

THE
NATIONAL TRUSTS
OF AUSTRALIA



"St Malo", Hunter's Hill, Sydney
A National Trust Property

. . . Preserving Our National Heritage

Preserving Our National Heritage

THE NATIONAL TRUSTS OF AUSTRALIA

By the HON. E. LLOYD SOMMERLAD, B.A., B.Ec., M.L.C.

with the co-operation and assistance of
DAVID SAUNDERS, National Trust of Australia (Victoria)
H. A. LINDSAY, National Trust of South Australia

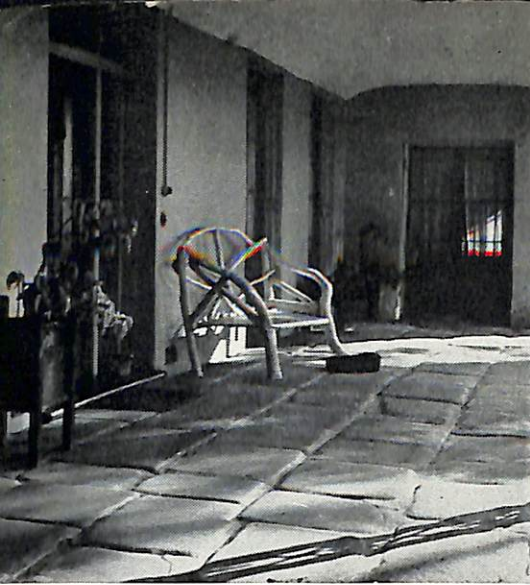


Photo: E. Lloyd Sommerlad

John MacArthur, the founder of Australia's wool industry, trod these stones on the front verandah of "Elizabeth Farm", Parramatta, New South Wales. He built this home only five years after the arrival of the First Fleet. It is preserved in its original condition with only minor alterations.



AUSTRALIA is so close, in point of time, to her foundation that a good many relics of the early years of settlement still exist. There are still, for instance, evidences of the penal colony from which we have grown, with proud achievement during 170 years.

The grim prison settlement at Port Arthur (Tasmania), the convict-built church at Port Macquarie (N.S.W.), the pick marks on the rocks that formed the first road across the Blue Mountains, the characteristic architecture of historic Sydney buildings designed by ex-convict Greenway—these are all reminders of a richly historic and indeed romantic chapter in the Australian story.

Again, we still have the homes of men famous in our history, men like William Charles Wentworth (Vaucluse House), Sir Henry Parkes (at Faulconbridge), and of the founder of the wool industry, that turbulent character, John MacArthur, whose 1793 home, Elizabeth Farm at Parramatta, is faithfully preserved in its original state. And at Tenterfield is the very hall where the veteran statesman, Parkes, made his famous federation speech in 1889, which led to the birth of the Australian nation.

The work of some of our earlier road builders is preserved, both in Tasmania and on the mainland. Stone bridges stand solid as the day they were built, nearly a century and a half ago. Here and there is a roadside tollhouse, or an inn, relic of stage-coach days.

As in Britain, some of our oldest buildings are places of worship, such as the Presbyterian Church at Ebenezer, built in 1809, and the Church of England at Liverpool (1819).

Australians are apt to undervalue this heritage of historic buildings, just as they tend to deprecate our scenery and natural

(At right): One of Australia's most historic buildings, known as The Mint, in Macquarie Street, Sydney. Built as part of the famous Rum Hospital under the direction of Governor Macquarie, it dates back to 1811.

Photo: E. Lloyd Sommerlad

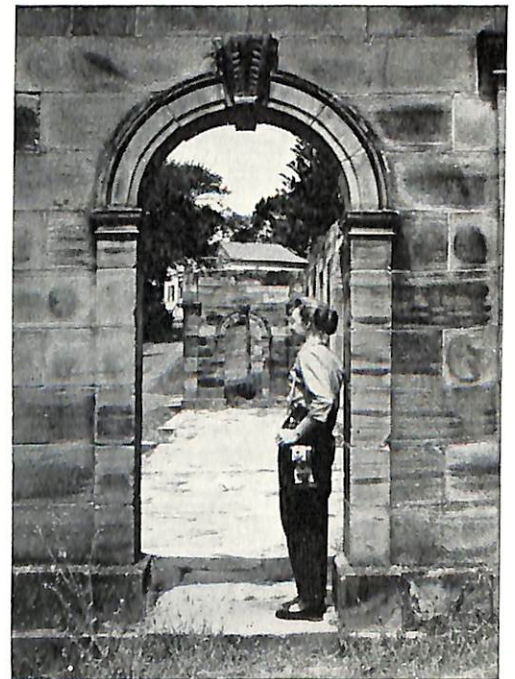


EMBLEM OF THE NATIONAL TRUST (NEW SOUTH WALES)

The National Trust of Australia (N.S.W.) has adopted an emblem to be used as a badge and on plaques denoting Trust properties. Its arched fanlight and native gum-nut are symbolic of the objects of the Trust—to preserve historic buildings and natural beauty.

The arch was an architectural feature of many early colonial buildings, including the first Government House built in Bridge Street, Sydney, in 1788. An example may be seen in one of the oldest public buildings still standing in Sydney, the first Military Hospital, built in 1815 on Observatory Hill, and now Fort Street Girls' High School. It is a feature in many of architect Francis Greenway's buildings.

The gum-nut, symbolizing the Trust's conservational activities, is a species of the eucalyptus family found in 1770 by Mr (afterwards Sir Joseph) Banks, near the shores of Botany Bay.



Inspecting the ruins, Port Arthur convict settlement, Tasmania. The Scenery Preservation Board, Tasmania's counterpart of the National Trust, has done excellent work on the restoration of these historic ruins.



U.S. BANK
AND TRUST CO.

STRICTLY
NO PARKING
IN THIS SITE

AUH 051

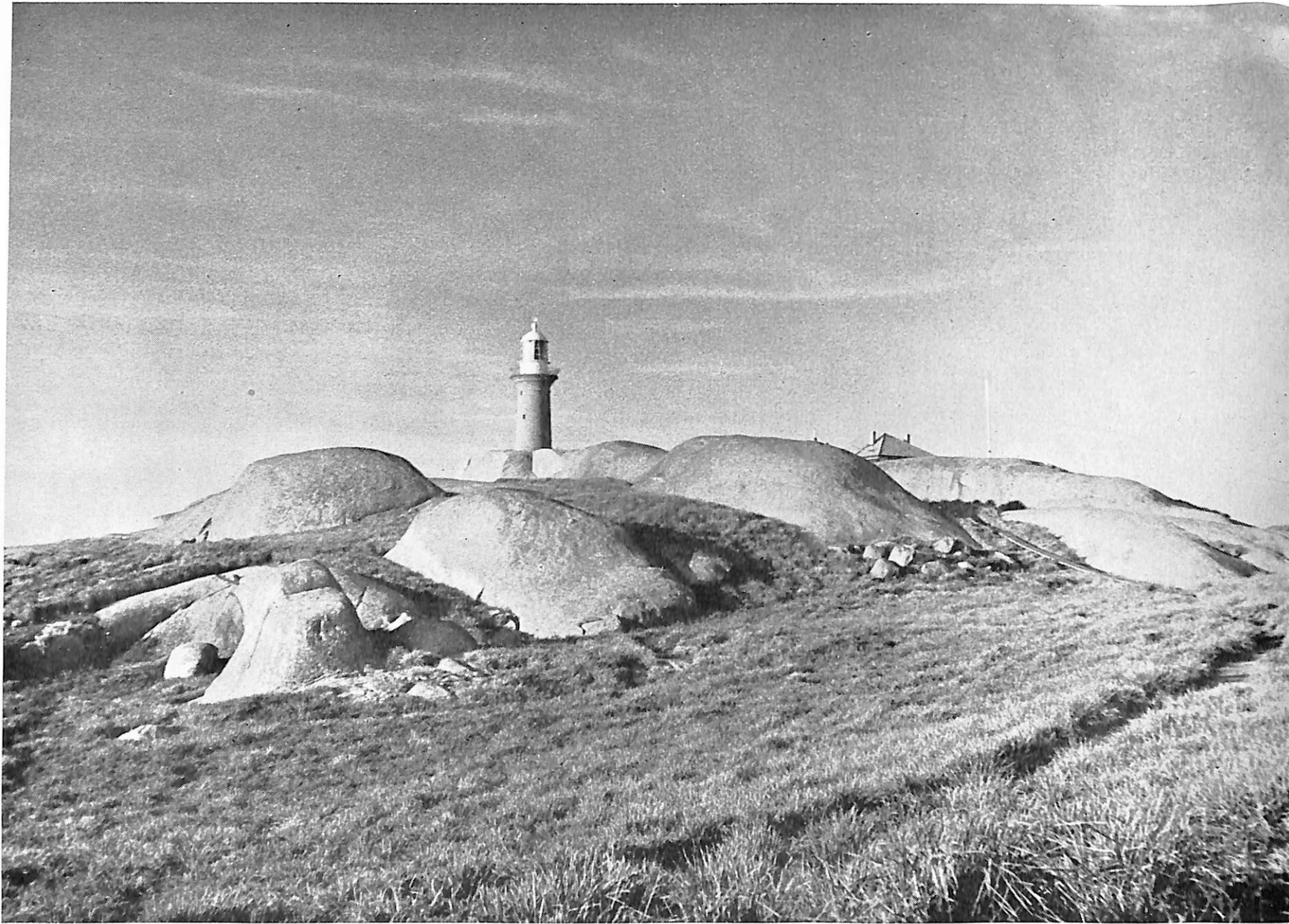


Photo: E. L. Sommerlad

Montague Island, off the southern New South Wales coast, has been made a sanctuary and placed under the control of the National Trust of Australia (N.S.W.). "This sanctuary is an important breeding-ground of seals and fairy penguins, seagulls and sooty terns. Protected from interference, all have since thrived."

beauty in mountain, river, coastline and forest. We have no centuries-old castles and cathedrals and battlefields, but we have some priceless relics of pioneers, of convicts, explorers, statesmen and of the aboriginal culture that preceded white settlement. It is a heritage as significant to Australia as her feudal manors and abbey ruins are to Britain. And it will increase in value as the years go by.

Unfortunately a great many of our historic buildings have already fallen under the wrecker's hammer, but there is a growing appreciation of the importance of saving what we still can.

Much of the credit for getting people to think in this way belongs to the National Trust movement. The first Trust was formed in New South Wales in 1945 by a small group of people who were shocked at the rapid disappearance of historic landmarks. It follows the pattern of the

English National Trust, which, by bequest or otherwise, has acquired over 1,000 properties during the past sixty years, and is holding them in trust for the benefit of the nation.

● THE NATIONAL TRUST IN NEW SOUTH WALES

The objects of the National Trust of Australia (N.S.W.) are:

- To restore and preserve historic buildings or those of outstanding architectural merit.

- To safeguard the charm and interest of the Australian country-side, its wild-flower patches, stands of timber, primitive reserves, national parks, aboriginal relics, vistas, lagoons or streams, and especially the breeding-places of native birds, animals and plants.

The Trust has sponsored the formation of the Hawkesbury Scenic Preservation

Council and has induced the State Government to declare Cabbage Tree Island the first Faunal Reserve. It has a representative on the Muogamarra Sanctuary Reserve. In 1953, the Commonwealth Government granted the Trust full control of the fauna and flora of Montagu Island (off Narooma on the New South Wales South Coast). This sanctuary is an important breeding-ground of seals and fairy penguins, seagulls and sooty terns. Protected from interference, all have since thrived.

The Trust has fought successfully for the preservation of some historic buildings, but for others it has protested in vain, and has lacked the funds to buy them when they were threatened with demolition. One of its notable achievements is the retaining of St Malo, an historic and attractive stone building, set in spacious grounds at Hunter's Hill, and nearly a

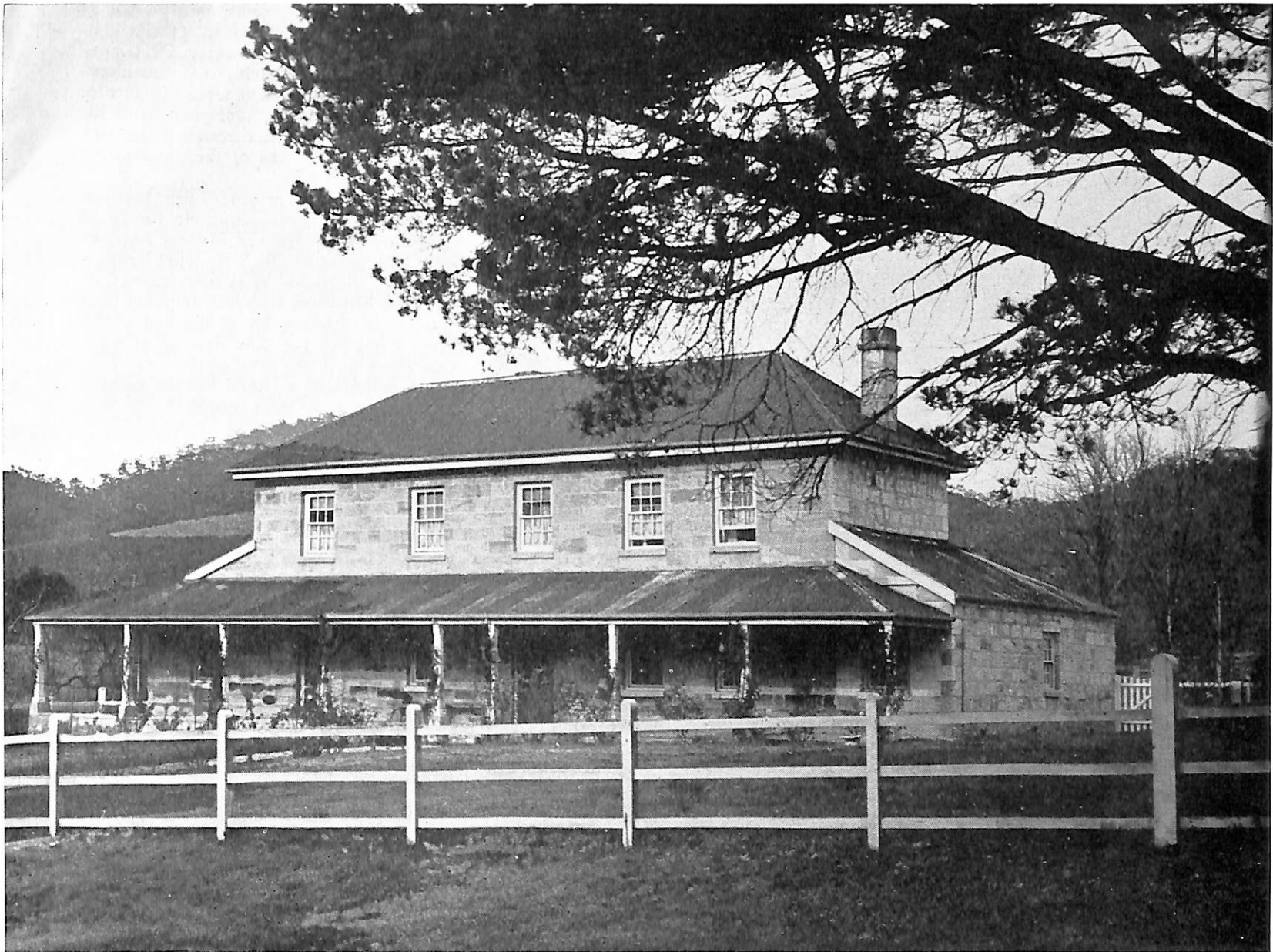


Photo: E. L. Sommerlad

"Rosedale", Hartley, at the western foot of the Blue Mountains, New South Wales. "Rosedale" was built in 1839 as a stage-coach inn. The old stables are still standing and the forge contains many parts of coaches and harness used for repairs.

century old. It is sublet to a firm of caterers who have furnished it in period style. St Malo is open for inspection on Sunday afternoons, and is visited by about 5,000 people each year. (See, also, article p. 27.)

The State Government, by special Act of Parliament in 1957, transferred the Tenterfield School of Arts to the National Trust. A Sir Henry Parkes Museum is to be established in this historic building, where Parkes made his federation speech in 1889.

The Trust has done much through its membership of the Historic Buildings sub-committee of the Cumberland County Council. A study has been made of historic buildings in the Sydney area, and the Council has named eighteen buildings of great significance which it is intended to preserve.

The Trust now has more than 1,000 members and forty-two affiliated societies.

The New South Wales Government has agreed to grant it legislative recognition later this year. The interest of Trust members is stimulated by regular public meetings with addresses or films and by occasional outings. Last year it staged an exhibition of historic photographs.

● IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Both South Australia and Victoria have established National Trusts. The South Australian Trust was incorporated by Act of Parliament in 1955, with the same objectives as its N.S.W. counterpart. Its 1957 report lists 505 members, including 87 life members and 22 corporate members. It has an active branch at Renmark. Six properties of scenic or historical interest have already been given to the Trust. These comprise sixty acres of river frontage on the Murray near Renmark;

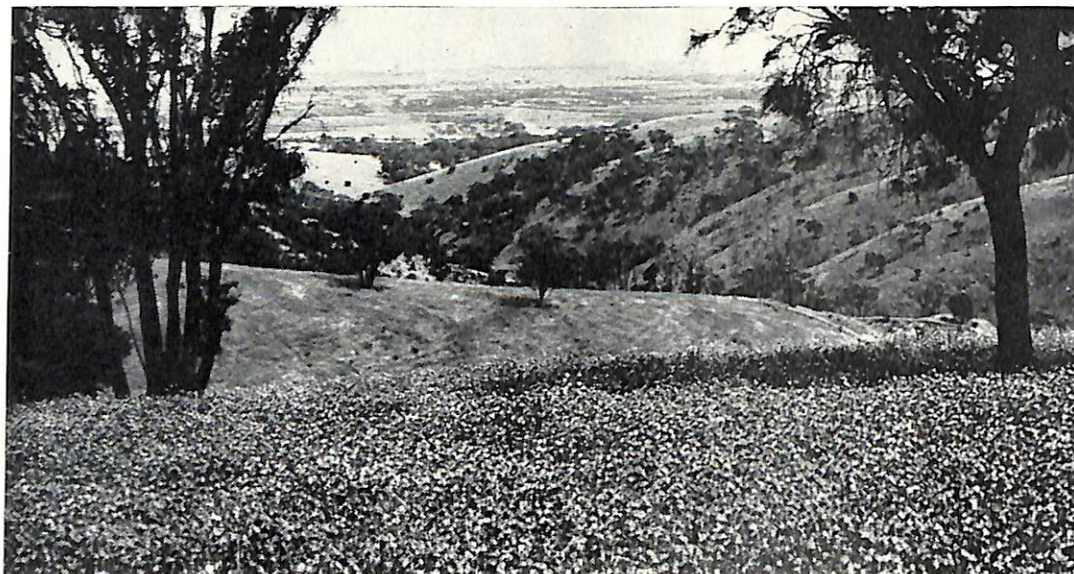
seventy acres of recreational land at Paringa, near the Victorian border, given by the Dowling family; a block of land at the Bluff, Encounter Bay, where a memorial to early pioneers is to be erected; a block of land at Gawler on which is an old cottage built in 1839; and two valuable properties, "Roachdale" and "Watiparinga" (see picture page 22).

"Roachdale" is a large area of natural scrub and open country at Kersbrook, in the Mount Lofty Ranges, given by Miss Hilda Roach, after whom it has been named. The scrub will be kept as a flora and fauna reserve, and the open country will probably become a recreation area with a youth hostel. Miss Roach retains a lifetime tenancy of the house and the grazing land.

"Watiparinga" is a property on the hills at Blackwood, overlooking Adelaide, presented by Miss Alison Ashby, who is

(Below) "Watiparinga", Blackwood, looking down on Adelaide. Twenty acres of this National Trust property are being planted with native flowering trees and shrubs.

Photo: N. Tindale



well known for her work as a grower of Australian native plants in garden conditions. She paid for fencing off twenty acres of this land, which she is now planting with native flowering trees and shrubs. "Watiparinga" is the aboriginal name for the creek which runs through it. In time it should become one of the show-places of South Australia.

The Renmark property lies between Renmark and Berri, alongside the Sturt Highway. Sixty acres of Murray frontage have been presented by Miss Janet Reiners. It is to be known as "Wilabalangaloo". The spot has historical associations going back thousands of years, for at the foot of the river cliffs lies the only deposit of flint-like chert in a big area of country. This stone, admirably adapted for the making of primitive tools, was traded by the aborigines from tribe to tribe for hundreds of miles.

The Trust is compiling an authentic list of buildings of note and proposes to attach suitable plaques to them. So far the Trust has not held lectures for its members or the public, holding it better at this stage to confine its work to "practical and formative issues".

● IN VICTORIA

The inaugural meeting of the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) was held in September 1956, when a distinguished council, headed by Sir Daryl Lindsay, was elected. Its first objective is to ensure that historic buildings are preserved. At the end of the first year it had 418 members.

It recently appointed a committee of members qualified to examine every building in the State which might warrant the Trust's attention. The committee was asked to consider each building's architectural merit and its historic significance and to recommend acceptable ones in three categories.

It has been very interesting to find the widely diverging estimates of how many buildings in Victoria might be worth preserving. Some say there is only a handful, others say there are hundreds. The Trust committees which considered this aspect had first to decide why any building should be preserved, and secondly what is really meant by "preserving". Their conclusions were that a building should be considered for preservation on three grounds. One is historic association (Captain Cook's cottage in Melbourne's Fitzroy Gardens or Governor Latrobe's cottage); another is architectural excellence (of these there are comparatively few, but more than



(Left) The Supreme Court Library, Melbourne. This consists of a two-storied chamber surrounded at two levels by reading alcoves and rooms. It is crowned internally by a fifty-five-foot diameter dome, off-white in colour, delicate in detail. This building is included in the "A" Class list compiled by the National Trust of Australia (Victoria).

Photo: Mark Strizio

(At right) Government House, Parramatta, New South Wales, now part of the Kings School. The first Government House on this site was built in 1795 by Governor Hunter. The house was enlarged by Macquarie and the building pictured was erected in the early 1800's. Architect: John Watts.

some people realize—the Supreme Court Library, Melbourne, shown at bottom left, is one example); and the third is a case of where architectural history is involved (homesteads—such as the old home shown at bottom right—bluestone cottages, gold-route pubs, mine-head buildings, and so on).

As for “preservation” the Trust uses three methods. If a building is of national importance, and its loss would be a grievous one from any angle, the Trust aims to preserve it completely “at all costs” (this is an “A” Class building). An example of this was the recent acquisition by the Trust of the South Yarra property “Como” (see page 21).

There are others, whose loss would be a pity, but whose value is less (“B” Class). In such cases the Trust will do everything possible to see it is preserved, paying special attention to the possibility of its self-support by rent, tourist fees, endowment or some other way.

The third category (“C” Class) is the building which is of interest, but whose extinction may have to be expected because of necessary replacement or lack of usefulness. For this third type of building (and for others) the Trust has a plaque, to be placed on the building to call attention to its merits. It will also be photographed and its history traced. If go it must, its passing will not be unnoticed.

The survey has so far concentrated on the city and its environs. Twelve buildings have been chosen by the committee as the first of a list of “A” Class buildings. They are:

1. ST JAMES OLD CATHEDRAL,
King Street, West Melbourne
(commenced 1839)

Believed to be Melbourne's oldest important building. Removed from original site in Little Collins Street stone by stone in 1914.

2. TOORAK HOUSE, 21 St George's
Road, Toorak (prior to 1850)

Leased as Governor's residence in 1854 and improvements included barracks for military guard. Used as Government House until 1874.

(Continued on page 12)

(At right) This old building at The Basin in the Dandenong Ranges, Victoria, is an example of a case where preservation is desirable on the grounds of architectural history. The picture shows how the builder made use of local materials for the poles which support the verandah and in splitting palings for the weather-boarding of the walls.



Photo: E. Lloyd Sommerlad



Photo: Mark Strizie



Photo: Mark Strizic

"Como"

South Yarra, Melbourne.

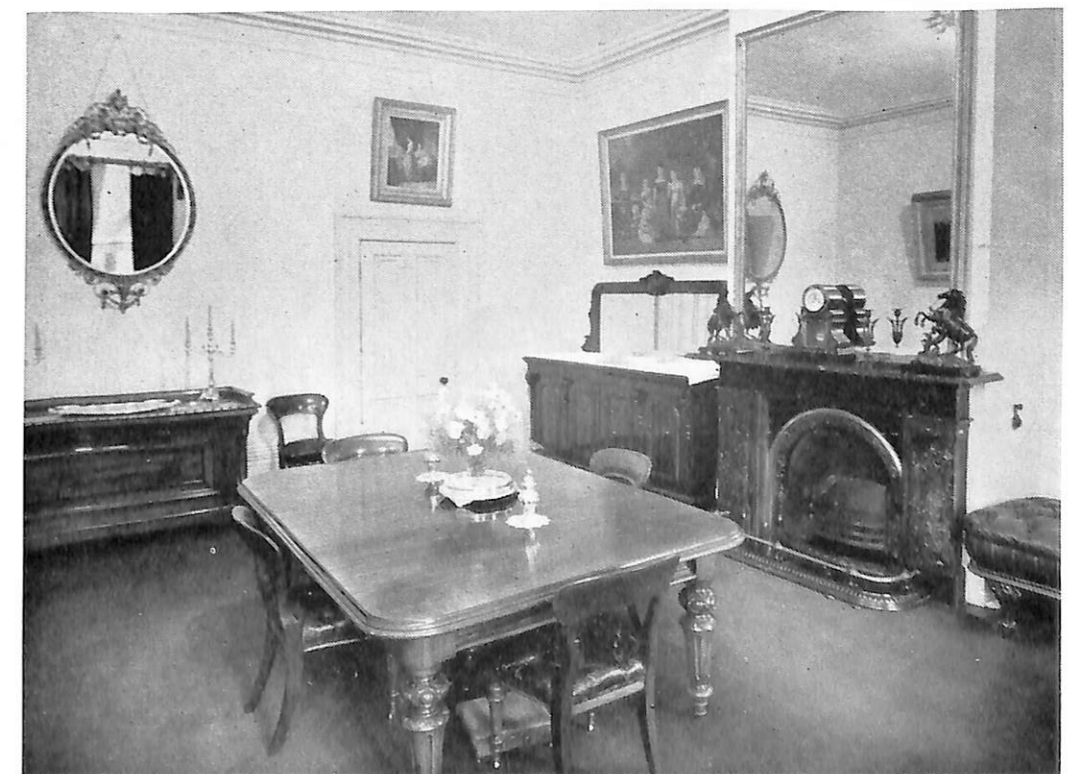
It is hoped that this will be the first acquisition for the nation by the National Trust of Australia (Victoria). An appeal for funds is now in progress.

"The Trust believes that the purchase of 'Como' will provide countless people, for generations to come, with the opportunity of seeing for themselves the way of life of a pioneer family in Victoria's early years."

—SIR DARYL LINDSAY.

(Left): The perfect symmetry of this Colonial-style house is enhanced by the iron railings, of Scottish design, which are, like the whole house, in perfect condition.

(Below): The original furniture still stands in many of the rooms at Como. The dining room, for instance, contains the furniture which the owner, Charles Henry Armytage, had ordered from a Richmond undertaker, who produced fine furniture when business in his main line happened to be slack.



Seed-bed of Australian Federation

THE TENTERFIELD SCHOOL OF ARTS (NEW SOUTH WALES)

IN this old building Sir Henry Parkes made his famous Federation Speech in 1889 in which he declared that "the great question which they (the colonies) have to consider is, whether the time has not now come for the creation on this Australian continent of an Australian Government, as distinct from the local Governments now in existence".

The Tenterfield School of Arts has been handed over by an Act of Parliament to the National Trust of Australia (N.S.W.) to preserve for the nation as a Parkes Memorial.

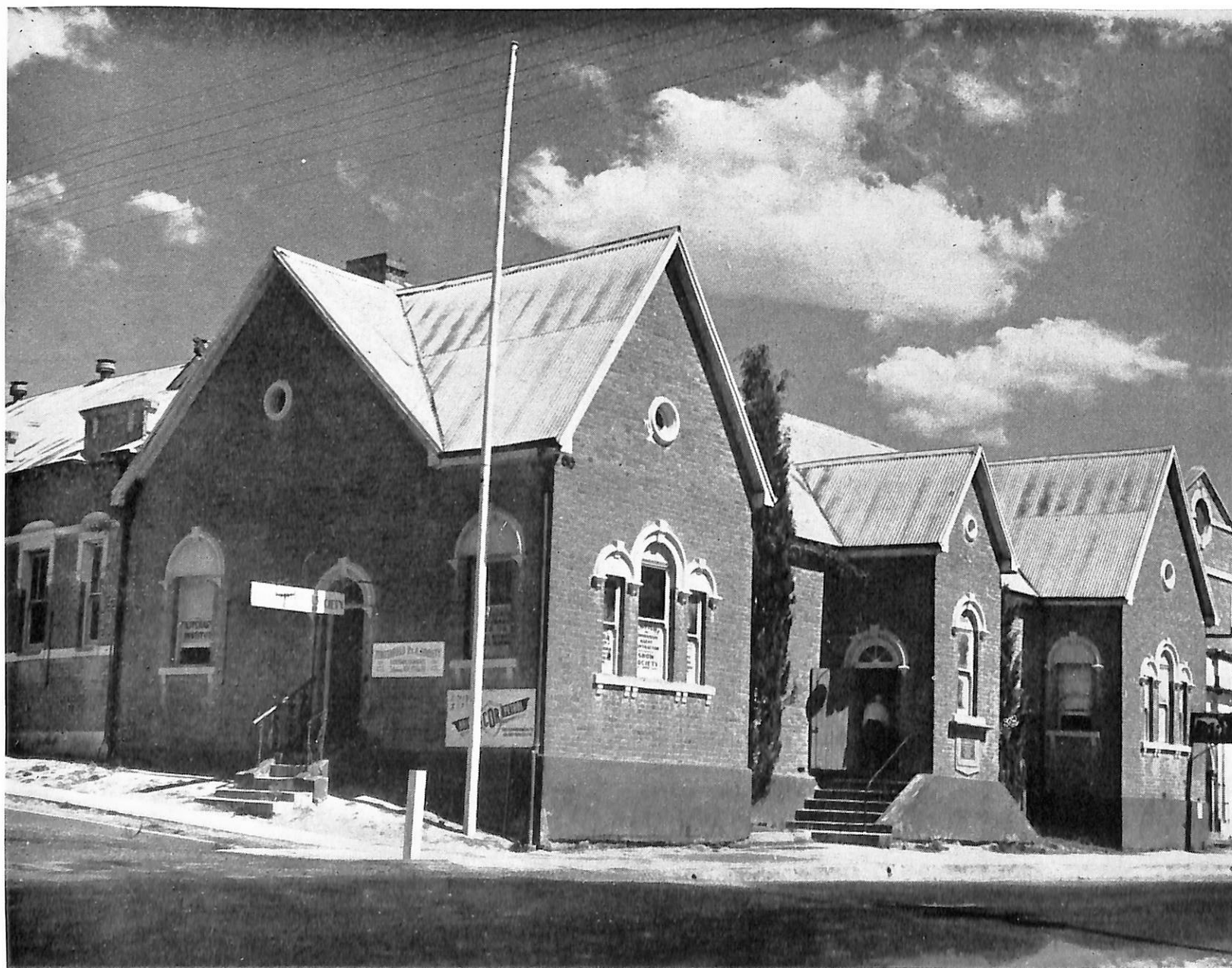


Photo: E. Lloyd Sommerlad



Photo: Mark Strizic

A House Built Upon Gold

THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL CHAMBER (VICTORIA)

THIS, the most monumental building in Melbourne, and so expressive of the law-making power, is constructed of Stawell free-stone on a high bluestone base. The first imposing feature of the building is the Roman Doric colonnade facing Spring Street, and throughout the design this is reflected in a giant order of matching columns and pilasters supporting an entablature enriched with swags and symbolic bas-reliefs.

The interior contains four notable rooms, the Legislative Council Chamber (shown in the picture above), the Legislative Assembly Chamber, Queen's Hall, and the Library. The Council Chamber is Corinthian and the Assembly Ionic, both have splendid stucco-work and gilding, and in spite of a rather nervous overcrowding of the ornamentation, both are beautiful interiors. It should be mentioned that all joinery in the building is cedar from Queensland and northern New South Wales.



Photo: D. H. Stephens

"Entally National House", Hadspen, Tasmania. "Entally", created and managed by the Scenery Preservation Board, is an excellent example of an early colonial house, and contains rare examples of beautiful period furniture.

3. COMO HOUSE, South Yarra (prior to 1850)

One of Melbourne's few remaining historic mansions. In perfect preservation and condition and set in five acres of grounds.



4. TREASURY BUILDING, Spring Street, Melbourne (1858)

Built as impressive architectural climax to Collins Street. A splendid example of early government building.

5. ST PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL (1858)

Another of the city's finest architectural projects resulting from the wealth of the gold discoveries in the 'fifties. The spires were redesigned and built in 1936.

6. THE CUSTOMS HOUSE, Flinders Street (1858 and later)

This building is the second Customs House built at the point where the Yarra rocks barred the way and where John Batman landed.

7. HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT, Spring Street

The two Houses stood for several years in the late 1850's as separate buildings facing each other. Their lavish gilt and cedar interiors contrasted strangely with the roughly finished bluestone exterior.

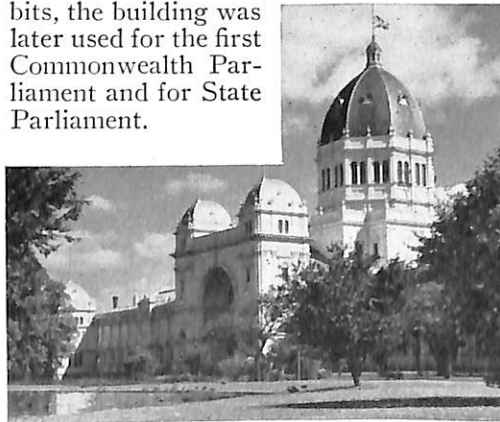
The Library was added, then Queen's Hall and the Grand Portico was added in 1892.

8. OLD MELBOURNE GAOL BUILDINGS (1841 and later)

Melbourne's picturesque gaol is now occupied by offices of the Education Department.

9. THE EXHIBITION BUILDING (1879)

Built for the Great Exhibition which housed 32,000 exhibits, the building was later used for the first Commonwealth Parliament and for State Parliament.



10. GOVERNMENT HOUSE (1872)

Government House's form is a sensitive adaptation of Queen Victoria's Osborne House, on the Isle of Wight. Governors-General occupied it until 1926.

11. THE ROYAL MINT, William Street (1870)

A striking and palatial building constructed from a design prepared in England and supervised by a Clerk of Works from the British War Department.

12. THE SUPREME COURT

LIBRARY, Law Courts, William Street (1877)

The Supreme Court Library lies beneath the Law Courts Dome. It is a two-storied chamber with reading alcoves. Its architects, Smith & Johnson, won a competition for its design.

The Trust will later arrange for plaques to be fixed on selected buildings, showing their classification.

WHEN completed, the survey will provide a permanent catalogue and details of such buildings, record basic information on which the Trust can act, as well as impress upon owners their own responsibilities as trustees of something that cannot be replaced.

A memorial museum to Sir Russell Grimwade has been established in Captain Cook's cottage in Melbourne's Fitzroy Gardens with the co-operation of the City Council, and a booklet on the cottage has been published.

● IN TASMANIA

Although there is no National Trust as such in Tasmania, much has been accomplished to preserve the State's outstanding historical relics by the Government itself. The Scenery Preservation Board, under the Lands Department, has the responsibility of preserving historic buildings and sites and developing national parks. It has the great advantage of an annual grant of public funds.

Buildings under its direct control are:

Entally House, Hadspen, an early colonial house containing rare examples of beautiful period furniture, and inspected by 17,000 visitors a year. The Steppes, a cluster of pioneer settlers' log cabins, in the highlands. Old Richmond Gaol, in its original condition—1825.

Port Arthur, a penal station from 1830 to 1870, with many historic buildings. Excellent work has been done on the restoration of buildings and development of park-lands here.

Smith O'Brien's cottage (Irish exile), restored and now a youth hostel.

Shot Tower, a very fine stone tower and residence near Hobart.

Last year the Commonwealth Government granted the National Trusts in the three States valuable taxation concessions. Bequests to them were declared exempt from death duties, and donations were deemed allowable deductions for income-tax purposes. The co-operation of the Trusts which secured the concessions suggests further close relations which may lead to the formation of a Federal body and to reciprocal privileges for members.

With encouragement from governments, valuable properties will no doubt be presented to the National Trusts; others may be acquired. As the years go by, Australia will be increasingly grateful for the foresight of those who established the Trusts.



The Stately Homes of Hunter's Hill

By HEATHER GEORGE

(Photographs by the Author)

"St Malo", a lovely old house, built in 1847, overlooking Lane Cove, Sydney.

"FIRST, I will show you Hunter's Hill," I told my Melbourne visitors. "It is the background of so much of Sydney's early history and contains so many interesting and beautiful old houses belonging to that period."

Hunter's Hill is a very pleasant district. Lying between the mouth of the Parramatta River and the Lane Cove River, it has great natural beauty. In many ways it retains an English character, with its lanes and hedges and magnificent old trees. Most of the stone homes are in an excellent state of preservation, and a feature of the area is the wonderful old stone walls. The grounds of some of these places gently slope down to the water's edge.

Much of the fine architecture is due to the creativeness of the Joubert brothers, who settled there in 1840. Many skilled Italian artisans worked on these homes, and the materials for some of them were specially imported from France and Italy.

All these houses have in common the quality of craftsmanship. They were built in an age when nuclear energy and utility housing were unknown. Time could wait gracefully while these early builders finished a house in all its traditional form and detail. To visit Hunter's Hill now and be reminded of this is a refreshing experience.

I will describe briefly two of these best-known old houses.

There is "St Malo". Set in very beau-

tiful grounds overlooking Lane Cove, this lovely old house was built by M. Didlier Numa Joubert, in 1847, and except for a short break from 1892 to 1897, the property has remained within this family, its present owner being Mrs Bruce Walker. Leased from the owner by the National Trust of Australia (New South Wales), it has been restored and refurnished in period style by a Sydney catering company which makes it available to the public for various functions. The Trust opens the house to visitors on Sundays.

The elegant fluted pillars, which now form part of "St Malo's" original verandah, are relics of the historic old Macquarie Street residence, "Burdekin House", now no longer standing. A feature of "St Malo" is the large cellars in which the original owner stored the wines which he brought out from Bordeaux.

The property on which "St Malo" is built originally belonged to Mrs Mary Reiby, and the two original buildings which were on the land are now called "Figtree House" and "Reiby Cottage". From its position in the grounds "Reiby Cottage", seen through a pattern of trees and native shrubs, still commands a delightful view. Some restoration work is now being done to this old building.

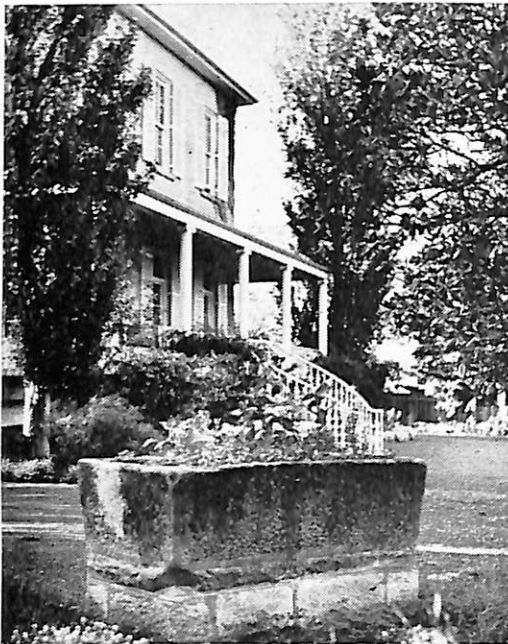
Mary Reiby figures very early in the history of Hunter's Hill. She was one of the first people to receive a grant of land there, and many accounts describe her

interesting and colourful life. She was born in Lancashire in 1777, her maiden name being Mary Haydock. When only fourteen years old, for a childish prank, "she caught and rode a neighbour's pony. For this crime, she was arrested and sentenced to transportation for seven years"!

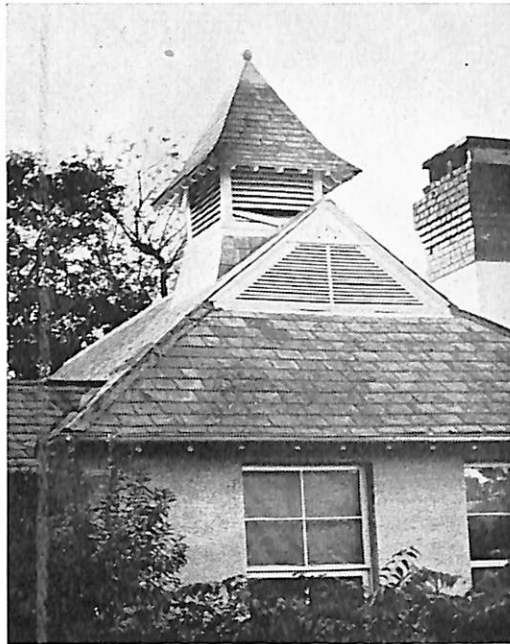
"The mate of the ship, the *Royal Admiral*, in which she was sent out," the record continues, "fell in love with her, and asked her to wait for him till his return after his next voyage. Meanwhile, she was assigned for service at Government House, where she acted as nursemaid. In 1792, she married her sailor lover, Thomas Reiby, and, after his death, carried on his shipping business and store situated at the corner of Macquarie Place and Reiby Lane, with great success. She was an educated woman, whose diary is now in the Mitchell Library."

It is gratifying to learn that Mary Reiby emerged as a woman of high standing in the colony, and when she later returned to England, her friends and relatives there were impressed by her prosperous and happy life.

The second house, "Passy", in lovely Passy Avenue, was built about the year 1854 by M. François Sentis, Sydney's first French consul. The grounds, in those days, adjoined "Mooroolah", the last house built by M. Jules Joubert. Since then the historic old house has been the home of a succession of prominent people.



Old stone trough now used for plants, "Passy", an historic old house at Hunter's Hill, Sydney.



"There is a bell-tower, and, in the early days, 'the bell was rung to announce the arrival of a ferry-boat'."



"From the high-pillared verandah on the other side of the house, two stairways curve to meet, forming a complicated and delicate design."



"Passy", built about the year 1854 by Monsieur Francois Sentis, Sydney's first French Consul. "The historical and romantic literary record of early Australia, *The Letters of Rachel Henning*, is associated with "Passy".

The historic and romantic literary record of early Australia, *The Letters of Rachel Henning*, is associated with "Passy". The Henning family occupied the house for a number of years, and towards the end of her long and vigorous life Rachel Henning went to live there with her sister and brother. Hunter's Hill was also the background for part of *A House is Built*, the prize-winning Australian novel by M. Barnard Eldershaw. The present owner of "Passy" is Miss Doreen Price, and the lovely old house is now a convalescent home.

"Passy" has many interesting and unusual architectural features. There is a cast-iron spiral staircase leading to a little gallery. It gives great charm to the entrance hall. From the high-pillared verandah on the other side of the house, two stairways curve to meet, forming a complicated and delicate design. There is a bell-tower, and, in the early days, "the bell was rung to announce the arrival of a ferry-boat". From the wide gateway, the approach to "Passy" is quite unusual. The curving trellis on either side of the house forms also an enclosing shape round the centre lawn and driveway.

The stone walls of many of the Hunter's Hill homes join one another, and it was once possible for a boy living in one of these old homes "to walk to school along the top of the stone walls, the only break being at the entrance to 'Passy'."

Residents of the "Hill" have always been extremely proud of their district, and in 1938, during Australia's 150th anniversary celebrations, the municipal council presented a pageant, "The Cavalcade of Hunter's Hill", which fully portrayed the historic and colourful story of this old and beautiful suburb of Sydney.



*(Reprinted from "Walkabout",
Australian Geographical Magazine,
October, 1958.)*

