

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



www.huntershillmuseum.org.au

“Bunk”

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

HUNTERS HILL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Diary Dates:

A general meeting of members will be held in the Hunters Hill Council Chamber on Wednesday 26 February, 2025. Morning tea is at 10am followed by the meeting at 10.30am.

Author Ian Burnett will speak about his latest book “Dangerous Passage” which is a maritime history of Torres Strait. Ian has also written “Spice Islands” about the spice trade in the islands now called the Moluccas, north-east of Indonesia.

March 14: tour NSW Parliament

Hunters Hill Historical Society Inc

Office bearers and committee
2024/2025

President: Rod Stewart

Vice president \Treasurer:

Felicity McCaffrey

Secretary: Tony Saunders

Committee: Dorothy Cubban, Jan Griffiths, Jean Pritchard

Newsletter editor: Kate Armati

HUNTERS HILL HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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Citizen award for society member

Hunters Hill Historical Society vice-president and treasurer Felicity McCaffrey was announced the Hunters Hill Citizen of the Year at the Australia Day Awards and Citizenship Ceremony on January 26. Felicity has been involved in the society for many years and has supported a number of local organisations, indigenous and sustainable projects, hosting open garden events and musical performances at her home for L’Arche NSW, Giant Steps, the Greenhouse Initiative, the Rotary Club of Hunters Hill Spring Garden Competition and the Happy Hens at the Henley Community Garden. Felicity particularly dedicates her time to preserving oral history at the museum.

Member tour of Parliament House

Save the date, Friday 14
March at 12 30 pm.
Numbers limited.

NSW Parliament is the oldest chamber in Australia. The Legislative Council was formed in 1842. It was originally used as a meeting place and was part of a hospital. This visit is to both the Upper and Lower chambers. The tour is led by experienced guides and you will be told the history of this institution. The tour takes approximately one hour and adequate seating is available in the chambers. You will be informed how Parliament works and it is expected we will have access to historic rooms and view the art works. Numbers for this tour are limited and there is no charge. You will need photo identifica-



**Felicity McCaffrey with the Mayor of Hunters Hill
Zac Miles at the award ceremony on Australia
Day.**

tion at the security entrance - 6 Macquarie Street, Sydney, next to the State Library. There is a Parliament café for lunch afterwards if required. Please register, preferably by email, contact@huntershillmuseum.org.au. Numbers are limited.

Police stop not so friendly mob at annual picnic

Last week normally quiet Hunters Hill was the scene of a disturbance which, but for timely police reinforcement, would have in all probability culminated in something approaching a serious riot. It was the occasion of the United Friendly Societies' annual picnic, which was to Fern Bay Pleasure Grounds (ed's note: now site of Pulpit Point Estate). Several thousand came up the Parramatta River in three special boats which made several trips.

Instead of the four constables who were expected to accompany the picnic, only one could come, and of course one with so many could do but little. A number of outsiders joined the picnic, which primarily consisted of respectable people. Among the crowd were, it appears, two rival "pushes," familiarly known by the curious titles of the "Silver Eyes" and the "Silent Tongues." Between these respective factions, an old standing feud existed. Moreover, it was patent that not a few of them, females as well as males, had got fairly well primed with drink before arriving. Given these elements of discord, it was not altogether surprising that a disturbance should eventuate.

The first batch put in an appearance before one o'clock, and rows were the order of the day almost from the commencement; continual fighting going on with some of the females being as bad if not worse than their male companions. About midday a number unable to procure strong drink in the grounds, there being only a lunch to be had there, accepted an invitation extended to them on distributed handbills, and made their way out towards the Garibaldi Hotel (ed's note: corner of Alexandra and Ferry Streets). It was between the grounds and the hotel that the disturbance in question took place. Here, in Ferry Street, the two pushes met, and both having their pockets filled with lumps of rock, a pitched battle ensued; a regular

fusillade being maintained for some time, in fact perfect pandemonium raged.

No intimation having been conveyed to the police in Ryde district that the picnic was to

take place, no special provision had been made to maintain order, there being only Constable

Pilsbury at Hunters Hill as usual, besides Special Constable Grace. The latter was the first on

the scene at the Garibaldi Hotel. Finding the language of both sexes in and around the

hotel very bad, endeavoured to get it moderated. The licensee, Mrs Mulvey, sent for Constable Pilsbury, who promptly arrived. Seeing the serious state of affairs, he at once telephoned to the Water Police in Sydney for assistance, and also wired to Gladesville and to

Ryde. Constable Ross was the first to show up on foot from Gladesville only 26 minutes after the despatch of the wire, and then Constable White rode over from Ryde. About the same time, flying along the river at full speed, came the Water Police launch with six men aboard, five of

whom landed to maintain order in the Fern Bay grounds, leaving the sixth in charge of the boat. It will thus be seen that the additional police responded to the summons with praiseworthy promptitude.

The appearance of this number of uniforms took the larrikin mobs by surprise, and their behaviour underwent a marvellously sudden

Society award for history



Boronia Park Public School Year Six student Rohan Mather receives the Hunters Hill Historical Society Award from society member Chris Schofield at the school's 2024 award ceremony.

Each year the society presents this award to a school student who is selected for showing the most interest and aptitude in the subject of history.

transformation. This was not, however, before Constable Pilsbury and Constables White and Ross had found it necessary to show they meant business by "flattening out" one or two of the ringleaders of the disturbance, one of whom drew a knife, whilst another fortified himself with bricks. Then the local constables drove the pushes back eventually to the Fern Bay Grounds, where the appearance of the five Water Police settled matters forthwith, and the disturbance was at an end. It is to be hoped that it will be a long while before another disturbance occurs at Hunters Hill.

Edited extract from Cumberland Mercury newspaper, 22 September 1894