

No. 17.



**Sutherland Shire Historical Society**

**Quarterly Bulletin**

OCTOBER 1970

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

Dear Member,

Since our last Bulletin the Society has suffered the loss of two of our members - Mr. D. Kirkby and Mrs. C. Horwood, we feel the loss keenly, but are grateful that we had as one of our members a man as distinguished as Mr. Kirkby.

Our next all day excursion is to be held on Saturday 10th October, when we will be taking a Harbour breeze, and inspecting Garden Island, and lunch at Clark Island followed by an inspection of Snapper Island,- returning to Circular Quay at approximately 4-30 p.m. The fare is \$2.50 per .adult, and \$1.50 each for the children of members, and for junior members. We hope this function will be supported by members.

N. Horwood,  
Hon. Secretary.

Programme of Activities for the Fourth Quarter, 1970.

Meetings :- Our General Meetings are held in the Auditorium of the Sydney County Council Showrooms, Eton Street Sutherland, on the second Friday in each month at 8 p.m.

Friday, 9th October - Members Night - short papers will be delivered by Mrs. Priestly, Mr. Jehan and Mr. Lukeman.

Friday 18th November, - An address by Mr. B.H.Fletcher of the history dept. University of New South Wales. "N.S.W. under Grose and Paterson. 1793-1795".

Friday 11th December - An address by Mr. J.M. Antill (to be confirmed).

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Excursions:-

Saturday 10th October - All day Harbour Cruise.

Saturday 12th December - an afternoon visit to "Tempe House" ( to be confirmed),

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Sydney Cove - Genesis of a Nation.

Our speaker on Friday, 10th July, was Sister Catherine O'Carrigan R .S .C . of the Bethlehem College, Ashfield. She spoke about early Sydney and illustrated her talk with slides.

When making his reports to the Home Government, Governor Phillip had to justify his choice of Sydney Cove for a settlement. The French had shown a keen interest in the Fleet and while it was lying in Botany Bay, La Perouse, the French explorer, appeared in what must be the most dramatic confrontation in our history. Phillip therefore ensured that the first maps sent home clearly indicated the Defence precautions taken and the other advantages the Cove had to offer.

From the start the infant Colony had problems. The Tank Stream, due to what we now call pollution, silted up the banks of the Cove until eventually a semi-circular quay was built, from which it took its future name (by dropping the "semi").

Building was difficult and, due to lack of limestone, shells had to be powdered and burnt as a substitute. Many early buildings simply fell down as a result of poor materials. The topography was very hilly as shown in the slides and our Speaker made us aware of the efforts our ancestors were required to make just to move even short distances. This explains the contours of streets like Bent Street and the peculiar direction some of the others take to-day.

It was generally agreed that the talk gave us a new perspective on our City and we are more aware of the relics of the First Settlement beneath the concrete and bitumen of to-day's metropolis.

The Sister aptly quoted Mary Gilmore's poem "Old Botany Bay"

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| 1. I'm old<br>Botany Bay;<br>Stiff in the joints,<br>Little to say.             | 3.I was the conscript,<br>Sent to hell,<br>To make the desert<br>The living well  |  |
| 2. I am he<br>Who paved the way,<br>That you might walk<br>At your ease to-day; | 4. I bore the heat,<br>I blazed the track-<br>Furrowed and Bloody<br>Upon my back | 6. Old Botany Bay<br>Taking the sun<br>From day to day<br>Shame on the mouth<br>That would deny<br>The knotted hands<br>That set us high |
|   | 5..I split the rock;<br>I felled the tree;<br>The nation was-<br>Because of me    |  |

Reporter Eric Lukeman.

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From the President.

David Randolph Kirkby M.B.E.

With the passing of Mr. Kirkby, a Vice-President since its foundation, the Society suffered a grievous loss. The deceased gentleman was not only an adornment of the Society; but also something of an institution in himself. All who served on our Council from time to time since inception of the Society found Mr. Kirkby a guide and counsellor of great wisdom and a sound authority. This was not a new or surprising experience for those who had enjoyed the privilege of business negotiations or associations with this courteous, capable dignitary during his long civic service. In that sphere he was noted for his deep sympathy and understanding as a public official.

Mr. Kirkby brought prestige and standing to any organisation with which he chose to become associated. Indeed his reputation was such that the inclusion of his name in an organisation was tantamount to a guarantee of its bonafides, integrity and very worth.

Much has often been spoken and written of Mr. Kirkby's long and distinguished administrative record. All of it, however laudatory, does no more than justice to this . great man. Perhaps when one relates the following-history some of his most notable features and outstanding characteristics will be observed and epitomised.

There were times during his long and distinguished tenure of office as Shire Clerk when personalities and groups in the Council became involved in fierce controversy and bitter contention, with strong and heated personal disputation. Accusations were rife - at no time, however although Mr. Kirkby was of necessity at the centre of affairs did any contending party ever remotely seek to involve or criticise, let alone reflect on the Shire Clerk who remained the friend and guide of all. Similarly if Press or public ever sought to accuse the Local Authority of wrongdoing, such accusers never on any occasion made even the slightest suggestion even by inference that the Chief Administrator could be in any way reflected upon.

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The Executive of the Historical Society knows it expressed the feelings of all members when it conveyed their sympathy and condolence to Mrs. Kirkby and the family upon their bereavement.

Members are reminded that their Council is at present re-viewing the Society's Constitution. They may recall that this action follows a resolution passed at the Annual General Meeting in 1969. It was further deemed advisable to examine and, if considered necessary, to amend the rules under which

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the organisation functions after four years of operation and the experience gained therein. From time various features which may warrant consideration for amendment have come to notice. Most of them are perhaps of a minor nature. In regard to this review it should be stressed that suggestions and recommendations are invited from members. Any such will be welcomed and given full consideration by the Council in its discussions. One should hasten to emphasise however that failure by the Council to bring forward a recommendation in accordance with a suggestion would not in any way deprive a member of his right to give notice of motion himself to effect any such amendment in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution.

Copies of this Document, by the way, may be obtained from Mr. Horwood, Honorary Secretary.

C . Law.

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An Appreciation.

When the Grim Reaper took David Randolph Kirkby, M.B.E., from us on 31st July, 1970 many shared with me a deep feeling of sadness and personal loss. Drawn together by our mutual hobby (recording local history) David and I found that kindred interests soon welded us in a close personal friendship.-Lest the recording of that fact should be looked upon by my readers as presumption, I hasten to say that I always regarded myself, when in the presence of my illustrious contemporary, as a mere candle flame dimmed to insignificance by the powerful light of the sun, David Kirkby was a maker as well as a recorder of history.

The deceased was one of Nature's gentlemen. Innate modesty, one of his many sterling qualities of character, rendered it extremely difficult for me to obtain material for the biography of the ex-shire clerk which I included in my book. Always co-operative and helpful with other sections he gave me little or no assistance in the writing of that biography. In fact, when, after seeking and obtaining the desired information elsewhere, I persuaded him to read my effort before publication and he did so but then blushing stated that he considered it far too flattering. That was the only occasion on which I felt compelled to chide him for poor judgment.

Nobility of character rendered it impossible for the deceased gentleman to understand - petty jealousy and spiteful vindictiveness. Displays of such traits made him sad but instead of anger he felt sympathy towards the poor benighted mortal exhibiting those frail human weaknesses.

Quite unnecessarily when his eagerly awaited book was released, under the title "From Sails to Atoms", he was perturbed that the editor or publisher had taken such liberties in altering his script. (At the time of publication David was in hospital, far too ill to be consulted). I assured him that the book as published was very nice but he was adamant that it was not his creation. On probing deeper I found that he felt that the edited version had contravened a tacit agreement between us, by which he had undertaken to concentrate on the history of the first fifty years (1906-1956) of local government in the Sutherland Shire while I treated 1906-1956 in a sketchy manner and the periods before and after those years in more detail. The high ethical code, by which his relationship with others was invariably governed made futile my task to convince him that his moral scruples were unwarranted

Luckily, copies of the original manuscript of "The First Fifty Years of the Sutherland Shire 1906-56" have been pre-served and will be available to students of history and others in the Mitchell Library and elsewhere. This volume reveals the true, forthright David Kirkby that we, privileged to know "The Man", so esteemed and admired and will stand as a memorial more enduring than any monument of marble or granite on which could be inscribed; "Well done Thou, Good and Faithful Servant."

John Walker.

- Obituary -

Claire Irene Meryle Horwood.

Shortly after preparation of our July Bulletin the Sutherland Shire Historical Society suffered a great loss in the death of this lovable; gentle little lady the mother of our capable Hon. Secretary.

The late Mrs. Horwood was one of those members who always had the welfare of our Society foremost in her mind. Genuine hospitality was unbounded when members of the Council were entertained at her home, even in the early stages of her long, severe and painful illness, which she bore with great fortitude and courage.

Always a devoted mother the deceased lady was a fervent admirer of Norman's undoubted ability.

On behalf of all members of The Sutherland Shire Historical Society I extend to June, Ted and Norman our deepest sympathy in the bereavement that they have suffered.

John Walker

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This Bulletin has been prepared by an Editorial Board consisting of Messrs. E. Lukeman, N. Horwood and J. Walker. Members are cordially invited to submit items of historical interest for inclusion in future bulletins.

Opinions expressed in the Bulletin are those of the contributor and not necessarily of the Society.

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Edmund Kennedy.

As our guest at the August meeting Mr. Edgar Beale gave an illustrated talk on the explorer Edmund Kennedy (1818-48) the subject of his recently published book "Kennedy of Cape York" (Rigby P6.50).

Mr. Beale is a Wollongong Lawyer and past-President of the Illawarra Historical Society. His Great-Great-Grandmother was a close friend of the explorer when he lived in Sydney and her son, A.A. Turner, was second-in-command of Kennedy's second expedition.

Mr. Beale has a number of Kennedy relics including a beautiful self portrait (Kennedy was a good artist), which were inherited by the Beale family. He conducted more than 20 years research, involving several flights over "Kennedy Country". In 1949 he published a detailed article on Kennedy's career in the journal of the R.A.H.S. Thus he has earned the title of "Leading Authority" on his subject.

He gave an outline of the theory and techniques of each journey and followed this up with an astounding collection of aerial photographs of the country showing reasons why the hoped-for results were not achieved.

The final tragic expedition on Cape York " Peninsular marked the climax of Kennedy's life and Mr. Beale was able to show it in all its hopelessness. Kennedy and his party had courage in large measure but to-no avail as the expedition was ill-conceived and doomed before it began. Whatever the country may have looked like from the deck of a ship, it was almost impossible on foot,

An unexpected outcome was the emergence of the aboriginal Jacky Jacky, who became a popular hero and won a permanent place in the hearts of Australians. The tragic end of his life which Mr. Beale outlined in answer to a question, is symptomatic of the end of many of our outstanding aboriginals, for example, Albert. Namatjira.

A great deal was not generally known about Kennedy, as the Beale family possessed so many of the original Kennedy documents. Now that these have been made known by Mr. Beale, there is no reason why the life and work of Edmund Kennedy should not become more widely known and appreciated.

Reporter - Eric Lukeman.

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- An excellent Story Teller with a Fascinating Story -

The unique honour of being twice the guest speaker, by invitation, at our General Meetings, within three months, has been bestowed upon Mr. D.H. Sinclair, President of St. George Historical Society. In June we enjoyed a treat, which will remain a pleasant memory for many, many years; so we were delighted when Mr. Sinclair, generously, came again in September, to treat the same subject in greater detail.

The remarkably fluent speaker portrayed the romantic, early pioneering days of our greatest mining venture (Broken Hill), and the resultant growth of that industrial colossus (B.H.P.) in a way that held his listeners spellbound. In fact, all were amazed at the extent and depth of his knowledge of his subject, which he rendered doubly interesting by his excursions into byways to illustrate, the characters, and also the fortunes and misfortunes of the chief figures in this true life drama.

The excellence of both addresses led listeners to believe that Mr. Sinclair must have been intimately connected with Broken Hill or, at least, had more than a nodding acquaintance with the district. Imagine my surprise when he confided that he had never had the pleasure of even visiting the Barrier Range City, but hoped to one day have an opportunity to do so. - He had certainly done his homework well to enable him to present the facts gleaned in his remote research in such a fascinating narrative.

John Walker.

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MONTHLY MEETINGS..

Reports of monthly meetings are a poor substitute for the real thing. No matter how interesting it may be to read about what was said by our guest speakers, it is impossible to recapture the spirit and feeling of the "original product". All members of the Society are not only entitled to be present at these talks but are made welcome, even to the extent of a friendly cup of tea and gossip afterwards.

So please come along!!!

Eric Lukeman,

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View to Matrimony ?

Mr. A. E. Brown of 69 Ben Boyd Road, Neutral Bay has requested that a certain lady member of The Sutherland Shire Historical Society should contact him at the above address. Striking up a conversation with the lady outside Angus & Robertson Ltd., in Castlereagh Street he apparently was suitably impressed. Inadvertently he has lost her name and address.

I am not running a Matrimonial Agency or even a lonely Hearts; Club; but if the man is tall, dark and handsome and his intentions are honourable while the lady is unencumbered and unattached, in lieu of the usual fee I am prepared to accept an invitation to the nuptials and the reception to follow.

John Walker.

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A BIG SPLASH.

For the following tale I am indebted to Messrs. Alf and Fred Midgley.

The early settlers at Bangor (the name was changed to Menai in 1910) although on the fringe of the Metropolis lived similar to their counterparts in other rural districts. Their farms and farmlets yielded a limited amount of cereals and hay, in addition to fruits and vegetables. Producing their own milk, butter, eggs and meat the farming families were largely self-sufficient. Barter of farm produce between producers was a recognised medium of exchange. Honey secured by robbing the nests of wild bees provided one of the few luxuries which brought some sweetness to a life of incessant toil.

However to provide the wherewithal to purchase necessities not produced locally surplus farm produce from the mixed orchard and farms was sent to the City Markets by road. In those pre-bridge days, heavily laden horse drawn carts made an all night trip across Lugarno ferry and then through the slumbering, sparsely populated suburbs to catch the early morning buyers. The advent of motor transport in 1922 considerably lightened this irksome task.

With the characteristic countryman's unique sense of humour the story is still told and relished of the erstwhile horse drawn cart owner who was one of the first to make the change-over to motor transport. Driving his "new-fangled", fully loaded motor truck onto the Lugarno ferry he forgot his complicated instructions on use of pedals and brakes and simply shouted "Whoa!" and pulled on the steering wheel as he formerly had done on the reins. Needless to say the Model "T" Ford engine failed to respond and the vehicle and luckless driver crashed through the gates and into the river. I am happy to report only a case of immersion and shock.

Depredations of the fruit fly which rendered a mixed orchard and farm no longer a satisfactory economic venture spelled out the doom of Menai as a rural community. Will the near future see it develop into a densely populated satellite; (and perhaps University) City?

John Walker.