

SUTHERLAND SHIRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

QUARTERLY BULLETIN



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DEPUTY PRESIDENT WRITES

As the November Bulletin is prepared our President and his wife are enjoying a well earned overseas tour. They have kindly sent cards telling us of their travels, which have been much appreciated.

We have been hoping to receive some "Notes from the President" in time for inclusion in this Bulletin, but possibly our recent Postal Strike has delayed arrival. Hence my humble effort to pass on items of interest.

Guest Speakers have been especially entertaining this year and many "topical" subjects presented -- We thank our Guests for giving time to share their special interest with us.

The new Community Radio Station was to trial again from October 28 to November 2 on FM Stereo Radio 89.1 mHz and recommend all members of Sutherland Shire Community to tune in. This Society was delighted when we were invited to have two members join with Mr. Will Newton to present a programme on air about the history of the Sutherland Shire.

The Society has been invited by Sutherland Shire Council to be represented again this year in the procession held as part of the Engadine Show, by travelling on the "Good Ship Sutherland Shire". This is an Annual Event and we are pleased to take our place in this Community Effort.

Alan Griffiths

THE PRESIDENT WRITES

This time I write to you during an historical night-seeing tour of my own. I am writing, early in October, in my hotel at Lancaster Gates, London, in order to catch the issue of the Bulletin. My first glimpse of London, on arrival in mid-August, gave me the impression of a people who are proud of their history, for so much of it comes into view in every direction. England is so well known for this that it is no news, but the cities and towns of Europe continued this panorama of historical beauty for another 30 days of travel and stop-over. Much credit goes to the people in these cities, towns and villages for retaining their history.

Whilst I have written in general terms about Europe in general I cannot pass by the Middle East, where I spent the small space of half a day. A visit to Jerusalem made during a stopover at Ashdod must constitute the highlight of the whole tour. The ancient History of the City combined with its spiritual significance made an uplifting experience for visitors of all beliefs. I do not cease to praise Jerusalem simply because of its history and its spirit. I have not seen a cleaner city. I walked the "streets" of the old city, coming finally to a section originally constructed as a shop-ping mall in Roman times, knocked down by invaders and earthquakes, which is now being built to harmonise with the adjacent architecture.

This issue of the Bulletin precedes Christmas. I take this opportunity to thank all members for their support during 1985 and wish them a happy Christmas and a bright New Year.

Harold Wilson

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CENTENARY OF PASSENGER TRAIN.

The double track railway to Hurstville was opened with great ceremony on October 15th, 1884, when the township consisted of a few stores, two hotels, some residences and small farms spread out in the bush and timber. From Hurstville a single railway line was to wind its way to Como and Sutherland being the continuation of the Illawarra Railway.

A trial survey had been carried out by Carver in 1873 with a crossing of Georges River at Rocky Point to a distance of 7 miles south of the river, with a circuitous route heading Yowie Bay, Gynea Bay, and the North West Arm of Port Hacking River. From Gwawley Bay there would be a gradient of 1 in 80 over the Goumea Range. Carver did not favour the crossing at Tom Uglys Point, although the river was narrower, but it was deeper.

It was hoped to interest private enterprise in its construction, but figures disclosed in financing it discouraged any venture. But agitations continued from many quarters until the Government finally was spurred into action, when John Whitton, Engineer in Chief for Railways was instructed to locate a suitable route to Kiama.

The greed of the Holt Sutherland Estate prevented any crossing of the Georges River, either at Tom Uglys Point or Rocky Point as they held out for an extravagant price, and the route was altered to crossing at Como. Here the route to Sutherland was through land owned by S.W.Gray, with a smaller portion of Holt's land.

A contract for the construction of the line had been let to C & E Millar in 1882 for the line between Redfern and Waterfall, including the Como Bridge, but a deadlock in construction in July 1884 led to a fresh contract being let to Rowe and Smith to continue the 10 miles 16 chains to Waterfall abandoned by Millars.

However the combined work of both contractors permitted the opening of the single track from Hurstville to Sutherland, (including the Como Bridge), a distance of 6 miles, 20 chains on December 16, 1888

From Oatley platform the line fell into a sharply falling gradient as it approached the Como Bridge. In 1905 the steeply graded track was re-routed between Mortdale and the bridge, which gave an easier grade to Sydney bound traffic.

Como station at first was a single wooden platform erected on the western side of the line. Soon it was to become a most popular holiday and picnic area, large boatsheds being constructed either side of the embanked approaches to the station.



Originally steam trains took on water on the Sydney-Hurstville section at Rockdale, the water being obtained from a creek flowing from the heights at Bexley, and this stream was dammed. Later a supply was available at the end of the goods yard at Hurstville. The line between Sydney and Hurstville was operated by small early tank engines running the suburban services. But water at Sutherland was a problem, as was the grade for small tank engines, so one would assume larger engines with tender would have been placed in service on this section.

It had been the intention to run a tourist train to Waterfall when the line was completed to there in March, 1886, but the first passenger train ran to Sutherland on December 26, 1885, and other excursion trips were run until January 4, 1886.

A platform had been constructed at Sutherland, but for the tourist there was only bush. The platform was then unnamed. After whom it and the township which soon followed is still conjecture, and is likely to remain so.

Of course trains carrying equipment necessary for the construction had moved up the line as the track was laid. Mr. William Hayes of Sutherland recalled a story told to him by his father, Thomas. When a 14 year old. Thomas remembered the morning in mid 1885 when he heard a locomotive labouring up the steep grade with a load of trucks. He had been in the thick bush where the Railway Hotel stands to-day, and ran excitedly to the platform as the engine now shutting off power drew in. As Thomas was the only one on the platform a railway ganger said; " There you are son, you are the first to see the first train to pull into Sutherland". From those early days when a camp was established of tents and other makeshift dwellings for the railway construction workers at Como, there has emerged several interesting highlights.

One of the earliest weddings in the pre-Shire took place at Como on April 9, 1884, when James Finn married Miss Batchford. The Rev. Father Berry was the officiating minister, possibly from Kogarah.

James Finn was a ganger on the construction of the Illawarra rail-way. He once put too much explosive in a charge and blew "everything apart".

Agnes Bissett was born in Sutherland in 1885 when her father was working as an engineer on the construction of the railway from Hurstville to Sutherland.

She recalled in 1980 when she was 95 years of age how she travelled in those early days from Sutherland in a horse drawn van dressed in a crinoline, over the Georges River on the ferry.

The family later moved to Helensburgh. Agnes married and became Mrs. Clements.

Weight deflection tests on the 956 foot, six span lattice girder Como bridge had not been carried out until the 19th of January, 1886. Mr. Wade, Inspector Engineer for the Railway Department, with Mr. T. Firth and Mr. Henry Deane carried out the tests, which were more severe than any previously applied to bridge construction in N.S.W.

Three locomotives were used testing each span by deadweight. The three locomotives were then coupled together and thundered down the steep Oatley Bank at 25 m.p.h. (40 k.m.h.). Deflections varied only between $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch, which was most satisfactory.

The three locomotives were of different types, specially chosen for their weight. The first was a 2-6-0 Mogul, No. 299 of the K-class, a goods engine made by the Baldwin Locomotive Works in the United States. Its original weight was nearly 64 tons. The second tender type locomotive was an 0-Class, No. 60, built by Robert Stephenson and Company at Newcastle-on-Tyne in England. It weighed 63 tons. It was painted in a dark green with splashes of red. There were six of these engines used over the Blue Mountains, but they were replaced in 1885-86, and at least two of them entered Sydney suburban passenger service which would certainly have included Sutherland because of the steep grade. The third locomotive was No. 205 of Class B. It was built by the famous firm of Beyer, Peacock and Company of Manchester, England. The total weight of this loco-motive was 66 tons, and was also painted green. This class worked as goods engines on the main lines.

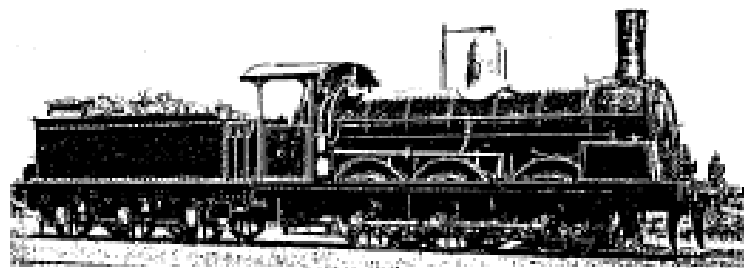
The section of line between Como and Sutherland was not duplicated until March 22, 1891, although most of the duplication had come into use by 1890.

Source: "A Century of Locomotives N.S.W. Railways, 1855-1955"; Mr. L. Manny; Mr. W. Hayes interview 24-1-1980; Mrs. J. Bowers inter-view 1980; Mr. Finn, April 1983; Carver and the Railway Survey, "St. George Call"; Railway Historical Society Bulletin, February, 1967.

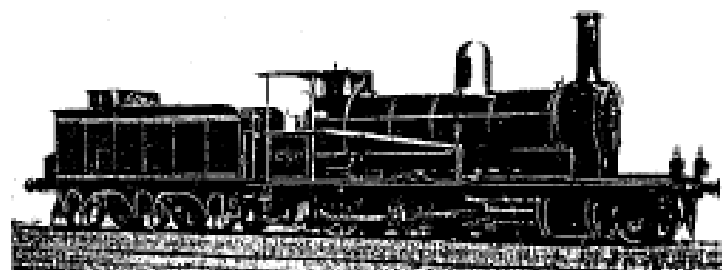
Fred Midgley



K-CLASS



CLASS 00



CLASS B

MEMORIES OF OLD SUTHERLAND

A sign in a glass case indicating that births, deaths and marriages could be registered within, stood outside the first Sutherland Shire Council Chambers on the footpath. The Council was in rented premises of Mrs. Lehane, on the corner of the then Railway Parade and a laneway.

The Shire Clerk was responsible for the Register, but this was the responsibility of the police later in the station situated on the corner of Eton and Flora streets, Sutherland. In the early days of the Railway Hotel(Boyles) there was a large trapdoor on the footpath near the building to which a ring was attached for lifting purposes. Here the wooden casks were lowered into the cellar. In those days the kegs were delivered on table top waggons sometimes drawn by two or three Clydesdale horses.

Shops were open on Saturday nights in those days and Mr. and Mrs. Henry Derrey would go shopping. Sometimes their son Mick would be given a penny. He knew what he wanted to spend it on, and would wait until his parents had returned by looking in the window at the lollies in Powe's shop which was also the newsagency. When his father and mother returned, he would rush in and spend it.

Mick Derrey's father cleared two acres for Tyldsley who intended to start a poultry farm there off President Avenue. That was in 1913. When Tyldsley first came he lived in a tin shed in



which the ceiling was 15ft. high. until Sid Zealey, a well known local bricklayer built the house. Zealey also built brick fowl houses and sheds.

Tyldsley, a fat full faced man, had a magnificent tenor voice. Mick Derrey's mother who lived on the corner of President Avenue and North West Arm road about two hundred yards away from Tyldsley also had a good voice, and they would sing with President Avenue between them.

Mick Smith, Bill Beach and Sam Houghton were maintenance men on the tracks of the Sutherland - Cronulla steam tramway. Nick Smith had two brothers, Paddy and Jack, and two sisters, Rosie and Maggie. None of them married except Rosie who married late in life, and when Jack Smith died in 1983 the family died out.

Jack Smith was baptised in a house near the cemetery gates which is still standing to-day on the southern corner of Flora and Linden streets. This was before the turn of the century, and his birth

had to be registered at Liverpool. And his mother had some difficulty in getting to Liverpool, Jack was a month old by then, so that the Registrar decided to avoid getting her into trouble for not

registering sooner, made an adjustment. So Jack always joked about that in later years, saying he was a month older than he actually was.

Jack's father was a fettler, and, in time Jack became a porter at Sutherland in the time of Warburton the station master. From there Jack was transferred to the country.

Source; From notes written by Mick Derrey in early 1984 ---- F.M.

TWO IDENTITIES OF EARLY GYMEA

Bert Irons was a bricklayer in the Shire's early days. He boarded at Joe Haye's place where the Gymea Hotel now stands in the Gymea shopping centre. It was on this site that Joe Hayes had the first Council pound.

Joe Hayes was a late enlistment in World War 1, and when he re-turned was like some others of the time who continued to wear the army uniform including the hat. Joe rode about the Shire in his old uniform as pound keeper. He was a small man with a moustache and he wore that uniform until it "fell off his back".

Joe rode about with his head in the air, and got the 'nick-name' of "bee-hive Joe", giving the impression that he was looking for hives of wild bees in the trees.

Bert Irons, as well as being a good bricklayer, was a brilliant pianist. He often played at the large house "Lynconhurst" on the corner of President Avenue and Gymea Bay Road, singing at the same time. He never used sheet music, but played from ear, and he could play any type of music. Bert Irons played the piano with any choice of tune even when the keyboard was covered with a sheet. Sometimes he played the piano with his nose, and could even play a tune perfectly when standing on his head playing the keyboard with his toes.

Source; From notes written by Mick Derrey in August, 1980 -----F.M.

CAR ADVENTURE

In 1926, accompanied by his brother Jack, sister Thelma, and his mother and father, Harry Bray set out from Menai for Melbourne in an Australian Six. Harry had gained his driver's licence on a Ford

T one ton truck in 1924. He had bought the Australian Six at Hurstville from Smiths Repairs for 150.

However, all went well until Moss Vale, when the engine "threw a bearing". The motor was underpowered for the size and weight of the vehicle, 34cwt., which seated seven, Having pull-out seats between the rear of the front seats and in front of the back seat.

They were able to purchase a bearing at a local garage from the engine of an Essex, which fitted the requirements. The men then set to work taking off the sump of the Rutenber engine of the Australian Six by the roadside. When repairs were complete the family turned for home.

Source: Interview with Harry Bray,Jnr.,by Alf Midgley 31-5-1973.

The thunder was rolling and the clouds were black for it was hot and sultry. I had been hurrying for miles, and I knew I hadn't far to go for shelter. I just made it, and had hardly leaned my old bike on the shop window when the hail started to crash down on the roof. What luck. Under cover and dry.

I sat on the shop step, and it was getting dark and looked a most forbidding night. Then along came two smart young policemen who looked me over. I said "Good night, looks like a drop of rain, I just made cover in time". The reply I received was not encouraging, for one of them said, "Well you won't be here long, so you'd better be moving on now, we have had too many burglaries here lately." I promptly replied, "Well that would'nt be from the Knights of the road, you know that". That didn't help, I was told to get going.

I wandered off under the awnings to the other end of town where a new shop was being built, so I went right through to the back room and played mouse until it was light again. It was fine at 6am. when I left town, but who should I meet as I was coming out of hi-ding but the young Copper, carrying a Gladstone bag. He was going home, and he asked me where I had slept last night. I replied, "I did'nt, I lay on the concrete floor in the back room of the shop". He grinned, and we each went our own way.

THE WATER CARRIER

I was travelling alone one day, just setting out, when I met up with a bunch of blokes lying on the grass at Mt. White. They asked where I was heading. I replied, "Brisbane". Their reply was "So are we, why don't you join us, we have a wonderful system, we pool our food and each person has one and only job to do. The rest is all done for you, it's the real Eldorado".

There were 20 of us altogether, and it worked out that there were four firewood gatherers, two kept the fire constantly alight, three were cooks helpers, two kept the camp tidy.

I drew a water carriers job. We had two 4 gallon kerosene tins for buckets, and a natural bush stick for a yolk. The first day was easy, the place had town water. But we were going north and the next day we stopped at about 10 am for a break. I'd hardly dropped Matilda when someone was yelling for water; the nearest water was in the gully at sea level, so away we went with a 4 gallon tin each. We had a drink and a wash at the creek, filled our tins and started to climb, my mate tipping half of his out saying it was too heavy. I struggled to the top with mine, but it was only a quarter full by this time as a lot splashed out. Instead of a cheer all we copped was abuse for taking so long.

A big bloke picked up my can, had a drink out of the corner, then poured some over his head, and had a wash in what was left and threw the remainder away. My mate received similar treatment. We went up and down that hill about a dozen times before we satisfied the water lusted mob. The idea was good, the food quite plentiful doing things that way, but a water carrying job in a barren land was not the most sought after under the circumstances.

One thing I learned from this experience was if you have a bucket of water and you have to carry it a distance without it splashing out, you put a couple of bracken fern leaves in the water and it will not splash over.

Source: Personal experiences of Depression Days by George Heavens

ALL SAINTS CHURCH CANBERRA

The story of a mortuary railway station that became a church is the story of All Saints Church of England, Ainslie.

The church has become an imported piece of history in Canberra - a link with an interesting facet of the old Sydney transport system - and because of the Church's unusual background it has been termed "A Station of the Cross".

The present All Saints Church was originally Rookwood Mortuary Station, built in the 1860s in the area now known as Lidcombe. In the early 1860s Sydney authorities were planning a large cemetery to be known as the Sydney Necropolis, in an area of 250 acres at Haslems Creek.

Hearses and other vehicles in that period were horse drawn and it was decided that it was much easier to use the railway facilities. Early in 1865 a railway line was laid into the cemetery at Haslems Creek, also known as Rookwood, and the funeral trains ran out from the city twice a day.

Two special stations, in the design of a church (to fit in with the atmosphere of a cemetery) were built as receiving stations for funeral trains. One was Rookwood, which now stands rebuilt as the All Saints Church, and the other one still stands in Regent Streets Sydney, near Central Railway Station. With the advent of motor transport the funeral branch line fell into disuse by 1939. In 1952 it was put up for disposal by the Department of Railways. Between 1952 and 1957 Rookwood was the haunt of vandals and drunks and during that period it lost its roof when fire swept through the cemetery.

In 1957 the rector of All Saints Church, Rev. E.G. Buckle set off for Sydney with a parishioner, Stan Taunton, to look at the site and study the possibility of moving the station. An offer of £100 was made, and accepted.

Demolition began in 1958, and the 782 tons of stone were transported to Canberra in 83 semi-trailer loads. For 14 weeks Mr. Taunton and his son John had camped in the cemetery at Rookwood making sectional drawings of the building, each stone being numbered and identified. 1



At the Dedication the original debt paid to the Railways for the stonework had risen to £24,000 (£8,000 for the demolition, and £16,000 for the re-building). A major part of the latter was the cost for the new timber roof of Tasmanian Fountain Ash.

The original bell disappeared after it was removed during the time Nol. Mortuary Station fell into disuse. The present bell on the church was presented by the Steam Tram and Railway Preservation Society of Parramatta. Originally it was the bell on a Shay Locomotive, three of which came to Australia from America. The engine which carried the bell served in the Lithgow district on the railway line running out to the shale oil deposits at Glen Davis. Shay steam locomotives were chosen for their ability to wank the steep grades. The bell tower has been erected on the opposite side of the church to when it was at Rookwood.

The Consecration was carried out by Bishop Cecil Warren on All Saints Day, November 1st, 1975, and was attended by a large number of past and present parishioners. All former Rectors of the Parish were able to attend including the first Rector, Rev. E.G. Buckle whose initiative gave Canberra a history in stone. Rev. Buckle is now the Bishop of Auckland in New Zealand.

Rev. Buckle was an Engadine boy, his father Doug. taking up land there in 1919 after he had returned from the first World War, but didn't come to settle there until 1927. Ted was a pupil of the first school at Engadine when it was located in Railway Parade in 1933.

The church, made of Pymont sandstone, is an interesting historical building in Canberra, and is open to the public each day. Regular services are held. There is much to see in this beautiful church and an informative booklet by Rev. Buckle tells the story from the times of the original architect, James Barnett F.R.I.B.H. to the Consecration.

Source: "Visitors World, Canberra; "Station of the Cross", by Rev. Buckle: Mr.J.Midgley of Steam Tram And Railway Preservation Society: notes of F. Midgley.

A PIONEERING LINK IS BROKEN

The death occurred of Richard Lionel Midgley on Saturday, Sept., 7, 1985, at Manly, in his 95th year, thus severing a link with the pioneering days of Bangor, later Menai.

Richard Lionel Midgley had his first associations with the district in 1896 when his parents took up a homestead selection of 34 acres, being the second family to settle there. He was the last survivor of those times.

He was a pupil of the first Sunday School when it commenced in Bangor in April, 1901, and when a Provisional Public School was opened in the home of Owen and Julia Jones on May 19, 1902, he was the third pupil enrolled of 9 boys and 2 girls.

When a postal receiving office was opened in his mother's home on June 1st, 1905, Richard, then a lad of 14 years of age, carried the first mail from Sutherland three times a week, on a Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. There was no road then, only tracks.

He joined the Railways, and was at first stationed at Sutherland. He enlisted with two of his brothers in the Great War of 1914-18, serving with the A.I.F. in France. He applied for transfer to the Flying Corps, but injuries delayed ere. training, and with the

Armistice he was back in civilian life.

After the war his working life was spent in the Sydney office of the Shipping Company, Howard Smith, until he retired at the age of sixty.

----Fred Midgley

"SHED"

THE OLD COUNCIL AT CRONULLA

Possibly at some time or other you have passed this old brick shed, with the flat galvanised roof and a black sooty lean-to attached to the southern side, with a black-smith forge and bellows inside the lean-to, for sharpening the tools.

The shed itself was of common bricks and a rough finish outside. Inside the mortar had squeezed out of the bricks and hung down in rungs, There had been no finish for the inside was never seen, the reason being that it had no windows and only one door, with a dirt floor.

This shed was not for, the men's benefit, its sole purpose was to hold the tools, which were either placed or thrown in as you felt inclined.

For years it stood majestically in the corner of Gunnamatta Park and Nicholson Parade and Waratah Street, and you passed it on the way to the Park or to Bundeena Wharf and Ferry.

How I came to be there was due to ill-health. I returned from the services, and was told I would improve if I had a position out of doors. The Shire didn't contain much work in those days, so I applied to the Council, had my discharge read by the Engineer, and was told the only job open was a labourer at Cronulla.

Living at Woollooware I said I would take it. I was told to report at the Depot to Tom Cole, the Riding Ganger. I rode my push bike down, leant it against the fence and walked in. There were more men around sitting down outside. I said, "The Engineer sent me down, which one is Tom Cole the Riding Ganger"? A grating voice said, "I am". I said, "Well I am to start here today as a labourer". He said, "Can you use a pick and shovel"? I said, "Yes I think so". "Get them out of the shed" came the reply, and he pointed to the shed with only one door.

I walked over and stood in the doorway, and that took all the light. As I entered it smelt dirty and musty, and as you moved around the dust rose from the floor.

To find the tools required you had to feel down the handles till you felt the heads of the mattock and picks to get the right ones, the same went for the short handled shovels and to find a round mouth or a square mouth. I finally emerged carrying the tools, and was immediately relieved of a pick it was claimed as one some chap had lost. It happened only the once though.

The origin of the shed went back before my time for it is only forty years ago that I started to work there, and I will say that I did work at that. It had never been cleaned or painted, and the blacksmith's forge had put soot over everything. I soon realised that the shed and lean-to was for work tools, the men's place was outside, rain or no rain. If we got heavy rain, work was called off and we went home without pay. The weeks following were really rough.

I was with a rough, tough, hardworking team of men, each man was designated a job, and you either did it or finished.

Most their best as workers, and gave good value for money. They were the last of the real genuine navvies, and during the war became the C.C.C. men and were sent to different parts of N.S.W. to build Army roads and Airfields, as most of them were too old for war service.

I was to remain with them for two years and learned just how tough they were, and how much their help and friendship came to mean to me for they really helped me over some rough spots. I also learned of their lives in and around the Shire.

The gang at Cronulla comprised of Tom Cole, Riding Ganger from Miranda; Jack Medlin, Six Ways, Miranda; Perce Steele, Cronulla; Bert Hudson, Caringbah; Harry Loveday, Miranda; Joshua Browne, Cronulla; Jack Osborne, Miranda; Bill Wally, Cronulla; George Bloxham, (truck), Miranda; Fred Lumb, Woollooware; Duncan Swan, Cronulla; The Stanton brothers, Cronulla; Bill Thorgood, Leading Hand, Miranda.

Gordon Wakeham

SURF PATROL

Fifty years ago last summer an aircraft was used to patrol the coast and beaches from Palm Beach to Cronulla. Known as Surf Patrol No.1, the plane used was a low wing British made twin engined Mono-spar, with a cruising speed of 105 m.p.h.

In charge of the Patrol was a very experienced Rex Nicholls the trans-Tasman flier. Earlier in a cramped in the cabin of a single engined plane with Whitehead, he flew from Sydney, landing at Ninety Mile Beach in New Zealand.

Cost of the Patrol was borne by Radio Station 2U W and McWilliams Wines. If a shark was sighted or a person in distress, Nicholls or another pilot dropped a red marker, and transmitted a mess-to Station 2UW, and a warning broadcast. Radio receivers operated close to patrols on every beach. Acknowledgement for all clear was received by the pilot by hand signal or wave from the beach patrol and the plane continued on its flight.

Source: "Wireless Weekly", 1934. in writers files.

-Fred Midgley

Rex Nicholls and Jack Larkin of No.1
Surf Patrol in the Monospar



GYMEA' S PROGRESS

GyMEA was named after the GyMEA Lily by Government Surveyor A.B. Greaves in 1855. When my parents brought me to GyMEA in January, 1915, with my brother Jack and sisters Doris and Clarice, the steam tram ran to Cronulla; you caught it at Sutherland after travelling by steam train from Sydney or intermediate stations. Many city folk came to our beautiful area for day picnics or week-ends. It was full of lovely bush walks, had plenty of swimming areas in their natural state with an abundance of birds and lovely wildflowers, Flannel flowers, Bluebells, Dog Roses, Boronia, Christmas Bells and Bush, to name a few, and many ferns.

Most folk would build their own homes or pay a carpenter etc. to build what they then called the shell, which is all the main outside part of a home. They would then line it as they could find the money and time to do it. This was a cheaper way, they just couldn't afford a home otherwise. Because in, as some folk hear it called "The good old days", money was scarce, folk lived on one wage of £2.0.0; families were larger, my family later became six when my sister Iris and brother Hector were born.

There was no electricity - washing was done in a fuel copper or outside in a Kerosene tin - ironing was done with a flat iron, the more wealthy used Mrs. Potts irons. Later petrol irons made it an easier job, as more starch was used in clothes then than now. Cooking was also done on fuel stoves. Most people grew their own vegetables and had a cow, horse and fowls.

Children used to walk to school or ride a horse. Alums took Dads by horse and sulky to Sutherland to catch steam trains, to get to work early.

In 1934 when Fred and I married things were only a little better; after the depression and war, things started to develop slowly. It helped a lot when the electric train - which opened in 1939 - would take you through from GyMEA either to the City or Cronulla.

A small school was started in GyMEA Bay Road, GyMEA Bay in Nov-ember, 1935 - on the opposite side of the road to the present day school, close to Vernon Avenue. It was really just the building) parents worked hard together donating books for the library, sports gear and many other extras. I was pleased my four daughters Joan, Val, Fay and Doris were educated there. The teachers were good. Mr. Brawn was Headmaster when Joan started there, and Miss Jordan was his assistant. Air. Brawn made up a lovely song "Boys and Girls from GyMEA". Mr. Shelldrick, Miss Bee, Mr. Bamborough and Mr. Keightley are names of a few teachers. During the war the school had its own Junior Red Cross, and they were quoted in the Junior Red Cross book as doing a good effort. Believe me they worked very hard all of them. Cecile South (now Airs. Sheaves) was President, my daughter Joan (now Bates) Secretary, Margaret Proctor (now Weetfallen) Treasurer, Aileen Cotterel, Nancy Reid and Noeline Swift helped a lot with tuckshops. My Fay and Doris made toffee on one of these occasions. They looked lovely with hundreds and thousands on top, but alas, two boys on eating them got them stuck in their teeth, and got a tooth out and a sweet for one penny. When the boys grumbled the girls said "you did get a bargain you know". I'm not sure if they thought that.

As the school got crowded a new school was built and sixth class and Kindergarten moved to the partly finished school in July, 1954. Other classes moved on completion of more rooms. Mr. E.G. Whitlam officially opened the school. I was there; it was another progress

for Gymea which was by now growing fast. Incidentally my girls all did well at High School and in their positions. Joan was Dux of the school in 1947.

Gymea today is a lovely "Village" town; I've many memories of her and folks I've known and still know. I'm still a Gymea Senior Citizen Member although I now live at Cronulla.

Phyllis Rugless

AN EARLY RESIDENT.

Well known resident of Heathcote , Stan Gray celebrated his 80th birthday on the 31st of August, 1985, at a surprise party given by his wife Iris, and family at his home.

Many people who worked with Stan in the Royal National Park and others who knew him a long time attended. Stan's father had worked in the Park and Stan was brought up there and for many years man-aged the boatshed at Audley.

The Birthday Cake was made in the shape of a boatshed, fitting for a man who had spent so much of his life there.

I have known Stan, his parents and family for over seventy years.

-----Phyllis Rugless

MONTHLY GENERAL MEETINGS

August 9: Mr. Vic. Hayes; Address on - MOTOR BUS SERVICES IN SUTHERLAND SHIRE.

September 13: Mr. Ian Badham; Address on - HELICOPTER SURF AND RESCUE SERVICE

October 11: Mr. Will Newton; Address on - BUSBY'S BORE

***** *****

RANGER AND THE BEES

The father of Bill Collins the well known Television personality was a tall man and was employed as a ranger in the National Park. Another man Charlie King worked on the pipe line, King had been a policeman in India, and was also a ranger in the Park. They carried out their jobs mounted on horseback.

On Sundays - his day off - Collins would set out with a sugar bag inside of which was a part kerosene tin in search of honey. He would walk to Loftus Heights from Sutherland, then would descend to Kangaroo Creek in the National Park. He also carried a three quarter axe, and would climb trees in search native bee honey. When he found a nest he cut a hole in it, and after extracting the honey he would nail the hole over with a piece of tin. This ensured that the bees would stay.

Source: From an interview with Mr. B. McPherson of Sutherland on 30-8-1978.

Fred)Midgley

COMO ELECTRIC RAILWAY ESTATE

It was called the Electric Railway Estate by the vendors, H. W. Horning & Co., of Martin Place, Sydney, because it was "on the first line to be electrified" and was no doubt a strong selling point to prospective buyers.

One hundred and sixty lots were put up for auction on Anniversary Day, January 26, 1924, with terms of £3.00 deposit with the balance in monthly payments of 25/-. Interest was 6% with 5% discount for those who paid cash within 30 days from the date of sale.

Solicitors to the Estate were T.J. Purchell & McCarthy of Sydney, and the surveying was carried out by Griffen & Harrison of George Street, Sydney.

The subdivisions, numbers 1 to 154 were bounded by Woronora Crescent and Wolger Street, with another 15 on the western side of the Woronora Crescent, seven of which had "absolute water frontages" on the Woronora River.

A huge marquee, with seating, was erected on the site, as the Auction set down to commence at 2.30 pm, would go ahead wet or fine. For those who wanted to make a picnic of the occasion there was boiling water and drinking water free of charge.

"Buy land near the railway station" was the catch cry of H. W. Horning & Co's posters and advertisements, where there is "Fishing, boating, swimming and oystering" and "Prices would be fixed by the public in the most gilt edged proposition on the Real Estate market"

When the line was electrified, said Horning & Co., it would be connected with the underground City railway, with stations at Liver pool street, King street, Wynyard Square, Town Hall and Circular Quay". From home to office in cleanliness and comfort, and without changing trains, they emphasised.

The Estate was described as beautiful, park-like, table land elevated and healthy, possessing glorious panoramic river views, and with great potential values. Here were their reasons why.

The Estate is situated on the first line to be electrified.

1. Only 35 minutes by the train from the City - much less with electrification
2. Six minutes comfortable walk from the Estate to the station.
3. Como is on the Railway line connecting Sydney with the future great Australian Federal Port (only 16 miles required to be constructed to complete the connection), and another bridge will be constructed on the western side of the present bridge at Como, but at a higher point on the Oatley side, immediately to the west of the present bridge, and will be carried thence by a large modern bridge to the opposite point at Como, and the future railway linking up Sydney and the Federal Port and Federal Capital will touch this Estate (so that some of the land which will be sold as residential lots are potential business sites). This important projected railway alteration has become necessary. (a) to reduce the almost unworkable grade between Como and Sutherland; (b) because the bridge at Como is so narrow that it can only carry a single track and duplication is imperative; (c) because of the phenomenal growth of traffic on this line; (d) because of electrification; and (e) in view of duplication of the South Coast line and the establishment of the Federal Port 16 miles beyond the terminus of this line - the latter being the great factor which is going to make this one of the most important railways in the world.

5. From the train you can watch the huge work of the Railway Commissioners proceeding between Kogarah and Como on which large gangs of railway men are employed.
6. Population closing in on Como! - Within recent years the growth of the suburbs along the Illawarra line towards Como has been phenomenal. Vacant spaces have rapidly filled up maturing into business and densely populated residential centres with astonishing speed. Even Sutherland which is three miles farther on from Sydney than Como, has in the last few years sprung into a thriving residential and business centre, while the sub-divisional land as far as Water-fall has been bought up, because of the electrification of the line to that point. So Como is the centre of rising values! Buy now and profit as values go up!

Source. The "Sydney Sun", Mitchell Library, Sydney. H.W. Horning & Co..
Lithographed Posters.

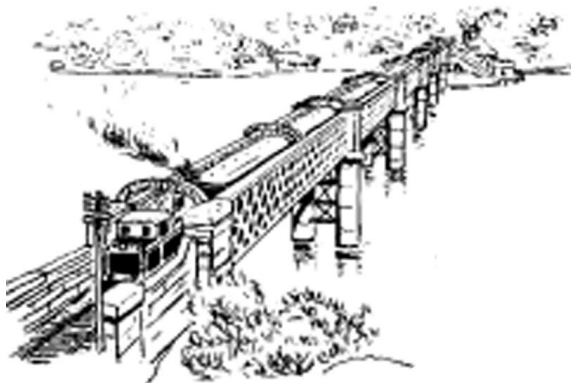
Note: It is interesting observe that in the coaxing and appeal to even reluctant buyers, there is a certain amount of prophesy that has come true, but the clamour for a high level bridge never came to be. Reference to the Federal Port is certainly that of Jervis Bay.

The first electric train ran to Oatley from Sydney on March 1st., 1926, the service being extended to Sutherland on August 12, 1926.

Fred Midgley

COMO RAILWAY BRIDGE

The Hon. Mr. John Sutherland, a Minister in the Parkes-Parnell N.S.W. Government of the 1870s fought for some 12 years to obtain the finance necessary to allow his dream of extending the Illawarra Railway over the Georges River, but by the time the grant came through his Government was out of office.



The Como bridge was constructed in 1884-85 and has been classified by the National Trust. It is the largest of ten single track lattice girder bridges built in the years 1871-88, the era of rail expansion. The Trust would like to see the bridge maintained, and used as a cycle-way.

The opening, of the Railway to Illawarra was celebrated by a Grand Ball held at the Wollongong Towel Hall on Wednesday, October 3rd., 1888, at 8pm. under the patronage of the Governor and Lady Carrington who formally opened the line. Ball tickets were sold and these included a 1st. class return ticket to Wollongong, available for three days and was sold from all stations on the Illawarra Line. There were both Gentlemen's and Ladies tickets. -----George Heavens

Tim Thornton was about 10 years of age when he came to Sutherland about 1898, with the family who had resided at Lithgow. First of the family to come and reside in Sutherland was an uncle, Joseph Thornton in 1897 selecting ground in Waratah street and Bath road, where Armco stands to-day. He built a house on the selection, then went back to Lithgow to the Ironworks in which the family was involved.

In 1898 Tim Thornton's father and family, with uncles Dave and Joe came to Sutherland, each family settling on a portion of the land taken up by uncle Joe. Dave started a poultry farm, Tim's father took up residence in the centre, with Joe next door.

Tim Thornton's father played in the Lithgow band on a trombone, and was also a band-master. He also played the violin. Prior to settling in Sutherland he was licensee of the "Court House Hotel" at Lithgow.

Earlier, Tim's father had bought into the Auckland Iron Works in New Zealand, sailing off on the "Tachapona". He lost everything there in the 1890 depression, and came back on the "Ilagamite". Both ships later sank.

On his return he worked for Browns Iron Works at Glebe, and then he found employment with Stanfords of Lithgow. He also bought into a syndicate of Lithgow iron workers.

As a boy Tim Thornton attended Sutherland school. One morning when the girls and boys were sitting in class, and Tim was sitting next to Charles Stapleton, an incident occurred relative to his teacher who, on entering the room swayed around and exclaimed in a loud slurred voice at the same time pointing his finger around, "Get the blowflies out"! Other teachers came and led him out at this unseemly conduct. On enquiring what the teacher meant, Tim was told by Chas. Stapleton, pointing to his head at the same time, "He's got blowflies in his bonnet".

The teacher was nearly always 'paralytic drunk', even at 6.30 in the morning, being a patron of Bramleys Hotel. He had been teaching at Hurstville before being transferred to Sutherland.

When a police officer from Cronulla, who was relieving Sutherland's Constable Lewis was called about the incident he unwittingly said, "Send him to the lunatic asylum- and that's where the poor man went, succumbing to alcoholism.

Frederick Holt, son of the well known Thomas Holt of Sylvania gave each of the local boys a shilling for the planting of pine trees along the "madman's mile", a straight stretch of road on the southern side of the township of Sutherland to near the railway crossing at Loftus. Tim Thornton was one of the boys who planted the trees, many of which still stand.

Frederick Holt who was deaf and sometimes used a hearing trumpet, was struck by a train while crossing the line at Sutherland.

Tim Thornton was a keen cyclist in his youth, and joined the Peerless Cycle Club of Sutherland in 1909. With local men Alec Wilson and "Sunny" Bennett the blacksmith, he rode in the Sydney to Goulburn race which was won by Alec Mead of Enfield. On riding over the 'razor-back', "Sonny" Bennett had a bad fall.

Shooting of quail was disastrous for Tim Thornton on King Ed-Wards birthday on November 9, 1909. Another local resident, a mate of mine who had not handled a gun before was instructed and warned

how to use it by Tim Thornton.

He was using a double barrel loader of Tim Thornton's, and when Tim's red setter pointed to the birds, he fired to the right instead of to the left, and shot Tim, resulting in the loss of an eye and seventeen pellets in the head.

Thornton ran up the gully to the main road and old Peterson who had a dairy on the corner of Bath road and Sydney road (Princes Highway) came along with a milk cart, and Tim was taken to Moorcliffe hospital at the Rocks, in Sydney.

Dr. Pocksley, Dr. Marr and Dr. Knight, eye specialists attended to him and also Matron Mark. In evening newspaper they made out that a gun battle had ensued on North West Arm road.

Source: Interviews with Mr. Tim Thornton by Alf Midgley on 2/9/1976, and Fred Midgley on 10/7/1980.

-----Fred Midgley

OPTIMISTIC-DREAMER

A proposal received by Sutherland Shire Council from Mr. G.Davey, January, 1910.

"Some months ago I was honoured by being allowed to respectfully suggest to you one or two matters tending as I thought towards the development on proper lines of the front door of your promising Shire. I mean, of course Cronulla. In venturing to express the best of New Year wishes in relation to your future work, might I be allowed to urge the values of the Brennan Mono-rail in connection with the progress and full utilisation by the public of Cronulla and the National Park. In no part of Australia perhaps could we get a better object lesson in regard to the new invention. I dream of a traffic bridge across by Tom Uglys.

Why not also an ideal in front of us all of a mono-rail (electric) railway from Sans Souci by Commyn's Point right across the steam tram route to Lilli Pilli bringing the front of the National Park into touch with the metropolis. The scheme could embrace, say, a loop at the back of Simpsons (in the Park) and a return line to stretch back over the waters of Port Hacking to the Fisheries Point and thence back to the School of Arts at Cronulla. In later years, perhaps, the Hon. J.H. Carruthers would work to get a ferry from Botany to Kurnell, and a single rail line (perhaps an excursion tram) from that historic spot virtually along the top of the six mile beach and on to Cronulla. Something like that may yet come. In your capable hands I confidently leave the germ of the idea. The future of Cronulla warrants us thinking hard and "big" now whilst the way is clear for a model Scarborough of the South".

Source: St. George Call, January 15, 1910. -----F.M.

Caringbah. William Burns the timber merchant was a man of unpredictable character. This was illustrated by an employee, Beehag, who was told quite often by Burns, averaging a couple of times a week, at the end of a day's work, "Get going and don't come back". Beehag always turned up next day. However in the end he took Burns at his word and failed to appear any more, which caused the timber merchant to puzzle why.

Source: Mr. J.T.Nelson of Caringbah

EARLY-SUTHERLAND-AS-SEEN BY' TIM THORNTON

William Bramley had the first hotel in Sutherland on the eastern side of the railway (where the Railway Hotel stands to-day). Foster took over the hotel from Bramley, then Kitts. Ted Boyle followed Fitts in 1901, having worked as a doorman at Tattersalls in Sydney

Ted Boyle developed gangrene at Moree which resulted in him losing a leg. He was fitted with an artificial leg which many people did not know he had. Boyle became well known in Civic affairs, and in promoting local sporting activities in Sutherland.

Brady; an American negro, built a weatherboard house in Linden St. just below Waratah street where he lived with his family. The house is still standing. Brady had a barbers shop adjacent to Les. Peters Hotel, the Royal. Mrs. Peters was the licensee, but the business was run by her son who remained a bachelor.

When a circus came to Sutherland before the first World War it would set up on the paddock alongside Robertson street. Cricket was also played there..On one occasion when a donkey "hee-hawed", the horse of Vern Barnett the local dentist took fright and bolted down Robertson street from the hotel, dragging the sulky behind it, while Vern was enjoying a pint.



Wood chopping contests were often held in Sutherland in Boyle's lane in the early days. At one event a local man Fretus while pulling chips out had the tops of the fingers of one hand chopped off by Mick Hannan, a brother of "Big Bob" Hannan of Peakhurst, who was later a caretaker at the sanitary depot when it opened at Menai in 1939. Bell, a resident of the Shire, kept his axe so sharp that he could cut bread and butter with it.

Pigeon shooting also took place near the lane and local man Glen Dwyer was a champion shooter. An American pigeon shooter came to Australia and in a competition on a clearing near Boyle's Hall, Dwyer won £100 for being champion of the day.

Moorefields racecourse came into being when Pat Moore, who owned tracts of land at Kogarah pressed for a racecourse to be constructed there, which resulted in the proposed racecourse being lost at Sutherland, thus enabling the area to be dedicated as the Woronora Cemetery.

Charles Diston who was a proprietor of a coach line was Sutherland's first undertaker. He had a coach adapted for use as a hearse which was drawn by a horse who was extremely slow. A large black animal, it plodded on, and when pulling a sulky moved at the same funeral pace. Two local men, Bob Cook and Jack Dwyer used to wheel bodies from the funeral trains to the graves on a stretcher type conveyance mounted on bicycle type wheels at the Woronora Cemetery. This conveyance is still in the possession of the Cemetery Trust.

In contrast to the slow motion of Diston's horse were those owned by Alf Gough and Dan Wiggins who often challenged each other to races in their horse and sulkys down President Avenue.

Alice Loveday of Miranda was a lover of horses, and was an excellent horsewoman. She drove a horse drawn butter cart around the Shire in the employ of Wiggins, who had a depot on the Princes Highway, near the Kingsway.

Stella Thornton of Sutherland at one time won the Golden Sculls when she beat the Ericson sisters in a race on Middle Harbour, Sydney. She also raced in open championships against Gertie Baer from Lilli Pilli and Mathersons.

Tom Brown and Breeman built Sutherland's first School of Arts on the corner of Flora street and Linden street - where the monumental mason has been in business for many years. The building was constructed of bricks made at the pit on a site in the Woronora



Cemetery. It was two stories high and was only about 10ft. by 10ft., and had also a lower gable roof building adjoining.

Source: Interviews with Mr. Tim Thornton by Alf Midgley on 22/9/76, and Fred Midgley on 10/7/1980.

----- Fred Midgley

MENAI CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

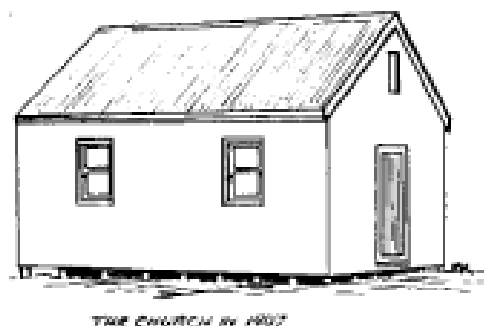
Donations to the building of Bangor's (Menai's) first church. The building was commenced in 1906, and was built by voluntary labour. It was opened and dedicated on January 2nd, 1907. Following are some donations towards the construction of the church,

October, 1906 Mr.C.Bentley	-----	£1-0-0
Mr.O.Jones	.....	£1-0-0
Mr.W.Shaw	.....	£1-0-0
Mr.W.Nicolson	.....	£5-0-0
Rev. L.Purnell	.....	£1-0-0
Mr.A.Midgley	.....	£2-0-0
		£12-0-0

Contributors to an organ fund in that same month were Mr.Fripp, Mr. G.Peake and Mr.W.Nicolson with one pound each.

Overall cost of the building was £24-8-10. Offerings at the open-ing and dedication service cleared the cost of the building debt by 4/- shillings.

Source: From the records of the church, now part of the Uniting Church in Australia.



-----F.M.

SUTHERLAND SHIRE COUNCIL 1912

Over 260 plans were inspected and passed for building, and there were 50 subdivisions. During the year the President interviewed the chief Commissioner for Railways to try and get a through ticket from Sydney to Cronulla, (train and tram), but was unsuccessful, the Commissioner would not grant any concession whatsoever.



Clr. E. W. Hyndman

The Minister for Works during the year appointed a Surf Bathing Committee to inquire into the conditions existing on the various beaches, how to improve those conditions where it was found necessary, and the accommodation required, and the cost of same. In connection with the sheds at Cronulla, the credit is due to Councillor J. Hill who designed and supervised their erection. The Committee recommended £1,170 to be spent on Cronulla Beach for further improvements.

In the early part of 1912, the Government accepted a tender for a bridge across the Woronora River at Cook's Crossing. The work was completed in October last, and it is a very substantial structure, The Government are also making a road to Menai, and when this road is completed, it will prove a great benefit to the settlers across the river, and the travelling public generally.

An amount of £4,700 was granted from the Minister of Works for work on Shire roads. A road has been started to Como, the first expenditure at Sutherland end being £138.

Council started the year with a cash balance of £635. The cash revenue for the year was £9,416, and the cash expenditure, £9,561.

The sum of £3,000 was spent in wages, averaging £66 per week. The number of contracts let was averaging about £40 a contract. The sum of £5,387-12-4 was spent on roads; kerbing and guttering £208; footpaths £118-11-8; drains etc. £130-2-1. £311-6-7 was spent on wharves - a new one at Como, and one at Bay Lane, Gunnamatta Bay.

Spent on health in the Shire £484-2-1. Providing for beach bathing, lavatories, band subsidy, advertising and lighting dangerous corners, £328-1-4 was spent; and bathing sheds cost £118-10-0.

Income from rates in 1907, £1,728; rates in 1911, £3,616; rates in 1912, £4,598.

Unimproved Capital Value rose from £234,000 to £635,000. The township of Sutherland grew by 41%, and Cronulla 34%. 260 cottages were erected during the year with a gross value of £60,000, an increase of nearly 50% over the previous year.

Mortality during the year, as registered, was 5 per 1000 of the estimated population. Only eight notifiable diseases were registered.

During the latter part of 1912 a surf boat was built and would be housed under the new ladies dressing rooms. A site for a pound was fixed, and it ought to minimise the cattle straying nuisance. The Council has also made many important resumption which should prove a great benefit to the public.

Source: Minutes of the President Clr. B.W. Hyndman of the Sutherland Shire Council, January, 1913, in the files of the writer.. -----Fred Midgley.

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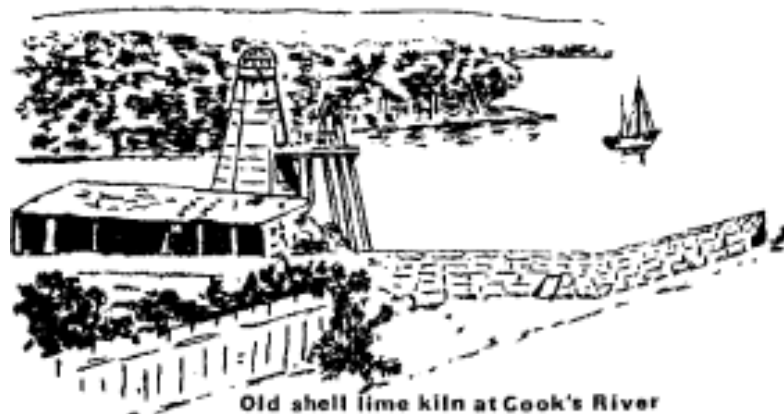
THE ESCAPE, A STORY OF THE 1850s.

In February, 1854, I started afoot from Sydney in company with two shipwrights, our destination being Cook's River. They had taken a contract to repair small craft engaged in the shell carrying industry between Weeney Bay and Cook's River at which place there was a kiln for burning the shell into lime. I carried a caulking box over my shoulder and my attire was as near as an approach to that of a shore lad as we could make it. It was mutually arranged that I was to pass as the son of the elder of the two men, although in reality I was nothing of the kind but simply a deserted midgy from a large ship then lying in the harbour from which the whole crew had cleared.

We had started on our journey early in order to incur the least possible wish of encountering any of the numerous police agents employed in those stirring days of the gold fever in hunting up any deserters from the merchant service. Many a ship had to wait for months before a crew could be got to man it for the homeward voyage.

However, we reached Cook's River without molestation, and Curtis, the owner of the craft was entrusted with the secret which he honourably kept. The men proceed to work on the boat and I was employed in boiling pitch for the canvas. At night I slept in the Curtis slab hut which stood on the slope a hundred yards or so from the kiln, and the little pier to which the craft was moored. The job occupied about a week and while the two men were finishing up on the afternoon of the last day I was away with the axe and barrow among some big trees getting some firewood for Mrs. Curtis and was on the point of starting back with my load when a horseman rode up and asked my name and occupation. He did not appear satisfied with my replies, and dismounting, accompanied me to the hut. We met Curtis outside who on being questioned by the constable (for he so proved) as to my name antecedents and business in the locality, upheld that my name was Hamilton and that my father was at that moment engaged with another shipwright in effecting repairs to the boat near the kiln. After an examination of some papers which he took from his pocket and suspicious glances at me, he remounted his horse and rode off.

Before Hamilton and his mate left on their return to Sydney it was arranged that I should go over in the vessel with Curtis to Weeney Bay on the following day, so as soon as it was dark I went on board and remained during the night. Curtis came at daybreak and we at once got under way and were through the channel amongst the mangrove flats and into the open waters of Botany Bay before the



Old shell lime kiln at Cook's River

sun was one hour high.

In beating across we happened at one time to be pretty close (as far as I can remember somewhere near the spot now occupied by Brighton-le-Sands) and had just got around on the other tack, when we heard a loud "coo-ee" and I saw a man emerge from the dense scrub. He begged to be taken aboard, so we lay, dropped the dinghy, and took him in. He turned out to be a shipmate of mine named Branch. He had spent the night and previous day among the mangrove swamps and had suffered terribly from thirst and Mosquito bites.

We reached Weeny Bay about mid-day and I was turned over to the care of "Long Ned", the boss of the shell getting concern who lived with his wife in a slab hut near the shore.

The next day we loaded Curtis' boat and on the following morning he was able to get away on his return trip to Cook's River. I do not know what Weeny Bay looks like now, but the time of which I write we had a full opportunity making acquaintance with the Australian bush in its primeval state and also with some fine specimens of humanity who were to be found here, and those frequenting it. We made a point of always having a load of shells ready for the craft,

and in the intervals between her visits we had an abundance of leisure which we employed in bee-hunting, fishing and shooting. Wild Honey was plentiful in the surrounding bush, and we were seldom without a keg of it in the hut. Shoals of bream, flathead and mullet frequented the deep waters of the bay, and an hour's sport in the dinghy with a couple of lines would furnish us all with a two days' supply.

There was a middle aged woman, hard faced and weather beaten, wife of a neighbouring settler who invariably accompanied us on our excursions. She could wield an axe or manage a boat with the best of us, and was always attired on those occasions in an old soft shirt, pea-jacket, slouch felt hat and heavy brogues, (a shoe of raw hide; pronounced brog, and peculiar to the Irish). She could beat us all at "stepping" a tree with her tomahawk. The blacks were more numerous in the vicinity than whites.'

I have a vivid recollection of a trip we once made to Port Hacking side and meeting on our arrival a fine looking well built man with a large black beard. He had a whale boat manned by aboriginals in which he took us up the Port Hacking river to a deserted peach orchard, where we all ate the delicious ripe fruit to repletion, and took away with us as many as we could, and so the days passed merrily between work and play during the six weeks of my stay at Weeny Bay under "Long Ned's kindly roof.

The time at length arrived when I was to bid farewell to Weeny Bay and the good folks who had given me food and shelter, in return for the little services I had rendered. The "Royal Stuart" had sailed. The news was brought across by Curtis who told us that she had got away on March 20, somewhat shorthanded of course as was the usual thing in those days.



Locality map showing Weeny Bay

I considered it would now be fairly safe to venture back to Sydney. Besides I was not anxious to spend more time than I could in helping to dig shells from the mud flats of Weeney Bay. My shipmate, Branch, however, decided to remain. On the 28th I crossed the Bay with reaching the little wharf at Cook's River the same evening, and passing the night with the Curtis family. I was told that the detective who had previously interviewed me lived in a house on Cook's River road, and that it would be well to make a detour across the flats at that particular spot to avoid, if possible, again coming in contact with him.

I started off the following morning accompanied by Curtis' son who piloted me by a circuitous course over the swampy flats covered with a profusion of wild flowers coming into the main road again near St, Peters church where my companion left me. All had so far turned out well, and I set out in high spirits along the road to Sydney. There was at that time a toll gate somewhere along that road. I cannot now locate the position, although I have occasion to remember it well. There was also a hitching post near it on the edge of the footway to which in passing I noticed that a horse was attached by the bridle.

I thought nothing of it at the time, and had gone about 50 yards past when a hand was laid on my shoulder, and on turning round I beheld my interviewer of the Cook's River episode. He asked me in a jocular manner, as I thought, if my ship had sailed, whereupon I gave him a true account of the whole matter. Then mounting his horse and bidding me to keep to the footway he escorted me to Sydney and to the Water Police Station where I was furnished with a ticket for the calaboose.

When I was brought before Mr. George Thornton the presiding magistrate at the Court next day, he questioned me on my several escapades, and then ordered my discharge.

Source; This article appeared in the issues of September 8 and 15, 1906, of the "St. George Call". The Author, Mr.G . Ellis was living at Hurstville at the time, and was nearing 70 years of age.

-----Fred Midgley

CRONULLA ABORIGINALS

The last two aboriginals living in the Cronulla area were known as Peter and Joe. They lived around near Kurnell. Joe died first and Peter, who was shorter and stouter, had a round full face. Peter caused some confusion by his reference to money for the "box" to a resident; Mr. Walker and others who thought he was asking for money.

It was eventually found that he was referring to the money for his coffin. The incidents related occurred in the late 192.0s at the be-ginning of the great depression.

Source: Mrs. Brown of Caringbah.

F.M.

How's that! Miranda Diggers who had a cricket team in the 1930s in the competition conducted by the Sutherland Shire Cricket Association a member of the team who was always last man in to bat. The man's name was Hodge, who in 38 innings never scored a run.

Source: Mr. S. Green of Miranda.

-----F.M.

EXCURSION REPORT

Since last Bulletin the Society has visited Goat Island and Parramatta, and by the time this issue is your hands, we will have spent a week-end in PORT STEPHENS DISTRICT.

The only other Excursion listed for 1985 is to Wiseman's Ferry on Saturday, November 30. Waiting list only at the moment, but it has been reduced and there could be more cancellations prior to the outing which you could fill; please contact Mrs. Cutbush if you wish to join us, Members \$7.50, visitors \$8.50 leaving Cronulla 7 a.m. and Sutherland 7.30a.m. The early start is necessary because it is such a long journey --- we hope ,to return to the Shire between 6 p.m. and 6.30 p.m.

A request has been made for us to undertake a three or four week-days trip in the New Year -- the Committee is looking into this possibility, but we would like to hear from other members if you would go with us on such a tour, suitability of time etc, being understood,

We have visited almost every place that is a convenient Friday evening drive, to allow reasonable arrival time; perhaps one extended tour and one week-end only could be the fair way if it be your wish. Please -- will you comment about this matter to one of the Excursion Committee (Messrs. D. Archer, J. Cutbush, K. Kirkby, S. Roberts, Mesdames A. Cutbush, V. Humphreys, and myself).

With December and January being holiday periods there will not be an outing in those months, but we are "looking at" a venue for a February outing. Of course, the hot weather must be taken into consideration with any plans for February. As this report is being prepared at the end of 3eptemben for publication for November Issue, we can only at this time promise to give definite advice by the November Meeting.

REMINDER: Bookings for all outings open at Meetings as announced; if you are unable to attend that meeting and telephone either Mrs. Cutbush or myself to have your name "put down", this is not dons until after the meeting. If the list fills by members attending, those 'phoned in go on waiting list -- if list not filled you are immediately placed on the tour list.

If you find it necessary to cancel and return tickets to Society, there is a cancellation fee of \$1.00; this assists when telephone calls are required, and quite often a number of calls are needed before it is convenient for a "waiting" name to be able to accept.

The Executive Council of the Society made this direction some years ago, but perhaps some of the newer folk were not aware of WHY?

Enquiries regarding the tours either to Mrs. Cutbush (523-8147) or myself (523-5801) _... bookings to Mrs. Cutbush.

AILEEN GRIFFITHS
EXCURSION CONVENER.

ILLAWARRA TO SYDNEY IN THE 1860s

After leaving Mr. Charles Mitchell's residence at Stanwell Park and seen all we could in Mitchell's vicinity we thanked our host and made back for the horses.

Taking a road that branched off in a westerly direction once more we ran into heavily timbered country. On reference to the map we found this to be Darkes Forest - and dark enough it was too. Keeping along the track we encountered a sign of civilisation in the form of a fence, and removing a panel we were not long arriving at a neat little homestead, kept as we soon found out by a man named Fisher.

One peculiarity of the place was a great flock of goats from the milk of which we found the Fisher family made excellent cheese. I mention that Mrs. Fisher was a French woman, and from Continental experience had learned this art. The cheese was first class and I could wish for nothing better. The goats were carefully herded, being let out during the daylight and returning home with regularity at dusk. A careful watch was necessary to subvert the ravages of the canis dingo, a rather numerous family in the district.

Fisher had a neat apple orchard which, together with the cheese and garden produce turned over a comfortable living. Good feed and water was here for our equines and in keeping with colonial hospitality renowned the world over, we accepted Fisher's invitation to spend the night at the homestead.

After having left the Fisher homestead we headed in a north-westerly direction and followed a faint track that brought us into another thickly timbered patch which, on reference to the chart turned out to be the fertile land giving rise to the Woronora River. After rounding this point we shaped our course in a N.N.E. direction heading for the Georges River where we knew we could cross and proceed back to the city. This track brought us through some beautiful scenery, and a very undulating nature of country, with clumps of stringy bark and bloodwood, with an occasional red gum. The track bore evidence of some heavy traffic in years gone by, and in some places the stony surface showed distinct wear of cart wheels. What caused this wear we could not ascertain, but the assumption was that residents of the Liverpool District, one of the earliest settlements came to this locality for stringy bark.

Being a rather a dry season we were anxious to water our horses and taking a gentle grade we found what appeared to be the Woronora River at the foot of our descent. It occurred to one of the party that such a splendid watershed as this would someday make a magnificent catchment area for the future city water supply. We could not be but struck by the many beautiful windings the river took in its course to the ocean, and we predicted for the spot a future ideal pleasure resort.

A SEQUEL. ILLAWARRA TO SYDNEY IN 1866.

After spending some time at Darkes Forest we happened on the farm of Mr. Fisher whose hospitality was most appreciated – we ' journeyed on. We were impressed by the number of goats roaming at large and the French influence in the home, with tiles, and several ways here and there made by Mrs. Fisher who was French.

After riding bush trails in rugged country for some time and hoping to find water for the horses we eventually sighted fresh

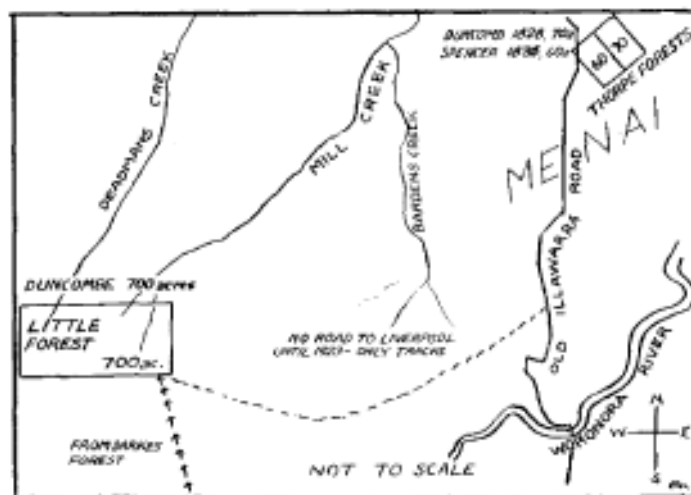
water flowing northwards from a ridge and urged our mounts down the hillside to the stream where we rested for some time, and as it was late in the afternoon, pitched camp.

The Woronora stream we noted could attract many to it, even for pleasure seeking. The rugged beauty of the place appealed to us. Next morning we broke camp, and watering the horses proceeded downstream, gradually rising out of the gully on to the high ranges.

However, the track back after traversing six or seven miles through uninteresting country with scant signs of use or activity,, we again met timber at Little Forest. The prospects brightened and different tracks came into view which we found to be tracks of timber cutters from Little Forest. Soil in the locality was of first order, and I cannot remember seeing such ironbark, blackbutt, and mahogany. From information from the timber getters we directed our steps eastwards towards what is known as Thorps Forest. We arrived at this spot to discover relics of fencing, evidences of cleared land and remains of a homestead.

From here we wended our way to the Woronora River which we reached where there was a crossing passable at low tide. Good land and timber on either bank and approaches promised stiff work traversing rocky slopes. Seeing signs of civilisation hereabout we explored a little and happened upon two or three disused habitations. Although the opportunity afforded crossing at low water we decided to erect. camp and turn in for the night.

Source: Both Illawarra to Sydney articles by "One of the old sort", from the "St. George Call", 1907. -----F. A. M.



WORONORA DAM

In reply to Sutherland Council's request that more local men should be employed on the Woronora dam construction the Water Board advised that on certain work it was the practice to employ experienced men who were able to do the work better. The Shire Clerk, Mr. Kirkby, said there were 400 men on the Council's waiting list.

"S.C.A.M, 1929.