

# SUTHERLAND SHIRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## QUARTERLY BULLETIN



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"PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE"

At the June meeting of the new Executive Council it was decided to change the name of the Bulletin Board to the above, to allow the Society to give consideration to the widening of dissemination of local history. I was re-elected as Convenor, and under the new Constitution I am now able to select qualified personnel for this committee.

The publications Committee comprises Mrs. H. Hutton Neve (Research Officer), Messrs. B. Sargeant (Archives Officer and Shire Librarian), F. Midgley, T.G. Moore and R. Hall -- all of whom have a practical knowledge of varied aspects of publication. Mrs. Hutton Neve and Mr. Moore are ex-journalists, Mr. Midgley is a commercial artist, and Mr. Hall (with his late father) has for many years been associated with "S.C.A.M." Printing Company (and onetime weekly Shire newspaper). Mrs. Neve and Fred Midgley are also well known for their local history publications; Mr. Moore is editor of "Sutherland Shire Studies"; as the Shire Librarian, Mr. Sargeant's academic qualifications will be of much valued assistance. I have over the past forty years built up a wide collection of Shire news and records. The Society's President is ex officio on all committees, and on this committee we look forward to his continued interest and co-operation.

Other than the Bulletin, we will be immediately concerned with stimulating sales of the Society's first general publication (see page 39).

-- Geo. Heavens, Convenor.

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PRESIDENT'S NOTES

We begin a new year in anticipation of renewed activity and interest by all members. I welcome all new members, especially those of the Executive Council, and also thank the members who have retired from the Council for their valuable services. At this stage the new Council sets about preparing a programme for the coming months, and we all look forward to new topics for our monthly meetings and excursions of fresh interest.

Members are invited to submit suggestions for consideration by the Executive Council,

The Annual Meeting was well attended, and I express my appreciation to the Rev. C.N. Steele for conducting the meeting during the election of officers. The evening concluded with the showing by members of a number of slides of historic buildings from rural districts.

A particular achievement during this last year is the publishing of a leaflet "Martha Matilda of Sydney Town", by our Research Officer Mrs. M. Hutton Neve. The monograph describes the life of an early resident of Sydney society and wife of our first landowner in the Shire, Capt. Jas. Birnie. The publication is modestly priced and is available from officers of the Society, and may also shortly be available from some local booksellers.

I have learnt that Mr. Holmes, the Sydney County Council caretaker who attends to our needs on meeting nights, is retiring from the SCC, and on behalf of the Society I wish him "all the best" in his retirement, and to thank him for his courteous attention at all times.

-- Harold Ivers.

WORONORA RIVER BRIDGE

On Thursday July 15, 1905, a deputation consisting of Messrs. Jones, Dawson and Cowling of Bangor, (Menai) Rev. W.A.Marsh, Mr.D. Peters of Sutherland Mr. W. Bell, National Park, and Mr. Croft of Sydney, were introduced by Mr. Y.W. Downes M.L.A. to the Minister for Works to present a Petition bearing nearly 400 signatures for construction of a bridge and approaches across the Woronora River to Connect Bangor with Sutherland.



The Petition appeared to be crowned with success and the promoters had every reason to congratulate themselves, for in the first week of August a company of surveyors were on the job surveying the country. Mr. Downes paid another visit to the locality and expressed himself favourably of the prospects.

A set of plans for the bridge was drawn up by Engineer J.F. Griggen, and early in January 1908 they were pasted to the Public Works Department by the Shire Clerk - but by some unaccountable means

they disappeared without trace.

Clr. Judd strongly criticised the Post Office "!as being a farce".

However, a set of new ones were quickly prepared as the Council was determined to get a bridge. But Government Departments move slowly, and in the second week of September 1909 the Public Works Department notified Sutherland Council as follows:

"Referring to previous correspondence, and to your personal representations urging the construction of a bridge over the Woronora River, near Sutherland, I am directed to inform you that the Minister has approved of borings being made in order that a correct estimate be prepared for a National Bridge with a view to a sum being provided on the 1910-11 estimates".

In a private letter to Clr. Cook Mr. Downes M.L.A. stated that after an immense amount of trouble "this bridge question may now be considered as absolutely settled". It was going to cost more than they had anticipated, but the Minister understood this. He had used every endeavour to get the matter placed on the coming estimates but could not do so. However, next year's



Woronora bridge as seen in 1920

estimates would not be much better. Had the military authorities persevered with their resumption proposal there, the granting of the bridge would not have been half so difficult, but the Lands Department officials were dead against the bridge.

By January 14, 1911 Mr. Downes had informed the Shire Council that a sum of £500 (\$1000.00) had been provided on the Estimates for the bridge, and that the work would be proceeded with at once. The balance of \$2240 would be provided on the next Estimates. The Council was not satisfied and on the insistence of Clr. Cook (who lived near the proposed bridge site) decided to ask the Minister when the Government intended to go on with the long-promised work.

It was not the building of the bridge that was the delay. It was over preliminaries that the difficulties arose, In June 1911 the Government pointed out that it would give Sutherland Council three years in which to repay the cost of the road to Menai by raising in January 1912 the general rate from 1½d to twopence in the pound. When the Minister for Works called tenders for construction of the bridge at "Cook's Crossing", work commenced early in 1912 with the Government accepting the tender of Mr. Farquharson.

The bridge contractor, Mr. Farquharson, was an experienced man in bridge construction and was 72 years of age when the Woronora project commenced,; A relative, Mr. H. Woodward, who was "to spend a lifetime in like occupation", was foreman on the bridgework.

The cartage of piles and girders was done by bullock team from the Sutherland railway to the end of the road overlooking Woronora River.

The track down the hill was only very narrow and could accommodate only horse-vehicle traffic as the bends in the road were too narrow and too sharp for a bullock waggon. This necessitated the logs being unloaded at the top of the hill and snigged down to the site of the works. The piles and girders after dressing were loaded onto a punt and lifted into position with the aid of a pile and frame winch.

Construction commenced from the western or Menai side of the river.

While the bridge was under construction complaints were received that at certain times the tide would make the river impassable for launches, Clr. Boyle presented a Petition to the Council in March 1912, but the Government thought that it was too late to alter the design, at the same time pointing out that inconvenience would be slight -- only an hour before and after high tide. The Petition was forwarded to the Works Department.

By mid-June the Department of Navigation wrote to the Council stating that complaints had been received about the river navigation being obstructed. The Council replied that they were in sympathy, but had not been consulted regarding the height of the bridge.

Clr. Boyle was now supported by Clr. Judd in his campaign to have the bridge raised, and kept worrying the Works Dept. At last, in mid-September the Department informed the Council that one of the spans would be raised by one foot six inches.

The bridge was opened for traffic in October 1912, and was the first traffic bridge constructed in the Shire.

In recent years the bridge has had to stand an increased volume of traffic, including heavily laden trucks-- for which it was never designed. During 1961 it was almost entirely rebuilt. The following year, during the month of May, the deck was tar-sealed to provide a safer driving surface,

It is again undergoing repairs at the present time, under the Dept. of Main Roads, over a period of eight months.

(Sources: "St. George Call": notes of H. Woodward).

- F. Midgley.

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### ABORIGINAL PROTECTION

The National Parks & Wildlife Service is now responsible for the protection and preservation of all Aboriginal relics in N.S.W., through an amendment in 1970 to the N.P./W.L. Act.. "Anyone who discovers a relic, whether it is the property of the Crown or not, must report the discovery to the Director, National Parks & Wildlife Service (Sydney) within reasonable time' of the discovery, unless he is aware that the Director already knows of its existence and location".... "Anyone who wishes to excavate, or in any way disturb land to discover relics, must obtain a permit from the Director of the National Parks & Wildlife Service, This requirement applies whether the land is freehold or Crown Land".

Midden Deposits are a type of occupation site found on the coast and on the shorelines of estuaries, lakes and large inland rivers. They are accumulations of shell and other food remains, a result of habitual camping by Aborigines to exploit food supplies, such as oysters and freshwater mussels. They usually also contain other food remains, implements, charcoal and occasionally burials. They range from a shallow or surface scatter of shells revealed by wind action on sand dunes to deep, well-consolidated deposits, which have now grassed over. Middens occasionally cover very large areas of open ground, They are also found in rock shelters.

(There are the remains of various middens, from about 500 to 3000 years old, in the Kurnell/Boat Harbour areas).

Burials: Aboriginal methods of disposing of their dead varied considerably. Burials in caves, middens, campsites and burial grounds are common in NSW. Sometimes burial grounds are marked by earth or stone arrangements, or by carved trees, though existing specimens of the latter are now rare. In addition, bodies were sometimes placed in hollow trees or caves, and not actually buried. These remains should not be moved or disturbed in any way.

(The remains of an aboriginal girl were recently found by schoolchildren in a cave at Gynea. They took the bones to the Shire Council, who passed them on to the Australian Museum for possible dating etc.. No results have so far been advised .... While presently carrying out reconstruction/building work in South Cronulla, aboriginal bones and parts of a midden were discovered).

(Extract: "Aboriginal Relics in N.S.W. (N.P/W.L. Service, Sydney).

The Kiama Blowhole, was discovered by George Bass on Dec. 6, 1797, during his voyage of coastal exploration.

Unanderra, on the South Coast, was so named in April 1881, its previous name being that of the "Village of Charcoal".

GEORGES RIVER RESERVOIR"

Reclamation of Botany Bay for Land Development?

When the 1st Fleet sailed into Botany Bay in January 1788 the first act of Governor Phillip, was to send a party ashore to check the sufficiency of a water supply. "Cook's Watering Place" was examined but was of no use for a large and permanent settlement.

After the 1st Fleet had moved to Port Jackson and settled around Sydney Cove, the small creek flowing down a gully (Pitt St.) was the only supply for the next 40 years -- the ubiquitous Tank Stream. Within a few years it had become polluted, and the Lachlan Swamps of Centennial Park were used terminating in "Busby's Bore" in Hyde Park (1830). By the 1850s this supply was quite inadequate for the fast-growing Town of Sydney, and the Botany Swamps were utilised, where a pumping station was built, this scheme supplying the growing city until 1886.

By the early 1870s it had become obvious that the Botany Swamps supply was also inadequate and that more ambitious schemes were urgently needed. In 1869 a Government Commission had decided to utilise the waters of the Upper Nepean, channelling the supply by open aqueducts and canals to a dam to be built at Prospect.

There was much public opposition to this scheme -- the distance of transporting the water to Prospect, the danger of an earthen dam which might threaten the large settlement at Parramatta, the limited catchment area, engineering problems and general expense. Mr. John Lucas M.P. (the grandson of John Lucas of the Woronora Mill grant of 1823) led the objections, and outlined these and his counter-proposal at an Address delivered to the Mayor and Aldermen in the Town Hall on Sept. 26, 1878.

His alternative to the Upper Nepean was the availability of a more economical and more convenient a location having also a larger water catchment area than the Nepean --the Georges River, which had a catchment some 375 square miles as against 325 sq. miles.

From evidence previously submitted to the State Government by an English consultant hydraulic engineer (Mr. Clark), Mr. Lucas showed that his proposal complied with the conditions laid down by the Commission, Mr. Clark had initially reported

".... that the Georges River, with its branches and bays, formed a natural reservoir with an area of 4,000 acres" (above three times the size of the proposed Prospect Reservoir); "also, that the whole of the drainage of that immense watershed fell into that reservoir, and that reservoir brought the water to within four and a quarter miles of the present pumping works at Botany, and within seven and a half miles of Sydney.

"Georges River with its jutting points and bays offered extraordinary facilities for the construction of impounding dams, together with the necessary weirs by which flood water would be discharged .... It may truly be said that there are but few places where the same facilities exist as are there found for such constructions, where long promontories of tongues of rock stand opposite each other with extensive bays and branches between and if Mr. Lucas's scheme was adopted, the water could be drawn off at the head of Townsend's Bay ...." ("Townsend's Bay" = Townson = Kogarah Bay).

The Lucas proposal required a dam to be built at Tom Ugly's Point, with a weir over Cummin's Point (Taren Pt.), and stonework at Rocky Point, and from there to the Botany Pumping Works. Upon completion of this scheme an immediate delivery of 12 million gallons daily could be provided at less than two-thirds the cost of the Upper Nepean scheme -- which latter scheme could promise only an initial delivery of 6 million gallons daily and would take seven years to construct. It was further estimated that 30 million gallons daily would be required by the late 1880s. As suburban development expanded so would the water demand increase, and the Georges River scheme could easily cope with this.

The tidal flow could be combated by engineering construction, so that after a short period any tidal seepage would not create problems of any salinity as this could as easily be controlled.

One objection raised to the Lucas scheme was that navigation on the Georges River would be prohibited. This, said Mr. Lucas, was not worthy of consideration, for at that time (1878) navigation was "confined to wood and fishing boats (seven in number, and of a united capacity of 56 tons)".

Another objection to his scheme, said Mr. Lucas, was the fact that if Georges River was dammed and its flood waters and tidal action stopped, Botany Bay would quickly diminish in depth by the drift of sand and other material.

"If such would be the result of damming Georges River, that alone would justify the expenditure," Mr. Lucas observed, "as forty-nine square miles of land would be reclaimed, worth £100 (\$200) per acre, or yielding a total of £3 million, besides opening up hundreds of thousands of acres of land. That land, although in the immediate neighbourhood of Sydney, was less known and more isolated from the metropolis than land in the interior of the colony, and all in consequence of Botany Bay and Georges River forming barriers to its approach".

In closing his address Mr. Lucas pointed out that the Georges River watershed appeared "from its very barren and sterile character" to be "so little fit for settlement that there is not one human being to every 10,000 acres living upon it".

This plan of reclaiming Botany Bay as a result of damming Georges River was an interesting one. As well as providing 49 square miles of reclaimed land, there was also about 2000 acres of scrubby sandy land between the head of "Townsend's Bay" and the Botany Pumping Works. "This would make an excellent site for all our objectionable trades .... They would have an unlimited supply of water, and all the objectionable matter and fluid could be sent into Botany Bay, which is seven miles wide", Mr. Lucas had pointed out. As this time there was also a proposal to extend the Sydney Railway to Botany and Cook's River Dam, and so adequate transport would have been provided for "Soap boilers, tallow chandlers, tanners. and curriers, and such trades ...."

The Government Commissioners, including the Survey-General and the heads of the Engineering and Survey Departments, had proposed and recommended the Nepean scheme. Mr. Clark, the English hydraulic engineering specialist brought to the colony; to advise (at the then extremely high fee of £500 per month with all expenses), apparently had second thoughts about opposing the Commissioners' scheme -- even though it was far more

costly, meant transporting the water sixty-three miles to a dam to be constructed; and would take in all up to eight or even ten years to complete,

Commenting upon Mr. Clark's about-face, Mr. Lucas Observed:

"Mr. Clark might think he would be blamed by the Institution of Civil Engineers for adopting a scheme of unprofessionals, and that his professional reputation would be damaged On arriving in the Colony (he) soon found it would be to his interest to recommend the Commissioners' scheme.... they would do all in their power to make it a success; and the Government (the paymasters), who, would support their officers .... would be glad their Commissioners scheme had been selected", concluded Mr. Lucas.

In his proposition Mr. Lucas did not seem to have taken into consideration the fact that the south-western portion (Loftus to Waterfall) had already been provisionally set aside "for railway purposes". The extension of the Sydney Railway to the Illawarra coalmining and farming districts had been under Parliamentary discussion for several years (brought forward by John Sutherland, Minister for Works).

At this time Thomas Holt controlled 12,000 acres (and inlets) between Georges River and the Hacking River; and he and some of his associates had vested coal mining interests both in the Shire and in the Illawarra. To develop these railway transportation was essential; and converting all this pre-Shire into a vast water-catchment area would naturally have prevented any such development.

According to various statistics and other facts submitted, Mr. Lucas had obviously made an extremely penetrating in-depth study of the Water Supply problem: and had presented a carefully considered plan. However, the proposed scheme of the State's Commissioners to utilise the Upper Nepean

was confirmed Work on this scheme began in 1880 and was completed eight years later. The reservoir at Prospect remains the main service reservoir for the metropolitan supply system.

-- M. Hutton Neve

(Reference: An Address upon The Water Supply for the City and Suburbs: delivered by Mr. John Lucas M.P., in the Town Hall, Before the Mayor and Aldermen of the City of Sydney". Printed by Gibbs, Shallard & Co., Printers & Publishers, 108 Pitt St., 1878).

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"Airds District": Part of the Campbelltown area was so named by Governor Macquarie when he visited there in Nov. 1810, it being the name of his wife's family estate in Scotland. On a later visit to the district in Dec, 1820 he named the settlement "Campbelltown", this being Mrs. Macquarie's maiden name.

Before the advent of the railway in 1858 coaching was the only means of public transport to Sydney. In 1838 the "inside" fare was 12/6d (\$1.25) and the "outside" - on top of the coache - was 10/- (\$1.00). The average travelling time to Sydney was between ten and twelve hours.

Peter's Church of England was designed. and built by Frank Lawless, the Principal Overseer of Government bricklayers, and was opened June 29, 1823, The Rev. Thomas Redder( being the first incumbent.



AN ADVENTURE TO MILL CREEK

During the mid-1860s, a group of young people having acquired a boat at Como, rowed up Georges River to the Moons (a bay) about half a mile up the river from the old hand-winchd punt, the journey occupying some two hours.

Their destination was Mill Creek, which flows into Georges River, at which junction an Englishman, "Old Billy Giles", resided on a property to whose place the young travellers were going by invitation. Billy Giles had married Bidy, wife of "King" Kooma of a Wollongong tribe, after the King's death in about 1858. The property they lived on at Mill Creek belonged to Dr. Alexander Cuthill, who was shot on April 28, 1854, while riding in his gig on Cook's River Road, going to Sydney.

The party having left their boat at the Moons began a stiff climb up a hill where much persuasion was required to urge the young ladies, encumbered by their long skirts, to face the task. A wallaby track was followed up for several hundred feet -- which in several places was almost perpendicular. On arrival at the top first thoughts were for a rest, and the party took up a position on a large rock which afforded a magnificent view of the winding river hundreds of feet below, which in the bright sunshine sparkled like myriads of diamonds.

The rest proved beneficial and the journey resumed across the ridge. A track was followed which led down a small gully, this short cut enabling some three miles to be taken off the journey to Mill Creek, which was reached after a half hour's walk. Crossing Mill Creek created a problem until in response to a "coo-ee" Old Bidy, Giles' aboriginal wife, made her appearance with a boat. After conveying friendly greetings to the travellers the dusky lady strictly impressed on them much care when getting in the boat so as not to damage it, "cos the ole man'd grumble".

What disturbed Bidy no doubt was the fear of damage to the lining of the craft -- which consisted of a sheet of stringy bark. The old woman paddled her new-found friends across without incident and led the way to the house.

Old Billy Giles' house was a two-slab structure, kept in a clean and tidy state. Here he received his guests and introduced two young half-castes, Billy and Louie -- two waifs who had found a home and kindly treatment beneath the hospitable roof of Old Billy.

A small herd of goats roamed the hillside, while on the flat a number of quince trees, planted many years ago by the unfortunate doctor, were loaded down with fruit. The Giles also had a pack of dogs, and a well-known resident of the time from Port Hacking, who occasionally visited them was adamant that the dogs had to lean up against a tree to bark!



Biddy Giles and her older brother Joey

The general substance of the Giles family was wild honey, of which the bush abounded, and also oysters. On this occasion, however, the menu was changed after

the Giles insisted on dining at their table. It was, the first time the young travellers had had the honour .of dining with "royalty", as old Bidy was "Princess" of a South Coast tribe, and humbly accepted. Bidy had an elder brother, Joey, a placid character who spent most of his time fishing, and lived for a while in the Sans Souci area.

The tucker was plain and plentiful, consisting of a damper and baked quinces, the latter with sugar. Beverage consisted of tea with a liberal supply of goats' milk. Some of the party, in particular the young women, did not appear to enjoy the hearty meal. After lunch, while some of the visitors listened to Old Billy's yarns, others went hunting and caught a native bear, On presenting the animal to Old Bidy, she exclaimed: "Poor ting, him smell like native roses".

As the afternoon shadows lengthened the visitors said farewell to their hosts, and after the stream was re-crossed, leisurely journeyed back to the Moons. Rowing downstream they reflected on the day's outing in the wilds.

-- A. Midgley.

(Research sources: "St. George Call" and author's notes)

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18th Century Hairdressing: "I spend half the day at the Hairdresser's now. My head has not been opened for over a Fortnight, and this is positively the longest time I will go in this hot weather, though some ladies' keep their Heads unopened till they are Intolerable to themselves and everyone else. The dresser informed me that one lady from motives of thrift went so long a time that her head when opened was found to contain a Nest of Mice:"

-- Diary of a Young Lady of Fashion in the Year 1764-5: by Magdalen King-Hall.

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Note: The fashion at that time required padded wire frames over which both natural and artificial hair were drawn and powdered. Some concoctions were between two and three feet high. These "hairdo's" were not removed at bed-time -- nor for many days thereafter, additional pins and wire and powder being added as conditions required. A special type of padded frame was used to support the "hairdo" when in bed.

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Formation 1st Sutherland Scout Troop: At the monthly meeting of the Sutherland Parents & Citizens' Association held on July 2nd the District Commissioner of the Boy Scouts' Association (Mr. Eddes) was present and gave an interesting address, setting forth the aims and objects of the Boy Scout movement (Baden-Powell). It was decided to form a troop of boy scouts in Sutherland. Several boys were present with their parents, giving in their names as intending "scouts". -- S.C.A.M. July 1931

(from Records kept by Geo. Heavens).

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George's Hall (Bankstown) takes its name from Colonel George Johnston, of the N.S.W. (Rum) Corps. He received a grant of 172 acres here in Apl. 1798. He owned other areas also in the same district, although he spent much of his time at his estate of Annandale.

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"ST. GEORGE HOSPITAL'S SHOCKING CONDITIONS" (1922)

"The nurses' and attendants' quarters at the St. George District Hospital are in a shocking condition", said Mr. Ley, Minister for Justice, to a deputation in May 1922.

At this time the St. George District Hospital was the only public one between Wollongong and Kogarah, serving the fast-growing southern areas of Sutherland Shire as well as the heavily populated Hurstville district. It not only had to cope with the usual medical admissions, but the hospital was also hard-pressed to cater for the increasing number of road accidents in and around the Shire -- especially the "mad mile" of Princes Highway leading to the National Park. Public accommodation was a outmoded and overcrowded but staffing accommodation was shocking.

"I would not expect a workman of mine to sleep in such quarters," Mr. Ley added. "Why, prisoners in the gaols live in palaces compared to this:"

"It is really tragic", said the Matron, Miss Pritchard. "Nurses have to sleep on a verandah roughly closed in, which has a cement floor, and they have to dress in the same room". And there was only one bath for 22 nurses:

Male attendants were living in skillions; hurricane lamps were still used in wards; there was no accommodation for outdoor patients; the office staff used another built-in verandah. A new building, erected and completed by the Government ten months before (mid-1921) at a cost of £6700 (\$13400) was not occupied --presumably as there were no funds to furnish it.

The deputation asked the Minister to assist them in obtaining an immediate grant of £25,000 (\$50,000) for the erection of adequate accommodation for both nursing and general staff, as well as providing some urgent extensions to other sections, including the operating theatre - which also was small and overcrowded.

Since those days St. George Hospital has been completely rebuilt, and is now one of the leading public hospitals. The Sutherland Hospital, opening 1958, immediately took much of the pressure off St. George --- but today Sutherland is planning increased facilities to cope with the ever-growing Shire population.

- Illawarra Sun, May 26, 1922

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Cronulla Gets Fire Station: (1930) Representations were made by the Chamber of Commerce for the Council to take the necessary action under the Fire Brigades' Act, and have a Fire Brigade established at Cronulla. As a result of this agitation, the Council made application to the Board of Fire Commissioners, and the Board has provided an up-to-date Fire Station and Fire Fighting Equipment at Cronulla, and, all land within the Town Improvement District has been included in the Fire District.

-- S.C.A.M. Nov. 1930

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Windmill at The Rocks: in 1795 Governor. Hunter brought with him parts of a windmill, which was erected near the site of the present Observatory. As it took ten minutes to grind a bushel of grain, it worked almost continuously.

Dawes' Point (southern end of the Harbour Bridge) was "Point Maskelyne".

Book Review: "MARTHA MATILDA. of Sydney Town"  
(Wife of Captain James Birnie of Alpha Farm, Kurnell)  
 by M. Hutton Neve: published by  
 Sutherland Shire Historical Society.

The six pages of this pamphlet make up a most interesting and detailed account of the life, not only of Mrs. Martha Matilda Birnie but also of that of her husband James Birnie. Our Historical Society is to be commended in selecting this material on pioneers closely associated with the early history of the Shire for its first publication. The Society is also to be commended by its initiative in applying for and obtaining a grant from the Royal Australian Historical Society towards the financial expenses of the work.

As usual, Mrs. Hutton Neve has done her researching with great thoroughness. In the Dictionary of Australian Biography, Vol.I, 1788-1850, A-H, the half page article on Birnie makes brief references to the vicissitudes which beset him and his wife in the latter part of their lives. Mrs. Hutton Neve has added so much lost detail to this personal tragedy that her monograph becomes a living document. Not only does it read as a vital piece of history, but it contains many other facets of interest. For example, as social history it gives a picture of colonial "Society" in the early 1800s; it mirrors the predicament of the unwary citizen caught in the inexorable grip of bureaucratic rules and regulations; and it reminds one of the extraordinary subjugation of women in society not so many years ago.

As a piece of printing production, the pamphlet is well presented with a pleasant type face and impeccable typesetting. After several readings I was pleased to find no typographical errors whatsoever. My only criticisms are minor ones and relate to typography only. Some uneven inking has led to unbalance of the overall effect of pages and a small increase of the spacing between lines would have been less of an eyestrain.

-- B. Sargeant,  
 Sutherland Shire Council.

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Copies are obtainable at 20 cents each, or 27 cents posted, from Mrs. M. Hutton Novo, 26 First Av., Loftus 2232.

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Some Outstanding Historical Dates - July/Sept: Matthew Flinders d. July 19, 1814 Florence Nightingale d. Aug.13, 1910: Japan surrendered Aug.14,1945; Sir Donald Bradman, brilliant Australian cricketer, b. Aug. 27, 1908: the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, Aug.24, 1572; many Protestant refugees escaped from France to England, settling mainly in the south-eastern counties and introducing new weaving skills: Sept. 22, 1918 -- Marconi transmitted the first wireless message from England to Australia.

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Castlereagh ' (one of the five Macquarie-founded towns in 1810) was originally known as "Birds Eye Corner", and at the same time this portion of the Hawkesbury River was officially named "Nepean".

Collits' Inn, Hartley, built about 1823 by Pierce Collits, who called it "The Golden Fleece" -- this name has long fallen into disuse.

AN OLD HORSE TROUGH

The water-filled horse trough was a common sight along all public roads until motorised transport completely superseded the horse.

There were several of these placed at varying locations in the Shire --one will be recalled as being in the Sutherland shopping centre near the old steam tram building. This was some time ago transferred to the Tramway Museum at Loftus.

Another horse trough, which was originally placed at the corner of Lilli Pilli and Port Hacking Roads, has now been removed to the Forby Sutherland Garden (adjacent to the 17th Milestone) beside the Council Chambers, where it is used as a "garden planter", The Shire Council intends to attach a suitable plaque.

It has proved extremely difficult to trace much authentic history of the Shire Horse Troughs.

Towards the end of last century George and Henry Bills were Bedstead and Mattress Manufacturers in Kent Street Sydney. Two other brothers conducted the Melbourne branch of the firm. All were well known animal lovers and prominent in their support of the R.S.P.C.A., donating funds regularly both here and overseas..

Mrs. Annis Bills predeceased her husband George, who died in Sydney in December 1927. Except for a few small personal legacies he left all his Estate in Trust to be distributed for the welfare of animals,

One of the projects was the provision of Horse Troughs, between four and five hundred being installed in Australia, as well as a number overseas. With increased motorisation of road transport, installation ceased just prior to World War 2 -- possibly about 1936-7.

Probate of George Bills' Will was declared in March 1925, and the Trustees' investment returns began to come through about the beginning of 1929. Thus the Shire horse troughs were apparently installed not long after this.

According to elderly local residents horse transport was still very common right up to World War 2 and during that period because of petrol restrictions.

The troughs were kept full of fresh water from the local reticulation supply, the filling system depending on a ball-and-valve to regulate the flow.

With the cessation of horse transport the troughs fell into disuse and many (as with the Lilli Pilli one) became repugnant rubbish receptacles --overflowing with stagnant water-soaked debris after heavy rains. Others were simply broken up for road-filling etc, or otherwise removed.

As with the old Kogarah-Port Hacking Mail coach milestones, these horse troughs were part of the pioneer era of settlement and development of the Shire. Until the advent of World War 2 much of the Shire still comprised small farms -- dairying, poultry, fruit vegetable and flower growing --with some of the farmers retaining horse transport.... So this Horse Trough, rescued by the Shire Council, is another relic of the early days of more leisurely living --- without polluting petrol fumes.

--- M.H.N.

"GRAVE HUMOUR"

Many of the old English churchyards are renowned for their tombstone inscriptions. "The Churchyards Handbook" (revised 1962) states: "the object of an epitaph is to identify the resting place of the mortal remains of a dead person. It should therefore record only such information as is reason-ably necessary for that purpose."

In Memory of MRS, LYDIA BARNETT, Consort of Noah Ripley Esq., by whom she had eight sons and eleven daughters seventeen of whom lived to have families Her descendants at the time of her decease were ninety-seven grand-children & one hundred & six great-grandchildren. She died June 17, 1816 aged 91. Many daughters have done virtuously but thee hast excelled.

M.S. DONALD ROBERTSON born 1st of January 1785. Died 4th of June 1848. Aged 65 Years, He was a peaceable quiet man, and, to all appearance, a sincere Christian. His death was very much regretted -- which was caused by the stupidity of LAWRENCE TULLOCH of Clotherton who sold him nitre instead of Epsom salts by which he was killed in the space of three hours after taking a dose of it.

In Memory of THOMAS HANSE: Lord thy grace is free -- why not for me? And the Lord answered and said Because Thy Debts Aint Paid. (no dates)

MARTHA BLEWIT of the Swan, Baythorn-End of this Parish Buried May 7th 1681 Was the wife of 9 Husbands successively but the 9th outlived her. The text to her Funeral Sermon was "Last of all the Woman dyed alsoe".

Here Lyes STEPHEN RUMBOLD He lived to ye Ago of 100 & 1 Sanguine & Strong. An hundred to one You don't Live so Long. (no dates)

Here lays JOHN TYRWITT A learned Divine He died in a Fit Through Drinking Port Wine April 3rd 1828 Aged 59 years

Here Lieth MARY - the wife of JOHN FORD We hope her soul is gone to the Lord but if for Hell she has changed this life she had better be there than be John Ford's wife 1790.

In Memory of IBS. PHOEBE CREWE who died May 28 1817 aged 77 yrs, who during 40 years as a Midwife in this City brought into the world 9730 children. (Norwich)

(Extracts: "A Small Book of Grave Humour": ed. Fritz Spiegl: Pan Books Ltd., London: 1971)

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"Sutherland Shire Studios": published by Shire Council. The next in this series will deal with Shire Transport, As this is such a comprehensive subject it was decided to publish it in two parts. Road & Water Transport has been written by A. Midgley: and Railway Transport Is by Peter Novo. Both these writers are regarded as authorities in their particular fields. These "Studies" are being increasingly used by the junior Secondary Schools as the basis of their Local History work -- and are also in continuing demand by adult residents. The "Transport pamphlets are now in the hands of the printers. A new print of No. 3 (Geology/Aborigines) and No, 4 (Commerce & Industry) are now available. Copies of all these may be obtained free from Library Branches.

BANGOR'S FIRST CHURCH SERVICE SEVENTY YEARS AGO (Menai)

On a crisp sunny afternoon on Juno 14th 1903 there gathered in a a number of settlers for the first service of Christian worship in the settlement --- then limited to Homestead selections.

In the New Testament and down the years to the present time the seed of church fellowships commenced in the homes of believers. Bangor (Menai) was no exception. Two years previously a Sunday School had commenced in the home of Mrs. Fanny Midgley and with others of the Faith interest was stimulated to commence a service of worship.

Thus came men and women and children to the same home all in their "Sunday best", with some on foot along bush tracks and others by horse-drawn conveyances on "roads" little more than cart tracks.

The presiding minister of the historic occasion was the Rev .W.A. Marsh of Miranda-Sutherland-Sylvania Circuit, who arrived by sulky driven by George Midgley along a track from a pick-up point overlooking what is now Prince Edward Park, Rev. Marsh hiked down from Sutherland through the cemetery and rowed across in Jack Price's "ferry", after which he endured a very stiff climb up what old residents called "Billy Goat Hill".

The sitting-room where the service was commenced at 3.30 p.m. was not large, and when all were accommodated the service got under way with Eliza Delardes playing the small organ. Eliza was married in the home ten years later to Charles Delardes. Other weddings were held in the home over the years. Members of pioneer families present were -- Bray, Bentley, Dawson, Jones, Midgley, Nicholson, Webb, with a sprinkling of visitors. Lily Dawson aged nineteen, rendered a solo.

Rev. Marsh, an extremely popular man in all walks of the community, spoke on the need to build on Christ the foundation of the Church. On this theme the congregation sang in unity from Alexander's hymnals. When the service concluded there followed a further rich time of fellowship, unique only to the Christian Church, as settlers took opportunity in this newfound atmosphere to chat about varied topics before commencing their homeward way -- and the necessity to. attend to the farm chores before winter's daylight drew to a close. The Seed sown that day continues to thrive.

-- A, Midgley.

(A few years later services commenced in the tiny. new-built "Church in the bush", and these still continue. It is not yet known how and where the community church will fit into the future "Menai satellite city").

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Cook's River Dam: Some years after Alexander Brodie Spark had built. hi home "Tempe" on this river, a dam was built nearby in 1839. This dam is now the site of the. Cook's River .(or Tempe) Bridge.

The famous Figtree near Wollongong -- giving the district of Figtree its name is believed to be at least 500 years old.

"Irish Town": In the Bankstown district three separate localities were known as "Irish Town", the first in 1814 being adjacent to the intersection of Hector St, and Birdwood Rd, The second one, 1833, was where the shopping centre at Yagoona Station now is; and the third, at the junction of Chapel Road and Liverpool Road -- in the early 1860s.

DOVECOTS or PIGEON HOMES

The dovecot (sometimes "dovecote") was, like the windmill, a familiar sight in the old English countryside. Although the windmill was soon introduced into the penal Colony of New South Wales no landowner seems to have felt the need for a dovecot in NSW, although there were several in Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania).

Because of the lack of sufficient winter fodder in England before the introduction of the turnip, all cattle except those needed for breeding were slaughtered in the autumn and their meat salted down, but supplies seldom lasted until the following spring. Prior to the 18th century the cots and their flocks of hundreds of wheeling doves (pigeons) were an enviable sight, for the birds provided a welcome change of diet.

The mediaeval right to keep a dovecot was reserved to the Lord of the Manor and to Monastic houses: although in a few cases, by custom, the Church of England priest also had this right. It was a serious crime for any other person to possess or kill these doves.

A few-dovecots, built of stone or brick, still remain in the English countryside. The earliest is the old dovecot at Rochester Castle (Kent), dating from about 1134-1140; one in good condition is at a Kentish farmhouse probably dating from Tudor times.

Perhaps the more favourable NSW climatic conditions negated the keeping of pigeons for winter food; and varied indigenous game was to be had in most country districts. The big landowners had sufficient stock to provide supplies of fresh meat for a few days at a time; and poultry supplies were adequate for those who could purchase in Sydney Town or breed for themselves. There do not seem to be historical records of flocks of breeding pigeons being brought to the Colony in any large numbers.

Several dovecots were incorporated with farm outbuildings on Van Diemen Land estates of the early 19th century. One of the most outstanding is that built by Joseph Archer, a wealthy man of the period. "Panshanger", near Cressy in the Macquarie River valley, has a well-known brick tower building some 60 feet high, to house fowls on the lower floors and above them were pigeons. This particular dovecot is more generally known as "Archer's Folly" -- for many of the small settlers considered it merely an extravagance. The "Folly", however, in its time provided owner and guests with a sufficiency of fresh eggs, poultry and squab. At another Tasmanian homestead, part of the stables block at "Darlington Park" (built in the late 1820s near Barton was designed to accommodate a dovecot.

- M.H.N.

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Loftus -- Junee: the railway extension from Junco Junction to Narrandera was completed in 1881. In this vicinity a small settlement was laid out and named the "Village of Loftus", after the State Governor. However, Crown Land to the south of Sydney's Georges River had already been named "Loftus Heights" shortly after the opening of The National Park (1879): and probably this was the reason why the Village of Loftus was given the aboriginal name of Junee by Government Gazette Notice of October 13, 1885.

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"Judd's Brickworks", Mortdale, once the property of the Judd family -- of whom Clr. W.G. Judd was the Shire's first President (1906-10) -- are in the process of being demolished.



COMING EVENTS:General Meetings: Addresses:

July 13: Mr. D. Sinclair: "The Story of Gilbert & Sullivan".  
Aug. -10: Mr. N.D. Walker, M.L.A.: "Sylvania Waters Project".  
Sept.14: Miss B. Goodyer: "The Municipality of Bankstown".

Excursions:

July 14: Half-day to Hunter's Hill.  
 Adult Members: \$1.50: Junior Members: 50 cents Adult Visitors: \$2.00:  
 Children: 75c

Bus departs Cronulla 12 noon; Council Chambers 12,30 p.m. --via Kingsway - will pick up en route. Bus returns Sutherland approximately 5.0 p.m., and Cronulla 5.30 p.m..

Aug. 18: Full day to Campbelltown & District.

Bus departs Cronulla 8.30 a.m., Sutherland 9,0 a.m., via Kingsway --- will pick up en route. Fares, etc., will be advised later.

Sept. 15: Half-day Botanical Gardens. Private transport. Members please advise President/Secretary if transport is required.

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The opinions expressed in this Bulletin are not necessarily those of this Society.

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