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# Sutherland Shire Historical Society

## Quarterly Bulletin

OCTOBER 1969

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SUTHERLAND SHIRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
QUARTERLY BULLETIN - OCTOBER 1969. p. 1.

C/- 9 Animbo Street,  
Miranda N.S.W. 2228

Dear Member,

Mr. J. Walker, who has completed his book in manuscript form, is endeavouring to have it printed by a syndicate which he hopes will be formed shortly. The Society was unable to proceed with Mr. Walker's offer to publish his book, because of lack of finance and our inability to find sponsors to underwrite the cost. The Society has agreed to join the syndicate, should the syndicate conditions be acceptable.

Our Bulletin has now been registered by the G.P.O. as a periodical, which will give the Society a substantial saving in postage.

Several exhibitions were held at various school fetes during the Quarter, which gave the Society publicity and brought the Society to the notice of many Shire residents.

Members will be sorry to hear of Mr. David Kirkby's recent illness, Mr. Kirkby has been in hospital for the past three months, and I know all members of the Society join the Council in wishing him a comfortable and successful convalescence.

A week-end symposium is being planned for the first week-end in May 1970, as part of the Sutherland Shire Captain Cook Bi-Centenary Commemorations. The symposium will have as its theme Captain Cook and the voyage of the Endeavour and those on board.

N. Horwood  
Hon. Secretary

SUTHERLAND SHIRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
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Programme of Activities for the 4th Quarter 1969

Meetings

Our General Meetings are held on the second Friday night of each month at 3 p.m. in the Auditorium of the Sydney County Council Showrooms, Eton Street, Sutherland.

Friday, October 10th - Members night - Mr. H, Taplin , Mrs.M.H. Neve Mr. N. Horwood

Friday, November 14th - A Talk by Mr, Sweeney of the Bankstown Historical Society

Friday, December 12th - A Talk on the Illawarra Railway by Mr. E. Oliver of N.S.W. Rail Transport Museum.

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Excursions

Saturday, October 11th - All day excursion to the lower Blue Mountains

Saturday, December 13th - Half Day excursion to St. Mary's Cathedral.

ON THE WORONORA RIVER: AN ECHO OF THE EARLY DAYS

Persons who at various times have visited the upper reaches of the Woronora River will surely know Price's Boatshed at the foot of the Sutherland track. The late Mr. Thos. Price (who died earlier this year) obtained his first knowledge of the river in 1932, when he was sent to do some clearing, and to dig a well on what was then the property of the late P.B.Walker but which Mr. Price later purchased. At that time the journey to the river from Mr. Price's home in Waverley was by train to Hurstville, then on foot to Connell's Bay where a boat was obtained for the long row up the river. The well was dug and good drinking water obtained -- which in those days meant so much, as there was no other way of conserving the water. The old well still exists, although Mr. Price did not depend on it in later years, having numerous tanks to draw upon. He was so taken up with the beauty of the district that he purchased 150 acres in 1947 and settled.

At that time a family named Swain were living on the property, but they moved down the river nearer to Como, so that the Price family were the sole occupants above Swain's new abode.

The difficulties they experienced may be best gauged when consideration is taken of the fact that there was only a at track over rocks and gullies from Sutherland to their place. So bad was the track that all heavy goods had to come up via Como by boat, only small parcels being carried down the track. At that period there were five trains daily from Sydney.

Thirty to forty years ago fish, bird and animal life were plentiful - bronze-wing pigeons, wallabies, possums and bandicoots. The river, too, was fairly good for light navigation as the channels were more open then than now, the only bad place being at the crossing where they used to drive cattle across just below the present traffic bridge (cattle-raising was a sideline of Mr. Price's.)

A small tug drawing three or four feet of water used to come upriver towing barges to collect sand, which was taken back to Shen' s Creek works at Botany. At that time, too, there was about fifteen feet of water in Brown's Greek (then known as Forbes' Creek); today, the creek is silted up at the mouth to such an extent that a skiff can barely manage to get in over the bar at low tide,

-- condensed from an article by A.H.Matheson M.B.E. in  
St, George Historical Society's mag.; June 1969

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St, Paul's Church of England, in the Parish of St. George, on Prince's High-way, celebrated its centenary on Sept. 21st last, In the 1890s additions were made to the original building and again in 1925. The building stone is believed to have been quarried at Rockdale, and the wooden shingles for the roof were probably cut from nearby trees.

The "VETERAN" and "LOYAL, VOLUNTEER" Organisations

The first civilian defence volunteers were formed at the end of 1800, When Governor Hunter. suspected the planning of an uprising by the Irish convicts, the object of the Organisations being "to assist the civil and military powers in the preservation of good

order and public and private property". They were provided with equipment and arms, and two officers were appointed with temporary commissions; but all services were strictly "voluntary" -- i.e., without pay.

Two Companies were formed,, each of fifty men; the Sydney Company and the Parramatta Company, under the combined title of "Sydney and Parramatta Loyal Associate Corps", the commander being Dr, William Balmain.

Governor Hunter's premonitions were well founded, for the convict, rising took place in 1804 at Castle Hill, Although the "Loyal Associations" (as "they were named in 1802) were reported to have ably supported the regular troops, no details are recorded of their actual role in the suppression of the rebellion.

With the advent of Governor Macquarie in 1810 and his own 73rd Royal Highland Regiment, the "Loyal Associations" were disbanded.

Before the NSW Corps left-for England in 1810 Macquarie enlisted from volunteers amongst the non-commissioned ranks a number of long-service men of good character to recruit into the 73rd. As well, he selected another hundred good conduct men to form a "Veterans' Company" for garrison duty, these being nominally attached to the 73rd Rgt., The Veterans' Coy, continued in existence until disbanded in 1823.

The return to England of the NSW Corps and their disbandment created various problems at Home, so in 1825 it was decided to reconstitute the Corps from volunteers who were interested in returning to NSW -- where apparently many of the soldiers-had spent agreeable years. This detachment was also known as "The Veteran. Corps" or "The Royal NSW Veteran Companies" The first Coy. arrived-in 1826, and at 1829 it numbered 6 officers and 151 other ranks. The Corps assisted in the garrisoning of the various military stations throughout the convict settlements until disbandment in 1833 -- when most were too aged to serve actively.

It was not until the early 1840s that any further interest was taken in civilian defensive organisation, The despatch of most of, the NSW Imperial troops to New Zealand to cope with Maori uprisings left the Colony almost denuded of protective-defence. A. few years later (1854) the declaration of war in the Crimea caused great panic and volunteer forces were quickly raised.. The "Volunteer "Sydney Rifle Corps" (later, the "First Sydney Battalion of Rifle Volunteers") was formed, followed by a Troop of Yeomanry and - a Battery of "Artillery, all providing their own uniforms. After the "Russian invasion" scare had died down most of the Volunteers were disbanded; ,and it was not until 1860 that positive defence steps were taken, with Penrith being the first country centre to form a Volunteer Rifle Coy. in 1861, quickly followed by platoons in Richmond, Windsor and Hawkesbury districts, these being known as the "Windsor Volunteers". It was not until 1871 that NSW

(The opinions expressed in this Bulletin do not necessarily reflect those of this Society)

formed its first permanent defence force, an Artillery Company.

-- with acknowledgment to Victoria Barracks, Eastern Command

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Two Informative Illawarra Society Publications:

"EARLIEST ILLAWARRA" by its Explorers & Pioneers: edited by W.G.McDonald, BA, LLB,

Past President Illawarra Historical Society. This was published to commemorate the Sesquicentenary of settlement in Illawarra, Price \$1.00 plus 8 cents postage, obtainable from the Society at 11 Market St., Wollongong 2500.

LITHGOW ZIG-ZAG RAILWAY, Blue Mountains: by Wm. A. Bayley, F.R.A.H.S.

This interesting little book (illustrated with many historical photographs) has just been published, Members who were at last month's general meeting to hear Mr. Bayley speak about this famous old railway line, may obtain a copy for \$1.00 plus postage 8c, by writing direct to Mr. Bayley at 17 Point St., Bulli 2516,

Gunnedah Historical Society has recently been granted occupancy of an old round water tower (built about 1906) for use as meeting rooms and museum. The tower is of three storeys, each of about ten squares (approx. 100 ,ft , ), together with a basement and lookout,

Cooma Cottage Yass: this dates back to 1835 and was the home of the explorer Hamilton Hume, It has been bought by a member of the National Trust, and does not wish his name to be disclosed. The cottage will be reconditioned, the cost being shared between the new owner and the Trust. The cottage will be occupied by the new owner and will be available for inspection, when reconditioned, by appointment for the time being, Eventually it will be taken over completely by the National Trust.

-- Sydney Morning Herald 29/7/'69,

Hastings District Historical Society's Museum is the greatest single tourist attraction at Port Macquarie: it is situated in Clarence St., and attracts nearly 50,000 visitors each year The Society has just made a two-storey addition (with courtyard) to the museum., It is in the colonial style of the original museum buildings, which were built by convict labour and are more than 130 years old.

The Open Road (NRMA) 1/7/'69.

Origin of "SPIV" - slang term for an unemployed no- hoper living by dubious means and "without visible means of support". The word 'spiv' originated from the English Vagrancy Act 1824 wherein an offender was referred to as a "suspected Person – Itinerant Vagabond" ("SPIV". being the initials)

The First Shire School was probably opened in 1881–2 at the Como Railway Construction camp followed in 1883 by a small school at Sylvania; both were voluntary "penny-pupil" schools, with a very simple elementary curriculum.

MEMBERS' ACTIVITIES

Historical Exhibitions: these school Exhibitions, depicting in photographs, household goods and china, the life and times of the Shire pioneers, are becoming increasingly popular amongst the schools: and create additional publicity for the Society -- to quite a number of people the Exhibition has been their first knowledge of the existence of a local Historical Society. An Exhibition was arranged at Kirrawee Primary School shortly before the August holidays; on Sept. 20th a special display was organised for Menai Congregational Church in co-operation with the Midgley brothers (who are always so willing to help at all school exhibitions); on Sept. 27th a display was given at Heathcote Primary School -- an exceptionally appropriate location, for the "Village of Bottle Forest" in 1842 became the first village settlement. All these Exhibitions create much local interest as well as discussion; and tidbits of local history are often passed on to us. During the Kirrawee Exhibition a local resident presented us with a large family-sized 19th century cream porcelain water-filter -- which he said, had recently been tossed out to be bulldozed after an old home had been demolished.

Mrs. E. L. Morison, one of our Engadine members, has presented to the Society a very old type of charcoal-burning laundry iron, a heavy and cumbersome piece of domestic equipment which superseded the flat-iron and "Mrs. Potts" iron, both of which latter required heating on a fuel stove.

Reprint of Article by Thos. Cosgrove: it is noted with pleasure that in the RAHS monthly "Newsletter" for August, the article "The Rocks Hundred-Year-old Smithy", by Mr. Cosgrove, was reprinted from our July Bulletin. The MLC have now asked if this article may also be reprinted in their Staff magazine, with due acknowledgment to this Society.

Mrs. M. Hutton Neve gave an illustrated talk to the local Apexians' Wives group on Sept. 17th: on Sept. 29th she addressed a gathering of local Girl Guides (with special reference to the Guide Local History merit badge); and on Oct. 13th she has been invited to speak at Hurstville Historical Society concerning Capt. Cook and the effects of his Kurnell contact.

Publications of Local History: four members of the Society will soon be bringing the Shire to the forefront of publicity with varied publications of local history, the result of careful and painstaking research. Three will be published before Christmas, and the fourth probably early in the New Year .... Late Shire Clerk David Kirkby has written the story of local development in "Fifty Years of Local Government" (1906-1956) - a momentous review of the growth of a small rural settlement to the pulsating community of today .... Messrs. A. and F. Midgley have collaborated to produce an outstanding pictorial history of the Shire 1770 to 1970, written for the child of primary school age .... Mrs. M. Hutton Neve has a slim booklet "Kurnell: Birthplace of a Nation" illustrated by A. Midgley, coming off the press very shortly: and this will be followed by "Bye-gone Days of Sutherland", a concise history of the Shire from 1770, also-illustrated.

Mr. John Walker has also a book "Two Hundred Years in Retrospect: 1770--1970; and is appealing for sponsors to meet the cost of printing this.

Women's Social Committee: the first meeting of this newly formed group was held on Aug. 6th at the home of the convenor Mrs. H.L. Taplin, of

199 Willarong Rd, Caringbah (2229), telephone 524-5095. It was decided to meet on-the fourth Wednesday of each month, but owing to the School holidays there was no August meeting, The first function to be held was an "Antique" Morning Teas when some of the members brought along "something old" to exhibit and describe. An attractive programme of both day and evening functions planned, to interest all women members and their friends .... Oct. 22, at 8.0 p.m., at the residence of Mrs, W. Mowbray, 8 Bonnie View Rd. (off Burraneer Bay Rd., Cronulla); supper provided, 40 cents: Nov, 26, "motorcar tour of Kurnell, commencing 10.00 a.m., cut lunch to be taken; cars provided -- no Charge: Dec. 5, at 8.0 pm., Christmas Party at the residence of Mrs. Mowbray; supper provided, 40 c.. For further information, please contact the convenor Mrs. Taplin.

Film-making at Fernleigh: last December a complete episode from ABC/TV "Animal Doctor" series, entitled "Sleeping Dogs Don't Die, was shot at the home of Mrs. Alcock, the 'players" being almost all of Mrs, Alcock' s private zoo -- dogs and birds, wallabies and kangaroos, two Shetland ponies, emus and sheep: with the lovely old house in the background. Even the long-suffering Mr. Errol Alcock was roped in as an actor chauffeur, Recently parts of the famous "Skippy" series were also shot at this home (and a number of other scenes were made in. Royal National Park). It is anticipated that "Sleeping Dogs" will be seen on Ch. 2 early in October,,

- M.H.N.

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FOR SALE, CRONULLA -- 50 YEARS AGO

Stylish Roomy Villa, with 2 ½ acres, water frontage (Torrens) to Burraneer Bay, ½ mile to Cronulla, fully and elaborately furnished, gas, motor launch, skiff, baths, etc.. £2000 or offer,

Very Stylish Villa, in centre of Cronulla, furnished in beautiful fashion, 2 acres, Torrens, garden, orchard, paddock, etc;, water frontage, £2,600, terms,

- Daily Telegraph 4/6/1914

(Unfortunately, these cannot be identified - doubtless they have long ago made way for "development" of home-'units or flats, Ed.),

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In August an ..AEC/T7 Drama Section unit took over Royal National Park Railway Station for the day to film a segment of a 60-minute play "Fiends of the Family" (by Pat. Slower). The action is set in 1913, so that a "period train" was required. The engine of the vintage with carriages of a few years older; the engine-tender was approximately 1913, This will probably be released on Ch. 2 sometime in October.

The Endeavour's Flag, flown at the stern, was the Red Ensign. In the 18th C, the White Ensign was flown only when ships were under the command of a Vice Admiral; the Blue Ensign, when under the command of a Rear-Admiral. Thus Cook, first a lieutenant and then a captain, sailed under the Red Ensign. When ashore, he "displayed the Jack" the Union Jack of those days but minus the cross of St. Patrick., not added until 1801 after the union of Great Britain and Ireland. The Endeavour also displayed the Jack" . at the foretopmast head when in any foreign port,



FIRST AUSTRALIAN RACE MEETING

Next month commerce and industry will come to a halt for a few frantic minutes -- "Cup Day". Although this nationwide cessation originates from Melbourne, the first race meeting took place in Sydney Town.

Many of the officers of Governor Macquarie's 73rd Regiment (Royal Highlanders) were enthusiastic racing men, and a few months after their arrival in the Colony they combined with leading citizens to organise the first race meeting, held in October 1810.

A track was prepared on what is now known as Hyde Park, with the straight laid down along the present Elizabeth Street. The meeting was most successful and it is reported that "the attendance was the largest ever collected in the Colony". To view the races, a stand was erected on the junction of Market and Elizabeth Streets.

In the following year a three-day race meeting was held on the 12, 14th and 16th August, and the officers of the 73rd were successful in training the winners of some of the more important races. Colonel O'Connell.'s 'Carle' won the Ladies' Cup of Fifty Guineas, and the presentation was made by Mrs, Macquarie.

All this appears to be the origin of the first Race Club known as the Sydney Turf Club, the foundation of which might be placed to the credit of the officers of the 73rd Rgt.. The Sydney "Turf Club has been revived of recent years and bids fair to rival the A.J.C..

-- Acknowledged to Victoria Barracks (East. Cmd. )

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Mediaeval English Burials: at one time it was an English custom to inter prominent persons in the chancel of the local Anglican Church, this dating back to mediaeval times. When the church at Gedney (Cambridgeshire) was having a heating system installed in 1967 a passageway leading to two sealed vaults beneath the chancel was discovered, each 16 x 8 ft. x 4 ft. high with arched roof, One vault was -almost completely empty, but the second-was packed with ancient coffins. It seemed that the local custom was to fill one vault with the remains of prominent people, this taking 150-200 years (providing the deathrate was not accelerated by plague, which would shorten the period). Apparently, when both vaults were filled, the earlier one would be cleared out to be used again, and the later vault sealed to await its turn in the distant future. The last recorded chancel burial in the Gedney Church was in 1844, so that possibly other English churches have sealed vaults now long unknown, which perhaps some future renovation may reveal. In one village church the skulls of the cleared remains were placed on shelves in a vault; the remainder of the Skeletons were apparently "dumped",

-- East Anglia Magazine (Eng.)

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Captain Cook's "N.Z. Base Camp" for his three Pacific exploratory voyages was at the top of the South Island, in Queen Charlotte Sound; here he spent several weeks each time, recuperating and indulging his crew.