

*We acknowledge the traditional custodians of Hunters Hill
and show respect to Elders past and present.*



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“Bunk”

“History is more or less bunk”
HENRY FORD, Chicago Tribune, 1916

HUNTERS HILL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Diary Dates

*General meeting
of members:*

**Wednesday May 29,
10 for 10.30am.**

**Town Hall,
Hunters Hill Council.**

**Guest speaker:
Lucy Miller Creagh
who will speak on
Hunters Hill
People and Places.**

**Mid-winter lunch
Wednesday July 24
Venue to be announced**

Hunters Hill Historical Society Inc

Office bearers and committee
2023/2024

President: Rod Stewart

Vice-President and Secretary:

Tony Saunders

Treasurer:

Felicity McCaffrey

Committee: Dorothy Cubban, Jan

Griffiths, Dean Letcher, Jean Pritchard,

Chris Schofield

Newsletter editor: Kate Armati

Fullerton Hotel shows off history of GPO

A group of twelve members of the society toured the Fullerton Hotel – the former GPO - in Sydney’s CBD.

The visit, last month, was organised by Tony Saunders who, unfortunately, was unable to attend as he fell and broke his shoulder the week before.

We gathered in the foyer and met our heritage guide Vickie who wore an appropriate guide’s uniform. She was very knowledgeable about all aspects of the building and its history. I should say that those who were expecting a tour of the hotel were to be disappointed as Vickie took us through the old GPO in great detail.

We started on the 7th floor in the atrium and progressed down to ground level looking at the features of the old and new building in the staircases and public rooms, but the main focus of our guide Vickie was the exterior of the building which most of us have known as the GPO.

At ground level there are 24 arches where the steps lead up from pavement to floor level. At the apex of each arch is a head carved in situ from stone and each head represents someone or something. As you would expect Queen Victoria is one head and there are the governors of NSW. Other heads along Martin Place represent the other States and the heads on Pitt Street represent industries, such as wool (of course). It is difficult to make out the differences, so it was interesting to find out that the heads actually represent different things or people.

This was also a lesson in looking up. How many times have we walked past the GPO without seeing the “heads” let alone the rest of the building?

If there was any criticism of the tour it was that there was a lot of time taken to discuss every head with resulting in long periods of standing. Perhaps a handout would have helped!

The general consensus was that it was a very interesting tour and conducted excellently by our guide. It wasn’t the hotel we saw but it was extremely interesting to find out so much more about the GPO!

Rod Stewart

Photo right: Entrance showing the carved heads above arches.



More photos on Page 2.

Post office and hotel links old with contemporary



Interiors of the Fullerton Hotel showing modern architecture whilst the original walls are highlighted. Spiral staircase in its glory and the members of the HHHS enjoy the guided tour by heritage guide Vickie.

Rain on an old tin roof a reminder of a local family

Who would have thought that the iconic Australian sound of rain on an old tin roof had anything to do with Hunters Hill. But there is a connection. It is to do with one-time residents of the municipality, the Lysaghts.

Herbert Royse Lysaght (1862-1940) and his wife, Ellen Zoe (Lydiard) (1864-1922), lived for at least 20 years at *Glenworth*, Ady Street, Hunters Hill. Born at Clifton, Bristol, England, on 15 December 1862, Herbert Royse was the nephew of John Lysaght (1832-1895) who was a galvanised iron and wire manufacturer and who set up an import company in Mel-

bourne in the late 19th century to take advantage of the demands of the burgeoning building and pastoral industries in the colony.

Herbert Royse migrated to Australia in 1883 and first worked for the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney at branches in rural NSW until 1899. At All Saints Cathedral, Bathurst, on 26 October 1892, he married Ellen Zoe who came from West Maitland. Following his banking career, Herbert Royse became a director of Australian-based Lysaght's Galvanised Iron Company. By 1913, Lysaght was responsible for importing 70 per cent of the entire Australian demand for galvanised products.

During World War 1, Australia became almost entirely cut off from supplies of galvanised and black iron sheeting. Because of this, Herbert Royse devoted his energies to setting up local production facilities. Thus, Lysaght was transformed into a manufacturing firm with eventually large plants in places such as Newcastle and Port Kembla.

At least between 1900 and the early 1920s, Herbert Royse and his wife, Ellen Zoe, lived at *Glenworth*. They had a son, Douglas Royse Lysaght (1896-1983) who grew up in

Hunters Hill and served as a sapper in World War 1. Ellen Zoe was a regular attendee at All Saints Anglican Church in Hunters Hill and a brass plaque in the nave commemorates her years of dedication and service.

In 1920, Herbert Royse was awarded the OBE for his work on the executive of the Australian Comforts Fund during the war. He was a director of numerous other companies, such as BHP, Anthony Hordern and Sons, Royal Insurance, and Sydney Hospital.

In 1922, the couple travelled to England on an extended holiday to visit relatives. It was while there that Ellen Zoe was taken ill and died at Chepstow, Monmouthshire, on 28 June of that year. Herbert Royse was still living in Hunters Hill in 1925 but by 1930 had moved to Darling Point, Woollahra.

He died suddenly at his Darling Point home on 28 June 1940. He was aged 77. He was cremated after a service at St Mark's Anglican Church, Darling Point. His personal estate was valued at £150,000.

As for the sound of rain beating on an Aussie old tin roof? Most likely the roofing material was supplied by the Lysaght company.

Chris Schofield

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