

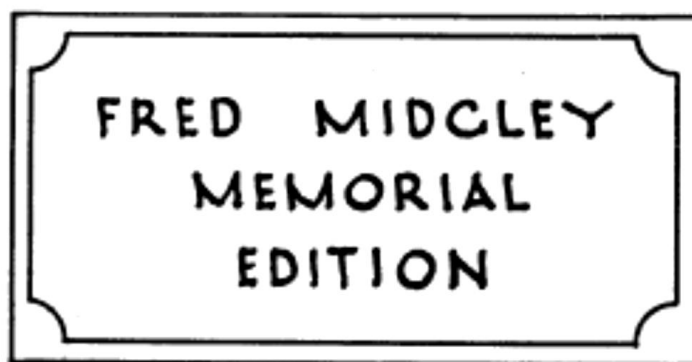


Artwork by the late Fred Midgley

No. 74

November 1990

Price: 20 Cents



This edition of the Bulletin is dedicated to the  
memory of the late Fred Midgley –  
Editor at the time of his passing in 1990

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### **What was life like in the early Days in Sutherland Shire ?**

Maybe your records could help in providing Information about people, places and events

The Local Studies Librarian Is interested In speaking to anyone who has Information or material on the history of the area.

Items such as photographs, maps, postcards, school yearbooks or diaries can contain vital Information.

Donations are gratefully accepted, however records can be copied and returned to you.

At present, the library Is seeking Information on the Port Hacking Road area In Caringbah in the twenties and thirties, as part of a research project supported by former resident, Professor Laurence Goddard.

Should you wish to contribute any Information, please contact Helen McDonald on ph. 521 0437.



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Quarterly Bulletin of the Sutherland Shire Historical Society

Edition No. 74

November 1990

Opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily  
those of the Sutherland Shire Historical Society.

PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

It was with very much sadness I learned that our friend and hard working Research Officer, Fred Midgley, had passed away, when I returned from my visit to the United States and Canada. Tributes are paid to Fred in following pages.

But, we offer once again our sincere sympathy to all his family --Fred will always be remembered by this Society and we are taking steps to have this memory perpetuated.

Because of the need for Council to put a 9 p.m. closing on the use of the Council Chambers Meeting Rooms, our Society has made a booking with the Uniting Church, Flora Street, Sutherland for our meeting nights. This Hall is next to the Service Station on corner of Eton and Flora Streets, just around the corner from the Council Chambers.

*Aileen Griffiths*

\*\*\*\*\*

MONTHLY GENERAL MEETINGS

November 9:       Quarantine Service - Plants  
December 14:     D.M.R. Film - Early Asian Roads  
January 11:       Members Night

(Members are asked to offer to take part in the "Members Night" by giving a short talk, or "reading a paper".)

\*\*\*\*\*

25th ANNIVERSARY DINNER

The 25th Anniversary Dinner being held to celebrate the Silver Anniversary of the Society's formation will be held on April Meeting Night -- Friday April, 12, 1991.

Although it cannot be confirmed until the New Year; we are hoping to have the then Shire President and former Senator, Arthur Gietzelt and Mr. Justice R. Else-Mitchell who was Guest Speaker, at the. foundation night, as our guests for the dinner Both gentlemen have expressed their interest and hope to be with us.

Tickets will be available from the December Meeting - costs will be available at the November Meeting, but unfortunately we could not conclude arrangements in time for the preparation of this Bulletin.

\*\*\*\*\*



FREDERICK ARTHUR MIDGLEY  
(1921 -- 1990)



VALE FREDERICK MIDGLEY

It was with very much regret we learned the popular dedicated Research Officer and friend of this Society, Fred Midgley, passed away on August 26, 1990.

Members showed their appreciation of Fred by the numbers who were able to attend the service in Menai Uniting Church and at the Woronora Cemetery.

The Midgley family came to live in Menai in 1899 and as a member of the second generation, Fred involved himself fully in the history of the family, the Sutherland Shire and other historic places.

Arranging the photographic displays so well known amongst organisations was a time consuming undertaking, yet Fred never refused an invitation unless it coincided with a prior booking. His slides and photographs were so much sought after.

Sutherland Shire Historical Society has been honoured by the support given to it by Fred Midgley and at this time we again place on record our deep appreciation of all he has contributed throughout the years -- as a Foundation

Member, Vice-President and Research Officer - Bulletin Editor, Exhibitions Officer, Honorary Life Member.

Aileen Griffiths

PRESIDENT



## FREDERICK ARTHUR MIDGLEY 7/9/21 - 26/8/90

The Sutherland Shire Historical Society pays tribute to Frederick Arthur Midgley (Fred) in this issue of the Bulletin because of his prominence in the Society, of which he has been a member since its beginning in 1966, through which time he has held various positions, mostly concurrently, in the group following: Vice President, Research Officer, Publications Officer and Exhibitions Officer.

Fred's parents, Lily and Arthur came to Menai with other settlers about 1897 taking up land sufficient for farming. Arthur secured employment with Sutherland Shire Council whilst he and Lily worked the farm part time. Fred and his brother Alf were born twins in 1921 and attended Primary school at Menai, and extended their education at Daconile\* college. He and his brother secured employment with a city store known until recently as "Farmers", in the display and screen printing department and remained in this employ until retirement. Fred won many prizes as a child and teenager in the Sunbeams competitions run by the Sun newspaper. Additional to his employment Fred was:

Treasurer, Menai Congregational Church 25 years  
Member, Menai Christian Bush Fire Brigade  
Member, Model T Ford Club  
Member, Bangor Twinning Committee (He was a twin)  
Member, Congregational Cricket Club

Concurrent with these activities, Fred and his brother Alf collected and preserved material of all kinds on the history of the Shire, published books and educational papers and lectured to schools and interested groups. He received an award shield from the Sutherland Shire Council for outstanding service to the community. Some of his publications are:

Menai Congregational Church Diamond Jubilee and History of the District. 1964. \*\*

Loftus, Woronora, and Engadine. 1970. \*\*

Light of Faith, Woronora Congregational Church, 1943-1968. 1968. Children's History of the Sutherland Shire. 1969.

Reflections, Menai Congregational Church, 1901-1977. 1977. \*\* Sutherland Shire Studies. History of Early Road Transport in the Shire. \*\*

The First Step - History of a Sunday School, 1901-1981. 1981.

\* Name supplied. Not known today.

\*\* Co-Author with his brother.

The Society is grateful to Mrs Daphne White of Bangor for the above highlights of Fred's life.

-----Harold Ivers



OXFORD STREET ENTRANCE TO CENTENNIAL PARK

Pencil drawing by Austin Platt

## A WORD FROM THE NEW (ACTING) EDITOR ...

I have been a member of the Society for some six years - and have been a Guest Speaker on two (or was it three?) occasions.

A Technical Writer/Illustrator for umpteen years - and something of a Theatre Historian (in my spare time, before I retired, that is, I tried to be an Architect). One of my special interests is WELFARE -- mainly in respect of aged people -- and I dabble a bit in Music Therapy, so far as it can be of benefit to people in Nursing Homes.

Earlier this year I completed a TAFE course in Welfare Work - and was THE ONLY MALE student in a class of about thirty. My classmates all reckoned I was the only 65 year-old adolescent at the St George TAFE College. (Female chauvinists: - all of them!)

I had only just written my first piece for the Bulletin (by arrangement with Fred Midgley) when I learned the sad news of Fred's passing. Fred Midgley did such a sterling job as Editor for all of those years that I doubt anyone, myself included, could adequately fill his shoes --but, hopefully, we will be able to keep his memory alive for a long time to come by quoting, periodically, from the FRED MIDGLEY COLLECTION.

Contributions from you, the reader, are most welcome -- and if you need some help in putting a story together, please give me a call at any time (within reason) on 529 9190. We don't mind if your article is simply hand-written - just so long as we can read it.

- Will Newton

## EXCURSION REPORT

PICTON excursion on July 21 was a very interesting day, and members of that Society were very gracious in their welcome with morning tea on our arrival, and the many things they did to ensure our tour's success.

BRUSH FARM and area -- thanks to Mr and Mrs Ivers and their friend Mr Buttrey for the success of this day. Regretfully, I was unable to attend but I am told it was an excellent day.

Coming up on the first week-end of November, 2-5-4, is the week-end excursion to Goulburn Braidwood district. By the time this bulletin is in your hands we will have had the enjoyment of the trip, and a report will be included in the February issue.

On Saturday, December 1, we shall be having a trip on the 'MV Macquarie Princess' at Berowra, followed by a visit to Fagin Park; the coach bookings are full, but a waiting list is being taken. Cost of the day is \$17.00 (members) and \*19.00 (visitors) -- leaving Cronulla at 8.00am, Sutherland 8.30 am. Morning Tea and entrance fees are included, but please take your luncheon requirements as usual.

Bookings with Mrs Ada Cutbush on 523 8174 -- and information with either Mrs Cutbush or myself an 523 5801.

Aileen Griffiths

EXCURSION CONVENER



## OLD NORTH SYDNEY

Henry Lawson

(Written for the NORTH SHORE &amp; MANLY TIMES --- but never published)

They're shifting old North Sydney  
 Perhaps 'tis just as well –  
 They're carting off the houses  
 Where the old folk used to dwell  
 Where only ghosts inhabit  
 They lay the old shops low,  
 But the Spirit of North Sydney  
 It vanished long ago.

The Spirit of North Sydney  
 The good old time and style --  
 It camped, maybe at Crows Nest  
 But only for a while  
 It left about the season ---  
 Or at the time perhaps --  
 When old Inspector Cottee  
 Transferred his yokes and traps

A brand new crowd is thronging  
 The brand new streets aglow  
 Where the Spirit of North Sydney  
 Would gossip long ago  
 They will not know tomorrow ---  
 Tho' 'twere but yesterday –  
 Exactly how McMahons Point  
 And its ferry used to lay

The good old friendly Spirit  
 Its sorrows would unfold,  
 When house-holders were neighbours  
 A shop-keeping was old  
 But now we're busy strangers,  
 Our feelings we restrain  
 The Spirit of North Sydney  
 Shall never come again.

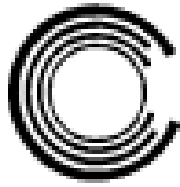
It's Henry Lawson, all right - but well past his prime. I guess the Editor of the NORTH SHORE & MANLY TIMES must have thought so too --but it certainly does have that special Henry Lawson sensitivity to it, that quality that set him apart from other poets.

I came across the piece around 1966 when Norman Lindsay loaned me a copy of OLD BOOKS, OLD FRIENDS, OLD SYDNEY a book of miscellany published by the late James Tyrrell - 'bookseller extraordinaire' - which I read and re-read over several weeks. Lindsay told me that someone or other had 'ghosted' the work for Jim Tyrrell -- but, for the life of me, I can't recall who the bloke was. (I only wish that Lindsay had let me keep the book.)

- Will Newton

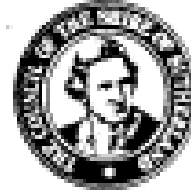
MODEL MAKING - The art of using a sharp tool to turn an honest piece of wood into something particularly useless. - Norman Lindsay

# Sutherland Shire Council



## 1991

### Heritage Week



## Fred Midgley Memorial Essay Competition



*The Heritage Week Essay Competition is open to all adults interested in written historical research relating to the Sutherland Shire.*

*All entries should demonstrate sound research technique, literary style and must be based ONLY on a topic relating to the history of the Shire.*

**CLOSING DATE : Friday, 8th March 1991**

Sutherland Shire Council gratefully acknowledges the assistance of Sutherland Shire Arts Council.



## CONDITIONS OF ENTRY


1. All entries will become part of the Local Studies Collection
2. All entries should be no less than 3,000 words and no more than 5,000 words
3. Sutherland Shire Council will retain the right to reproduce part or all of the winning entry submitted, if it so chooses for the purpose of publicity and/or general library use.
4. All work must be based on original research and relate to an aspect of the history of the Shire.
5. Entry is restricted to adults (18 years and over)
6. Audio - visual resources including photographs, maps, oral history recordings etc. may be used as part of your written research.
7. If audio visual resources form a substantial part of your entry a transcript and explanation must be provided
8. Bibliography and footnotes are essential. Footnotes must be consistent throughout the entry. All sources consulted must be acknowledged.
9. All entries must be typed on A4 sheets.
10. The entry form below must be attached to the front page (blank sheet) of your entry.
11. The judge's decision will be final and no correspondence will be entered into.
12. Only one entry will be considered for each prize as listed.
13. Merit Certificates will be awarded to selected entries.
14. Sutherland Shire Council, Sutherland Shire Arts Council or their servants, agents contractors or third parties shall not be responsible for the any costs incurred by the entrant.
15. The entry submitted must be written within 12 months prior to Friday, 8th March 1991. Prior research may be included but must be adapted to meet the conditions of Heritage Week Essay Competition.
16. Group entries will NOT be accepted.

## HELPFUL HINTS

Consult the library catalogue at the Central Library, Sutherland or any branch library for information on research techniques, setting out and works written by other historians

OR

Consult the Local Studies Librarian, Helen McDonald at the Central Library, Sutherland, 521 0345.



Name of entrant: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of essay: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_


Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Work: \_\_\_\_\_

**DECLARATION**

I the undersigned acknowledge and agree to the conditions of entry and judging as outlined. I solemnly and sincerely declare that this essay is my original work and has been executed in the 12 months prior to March 15, 1991.

\_\_\_\_\_ signature \_\_\_\_\_ date



Please cut and paste the above information onto a blank A4 sheet of paper and attach to the front of your essay.

Delivery Post or deliver your entry to:

Local Studies Librarian  
Central Library, Sutherland  
Eton Street,  
Sutherland 2232.

or

Community Arts Manager  
Sutherland Entertainment Centre  
Eton Street,  
Sutherland 2232.

## THE APPRENTICE SWAGMAN

I commenced the Swagman portion of my life in New Zealand as has been written in "Swagmen" .... Survivors of the Great Depression; by Nixon. I had come to the conclusion that New Zealand was not the working man's paradise, as I had been led to believe; I had run out of cash and now had to take to the road, having no relations to sponge off, and all my friends in the same boat as I was. It was take to the road or starve; as I have already said: it was the obvious conclusion.... there was no other way to find out where employment was wanted, and no boss rushed out and offered a job, so the system continued; walk for work. I met a bloke on my first day out, his name was Jack, and I liked him from the start because he had such a nice manner about him. He told me he knew the run of the ropes and would teach me how to go about living without a home. He said he would lead the way and do the necessary talking, but that I must watch and listen carefully to learn for myself, to which proposal I promptly agreed.

We reached a station, in front of me I saw a large low wooden built bungalow surrounded by a fine garden, this was obviously the owner's home. To the right I could see the men's quarters, not nearly so elaborate, while to the left a few hundred yards off were the shearing sheds, stables, etc.: long low buildings of corrugated iron.

While I was looking around my mate walked on toward the men's quarters and soon I saw him knock on the door and as I joined him it opened. "Got any work for me and me mate boss?" he said. Jack had a real Bob Hawke smile -- took anybody in! The man he spoke to was a big Scot who immediately started to laugh, and said "Rack again Jack, why it's only a couple of weeks since you were here before." The boss didn't make any mention of any work so my heart sank a bit; I thought "why waste time talking here -- let's go."

Jack said "I came back to your station to teach my mate the run of the ropes, and I thought you would help me do this small thing." Jack nodded to me and walked away, leaving the boss laughing at one of Jack's jokes. "Come along mate" said Jack, throwing his swag over his shoulder again, "this is the sort of station I like"; "Now then Cook", he added as he put his head in the cookhouse door, "two more for dinner please".

Jack seemed a popular bloke, and no sooner was his face inside the door than two or three men sang out to him, and in a few minutes they were all laughing and joking, the permanent men and the casuals (us). I stood looking on in silence.

Having fixed things with the cook, Jack led the way to the Swaggers' hut, this was a long wooden building, like a barn, with a large old fireplace at the far end, with two rows of bunks, similar to those in a ship's cabin, attached to the walls on each side. In the centre of the room was a large table complete with long, long backless forms. There were three men in there when we arrived, and they all greeted Jack and said something to me. "A new chum" said Jack, explaining my presence, "I'm putting him

through his paces", "Now mate", he said, turning to me, "collar a bunk and put your swag in it". He was chattering away at a great speed of knots, but all the while he was undoing the rope his swag, his ways interested me, there was no doubt he enjoyed his life. As soon as he had loosened his blanket he laid it out most carefully in the bunk, rolling up the rope and putting it in a clean flour bag which contained his clothes and formed the inside of his swag; next he pulled out a piece of soap, a small towel, and an old tooth brush, turned up his sleeves and left the room, remarking to me over his shoulder that if I wanted a wash I had better follow him. I dived into my swag, grabbed my soap and went after him. I didn't own a towel but I had an old singlet that I used for the job. On returning Jack put his hand in his flour bag again, producing about three inches of mirror, and after combing his hair and his beard he replaced the tools of ablution less the towel, which he hung up. The residue, less a well thumbed copy of the Works of William Shakespeare, became his pillow. The whole performance was so methodical, I could not help watching his every movement; I was learning fast (put it away where you can find it, and make double use of everything), I could see that he has done it before, night after night for years, and would probably go on doing it 'till' he became too old to walk, then he would go to the Old Men's Home and die a week later, for want of fresh air.

By this time several other men had arrived, and the bunks were beginning to fill up and the conversation became lively: it was chiefly of sheep, cattle, and the wrongs of the working man. Many of them knew each other, but others were evidently strangers like me, new men on the lookout for work. At about 6.30 I heard a bell ring, and, following the crowd that sprang up at the sound, I soon found myself in a large dining room containing a big table with a long form on either side. The room had about a dozen men, in it; they were some of the regular hands who had finished their meal and were smoking by the fire, eager to hear the swagmen's news, for these men were daily papers. When I say I had a sumptuous feast it hardly describes it; we began with boiling hot broth which was followed by a joint of beef accompanied by two vegetables, then came the pudding, the bread and butter, cheese, cake and brownie (a light bread with currants in it), and as much tea as we could drink. The whole meal took about three quarters of an hour to get through, and no-one seemed anxious to hurry us. The cook and his mate, with our aid, cleared up and many hands made the washing up a five minute job.

Throughout, there was neither ill feeling or unkindness, in fact everyone was as jovial as he could be, and looked on the whole affair as if it were the most ordinary thing in the world; and I suppose it was, to them. I confess that I felt rather out of it. After tea as we called it, we, the swagmen, returned to our hut and sat chatting 'till about nine o'clock, then, one by one, the men turned in, some falling to sleep immediately, while some read. I noticed that one or two changed books, a kind of exchange library went on among these men; each one has a book, when he has read it he swaps it for another.

In the morning we were given breakfast on the same sumptuous scale, and afterwards one or two of us were designated our work for the day. Jack and I went off with two of the regular men; we were erecting a fence of No. 8 gauge wire, four strands of plain with a barb top and bottom, all wire through the post at this station and no staples. We used augers for the barb  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch holes and brace and bit for the  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch holes to take the plain; we had to put in strainer posts and, in passing, this was the place I learned to use the Donald wire strainer. What a mighty invention, I think they are still in use today, or maybe they hitch a tractor to the wire to strain - of course that could be very dangerous if the wire snapped, as it often does.

We had lunch at midday; I had to boil the billy and make the tea. With this we ate "doorstep" sandwiches prepared by the cook: two slabs of bread with farm made butter and a thick slice of meat placed between. The smell of the butter made me heave, so I just ate the meat and drank lots of tea ... lots of it! The work was hard but exciting in a way. It made me very tired ... we were going up a hillside and were constantly walking up and down, dragging huge coils of wire up the hill ... thank goodness the posts had been planted the previous week. By 5 o'clock I was not told twice to knock off, then back to last night's routine. Some would go on and some would stay. I did not mind the work, rather enjoyed doing it; the weather was fine and it wasn't cold, plenty of good food, the pay was 10/- a week and tucker. We stayed a couple of weeks, then Jack decided to move on, so next morning at about ten o'clock we rolled our swags and left the station.

I felt a bit sorry as even if only 10/- a week it was security. Several of us left together, in twos or threes going in different directions; it is considered bad policy to travel in a crowd. I felt I had been initiated into an environment entirely different to anything I had ever dreamed of.

I learned very quickly ... you can see the world and live guile well for a while on 10/- a week and a couple of good meals, especially the one at night, in the company of some of the Knights Of The Road.

George Heavens, Swagger N.Z. 1930/1931

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YESTERDAYS ...

#### DAY'S FISHING ENDS IN DEATH

George Grant, 70, who lives on the Woniora (sic) River, in the Sutherland district, was drowned yesterday after he had fallen an rooks at the edge of the river.

Grant had been fishing all day and was leaving his boat when he slipped and fell. Men who found him dragged him from the water, and two doctors and Sutherland Ambulance officers worked on him for more than an hour in an effort to restore life.

Source: SM Herald (25/6/39)

-- George Heavens

## WORLD OF THEATRE

## NEWTOWN - FULL OF THEATRES

In 1985 the ENMORE THEATRE was being renovated -- to go legit, once again. I was researching its long history (from 1912) and learned, to my surprise, that in the 20s there were some FIFTEEN theatres in the Newtown area.

Most showed early movies, a few had live shows only and others had both. A number of them were open-air theatres and some were only partially roofed.

Newtown's theatres included the Arcadia, Victoria, Picture Arcade, Bridge Theatre, Prince of Wales, Coronation, Picture Palace, Theatre of Variety, Trocadero Picture Palace, Majestic and the Enmore Theatre.

Harry Clay's BRIDGE THEATRE (now THE BUS) next door to the Tam Hall in Bedford Street claimed to be "the only vaudeville theatre" in Newtown. It boasted a complete change of performers each week. Jim Gerald, Syd Beck and the immortal 'Mo' (Roy Rene) worked for Harry Clay. George Wallace and Links (Jack) Paterson did their famous 'Links and Onkus' acts on the Harry Clay circuit.

The first HUB THEATRE (in King Street) claimed to be the only "continuous picture theatre in Newtown" - with non-stop screenings from 2:00pm until 10:30pm. Movies shown in 1922 (The Diamond Jubilee year) included the provocative "The Last Payment" starring Pola Negri, the sexy Polish actress who made headlines by throwing herself on Rudolf Valentino's coffin and then fainting. (Pola was given to doing things like that.) And there was also the Buck Jones movie "Trooper O'Neil". When lass a kid, cowboy movies were all the go - and there was Tom Mix, Hoot Gibson, Ken Maynard, Tim McCoy (Hopalong Cassidy came a bit later) but Buck Jones was the king of them all and seemed to be in every other western movie on the local screen.

Lawler's STADIUM THEATRE, also in King Street, seated 3000 and showed early films starring such names as Charlie Chaplin, Mary Pickford, Harry Carey, Francis X. Bushman and Gloria Swanson. These silent 'flickers' had the musical backing of McGann's 'famous' Orchestra.

One of the earliest theatres in Newtown was the VICTORIA PICTURE SHOW in Erskineville Road. An open-air theatre built in 1910 and later roofed over, it boasted three weekly changes of program.

Stan Victor's PRINCE OF WALES was in King Street just up the hill from where the NEW THEATRE now stands and almost opposite Camden Street. Stan Victor was the bloke who had taken over the old Glaciarium after coming home from World War I and had subsequently built the 2500-seat PRINCE OF WALES. In that jubilee year, 1922, they screened "The House that Jazz Built", "Why Girls Leave Home" and "Sonny" starring Richard Barthelmess.

Fuller's MAJESTIC opened in 1917 claiming to be the third largest Music Hall in the Commonwealth - with a seating capacity of 1500 plus. Ben (later Sir Benjamin) and John Fuller employed mainly local talent and used a vaudeville/revue format -- the first half of the program being straight vaudeville and the second half being a type of revue rather in the vein of a mini-musical comedy.

The MAJESTIC presented two shows a day, six days a week and had a weekly change of program. The performers certainly earned their pay in those days.

The opening show was a production of the revue "Then They Woke Up" with Bert le Blanc as the leading comedian. For more than a decade they did a range of productions from silent movies through variety, revue, farce, melodrama ... you name it. Allan Wilkie's Shakespearean Company played a long season -- more than 100 performances --- in 1928.

Many big names in the profession played at the MAJESTIC during its long history -- from straight actors to slapstick comedians. That consummate artiste, Agnes Dobson, made her leading-lady debut there back in 1919. Neva Carr Glyn (mother of actor Nick Tate) and another great actress, had her first professional role - at age 13 --- as a chorus-girl in pantomime.

Ron Haddrick -- with the Trust Players - appeared in such productions as "Julius Caesar", "Man and Superman" and "Long Day's Journey into Night". Margaret Rutherford starred in "Happiest Days of Your Life".

During the golden era of the Comic Sketch - around 1935 - names like Queenie Paul, Mike Connors, Morry Barling, Syd Beck and 'Mo' packed the crowds in and 'laid 'em in the aisles'.

The MAJESTIC became the headquarters of the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust for about eight and a half years - having been re-named ELIZABETHAN. Under that august body it went from one financial crisis to another -and eventually reverted back to a cinema.

The TROCADERO PICTURE PALACE .- yet another in King Street -- showed silent movies from about 1905. It had been converted from a skating rink, in a building with a Victorian facade that dates back to the 1880s -- and is still standing.

The original ENMORE THEATRE, in Enmore Road, was built for Szarka Brothers in that 'titanic' year of 1912 and had a seating capacity of 3000. It was claimed to be the "Premier Photo-Play Theatre in New South Wales" and had been designed by local Architect, James Campbell. Mood & Spinks Concert Orchestra provided the old silent 'flickers' with musical accompaniment.

There are conflicting stories as to whether it was an open-air theatre --with one source of enquiry suggesting that it was partially roofed. The ENMORE was completely rebuilt for Szarka Brothers in 1920 - again with seating for 3000. Designed this time by Architects, Kaberry & Chard, the new theatre had a stage about eight metres deep and a proscenium of about ten metres wide -- and with the stage curtains working on a counter-weight system.

Live performers vied with the 'moving pictures' to attract audiences on Newtown's keenly competitive showbiz scene. As a child star, Barbara James played xylophone on stage at the ENMORE in the early 20s. Versatile Baba became one of our leading jazz and dance vocalists, singing later at the Tivoli and with Abe Romain's outfit at the famous Trocadero Ballroom. Barbara also played saxophone with husband Reg Lewis' band at the old Prince Edward Theatre.

Later, Hoyts took over the ENMORE, altering it to a movie theatre with reduced seating and various other changes. Still later, only Greek films were screened for quite a long period - a sign of the times.

In 1985 the theatre was converted back for live productions and re-opened, 'spectacularly' with a new science-fiction musical "Return To The Stars" - a monumental FLOP (the audience stayed away in droves).



## MR PERCY PIDGEON - TEACHER AT MENAI 1935 – 1940

Rhys Pidgeon

In the May issue (Number 72) of the Sutherland Shire Historical Society's Bulletin, Fred Midgley, in his article TEACHERS AT MENAI SCHOOL listed Mr Percy Pidgeon, who served between 20 December 1935 and his retirement on 13 March 1940. A few more details about this gentleman.

Percival Joseph Fernance Pidgeon was born on 15 July 1875, the eldest son of a mining engineer, in Macquarie Street, Sydney. He was grandson, incidentally, of the well known religious eccentric Nathaniel Pidgeon (1803-1879). In his childhood the family lived at No. S Glasgow Terrace, towards Circular Quay, and Percy attended Sydney Boys' High School. Later, the family moved to North Sydney.

Trained as a Primary School teacher, he served in one-teacher schools in country areas around NSW. During the Boar War he enlisted in the Australian Mounted Rifles and served in South Africa, where he contracted typhoid fever. He married Alice Grace McKeahnie in 1905 and subsequently became the father of two sons.

While teaching at Sutton he volunteered, during the Great War, and was sent to France where he suffered trench fever and was affected by gas. For many years afterwards -- affecting his teaching career - he suffered periodic voice loss.

He transferred to Menai from Sackville Reach, travelling each day by road and punt across the Georges River from his home in Penshurst. An early motorist, he owned first a veteran Model T Ford - in the days when a journey of any length involved a breakdown - and drivers were expected to repair their vehicles by the roadside. He was no exception! Later, he owned a 1924 Dort, a 25HP' Morris (in the 30s) and finally a Ford. Prefect, circa 1950.

During the 20s he owned and rented two houses at Ashfield. Following the Depression, he was caught in the dilemma of many landlords; his tenants, being out of work, were unable to pay rent - but he was still responsible for rates and repairs.

After he retired, he attempted to volunteer during World War II. When he disclosed his date of birth, the recruiting officer at Victoria Barracks was obliged to refuse, but seeing he was so determined, suggested he join the queue at another table -- meanwhile "getting his age right". He served first in an anti-aircraft battery at Port Kembla, then as a Pay Sergeant when the Army took over the Showground, converted to a 'tent city'.

During this period he lived in a cottage in Rose Street, Hurstville, which has since disappeared beneath the bulk of a supermarket. In his later life, remembered as a courteous old gentleman who smoked 'roll-your-owns' all his life, and became somewhat deaf - he could catch only higher pitched female voices. Into his 90s, he rose before dawn and walked several miles each day. Mrs Pidgeon died in 1960.

Despite serious illness - he survived strokes and a serious heart attack --he outlived many of his doctors. Percy died at Kogarah on 13 September 1970, aged ninety-five. He was also, coincidentally, the writer's own grandfather.

Edward Duyker, *Of the .Star and the Key.- Mauritius, Mauritians and Australia.* Australian Mauritian Research Group (P.O. Box 20, Sylvania, 2224), 1988, pp 129, illustrations, bibliography and index, \$ 19.95 plus \$3.50 postage.

Mauritius has exercised a powerful fascination over artists and writers ever since it was colonized by the French in 1715. Baudeloire spent a short time there; so too did Joseph Conrad. In fact, explorers such as Matthew Flinders and La Perouse are only the tip of an ice-berg. The island was an important link in a chain stretching from Europe to the infant colonies in Australia throughout the 19th century.

Duyker has set out to explore the various human links that join Mauritius to Australia over the past two centuries. In doing so, he has given us a rich insight into what goes on 'behind the scenes' of important historical events. To imagine that a tiny island in the Indian Ocean would have so many links with a large continent like Australia is a revelation, to say the least.

The author's research is meticulous. He has given us a panorama that includes escaped convicts on the streets of Port Louis, pardoned slaves on the streets of Sydney, and a world of dreamers afflicted with 'gold fever' scurrying down shafts on the goldfields of Victoria in the 1850s. Young Mauritians were as adventurous as any when it came to setting soil into the unknown in pursuit of their fortune, it seems.

To discover that the Australian sugar industry owes much to those early Mauritian migrants comes as a surprise also. And to find out that our much loved painter, Lloyd-Rees, attributes his 'impressionism' to his Mauritian mother makes it easier for us to appreciate the unusual delicacy that he brought to his work.

Matthew Flinders spent six years as a prisoner of the French on Mauritius. It is a footnote in the history of our circumnavigator that few would recall. Likewise, Baudin, another French explorer to our shores, died in Mauritius on his way home from Australia.

It is clear from Duyker's painstaking research that the link between

these two peoples is important. Present-day Mauritians in Australia are already making their mark in film-making, opera, business and commerce.

'Of the Star and the Key' is fascinating work of social history. Duyker should be congratulated in producing a work that is both informative and entertaining to read. He has drawn this island closer to us by way of the fragile human contacts that make up the fabric on any emerging society such as Australia.

James Cowan

(Author of *The Painted Shore*)

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THE FUZZY-WUZZY ANGELS

"...May the mothers of Australia,  
When they offer up a prayer,  
Mention those impromptu Angels,  
With the fuzzy-wuzzy hair."

So ran the words of Sapper Bert Beros' emotional poem - written while he was on the infamous Kokoda Trail during the New Guinea campaign in World War II. (Bert Beros served in the two World Wars.)

On stage at Sydney's Prince Edward Theatre the great Joy Nichols, in Army uniform and with a tear on her eyelid, held her audiences spell-bound as she delivered:

"...And the look upon their faces  
Makes us think that ... Christ was black."

So moving was Joy's obviously heartfelt rendition that I came away with visions of the 'fuzzy-wuzzy Angels' rushing to our aid - in our time of dire need -- VOLUNTEERING to share our hardships, suffer alongside us, fight to the death, etc, etc.

A year or so later I arrived in Papua New Guinea with the AIF - still with Joy Nichols' impassioned performance clearly imprinted in my mind. An Army Officer, who had lived in the Territory all of his life, gave me quite a different version:

"Volunteers my big fat aunt;": he snorted,

"we had to chase the buggers all 'round the hills and RECRUIT 'em :"

-- Will Newton

Robert J. King *The Secret History of the Convict Colony: Alexandra Malaspina's Report on the British Settlement of New South Wales*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney. 1990, pp 179, illustrations, notes.

Reviewed by Edward Duyker.

In recent years historical analysis of the events and motives which led to the British settlement of New South Wales in 1788 have undergone a significant reassessment. Simplistic notions that Australia was colonized as a convict dumping ground in desperate response to Britain's loss of her American colonies, have receded into the realm of mythology. Alan Frost in his pioneering study *Convicts and Empire* showed us that Britain's pressing needs were not penal but strategic as she attempted to revive her economy through an expansion of trade among hostile competitors. Botany Bay was to be a "strategic outlier" for the Royal Navy - a base with a hinterland that could supply timber for masts and cultivate flax for cordage. Employing contemporary documents, Frost also demonstrated that in the event of war the British saw the establishment of a settlement at Botany Bay as a means of sending squadrons against the Spanish in South America and the Pacific, the Dutch in Indonesia or the French at Mauritius. The great value of Robert J. King's scholarship on Alexandro Malaspina's visit to New South Wales is that it reveals how obvious these strategic considerations appeared to Britain's rivals in the late 18th century. King himself acknowledges Frost's work as the point of departure for any consideration of the founding of the British colony in New South Wales."

Although a native of Parma, Malaspina was in the service of Spain. He commanded two corvettes the *Descubierta* and the *Atrevida* which visited Port Jackson between March 12 and April 11, 1793, having begun their epic voyage in July 1789. The poly-ethnic crew included other Italians, a French and a Bohemian naturalist and an Irishman who was an invaluable interpreter in New South Wales. Ostensibly Malaspina mission was scientific, but he also had a political brief. According to King:

"The visit to Sydney Cove had a deeper purpose. In the Plan for the voyage, the principal objects were stated as being: a thorough investigation of the natural resources of the Spanish possessions in the Americas and the Pacific Ocean (the whole of which was claimed at that time as a Spanish *mare clausum*); the preparation of hydrographic charts to improve navigation; and a confidential examination of political and social conditions in the provinces of the Spanish Empire." Included in the secret tasks of the expedition were the preparation of comprehensive political reports on the new Russian and English settlements in the North and South Pacific: Alaska, Nootka Sound, and Botany Bay."

Malaspina's secret report, published for the first time as a translation in the second half of King's fine book, is a remarkably astute document. Malaspina had little doubt that the long-term strategic basis for settling

Port Jackson was to ensure that Holland and Spain suffer the main brunt of the outbreak of war, with help of the Islands of the Pacific for essential maintenance of squadrons, or corsairs, which would at will direct their courses now toward Asia, now toward America." But not only is Malaspina's report a valuable illustration of contemporary strategic thought, it also provides a fascinating and a hitherto ignored window on the life of the infant British settlement. Malaspina was a man of unusual sensitivity and enlightenment. Unfortunately, he served a moribund power which rewarded him, shortly after his return, with a charge of treason and a long period of imprisonment. He was only released after Napoleon's intercession.

*The Secret History of the Convict Colony* appealed to me in many ways. I liked King's clear exposition of the strategic canvas in the Pacific from the mid-18th century to the early 19th century and the Napoleonic Wars. His erudite portrait of Spanish perceptions is particularly welcome, especially since Australian historians have so long emphasized British sensibilities. I am no scholar of the Spanish language, but King's translation of Malaspina's original prose is elegant and very readable. The author has also chosen a number of exquisite illustrations by the expedition's artists, the Italians Juan Ravenet and Fernando Brambila, which are held by the Museo Naval in Madrid. We have become so used to a particular stock of images of early Port Jackson and its inhabitants, that it comes as a marvellous surprise to encounter these generally unknown Spanish artistic records. My only complaint about this impressive book is that Allen & Unwin have not included an index.

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YESTERDAYS ...

WEDDING BELLS: Paton - Cook

St John's Church of England, Sutherland, was chosen on December 12 for the wedding of Miss Evelyn Cook, only daughter of Mr and Mrs R W Cook of East Parade, Sutherland, to Mr A R Paton, only son of Mr and Mrs A. Paton of Carlton.

The bride, who was given away by her father, looked charming in a gown of hydrangea, blue lace and hat to tone. She carried beautiful flowers of gladioli and frangipani.

Pink georgette with silk spot net and matching hat was worn by the brides-maid, Miss Vera Paton, sister of the groom - and her posy was of powder blue delphiniums and pink carnations.

Mr Alfred Cook was best man, and during the signing of the register Mr D R Kirkby sang 'Because' accompanied at the organ by Mrs Kirkby.

Fifty guests attended the reception, the table being decorated with blue hydrangea and pink carnations. Later the happy couple left for the Blue Mountains.

## HISTORY OF TRUBY KING (KARITANE) CLINIC SYLVANIA BATHS RESERVE

In the 1950s the Sylvania Progress Association -- due to rapid development in the area after World War II of young married couples settling and starting a family - decided that a Baby Clinic was essential to avoid long travelling out of the district.

In 1955 a committee was formed to pursue the idea, with Mrs Dorothy Streeter nominated as President. The Truby King (Karitane) Clinic, Woollahra, agreed to having a Sister attend the new Clinic two days a week.

An enthusiastic committee approached various firms for donations of goods to stock the Clinic - and on Thursday, June 2 at 11.00am the Truby King Baby Health Clinic was officially opened by Mrs Margaret Whitlam, wife of the Federal Member for Werriwa.

Guests, welcomed by the President, included Mrs Waterhouse (wife of the Professor), Mrs Scott of the Australian Mothercraft Society, Sister Clancy who introduced Sister Hawley (their first Sister). The invitations included the President and members of Sutherland Shire Council, Dr Reynolds, Dr Soper and numerous other guests - and the opening was highly successful.

Funds for the ongoing maintenance of the Clinic were raised by the committee mothers and their friends with stalls, dances, mannequin parades (lots of work, but lots of fun), tennis tournaments (with free use of Mrs Stevenson's courts), games afternoons, novelty events like 'Mad Hatter's Party' (lots and lots of fun - especially for children over 50), various parties, talks, demonstrations, etc. These went on for many years and were held at the Boomerang Hall, the Riverview Night Club at Tom Uglys Point (now a block of flats) and at many private homes as well as the Clinic building itself.

The BABY SHOW in 1956 was a whale of a success - and the Boomerang Hall overflowed with mothers and babies from everywhere. Radio personality, Keith Smith ('Grandpa' in some of Jack Davey's broadcasts) opened the show - and the Judges and committee battled on until late afternoon.

The Baby Clinic grew bigger and bigger, eventually requiring larger premises. Cr Walter Page of the Sutherland Council was an active supporter of the Clinic over the years. In due course the Main Roads Board made land avail-able at the Sylvania Baths Reserve - but on the understanding that the new building would have to be moved when required to make way for the second bridge, a project which was still a long way off.

They had only about £50 (\$100) in funds and Mrs Streeter approached the Kogarah Lions Club for some assistance. The Lions generously built the Clinic - at no cost - and some of the babies' fathers, who were building tradesmen, donated much of their time and expertise to the project.

At 2.00pm on 6 December 1958 the new Clinic was officially opened by the Shire President, Cr Dwyer, in the presence of many notable personalities. The weather was glorious and local singing star Helen Zerefos sang (most appropriately) 'Bless This House' to the accompaniment of the Sutherland Shire Band. Afternoon tea was served to a large crowd of supporters and friends on this emotional occasion for the local people.

Throughout 1962-63 Sr Hawley attended Tyson's Pharmacy, Gymea and Wilkinson's Pharmacy, Kirrawee, for a half-day clinic each week for the mothers in those areas who had difficulties with transport.

Over the years the attendance grew steadily at the Sylvania Clinic and it was open from 9.00am to 5.00pm for five days a week. In April 1971, the Committee was informed by Head Office that any clinic operating at a loss would have to close because there were no longer the funds available for subsidies. It was suggested, however, that the Clinic be used in a pilot scheme for a Day Hospital for babies with emotional and behavioural problems in the first year of their lives - but the Committee did not favour this type of usage. It subsequently transpired that funding was not available for that project anyway.

The Baby Clinic continued to operate through the Committee's fund-raising efforts, supported by mothers and friends -- and with donations from various Clubs and interested parties, together with the Council's subsidy, up until 1982. In that year the Main Roads Board resumed the land for the second bridge from Tom Uglys Point.

The building was given to the Engadine Baptist Church and it was carted off bodily to be used as a classroom at Innaburra Baptist School. Sutherland Shire Council and the Health Dept decided that, as the Truby King Clinic was now funded by the Government, it could operate from the existing Clinic at Holt Road, Sylvania Heights. On 14 March 1983 the Clinic opened, for five days a week, and is still functioning as the Karitane Baby Clinic.

I wish to express our thanks and appreciation to Kogarah Lions Club, Apex Club, Main Roads Board, various other clubs and firms, and particularly the local tradespeople, citizens and mothers who contributed so much to the Clinic in so many ways.

Our appreciation and thanks to the Sutherland Shire Council who gave support by maintaining the grounds and building over the years and for the \$350 annual subsidy. Our thanks also to Srs Clancy and Hawley, Drs Cousins, Rose, Sainsbury and to the various others who cared for the mothers and babies over those years.

Special tribute is paid to Sr Elaine Lee who retired from the Clinic on 2 May 1981 due to ill-health after giving loving care and service to the mothers of more than 50 000 babies in the twelve years she served the local community. At a special reception in the President's suite at Sutherland Council's Administration Centre on 14 August, Sr Lee was awarded a plaque "For outstanding service to the Sutherland Community" - and no one could have deserved it more. I was privileged to be an invited guest.

During her service Sr Lee took home-calls after a busy day at the Clinic and would always call to a private home if a baby was too ill to travel. No problem was ever left unattended - mothers came from near and far, and even telephoned long-distance -- and Sr Lee worked tirelessly to keep the Clinic operating. We were even grateful to her husband Leo and their daughter Leonie.

The Committee and a multitude of grateful mothers were deeply saddened when, after a long battle with leukaemia, Sr Blaine Lee finally passed away in July 1984. After the funeral many people attended a special Memorial Service at which moving tributes were paid to this wonderful lady who will always be remembered.

The surviving foundation members Mrs Dulcie Kemp, Mrs Gwen Robinson, Mrs Beryl Swindley, myself and others must pay tribute to our first President, Mrs Dorothy Streeter. Dorothy was interested and involved in all local projects, but her dedication to the Clinic and the babies, of the future inspired everyone's support.

This grand lady enjoyed much happiness before her sad death - she was our President until 1968 - and was mourned by all who knew her ... her passing was a great loss to the community and she will long be remembered.

It is an honour for me to present this little piece of local history -- the original plaques from the Clinic are preserved here for safe keeping.

I hope this brings pleasant memories to those of you who were associated with and remember the Truby King (Karitane) Clinic, Sylvania Baths Reserve.

Ruby Jones

HONORARY PRESIDENT

LIST OF THE LADIES who were members of the Truby King Committee over the years - and my apologies to anyone who may have been, inadvertently, overlooked.

Ruby Jones Mrs Dorothy Streeter - 1st President (until 1968)

Ms Kemp	Ms Illich	Ms Branch
Robinson	Knapp	Symons
Swindley	Barber	Crocker
Horn	Oliffe	Sparre
Winshuttle	Ellis	Day
Wright	Barter	Morris
Mathieson	Millwood	Teale-Gosper
Buckeridge	Austin	Sister Doe
Kadwell	Carroll	Sr Sainsbury
Hodges	Milivain	Durkin
Witcombe	Fydler	Lesley
Champion	Rudman	Jones
Fitzgibbons	Ogle	

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### OLD RECIPE FROM THE MIDGLEY FAMILY

#### LEMON CHUTNEY

ingredients

4 lemons, ¼lb onions, ¾pint vinegar, 1 lb sugar, 4 oz raisins, 1 oz salt, 1 oz mustard seed, 1 teaspoon ground ginger, ½teaspoon pepper.

Wash and slice onions and lemons and place in a dish, sprinkle with salt and leave 24 hours and place in a pan. Crush mustard seed finely and with other ingredients add to the ingredients in the pan. Bring to boil and simmer until cooked, turn into dry jars and seal when cold.

Contributor: Daphne White, Fred's niece. Recipe originally cooked by Mrs Midgley using a fuel stove.



## MEMORIES OF SYDNEY SHOWGROUND

### PARK ROAD -- why it has such an awkward shape

PARK ROAD starts at the Administration Building (on the eastern corner of Sutter Avenue) and loops around in an awkward curve past the Hordern Pavilion and on to the Technology Pavilion - better known to most people as the Commerce Hall. If you have ever puzzled over why Park Road is such a bloody silly shape, well lose no more sleep - you are about to be enlightened.

Some years ago I had been checking out various aspects of the Showground development, over its 100-odd years of existence, by plonking transparent overlays on top of outline maps, etc etc when it suddenly hit me: the reason for the blind-curve shape of Park Road. Although many of the RAS hierarchy were aware of this seeming irregularity, no one had the foggiest idea why it was so. My 'discovery' elicited a variety of comments like, for example, "Well I'll be buggered."

In the 1880s trotting events became extremely popular and the Agricultural Society (as it was then) was talked into extending the existing track to cater for this sport. In 1887 (I remember it well) some two thousand spectators attended the inaugural meeting of a reconstituted Driving Park Trotting Club at the, by now five years old, Showground.

Times were tough but these trotting meetings brought in considerable revenue to the Society. HOWEVER... doubts were raised about the legality of this usage and also whether the Society was entitled to charge admission to the ground. According to the terms of the lease the public were supposed to be admitted free -- except during the annual Show. This seems to have been conveniently forgotten but, following an incident in 1888, the poo really hit the fan.

Now the Municipal (City) Council had control over the usage of the ground and their prior approval was supposed to be obtained for any new activity. Some of the aldermen - or should that be alder persona? - were not very happy with the Society's way of doing things and the Mayor, John Harris - a stickler for protocol -- reminded the Society, in no uncertain terms, that they were not abiding by the rules. A month later he ordered that the UNAUTHORISED trotting events be discontinued.

But what did the Society do? They literally thumbed their collective noses at the Council and just kept on going. The Mayor then threatened blue murder - to have the gates thrown open to the public, to terminate the lease, to repossess the ground... you name it. (The controversy between the BAS and the City Council that raged around those Rock Concerts in the 1980s actually had its beginnings a century earlier - so what's new?)

Many people, including a lot of aldermen, regarded the Driving Park Club as a bunch of shonkies whose activities weren't all that far removed from 'systematic fraud' as one bloke put it. For them to have exclusive rights over the trotting events at the Showground, didn't exactly enhance the Society's reputation either. And the fact that much of their activity had little to do with promoting agriculture certainly didn't help things.

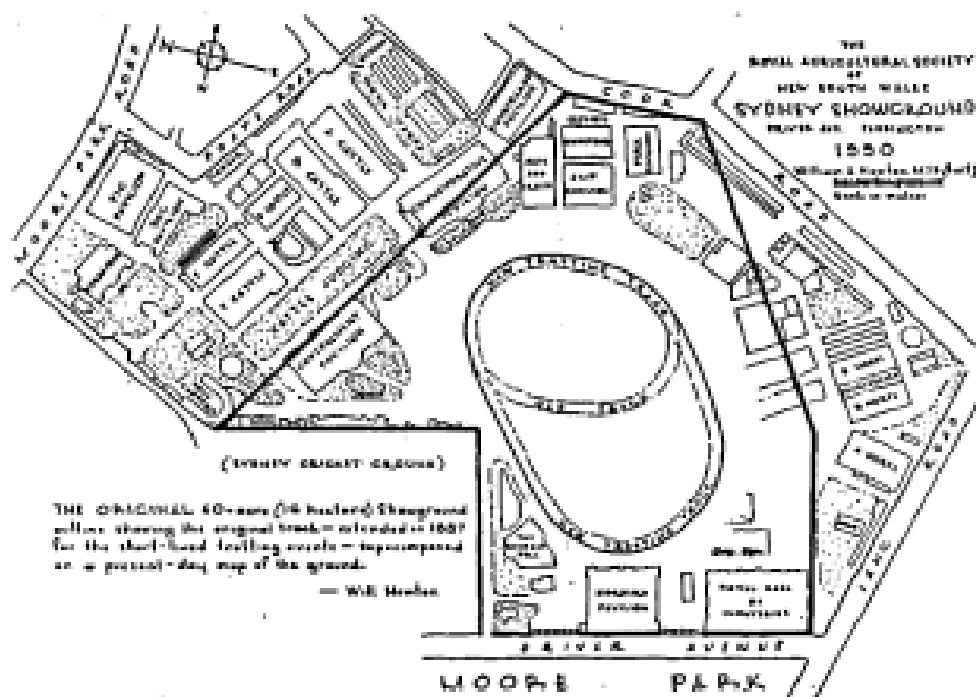
A detailed account of the shenanigans that went on during the ensuing bun-fight - the lobbying and the interminable rhetoric - would be a sure cure for insomnia, so I'll 'shortcut the most wearisome bits and push an with the 'exciting' stuff.

Those trotting meetings were certainly lively affairs, to say the very least, and 'welshing' was quite commonplace. There was bedlam in 1891 when -race crowds stormed the gates and refused to pay the admission fee.

The Society's John See (later Sir John) who was to later become Premier of New South Wales tried to sort things out with the Council. A dab hand at 'laying it on thick' he angled for a ninety-nine year lease, whilst the Council grudgingly countered with a suggested twenty-one year (maximum) lease - subject to a number of stringent conditions. The shilly-shallying went on for years - and even some of the church groups, who were opposed ,to gambling and horse-racing, got into the act.

Well, by the time the Society eventually got their lease, gave the Driving Park Club the heave-ho and reverted the track back to its original size, so many buildings had gone up around the western aide that they were stuck with that stupid curve. And so you have had to wade through all of that guff merely to find out about the shape of Park Road. (It was even worse for me having to research it.)

OLD CUSTOMS die hard. Those trotting events were discontinued in 1895 but maps of the Showground still denoted TROTTING TRACK right up until 1980 --would you believe? When I prepared a new map of the ground in 1981 I simply denoted TRACK - and that's how it has appeared on subsequent maps.



The original track, around the Main Arena, was about the same size and shape as the present track - and was in approximately the same location. During the six years of those controversial trotting meetings the track was more than doubled in size, while the Showground was only about half the present use - as will be seen on the drawing. The crescent-shaped section on the western side was to eventually become Park Road.

-- Will Newton

## TALES FROM NEW GUINEA,

### A FISH DINNER FOR THE JAPS



PAPUA NEW GUINEA - a savage, mountainous country inhabited by head-hunters, cannibals and crocodiles, plagued by the dreaded malarial fever -- and always shrouded in mystery. From my schoolboy days I had been intrigued by the tales that filtered back from this awesome place - stories about tribal wars, gold fever, crocodile hunters, missing explorers - and brawling white adventurers. Oblique references to characters with names like Sharkeye Park, Tiger Lil, Lucky Dick, Errol Flynn (Errol sure left his mark), Jack Nettleton, Ma Stewart, Mick Leahy, Jack Bides, Joe Sloane, were more than enough to fire the imagination of a romantic schoolboy.

Then came the Pacific War. Australian soldiers were sent to this most inhospitable country to sort out the invading Japanese - and didn't they do precisely that; Newspapers were full of accounts of fighting in the jungles, along the Kokoda Trail, etc, etc. Newsreels showed scenes of shocking casualties and wounded soldiers being carried by the 'Fuzzy-wuzzy Angels' across swollen rivers and through treacherous swamps.

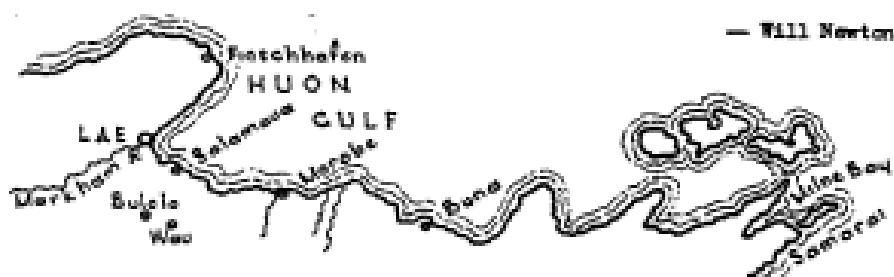
At the ripe age of 18 years I decided it was time to put an end to the Pacific War - so I joined the AIF. A year later (these things take time), in 1944, I was stationed in the Morobe area - on the northern coast of New Guinea between Buna and Salamaua - with a Line Maintenance Unit. I was the only one who was not continually whingeing - I loved the place. (Possibly I was a bit 'troppo' at the time.)

The Luluai (Chief) of Bospaira village was a very old bloke named 'Mo' --just like the late Roy Rene. Mo would pay us a visit about once a week and sometimes he would tell us fascinating stories about his savage country. One little incident had its own special appeal for an Australian soldier:

At a village a little to the west of Morobe a party of Japanese soldiers suddenly appeared out of nowhere. They were starving and had no idea of how to forage for food in this wild country.

The Japs rounded up the entire village and ordered the tribesmen to go and fetch food - otherwise they would kill the women and children! The men went off and duly returned with a large haul of fish. The 'Sons of Heaven' had a great feast that night - with every man gorging himself an tasty, fresh-cooked fish.

During the night the natives all slipped out of the village and melted into the scrub (the Yanks called it 'the jungle'). A couple of days later the tribesmen returned to the village to take stock of the situation. Those of the Japs who weren't already dead were writhing in agony and praying for a quick passage into the next world - those fish were all of the most POISONOUS tropical variety.



## REMEMBERING ...

GLADYS MONCRIEFF the great star of Musical Comedy and Operetta, had a long association with Sutherland Shire. 'Our Glad' had many friends in this part of the world -- and loved to surf at Cronulla. Well known local identity, Barrie Denniss - founder of the GLADYS MONCRIEFF FAN CLUB - has a rare photo of the singer in a bathing suit and sitting on a rock at Cronulla beach.

Gladys also stayed regularly with friends at Yeran Street, Sylvania at one time. Can some reader tell me anymore about that ???

Advice from Barrie Denniss is that 'Our Glad' has just lately been re-discovered in England. Her early success in Franz Lehar's operetta BLUE MAZURKA on the London stage in 1926 --- where it ran for a 28 week season - is being re-released on record and, I think, CD. The great Fritz Kreisler once said that Gladys had "a voice with a soul" - and who would dispute that ?

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HENRY LAWSON also had a long association with the Shire. My little piece about the great poet in this issue was not merely coincidental. Our President, Aileen Griffiths, advised me that Lawson lived at Como at one time (and was possibly known at the Como pub). Megan Pitt of the Council library mentioned that Lawson also stayed, periodically, at Cronulla with another famous identity - his friend Neville Cayley, the painter and authority on bird life. (And it is just possible too that the bard was known to one or two of the Cronulla publicans.) There was an article in the October 1971 edition of the Bulletin about the man who wrote all of those wonderful poems.

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JOHN ANTILL - the 'composer from Cronulla' - caused a sensation in 1946 when his famous suite CORROBOREE was given its world premiere by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Eugene Goossens.

This brilliant work -- which made the entire music world sit up and take notice - was inspired when, as a child, Antill witnessed a Corroboree. The memory of this later impelled him to sketch out a ballet with the Aboriginal ritual as its focus.

A biography of John Antill, 'Gentle Genius' - launched in 1988, a year or so after the composer's death - was co-written by Beth Dean and Victor Carell. (Profits from the book now fund the JOHN ANTILL SCHOLARSHIP at the NSW Conservatorium of Music.)

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I first saw husband-and-wife team Beth Dean and Victor Carell on stage at the old Theatre Royal in the original Australian production of ANNIE GET YOUR GUN which starred Evie Hayes - and that brings to mind another celebrity who had local connections ...

EVIE 'Annie Get Your Gun' HAYES came to Oz with husband Will Mahoney billed as 'The Californian Song Bird' - and eventually settled in the Melbourne suburb of South Yarra. But, when in Sydney, Evie sometimes stayed at Barrie Denniss' place ... in CRONULLA, of course.

- Will Newton

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Meetings of the Society are held monthly on the second Friday -- at 8.00pm in the Council Administration Centre, Eton Street, Sutherland (on the 2nd floor). Visitors are always welcome.

Opinions expressed in this Bulletin are not necessarily those of this Society.

All correspondence should be addressed to: The Hon Secretary, Sutherland Shire Historical Society, PO Box 389, Sutherland 2232

A FAMILIAR SYDNEY LANDMARK



**Pencil drawing** by **Austin Platt**