

SUTHERLAND SHIRE HISTORICAL
SOCIETY INC
QUARTERLY BULLETIN

Design by (the late) Fred Midgley



No. 77

August 1991

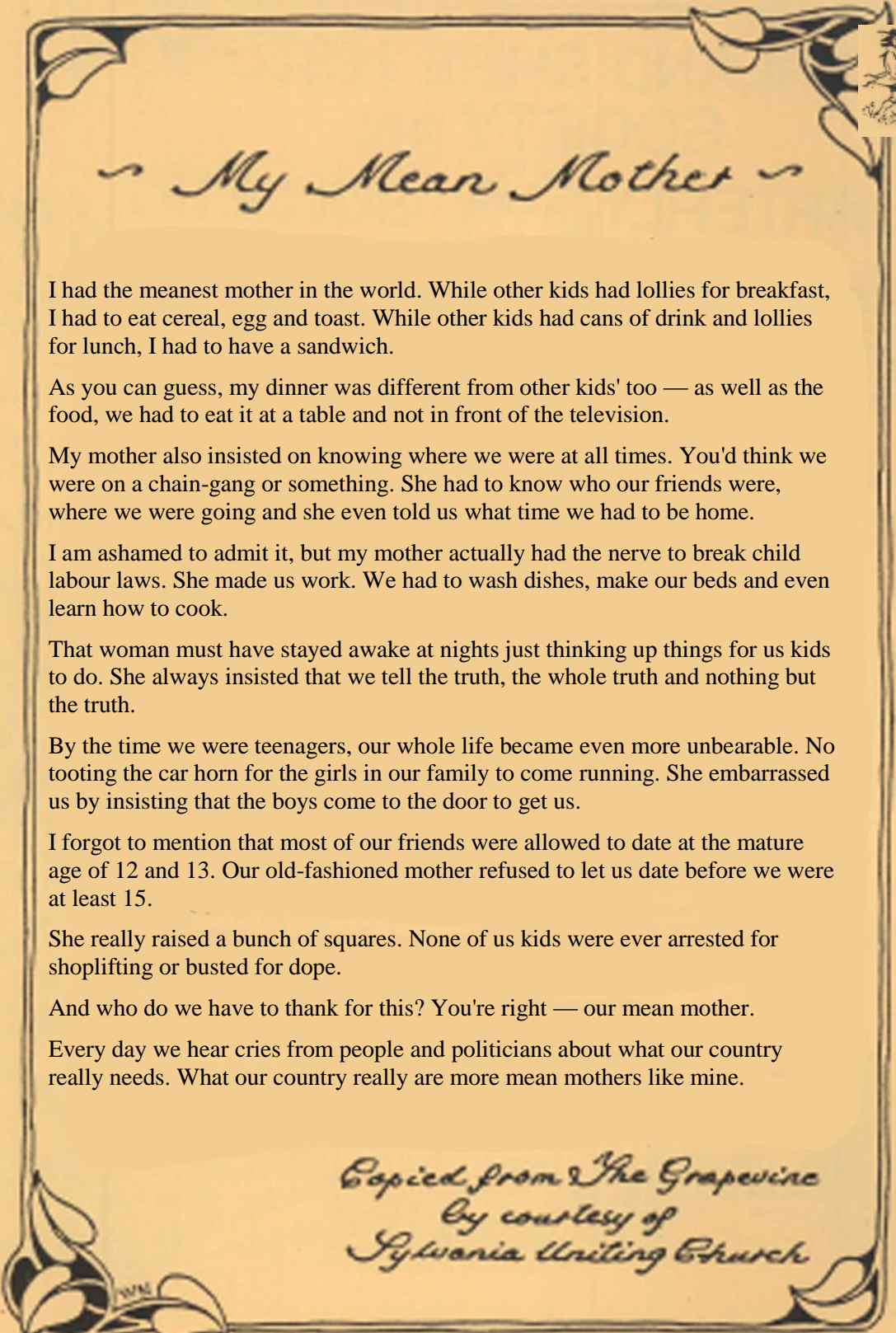
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The monument at Captain Cook's Landing Place, Kurnell, Sydney.

"The Monument at Captain Cook's Landing Place, Kurnell, Sydney" — one of a series of pencil drawings of scenes in Sutherland Shire by internationally acclaimed artist IAN GALBRAITH now residing back in Australia. Presently on a working holiday at Cronulla, this artist's work has been exhibited at a number of venues in the Shire from early in the year. See IAN GALBRAITH BIOG

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My Mean Mother

I had the meanest mother in the world. While other kids had lollies for breakfast, I had to eat cereal, egg and toast. While other kids had cans of drink and lollies for lunch, I had to have a sandwich.

As you can guess, my dinner was different from other kids' too — as well as the food, we had to eat it at a table and not in front of the television.

My mother also insisted on knowing where we were at all times. You'd think we were on a chain-gang or something. She had to know who our friends were, where we were going and she even told us what time we had to be home.

I am ashamed to admit it, but my mother actually had the nerve to break child labour laws. She made us work. We had to wash dishes, make our beds and even learn how to cook.

That woman must have stayed awake at nights just thinking up things for us kids to do. She always insisted that we tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

By the time we were teenagers, our whole life became even more unbearable. No tooting the car horn for the girls in our family to come running. She embarrassed us by insisting that the boys come to the door to get us.

I forgot to mention that most of our friends were allowed to date at the mature age of 12 and 13. Our old-fashioned mother refused to let us date before we were at least 15.

She really raised a bunch of squares. None of us kids were ever arrested for shoplifting or busted for dope.

And who do we have to thank for this? You're right — our mean mother.

Every day we hear cries from people and politicians about what our country really needs. What our country really are more mean mothers like mine.

*Copied from The Grapevine
by courtesy of
Sylvania United Church*

There are holes in the sky,
That's how rain gets in;
But the holes are small
--That's why rain is thin.
- Spike Milligan

Quarterly Bulletin of the Sutherland Shire Historical Society Inc

Edition No. 77

August 1991

CONTENTS

PRESIDENT'S REMARKS	Aileen Griffiths
THE MASONIC GOAT	George Heavens
EDITOR'S DESK	Will Newton
IAN GALBRAITH BIOG	
VALE GORDON LEECH, MBE — MASTER BUILDER	
ABOUT MICK DERREY	George Heavens
NOTICE: Re-Union at Tuena	
EXCURSION REPORT	Aileen Griffiths
CHILDHOOD MEMORIES OF SYLVANIA - Part II	Norma Branch
80 YEARS AGO	Merle Kavanagh
SYLVANIA'S SINGING STAR	Will Newton
'CORROBOREE' - And Peter Finch	
BEACH LANDINGS ON BOUGAINVILLE	Andrew Hanley
WITH THE ORGANISTS	Ron Roberts
THE PRINCE EDWARD WURLITZER	Will Newton
BOOK REVIEW --	
The Hollow Crown: Ethnohistory of an Indian Kingdom	Edward Duyker
AUSTRALIANS PIONEERED MOVIES	Will Newton
EPIDEMIC:	Merle Kavanagh
SUTHERLAND ELECTRICITY SUB-STATION	Rhys Pidgeon
SUTHERLAND'S FIRST SCHOOL	Ralph Clark
JERSEY BULLS and HUMANS	George Heavens
BUSBY'S BORE	
- The Lachlan Water Tunnel	Will Newton
GENERAL INFORMATION — Sutherland Shire Historical Society Inc	

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



PARAMOUNT
THEATRE — COMMENCING TOMORROW
A. S. BRONSTEIN, PRES. — BRONSTEIN, MANAGER — L. M. BAYNE, GEN. MGR.

A BIG NEW AUSTRALIAN PICTURE!

The life of the Great Heart has been the subject of a picture.

Our CONQUEROR presents

GREENHIDE

Starring
Eddie Spivey
and
Bruce Gordon

A movie poster for the film 'Greenhide'. The poster features a central illustration of a woman in a long dress and a man in a hat, set against a circular background. Below the illustration, the title 'GREENHIDE' is written in large, bold letters. The names of the stars, Eddie Spivey and Bruce Gordon, are listed at the bottom. The Paramount logo is at the top.

Again, it is with much sadness we refer to the passing away of a very good and dedicated member, also former Committeeman, Mr. Ray Sowden. The Society was represented by the Society at the funeral by Mr. and Mrs. Ivers and myself. Other members were also in attendance, but they had other associations with Ray. Ray was also a Life Member.

The Society is very much indebted to Ray for the wonderful Index he provided for the Bulletins from our first issue in September, 1966 to February, 1986. It is beautifully bound and a credit to Ray.

Our deepest sympathy is expressed once again to Mrs. Sowden and her family.

We were sorry to receive the resignation of Mrs. Cutbush from her position as Vice President on the Executive Committee at the June meeting. Also, from Excursion Booking Officer, but she has remained on the Sub-Committees of Excursion, Museum, Heritage Week and Heritage Register. (Full details for bookings of trips etc is in Excursion Report.) Expressions of appreciation were given to Mrs. Cutbush at the June Meeting and again I record of thanks for the work she did.

Mr. Jim Cutbush has been elected Vice-President and Mr. Frank Thornley returns to the Committee as Committeeman. These were confirmed at June Meeting and their badges of office presented.

I would like to remind you of "Members Night" in January when we ask our members to be the Guest Speakers for that evening. Will you please offer to be one of our panel -- ten to twenty minutes is all we expect, but as it gives you the opportunity to present details of research you are doing we look forward with much interest to hearing from our members on that evening.

William Sutcliffe

THE MASONIC GOAT

The Sutherland Shire Council Chambers now occupy the exact site of Sutherland's first Masonic Temple; the Council bought the land from us thirty-odd years ago. The Temple stood on quite a large area of land that ran from Eton St. through to Merton St. It was a single-storey, brick building with a wire fence and a tall privet hedge along the front. The side and rear fences were the usual 6 ft high (1.8 m) paling type.

It was built next door to Dr Sandbrook's residence — this becoming the Shire ;Council's Library. A large billy-goat kept the grass down. I don't know who owner the goat, but it was generally known as 'the Masonic goat' — for some reason the goat is synonymous with Masons, Masons riding the goat.

One day the goat got out — I think the toilet man must have left the gate open. Mr Austin, of the shoe shop next door to what is now Cripps' Estate Agency, caught the billy and put a large cardboard sign around its neck --THIS AIN'T NO KID — AUSTIN'S SIDES ARE THE BEST.

The goat walked up and down the main street all day, pursued by delighted small boys — and it was the best advertisement old Austin ever had. The billy was eventually caught by two large policemen and returned to the Temple grounds — all much to the amusement of the shoppers that day.

-- George Heavens

EDITOR'S DESK....



CONGRATULATIONS to Merle Kavanagh for her WINNING ENTRY in the first Fred Midgley Memorial Essay Competition conducted by Sutherland Shire Council. Merle's "HOTEL, HOSPITAL & HOME: A. History of the Yowie Bay Hotel" took out First Prize in a competition that attracted a mass of entries from some very competent Essayists.

The Judge, Bernard Sargeant — former Sutherland Chief librarian and now with Marrickville Council — praised the generally high standard of the entries. Merle's Essay is to be published by the Council later in the year.

- GOOD NEWS for theatre buffs — the advice from John West that his great work THEATRE IN AUSTRALIA has been updated and is about to be republished ... by the ABC, no less. It should be on the bookshelves early in 1992.

SILENT MOVIE (child) actress Rebecca Sanders (see AUSTRALIANS PIONEERED MOVIES) whom I met recently, wants to join our Historical Society. So I have sent her an application form.

- WHO ELSE reads the Bulletin? The Bulletin evidently circulates to a much wider range of readers than I had previously imagined. Recently I was invited to be interviewed by Joy Hruby on CTV1 — Oz's only community TV channel.

Two articles in the Bulletin, MEMORIES OF SYDNEY SHOWGROUND (November '90) and THE KENT ST THEATRE (May '91) caught the attention of someone involved with the channel -- hence the invitation. The interview went to air live on Sunday, 30 June. — and I was able to give our Society (and the Kent St Theatre) a good mention. It may attract new members, who knows?

CTV1 operates from a studio in the inner suburb of Redfern. It receives some funding from the Government and is similar in concept to the community radio stations throughout Australia. The telecasting range is presently limited to the Redfern area, but they are about to open a second studio and will also be extending the viewing range.

Joy Hruby is a former actress who played on the London stage opposite such notables as 'Professor' Jimmy Edwards — and now teaches Speech and Drama. Joy presents a regular theatre program on CTV1.

NOTE. Television interviews are fine, and I quite enjoyed this one (my first) but, with a face like mine, it's probably advisable to stick to radio.

The Society continues to obtain excellent Speakers to give talks at our regular monthly meetings. GUEST SPEAKERS for the next few months -

AUGUST	Dr Peter Orlovich.:	Sir Joseph Carruthers - and the Captain Cook Memorial in London
SEPTEMBER	Mr Brian McDonald:	The controversy about Governor Phillip's Botany Bay landing — 18th January
OCTOBER	Dr Edward Duyker:	The Rajah and his Australian wife
NOVEMBER	Mr Frank Gartrell:	The Royal Commonwealth Society The Queen Mother's birthday - Will Newton

IAN GALBRAITH BIOG

Painting, Drawing, Interior Design, Graphics, Fashion Design

IAN GALBRAITH, whose work appears on our front cover, is an Australian artist with an international reputation — and many of his paintings are in famous private collections around the world including those of King Juan Carlos of Spain and superstar singer Julio Iglesias. Melbourne born Ian studied at the Melbourne Technical College and later won a Commonwealth Scholarship to study Painting and Graphics in Britain.

Versatile Ian has also designed clothes for the Beatles' Boutique ("Apple") and 'Light Years Ahead' in London, selling through Harrods and Selfridges. He has produced Graphic Art work for international magazines and is also a top Interior Designer.

Ian has taught Art and lectured in Graphics at a number of renowned institutions including Bath Academy of Art where he had earlier studied. His paintings and drawings have been featured in art exhibitions throughout the world --Britain, France, Spain, Italy, America... There is an impressive array of his murals in high class establishments in Britain, Spain and Cyprus which were produced between 1967 and 1987. (This bloke sure gets around.)

Since returning to Oz late last year, Ian's work has been exhibited at the Glen Galleries in Cronulla, Bruno's Restaurant in Miranda and were displayed at the Sutherland Shire Biennial Art Exhibition earlier this year, as well as the Gunnamatta Arts & Crafts Festival staged by the Cronulla Sailing Club.

A special Exhibition of Ian's work is expected to be held, in the near future, at the Woollooware House Arts & Crafts Centre & Gallery.



An old friend passes on...

GORDON LEECH, MBE — a leading Master Builder in Sutherland for many, many years — passed away at Gosford on 15 July, at the age of 83, and was buried at the Ourimbah Lawn Cemetery.

For many years a designer, developer and innovator of rationalised building systems — he was able to build quality homes at well below average cost by simply applying commonsense methods learned from a lifetime in the building industry.

He was once a Councillor with Sutherland and was always involved in charity work — Austcare, Salvation Army Red Shield, Freedom From Hunger, handicapped children, care of the aged... and he was always ready to help young people who were struggling to get a home.

Gordon Leech left the local scene in 1977 when he "retired" to the Central Coast — and promptly threw himself into the multitude of activities including the building work for which he was renowned.

His building work in the Shire and on the Central Coast included the Thomas Holt Memorial Village, Kirinari Hostel for Young Aborigines, Adeline Retirement Village and Nursing Home, Narrara Hostel for the Aged, as well as scores of houses and other residential buildings.

He was working, planning, organising, right till the end of his long and productive life. Gordon Leech will be sadly missed by many.

ABOUT MICK DERREY

George Heavens

MICK DERREY, Honorary Life Member of Sutherland Shire Historical Society. When Mick passed on we lost a valuable member. Mick Derry was born in the Shire — and remembered it all.

This story — written by George Blaikie and printed in 'The Sun' (26-4-1979) is worth recording in our Society's Bulletin.

A leader of the march down memory lane is Mick Derrey of Gynea. His mother, a French girl from Mauritius, caught the dream in 1893 of rearing her family hard by a vast national park. She took up a selection of 1.3 lonely hectares out from Sutherland — gateway to the reservation — and there she settled with the first four of her eight children. And where was the father? For the most part, he was away at sea earning a meagre living 'before the mast'. He too was French, with the impressive name of Henri Pierre de Closeps Derrey.

With an elegant name like that, the father may have sounded like a millionaire from the French Riviera. But he brought so little home, when he did get back to the family, that his wife had to feed the children by doing washing at the Yowie Bay Hotel and raising a few chooks in the bush backyard.

One night the fowls went mad. Mrs Derrey rushed to their pen and was confronted by a hungry wildcat that would not back off. Woman and wildcat fought hand to claw for the fowls. When Mrs Derrey went to her grave in 1949 her body was still laced back and front with the scars she had received in that battle. But she did save the family's precious poultry.

While wild animals could not beat Mrs Derrey, loneliness did. No one ever visited her lonely little property. At nights she sang La Marseillaise to blot out the haunting cries of foxes and the croaking of the frogs. So she moved nearer to Sutherland, and civilisation, before the turn of the century. One advantage was that she was able to tell the time fairly accurately — at least once a day. A funeral train ran daily from Sydney to a cemetery near Sutherland. The last carriage picked up coffins which would be stacked at the city end of each railway station along the way.

It was little Mick Derrey's job to listen for that train puffing up the hill between Como and Sutherland. The puffing could usually be heard at 3.00pm --give or take a quarter of an hour.

When father came home from sea something exciting tended to happen. In 1900, for instance, he decided that the family should have a new home. Of course he couldn't afford to buy one, so he set out to build one himself— with mud bricks. The roof was thatched with local grasstrees and the finished job didn't look too bad at all.

The new house had one important weakness, however, and this was demonstrated after a week of rain. Young Mick Derrey and his elder brother, Fred, were sleeping blissfully in spite of the storm when the west wall of the house fell in on them. Father's mud bricks hadn't been as solid as they appeared. The two soaked and muddied lads sought comfort by climbing into their long-suffering mother's bed. Father, lucky for him, was away at sea at the time.

Another dramatic event associated with the seafaring M. Henri Pierre de Closeps Derrey took place about 1901. He was home at the time and somehow got hold of a horse which collapsed outside Sutherland station. A crowd of interested children quickly assembled to study the fallen animal — and the wisest

amongst them poked back the creature's eyelid and then pronounced it dead. Into this situation strode Sgt Lewis of the Sutherland. Police, and asked: "What's the trouble here?" In a chorus the kids replied: "It's dead."

"Stand back," shouted Sgt Lewis, who then drew his pistol and fired two shots into the horse's head — just to make sure it really was dead. That event well deserves a place among the legends of the folk who lived beside the now Royal National Park in the early days.

Mick Derrey had memories of high jinks at Sutherland in 1916 when the first Council Chambers were built. Certain irate citizens decided that the building was a 'white elephant' and expressed their feelings by disfiguring it with black paint. The thought of white elephants inspired someone to think of a white horse owned by Mr Hoare who kept pigs at the corner of Merton St and President Avenue. Before the night was over the white horse had its ribs painted black — and everyone went home happy. As Mick says you had to make your own entertainment in those days.

The lads about the place were fond of staging wallaby drives through the National Park with the aid of dogs. Until 1885 the train from Sydney stopped at Hurstville. Then the line was extended to Sutherland and, on 26 December 1885, ten trains carried sightseers from city and suburbs to visit the fine new National Park.

The waters of Port Hacking lap the northern boundary of what is now the Royal National Park and, to exploit this fact, a small steamer SS. ORARA ran excursions from Sydney to the park at 5/-d (50¢) per head. This service started during World War I and extra thrills could be had on the trip by the young men who assured their twittering girlfriends that they could see the periscopes of German submarines on all sides.

The SS ORARA served as a Mine-sweeper in the RAN during World War II. After the war she was sold to China. In mid June of 1950, while heavily laden with passengers, she struck an old mine at the mouth of the Yangtze River — and was lost with all hands. She is still remembered kindly by people in the Port Hacking area.

In 1893 the trustees of the then National Park published a guide which declared: "For situation the National Park is so highly favoured that in the not far distant future it will stand a beautiful reserve, possessing undisturbed the best of its natural grandeur in the midst of a dense population. How right that ancient prophecy has proved to be.



REUNION AT TUENA

A REUNION and Registration of the descendants of Isaac and Ann Fenton will be held on 26 January 1992 at Tuena (between Crookwell and Blayney) NSW to mark 150 years in Australia.

Isaac and Ann arrived in Sydney 7 January 1842 from Westmoreland, England, with three sons — William 7, John 4 and Isaac 11 months. Two other children Henry (b 1845) and Thomas (b 1848) were born near Tuena.

All interested persons are asked to contact Graham Howard, "Kimberlee" Gilgandra Ph: 068 483 530 — Heather Davis, 25 Hambledon Hill Rd Singleton Ph: 065 721 236 or Ruth Morris, 12 Curtin Place Lithgow Ph: 063 514 749

EXCURSION REPORT

The May tour to THE OAKS was an excellent outing — that Society was fortunate to receive a BiCentennial Grant to assist them make such a grand display in the Museum and grounds. We recommend you to make a visit there, if you were not with us on the Excursion.

And the visit to Balmain in July was outstanding. To see so many of the early-day houses restored - many in original condition - and hear about their history from such a knowledgeable guide as Bath Hamey simply "made our day".

On September 21 we will be making a return visit to the Nepean and District Society's area, commencing at their Museum at Emu Plains. I am advised there are a number of properties we did not see on our previous visit, to be included in the tour.

Leaving Cronulla 8.00am and Sutherland 8.30am — Members will be \$13.00 and Visitors \$15.00 **BOOKINGS ARE NOW OPEN.**

Two options were presented to members at the July Meeting regarding the November 16 outing, but a costing has not been finalised. To enable us to visit the historic village of Stroud in a day, and save accommodation costs that would be incurred for a week-end, that we travel by rail to Newcastle and hire a coach from there and make the outing a very long day.

Subject to costs and other details, this recommendation was accepted by those members present and no questions asked. However, after the meeting a suggestion was made that we investigate the costing of "coach all the way"; this was done and at the Balmain Outing a questionnaire given to the 50 folk on the coach as to "Rail and Coach" or "Coach". It was the unanimous decision to be the latter.

Cost will be \$35.00 Members and \$40.00 Visitors — including guide, luncheon and coach, and any entrance fees that may be incurred. Leaving Cronulla 6.00am and Sutherland 6.30am. It is anticipated we will not return to the Shire until approximately 8.30pm. But with daylight saving and early sunrise, we should make the outing in sunshine all the way. (Having done the trip with the City-Rail Touring Group, let me assure you it is a fabulous place.)

May we repeat the reminder in the July Tour Newsletter that "Members" means just that and "Visitors" are friends or family accompanying you; with the Society's low fees, we hope to encourage our guests to join the Society, as well as giving members some benefit for their fees. This is an Executive decision made some years ago — NOT a new one.

Following Mrs Cutbush's resignation as Excursion Booking Officer, Mrs Joyce Barrett has accepted this duty, and will be assisted by Mrs Ellen Melbourne. Mrs Barrett's address is 45 Judd St Cronulla and 'phone number is 523 5748. We hope to make this change at the August Meeting.

Bookings at meetings will be taken from 7.15pm and we ask if you are making enquiries for tickets for outings, if you could please arrive a little early so that we may be able to complete this part of the Society business prior to the meeting; it is difficult for the Hon. Treasurer and Excursion Committee to finalise their figures if further bookings are required after the meeting.

And if you are on a "Waiting list" would you please let us know if you find that you are unable to go on the particular trip, as many telephone calls become expensive for the Society? Thank you for your help.

Alan Griffiths

EXCURSION CONVENER

CHILDHOOD MEMORIES OF SYLVANIA — Part II

Norma Branch

Growing up in Sylvania, forty-odd years ago, has left me with some wonderful memories that I will cherish forever. A mixed bunch of uninhibited kids bush-walking to Gynea or Miranda railway stations to catch the train to Cronulla for a day's surfing — skinny-dipping in Gwawley Bay — learning to swim at the Sylvania Baths — passing old Miss Chuter's cottage where her 20 or so fox-terriers would run out and snap at your heels — Samways Dairy — the local school with the dunny on the side of the hill — hunting for rabbits --learning to dance at the Boomerang Hall ...

After school in summer we would hightail it down to the seclusion of Gwawley Bay — then it was off with the gear and into the water. From a rope tied to an overhanging branch we could swing out and drop into the cooling depths, laughing, splashing, dunking. In those bygone days nobody could have dreamed that this virgin paradise would one day be transformed into the marine suburb of Sylvania Waters.

We were taught swimming at the Council pool where the new bridge now crosses. When the tide was low it was all mud, glorious mud. When our cousin climbed on to the Dressing Sheds roof to retrieve a football — TRAGEDY STRUCK. He brushed against the overhead wiring and was electrocuted.

During school holidays, when we were not bush-walking or skinny-dipping, my sister Pat and I would take our young brother along on our rabbit hunting expeditions. The place was crawling with rabbits in those days. Being an enterprising lot we once decided to make our fortunes by catching green frogs and selling them to the High School Science teacher. This little venture was to land us in no end of strife.

At the gravel quarry in Craighoim Street there were green frogs in what to us seemed like plague proportions. We took home a kerosene tin full of frogs and put it in the garage ('temporary dwelling') where mum slept. In the 'wee small' — when such catastrophes usually seem to happen — mum was rudely awakened by the croaking of squillions of green frogs. They were all over the floor, they were up the walls, they were in the bed — and I'll swear there were green frogs hopping across the ceiling.

Poor mum — who was it said that life wasn't meant to be easy? The next day we had to round up all the frogs we could catch and take them back to the quarry. But I'll bet there are STILL some of those frogs up in Harley Street.

Boomerang Hall was the venue for much of our social activity — especially on Saturday nights when the then the whole family went along to the 'local hop' (dance, to you). The first hour was for us young people when the ballroom champions Arthur and Linda Cornwell taught us the waltz, quickstep, foxtrot, barn dance, Pride of Erin and all the rest. I mourn the passing of those warm, friendly social gatherings. Whatever has happened to family life?

Mr Browy, the blacksmith, up at Sydney Road (Kingsway-Princes Hwy junction) was a skinny little man — but he could sit one of us kids on each arm and lift us up to his shoulder height. I once saw him lift a horse clean off the ground -- and that's the honest truth. (He couldn't possibly have been THAT strong — surely he must have done it with mirrors. - Ed:)

TO BE CONTINUED ...

80 YEARS AGO

By Merle Kavanagh

On March 10th, 1911 the Propeller began as a free local paper for Hurstville and district, the first issue being a four page sheet limited to 2000 copies.

Wennholm Bros. had established the first and only printing office in the district at that time and in launching the Propeller said "We submit for your approbation this small newspaper which we have designated the "Propeller" in honour of Hurstville's past lack of propulsion". It set the tone for the paper's stand on community affairs.

The first issue included Hurstville Council Notes, Coming Local events, Local Lodge Information and news of other local organisations such as the Mortdale Bicycle Club. The front page carried a Newsy Notes column detailing rates collected in the Municipality during the past year amounting to £2997 at 3d. in the £ and other items on a light-hearted note such as "That leading brides to the alter is the favourite pastime in the district just now. As a sport it outrivals surf bathing." There were also items in support of local businesses with mention of a special give-away of a cup and saucer with 1 lb. of tea at 1.3d. at Gannon's (who later sold out to T. Adams). It also supported the Hurstville Coach Works and Shoeing Forge where Mr. H.T. Woods had "just completed an up-to-date sulky which compares favourably with any turned out in the city".

Amongst the news on the other pages was the announcement of the new Mayor for Hurstville, Alderman A.L. Blackshaw (who's resignation was reported in the later issue of January 12th, 1912) and a report stating that Mr. W. Forsythe of Inverell had been elected Town Clerk which was refuted on another page due to Mr. Forsythe taking another position with more remuneration! Mr. Evans of Windsor Council was then given the position.

There were touches of humour with a child's essay on Hurstville Cats beginning "Cats is domestic animals and they live on the tops of houses". The column "They Say" reported on items of interest, especially any local problems, one in particular drawing attention to the railways "That the rail-ways are for the people and not the people for the railways". It appeared that there were often delays in the opening of the ticket window and on many occasions passengers were unable to buy a ticket until the train arrived at the station - "That a rush then occurs and the train departs leaving people behind with 'cuss' words on their lips". Attention in this column was also drawn to the telephone - "That a person might as well try to resurrect a dead mother-in-law as to get satisfaction at our local telephone bureaus".

It also carried many advertisements for local businesses, including the Hurstville Picture Palace, admittance 3d. and 6d. children under 7 half price in front.

There was a very pro-Hurstville feeling to the paper and the needs of the community - "Hurstville has great prospects before it, due greatly to its healthy climate and lack of obnoxious odours".

It was the beginning of a long association with the people of the district and the many ups and downs associated with newspaper publication. Only a few weeks later they reported having already been libelled and accused of stealing "for which we intend to issue a writ during the week". But they always kept their sense of humour. When there was a report of defective steering on the ship "Yarra" it was noted in the paper that this was easily accounted for as Wennholm Bros. had stolen the Propeller and with it started a newspaper at Hurstville.

SYLVANIA'S SINGING STAR

Star of stage, screen, radio, this versatile artiste has been delighting audiences right from her childhood days — and has combined her strong family commitments with a very successful career in showbiz ... and also in fashion design.

When I lived at Sylvania, a few years ago, a very young Helen Zerefos was just beginning to make a name for herself as a singer. We were only slightly acquainted, but it was patently clear that this young lady had a big future in showbiz. She had loads of talent, the right looks — and a delightful personality into the bargain. She had been a bright student too — dux of the local school, no less.

In the early 1980s I was presenting a weekly music/theatre program on 2RES-FM. My format was to interview a showbiz celebrity and slot in a couple of music items — or else present highlights from a singer's career in the form of a Musical Special.

My very first guest, in the series, was ... you've guessed it, HELEN ZEREFOS. When this glamorous vision appeared, half a dozen blokes in the studio nearly dislocated their eyeballs in following her every movement. One fellow, whose head seemed to be on a swivel, tried to walk through the wall alongside the doorway. Talk about heads being turned by a beautiful woman — I STILL have not come down to earth.

The eldest of three children, Helen was born at Scone, NSW (of Greek parents) and tells of how her mother "went from A to Z". Mother, Katina, was an ANDRONICUS who, upon marrying, became a ZEREFOS.

Helen had studied piano from an early age but always had the burning desire to be a singer. Her parents, however, had some reservations because of the uncertainty of showbiz as a livelihood — and insisted that she learn a craft that offered more stability. A compromise was reached and Helen completed the Diploma Course in fashion design (more about this later) whilst also taking singing lessons. Her voice was brought to its full bloom when she began studying with the renowned contralto Florence Taylor AM -- and with whom she is still studying. Helen has the highest regard for this wonderful teacher.



Following an audition with Channel 7 Helen joined the REVUE 20 company where she learned to dance on stage — and to sing anything from jazz to classical, depending on the particular production.

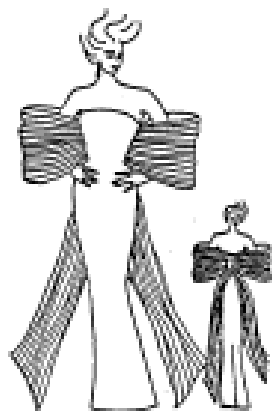
Next came a stint with Bobby Limb's long-running SOUND OF MUSIC on Channel 9. When Betty Parker took a year's maternity leave, Helen joined Nola Lester and Margaret Day as a member of that delightful trio. It was during this period that Helen won the SEARCH FOR A STAR quest which was sponsored by Qantas, Millers and BMC. Her prizes included a world trip, a car and also a generous cash prize plus various singing contracts.

The world trip took Helen to Greece where her singing delighted the many relatives she was able to meet for the first time. Back in Australia, after seeing much of the world, Helen joined the Old Tote Theatre for a season in ASPECTS OF LOVE which gave her valuable acting experience in live theatre.

Visiting American producer, Bret Adams, cast Helen as the female lead in three of his musicals — THE KING AND I, MUSIC MAN and SOUND OF MUSIC --staged at the Warringah Mall. At the close of the season Bret urged Helen

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to take her talents to America as she was a natural for the Broadway stage. However, big things were happening right here on the local scene — Helen was engaged by Channel 10 for a two-year-contract in the national series to be called SAY IT WITH MUSIC appearing with Kathy Lloyd, Neil Williams, Barry Crocker and James Pegler. During this period Helen developed her own one-woman show for the Australian club circuit, then becoming extremely popular with theatregoers. This led to highly acclaimed performances all around the country.



When SAY IT WITH MUSIC finished Helen guested on top-rating TV shows and made many appearances at the Sydney Opera House, the Sydney Entertainment Centre, in Symphony Concerts, in cabaret and theatre in such productions as SHOWBOAT, SONG OF NORWAY, HOORAY FOR HOLLYWOOD, EVENING IN PARIS, ASPECTS OF LOVE, EUROPE BY NIGHT, FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE and ROMAN HOLIDAY. On Channel 10 Helen hosted the popular series LET'S GO GREEK ENDAXI.

Among my treasured possessions are two IP albums --

HELEN ZEREFOS & THE NSW POLICE CONCERT BAND (recorded in 1981) and MILLION DOLLAR MELODIES with the Sydney International Orchestra, under the baton of the Maestro Tommy Tycho AM, MBE (released in 1989). Only a week before the first of these albums was recorded, tragedy struck. Helen's beloved father passed away suddenly and unexpectedly. The Zerefos family was devastated. And as the recording session had taken nearly a year to arrange, it just had to go ahead as planned. In a state of shock Helen recorded the 12 tracks. It says much for Helen Zerefos, the trouper, that no evidence of her grief is apparent in any of the songs. It is also typical of Helen, the person, that the profits from both albums were generously donated to worthy charities.

If you have ever marvelled at those beautiful gowns Helen wears on stage those superb garments with the simple, classical lines — well, Helen's early training has stood her in good stead as you will see below. In the words of the lady herself:

"To me the theatre is fairyland, some magical place where everything is beautiful. I've always had a penchant for magnificent gowns, something we could wear in our fantasies. Consequently, from my first appearances on TV in the sixties, I always wore something spectacular — and I have sometimes been called 'Helen Fairyfloss' since then."

This lady could easily become one of the country's leading fashion designers. Several years ago the HELEN ZEREFOS SPECIAL OCCASION fashion label was launched at Sydney's Airport Hilton. It was quite an event — 75 garments plus hats paraded by six models. After working all night, putting on the finishing touches, Helen compered the whole parade.

Helen and her little team prepared the whole thing, 'from designing to the actual making, in three weeks — while similar collections done in Europe usually take about three months. Having been committed to producing by a certain date, it was go-go-go for those three weeks. Helen clearly loves creating beautiful garments and has no difficulty in deciding styles as, she will tell you, "Each type of fabric lends itself to its own particular style." Helen spent a few heady months of designing and fashion parades --and then her mother began to show signs of Alzheimer's Disease. And so she promptly scaled down her fashion activities in order to devote more time to the taking care of mum.

Helen found that the 'rag trade' is an around-the-clock job and is full of intrigue — and that there is still NO BUSINESS LIKE SHOW BUSINESS.

cont'd



A big highlight in Helen's singing career occurred in 1986 with the invitation to appear in the Royal Gala Concert at the Sydney Entertainment Centre before HM Queen Elizabeth and The Duke of Edinburgh. (I have a delightful photo of Helen meeting Her Majesty after the show.)

During 1990 Helen made regular appearances on stage at Mike Walsh's Hayden Orpheum Picture Palace at Cremorne Junction. Top flight entertainment at the Orpheum — along with movie classics — featured Helen Zerefos presenting song-hits from some of the great modern musicals like *EVITA* and *CATS* and *PHANTOM OF THE OPERA*. It was rather reminiscent of the old days at Sydney's Prince Edward Theatre when the stars who appeared live on stage were quite often bigger attractions than the movies being screened.

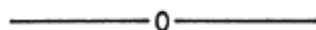
Earlier this year Helen teamed up with Renato (of *RENEE & RENATO* — "I'm A-going To Brighton") for a series of 20 concerts around Oz. I thoroughly enjoyed the performance at St George Leagues Club but, without wishing to be unkind to Renato (who had the top billing), I don't think he was the star of that particular show.

At the Sutherland Entertainment Centre last April, Helen starred as guest soloist with the Sutherland Symphony Orchestra — under the baton of Cedric Ashton. From her extremely wide-ranging repertoire, Helen selected operatic arias 'Voi che sapete?' and 'Porgi amor' (both from *The Marriage of Figaro*); 'Musetta's Waltz Song' (from *La Boheme*) plus a couple of lighter pieces --'I Could Have Danced All Night' (from *My Fair Lady*) and 'Autumn Leaves'.



If ever the phrase "local girl makes good" should be applied to anyone, it would have to be Helen Zerefos. Residents of the Shire can be justifiably proud to have a star of Helen's calibre in their midst. Now whatever gave you the idea that I am a Helen Zerefos fan?

-- Will Newton



'CORROBOREE' — AND PETER FINCH

In 1947 Peter Finch took his first technical job in movie-making. He went to Arnhem Land with a film unit to make an Aboriginal doco titled 'Primitive People' for Gaumont-British Films.

Shot among the nomadic Wangarri and Iriji tribes, it was not an easy film to make. Although the Aborigines were cheerfully co-operative, they got bored quickly and their activities in front of the camera were never sustained. The film crew had to catch everything in small snatches.

During filming, the Wangarries put on a special corroboree for the camera. The elaborate ritual, for placating the Spirits. (in the funeral part), and accompanied by music from primitive instruments — didgeridoo, etc — with the tribe singing softly at first then rising to a frenzied climax... then stopping, in a pulsating deathlike hush.

The Arnhem Land experience made a deep impact on Finchie, as did Aboriginal culture in general. The corroboree itself he described as "the swan song of a vanishing people ringing out to the stars in the great echoless emptiness of the spinifex deserts". He was also most impressed with John Antill's famous ballet suite *CORROBOREE* which, he said, gave absolutely an idealised evocation of the ancient corroboree.

BEACH LANDINGS ON BOUGAINVILLE

Andrew Hanley

BORN IN 1925, I came to live in Sutherland as a babe in arms — and lived in the Shire for more than 50 years, until being promoted to a position in the Australian Public Service in Canberra.

Probably the most dramatic experience I had while a resident of Sutherland occurred after I went to fight the Japanese on Bougainville Island as a 19 year old soldier. I was a gunlayer, operating the gear on a 25-pounder gun.

World War II saw thousands of battles, with some of the small ones being a part of the major campaigns. But whether there were two hundred or two million men involved, the stress was the same when casualties were heavy. Such was the case with the Battle of Porton Plantation in 1945 on North Bougainville. There were almost 40,000 Japs on Bougainville when the Australians took over from the Americans, although the figure at the time was grossly underestimated.

As part of the Australian Campaign to drive the Japs into the northern part of the island, a series of small leap-frogging beach landings were executed successfully until the final one — which comprised two hundred men --landed on Porton Plantation. After the first party had landed (without any opposition) and quickly dug in to form a small perimeter, the second half of the landing party — containing heavy equipment and large supplies of ammunition — became hopelessly stuck on coral reefs. The hundreds of Japs brought up to surround the perimeter no doubt believed they were about to annihilate the Australians and they soon brought to bear heavy machine-gun-fire and mortar fire on them.

Our 25-pounders supported the landing party by laying a continuous stream of shells in a semi-circle around the position, a virtual wall-of-death only 25 yards (23 metres) from the Australians. Supercharged shells were used for greater accuracy, over the relatively short range, making them deadly to the enemy.

At one stage Japs seen running fanatically along the beach, wide open to our machine-gunners, were mowed down by the fire. All the Australian rear-gunners on the landing craft were killed, leaving defenceless the men on board. Japs climbed into tall trees along the beach to rain deadly sniper-fire down into the open barges and, when these were shot out of the trees, others climbed in to replace them — again displaying their fanaticism. The Japs brought up anti-tank gunfire and blew one door completely out of one of the barges before our artillery could destroy the Japs involved.

This caused some of the Australians on board to dive overboard in an attempt to swim to another barge. Hand-to-hand fighting also occurred with Japs who had swum out to toss grenades into the barges. Sharks were seen to reduce the number of Japs. Any Australian who stood up was immediately picked off by a Jap sniper firing from close range.. Some of the Australians got down into the space beside the landing-craft's engine, in an effort to escape the deadly gunfire, but when the tide rose acid from the engine's batteries flooded the area around them and burnt into the skin agonisingly.

In the water a group of Japs swimming out to toss grenades at the helpless Australians was completely wiped out when the Australian Artillery Officer directed the fire right into the centre of the group.

On the land Royal New Zealand Air Force Corsair dive bombers were brought in to carry out an air strike, but were restricted by the closeness of the targets to our men. At time Japs were found to have come inside the 25-yard

artillery barrage in almost suicidal attempts to get closer to our men. As ammunition had become practically exhausted, and the men were absolutely fatigued, attempts were made to effect a withdrawal, including the dropping of rubber rafts along the beach, but all of these failed. As the position had become so grim a brilliantly executed plan was devised to attempt another evacuation under cover of darkness by a number of additional barges which had been brought up, inching their way along the beach, behind a screen of smoke laid along the beach by the 25-pounders. This final plan succeeded.

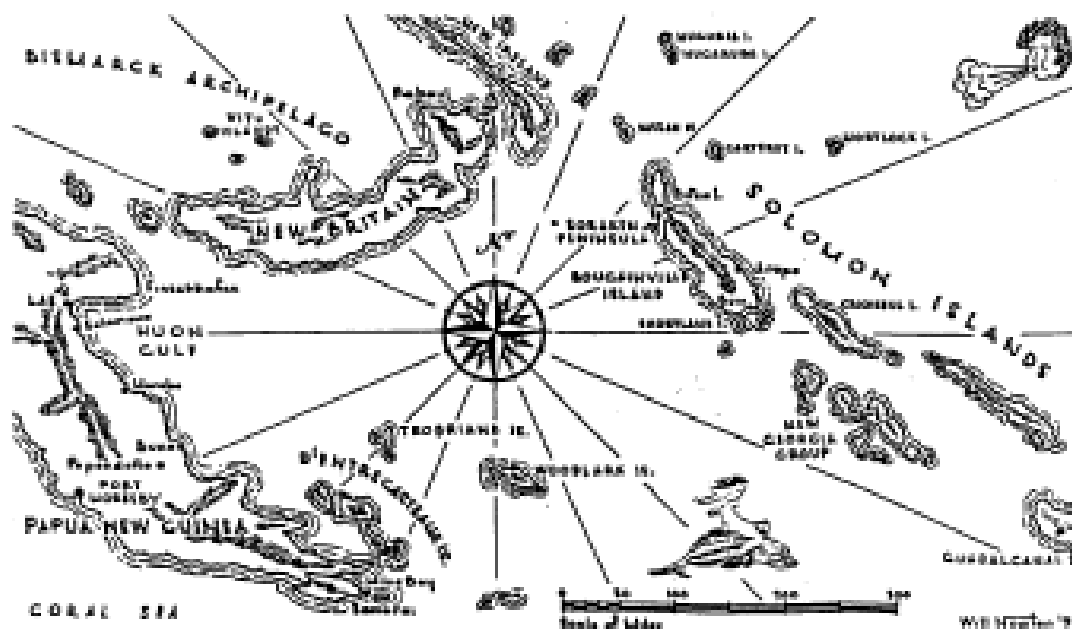
When all surviving troops on the beach had been recovered, and the stranded barges checked for other survivors, the force made its way back to Soraken Peninsula — the departure point.

All of the survivors were completely deaf from the non-stop sound of the artillery and mortar fire so close to them. And the force had suffered 50% casualties — either killed or wounded. My Battery alone had fired 4000 rounds of 25-pounder shells into the position, most of them into the protective screen. One of the artillery party, Gunner Glare, swam three miles to a small island, supporting a non-swimmer all the way. The artillery officer, Spark, was subsequently decorated for bravery with the Military Cross.

Sadly, the body of Captain Downes (Infantry), who had fought so bravely alongside Spark (he even suggested that the artillery barrage could be brought in closer than 25 yards) was seen floating in the ocean by one of our aircraft the day after the evacuation. Two of my gun-crew were killed instantly on this site. It was recorded that the guns fired magnificently.

Sydney newspapers reported that Australians continued to carry out "mopping up" operations on Bougainville.

I was still on Bougainville when the war ended. Shortly after the cessation of hostilities Gracie Fields entertained us and brought tears to many eyes with her rendition of 'Ave Maria' in thanksgiving for the war's end. Many of the Australians who had seen some of their friends killed before their very eyes, were overcome with emotion. I was fortunate to take a photo of Gracie with my Baby Brownie camera which I had carried with me through the war; I still have that snapshot as a treasured memento.



WITH THE ORGANISTS

by RON ROBERTS

Reprinted from AUSTRALIAN MUSIC MAKER & DANCE BAND NEWS

(1st November 1937)

SUNDAY, October 17, ten of Australia's leading cinema organists gathered together to play on one programme. The occasion was an afternoon's musicale arranged at the home of Mr and Mrs Dodd, "Braieside," Tom Uglys Point, in aid of the ETNA LEWIS FUND. The organists who played on the beautiful Residence Wurlitzer Unit Organ were H Stanfield Holliday, assistant honorary organist at St Andrews, Owen Holland, of the Sydney Regent, Dennis Palmistra of the Parramatta Roxy, Charlie Tuckwell of the Kogarah Victory and 2(B, Gunnar Paulsen, an organist from abroad, Les Waldron of the Prince Edward, J Knight Barnett of 2CH and the Hurstville Savoy, Manny Aarons from the State Theatre, Des Tanner from the Chatswood Arcadia and Hammond Studios — and last of all Norman Robbins of the Auburn Civic.

Knight Barnett was well rewarded for his visit — he won a tin of cigarettes which a smiling young lady promised I would win. Stan Holliday is making a name for himself as a relief organist. During the last month he has acquitted himself well at both the Capitol and the Plaza.

Stan J Cummin's ABC broadcasts are proving a great success, and he tells me that in future they are to come from 2FC. Ambition in an organist — starting off with Gershwin's Rhapsody In Blue and finishing with St Louis Blues — this, I might tell you, is Charlie Tuckwell's idea of a good turn ... and can he play them!

FOOTNOTES

- Eustace Dodd, of Tom Uglys Point, was then the Wurlitzer Representative for Australia. In 1939 the 'Residence Organ' was installed in the cinema at Wentworthville.
- The late Ron Roberts started writing in 1937. After World War II he began writing for the Catholic Weekly -- continuing until the time of his demise in 1989. For many years Ron also wrote Theatre, Music and Art Reviews for the St George Leader, under the pseudonym of Aaron Israel.

(Information provided by Betty Roberts.)



THE PRINCE EDWARD WURLITZER

THE FIRST WURLITZER organ in Sydney was probably the one installed at the Lyric Theatre in 1917. A year later another was installed at the Crystal Palace Theatre, also in George Street.

In 1924 the very latest model Wurlitzer was installed at the Prince Edward Theatre at a cost of about £10 000 (\$20 000). This was purchased via the late W A Crowle, then representing the Rudolph Wurlitzer Company of Australia. This magnificent instrument was heard by the public, for the very first time, when the theatre opened in November 1924 with Cecil B de Mille's masterpiece THE TEN COMMANDMENTS which ran for 36 weeks -- a record run for any Australian theatre up till that time.

The chariots used in the movie were brought to Oz and featured in a race at

the AUSTRALIAN RODEO, a two-day event staged at Sydney Sportsground during October 1924 — the race, of course being part of the promotion for the movie. One of the chariots was also driven around Sydney streets for several weeks by a 'Roman soldier' — all of which has nothing to do with theatre organs, has it? (That was today's bit of useless information.)

The first organist at the Prince Edward (the 'Theatre Beautiful') was the American, Eddie Horton, who supervised the installation of the Wurlitzer. It is worth noting that this was the first time a cinema organist had been featured as a principal attraction.

Another American, Leslie V Harvey — who had been brought to Australia for the opening of Brisbane's Wintergarden Theatre — succeeded Eddie Horton at the Prince Edward. Leslie was at the console for a couple of years up till February 1928. Next came a 'singing organist' in the person of Julia Dawn, from the Rivoli Theatre, New York — and the last of the overseas organists to be engaged by the Prince Edward management.

Following Julia Dawn's final appearance in 1931, J Knight Barnett --who was Australia's first featured organist — played at the Prince Edward until 1933. Next came Leslie Waldron, who stayed until 1938 and then moved on to other theatres around Sydney including the Plaza. Leslie went to Perth in 1940 for a season at the Ambassador Theatre (that's when I lost track of him).

From 1938 Kurt Herweg played at the Prince Edward for a couple of years and was succeeded by Walter Aliffe who became one of the first organists to broadcast for the ABC.

Queenslander, Noreen Hennessy, was the Prince Edward's last organist — and had the distinction of being the youngest theatre organist to receive such an appointment. The very popular Noreen — who obliged with countless request numbers for her many fans — played before an estimated audience of thirty million people during nearly twenty years at the Prince Edward.

The multi-talented Noreen was an accomplished pianist-organist and violinist at the tender age of eight years — and appeared as guest artiste with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra. She also played 'cello and just about every other stringed instrument you could think of — and, on top of all that, studied singing at the NSW Conservatorium of Music.



ON STAGE at the Prince Edward, under the direction of Mel Lawton, many top stage and radio stars provided live entertainment to supplement the movies. Names like Joy Nichols, Smoky Dawson, Shirley Abicair ('the girl with the low-cut voice'), Robey Buckley, Marie Ryan, Jack Davey, Kenneth Neate ('the singing cop'), Dawn Lake, Ronald Dowd, Peggy Mortimer, Jimmy Parkinson, Angela Parselles, Valda Bagnall, Colin Croft, Willa Hokin ... were quite often much bigger attractions than the feature movies.

The great Gladys Moncrieff presented GEMS FROM RIO RITA (along with excerpts from Student Prince, Love Parade and other shows) for a short season during a tour of the capital cities in 1932. Of all the theatres in Australia, the Prince Edward was Glad's favourite.

WRITERS WANTED..,

We have been receiving a few articles for the Bulletin' (mostly from the same few people) — but we need MORE, particularly about the Shire. YOU, who are our esteemed members, must have lots of information about incidents and also identities — the stuff that makes up our social history. There must be a few Morris Wests and Patsy Adam-Smiths and Tom Keneallys and Dymphna Cusacks in our ranks and just waiting to be discovered.

If your kids happen to be doing a school project about some relevant aspect, at any time, it may well provide the type of material we'd like to record.

Merle Kavanagh, winner of the FRED MIDGLEY ESSAY COMPETITION, has responded to our need for more local material with a couple of beautiful articles, both of which appear in this issue. Thanks, Merle, they are more than welcome.

BOOK REVIEW

Nicholas B. Dirks *The Hollow Crown: Ethnohistory of an Indian Kingdom*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1987, pp 458, Maps, Illustrations, Tables, Hardcover, \$119

Reviewed by Edward Duyker

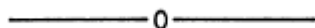
The Hollow Crown is a major contribution to the small but growing body of scholarship centred on the meeting ground between history and anthropology in Indian studies. At first the use of rigorous field work techniques such as direct participant observation might appear anathema to the analysis of the unobservable past, but the seeds of the past are often readily represented in the present. In many parts of the world, oral tradition forms the principal available source of historical reconstruction. Such traditions are directly accessible through field research, but so too are myths, songs and ballads which (although fabricated narrative structures) can be important attitudinal statements of communal concerns and readily retrievable sources of historical evidence. In the course of his own awesome research, Nicholas Dirks expanded the very frontiers of fieldwork. In his introduction he tells us:

"...gradually I became aware of that, as important as my village work was, real field work also took place in the town: in the palace, the record offices, the homes of people who became both friends and informants, and most of all in my own palace where I presided over a floating population of eight to eleven members and received countless visitors. I discovered that I had become an ethnohistorical fact...In my fieldwork, I not only acquired much new information, I also learned new ways of evaluating old information. Fieldwork is the production of new texts and the construction of related contexts: contexts of power, interest, motivation, intention, meaning and action..."

cont'd

While the field researcher can render songs, myths and oral statements into historical documents with notepad and tape recorder, anthropological monographs, field journals and colonial reports can also become historical documents. Dirks draws upon sources which range from the fourteenth to the twentieth century in that part of southern India which evolved into the princely state of Pudukkottai. He employs a potent combination of ancient inscriptions, eighteenth century chronicles, British records and intimate field work in towns and villages to lay bare the political and historical origins of caste relations and power in India's south. With Dirks' pen, anthropology and history have cross-fertilized each other to challenge the assertion that caste is a fundamentally religious system.

Anthropology has taught historians to ask new questions and to consider the structure of societies under historical consideration. In recounting the ethnohistory of a single Tamil kingdom, Dirks not only reveals the great significance of the state as an institution, he also penetrates the dynamics of power, ritual and modernisation before, during and after the British Raj. *The Hollow Crown* is a remarkable book which is destined to become an enduring classic.



AUSTRALIANS PIONEERED MOVIES

The world's first full-length movie — **SOLDIERS OF THE CROSS** — was made by Australians. And the world's first full-length feature movie — **THE STORY OF THE KELLY GANG** — was made by ... Australians, of course. Australian film-makers also pioneered the use of the close-up — and they shot indoor scenes long before the era of the arc light. OUR motion picture industry actually began in 1896 (I remember it well) with the filming of a horse race — the Melbourne Cup.

Following this, audiences watched locally produced newsreels and doco's that covered everything from sporting events to religious processions to actual battle scenes of the Boer War. Considered even better than the footage of the Melbourne Cup was the filming of the Sydney Wheels Race at Sydney Showground in 1897.

In September 1900 some 4000 people packed the Melbourne Town Hall to see early Christian martyrs being fed to the lions, or tossed into the Tiber (which bore a strong resemblance to the Richmond Baths). **SOLDIERS OF THE CROSS** — a world first — was made by the Salvation Army and most of the scenes were shot at a tennis court in Dandenong Road. The ingenuity of the Director, Joseph Perry, produced spectacular effects years before Cecil B de Mille and Steven Spielberg — and all at a FINAL cost of £600 (\$1200).

THE SILENCE OF DEAN MAITLAND premiered at Sydney's Palace Theatre in 1914 and starred Arthur Shirley, Harry Thomas and Lottie Lyell. Produced by Raymond Longford, this was the first film to use the close-up. On that count alone it earns a place of honour in the annals of movie-making. Making her film debut at six years of age, Rebecca Sanders (then Rebecca Gray) of Hurstville Grove played Lottie Lyell's daughter — and, at 84 years young, is the only surviving member of that distinguished cast.

The last Australian silent movie was **THE DEVIL'S PLAYGROUND** made in 1929 --and banned in 1930. (Movie censorship goes way back.) — Will Newton

EPIDEMIC !

By Merle Kavanagh

Call it what you will, plague, pestilence, pneumonic flu, scourge, Black Death, Spanish flu, who would not feel a faint sense of unease at the word. The very name can bring fear into the hearts of both rich and poor, old and young because it strikes at random and a community where it enters is wise to take all precautions. Such was the case in the Sutherland Shire when the Pneumonic or Spanish flu struck in 1919 but despite all efforts, it left behind many grieving families.

The Spanish flu began on the other side of the world, spreading rapidly through the countries in Europe and infiltrating to the far corners with the home-coming troops from the 1st World War. It raged from 1918 to 1920, claiming 11,989 Australian lives in the peak year of 1919, and Sutherland Shire had its fair share of the tragedy and dislocation of community life.

People began to realise that gathering in a crowd increased the risk of infection so many planned events were postponed or cancelled. The Church of Christ Sunday School who were to have held their picnic at Como on a Saturday in February 1919, was one group who postponed indefinitely and they advertised this in the Hurstville Propeller. At the same time the Council was stirred to action and Inoculation Depots were opened in the shire at Sutherland and Cronulla in the hopes of preventing widespread infection. Cronulla was open on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 6.30 - 7.30 p.m. and Sutherland on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6.30 - 8 p.m. There was, of course, no hospital then and only two Doctors to serve the whole shire, Dr. Sproule at Cronulla and Dr. Sanbrook in Eton Street.

Other measures included the closing of hotels by the Influenza Proclamation except between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m., and this resulted in at least one court action. It concerned the charging of Edgar William Boyle, the licensee of the Railway Hotel, Sutherland, with keeping his licensed premises open for the sale of liquor after 6 p.m. to a person who was not a bonafide lodger, servant or traveller. Sergeant Walsh gave evidence that he "saw a woman go into a side door of the hotel. He also noticed some persons enter the bar and heard bottles rattle." Despite Boyle and the customer explaining that the goods had been ordered prior to 6 p.m., but not collected, and had been put aside in his (Boyle's) private sitting room prior to locking the bar, the Magistrate felt that the sale was not completed until after 6 p.m. and he therefore had to convict, imposing a fine of £3 in addition to 6 shillings costs - or seven days imprisonment - another victim of the flu epidemic in an unexpected way.

There seemed no stopping the spread of the disease and the extreme circumstances called for every effort to combat the danger to the community. In neighbouring Hurstville and Mortdale the proprietors of public gathering places and shops were taking steps to protect their patrons from the disease - an inhaling chamber at the entrance to the Queen's Theatre at Hurstville was installed for the free use of the public and a chemist at Mortdale had installed an inhaler at his pharmacy.

By March, the government had ordered that the wearing of masks was to be compulsory in trains, trams, motor buses, cabins of ferry boats and public lifts. There were small masks, ones with a wire frame to fit on the bridge of the nose, to below the bottom lip, with a muslin bag sewn on, others extending down the chest and including a cake of camphor or a small ball of wadding dipped in eucalyptus. It was taken to the extreme when the

Propeller reported bathers wearing them proceeding to the water and discarding them with their kimonos prior to plunging into the breakers. "A number of masks without owners were noticed on the beach but there were no claimants".

But each day brought further deaths directly or partly due to the flu. The Rev. Henry Wiles of the Methodist Ministry died at his residence, Glencoe Street, Sutherland from cerebral haemorrhage after an attack of influenza. Being a leader in the community did not exempt anyone from the risks. In April 1919 Councillor Chas. Edward Paine of Suth. Shire Council died at his residence, Miranda, from pneumonic influenza, aged 63 years. Other members of his family were stricken with the disease at the time. Mr. Leslie Thacker was elected to Councillor Paine's vacancy the following month. Some were made more vulnerable by their occupation, Mr. Donald Campbell being one, who was a member of the Sydney Hospital staff in the Casualty and Outdoor Departments for 12 years. He died leaving a wife and two children. Age had nothing to do with who died. The Sylvania Star reported the sudden death of Miss Olga Chiplin on 28th June 1919, daughter of the Headmaster of Miranda School. Mr. W.J. Chiplin was in charge of the Miranda Branch relief depot established by the Central Administration Committee at his residence on the corner of Wandella Road where part of Miranda Fair now stands. Michael Patrick Hegerty, eldest son of one time mayor of Rockdale, Mr. J. F. Hegerty, died aged 38 years. The scourge raced through the community and by June the cemetery at Sutherland was handling record numbers of burials, with still no sign of abatement.

In March a suggestion had been made by Councillor Boyle that the old Yowie Bay Hotel would be suitable as an Emergency Hospital and it was arranged that an inspector in company with the Depot Master, Mr. Davies, inspect and report back to the Red Cross workers. By mid April it was agreed the hotel was "very suitable" and a lease was signed by W.S. Smith as agent for those interested for three months, with the option for a three months renewal. In May the Hurstville Propeller announced that the Health Department had taken over the whole liability of the Yowie Bay Emergency Hospital and had congratulated the council on its enterprise and promptitude in opening the institution. The hotel had only closed the year before as the government had been anxious to reduce the number of hotel licenses in response to a movement towards prohibition at that time.

At Cronulla the cottage home "Myola" in Parramatta Street and Cronulla House on the shores of Port Hacking took in mothers and children, some from the poorer parts of the city, while they recuperated from the disease. Many helpers worked long and hard with the nursing of victims, the Propeller in August 1919 reporting the praise given to Miss Heffernon, Mrs. Oates and Mrs. Vennard, V.A.D.s for the untiring manner in which they worked in many afflicted homes. As late as May 1921 mention was still being made in that newspaper of appreciation, this time to Mrs. Gregg from Council on her departure from the district, for her work in war activities and the influenza epidemic.

Occasionally evidence of prejudice and fear surfaced as indicated by a notice in the Propeller in March 1919 - "It is absolutely untrue that my wife and children are suffering with Pneumonic Influenza. R. Hyslop, Dairyman".

Gradually the community began to return to normal. Many shire homes had been touched in one way or another by the epidemic, most suffering the loss of family members or friends. They had dealt with the problem as encouraged by the local newspaper - "it behoves us all to see that the disease does not enter our peaceful village by taking every precaution". At the end of it all they were still able to smile when they read "The wearing of masks may have been the cause of more than one mo (moustache) in the district being shaved off."

Ref. The Propeller, The S.S.H.S. Bulletin, Sylvania Star, Council Minutes, Macquarie Book of Events.

SUTHERLAND ELECTRICITY SUBSTATION

ACCIDENTS

The early years of the Sutherland electricity sub-station, near the Illawarra railway line, were marred by accidents. 1927, especially, had an unfortunate record.

On 6 May, workmen commencing the morning shift found the night watchman unconscious in his room. This young man, Leslie John Byrne, aged twenty-one, had apparently started a coke fire in a tin to warm himself on a bitterly cold night; the fumes driving oxygen out of his small sealed office. Revived by Doctor Sandbrooke of Sutherland, he was conveyed by St George District Ambulance to St George Hospital, where he died on 9 May.

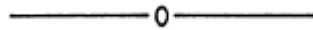
Newspaper reports state the young man lived with his family in Togo Street Banksia; a street which does not now exist. It is not known whether it was renamed, obliterated by later "developments" or simply mistranscribed. Reportage in newspapers, even the Sydney Morning Herald, was often inaccurate during the 'twenties.

Detail of the accident is recorded on an elaborate white marble monument in the Anglican section of Woronora cemetery.

On a cold and squally Wednesday morning, 6 October of the same year, Findley Ralph Lack, an electrician, working from an eight foot ladder on repairs, touched a wire he believed to be "dead" but was in fact carrying 33,000 volts. Hurlled to the ground, he suffered head injuries, burns over most of his body, and extensive loss of blood. Carried to Doctor Sandbrooke's residence, then to St. George Hospital, he died without recovering consciousness the same afternoon.

Resident of 74 Park Street Hurstville, Findley Lack was interred also in the Anglican section of Woronora, his funeral travelling on the Regent Street mortuary train from Hurstville station.

— Rhys Pidgeon



SUTHERLAND'S FIRST SCHOOL

In 1886 an application was made to the Chief Inspector of Public Schools, Mr Bramley. Many schools of the period were established in tents — usually for the children of itinerant workers such as railway construction gangs.

In the estimation of the parents, the number of children attending would be 22 boys and 20 girls. For the Department of Public Instruction the District Inspector, Mr W McIntyre, visited Sutherland to assess the need for a school. The nearest were at Hurstville and Heathcote.

His investigations included (a) finding where the parents lived, and (b) the price of land in the township. In contrast to the optimism of the petition, about the future of Sutherland, his feeling was one of caution because they were chiefly labouring men who had little or no permanent interest in the locality.

There are as yet, he wrote, very few permanent residents — the bulk of the children belong to labouring men who may remove to another locality at any time but, all things considered, I think that the population will be sufficient to maintain a small Public School. Fees only one penny a week.

— Ralph Clark

JERSEY BULLS AND HUMANS

George Heavens

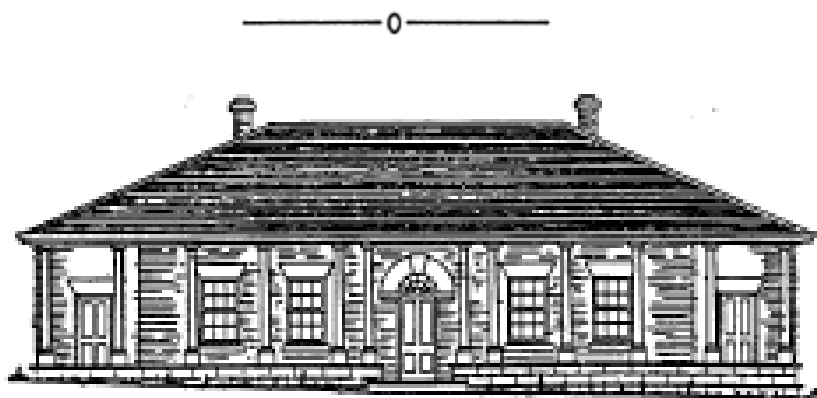
Many of our members would remember me as a local business man in Sutherland town. I was such for about 40 years, but as well was a very active fireman in the NSW Fire Brigade at Sutherland Fire Station for 33 of those years --working in conjunction with my business. A few would know that I was the Officer-in-Charge of the Fire Station at Sydney Showground for many years at Easter Show time — and it's under this hat I tell my story which could have been an historic event.

Our crew were sitting in the watch-room talking when an internal 'phone rang. It was the Duty Fireman in the Royal Hall of Industries who informed me that a fish-and-chips in that building was well alight. We advised HQ in Sydney and the other stations on the ground to proceed to the fire — RED ALERT. We had hardly left the station, making plenty of music with our siren, when we came up to and had to stop for, a line of Jersey Bulls being led across the road for the Grand Parade.

A groom ran out and told me to keep the noise down or we would frighten the bulls — and that the dire results of half a dozen bulls on a rampage on the ground would be a disaster. We indicated the urgency by pointing to the smoke billowing from the roof of the distant building — but those 10-ton bulls would not stop walking in front of our motor. We tried pushing them, with the aid of the grooms, but those animals kept following the one in front; they would not turn aside and let our beautiful red-and-gold fire appliance go through. It took us at least five minutes — and by now the smoke was coming out of the roof in great volumes.

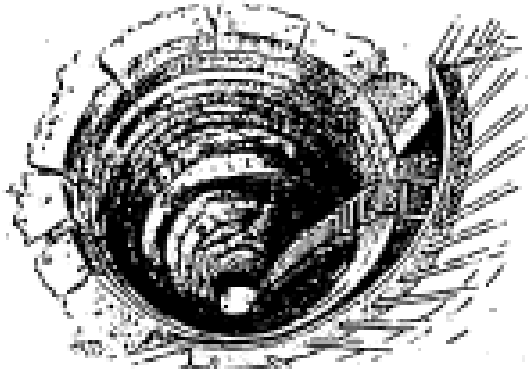
Eventually we arrived at the scene of the fire; our job was to get a line of hose into the building. There are plenty of hydrants at the Showground, and plenty of indicator signs to show where they are — but when a thousand or more sightseers stand in a solid block you can't see the hydrants or the signs. And, search as we may, we simply couldn't find the hydrants. It was not until No. 11 Station from Woollahra arrived and put a hose over the fence from the street outside that we had water from the town supply on the job. However, our First-Aid pump had been put to use — as well as every fire-extinguisher in the building — and the fire was contained, and that to the credit of the fireman on duty inside.

Now I don't know which as the hardest to move, humans or Jersey bulls — as both show no imagination when it comes to a building on fire. Had our First-Aid tank and fire-extinguishers not been able to contain the fire as they did, we could have had a terrific blaze.



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BUSBY'S BORE



THE LACHLAN WATER TUNNEL

SYDNEY'S first piped water supply, known as 'Busby's Bore' — but officially the LACHLAN WATER TUNNEL-- runs under the Showground ... and it still flows. Cut mostly through solid rock by convicts between 1827 and 1837 the tunnel supplied the colony with drinking water for nearly 60 years.

The water was drained from the Lachlan Swamps (now Centennial and Queens Parks) and flowed by gravitation under the Showground, the old Sports Ground, Victoria Barracks and thence in a north-westerly direction below Oxford Street. It surfaced near the corner of Liverpool and College Streets and continued diagonally across Hyde Park in an elevated wooden pipe-line to an outlet point near the corner of Elizabeth and Park Streets — about where the Ladies Rest Rooms are.

When the Agricultural Society moved to the present Showground site in 1882 one of the first projects was to tap into Busby's Bore for a supply of water. Windmills were erected over three of the access shafts to the tunnel and, according to a contemporary report, "an adequate supply of the valuable fluid" was obtained. In those days the Showground covered an area of 16 hectares (40 acres) on which were five shafts to the tunnel. The size of the ground has since been increased to about 29 hectares (71 acres) on which there are nine shafts.

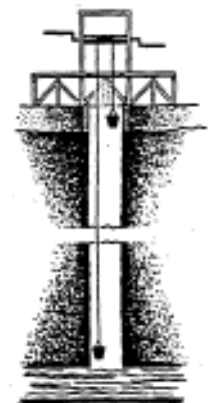
After joining the Society's staff in 1978 I learned that 'The Tunnel' runs under the Showground. That didn't sound particularly mind-blasting — a bunch of surly convicts cutting a tunnel through rock last century — but some of the amusing sidelight incidents really caught my attention. Dissident soldiers tossing their rifles down one of the shafts in protest during World War I; workmen at the Showground polluting the Botanic Gardens water supply

in 1910 by dumping cattle droppings down one of the shafts as an easy means of disposal; entrepreneur Barnett Levey building a windmill on top of a city building - in defiance of the Authorities; the chambers of the Chief Justice being run as a part-time brothel by the Governor of Darlinghurst Gaol; a local cartage contractor being fined four shillings and sixpence (450) in 1849 for dumping 200 tonnes of nightsoil near the mouth of the tunnel (the Magistrate didn't seem to think it was all that important).

Upon consulting some acquaintances at the Water Board I learned that water is still flowing through the tunnel — and actually runs off into the Bondi sewerage outfall. (The Water Board takes responsibility for the tunnel.)

At Victoria Barracks one of the shafts to the tunnel is open for inspection — and visitors can look down about 23 metres (75 feet) of beautiful moss-covered natural stone walling to the water below. From time to time some hapless soldier on guard-duty has to climb down a spindly ladder to retrieve a handbag that some lady visitor has carelessly dropped down the shaft. Rumour has it that a human skeleton was once discovered in a large cavern at the bottom of this shaft.

John Busby, the Engineer who designed the tunnel water system, never went down to inspect the work in progress — as far as anyone knows. He would have no doubt feared that the surly convict labourers would have made doubly sure that he did not get out alive.



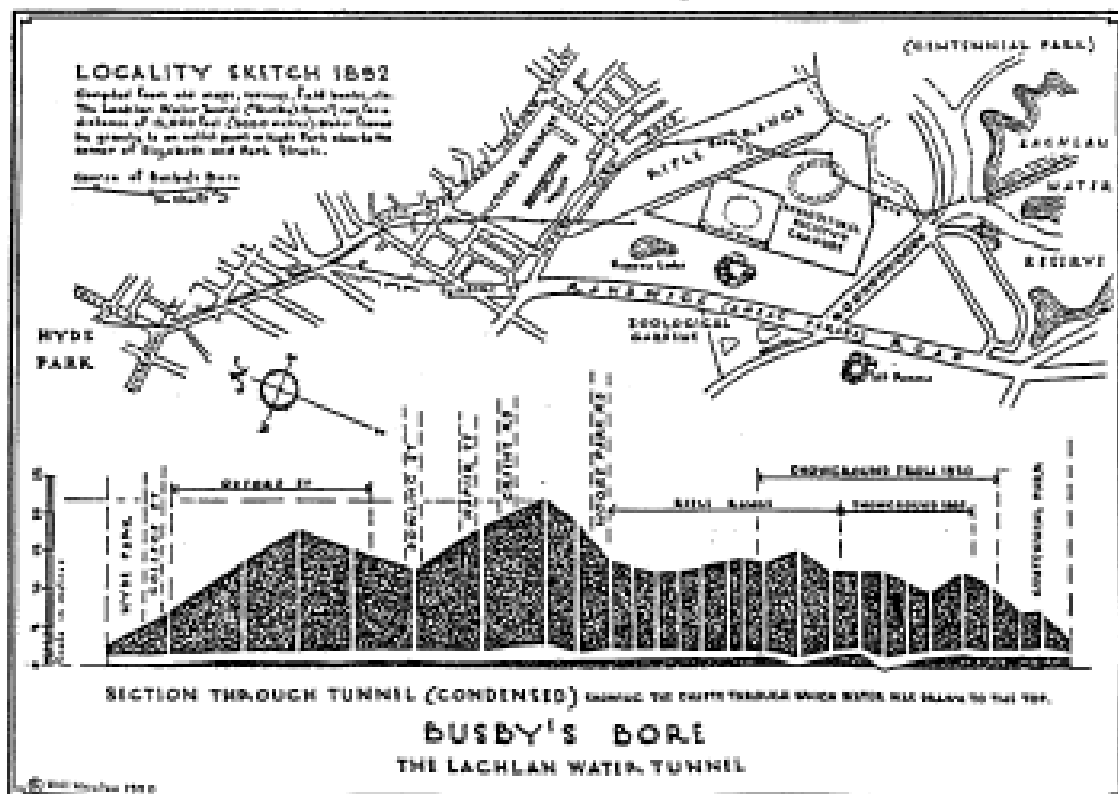
But back to the Showground. Water Board surveyor, James Cook (no relation to the celebrated navigator), pin-pointed Shaft No 3 for us. Of all the most damned awkward places, it was right under the low end of the big slippery-dip in old 'Sideshow Alley'. I recruited the ground foreman, Big Wal, and three of his labourers with crow bars and shovels for the 'big dig'. After some not-too-enthusiastic scratching and scraping, three sandstone slabs, which sealed the shaft, were exposed to view. By now the enthusiasm was mounting -- we had all suddenly become potentially-famous archaeologists.

Big Wal stepped down on to the (fractured) middle slab to investigate the matter further. I half expected Wal, and the slab, to disappear down a bloody great hole into infinity. Fortunately that did not happen because, as we were to learn, this shaft had been filled up with earth and rubble to stop the surcharge that had been flooding the nearby horse-stalls. That had all happened back in 1932 — so it's no wonder none of us remembered it.

Accompanied by much grunting and groaning, the covering slabs were lifted off and dragged clear. The next move was to re-excavate the shaft — and what a bitch of a job that was. The labourers took turns at digging out gooey, sticky mullock to a depth of about ten metres — but by then water was seeping in just as fast as it could be pumped out. The exercise did not exactly endear me, the project boss, to the blokes doing the digging — in fact, I think they could have cheerfully murdered me.

The object of the whole thing was to reinstate this shaft to form part of an historic display. It measures about 1.8m (6 feet) in diameter and is trimmed at the top with four courses of sandstone masonry -- still in good condition. The total depth I estimated to be about 11.5m (38 feet).

When it became apparent that we could go no further (until the slippery-dip was moved) I called a halt and we boarded the shaft over and put back the earth on top. And now, umpteen years later, everything is still just as we left it — and waiting for someone to make the next move. The Royal Agricultural Society doesn't like rushing into things.



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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.

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