

No. 20.



Sutherland Shire Historical Society

Quarterly Bulletin

July, 1971.

Price: 5 cents

Registered for posting as a newspaper (or periodical)
Category B.

THE SUTHERLAND SHIRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY - QUARTERLY BULLETIN
--JULY, 1971.

C/o 9 Animbo Street,
 Miranda, 2228.

Dear Members

Our next all day excursion. is being arranged for Saturday, 16th October, 1971. This is a change from our usual day for an all day outing as it is the week following our October meeting night, instead of the day following our meeting. Members may care to advise if this is more convenient, or if our former arrangement is more suitable.

The all day excursion is expected to be a Harbour Cruise, visiting Cockatoo Island, Shark Island for lunch, and Vacluse House and Wentworth's tomb.

I hope this will prove to be an interesting and enjoyable outing. In order to foster closer fellowship with neighbouring Historical Societies, an invitation will be extended to St. George, Hurstville and Kogarah Historical Societies to join us on this day and I hope that this. will add to the enjoyment of the day.

N. Horwood,
Hon. Secretary.

PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE THIRD QUARTER, 1971.

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

9th July, An address by a member of the Jewish Historical Society (to be confirmed).

13th August, An illustrated address by Mrs. Currey "Early History of Canterbury District".

10th Sept.- An address by Mrs. Tearle "Rose de Freycinet and her World Voyage 1817-1820"

Excursions.

Saturday August 14th - Half day visit to the Rocks area

Saturday October 16th - All day Harbour cruise, visiting Cockatoo Island, Shark Island and Vacluse House.

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The Sutherland Shire Historical Society was founded in 1966 on the initiative of the Shire President, Councillor A.T.Gietzelt, who presided at two meetings which completed its formation and establishment. Indeed, the President was most active and helpful in the many suggestions he made and the general guidance he provided in formulating your constitution of the Society and defining its purposes and objectives. All who participated recognised and appreciated the interest shown and the practical assistance given by the Shire Council.

The Society's name and objects as stated in the preamble to Rules in its constitution could perhaps be interpreted as indicating that the Society may even be regarded as an auxiliary of Sutherland Shire Council. Over the course of time it does appear that relations between the Society and the Shire Council have not achieved such a state of close recognition and acknowledgement as might have been expected. There have been instances where perhaps the Shire Council may have overlooked the contribution the Historical Society could have made to some of its official occasions and junctions. So that the aspect mentioned above could be brought before the Shire President, the Executive Council of the Society recently appointed a delegation to meet him on a suitable occasion. The meeting took place at Sutherland Council Chambers on Friday the 3rd June.. Councillor Gietzelt gave the Society's representatives a most courteous, patient, and attentive hearing. The President did mention that there are some aspects of the Society's affairs with which the Shire Council is not entirely in accord. However he gave an assurance that he was still very interested in the Society and hoped he could look forward to some continued association with it after he enters the national political sphere. He was also good enough to make some suggestions regarding wider activities by the Society. Further he suggested we should persevere with efforts-to acquire a place of permanent establishment. Also he expressed a belief that Sutherland Shire Council could be expected to look with its sympathy upon any reasonable need for aid arising from such efforts.

Members may care to offer or contribute their views on the matters mentioned and discussed.

C. Law.

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His intention is to stimulate thought on these subjects and the suggestions he makes regarding possible avenues for research could lead to the involvement of members in action research to their own and the Society's benefit.

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Valediction - Professor H. Newton Barber, F.R.S., F.A.A.

Those members of the Society who had the privilege of meeting Professor Barber at the Cook Bi-Centenary Symposium were shocked to learn of his death on 16.4.71.

This learned gentleman was one of the notable people who graced and addressed that historical assembly. His subject was, "The Royal Society" the great and distinguished scientific body of which he was a Fellow and which is almost synonymous with the name and life of Sir Joseph Banks. A towering figure both intellectually and physically, Professor Barber was also a gentleman of great charm. These features were amply demonstrated when he attended all sessions of the Symposium and contributed so much to discussions which followed the various addresses.

The Professor occupied the Chair of Botany at the University of New South Wales at the time of the Symposium; but he had later accepted an important post at the University of Newcastle.

Professor Barber was a member of this Society and we had looked forward to him being able to accept an invitation to be our special guest speaker on some occasion.

The Sutherland Shire Historical Society offers its deep sympathy and condolence to Mrs.Barber and the family.

C.L.

An Interesting Discovery.

All who took part in the recent excursion to Pitt. Town, Wilberforce and Ebenezer were most interested in the discovery made by Mrs. Gwen Thomson, Member, at the historic church of St. James, Pitt Town. As she entered the building Mrs. Thomson was greeted by a photograph of her grandfather, the Reverend Devenish-Meares. This gentleman was honoured as the first Rector of the Parish of St. James. Although Mrs. Thomson had known that her grandfather served in a number of different localities, she had not realised she was to see his photograph commemorating his incumbency at Pitt Town

It is also interesting to know that another relative of Mrs. Thomson has served as Rector of the famous St. Matthews at Windsor.

C.L.

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- OUR JOURNAL -

The unofficial Gallup Poll, in which many of our members so generously gave well considered opinions in response to my wide range of probing queries, provided excellent food for thought for our Bulletin Editorial Board. I thank you!

The outstanding feature revealed was that readers interviewed were unanimous that we should concentrate in the magazine section of our misnamed Bulletin on articles dealing with local history. I hasten to add that I heartily agree with that contention. Verily ! I say unto you that we can afford space only for OUR OWN history. - Our publication should contain "A Bulletin" for current announcements etc., plus "A Magazine" section devoted to a chronicle or narration of the past days of the South Botany Bay - Port Hacking region with, perhaps, brief reference to other events which exerted a direct influence on the area under review.

A few moments reflection will serve to convince readers of the wisdom of such a course of action. There are millions of interesting anecdotes in World History. At random I name : The Inca Civilization; The Conquests made by Kublai Khan or The foundations upon which the legends of King Arthur and His Knights of Camelot were built. Likewise in Australiana I nominate The Ill-fated Expedition of Ludwig Leichhardt; The Eureka Stockade and The Exploits of Ned Kelly. Research students in those fields (and indeed in many, many more) could produce a galaxy of fascinating articles; but unfortunately we could not find a place for such contributions in the limited space of our small publication. So, without hesitation or apology I assert that we should endeavour to make the copies of the "Bulletin" (I favour a more appropriate name) filed, year after year, in our archives, a treasure house into which future historians may stray, to did cover factual information embracing a comprehensive. chronicle of local history otherwise unrecorded. Thus we will fulfil that which I consider the most important function of our Historical Society, namely to bequeath to 'posterity a written record of the history of the area from which our organization derived its name. Otherwise much of that information will remain unrecorded and eventually be forgotten and lost forever

Recently I was astounded when a prominent member of our Society expressed the opinion that we could not possibly find sufficient local history to fill the meagre few pages of our quarterly publication.

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With the span of more than two hundred years behind it, surely our district would yield narratives, treating only outstanding events and striking personages, of ample length to occupy a huge volume.

The following random jottings are simply a few examples calculated to direct members attention to avenues along which they could profitably glean information to incorporate in articles to submit for consideration for future publication

Our pioneers deserve far more commemoration than they have, to this date, received,. Let us think not only of Birnie, Connell, Laycock, Lucas, Gogerly, Dolan and Holt; but also of the countless others who have received scant recognition. For instance we know little of the Simpsons, Websters and Lehanes or even of Charles' McAlister, the retired pearler, who founded Engadine.

W.C. Judd, first President (1906-1910) of the Sutherland Shire, followed by E.W. Hyndman and R.W.Cook, all deserve appropriate mention together with President P.R. Ainsworth, who, with vice-regal pomp,,-flow a flag in front of his Engadine home, when in residence there.

Sketches of the characters of the foregoing men, along with a chronicle of their achievements and failures would vie for pride of place with those of others of more recent date such as Arthur Joseph Hand, R. Bingham and A.G. Harpers

Equally in the civic field, Reg. Dallimore (Councillor 1942-1950), a fearless fighter for any worthy cause that he espoused should be given his rightful place beside his contemporaries "Joe" Monro and Seymour Shaw

Other writers might glean a sheaf of interesting facts referring to the life and work of such notable personages as Frank Cridland, Robert Mackie or Donald MacKay.

James Murphy's long association with the Holt-Sutherland Estate Companies, and his efforts in the development of Como, would make interesting reading.

Old established families (and the part's that their members played in the growth of our region) cry out for recognition. The names Bull, Williams, Cook, Piper, Stapleton, Boyle, Lawrence and Gidding come readily to mind.

Nathaniel Bull and his association with the local

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Church of England would provide excellent material for a treatise. What of our Churches? A striking building such as St. Andrew's, at Cronulla, must surely yield an intriguing story.

The idealistic zeal of Schoolmaster Short in establishing Methodist Services at Sutherland and the influence of Ebenezer Vickery on the spread of Methodism in the Sutherland district would prove a fruitful field for research.

Another promising avenue is offered by the achievements of the various Surf Life Saving Clubs – Likewise our numerous sporting organizations and notable personages connected therewith.

What do we know of Bob South and Andrew Gray and the establishment of the Sutherland District Hospital?

Old houses always arouse curiosity and coupled with the lives, achievements and hopes or aspirations of their founders yield data of historical importance. Surely there are local people who could narrate the stories of "Castlewood" (Woolooware Road); "Cranbrook" (Menai- Illawong area) and that commodious old mansion "Woolooware", which was demolished a few years ago to be replaced by a massive block of home units. The palatial home of Joynton Smith (of Smith's Weekly fame) out Menai way, the fabulous parties that he staged there and the disastrous fire which destroyed the house could well fill a niche in our annals.

Nobody has yet, to my knowledge, written the story of King Billy, the last of his tribe (the Cronulla Aborigines).

In short I trust that I have written enough to inspire and infuse my readers with a burning desire to do research in local history and as a result produce data of such variety and absorbing interest that our journal will be an outstanding example of all that is desirable in a publication of this nature. Please let me have your efforts. I am confident that they will prove of value.

Construct your compositions so that they will be concise. Very long items crowd other writers out. We have not yet considered running a serial of ability to set form, I would be delighted to assist you. I have had nearly half a century's experience, as a schoolmaster, training and assisting students to express themselves in written words. For many years I have dabbled, as an amateur,

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in journalism and my work as editor of The Gould League' Magazine brought me into contact with a wide range of problems which confront aspiring writers.

Readers, with your co-operation, we can make our periodical publication or journal (whatever we call it) a repository chock full of originally written local history - a production of which we can feel proud and a heritage that we may, with considerable satisfaction, hand onto future generations of historians. - Join in a mighty Research Crusade - Set yourselves to the tasks of your choice and let me have your contributions without delay.

John Walker.

RESEARCH AND THE ROLE OF HISTORY

To me history is a vital subject, not only concerned with the collection of information about our past, but an activity which should aim at a deeper knowledge of the present situation. To-day, when pollution has become so obvious that it can no longer be ignored we can make our contributions as historians by making our neighbours aware of the background of past events.

History is made by people and is the record of their achievements and failures. An understanding of history can give meaning and purpose to present and future generations and perhaps prevent us making the same mistakes our Forebears made.

The Society has created the position of Hon. Research Officer because it sees the need to stimulate and regulate this kind of activity. I see my role as not only making a Personal contribution but also as encouraging members to take an active part themselves in historical research.

I put forward the following suggestions to stimulate discussion and, I hope, activity, I will pose them as questions.

1. What really happened to our local Aborigines; the descendants of those who met Cook in 1770? When and why did they disappear?
2. Did we have unique animals and plants in this area? If so, why were they destroyed? If any remain what can be done to preserve them?

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3. Who were the pioneers of the Shire? Why did they come? What did they do on arrival? What legacy have they left us? What legacy will we leave?
4. Have enough books been written to justify the compilation of a comprehensive bibliography for the use of researchers?
5. What other topics can you think of?

Eric Lukeman.

Hon. Research Officer

"SLUSH" LAMPS ?

Enquiries from numerous readers of one of my books ("Two Hundred Years in Retrospect") have prompted the following:-

Material comforts for pioneer settlers in the South Botany Bay - Port Hacking-region were as difficult to come by as for their counterparts in the hinterland. Money was never plentiful amongst the small farmers and poorly paid agricultural labourers, timber cutters etc. Candles were not costly but many, whose purses did not extend even to those modest luxuries, improvised by filling a suitable container (often an old mug or pannikin, with a hole which rendered it no longer serviceable a drinking vessel) with mud to within half an inch of the top. In the centre was erected a small stake of dry wood wrapped in combustible rag. This more or less effective wick when surrounded by a pool of melted animal fat (whale oil, beef fat or mutton tallow) gave off a feeble light, which was barely sufficient to find one's way to bed, after nightfall, or to attend to a sick child in the hours of darkness. One consolation was that the odour given off by the primitive contraption was an effective repellent, useful in keeping mosquitoes at bay.

What a contrast! The dim light of "Slush" Lamps and the sophisticated light fittings of today.

John Walker

This Bulletin has been prepared by an Editorial Board consisting of Messrs, J. Walker, E. Lukeman, and N. Horwood.

Members are cordially invited to submit items of historical interest for inclusion in future Bulletins. Opinions expressed in the Bulletin are those of the contributors and not necessarily of the Society,

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- Gogerly Point -

During a recent visit to the Bulahdelah-Forster district, I had the good fortune to meet Miss Elsie Gogerly, a well known and highly esteemed identity of that area.

On learning that I came from Cronulla, Miss Gogerly informed me that her Great-grandfather, Charles James Gogerly, was a pioneer settler on Port Hacking and that Gogerly Point was so named to commemorate his association with the region.

The reminiscences of Miss Gogerly will form the basis of an interesting item, in a future issue, on the Gogerly Family of Port Hacking.

John Walker.

- Wilberforce -

Thorough enjoyment of our Historical Society Bus Excursion to the Hawkesbury (including the village of Wilberforce) prompted Mrs. Jean Jehan to record that during her sojourn in Britain Mrs. Jehan visited "Wilberforce House" in Hull (Yorkshire), where the famous humanitarian William Wilberforce was born, in 1759; and also saw the Doric Column in the centre of Hull, erected to commemorate the work of Wilberforce to abolish slavery.

Husband Eric supplemented this information by advising readers that a reference, worth reading, dealing with the life and work of Wilberforce, may be found on Page 672 of "This England" by W.S. Shears,

Eric also submitted interesting sketches of the tomb stones of James Ruse (pioneer farmer) and his wife Elizabeth, who were both buried at Campbelltown (N.S.W.). Unfortunately we cannot reproduce those illustrations, However we are fortunate to have two such enthusiastic members as Eric and Joan Jehan and trust that they will, in the near future, turn their hands to research in local (Sutherland Shire Area) history.

J.T.W.

RESEARCH OFFICER:

This year's Annual Meeting agreed to the creation of an Hon. Research Officer, subject to election each year under the same conditions as the other members of the Society's Council.

As the first member elected to this position, Mr. E. Lukeman makes known his thoughts on historical research and the role of history.

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