

MARRICKVILLE HERITAGE SOCIETY

Covering Dulwich Hill, Enmore, Lewisham,
Sydenham, Tempe and parts of Newtown.

Marrickville, Petersham, St Peters, Stanmore,
Camperdown and Hurlstone Park.



OUR NEXT MEETING

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JOHN HORBURY HUNT 1838 - 1904

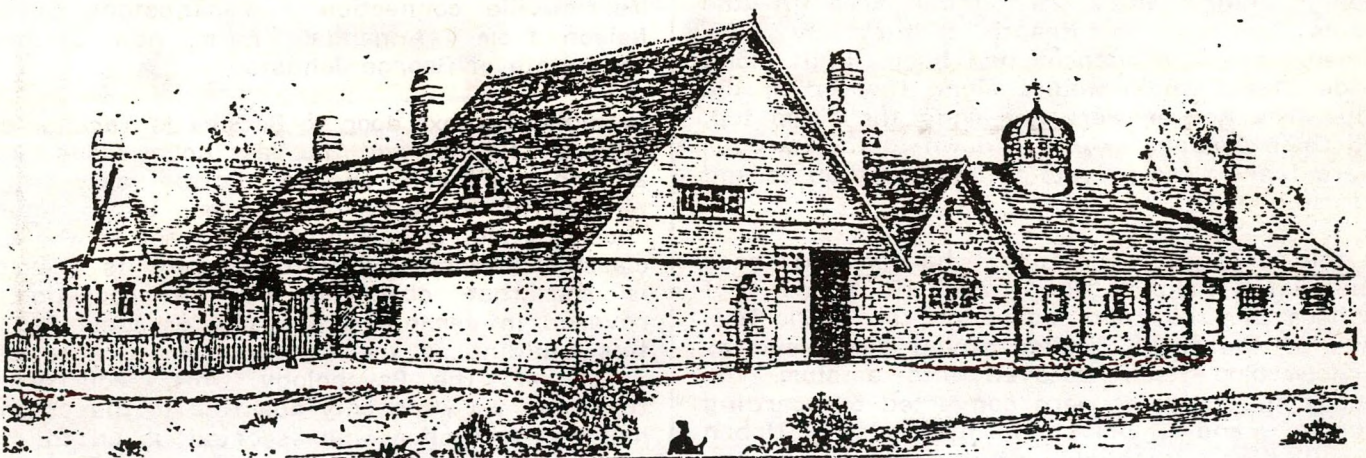
A Talk by Peter Reynolds
Master of the Horbury Hunt Club.

10.30am Saturday 24 April 1993
Amenities Room, Petersham Town Hall

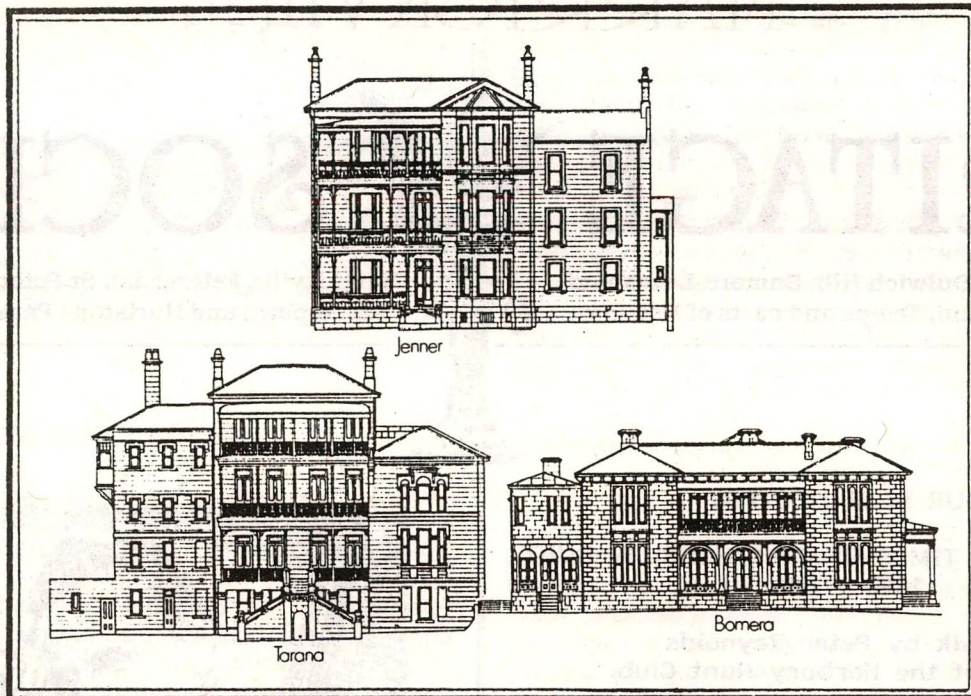
Canadian born John Horbury Hunt arrived in Sydney in 1863 where he worked with Edmund Blacket before establishing his own architectural practice in 1869. For the ensuing 30 years Hunt's free-Gothic mastery of complex form and asymmetrical balance, combine with outstanding skill in timber and brickwork, produced many significant buildings. Peter Reynolds, who retired in 1991 as Director of the graduate course in Building Conservation at the Faculty of Architecture, University of New South Wales, will give us an entertaining talk about the life and work of this gifted but eccentric architect. Hunt was inordinately fond of animals and some of his most magnificent buildings were horse stables.



John Horbury Hunt



Perspective drawing of the stables,
Booluminbah, Armidale.



THE VILLAS OF WOOLLOOMOOLOO

The Society's tour of the Villas of Woolloomooloo was truly a discovery of hidden heritage. At the end of Potts Point, a handful of elegant villas surrounded by tiny patches of garden still survive, jostled by the flats and apartments of Kings Cross to the south and by the dockyards of Garden Island to the north. A large turn-out, 52 in all, of members and friends were admitted to some of the secrets of Woolloomooloo Hill by Mr Jack Gibbs, Civilian Foreman of HMAS Kuttabul and passionate historian of this hidden heritage of Sydney. We were also fortunate to be accompanied by Society member Peter McLaren, who completed a Master of Science in Conservation Architecture in 1989 with a detailed study of three of the buildings we visited, Bomera, Tarana and Jenner.

The ridge extending from what is now Kings Cross to the harbour was picturesque, rocky, steeply sloping and heavily timbered. Its beauty and proximity to the city meant that it was keenly sought as a residential area in the middle and late nineteenth century. By 1900, fifteen elegant residences had been built along Wylde Street which wound along the top of the ridge. The houses were set along the ridge top, and their gardens extended down to the harbour where there were private jetties, boathouses and swimming pools.

By the turn of the century, wharves and roads constructed along the western shores of Woolloomooloo Bay encroached on the properties. Many of the early families moved away, and as Woolloomooloo itself decayed into a slum, the houses on the point were converted to boarding houses and private hospitals. Urban consolidation, through subdivision and the building of blocks of flats resulted in the demolition of many of the original houses, a fate that all would have certainly met with but for the second World War.

In 1941 the Commonwealth resumed most of the land at the eastern side of Potts Point as part of the construction of the Captain Cook Graving Dock. Reclamation and excavation for the dock destroyed most of the gardens and jetties of the residences, and one, Crecy, was itself demolished to permit the extension of Wylde Street to the harbour. But Bomera and Tarana, two of the most important buildings on the point were spared, and remain today in Commonwealth ownership.

The first building we visited was Bomera, the oldest surviving building at the northern end of Potts Point. It is an elegant stone Italianate villa, built in 1857-8. In 1865 a special hall was added, two stories high, to house an organ. This wonderful room survives, newly restored, but the organ is now at St Brigid's Marrickville! Fortunately the house is set off by a small but exquisite garden complete with sphinxes and lions. Here to our surprise we found another Marrickville connection - a sandstone bust of Nelson from Annandale Farm, now Stanmore, the estate of George Johnston.

Immediately next door to Bomera is Tarana, built between 1887-9, and the last house constructed at the northern end of Potts Point in the nineteenth century. Built in late Victorian "boom" style, it is quite a contrast to the more classical Bomera, but unfortunately its character is somewhat obscured by an accretion of covered in verandahs and fire escapes. Because this building is the headquarters of the Naval Police and the Psychology Unit, security was tight and we were only admitted to the entrance hall by the police who escorted us on the tour around Bomera and Tarana. Even so, we got a glimpse of boom period splendour in the main staircase with its elaborately carved newel post.

We walked back up Wylde Street from Bomera and Tarana on the point, to visit Kismet built in 1919 in a bungalow style. This building is now used for officers' accommodation and mess and is the process of refurbishment. Many of the original internal features survive including the timber panelled dining room and some marvellous nursery rhyme bathroom tiles. From here we proceeded south to HMS Kuttabul an uninspiring multistoried 1960s building on the site of one of the original villas, Clarens, which was demolished for the car-park. Part of Clarens Gardens survives however, including an imposing sandstone stairway down the cliff face on the eastern side of Potts Point, which has recently been restored. Clarens Gardens was the original location of the Choragic Monument, now in the Botanic Gardens. Finally we visited Jenner, near the junction of Wylde and Macleay Streets. Jenner was built in 1871 on part of Alexander Macleay's land grant at Elizabeth Bay, leased to Lebbeus Hordern. Jenner was designed by Edmund Blacket, though some details such as the stairs may have been designed by John Horbury Hunt. It is a fine example of a mid-Victorian city house, with a elegant cast iron portico.

The survival of these beautiful buildings is entirely due to their continuing public ownership. At one time or another during and after the war, the Commonwealth owned eleven 19th or early 20th century buildings in the Wylde Street area. Apart from the buildings mentioned above, the Commonwealth also demolished Charlemont and three of the four stories of Agincourt, and sold off Glamis Hall, Wyldefel, Fairhaven and Bellevue Gardens. With the exception of Bellevue Gardens, all those sold were demolished by the new owners. It's highly likely that all the historic buildings in this area would have long ago disappeared if they had been sold to private owners.

We are particularly grateful to Jack Gibbs for showing us his treasures (we look forward to his proposed book on the area), to Peter McLaren for access to his thesis for the information and illustrations included here, and to society member Ian Phillips who drove the bus.
 Jeannette Hope

Below: Tarana (left) and Bomera (right) ca. 1981



ELIZABETH FARM 1793-1993

Elizabeth Farm, Parramatta, the home of John and Elizabeth Macarthur, was built in 1793 and is celebrating 200 years with a programme of exciting events running to the end of the year. Part of the house is the oldest European building in Australia. The Macarthur's home was the centre of social, political and agricultural endeavour in the early years of the colony. For a copy of the attractive Calendar of Events, phone 692 8366 or 653 9488.

COLOURING HERITAGE

Have you noticed some of the very good heritage paint schemes in the Municipality? Bouquets to the Queen's Hotel, Enmore Road, and to the Salisbury Hotel, Cafe Floriade and Hunters and Collectors Antiques all in Percival Road, Stanmore. The Salisbury Hotel, an Art Deco building, looks particularly marvellous at night. The wise publican contacted the Art Deco Society and a member, architect Roy Lumby devised the colour scheme. The Main Street project, King Street, Newtown, is catching on!

THE HERITAGE OF CANTERBURY

Canterbury and District Historical Society have launched a new publication, "The Heritage of Canterbury Municipality", intended to promote a knowledge and understanding of the local heritage of the area. Congratulations to editors Brian Madden and Leslie Muir (who are also members of Marrickville Heritage Society). We hope to have copies of this book for sale at our meetings.

GROW YOUR OWN HERITAGE WITH PLANTS FROM

SHRUBS AND TUBS GARDEN CENTRE

130-136 New Canterbury Road Petersham

And the **NEW LEICHHARDT GARDEN CENTRE**

346-350 Norton Street Leichhardt

***** OPEN 7 DAYS *****

COMING EVENTS

Saturday 22 May: Wine ... and a little history! Day Trip to Cessnock and the lower Hunter Valley by bus. To book, ring Shirley Hilyard on 569 1768.

Sunday 30 May: Heritage Society Concert, Newington Chapel. If you attended the concert at St Stephen's, Newtown, last year you will know what to expect. Fine music and fine musicians! Contact Sue Miller on 519 9980 if you can assist the organising committee.

TENNIS, ANYONE?

Mr Terry Meakin, President of the Marrickville District Lawn Tennis Club, is seeking information from members that will help to establish the heritage of tennis in Marrickville and the part played by the Marrickville District Lawn Tennis Club. The Club, whose courts are at Livingstone Park, was formed in 1921. According to the 1936 History of Marrickville, by that time the Club managed six turf courts. There were also about 200 tennis courts of the hardcourt type in Marrickville, and the control of competition tennis on these courts was vested in the Dulwich Hill and District Branch of the Sydenham-Bankstown Tennis Association.

The following people were associated with early tennis in Marrickville. Lawn Tennis: Sir William Vicars, Alderman Mansell, V. Hall, Jim and Aubrey Willard, Eric Crawford (curator), Frank Denshire, Roy Steele, J. Gash. Hardcourt tennis: H.G.Cray, S.Edwards, George Robinson, H.James, Claude Willard, Jack Hayes.

Perhaps you played tennis at Livingstone Park, or knew some of the players listed above. If you can help, please contact Mr Meakin, c/- Marrickville District Lawn Tennis Club Ltd., PO Box 555, Marrickville 2204.

HOW TO JOIN THE SOCIETY

Membership is \$12 for individuals, \$18 for households and \$6 for students and pensioners. You will receive a monthly Newsletter (except in January) and the Society's annual journal Heritage. Subscriptions are valid for the Society year starting 1 July. Regular meetings are held on the fourth Saturday of each month. Write to PO Box 415 Marrickville 2204.

NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS

Send Newsletter contributions to editor Jeannette Hope, PO Box 702, Marrickville 2204, phone or fax 559 1431. Letters, suggestions, quotes, drawings, photos, cartoons, newspaper cuttings, coming events - all welcome.