

# SUTHERLAND SHIRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## QUARTERLY BULLETIN



No. 73

August 1990

Price: 20

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PRESIDENT'S REMARKS.

We welcome back Harold and Athalie Ivers, from their wonderful trip to America -- we look forward to hearing about some of the historic places they visited whilst on tour.

Members -- we have a number of receipts for fees paid during the year and would be glad if you would ask the Hon. Secretary for yours, when at a meeting. Postage is so high now, it is too costly to send them separately, and the terms of our Bulk Postage Rate for the Bulletin do not permit their inclusion therein. In future years, we will be asking for a stamped -self-addressed envelope if you require receipt posted.

The Society Museum is open on the first Saturday of each month - please advertise this amongst your friends to encourage larger attendance. It is very well presented and is commended to you.

As always, Mr. Midgley seeks contributions to the Bulletin --- if you are able to write an article, please do so, and let us have it by first week of the month prior to publication.

MONTHLY GENERAL MEETINGS

August	10:	Dr. Andrew Fell, a Chiropractor will speak on the history of the profession.
Sept.	14;	Mr. Wood from the Land Titles Office.
October	12:	Dorothy Nixon. The history of dolls.

*Gileen Griffiths*

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25th ANNIVERSARY

The Society will be celebrating its 25th Anniversary about April next year in the Rainbow Room of the Sutherland Entertainment Centre with a Dinner.

This function was suggested at the Council of the Society and was fully approved by the members at the monthly General meeting on Friday, July 13.

Up to 100 guests can be accommodated at the 3 course Dinner at which there will be a guest speaker.

More details in the November issue of the Society's Quarterly Bulletin.

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SOME OF THE GOOD OLD DAYS, BY GEORGE.

Poverty and hunger did not start in Sydney by any means in the 1930s, following the depression, no sir. I recall in 1925 I was walking home from work one evening with my father, along Bulwarra road in Ultimo where I worked at Pymont in a big timber mill; Saxtons. We used to walk to Sydney railway station to save the 2d tram fare. 'As we walked, a little boy about 8 years old came up to my father and said, "Please, mister, can you reach down there my arm is not long enough. Dad looked down, Below ground level was a window lite. On the top of the architrave was a crust of bread. Dad got it and gave it to the boy who said Thank you mister", broke it in halves and gave half to his sister and they both immediately ran off eating it.

We worked in a factory. Our buildings were four stories high, so the sun seldom saw the ground, except at lunch time, high twelve, Many of the men used to leave the building taking 3 pieces of wood blocks, to sit on while they ate their lunch, in the winter in the sun and in summer in the shade on the other side of the road. When the whistle blew telling that you had 5 minutes before starting time, the men would get up leaving the blocks of wood. This was immediately grabbed by old women or kids who had waited all through our lunch time, They would stand alongside one man so they got his pieces of wood for their fire, One dirty looking old woman had a golden syrup box with rope tied on it. she would drag it along like a billy cart, although it had no wheels. She would grab two or three lots if she could, even knocking the smaller kids over in her haste, then off home dragging her cart behind her. My father got sick of balancing on blocks, so one day he made himself a rough stool, carrying it in and out with him each day. One day a grubby little girl went up to him while he was sitting there and said to him "You are a nice man, but, why do you bring a chair out with you, why don't you bring firewood like everyone else?" Dad looked at her and said "Well, seeing you asked me so nice, I'll give you my chair today to take home, and I'll bring some blocks for you every day from now on." Which he did from then on. Dad's little girl as we called her was there every day to see he kept his word.

Some of our blokes didn't have many teeth and couldn't eat crusts, they would eat as close as they could to the edge then throw the crusts at the gutter, but no crust ever arrived at the edge, it was always salvaged before it hit the ground, they were always that hungry. Some would be eaten there but a lot were taken home. As we knocked off at 5P.M. and teamed out of the gate, we were always met by an army of kids who would call out "any sandwiches, please. Those were the days of real poverty, every needy family now, here, can get the dole, but not in those days,

— — George Heavens.

### THE HISTORY OF OUR (ROMAN) CALENDAR.

The starting point was the year 3761 A.M.(Annus Mundi.) on the Jewish calendar.

From that point we denoted B. C. (Before Christ.) and A. D.) (Anno Domini.) This was the 753rd year after the foundation of Rome.

The calendar as we know it evolved from a Roman calendar established by Romulus. It consisted of a year spanning 304 days which were divided into ten months, commencing with March. This was later modified by Numa, who added two extra months, January and February, making a year consisting of twelve months of 29 and 30 days alternatively, plus one extra day making a year of 355 days. This calendar required the use of an intercalary month of 22 or 23 days each alternate year, but by the year 46 BC the calendar had gotten into such a mess that Julius Caesar asked the help of the Egyptian astronomer Sosigenes as he had discovered the calendar had fallen into confusion. This led to the adoption of the Julian calendar in the year 45 BC.

In fact the year 46 BC. had to be made of 445 days to adjust to earlier faults and is known as " the year of confusion:'

This system of calendar was introduced into England by St. Augustine about A.D.596. but was not put into general use for many years and was ordered to be used by the bishops, at the council of Chelsea in AD 816, 220 years later.

In the Julian calendar all centennial years were leap years (I.E. 1200 1300, 1400, etc.) and for this reason toward the end of the 16th century there was found to be a difference of ten days between the Tropical and calendar years. This was corrected in 1582 when Pope Gregory ordained that October 5th become October 15th thus making a 10 days correction, and that only every fourth centennial year should be a leap year. This is known as the Gregorian calendar and is the one which we now use. It was adopted by Italy, France, and Portugal in 1582, Other countries made the correction at various dates up to as late as 1923. The change from the Julian to the Gregorian calendar did not take place in Great Britain and her dominions until 1752 when the correction was made, by the omission of eleven days, Wednesday the 2nd September being immediately followed by Thursday 14th September.

The Julian and Gregorian calendar are also sometimes referred to as the old style and the new style calendars. It is interesting to note that these terms originally applied to the date of the beginning of the year (New Years day.). In the Julian this was on the 25th March, and was changed to the 1st January in the Gregorian in England at the time of changing from the Julian to the Gregorian calendar in 1752. New years day was changed to January 1st in Scotland in the year 160C.

The Egainactial or Tropical year is the time that the earth takes to revolve around the sun, from one spring equinox to the next. This takes approximately 365.242119 mean solar days, or 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes and 45.216 seconds.

The equinox being the point where the sun crosses the equator, raking day and night equal.

The calendar year is 365 days except if the year number is devisable by four evenly, this being known as leap year and consists of 366 days. The last day of a century is not a leap year unless its number is devisable by 400.

i.e. the years 1800, 1900, were not leap years but the year 2000 is.

---George Heavens

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### SUTHERLAND CRONULLA TRAM

The tram had its first accident in December, 1911, without any damage to human life or limbs. When the last tram on a Wednesday night was near the Woollooware road stopping place it came into collision with a horse and cart belonging to Mr. W. P. Hayes. The horse was killed and the tram derailed. There were no passengers in the tram. All was put right in time for the next day's traffic.



THE TRAM AT SUTHERLAND

In April, 1920, the tram Service was disrupted for 3 hours on a Sunday night when the tram leaving Cronulla ran over a stray horse. Passengers arriving at Sutherland at 10 p.m. from the Sydney train had to walk to Miranda to catch a tram to Cronulla as the tram involved in the accident was derailed.

Another incident involving a horse occurred when the tram was on an unofficial trip over the line to Cronulla on Thursday morning, June 1st, 1911, when a number of officials were on board. All went well until the horse unaccustomed to such a large moving object, took fright and broke the shafts.

There are stories of the Council employees who had an arrangement with the drivers of the steam trams to cremate all small dead animals found along the road and the tram line in the fire box.

Mr. C. A. Lee, the then Minister for Works turned the first sod at Sutherland for the construction of the Sutherland - Cronulla tramway.

----St. George Call ---F.M.

Peter Turbet *The Aborigines of the Sydney District Before 1788*, Kangaroo Press, Kenthurst, 1989, pp 160, \$ 12.95.

Ros Bowden & Bill Bunbury *Being Aborigine': comments, Observations and Stories from Aboriginal Australians*, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Crows Nest. 1990, pp 121, \$14.99.

One of the more heartening developments in Australian society in recent years has been the increasing interest of Australians in the history, culture and sensitivities of the descendants of the indigenous inhabitants of this country. Surveys have shown that Australians want to know a lot more about Aborigines. Although the body of literature on Australian anthropology, prehistory and Aboriginal sociology is now vast, these two recent books, the first by Peter Turbet and the second by the ABC's Social History Unit producers Ros Bowden and Bill Bunbury, are a pleasing addition to those aimed at the general public.

Peter Turbet's *The Aborigines of the Sydney District* is an excellent, source for anyone who wants to gain some understanding of Sydney's aboriginal heritage, but teachers, students, local historians and bushwalkers will find it a particularly valuable reference work. The author has abstracted references to Aboriginal society from the diaries and letters of 18th and 19th century visitors and colonists and discussed and analysed them in the context of findings from modern archaeological and anthropological research. The book is divided into chapters on aspects of social organization, language, material culture, religion, art, kinship and hunting, fishing and food gathering. Those who wish to pursue further information will be glad of the end-notes, the detailed bibliography and the index.

In his final comments, Turbet has articulated feelings I have long held about Australia and its supposed "newness". He writes:

"Whenever I have heard Australia called 'a timeless land' I have always felt that what was meant was 'an ancient but empty land without a history'. Happily, non-Aborigines are coming more and more to realise just how old the history of this country really is. Part of the magic we can sense, in places like Europe and the Middle East derives from an awareness of the human events that took place in them. The English countryside, for example, owes much of its beauty and fascination to our knowledge of the peoples who occupied it for the last two millennia. In the same way, an acquaintance with Aboriginal culture adds something to our perception of the Australian landscape. At Currurrang we can stand at a campsite knowing that this is where people lived thousands of years before the pyramids were built. In a grasstree we can see not just a spectacular plant but a source of essential raw materials to untold generations."

In Sutherland Shire, our Council has long placed silly signs proclaiming the Shire as the "Birthplace of the Nation" merely because Captain Cook landed at Kurnell. Not only is this dismissive of the contribution of Dutch and

French navigators in exploring Australia, it negates some 50,000 years of Australia's Aboriginal heritage and thus a fundamental aspect of our nationhood. Perhaps in deference to Carbon-14 data from Currurrang (which after all is in our shire) we should extol Sutherland Shire's "Eight Millennia of human endeavour."

Being Aboriginal, on the other hand, is a distillation of several ABC Radio documentaries which have attempted to "give the Aboriginal experience of our times its true place in our history". In her introduction, Ros Bowden declares "Almost every contact I have with Aboriginal people forces me to rethink the way I am conditioned to understand things." The reader will also have his or her preconceptions unavoidably challenged by this book which is the product of emotionally potent oral history. Bowden and Bunbury have recorded reminiscences of life on reserves and captured the pain and anguish of Aboriginal parents and children separated by heartless assimilationists. But their book is also full of Aboriginal mirth and joy. Most importantly it celebrates the strengths of Aboriginality.

Over the years, Bill Bunbury and Ros Bowden (together with Ros' husband Tim) have recorded a staggering amount of Australia's past with dedication and sensitivity. The radio documentaries of the ABC's unique Social History Unit have won numerous media awards, yet their producers have not yet received the formal national recognition they deserve. It would seem we value cricketers and solo yachtspersons more!

----Edward Duyker

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#### MIRANDA MUSICAL SOCIETY

On Saturday, March 2nd, 1901, the Miranda Musical Society held a picnic to which they invited their friends. The National Park launch was chartered in charge of Mr. W. Reid. The party, numbering 40, embarked on the little craft at Yowie Bay and steamed to and fro on the waters of Port Hacking until a landing was made at Mr. Haig's place where lunch was taken. After lunch a varied programme of sports had been arranged.

The weather was beautiful, the arrangements perfect. When the party broke up at 8 p.m. everyone voted it was the most successful picnic ever held in Miranda.

On Tuesday, August 27, 1901, the Society gave a successful social at the residence of Mr. Carr and presented an illuminated address to their conductor. It was nicely framed and was presented by Mr. Johnson To Mr. J.W. MacFarlane, C.S.S.A. and T.S.F., College, London" ..\*

Earlier on August 10, the Society was defunct. Quite a number came to see Mrs. Mortlock. the Hon. Treasurer for their money which ranged from 9 pence to 4/10d., an error in the calculating made it necessary to submit the following explanation.

"Since the general meeting on Tuesday, July 23, it has been discovered that the Liquidating Committee omitted to include several contributions of members prior to September 18, 1900."

\* J.W. MacFarlane was appointed Shire Clerk of Sutherland Council in 1907. Source: St George Advocate.

----F.M.

THE CONTENTS OF THE MEDICINE CHEST

When my Mother passed on I had the doubtful honour of cleaning up the old home As I went through the medicine chest as we called it,-it was really a cupboard 71 found bottles and packets of many historical things, Boracic acid powder, very pure and finely powdered, to dry up sores. Carbolic acid crystals for bathing sores and cuts.

Alum crystals, ammonia lump, Prepared Chalk, I don't know what for. Frair's Balsam, for putting on busted knees, Camphor for the moths. Tasteless Castor oil, for lubricating parts and cleaning suddenly. Cascara fluid extract, for just sudden cleaning. Cod liver oil, this was good for you. So was Lanes Emulsion.

Chloride of lime, Citrate Magnesia, Essence of Bergamot, to me a Mystery. Citrate Magnesia, effervescing, I think this was used to make a drink with a lemon flavour that had Epsom salts in it, a spoonful in a glass of water that fizzed in your face while you drank it.

Creosote pure, I thought this was to stop White ants but it must have had some medicinal value too, for humans. This cost 6d a bottle, 1 oz. Glauber's salts, for use if things got too tough.

Gum Arabic, 2oz bottle 3d. Iodine, to make you hop when it was put on cuts and abrasions. It must have been good, it hurt enough. A few I don't know what they were for, Ipecacuanha wine, Lead (sugar of. ) Potassium Bromide, Potassium Chlorate, Saffron, Soda sulphate, Almond oil, Tinctures a Iron, of Myrrh, Quinine, Senna leaves for making senna tea. But how about Blands pills arsenic & strychnine, I suppose these were kept in case she ever caught the old man playing around, the bottle of 200 only cost 2/-. There were many more, too many to mention here. I got rid of the lot, things like Sal Ammoniac I kept, that is used for soldering brass, Saltpetre is for tanning skins, there were also some Seidlitz powders there. These used to be very popular, you mixed two powders one in each half glass of water, you then tipped one into the other and while they were effervescing you quickly drank it, I saw a chap once do it wrong. He mixed the glasses O.K. drank one then drank the other, Well what happened to him was nobodies business, I truely thought he was going to die. To wind this up - what do you do with Trinitrin, Saxin, Peptonic, Saffron, and Menthol Snuff?

Maybe I threw away a lot of good things but I'm still here, If I had followed the directions on some of those bottles I would not be here.

Source; Mothers cupboard,

Contributed George Heavens.



A VOYAGE TO AUSTRALIA.

Following are two letters of the Duncan family who migrated from Glasgow in 1884. James Duncan, his wife Ann Donaldson Duncan and children, James (Jnr), William, Mary Jane, Mina-Salmon, Jessie -Ross and Anne, left England on March 12, on the ship Bann, which anchored in. Botany Bay after a rough passage of 92 days on June 16.

One letter tells of some of the voyage and the other while the family was at Sutherland House, Sylvania. Spelling in the letter is from the original.

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VOYAGE OF THE SHIP 'BANN' FROM GLASGOW TO BOTANY BAY IN 1884.

The ship belongs to an Irish Company in London. Taking in her cargo at London which consisted of cement and machinery. She came around to the tail of the Bank of Greenock, anchoring there until the 15th of March where all the passengers luggage was taken on board and 450 emigrants. We started on the voyage about 3 o'clock on Saturday afternoon, the tug going with us until Sabbath morning. We did not make much progress until we were past the Mull of Castyre.

We went round the north and west of Island (Ireland) keeping sight of the west coast of Island. The ship was rolling a good deal and sickness has begun. Women and children getting very bad and also a good many of the men.. I was a little sick for a day and night only. Wife and children was very sick for about four days. I had a busy time of it nursing them. There was a very bad smell between decks for about a week with so much sickness.

March 19th. The wind is beginning to blow very hard and by night it increased to a perfect gale. Between, nine and ten o'clock we all thought it was to be our last. The ship was rolling from side to side, and the waves flying over her and flooding the decks and driving everything before it. There was a great amount of water come pouring down at the main hatch which terrified us a good deal.

On the above date (June 1st) we experienced one of the heaviest storms that we have encountered all the voyage. We was in Lat. 45 and Lon. 120 about 600 miles off the south west coasts of Australia.

It being on the Saturday night it began to blow from the north-west, and by midnight it was perfect hurricane with great: seas coming over the ship making her stagger and shake every now and again.

There was a great depth of water on the decks all Saturday night and Sabbath, but they lashed the main hatches and put on the cargo hatch too so that we was not in the danger that we was in on the first storm when there was nothing off that done. There was a little water down., but nothing at all to what came down at the first storm, there was a water closet and a coal bunker washed away on the Sunday, and one young woman's port was broken by the force of the storm which made them all terrified. But great praise is due to one of them that acted promptly in stopping up the port with a blanket. On Saturday night when they were Mowing the sacks there was one of the sailors fell from the foremast yard arm a distance of about 40 feet, but strange to say he was not very much hurt. He fell right on to the canvas that covers the fore-mast.

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Sutherland House,  
Sylvania,  
Georges River.

A letter

from James and Anne Duncan

To a friend.

I now sit down with pleasure to write to you the first letter from a foreign country after a long voyage of 95 days. I will first tell how we settled in this new country, then I will tell you about our voyage. We anchored on Tuesday morning 16th June, then the hiring for the Emigrants was on Friday. I was not long into the hiring room when I was engaged to go to the above place at 30/- per week, free house of four rooms, firewood and milk.

It is a gentleman's estate 14 miles from Sydney on the south bend of Georges River. We have to cross the river on a thing called a punt. I don't think there is such a thing in Scotland. The river is about one mile wide where we cross it., but there is bays in it which are 8 and nine miles wide. The principal bay is Botany Bay where Captain Cook first landed and discovered New South Wales. We have a fine view of it and all of the river up to the sea. Our house is partly furnished and we are not to seek any more until we see whether we are to stop here or not. We are about 100 yards from the river. There is no railway to our place but they are making one 2 or three miles farther down the river. They have to make a bridge across the river. It will be very handy when it is made. I thought I would like to see the railway.

A mate and another man got a small boat and went down the river about 3 miles to the place where they are making the railroad just now. There is a boatshed shop, a bakers, a grocers, a post-office and also a public house. There is any amount of them in this country and they were doing a good trade on Sabbath day. I got the offer of a job at the railroad, good pay and three years work if I liked to stay but as I have three months engagement where I am I could not take it. There is also about a hundred men on it. This is not a farming part of the country there is nothing but cattle grazing all together. Bush and water as far as the eye can see. The bush has been chopped down: some time ago where we are but it has all sprung up again and thick as ever.

The grand daughters of James and Anne Duncan, Flora and Jessie have given permission for the publication of these letters. Thanks also to Margaret McGlenn of Lane Cove.

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### RED CROSS

The Menai Branch of the Red Cross was inaugurated on September 15, 1943. Lady Owen of the State Executive addressed a fine gathering and gave a most interesting review of Red Cross work at home and abroad. Clr. Tucker the Shire President and Pastor Keith Matta of the Menai Congregational church conveyed their congratulations. It was reported that residents were already subscribing £7/10/- per month to support Prisoners of War.

The personnel of the first executive were : Mrs. W. Mayman, President, Mrs. W. Nicolson and Mrs. H. Mayman, Vice Presidents, Mrs. A. Delardes, Hon. Secretary and Mrs. H. Bray, Hon. Treasurer.

-----Fred Midgley

### GEORGES RIVER TRAGEDY

In the Catholic section of Woronora Cemetery stands a headstone erected to the memory of Sarah B. M. Woodward "accidentally drowned" on 4 March 1934. Behind this inscription lies a sad and in some ways disturbing story.

Cloud bursts struck Sydney on Saturday 3 March, but Sunday was fine and unseasonably hot - Adelaide experienced the highest temperatures in sixty-four years.

Early

Sunday morning, twenty year old Sarah Beatrice May Woodward left her parents' home at 62 Willington Street Arncliffe to travel by train from Turrella to East Hills, then walk another two blocks to the baths in East Hills Park on the Georges River. Sarah, known as Sally, an only child, was a deaf-mute.

She was said to be a strong swimmer. Diving into the river from a springboard, she was followed immediately by two youths, and failed to surface. Members of the baths life saving team promptly dived repeatedly under a wharf, sixteen feet wide, behind the springboard, but were unable to find her in the muddy water. Campsie police bought grappling irons, and her body was recovered from beneath the wharf later in the day. There was a slight swelling on the back of the dead girl's head, and police suspected that another person had dived on top of her. Canterbury Ambulance conveyed the body to her parents' house.

On Monday, 6 March, her funeral, conducted by T. J. Andrews, left the family home at 2.00p.m. for the Catholic section of Woronora Cemetery. Members of the Adult Deaf and Dumb Society gathered at Central Railway station to attend.

Strong tributes to the life saving team were offered by Senior Constable Dennis, giving evidence before the Parramatta Coroner, Mr R. Richardson Clark, sitting at Campsie. Owing to storms on Saturday, Georges River was very muddy and divers could not see underwater as they searched beneath the pier, where debris, admitted by badly holed mesh, formed snags. Repeated dives were made until any hope of retrieving the girl alive was lost.

Mr Frederick Woodward, the deceased's father, told the inquest he was not convinced his daughter had accidentally drowned; he believed she had died from a fractured skull when one of the two youths on the diving board had jumped on top of her.

The Coroner said he "thought" a fractured skull would have been more evident than the slight swelling noticed on the back of her head but agreed she had probably been struck in the water by a subsequent diver. It was a most regrettable occurrence and he was sure the young man was sorry. Following this platitude, he proceeded to record a verdict of accidental death by drowning.

While Constable Dennis and the Coroner spent much time praising, deservedly, the efforts of the rescue team,

one is startled by the perfunctory nature of the investigation.

The girl died on Sunday morning, her body was recovered later in the day, taken directly to her parents' home, and interred early Monday afternoon. There was no autopsy, today mandatory for accident victims. One wonders if a doctor examined her. No attempt, apparently, was made to identify the youth who dived on top of Sally Woodward and bear evidence from him. Not surprisingly, the girl's father was dissatisfied.

Number 62 Willington Road, high on the ridge above Turrella station, has since been demolished and replaced with a modern house; but the East Hills baths and jetty still survive. Sally Woodward is buried beside her father, who died in 1937.

From the late 'twenties onwards, netting was erected around baths, both on Sydney's beaches and inland water-ways, in response to the rising incidence of shark attacks. Even out of the surf, however, mesh tended to deteriorate quickly and become holed by debris. Within a few years, breaks sufficiently large to admit a shark were discovered in many cases.

----- Rhys Pidgeon

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#### LUGARNO FERRY

In April, 1911, a ratepayer made a claim to Hurstville Council for £3/10/6 for the breakage of an axle and expenses alleged to have been caused on the road to the punt. Another complaint was made that the attendant was over 70 years of age and was unable to perform his duty satisfactorily. Passengers also complained of having to wind the handle on the punt.

Alderman Hunt: "Is that so?"

The Mayor: "I don't know. But he's rather old."

Alderman Brown: "It's just a case of petty jealousy."

The Council then decided to refer the matter to the Public Works Department.

At the same Council meeting the Overseer's report was read and showed that on Easter Sunday the cable parted and the punt drifted down stream. Fortunately the detachment from the Easter camp was waiting to cross the river and the troopers went to the rescue. After securing the punt they set themselves the task of splicing the cable which held until a replacement was made.

Source: St. George Call, April 29, 1911.

-----F.M.

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During an early flood of the Woronora River, a boat shed was swept down-stream in the rushing waters. The shed was constructed of wood and fibro and when it crashed into the bridge the shed burst open and rowing boats floated out.

-----F.M.

## 150 YEARS OF POSTAGE STAMPS



Sir Rowland Hill, then Britain's Postmaster General, originated the postage stamp. At a Post Office Commission, on February 13, 1837, the question was raised as to the "inconvenience of employing envelopes in certain cases". Sir Rowland replied: "Perhaps this difficulty might be obviated by using a bit of paper just large enough to bear the printed stamp and covered at the back with a glutinous wash which the bringer might, by the application of a little moisture, attach to the back of the letter':

The first postage stamp issued to the public by the British Post Office was a penny stamp printed in black on May 1st, 1840. Sir Rowland's idea was executed by Joshua Bacon, engraver and printer, of Fleet Street, London, whose designs for a postage stamp were accepted by the Treasury. Model for the portrait was Henry Corbould's drawing of obverse of Wyon's medal commemorating Queen Victoria's visit to the Guildhall in 1837.

World history is largely shown in postage stamps. On their tiny faces are portrayed great events - war, epic achievements, nations' leaders, wildlife and views.

The first United States national stamp was sold on July 1st, 1847, superseding cities' own postage. Letter carriers in America were abolished in 1846 in favour of letter boxes.

The system of adhesive stamps soon spread all over the world, but at first the stamps were not perforated.

The first Australian adhesive stamp was issued in New South Wales on January 1st, 1850. There were three denominations designed and printed in Sydney of Sydney Views.

By 1878 stamp collecting was so popular that children made swaps at a stamp exchange in Paris. As soon as the first stamps had been issued Englishwomen took a fancy for papering whole rooms with cancelled postage stamps. In 1862, the first stamp catalogue listed a variety of 1200.



Above is the first British stamp, the Penny Black.

Source: Pix, August 3rd, 1940.

---Fred Midgley

### HERITAGE WEEK, 1990

The Society again participated in Heritage Week from April 22 to 29 with an Exhibition in the Entertainment Centre.

There was a large display of photographs of the Sutherland Shire in earlier days, including a display from the Shire Library. There were also many items once seen in everyday use in the home. In addition there was an assortment of old tools, and a small display to commemorate the 75th anniversary of Anzac. Amongst Mrs. Salt's photographs was a special arrangement marking the centenary of the Como Hotel, 1890 - 1990.

Main feature by the Society was the two contrasting Australian life styles. This involved the making of bush furniture for this display thanks to Mr. Ivers and Mr. Cutbush. These items will be kept for future use.

Attendances were not as high as last year when 3272 adults and children saw the display which was a record number. Adults attend-this year were 924 and 59 children accompanied by an adult. Children from schools attending in groups from year 3-4 to year 9 were 1112, the largest number attending being 422 of the Friday, the others being present on the Tuesday and Thursday. There were no school children in groups on the Monday. The Exhibition closed for Anzac Day.

The layout for the displays at the Entertainment Centre was very good allowing plenty of space for movement. A lot of the success was due to the planning by the Heritage Week sub Committee at which the Society is represented.

I sincerely thank the members of the Society for their assistance with the loan of items, the arranging and removal of the displays and forming a roster to look after the Exhibition.

The Society appreciates the publicity in the local press which was very good with the inclusion of photographs promoted by Council's Public Relations. The Society also expresses its thanks to the Shire Council and staff for their assistance in so many ways which contributed largely to the success of the Exhibition. Thanks, too, to the management and staff of the Sutherland Entertainment Centre.

With entries to the photographic competition displayed in the Rain-bow Room; the ladies with: their spinning and weaving and the folk dancers all added variety to the Exhibition. A number of people expressed their appreciation.

The Society's museum in the Sutherland School of Arts was opened on Sunday, April 29, to coincide with the free vintage bus trips organised for that day. There were 21 adults and 12 children who visited the museum.

*F. Milsby*

Exhibitions Convener

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The children enroute on the first horse bus from Gynea Bay to Sutherland were Bob, Stan and Thelma Gray, Jack Millham, Alf and Jean Warman, Les Doris and Vera Clarke. Driver and owner of the bus was Mr. Warman who was also the proprietor of the boat sheds at Gynea Bay.

Source: From the late Mick Derrey.

----F M

### HISTORY OF THE KURNELL ROAD

The area comprising Kurnell village south to the sand dunes was occupied in the mid nineteenth century by timber getters, fishermen and for grazing. The area was reached by horseback or on foot from the Cronulla end. Most people and goods accessed the area by boat from various locations around Botany Bay.

The idea of a permanent road or track between Kurnell and Cronulla/Caringbah was no doubt a popular talking point in those days.

Sutherland Shire Council was formed in late 1906 and a road to Kurnell was on the agenda without action. Again in 1910 Council agreed with the Trustees of the Captain Cook Landing Place Reserve to have a road constructed from Cronulla to Kurnell. Nothing eventuated.

In 1920 agitation for the Kurnell-Cronulla road continued. The Bolt Sutherland Co. offered to donate the land required with the proviso that Council and landowners to benefit would contribute a fair portion of the cost. Work did not proceed.

Things began to happen after Easter 1929, for years referred to by locals as 'Black Easter'. A strong southerly wind blew up on the Easter Monday and the afternoon ferries from La Perouse to Kurnell could not run because of the rough weather.

In those days Kurnell had a small regular population and a number of week-enders where people came across from the city via La Perouse on the ferry to spend the two days. In addition, of course, there were 'day trippers'.

The southerly wind came up during the Easter Monday, the ferries stopped running and the people across at Kurnell were stranded. There was no road or alternate transport out of Kurnell at this time. A group of people wanted desperately to get back to the city for work and their other activities during the week. A group of fourteen people, men and women, boarded a boat about 7 metres long to go from Kurnell across into Cooks River.

Sadly, the boat foundered on the bar at the entrance to Cooks River and all fourteen people were drowned.

In those days Cooks River was not the river it is today. It entered Botany Bay on the north side of the present airport. The river was re-routed after World War II as part of the expansion of Mascot Airport.

After the Easter 1929 tragedy, locals and regular visitors set out to build a track to Cronulla. They hacked a path through the trees and bushes and covered sandy stretches with cut ti-tree branches. The track wound its way around the edge of the high tide mark close to Quibray Bay and Woolooware Bay and thence on to Cronulla. Within weeks of completion sections in the sandy area had been covered by sand.

In those days there were heavy sand drifts and a lot more sand than is present today. It would be quite common to see the tops of telegraph poles just sticking out above the sand.

Local residents gradually improved the track away from the sand area by adding crushed rock and other solids. Rocks and stones were also continuously added in the swampy regions. Horseback riders and horse and carts used to take this track. Most people and freight were still brought in by the ferries from La Perouse and also the vessels plying up to the Cooks River and to wharves at Brighton and Doll's Point.

Two of the vessels operating from the early 1920's were 'The Erina' and 'The Favourite' and they carried freight down from wharves at Doll's Point, Botany and next to the old Brighton Baths.

In the late 1930's motor bikes and bike and sidecar outfits used to make the trip from Cronulla. Kurnell residents at this stage would take their boats around to Quibray Bay and walk along the track to Cronulla to go to the theatre. A feature in these days was Mr. Cortez, a Kurnell identity, plodding along the track in his horse and cart with his pet white cockatoo on his shoulder.

Council continued to urge Government for funds for a road to Kurnell. In 1929 the State Government promised Council a loan of 5,000 pounds to complete the road as unemployment relief work. The Public Works Department made it a condition that Council find an amount in excess of 5,000 pounds to complete the road. Council provided for this in its loan programme. However, the Government withdrew its offer on the grounds that the existing tracks were over private land and there was no dedicated strip for a road.

In 1930 Council put another proposal for the road as the birthplace of Australia still did not have road access. The State Public Works Department rejected the scheme. One of its reasons being the low labour content of the work. Public Works at this time were heavily tied to high labour content as unemployment relief.

By the late 1930's there was a sandstone section of road stretching from what is now the intersection of Cook Street and Prince Charles Parade along to about where Abbots is located. This was referred to by residents as 'the good road'.

In 1936 celebrations were being planned for the 150th Anniversary of settlement in 1938. The minister concerned with celebrations, Mr. J. M. Dunningham, became interested in the road and promised to make representation to the Federal Government to have the road built. The Council linked the issues of road and celebrations with a proposal to have the land between Cronulla and Kurnell declared a national reserve. Again nothing came to pass.

Mr. Dick Latta introduced the first passenger service on the Kurnell track in January 1947. At first he used a 1934 model 9 seater Stutz car. Later in 1947 he introduced a four wheel drive World War II Blitz Waggon built by Ford for periods of bad weather. This machine carried people and freight such as the newspapers and groceries. It did a Friday evening picture show trip back from the Cronulla Odeon. This trip included a 'comfort' stop at the old oyster shack at Quibray Bay. The Blitz Waggon also doubled up for collecting shell grit at Wanda.

In August 1947 the old Stutz gave up and Dick Latta purchased a 1929 REO, 21 seat, bus from the Kogarah Bus Company. His brother Bert drove this on the Cronulla-Kurnell run as the Kurnell Bus Service. Former Sutherland Shire Councillor Mr. John Weir was the first regular passenger on this service. Fare was one shilling and sixpence.

A feature of the bus was a shovel carried under the front seat. This allowed the passengers to help dig it out of sand and bog. One of the notorious traps was Cudgery Hole a swampy bog at the Kurnell edge of the sandhills. Another feature was a special closed off compartment at the back to carry Kurnell's bread supplies out from Cronulla.



The Latta's did most of the road maintenance from 1947 to 1950 to allow their service to continue.

Kurnell had a sort of revenge on authority for lack of a road at the occasion of the 1949 anniversary celebrations commemorating Captain Cook's discovery of NSW and the claiming of it for King George III. Some 500 visitors made the voyage by launch and ferry from La Perouse including Cabinet Ministers, judges, public servants and journalists.

As the last visitors were arriving cyclonic weather struck the bay with fierce winds and driving rain. The HMAS Murchison came into the bay with the State Governor on board. He was to preside over events. After an hour's wait in the severe wind and rain it was decided that he could not come ashore and that the ceremony would have to proceed without him.

At the completion of the dampened ceremonies as dusk approached, Mr. Fisher the ferry proprietor announced that his ferries could not return across the bay because of the risk in the seas. About 500 visitors were trapped between the storm driven waters and the sandhills.

The Kurnell folk offered uninhibited hospitality. Shelter, meals and hot tea were provided for all those stranded.

Men from the Army and Air Force had stood to attention in the rain for hours, waiting to provide the guard of honour for the Governor. To get home they had to march through the gale driven sand to Cronulla.

Mr. Latta's Blitz Waggon, RAAF trucks and four wheel drive vehicles carried out a shuttle service to Cronulla. It was 10 pm before the last visitor had been deposited at Cronulla. The Blitz Waggon was used many times to free RAAF trucks stuck in sand or swamp.

The Minister for Education, Mr. R. Heffron, was rescued from the scene in a car owned and driven by Shire Councillor Welch. The occasion was used to impress upon him the need for a road.

Representations continued for the road, reinforced by the anniversary experience. The residents' track was graded for use by motor vehicles. In September 1949 Army Training School members from Ingleburn damaged the track. They carried out training exercises in 14 heavy vehicles. After approaches to Mr. H. P. Lazzarini MHR, the army restored the track.

Late 1950 the Council served notice on landholders of intention to dedicate a strip of land 80 feet wide for a road. On October 30, 1950, the road was named Captain Cook Drive.

The road from Kurnell to Cronulla was finally built in 1953. The catalyst and the source of funds was Caltex which needed the road as part of the construction of the Australian Oil Refining Pty Ltd plant at Kurnell. It required an external element to end the years of buck passing between the levels of Government.

NSW Premier J. J. Cahill turned the first sod on February 28, 1953 and Caltex paid Sutherland Council its first payment of 50,000 pounds. The road was completed to Kurnell as a dirt road in September 1953. It was used in this form for a few months to allow it to settle and compact. Tar sealing was completed by Christmas 1953.

Caltex paid 155,956 pounds towards costs and Federal Aid grants were made available totalling 25,500 pounds. Total funds available were this 181,456 pounds..

The section of road from Cawarra Road in Caringbah and Bate Bay Road was opened in July 1954. Total expenditure at November 1954 was 177,000 pounds.

During construction of the refinery State Government double-decker buses were used to carry workers to and from the site each day. These were a familiar sight in 1954 and 1955 moving in convoy around the Cronulla district.

E. B Badger & Sons Pty Ltd was the prime contractor for construction of the refinery. They established offices at Miranda at the beginning to control the development. In September 1953 Badgers moved their offices to Kurnell.

The Kurnell road still weaves its way around the edges of Woolooware Bay and Quibray Bay. The road was upgraded for the 1970 visit of the Queen to Kurnell as part of the bi-centenary celebrations for Cook's discovery of Australia. Work included kerb and guttering and drainage from the shops out to the Service Station. The road edges were widened for most of the distance to Cronulla. This work was paid for by Council. In 1974 the straight section of road from the water Board entrance to the Towra Point gates was upgraded. The Council supplied funds for this work.

In more recent years upgradings have continued. The section on the straight leading into the village of Kurnell between Solander Street and Sir Joseph Banks Drive was upgraded in 1985. Funds were from the Federal Government Australian Bicentennial Road Development Programme (ABRD). The section from Hooker Sands to the Water Board Treatment Works was done in 1987/88. Funds were from ABRD Programme and Hooker Sands. This work was followed immediately by upgrading of the section from Hooker Sands back to Elouera Road. This work was paid for from State Urban Local Roads Programme funds.

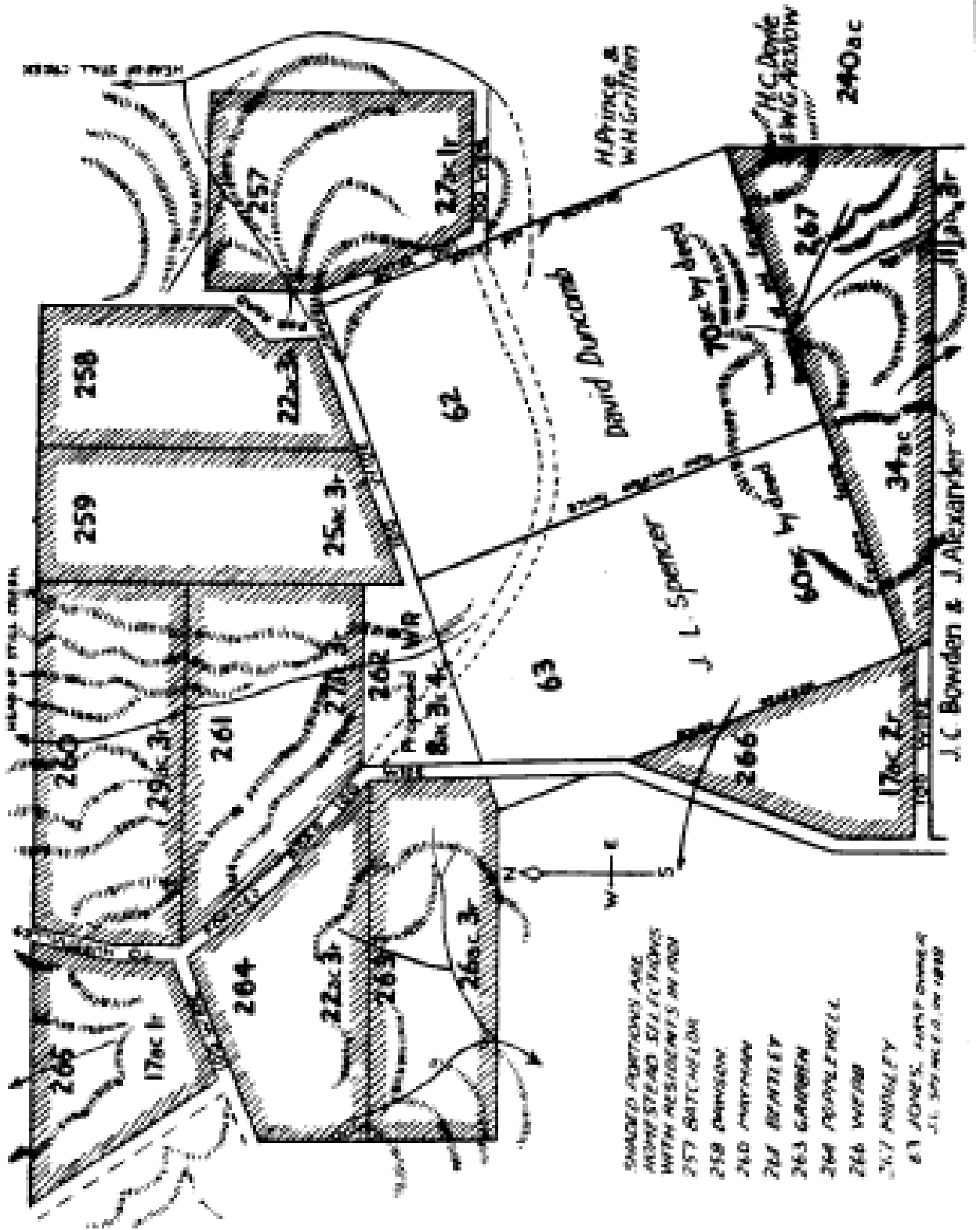
In late 1988 work started on a programme to complete upgrading of the main stretch of road from the Towra Point gates to Sir Joseph Banks Drive.

The section by Woolooware Bay is complete. Work is now progressing past the Monier entranceway. Funds for this work are from the State Government and Monier. A total of 3.3 million dollars is budgeted to complete this final section. While funds are mostly from the State Government private industry has made contributions.

A temporary roundabout at the junction of Elouera Road and Captain Cook Drive was completed in March 1989. This roundabout will be raised and rebuilt in the mid 1990's as part of reconstruction of the road into Caringbah.

I must acknowledge Mr. David Kirkby's book 'From Sails to Atoms' for much of this history. In addition I am indebted to Mr. John Weir a resident of Kurnell and former Councillor, to Mr. Des Hewitt of the Council Engineers Department and to Mrs. Jess Taylor (nee Honnor) a resident of Kurnell from 1915 to 1938, to Mrs. Betty L. Blyth a Caltex employee from 1952 to 1983 and to Mr. Ron Latta former proprietor of the Kurnell Bus service.

---J.A.Taylor



### THE WATER RESERVE AT MENAI.

At a Council meeting in Fay, 1909, the Council decided to sink a well for the convenience of Menai residents at the Water Reserve in their locality. At that time water had to be carried long distances and this well being in the centre of the settlement should be appreciated.

Since the early days of the district provision was made for such a well by the Government. When E.A. Harris, a Government surveyor completed his surveys of 10 Homestead Selections ranging from 17 to 34 acres on August 21st, 1896, marked on his maps was "proposed W.R.", this being Water Reserve. It was marked Res. No. 21905 and notified on 17th October, 1896.

The well was sunk by Sutherland Shire Council in 1909, in the Reserve on one of the heads of Still Creek, just off the then Menai Road which spanned a culvert there.

In the 1920s the Menai Progress Association pressed the Council to have the well covered in as it was a danger to children of the near-by school and straying stock. Council was prompt in covering the well. Small hand pumps were provided on several occasions by the Council but were always stolen.

Water was unfit for human consumption, and a notice was erected nearby.

Residents did make use of the well during periods of drought coming with various types of containers such as large disused oil drums in horse drawn vehicles and later motor vehicles.

As the years went by the well began to silt up until today its exact location is difficult to find. This historic site of the early days of Menai is to remain a Reserve in the new Town Centre and we trust that some kind of inscription will be mounted to indicate to future generations that here was a public water supply for the use of pioneer settlers and a reminder, too, of the forethought in the planning of a new settlement such a provision was made 94 years ago.

When Thomas Price, the first permanent settler to reside at the Woronora River in 1899 stated that in those early days there was a lemon tree growing near the Reserve Well. There was a sort of soak there, and once in later years a son Norman saw it dry. One wonders how a lemon tree came to be growing in such a place. Were the seeds planted or were they the result of some person throwing away the re-mains of a lemon? Prices called it the Lemon Tree Reserve.

Frederick Barden of Arncliffe took up 111 acres in 1900 south of and adjoining portions 266 and 267 and ran cattle on his property. He came out mostly at weekends residing in a hut but spent most of them hunting the surrounding hills and gullies for wallabies.

Barden had quite a large well on his property the water of which was much better than that of the Reserve Well. large heap of stone excavated from the well were used by the Shire Council in early days for reconstructing and repairs on Old Illawarra Road.

The map opposite shows the original survey of the 10 Homestead Selections in 1896 and clearly shows W.R. in the centre of the map. The new portion of Menai Road is shown in dotted lines replacing a section which included an "S" bend. It will be noted that no roads were surveyed in portion 262 originally.

Source: Writer's records.

-----Fred Midgley

## EXCURSION REPORT.

Australiana Village outing on Saturday May 19, was held on a 'most beautiful autumn day, and most successful in its arrangements.

The Picton Tour, July 21, will be over by the time this report is in your hands, but we are indebted to the Hon. Secretary of that Society for all the arrangements being made on our behalf.

All the arrangements have been finalised for the visit to Brush Farm on Saturday, September 22, and Mr. Buttrey is doing everything in his power to make it an enjoyable day. Cost to members is \$8,00 and Visitors \$10.00 -- leaving Cronulla 8.30 a.m. and Sutherland 9 a.m. At time of writing there are still a few seats available.

A week-end tour to Goulburn and Braidwood has been arranged for Friday to Sunday, November 2 - 4; leaving Cronulla at 5 p.m. Sutherland 5.30, returning late afternoon Sunday, As it will be daylight saving time, most of our travel, if not all, will be in daylight hours.

It is our intention to stay at Centretown Lagoon Motel, on Friday and Saturday Nights, travelling to Braidwood on Saturday; there we will be met by a Courier from Braidwood & District Society to act as our guide, and also for morning tea and luncheon requirements.

Special arrangements are being made for our dinner at the Motel on Saturday evening -- and on Sunday morning we are booked in for an inspection of the "Old Brewery" at 9.30 a.m. The rest of that day has not been finalised as yet, but we can guarantee you a most interesting time.

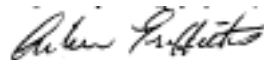
The cost of the week-end from Friday evening until the inspection of the Brewery on Sunday, will be \$128.00 members, \$133:00 . Visitors. Morning Tea available,. at the Brewery, but not included in your costing because some of our members prefer not to have morning tea).

Bookings are now open and we hope this will appeal to you as some of the places we expect to visit in Braidwood have not been a venue of this Society on a previous occasion, although a visit was made to some of the area many years ago.

The last outing for the year will be Saturday December 1; we shall go by coach to Berowra to join the "M.V. Macquarie Princess" for a two hour cruise, including Devonshire Morning Tea. After returning to the Marina we shall go to Fagin Park for luncheon, followed by an inspection of the Museum and other historic features of the Park, by courtesy of the Tourist Officer of Hornsby Shire Council.

Leaving. Cronulla at 8 a.m., Sutherland 8.30 a.m. cost will be \$17.00 members, \$19.00 visitors, fully inclusive Coach, Cruise, Morning Tea and entry to Park.

Bookings for all outings with Mrs. Ada Cutbush on 523-8147 -- -- any enquiries either Mrs. Cutbush or myself, on 523-5801.



EXCURSION CONVENER.

## THE ORIGINS OF LOFTUS AND LOFTUS VILLAGE

LOFTUS is named after Augustus William Frederick Spencer, Baron Loftus, who was governor of NSW from August 1879 to November 1885. The arrival of the new governor had coincided with the dedication of the National Park by the NSW Parliament in 1879, the second National

Park to be dedicated in the world. As it was the custom in those imperial times for new places to be named after governors and others who held similar elevated positions, the most important central northern area in the new National Park was named "Loftus."

From the beginning Loftus was closely associated with the National Park. Loftus was the name applied to the whole general area of the park, extending from its present suburban location to what is now the Royal National Park railway station. Strange as it may seem, the present Royal National Park railway station was called Loftus station and the present Loftus railway station, then actually situated some short distance south of the present station, was known as Loftus Junction.

The present suburb of Loftus was originally part of the National Park which at that time extended north to Sutherland and west to the Woronora River. The railway line which was extended from Sutherland to Waterfall in 1886 (making this year Loftus railway station's centenary year) ran through the National Park.

Most of Loftus's early development took place on the eastern side of the railway line. By 1893 two thousand acres of land had been cleared and planted with grass and some exotic ornamental trees while only those native trees and shrubs that were considered to be of ornamental value were retained. This area extended from the present Royal National Park railway station to Sutherland. A highly regarded shady carriage drive was built to run through this area from Sutherland.

The early Loftus area was also closely associated with the NSW colony's military forces. Annual Easter encampments were held from 1886 to 1914. The first encampment in 1886 attracted thirty thousand visitors who came to picnic and be entertained by the military display - quite a feat when it is realised that Sydney's total population was little more than 300,000. On Easter Monday 1886 so many people wanted to travel to Loftus for the display, the railway department was forced to use some cattle trucks to cope with the overflow of passengers.

## LOFTUS AS A SETTLEMENT TO 1945

We are fortunate in Loftus in that we have some senior people still living in Loftus who have been here since the beginning of the 20th century. As there seems little of this history recorded

in any of the archives we have invited some of these early Loftus residents to tell us about Loftus in the 'good old days.'

Mrs. Foster came to Loftus when she was one year old in 1904. She has lived here for 82 years! She has a remarkable memory.

Mrs. Foster's father had a poultry run on 2½ acres of what is now Orchid Street and National Avenue.

She attended school at Sutherland and walked to and fro each day. Sometimes she 'hitched' a ride on the horse bus travelling to its depot near the turn off to the National Park. The driver would never stop to pick them up or stop to let them down but they could hop on and off while it was travelling. In later years when she went to work she had to walk to Sutherland each day to catch the train - the 6.15 am from Loftus was too early and the 7.40 am too late. It was nearly always a run to Sutherland.

Her brothers, who were older than she, attended school at National Park. With the schoolmaster who lived in Loftus, they crossed the railway line over home-made steps then walked through the bush to a school fronting the water at National Park..

Delivery of goods was difficult. Delivery carts avoided the western side of the railway line - produce was left on the eastern side of the railway line and had to be collected and lifted manually over the line to the farm. Bread was delivered twice a week.

The road to Loftus village from Sutherland ran parallel to the railway line roughly along the route of Loftus Avenue. It was constructed in 1910 at a cost of £20 (\$40).

There were no fears of robbery in those days - Mrs. Foster left the insurance money on the back door step with the book to be collected if they were away from home.

Loftus station was located in those days near the crossing - a politician, Jeffrey Dodd built a beautiful brick home where the BP garage now stands and was glad when the station was moved to its present site - not so the Fosters. This house became the property of the Gilham family who have a long history of enterprise and goodwill in this area.

Mrs. Foster was married in the Catholic church in Sutherland which was then located on the western side of the railway line.

Mr. Foster had purchased 16 acres of land around Logan Street for an orchard - he bought the land at auction and could not buy less than 16 acres.

Changed as she sees Loftus today with fast trains, convenient shops and good roads and footpaths, Mrs. Foster would rather have it as it was back in the 'good old days.'

Early residents in Loftus were the O'Sullivan's and the Gerreds who were railway workers, Mr. Lobb the coachman, the Pearces who had the gate house and the McGraths who had the poultry run. Mrs. Foster was a Miss McGrath - her nephew and his family also still reside in Loftus.

The Gilham family managed the fibro plaster works which were on the Corner of Tenth and National Avenues. "Cracker night" at Gilham's, when all were invited, was a memorable night - no one seemed to want to go home.

For Mrs. Gilham it was not an unusual sight for her to see up to a dozen pairs of shoes on her verandah each morning. People traversing the rough roads to the station would swap shoes to go to town. They would leave the old pair on Gilham's verandah and step into their good ones. They would of course retrieve the old ones. on the way home.

Mrs. McLennan (sister of Mrs. Gilham) came to live in a little weatherboard house in Loftus Avenue opposite the signal box -

one of three little cottages. The rent was 5/- per week until the electricity was put on then it went up to 7/6d per week. These were hard times - there were a lot of shanty type dwellings around Loftus made from hessian and poles and corrugated iron.

Rumours still persist about residents who used to stand near the railway line enticing the drivers of the steam trains to shovel a bit of coal onto the side of the railway line to be taken home for the fireplace.

In 1937 Sutherland Shire council proposed the establishment of a sanitary dump in Loftus. This, of course, was in the not-so-far distant times before, first the septic tank, and more recently sewerage, made Loftus an easier and more fragrant place in which to live. So it is understandable that the Loftus residents of 1937, few as they were, became alarmed at the prospect of having other people's problems in the form of nightsoil (the official euphemism for human excrement) liberally



distributed on their doorsteps. The result was the formation of the Loftus Progress Association to oppose this project. In the end Loftus Progress Association won and the project was stopped, but it is interesting to speculate on how different the development of Loftus might have been if Loftus residents had not organised, fought and won.

Following this success the Loftus Progress Association continued to work for the betterment of Loftus and its people until the outbreak of war in 1939 drastically changed the situation. The war took the majority of mature male residents into the armed services. This placed additional work and pressures on the women of Loftus and this, combined with the severe limitations imposed on local government works by the war economy, led to the Loftus Progress Association going into recess from December, 1941 until October, 1944.

#### THE POST WAR BOOM 1945-1965.

Soon after the war ended in 1945 Loftus became involved in Sydney's post war expansion. Large areas of formerly semi-rural Loftus land were subdivided into building blocks that were soon being sold for as much as £50 to a breathtaking £200 each - a lot of money in those days. In no time the gullies around Loftus were echoing and re-echoing hammer blows from daylight to dark, seven days a week, as the new residents, many of them owner-builders, moved in and erected their mostly timber framed houses.

Of course many friends and relatives of those new post war Loftus residents told them that they were crazy for moving into an area almost completely without any services or amenities and always vulnerable to the periodic bush fires of the time. And maybe they were right, for in the immediate period after the war Loftus had only one 'made' road, Loftus Avenue, which had an unsealed gravel surface that very often turned a car journey to Sutherland into a challenging, dusty, bone-jarring expedition. In addition to this there were no shops, no schools, no sewerage, restricted mail deliveries, and for some no water (other than rain water) and no electricity. The railway station was built from sleepers and had oil lamps for lighting. However, despite all these disadvantages and the discouraging comments of others, people just kept on coming and Loftus grew and the new residents, mostly from the older better-endowed parental suburbs of Sydney, began to agitate for improvements and as a result the still young Loftus Progress Association entered a new phase.

From Loftus, 1886 - 1986 souvenir, Permission of Marjorie Blackley.

JOYFUL NOISES.

Can you remember the time when as you walked along the footpath you would hear the housewives singing as they went about their work in their houses. some had beautiful voices, they would all sing the latest songs that they had heard, taking into consideration, hearing the latest or any other song was not easy, there was no Radio or T.V. in those days, I'm thinking back about 75 years, There were Phonographs and Gramophones if you could afford one, The latest music came to us through the music halls from England. American songs were a bit on the coarse side. and in many instances wouldn't pass the censor; most dance halls had a guest singer who screeched her latest song taking up the time of a dance we wouldn't get. Small boys and the youth of the day would whistle when they walked down the street, tunes like Gilbert & Sullivan. These were bright and cheery, everybody knew them. At school we had singing classes once a week, where we sang Australiana type songs, like Click go the shears old sea shanties and not forgetting "Mother McCree".

When we went on a picnic we would stay until it was late making our way home in the twilight and the dark, We would sing as we walked along the road home, and, it would be a miracle if someone didn't pull a mouth-organ out and give an accompaniment. Sundays we were only allowed to sing hymns, occasionally a song suitable for the Sabbath, would be rendered by a visitor. 70 years ago we had the 6d songsters, a little book with all the latest song words in them, about 40 songs per copy, The music shop sold sheet music. At a house party everyone would gather around the piano and sing, Then came the pianola, this was wonderful as the words of the song were printed on the roll and as the paper passed down you could allow your vocal chords to-make a contribution. Then the radio came, and a human silence spread itself over the earth, no more do we hear the youth sing, they walk along the street with headphones on, looking like Zombies, as they listen to a walkman, and on arriving home turn the radio up as loud as thunder. The housewife doesn't sing any more she is content to listen to the T.V. or the radio. There are so many devices now that make noises, perhaps the amateur is better silenced and the professional listened to instead, although I feel the old way portrayed a truer showing of a happy home.

Contributed by Geo. Heavens.

COUNCIL OF THE SUTHERLAND SHIRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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SUTHERLAND SHIRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

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If your contribution is hand written, please print names in CAPITAL LETTERS.  
Contributions for the next issue must be in the hands of the Publications Convener no later than August 10.

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Meetings of the Society are held monthly on the second Friday at 8 p.m in the Shire Council's Administration Centre, Eton Street, Sutherland, on the 2nd floor. Visitors are welcome.

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

All correspondence should be addressed to:- The Secretary, Sutherland Shire Historical Society, P.O. Box 389, Sutherland, 2232

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