

SUTHERLAND SHIRE HISTORICAL
SOCIETY INC
QUARTERLY BULLETIN



Artwork by the late Fred Midgley

No. 76

May 1991

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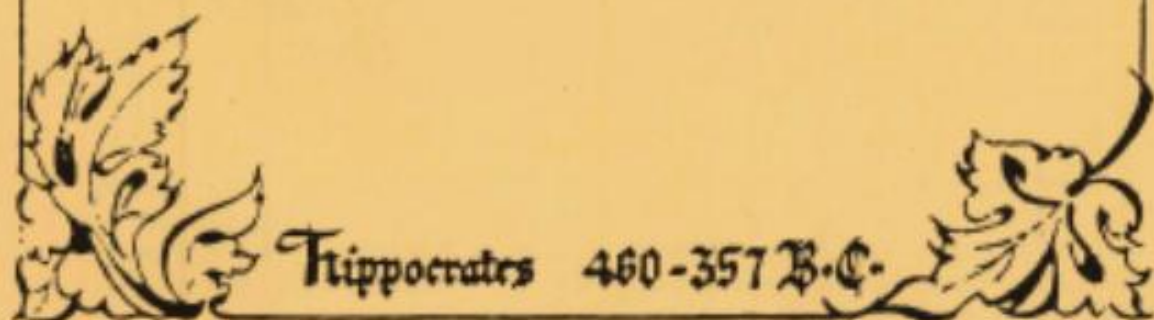


The building now known as Como Hotel was completed by 1883 - before the coming of the railhead to Como. It was a social club for either the German Consul or the Concordia Club of Sydney. It was built by either a Frenchman, M. Porcham, or a German — and the hotel faces Scylla Bay. The Licensees, over the years, have included such names as Sydney Staples and Paul Buchholz.

— Helen McDonald

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Life is so short
and Art
so long
to learn



Hippocrates 460-357 B.C.

— Fran McKirdy

COVER ILLUSTRATION by courtesy of Sutherland Shire Council

COMO HOTEL — one of a set of ten drawings by George Youssef — produced by the Town Planning Department, Design Section, as a Bicentennial Project

Sets of these fine prints (suitable for framing) are available at a very modest cost from the Council's Central Library.

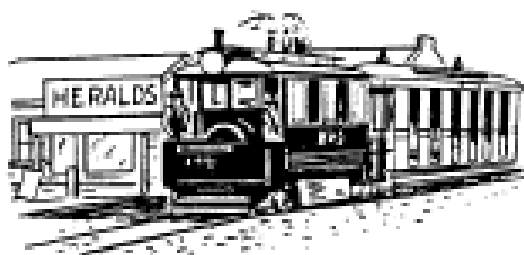
Quarterly Bulletin of the Sutherland Shire Historical Society Inc

Edition No. 76

May 1991

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GENERAL INFORMATION — SUTHERLAND SHIRE HISTORICAL
SOCIETY INC

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

With sadness I announce the death of a long-time member and also one of the members of very early settling families in the Menai District, Ellen Bentley; we offer our sincere sympathy to her family.

1991 Heritage Week proved to be the best display we have been able to mount; many more photographs than usual were on display, together with household and farm items from days gone by. Our main display was the School Room, Bed Room and the Music Room.

My thanks to everyone who assisted in any way — a full report will be made by the Exhibition Committee Convener, but too late for inclusion in this edition of the Bulletin.

The twenty-fifth Anniversary Dinner was an outstanding success; my thanks to the Sub-Committee who assisted me to present this function. See the following:

TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY DINNER

This function, held in the Sutherland Entertainment Centre, 'Rainbow Room' on Friday, 12 April 1991 included special guests: Shire President, Cr Don Carter; General Manager/Shire Clerk, John Rayner; Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Hon Robert Tickner MP and Mrs Tickner; Cr Chris Downy MP; Mr Malcolm Kerr MP; Mr Ron Phillips MP and Mrs Phillips; a particular guest Ex-Councillor and Senator, Arthur Gietzelt (Guest Speaker), who was Shire President when the Society was formed.

We were also pleased to welcome members of our Sister Societies, Hurstville, Kogarah and St George, together with our first Deputy President, Mr George Heavens and Mrs Heavens, who travelled from Dubbo to share the evening with us. .

It was my pleasure to welcome three other Foundation Members — Mrs Noelene Smith, Mr Richard Peir and, again, Mr Arthur Gietzelt — who join me in this honour.

It was a privilege to have with us Mrs Alice McHugh, who is the daughter of the late Cr John Hill; Mr Hill served as a Councillor from 1906 to 1922 and was Shire President for part of 1918.

By courtesy of the Shire Council we were privileged to play the 'Sutherland Shire Fanfare' to open the night's proceedings. This was written by the late Dr John Antill, CMG, OBE, well known as the composer of 'Corroboree' Ballet, a former resident of Cronulla and long-time member of this Society; and the music was played by Sutherland Shire Silver Band. Once again we extend our thanks to the Council for giving the Society this tape for use at any other special function.

Mrs Janelle Scott and Mrs Sibyl Bates presented the musical programme and we thank them for giving their services on our special evening.

The evening ended with the playing of 'Advance Australia Fair' at approximately 10.30pm and many guests and members took the opportunity to see the Heritage Display before going home.

On your behalf, once again I extend thanks to the Entertainment Centre Staff for the arrangements they carried out for us, and in particular to the Sub-Committee of Mrs Marjory Blackley, Mrs Ada Cutbush and Mrs Ellen Melbourne for their assistance to me in preparing for the Dinner.

Aileen Griffiths

PRESIDENT



EDITOR'S DESK...

RE CONTRIBUTIONS

Life Member and former Editor of The Bulletin, George Heavens, raises a valid point in his LETTER TO THE EDITOR (q.v.) in mentioning a number of people and places as important links in the Shire's history.

These are among the many subjects that are yet to be written up and recorded for posterity in The Bulletin — so how about it, you budding authors?

DEADLINE FOR COPY

We aim to have the Bulletin ready for mailing to members during the first week of the month of issue — FEBRUARY, MAY, AUGUST and NOVEMBER. We ask that all contributions be in the hands of the Editor FOUR WEEKS prior to the respective publication week.

STORM IN A TEACUP

The publication of Austin Platt's drawing of the main entrance to VICTORIA BARRACKS (February edition) unwittingly provoked an extraordinary response from a reader. The first part of the caption — 30-odd words — caused this fellow to get his knickers into such a knot that he wrote a two-page letter of complaint deploring our 'abysmal ignorance' — suggesting that we are dropping to 'gossip column' standard — that we made a 'snide' comment, etc.

This was followed by a second letter with still more complaints. Space does not permit publication of the entire contents (and besides, I don't want to bore you to death) but the following extracts will indicate the general nature of Letter No 2 --

"I would have assumed that a pedantic person such as yourself would have researched for material in A historical magazine, whether you believed your main source to be official or otherwise. Quite often official information is misleading and inaccurate "

"Regarding your approach to English Grammar I refer you to Fowler's "Modern English Usage". Even WISE people can learn from NITPICKING.

Yours faithfully,

(Name and address supplied)

(Those minor shortcomings aside, do you suppose this bloke likes my editing?)

You are, of course, entitled to express your opinion — whether favourable or adverse or whatever — and CONSTRUCTIVE criticism is always welcome, even more so where it concerns the standard of the Bulletin. But please let me make it quite clear that I certainly do not encourage petty nitpicking.

— Editor

24th February 1991

G. H. & E. HEAVENS
 Phone:
 (068) 82 0424

The Gables,
 15 Goode Street,
 Dubbo, N. S. W.,
 2830

Sutherland Shire Historical Society Bulletin.
 Letter to the Editor,

Dear Sir,

I have just received my copy of your first Bulletin, thank you I have read it from end to end, it is in my opinion excellent.

You are to be congratulated, to be able to step in at such short notice and produce a Bulletin of so good a quality.

But, we still need more personal local history, let us have more from our members who were here when it happened; thousands of things have happened over the last 100 years right here. Members should try and remember or even research things and people that have not been thought of in their lifetime, Write ups are needed on Dave Kirkby, Joe Monro MLA, Father Dunlea, Thomas Holt, Gray Bros (National Park) .Edith Edwards, Bob South. (two of our Hospital pioneer's,) George Prosser, The Hayhow Family, Dr Miles, Arthur Hand, Bob Cook, Tom Smith, Harry Price, Gordon Simpson, The Brinsley Family, James Murphy, Roy Carter of Menai, Mepsteads, Dallimores, Cottons of Menai, Oh there are so many more that all have a place in the History of Sutherland Shire. As Mrs Neve once said the Bulletin is the history of Sutherland Shire. How true. I have written these names that have come to my mind as I sit here, what about where you live, we need the history of Sandy Point, Como, Deadmans Creek, Waterfall Sanitorium and why was it built and why way out there, its role then and now. About the Ferry Masters, we had three vehicle ferrys in our shire for many years, with traffic queues back to Sutherland brickworks, waiting to get over the Georges river. There are so many things ,left to be written about here/before they are forgotten forever.

Wishing the Bulletin every success under your leadership, I feel we have little to fear.

Yours Sincerely,

Georgett
 George H. Heavens.



LETTERS...

92 Madagascar Drive
Kings Park NSW 2148
8 March 1991

Sutherland Shire Historical Society

Dear Sir/Madam

I submit the following in the hope of inclusion in a forthcoming edition of your newsletter. Following the invitation of the Clan Mackay Society (Scotland and Australia), I have been requested to act as Commissioner to establish a formal branch of the Society in New South Wales.

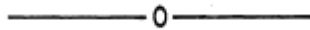
At this early stage eligibility for membership is open to all persons of Scottish descent who bear the name Mackay or MacAoidh (?) — in its various forms — by birth or marriage, or via one of the Septs of Clan Mackay, or whose mother or grandmother bore that name.

Septs include: Allen, Bain, Bayne, Kay, Key, MacBain, MacGaw, MacCay, MacCee, MacDaa, MacGaw, MacCee, MacGhee, MacGhie, Mackee, Mackie, MacPhail, Macque, Macquoy, MacQuoid, MacVail, Macvain, MacVane, Morgan, Neilson, Nelson, Paul, Paulson, Poleson, Poison, Reay, Scobie, Williamson or 'Mc' variations thereof.

This major Clan has a very long and colourful history — one which descendants will be proud of and one which should be perpetuated.

Interested persons can contact the undersigned by writing to the address as above — and enclosing a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Thanking you.

Yours sincerely Trevor
Mackay



EXCURSION REPORT

The week-end tour to Scone was most enjoyable and the folk from that area overwhelmed us with kindness. And on Sunday, at Richmond Vale Railway Museum, we found it to be a special bonus for our party.

That such a small number of people, by our standards, made the journey was regretted — but those who availed themselves of the tour all expressed their appreciation of what had been done for our comfort.

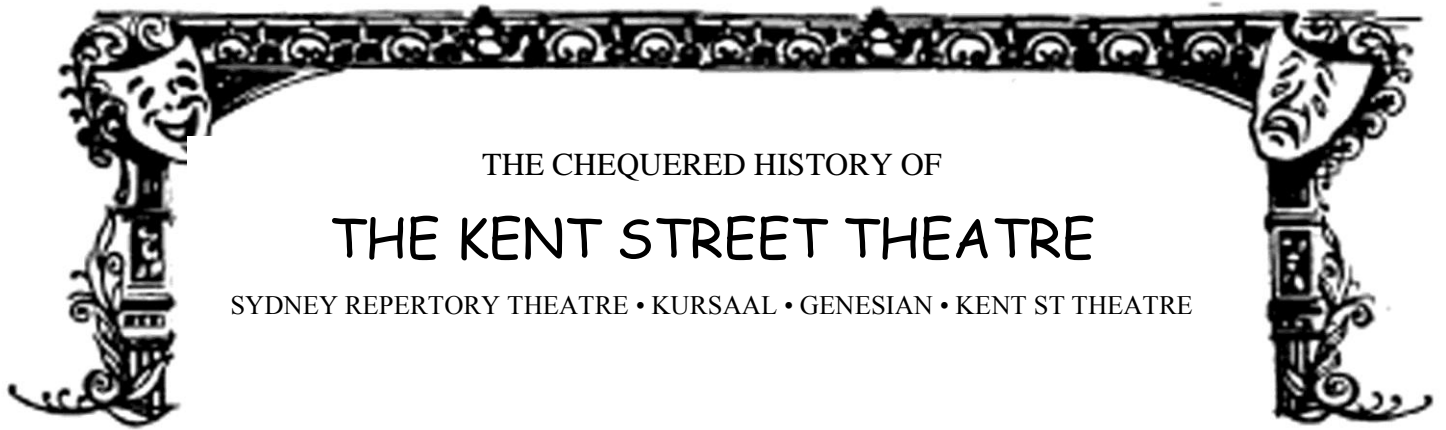
On Saturday, 18 May 1991, we are to visit 'The Oaks' District: in the past we have been to Camden, Cobbity, Picton, Menangle — but it will be our first tour to 'The Oaks' region.

The bookings are full, but if this Bulletin is in your hands before that date, please contact Mrs Cutbush as there may be a late cancellation.

And on Saturday, 20 July 1991, we have booked a tour to the Balmain area; it is quite some time since we were in this region, but we commend it to you as.. one of the most interesting parts of Sydney in the early days. Bookings will be open at the May meeting and tickets will be \$10.00 (members) and \$12.00 (visitors) — coach, entrance fees and guide inclusive. Leaving Cronulla at 8.30am and Sutherland at 9.00am will allow us to return home about 4.30-5.00 in the afternoon — quite late enough in short July days.

'Enquiries about excursions either to Mrs Cutbush or myself — bookings with Mrs Cutbush on 523 8147.

Aileen Griffiths — CONVENER



THE CHEQUERED HISTORY OF

THE KENT STREET THEATRE

SYDNEY REPERTORY THEATRE • KURSAAL • GENESIAN • KENT ST THEATRE

IN OCTOBER 1810 the Sydney Gazette announced changes in some street names in Sydney Town, authorised by Governor Macquarie. Incorporated into George Street were Sergeant Major's Row and Spring Row; the original Barrack Street became York Street; Middle Soldiers' Row became Clarence St; Back Soldiers' Row became the present KENT STREET.

Kent Street subsequently became a tradesmens and shopping venue as well as a residential street. Listed in Sands' Directory, over the years, were many craftsmen including a coach-trimmer, a vinegar maker, a farrier, several engineers, butchers, a shoemaker, mariners, a drayman and even a pawnbroker. As well as the Working Girls Club (and gymnasium), there were several hotels including the Stars & Stripes, Clock, Brisbane Inn and Grosvenor.

Thomas Glover, who was a stonemason to Governor Macquarie, built three small houses snuggled into the roughened sides of The Rocks. The surviving house is known today as Noah's Ark — and is a focal point at the northern end of Kent Street. At the southern end 'The Judge's House' was the home of Judge Dowling before he moved to the heights of Darlinghurst. Captain Ashmore, a master mariner, built his home, Ashmore House, at No. 140. Genteel-born murderer, Captain Knatchbull, lived for a while up near Margaret Street. Blanche Grey, an actress of old, lived in a little terrace block just south of Erskine St. Blanche had played at Joseph Wyatt's swish Royal Victoria in Pitt St in its heyday as the leading theatre in Sydney Town.

Bill Sumner lived at 117 Kent St. Bill used to fire the cannon at Fort Denison when the black ball dropped at one o'clock on Observatory Hill. On one occasion the cannon was fired for the second time that day — at about half past two in the afternoon. A young lad who was staying on the island, and who had been watching Bill loading the cannon, decided to give his own time signal. He was sent home very soon after this incident.

In 1867 it was decided that a church and school should be built on the site known today as 420 Kent St. Local Architect, William Munro, drew up plans for St John's Church and School which was officially opened by Archbishop John Bede Folding in October 1868. The sandstone building was used alternately as both church and church-school up till about 1905. It then became St John's Poor School, run by the Sisters of St Joseph, until 1927.

The Poor School closed in September 1927 — and for the next five years only sketchy details are available. It is known that the building was vacant for part of that time and that it was, for a period, a Soup Kitchen where meals were provided for destitute men. (This was years before the Matthew Talbot Hostel operated from the same building.)

In 1932 (at long last we've come to the theatrical stuff) the building was taken over by Scott Alexander's NEW SYDNEY REPERTORY COMPANY and fitted out as an 'intimate' theatre, similar in layout to the smaller theatres in parts of London used by repertory companies.

Alexander, whose real name was Codrington Ball (it's no wonder he changed it) had been in English theatre for many years with such greats as Beerbohm Tree, Ellen Terry and Mrs Patrick Campbell. He was an actor-manager who taught drama, stagecraft, production, etc and could turn his hand to anything to do with theatre — writing, set-making, costumes, whatever — and could always bring out the best in his students.

The New Sydney Repertory Company moved from St James Hall (in later years the Phillip St Theatre) to 420 Kent St and 'opened with a flourish' on 9 May 1932. Sir Benjamin Fuller made the opening speech and complimented Scott Alexander and the company. Sir Ben was confident that such theatres would not be too disadvantaged because the 'talkies' had replaced the old silent movies.

The name 'Sydney Repertory Theatre' was, soon afterwards, changed to KURSAAL 'and it continued mainly as a repertory theatre until 1938. A play, or program of plays, was presented each week and ranged from Shakespeare to light comedy to Grand Guignol (horror).

As a student Jean Garling was encouraged to write a play in the Grand Guignol style. (Alexander held the rights to stage Grand Guignol in Australia.) Jean's play was duly staged and, what's more, she was cast in the lead role. (Dame) Sybil Thorndike, who won great acclaim in Grand Guignol, was most impressed and urged Jean to write more plays in this vein.

One of Alexander's early productions at Kent St was CAPRICE, the Alfred Lint and Lynn Fontanne big success on Broadway. In this, Peter Finch (at sixteen years of age) made his debut in a straight role. Finchie had already played stooge to comedian Bert le Blanc in vaudeville — but aspired to bigger things in theatre. He quickly caught the attention of producers like Scott Alexander and Doris Fitton. Ethel Gabriel was another of Scott Alexander's protégés who carved her own special niche in the theatre.

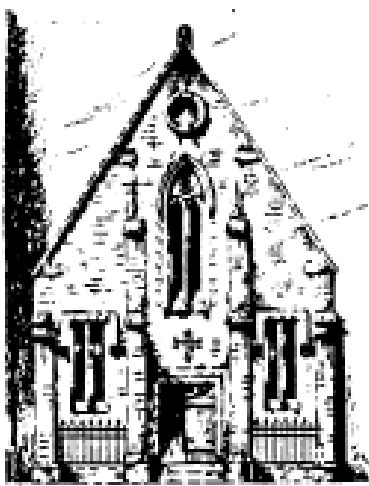
Jocelyn Howarth stepped straight out of repertory into the lead role in the Ken Hall movie THE SQUATTER'S DAUGHTER - and, I might mention, attracted rave reviews. Beautiful Jocelyn later hit the big time in Hollywood, where she married leading actor George Brent.

The final productions of the Kursaal at Kent Street were Merchant Of Venice, Romeo & Juliet plus a Testimonial Benefit to Scott Alexander. Closing night saw Alexander starring in a Grand Guignol production. later that year Scott Alexander set up the new Kursaal

Theatre at Miller Street, North Sydney --which was to become Doris Fitton's INDEPENDENT THEATRE following Alexander's untimely death.

The Kent St building then became the Matthew. Talbot Hostel — again catering for destitute men — up till 1952 when it moved to bigger premises at Young Street near Circular Quay.

ENTER THE GENESIANS. In 1944 some members of the Catholic Youth Organisation decided to form a theatre group. The meeting took place on 24 August which happened to be the eve of the Feast of Saint Genesius. Genesius was a Roman martyr AND ... the Patron Saint of Actors — hence the (original) name THE GENESIAN PLAYERS.



THE KENT ST THEATRE
Drawing by Patrick Faulkner

cont'd

Their first production -- staged at the Australian Hall in Elizabeth St — was (rather appropriately) Henri Gheon's *THE COMEDIAN*, a play based on the conversion and martyrdom of Saint Genesius. This play had been sent to them by Dorothy Clayton who is now their Librarian and Historian/Archivist.

The Genesians mounted successful productions at a number of venues for some nine years — the Radio Theatre, Manresa Hall, Independent Theatre, Capitol — before settling into a permanent home base.

Cardinal Gilroy earned the undying gratitude of the group by allowing them the use of the then vacant Kent St building as a theatre and workshop.

After extensive alterations and repairs the GENESIAN THEATRE opened in April of 1954 with a production of T S Eliot's *MURDER IN THE CATHEDRAL* — a play that had won them the NSW finals of the Commonwealth Jubilee Amateur Drama Competition in 1951.

The Genesians prospered at Kent Street and became a training ground for many of our top professionals — names like Peter Carroll, Jennifer Murphy, John Bell, Angela Punch (-McGregor), James Dibble, Judi Farr, Bryan Brown, Julie McGregor, Tony Ward, Sarah Chadwick ... have all graced the boards at Kent Street. Others like Kevin Brennan and Bruce Stewart have long-since gone overseas to settle permanently.

That grand lady of the theatre Royal Command Performer, Colleen Clifford, has appeared on stage at Kent Street but, more importantly, has directed about ten of their productions — *Playboy Of The Western World*; *The Vigil*; *A Man For All Seasons*; *The Lady's Not For Burning*; *Richard II*; *Richard III*; *Bernadette*; *Thieves' Carnival*; *Relative Values* ... It's worth noting that the production of *Richard II* (with Peter Carroll) earned high praise from Sir Robert Helpman.

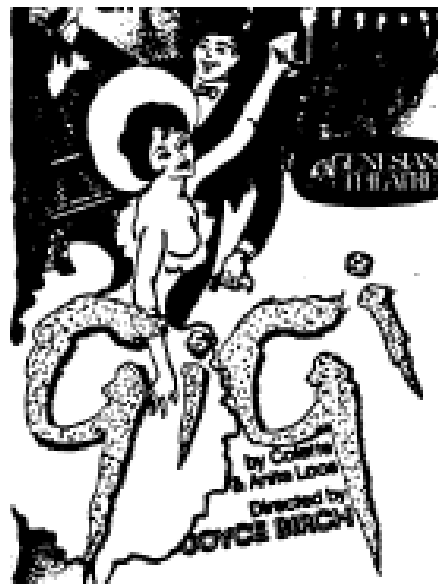
Once, when May Pusey was teaching drama at Kent Street, their youthful Stage Manager asked: "Can you turn me into an actor?" — to which May gave the tongue-in-cheek reply: "No way, I don't have a magic wand." The young fellow's name was Bryan Brown.

Into the 1990s the Genesians continue to stage around half a dozen productions a year — from comedy to drama to farce to revue to pantomime. During 1990 the management changed the name to *KENT ST THEATRE*, because that's how so many patrons have been referring to it over the years.

The building received a listing by The National Trust of Australia in 1983. The following is a short extract from the Report --

"A small rectangular face brick former church of simple gothic character, with buttresses, original slate roof, central entry flanked by rectangular windows, small two-light lancet window above topped by circular vent with trefoil cut-out. Sandstone door and window surrounds. There are small sections of iron picket fence on either side of the entrance."

— Will Newton



LE BATAILLON CARRE

-by-

Edward Duyker

Australians are long accustomed to news of Australian galleries purchasing, or seeking to purchase, works of art abroad. Often these works of art have particular historical significance. The traffic, however, is not always one way. It may come as a surprise that the French have been searching for a painting in Australia for some time. The painting in question is "Le Bataillon Carré, Affaire de Fougère", by Julien Le Blant (1851-1930). It depicts a battle during the Vendée War (1793-96), when a Republican battalion, in the face of a Royalist attack, formed itself into a defensive square.

It was in 1982, that Monsieur Francois Ribemont, Chief Curator of the several museums in France's Vendée region, learned, from one of Le Blant's descendants, that the painting was in Sydney. After writing to a number of galleries and museums, and requesting the assistance of the French Embassy's Cultural and Scientific Councillor, he was informed that the painting had been owned by the Gallery of New South Wales, but that in 1959 it was culled from the Gallery's collection and auctioned by the firm of James R. Lawson Pty. Ltd. What is surprising is that neither the Gallery nor the auctioneers appear to have kept any record of who the painting was sold to!

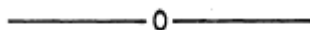
Le Blant's "Le Batallion Carré..." is an important French historical painting, for it portrays a rebellion which sent shock waves through Revolutionary France. In 1793, the conservative peasantry of the Vendee region - angry at the Republic-an campaign against the Church, at Bourgeois designs on rural land and at enforced conscription and higher taxes - revolted in anarchistic rage. The rebellion became one of the most bitter of the modern age. Armed with scythes and fowling muskets, the peasants began to attack the Republicans in their towns. It did not take long for émigré nobles to enter the fray and place themselves at the head of the peasant "Christian" Army. These aristocrats characterised the monarchist cause as a Catholic one, and the Vendéens soon adopted the name "Royal Catholic Army of France". The insurgents were to mount a serious challenge to the new Republican regime. (At one stage they even besieged the city of Nantes.) With an intimate knowledge of the terrain, the Vendéens successfully applied guerrilla tactics, but when they attempted to fight pitched battles, their lack of discipline, training and weaponry proved disastrous. By the time they were defeated, most of the countryside was laid waste in the face of Republican scorched earth measures.

cont'd

Throughout the nineteenth century, the term "Vendée" would have the same emotional connotations as "Vietnam" in our era. In describing a people (particularly a Catholic people) like the Irish or the Poles, taking up arms against overwhelming odds, it sufficed to employ the word "Vendée" for all to comprehend the full meaning of the drama.

Julien Le Blant was to paint a whole series of works on the Vendée theme. He even illustrated Balzac's Les Chouans, which dealt with counter-revolution in Brittany. In 1885 he was made a Chevalier of the Legion d'Honneur for his contribution to French art. Though he has long since been overshadowed by the Expressionists and Impressionists, his historical paintings are based on considerable research and have a strong dramatic quality. His Vendée works are indicative of the powerful hold the Vendée insurrection had on the nineteenth century French mind. The desire of the French to locate one of Le Blant's paintings, in Australia, suggests this fascination is still strong. Naturally enough, Monsieur Ribemont is anxious to hear from anyone who knows of the whereabouts of Le Blant's "Le Bataillon Carre..." Let us wish him bonne chance in his quest.

NOTE. To illustrate his article Dr Duyker provided a photo of Julien Le Blant's important painting LE BATAILLON CARRE, AFFAIRE DE FOUGRE. Unfortunately, due to the limitations of our printing process, we were unable to obtain a clear reproduction of the photo. — Editor



JACKY HOWE — THE GREATEST SHEARER

JOHN HOWE, born in Queensland in 1851, is reputedly the greatest shearer of all time. Working the central Queensland sheds in the 1880s and 1890s he set shearing records that stood for years.

The son of a circus acrobat, Howe was an outstanding athlete in his youth. He once sheared 321 sheep — using HAND SHEARS — in a standard working day. That record has never been broken with hand shears — and, in fact, it was not until 1950 that it was surpassed by a shearer using machine shears.

— George' Heavens (Dubbo)

SOAP AND DR JOHNSON

By the end of the 16th century soap was in general use, although it was still a luxury. Queen Elizabeth had but one bath a month — and lesser folk certainly had fewer. For that matter, many years later, Dr Johnson — upon being shown a friend's new bathroom at Litchfield — shook his head and advised his companion: "Let well alone and be content. I hate immersion and strongly advise against it."

(From a book by Unilever)

— George Heavens Collection

Pointed
Gothic

abcdefghijklmnop
 mnopqrstuv
 wxyz bbb bdd
 ll gny h h g p

A B C D E F G H I J K L M

N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

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PROFILE OF A CALLIGRAPHER

OUR FEBRUARY edition featured A SHORT HISTORY OF WRITING (and some beautiful illustrations of Calligraphy) by Guest Writer, Fran McKirdy — Guild Member, Australian Society of Calligraphers — and long-time resident of Woollooware.

Early in her schooling Fran received instruction in such classical subjects as Architecture and Lettering as part of the Arts Course. The pure form of the beautiful alphabets of ancient Rome were especially favoured and this provided Fran with an excellent grounding for the National Art School where she studied with the renowned Eric Roberts.

Fran's skills were advanced considerably by her work in the field of Survey Draughting which, amongst other things, requires clean lines and legible, attractive lettering. This type of work provides an excellent training in discipline as everything has to be done so meticulously.

During her residency in Victoria Fran did much freelance work for the local newspaper, Gippsland Times. Upon returning to Sydney Fran found herself in constant demand by art studios, Universities, newspapers and the printing industry in general. Lettering in art schools had declined greatly — and, consequently, there was an acute shortage of experienced Calligraphers.

In 1970 Fran McKirdy enrolled at Gymea Technical College to catch up on the latest developments in Lettering. Here she worked with Jocelyn Maughan, who was Acting-Principal of the Art Department. This association led to Fran also working with Olivia Roberts at the St George Technical College. Still later Fran worked with Stan Clements who was then teaching at Meadowbank Tafe College. Clements had trained in advertising agencies and his approach to Lettering was different again — and this provided a further broadening of Fran's horizons. Fran ultimately took over teaching the Lettering class at Meadowbank when Stan moved over to the Painting class.

During Fran's years at Gymea Technical College, Lynette Mawer joined the class. An outstanding pupil, Lynette was later to found the Australian Society of Calligraphers — for which she will long be remembered.

A lady who has devoted such of her free time to Social Welfare — like about five days a week, at one period — Fran McKirdy was Supervisor for the Georges River Community Service and was also a founding member of Homecare.

Several years ago Fran began teaching Calligraphy at the Woollooware House Arts and Crafts Centre. This has proved to be an extremely popular course

and some delightful examples of Lettering, Illuminating, Calligraphy, etc by some of Fran's pupils, can be seen on display there.

Fran McKirdy is one of the quiet achievers who won the most prestigious TOWN CRYERS AWARD in London from 100 entries that poured in from all over the world. The Town Cryers were announcing the departure of the 'Tall Ships' from Portsmouth — as part of the FIRST FLEET RE-ENACTMENT for 1988 — and Fran designed and wrote the Scroll that took out the Award. No mean feat, eh? This is a local lady of whom we can all be proud.

— Will Newton



MEDICAL PRACTICE AT LOFTUS

Dr Douglas Ash

My long-time friend and patient, Mrs Marjory Blackley, has asked me to write a few lines about "Medical Practice in Loftus in the last 36 years". Reading her account of "The Origins of Loftus and Loftus Village" in the August, 1990 edition, reminds me of those early post-war years of development in our small village.

In 1954 I asked Dr Eric Miles — an old and very respected doctor, with a large practice in Sutherland — if he would mind if I started to practice in Loftus. He said that he wouldn't mind — but I had the feeling he didn't know where Loftus was.

Only a few people lived in Loftus in those days, but my medical practice grew rapidly and extended to part of Sutherland and Woronora River. There were very few roads and many home calls had to be made along bush tracks to newly built homes and temporary dwellings tucked away in all manner of most unusual locations.

In those days it was fairly common to have to do several late night calls on almost every night, for in those days not many people owned motor cars and were unable to bring sick children to the Surgery. Treating children in this way was gratifying but very trying. I could not have carried on with all the work without the help of two wonderful friends at Engadine — Dr John Achary and his wife, Dr Norma Nelson. We shared the work and were therefore able to have a little recreation time.

A few years later the practice in Loftus and the Sutherland area was made a lot easier when I found a partner, Dr Len Dawson, who worked with me until 1969 when he became ill and had to leave.

In the early 1950s there was no hospital in the Shire. Our hospital patients all had to go to St George Hospital. Fortunately St George was very good and had a very efficient Superintendent, Dr David Storey. Storey had laid down a rule that no genuinely sick patient would ever be refused admission. Many a time we were told, "Sorry, there are no empty beds — but send the patient anyway and we'll find a bed somehow."

In 1957 Sutherland Hospital was built. It was the result of hard work over many years by many people who had virtually slaved to acquire the land and then persuade the State Government to build the hospital. Believe me, that hospital really belongs to the people of this Shire.

In the early years most of the babies were delivered at a tiny private hospital, San Gerard, at Engadine — owned and run by Sister Nancy Taafe. Sister Taafe was one of the most remarkable nursing sisters I have ever known. Every patient who went to this hospital wanted to go back. Patients told me that it was like going for ten days holiday — to be spoiled and waited upon. The little hospital eventually gave way to the big new Maternity Wing of Sutherland Hospital. This Wing rapidly gained a name for efficiency and it was always a happy hospital. It was managed by Sister Mary Hampson, ably assisted by a long line of very capable nursing sisters — some of whom have only just resigned after having worked there since 1957.

Medical practice in Loftus has always been a happy affair in spite of the tragedies which we have all had to accept. One sad incident which had a very marked effect on the development of our little village was the death of an elderly gentleman, at 9 o'clock one night, when he was killed on the level crossing which used to be located at the northern end of the station.

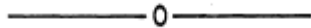
The following day my wife and I, with the help of our two secretaries, were to contact the Commissioner for Railways — and were truly amazed at what he told us. We found that a number of Loftus residents had been trying for years to have the crossing closed ... but without success. A few days later the Loftus residents 'declared war' on the Department of Railways. Two years later the present footbridge at the station was built — and Loftus Avenue was extended to become Wheatley Road and connect up with Old Bush Road at Engadine.

Medical practice, from day one in 1954, was always involved with bush-fires. In those days we had a Loftus Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade — and the Captain was Ray Watchorn, and later Jim Chadwick. I shall make no attempt to recount the history of the Brigade. Doctoring the Brigade was not particularly arduous — and my wife worked harder than I did in helping the other wives feed the fire fighters.

Loftus Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade never had a tragedy requiring medical help. However, some of its members were close to five young lads who were killed at Waterfall in 1980. Those Loftus survivors will undoubtedly carry the psychological scars from that incident for many years.

There's an old saying that sympathy in a doctor should not be an emotion --it should be a motivatory force to do something to alleviate suffering. In response to that tragedy my wife and I did something. Whether the result of our work will ever be of some use, only history books will tell.

Medical practice in modern day Loftus is much easier. We have lots of help nowadays from hospitals, Daycare Centres, Nursing Homes, District Nursing Services — just to name a few. However, we will remember with very much satisfaction and happiness the old POST WAR DAYS OF MEDICAL PRACTICE IN THE LITTLE VILLAGE OF LOFTUS.



'OUR GLAD SINGS AGAIN'

BARRIE DENNISS, long-time resident of Cronulla and founder of the GLADYS MONCRIEFF (INTERNATIONAL) FAN CLUB was Guest Speaker at our February Meeting. Barrie gave a most interesting talk about the career of one of Australia's greatest ever stars of musical comedy, the one and only GLADYS MONCRIEFF.

-A clearly delighted audience listened to several of OUR GLAD'S best-loved recordings — which, incidentally, are still being released in Oz after all of these years. Barrie also gave us a preview of the new Cassette, due out a bit later in the year, which features THE BLUE MAZURKA and JOSEPH — never previously released on an LP recording in this country.

Glad's autobiography MY LIFE OF SONG was published in 1971 — about five years before she passed on. A new biography written by Alwyn Capern, an old friend of the singer, is expected to be on the bookshelves in 1992.

Alwyn is an extremely knowledgeable bloke and has, in the past, provided me with various bits and pieces of obscure information about OUR GLAD that I had needed for commentary in my radio programs.

Thanks again to Barrie Denniss who will shortly be moving to Queensland --presumably to put the bend in a few more bananas.

— Will Newton

BACK TO NATURE IN SUTHERLAND

Now that Sutherland is so heavily built upon, or built out, many of the old things are gone. Who remembers the beautiful Emperor Gum caterpillar? About 4 - 5 inches (100 - 125 mm) long, leaf green, with spikes all over him, a diamond or sapphire on the ends of the spikes — he lived in the gum trees and, after meals, would wrap himself up in a silken house. Later, the most magnificent butterfly would emerge, live for about a week, lay some eggs --and the process would start all over again.

Then there was the Rope, or String, caterpillar — we still get a few that look like them here in Dubbo. When I was a boy we would see them — in a string 6 feet (1.8 metres) long, each one hanging on to the one in front by its fur, like a piece of rope laying on the ground — sometimes two or three lines, parallel with one another, making a rope. It was fun, if you wore shoes, to kick the middle of the string — and confuse the issue. It was also good fun to use a stick to direct the leading caterpillar into the meat ants' territory — and then scratch the top of the meat ants' nest with a bush. The ants would come out in their hundreds and the caterpillars would roll up into little balls in an attempt to avoid being eaten.

Then there was the dark green with dark yellow stripes, no-fur caterpillar that would hang together in a group over the fork of a gum tree — and like a great lump of horrible flesh. If you went close they would spray you with a poison that would cause an extremely itchy rash that you would scratch at until it bled. The only caterpillar I see in any quantity these days is the nice little green one that comes from the white butterfly — and which must taste horrible because the birds won't eat them.

And then there was the black and yellow bloke that feeds on the thick-leaf climbing vines out in the bush. They arrive in hundreds and, if you go too close, they stop eating and sway their heads from side to side as though to say, "No, no". They finish up making the beautiful jet-black butterfly --that lays more eggs, and then the cycle starts all over again. Gone from Sutherland ... forever.

Another was the Unicorn caterpillar — about 3 inches (76mm) long, grey-green and with one $\frac{3}{4}$ inch (19mm) long horn on its head. That horn is solid — and it carries a sting. And talking about stinging, how about the red ant — 1 inch (25mm) long, fire-engine red, with a sting where its tail should be. This one can grab you with the forceps on the front of its head, bend itself in halves and let you have it with a tail-sting ... and it's not at all fussy where it stings you. They seem to like to walk up the leg of your shorts — and the pain, akin to a tooth-ache, stays with you for about a week. Holy cow!

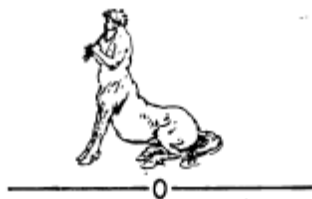
The red ant has a relation that is a little larger and is very black — and with the increase in size comes an increase in the amount of poison this ant injects. The sting brings up great big blisters and the pain is just like the shock from an electric alternator. The red and black ants always operate in pairs and you seldom see them on their own. These ants have a little relative commonly known as the Brown Bum ant, which also bites and moves a lot faster than the red or black. But don't confuse these with the Meat ant that makes a 10 feet (3.0 metre) circle in patches of gravel and yellow clay. They are meat-eaters — and it was on these patches that the convicts had been known to tie Troopers down and let the ants eat them alive.

I was once told by a learned person that these ants have the same poison as the Sandfly. Are they still around? — they were once prolific along the banks of the Woronora River.

Yes, when I think back Sutherland wasn't such a bad place to move away from after all. And, I haven't mentioned snakes ...

The largest Death Adder ever caught in Australia was killed in Sutherland --and used to be on display on the shelf of the Chemist, Mr Marsden, a few doors north of Sutherland Post Office.

---George Heavens (Dubbo)



• This interesting little graph was submitted by our Honorary Auditor, Ken Greentree. We don't know where it originated, but someone has obviously spent quite a deal of time in working it all out.

	<u>C</u> HURCHILL	<u>H</u> ITLER	<u>R</u> OOSEVELT	<u>I</u> L DUCE	<u>S</u> TALIN	<u>I</u> OJO
YEAR BORN	1874	1889	1882	1883	1887	1884
AGE VE Day 1945	71	56	63	62	58	61
CAME TO OFFICE	1940	1933	1933	1922	1924,	1941
YEARS IN OFFICE	5	12	12	23	21	4.
TOTAL	3890	3890	3890	3890	3890	3890
HALF OF 3890 = 1945 - 7 May = V E DAY (End of war in Europe)						
• HALF OF 1945 = 972.5 = 9th month • 7th hour • 2nd day 7.00am • 2 September 1945•VJ Day						
• FIRST LETTER OF EACH NAME: AT TOP } SUPREME RULER = <u>C</u> <u>H</u> <u>R</u> <u>I</u> <u>S</u> <u>T</u>						

There is in existence a similar graph to do with the 'Immortal Bard' WLLLIAM SHAKESPEARE. If any reader has a copy if it, we would be most interested to publish it in the Bulletin.

— Editor

Museums in Paris:
Some Recent Developments in Adaptive Re-Use

Susan Duyker

France has a proud museological tradition and an impressive record of innovative re-use of old buildings for modern purposes. During a recent five week sojourn in Paris, I was able to visit a number of important museums installed in "recycled" structures. All had provoked controversy over differing philosophies of presentation and organization. In this short report I have chosen to examine three such museums and draw both from my own impressions and some of the critical literature.

Musee Picasso.

A selection from the Estate of Pablo Picasso (the dation, which enabled his heirs to pay inheritance tax with works of art) formed the basis for this collection in 1979. It includes paintings, sculptures, drawings, prints, ceramics, illustrated books and works by other artists including primitive art. Donations, acquisitions and works on loan complete the collection which is housed in the Hôtel Salé in the old quarter of Paris which is called le Marais The Museum was opened in September, 1985.

The Hôtel Salé was built between 1656 and 1659 for Pierre Aubert, Lord of Fontenay, who made his fortune from the salt tax (hence the building's nickname). Hélienè Seckel writes:

“With its impressive size, its sumptuous appearance, its clearly ordered architecture, and the quality of its decoration, it ranks among the finest historic houses of the Marais. The large portal facing the rue de Thorigny opens onto a semicircular forecourt bordered, on the right, by the former service wing whose presence explains the off-center composition of the facade, which is crowned by a monumental arched pediment (the facade on the garden side is flanked by two pavilions and is perfectly symmetrical). Overlooking the courtyard of the outbuildings, there is a chapel that protrudes strangely from the facade at the first floor level.”¹

It has seen various occupants including the Ecole Centrale des Arts et Manufactures between 1829 and 1884 which led to many modifications. From 1943 it housed the Ecole des Metiers d'Art.

In a dilapidated state, the Hôtel Sale was acquired by the city of Paris, and given the status of an historical monument in 1968. After some urgent repairs, it underwent a program of restoration between 1974 and 1980 under the architects Bernard Vitry and Bernard Fonquernie of the Monuments Historiques.

There was quite a deal of opposition to the selection of the Hôtel Salé

¹Seckel, H Musee Picasso Guide Editions de la réunion des musées nationaux, Paris, 1985 p5.

as the site for the Musée Picasso, although, as Helene Seckel points out "...Picasso himself, who had always chosen to live in old houses, would have been delighted"². Roland Simounet won the competition for the design of the museum's facilities over ³ other schemes (of Carlo Scarpa, Roland Castro and Jean Monge). The problem was how to adapt a 17th century mansion to the needs of a modern museum open to a large public with controlled lighting, temperature and security while preserving its architectural integrity. Simounet's was the only scheme to accommodate all that was needed into the existing building without extensions into the gardens or enlarged basements.

The interior has been restored, by and large to its original state in terms of levels, volumes and proportions. Furnishings for the rooms, designed by Diego Giacometti, are superb.

The collection, while very comprehensive, is small enough to be grasped in the first visit. The planning leads the visitor clearly, but not in an authoritarian manner. The grand staircase draws the visitor to the first floor. Each room is visited in succession, then stairs (or elevator) lead back to the ground floor which includes sculptures in a now covered courtyard. Ramps lead to the lower floor (the old vaults) and back to ground level. The levels above the first floor contain temporary exhibitions, library, archives, projection room and offices. Bookshop, front desk and cafeteria are contained in the old service wing.

The organisation of the collection chronologically (except for some of the sculptures), juxtaposing different media, gave me an understanding of Picasso's work, his sources of inspiration and the constant dialogue that existed between his different media. The symbolic level of the journey can be perceived also: ups, downs, traverses and surprises reveal the magic of Picasso's unique and varied work.

Original ornament of the grand staircase has been maintained but elsewhere assumes an air of understatement. Simple intersecting planes and shades of white do not detract from the works displayed.

Musée d'Orsay

The Musée d'Orsay opened in December, 1986.

The Gare d'Orsay was inaugurated in 1900 for the Exposition Universelle Architect Victor Laloux's brief was to create a fashionable envelope for the metal structure conceived by the railway engineers of the Compagnie d'Orleans. After years of declining importance (its platforms were too short for the modern trains) the SNCF decided to sell the building in 1961. It was classified in 1978 in the aftermath of the demolition of the historic Les Halles markets.

In October 1977, President Giscard d'Estaing made the decision to use the station for the Museum of the 19th century, covering art from 1848 to 1914. The project became one of the earliest of the grands projets In 1979 the team of architects known as ACT won a competition for the project. Then at the request of the Musées de France a second competition,

² ibid p 6.

for the fitting out of the museum, was won by Gae Aulenti.

From the start there was heated debate over the philosophy of presentation. On the one hand, the Inspector-General of the Musees de France, Michel Laclotte represented the traditional French idea of displaying art chronologically, by genre, showing the development of an artist and his place in the movement. The idea is that Art transcends the dross of history. On the other hand, historian Madeleine Rébérioux represented the view that Art should be presented in the context of cultural, economic and social history and the history of ideas of the period. The result of this debate was that little by little ACT's scheme was emasculated. The original concept of putting the art in the context of the century was eroded.

There is a certain harmony between the old and the new but no dialogue. Gae Aulenti says she considered the Gare d'Orsay as "...a contemporary object, without a history...less an architectural work, more a territory". Aulenti's interior stands physically apart from Laloux's railway station. J.-F. Pousse rightly describes it as "une architecture monumentale clans l'architecture monumentale de Laloux"³, while some have gone further, calling it "devastating exhibitionism"⁴.

The small section on 19th century architecture, difficult enough to place in the scheme of the Museum, seems to fly in the face of the museographic logic used elsewhere in the Museum. Richard Puduzzi, set designer, has used his sense of the theatre to display Charles Garnier's Opéra in its urban context in a 18m² model under a glass floor. There is a sectional model of the Opéra showing the machinery backstage. The different architectural movements are shown by facades, displayed in relief, of the cathédrale de Marseille, halle de Balthard, etc.

From a purely functional point of view the museum works well. The visitor, armed with a very clearly set out "Musée d'Orsay brief guide", walks along the central nave of the ground floor where sculpture of the Second Empire is displayed. As one ascends, little by little one is offered detours to collections of paintings of the period or, further, to temporary exhibitions. Past the Architectural section at the far end of the building are escalators giving direct access to the Impressionists, Post-impressionists and Neo-impressionists, whose gallery is lit naturally under rooflights. There are no detours here. Two lookouts' on this level provide a panorama of the nave and Laloux's building. The middle level, devoted to the Third Republic, Art Nouveau, foreign schools, etc. is organised like the first level, with galleries of sculpture overlooking the nave and detours to other genres. Visitors with strollers or otherwise disabled take note, however, that elevators exist but are hidden!

Musée du Louvre

In September 1981 the plan to devote the whole of the Palais du

³ Pousse, J.-F. "Le temps du musée", *Technique & Architecture* No. 386. octobre-novembre. 1986. p p31

⁴ Dagen, P. "The Golden Age of French Painting", *The Guardian*, April 16, 1989, p15.

Louvre to Museum was announced by Francois Mitterand. In 1983 Ioh Ming Pei was asked to develop the plan for the Grand Louvre. The first stage of this project, inaugurated in March 1989, includes the new entrance via the glass pyramid.

The Louvre had been described by the Director of the Museums of France as being like a "theatre without a backstage" and the space required was vast. This was not the only problem in the old Louvre. From memory, the floors of the Pavilion Denon were suffering seriously from concentrated use and the crowds in that section were a disincentive for the visitor. And as I.M. Pei said, "People tend to stay longer in a museum if they are not anxious, if they know at every point where they are. In the old Louvre, a visitor was lost once he had reached the Salle Rubens, after entering at the Porte Denon."⁵

Pei became convinced that the solution lay in excavating under the Cour Napoleon rather than adding to the existing structure which had remained virtually unchanged since Napoleon III. The idea of a central entrance was obvious, but Pei's proposal for public reception areas underground, along with the limited excavation depth (7m because of the water level of the Seine) posed a dilemma. "There had to be space to create a room of importance, and there had to be light...I read extensively about Le Notre and I began to imagine a glass pyramid which would reflect the sky, and the fountains as well. The sky and the water could then become the essential elements of a composition whose illusionistic aspects bring it closer to landscape architecture than to pure architecture."⁶ Low triangular pools surrounded by granite benches reflect the sky and palace, while three smaller pyramids point to the three wings of the Louvre.

The large glass pyramid marks the entrance in the Cour Napoleon and lights and gives height to the hall beneath; its square plan generates the larger square of the hall. This becomes the new centre of gravity of the Museum. The visitor enters the pyramid and descends to the hall on the lower level where he finds information, tickets, etc. He then takes escalators back to the mezzanine, choosing the wing he wishes to visit first. As he walks towards the wing a small pyramid lights his way giving him a crystal clear view of the pavilion of his destination. Behind each wall of the hall are four essential services related to the public: NE - auditorium and conference rooms; SE - Group tour and children's areas; SW - museum shop and bookshop; - NW - two restaurants and three cafés. Major spaces to the east of the hall contain temporary exhibition areas and the fascinating History of the Louvre section. Preceding the new construction, the buried areas of the ancient Louvre including the moat and lower ramparts of the fortress of Phillippe Auguste and the Salle Saint Louis were excavated and can now be visited as an extension of the History of the Louvre display.

The sorely needed "backstage" for the Museum is also housed

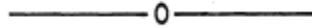
⁵ Jodidio, PE. (ed.)The New Louvre: A Complete Guide, Connaissance des Arts, Paris, 1989, p.39.

⁶ ibid

underground, invisible to the public and served by a 4m x 4m road/tunnel.

The redistribution of the collections to include the Richlieu wing, until recently the home of the Ministry of Finance, will be complete in 1993, the bicentennial of the Musée du Louvre, and the full logic of the scheme will be realised.

The Louvre is repository for a great and universal art collection but since its beginnings in 1290 until one hundred years ago the Louvre has also been a seat of power. The design for the Grand Louvre succeeds in reflecting this duality.



MANY HAPPY YEARS IN LOFTUS

Betty McGrath

I ARRIVED at Loftus 41 years ago with my husband and a nine-months baby girl — to live in a partly-built house with no linings or windows on the south wall. But I was so happy to have my very own home. Six or seven families, all related to us, lived in Loftus at this time — grandparents, father, mother, aunts, cousins, the lot. Quite a number of relatives whom I'd known as a child and many of us had attended school together.

Our front street, Loftus Avenue, was a dirt road in those days but the baker and the iceman still delivered to us. The she-oaks that grew in front of our house absorbed some of the dust from the unmade roadway. On wash-days we boiled up the fuel copper -- I dragged the wood for it from the schoolyard just up the hill from us.

Two sons were later born to me and it was a good life-style for them. They had the bushland to themselves and were able to swim in the creeks as their father had done when he lived there as a child. There were two chicken farms in the area — and great was the excitement when shops began to open up. We reckoned we were really made.

Tents lined the railway line opposite — and lots of very nice people lived in them permanently. Then there was the good old rail-motor train. We all knew that if we were running late the train crew would wait for us. Another thing was those lovely old steam-trains passing by. We'll never see the like of them again — climbing up the hill in front of us, especially on a wet night. The struggle they had. And there's also the train that runs into the Park. I like that too, and have heard that it may come to an end. It has, in the past, been extremely useful to us all.

I love the birds that come to roost in the trees — and my possum that has come for a feed of bread and apples even on the darkest nights. Over the years he has become quite a pet. We have seen bushfires and flooding rains, but this has still been a good place to live.

Having lived the whole of my life in Sutherland Shire, I have been very happy near my relatives, and never want to leave. My daughter calls this a village as we all know each other in a way that other places seem to be lacking in this day and age. The people here are just like family. And we've finally finished the house — so long after it was begun. It's all been a great experience and I have no regrets at all.

THE WITCH OF KINGS CROSS

(HISTORY OF KINGS CROSS)

"IF I'D PULLED RANK SHE MIGHT HAVE TURNED ME INTO A FROG."

RECENTLY I read Toni Lamond's delightful autobiography *FIRST HALF* which was published a few months ago. Expatriate though she, may be, Lamond is still one of OUR great showbiz personalities and her book makes excellent reading — particularly for old theatre buffs like me.

Toni's mention of a 'terrifying' near-encounter with Rosaleen Norton -- the so-called Witch Of Kings Cross — intrigued me and also called back a few memories that I had more or less forgotten in the course of thirty-odd years.

Toni relates how, in the wee small hours (after a late, late show) she saw Rosaleen and a male companion walking in her direction ... "My blood froze -- she now had an ugly, satanic appearance ..." Toni goes on to tell how she crouched down in the back of her car until the danger had passed — and, I guess, under the impression that the 'wicked witch' was likely as not to put a spell on both her and her baby son, Tony Sheldon, who was with her.



The Author - as seen through the eyes of Rosaleen Norton in the late 1950s.

I think Toni must have had a very vivid imagination in those days. Shortly after her 'terrifying experience' I was to make the acquaintance of Rosaleen Norton to negotiate for some art work for a city Coffee Lounge — and found her to be vastly different from the 'frightening' descriptions given by a number of other people over the years.

My client had commissioned me to draw up Plans & Specifications to convert a city shop to a Coffee Lounge and wanted 'eye-catching' murals as part of the decor. During discussions the name of Rosaleen Norton was mentioned as the possible artist — and it fell to ME to make the approach.

This would have been about 1958-59 — a year or two after Toni Lamond's 'terrifying' experience, as near as I can reckon up. Most of our discussions took place at the Kashmir Coffee Lounge (now a Thai restaurant) next door to Clay's Bookshop in Macleay St and opposite the Rex Hotel. The Kashmir had a lower floor section where local artists used to display their paintings. Rosaleen would decorate the walls with pastel drawings a couple of times a year in return for coffee and light meals, I think.

On a few occasions we met at the Apollion, a little cafe in Darlinghurst Rd opposite the Fire Station, where artists and writers would gather for a cheap evening meal and plenty of lively debate. The walls here were also adorned with Rowie's work — ghouls, hobgoblins, satyrs and a general assortment of phantasmagoria.

Several times I had occasion to call at the terrace house up at Hargrave St (behind the Police Headquarters) that Ramie shared with her long-time consort, the supposedly 'nutty' poet Gavin Greenlees. I once heard Gavin laughingly tell someone or other, across a crowded dinner table, that his Invalid Pension was because of his mental disability — and that he did not,

cont'd



therefore, have to work for a living. This seemed to be a standing joke amongst his associates. Greenlees wasn't quite as nutty as the Pensions people thought.

But back to the main point. The suggested theme for the Coffee Lounge murals was Francis Thompson's eerie poem TOM O' BEDLAM'S SONG

"...With a knight of ghosts and shadows
I summoned am to tourney
Ten leagues beyond the wide world's end:
Methinks it is no journey ...

...The air is all a-bustle:
Draughty with wings and seething things
That without sound do rustle ...

Spooky stuff, eh? — and who better to illustrate it than an artist-witch? We knew that Norton was an admirer of Norman Lindsay and that Lindsay had produced a number of TOM O' BEDLAM illustrations over the years. And it was, incidentally, thanks to Rosaleen Norton that I later became friends with the great Norman Lindsay ... but that's another story.

Yes, Rowie was interested in doing the murals — and her only requirement was that she preferred to work through the night. A little excited, I asked if I could be the model for the central character. She didn't think that I was right for Tom O' Bedlam — but suggested that I should be depicted as one of the satyrs (that is how the sketch at the end of this article came about). How could I have refused? If I'd pulled rank, as the Architect, she might have turned me into a frog — or something even worse.

Dining at the crowded Apollion one evening, during the negotiations, when Rowie asked to see the shape of my leg for the sketch. I rolled up the leg of my trousers and she looked under the table and got the details. For the shape of my arms and torso, well she merely guessed these (and got it all wrong). And that was how I POSED FOR ROSALEEN NORTON — hardly an erotic experience, would you think?

Some preliminary sketches for the murals were duly produced and I took them along to show my clients. The Proprietor's wife took one look and announced that she didn't like "that sort of surrealistic crap" — and that was the end of that little episode.

My meetings with Rosaleen Norton were over a period of some two or three years and, despite all the newspaper hype about naked revels, carnality, satanic practices and all the rest, the woman I knew was highly intelligent, had a pleasant manner and was a very good conversationalist.. Certainly she was an eccentric — but, to my way of thinking, Rowie was the typical bohemian artist who happened to dabble in the occult. She made no secret of the witchcraft ceremonies — and there are plenty of newspaper photos of them on record... and that rather leads me to think that the 'orgies' were probably more tongue-in-cheek than depraved. No doubt she made money from them. I once asked — naively, I guess — why people practice witchcraft and she made the simple reply: "To get what they want." And that was the full extent of our discussion on the subject.

My understanding is that the practice of witchcraft stems from ancient, pre-Christian fertility cults and that the associated rituals are simply an extremely kinky form of sex orgy. But you don't need witchcraft to indulge in those ... er, do you?

These days intelligent people seem to regard self-styled witches and warlocks as silly creatures who delude themselves into believing that they are the possessors of supernatural powers — but that they are, generally speaking, harmless bloody ratbags.

One who, perhaps, was not so harmless was the infamous Aleister Crowley --described by Ernest Hemingway as 'the most evil man in the world' — and by Somerset Maugham as 'a psychotic and satanic satyr' — and regarded by many as a 'gentleman sex pervert'. Crowley made a lot of money, early in the century, by organising black magic sex orgies and, for a time, held sway over a large following of gullible dingbats.

After being kicked out of several countries Crowley was living in London at the outbreak of World War II — but, strangely, did not use his 'supernatural' powers to protect himself during the blitz. When those bombs began to drop -Crowley did the same as everyone else — he ran like buggery. He died in 1947 -- a hopeless drug-addict.

John Douglas Pringle, writing in the Sydney Morning Herald a few years ago, reviewed a book about occult in Australia — and came to the conclusion that the whole business of occultism, Satanism and all the rest is "more silly than supernatural".

When Sir Eugene Goossens was charged with trying to smuggle porno material into Australia in 1956, the music world and the entire nation were stunned. One furphy, that made the rounds, was that he had been 'set up' by Rosaleen Norton. It's hard to imagine how or why — and the only connection I can find is that Goossens, who was also a talented painter, was known to have visited Norton's studio. That idea seems just as preposterous to me as the one suggesting that Sir Bernard Heinz had engineered Goossens downfall ... because of professional jealousy.

A story I find amusing is that Rosaleen Norton was expelled from Chatswood Girls Grammar School because her bizarre drawings had a most 'corrupting influence' on the other girls. The offending pictures were all of satanic revels — and the vampires and other monsters all bore uncanny resemblances to the schoolteachers. The teachers were not amused.

— Will Newton



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Meetings of the Society are held monthly, on the second Friday, at 8.00pm at the hall of the Anglican Church of St John the Baptist in Belmont St. VISITORS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME

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BEAULTY OF FORM. &c. Those who are not accustomed to seeing beautiful things are often uncertain if a thing has beauty or not. Some- perhaps all of us- have an intuition for what is beautiful, but most of us have to take pains to achieve it. To construct or choose beautiful forms requires good taste, and that requires cultivation, which comes from observing beauty. &c.

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