

SUTHERLAND SHIRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC QUARTERLY BULLETIN

Design by (the late) Fred Widdgley



No. 81

August 1992

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The BELL HOMESTEAD at Bonna Point, Kurnell, was built by Henry Bell during the 'Great Depression' of the 30s. Nine children were raised on the property.

Artist OTTO KUSTER, who hails from Bohemia, trained initially as a Sculptor. His paintings and sculptures are featured in many important private collections and Art Galleries around the world. His landscapes and Sydney Harbour scenes are always in big demand. Earlier this year Otto received a Masters Degree in Aesthetics & Visual Literacy from the University of New South Wales.

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The night too quickly passes
And we are growing old,
So let us fill our glasses
And toast the Days of Gold;
When finds of wondrous treasure
Set all the South ablaze,
And you and I were faithful mates
All through the Roaring Days!

Then stately ships came sailing
From every harbour's mouth,
And sought the Land of Promise
That beacons in the South;
Then southward streamed their streamers
And swelled their canvas full
To speed the wildest dreamers
E'er borne in vessel's hull.

Those golden days are vanished,
And altered is the scene;
The diggings are deserted,
The camping-grounds are green;
The flaunting flag of progress
Is in the West unfurled,
The mighty Bush with iron rails
Is tethered to the world.

ACHTUNG !

Alterations to GUEST SPEAKERS agenda --

We were advised, AFTER going to press, that Mr Robert Booth will not now be available to speak at the October meeting — which, of course, alters the listing in this edition of the BULLETIN.

But, maybe the good Lord is keeping an eye on things for us, anyway. With the revised schedule, our SPECIAL AUSTRALIAN guest speaker will now give his talk at the October meeting. He is the renowned singer/entertainer JOHNNY WADE AO, who was awarded his Order of Australia in 1990 for services to the community, music and entertainment -- and you can take it from us, this will be a special treat.

We understand that Robert Booth will now give his talk "Southern Railway Line" at the November meeting.

As an added bonus, our Guest Speaker for December will be the famous local identity, cartoonist JIM RUSSELL AO MBE — and this also promises to be something really out of the box.

So how about that for a beaut line-up — every cloud has a silver lining, eh?

— Will Newton

Quarterly journal of the Sutherland Shire Historical Society Inc

Edition No. 81

August 1992

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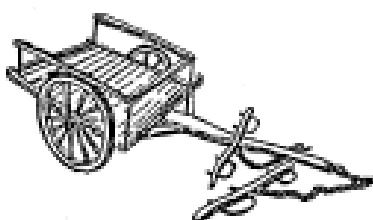
Aileen Griffiths

MAGNA CARTA - Icon of Liberty

Will Newton

GENERAL INFORMATION - Sutherland Shire Historical Society Inc

(Copy of Magna Carta)



(ii)

The Blue Mountains

ABOVE the ashes straight and tall,
Through ferns with moisture dripping,
I climb beneath the sandstone wall,
My feet on mosses slipping.

Like ramparts round the valley's edge
The tinted cliffs are standing,
With many a broken wall and ledge,
And many a rocky landing.

And round about their rugged feet
Deep ferny dells are hidden
In shadowed depths, whence dust and heat
Are banished and forbidden.

The stream that, crooning to itself,
Comes down a tireless rover,
Flows calmly to the rocky shelf,
And there leaps bravely over.

Now pouring down, now lost in spray
When mountain breezes sally,
The water strikes the rock midway,
And leaps into the valley.

Now in the west the colours change,
The blue with crimson blending;
Behind the far Dividing Range
The sun is fast descending.

And mellowed day comes o'er the place,
And softens ragged edges;
The rising moon's great placid face
Looks gravely o'er the ledges.



Again, in this Bulletin, we have to sadly report the death of two members; Mrs. Olive Lloyd who many will remember joined the Society in its early days, and was a regular attendant at the meeting;; and Excursions, until ill health caused her to restrict her activities. Many members will recall Olive for her work at The Sutherland Hospital with the Lilac Ladies. I was at Surfers Paradise when I learned of the death and was unable to return in time for the funeral.

And our former Committee Member, Mrs. Ellen Melbourne passed away one week later. Ellen was a dedicated Co Committee lady always ready to offer assistance where needed, especially with the Excursion Committee and had just agreed to take over the booking plan. Seven members of Committee attended the funeral.

The Society offers its sincere sympathy to both families.

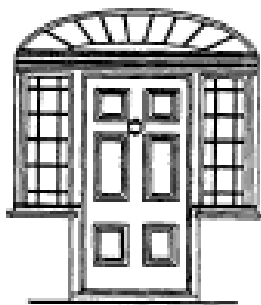
We are still seeking a new Bulletin Editor; if you think you may be able to carry out this position, please contact Will Newton on 529-9190 and discuss the Bulletin with him.

In the meantime he has accepted the title of "Acting Editor" so that we may have a full Committee; but bear in mind it is only "Acting" and we must assist him by filling the position.

Also, we welcome Mr. Allan McGrath to the Committee -- Allan has been very busy helping with Museum Duties and was a very willing helper at Heritage week, as also is he there at all meetings to assist in any way we may request.

We have received a special request for information regarding the original Burraneer Bay Public School, which was opened at corner of Gannons and Burraneer Bay Roads, Cronulla, 1893; it closed in 1908 and was re-opened in early 50's. To celebrate, a special occasion is being planned for 1993. If you can help will you please contact me at your convenience.

Alan Griffiths



- Talking recently with famous cartoonist JIM 'The Potts' RUSSELL brought back memories of some of those colourful journos who wrote a regular column in our newspapers — Jim Macdougall, Alexander MacDonald, my old friend Andrea, Ross Campbell, David McNicoll, Leon Gellert ...

I was reminded of a Colgate-Palmolive radio broadcast, during those Golden Years, when JIM MACDOUGALL who was guest celebrity, was introduced by Jack Davey to Roy Rene (Mo) something like this —

DAVEY : "Mo, I want you to meet Sydney's No.1 newspaper columnist."

MO: "Ah, I've always wanted to meet David McNicoll."

- WN

EDITOR'S DESK...

In the last edition we reported the sad passing of one of our esteemed members, Ralph Clark. This time it is the equally sad loss of Ellen Melbourne — a lady who was always ready to pitch in and help with Committee tasks. I guess none of us quite realised how ill Ellen had been in recent times, but we do know that she will be sadly missed by all.



And I have yet another sad passing to report (that went almost unnoticed in the local media) — expatriate showbiz personality JOY NICHOLS who had been in a New York nursing home when the final curtain came down at 1:00am on 24 June (our time). Artist and astrologer, Evon Ackland, worked out for me that it would have been 10:00am on 23 June in New York. More about Evon — former art teacher at Gympie TAFE — in the next edition. A versatile lady, indeed.

I had just finished writing my tribute to Joy Nichols, who had been a friend, when George Heavens' delightful letter about the Nichols family arrived in the mail — I can hardly wait to share it with you (see under the heading of GEORGE HEAVENS LOOKS BACK).

H M ENDEAVOUR BARK — I received a letter from Mrs Jane Glad who made some most gratifying comments about the BULLETIN. I had sent her a copy of the last edition because of the article about Norman Lindsay's model of Captain Cook's ENDEAVOUR. Jane's father was NORMAN LINDSAY.

Hands up all those who don't remember Jenny Howard — 'Darling Jenny' the English-born comedienne who made Australia laugh for many years, particularly in the years when she was on the Tivoli circuit. Jenny, whom I reckon would be 89, is in a nursing home at Coolangatta — and still loves to hear from her old fans. When they teamed her up with the great George Wallace, a long time ago, it seemed like a most improbable combination — but, together they were pure magic. Jenny, incidentally, was still performing on stage until only a year or so ago. Old troupers are not easily stopped.

ONE I MISSED. On April 13, one hundred years ago, the great Gladys Moncrieff was born in Bundaberg (where the rum comes from). I'm not the only theatre buff who failed to note the occasion at the time — I'll blame Barrie Denniss for not reminding me — but Peter Burgis and Barry Badham both did likewise. Both had Moncrieff tributes in the JUNE edition in THE SOUND RECORD (journal of the Phonograph Society of NSW) — and well worth reading.

It is 16 years since Gladys Moncrieff departed this world (8 February 1976) but her recordings are still being issued — and you can get them on CD.

COMING GUEST SPEAKERS --

AUGUST	Doug Perry	"The Antarctic"
SEPTEMBER	Neville Williams	"Theatre Organs"
OCTOBER	Robert Booth	"Southern Railway Line"
NOVEMBER	Septimus Blogg	"Migratory Habits of the Turnip Termite"

As there is some doubt as to whether Professor Blogg will be available for the November meeting, we are negotiating with a SPECIAL AUSTRALIAN to fill in and give a talk — and, I know you will be delighted.

— Will Newton

THE BLACK BERET IN THE SHIRE

I feel that the Sutherland Shire houses many of the great artists of the future.

- Lloyd Rees

The photo shows Marjorie and Lloyd Rees signing autographs at the Gympie TAPE School of Art annual art exhibition at the Sutherland Civic Centre Gallery - 1975. The black beret worn by Lloyd Rees was presented to him by graduates from the School of Art Design (the one he had worn for years was falling to pieces).



Lloyd and Marjorie Rees have sadly passed on, but the undersigned, a cofounder of the College of Aesthetics & Visual Literacy, is carrying on the aims and objectives. It was originally intended to be a small college, but it has snowballed into an international organisation. Members are networking in nearly all countries of the world.

In Australia there will be a series of seminars at the University of NSW and conferences at Woollooware House in association with members who would wish to research for further accreditations. The Vietnam Veterans Art Association, the Australian Porcelain Artists Association and the Woollooware House Campus are arranging seminars and conferences for accreditations.



Internationally, the first series of University and Regional Conferences will take place in Indonesia - in Jakarta, Jogjakarta, Surabaya, Bali and Sulawesi - where functions will be held at Universities in each area in



late November. Interested persons should contact the undersigned, or the Editor of this journal, so that details when completed can be forwarded on. Those joining the overseas conferences must be prepared to contribute to some area of research.

For 1993 a series of international ART RESEARCH SYMPOSIUMS are being organised to exchange indigenous and contemporary artistic research developments. Again, those interested in attending will need to contact the undersigned as soon as possible so that a range of people with a diversity of interests can be invited to join the expedition. It will be a first-in-a-lifetime project of this particular kind.

Members of AVL have contributed to a publication — now nearing completion --on Aesthetics & Visual Literacy and dealing with the indigenous, classical and contemporary comparatives with the Pacific Arts.

In the near future, a curriculum for advanced arts research accreditations will be tabled at Woollooware House for perusal. It is heartening to know the Shire has played such an important part in furthering the arts. I remember Lloyd Rees and Aub Schulstad saying, "The great artists of the future will come out of the present artists and groups in the Sutherland Shire."

— Dr Lucy Hertz MBE DAVL



THE PEOPLE'S POET IN THE SHIRE

THEY lie, the men who tell us, for reasons of their own,
That want is here a stranger, and that misery's unknown;
For where the nearest suburb and the city proper meet
My window-sill is level with the faces in the street
 Drifting past, drifting past,
 To the beat of weary feet --
While I sorrow for the owners of those faces in the street.



HENRY LAWSON, the great representative of Australian writing in the 1890s, his finest achievement no doubt being in his short stories. But also, in his collection of verse are found several ballads which have virtually attained the status of folklore. Such was the genius of The People's Poet.

It was the Reverend Bill Clarke, of the Uniting Church of Sylvania, a kindred lover of Lawson's works, who drew my attention to the upcoming 70th anniversary of the poet's departure from this world — 2 September. Lawson spent a lot of time in the Shire — he was a mate of Neville Cayley, the painter and expert on Australian birds — and some of his last days were passed in a little rented cottage near The Bonnet at Como. Local historian, Daphne Salt, showed me the remains of that cottage on the bank of the Woronora — in a delightful spot, quiet and tranquil. Lawson was well past his literary prime in his Como days, but I can easily imagine his troubled mind being at peace with the world in this, even now, virgin paradise. Daphne's masterly work *GATEWAY TO THE SOUTH* has a photo of Lawson taken in 1919 at the opening of the Ocean Wharf, Cronulla — he took an interest in local affairs.

So many books and comprehensive articles about Henry Lawson, by top literary people, have been published over the years that I can only echo what others have already said time and again. So I'll confine myself to a few snippets of information that are probably not so well known.

In 1936 Henry Lawson's old home "Eurunderee" — just out of Mudgee — was put up for sale. It was built of sawn timber in 1876. *SMITH'S WEEKLY* urged the Federal Government to buy the historic edifice for the nation and also suggested that a returned soldier, from World War 1. and living on a pension, could be installed as caretaker.

The newspaper argued that if the Government could spend £20,000 (\$40 000) on new homes for the Governor-General, Lord Gowrie, £500 (\$1000) on a portrait of Prime Minister, Joe Lyons, then surely it could purchase Henry Lawson's old home for a mere £330 (\$660). But neither the Federal nor the State Governments were the least bit interested.

In 1939 LIONEL (later Sir) LINDSAY, who had illustrated much of Lawson's work for the *BULLETIN*, wrote:

"It is Lawson's humanity, his humour, his knowledge of the heart, that won for him a world-wide audience, But the power to condense and dramatise, the sure instinct for the right tone and atmosphere, and above everything, the easy control of a simple vocabulary from which he can evoke any shade of expression, made him the fine prose artist with a unique place in our literature."

NORMAN LINDSAY, whose book *BOHEMIANS OF THE BULLETIN* was published in 1965 --in recollecting many notable literary figures from bygone days — had this

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to say about the poet with whom he collaborated an several literary projects:

"If the hearing-aid had been invented in Lawson's time, I might have had much more to write about him than a few skimpy items that I can call to mind. My visual memory of him is perfect but my auditory memory has hardly anything worth recording. To me, he was a presence, not a voice; a presence haunting the BULLETIN office, the North Shore ferry, and Angus & Robertson's bookshop.

As a presence, he emanated that quality which cannot be defined because it is one of the spirit. In a street of people, his was the face that arrested attention. Not that he was not otherwise distinctive, with his tall figure, shock of hair over his right eye, bush of a moustache, well bridged nose and brilliantly alive dark eyes."

Here's what fellow-poet, 'Banjo' Paterson, had to say, with a twinkle:

"...But that ends it, Mr Lawson, and it's time to say good-bye,
So we must agree to differ in all friendship, you and I.
Yes, we'll work our own salvation with the stoutest hearts we may,
And if fortune only favours we will take the road some day,
And go droving down the river 'neath the sunshine and the stars,
And then return to Sydney and vermillionize the bars."

One of the early prose works that brought Lawson into prominence was *WHILE THE BILLY BOILS*, first published by J F Archibald in the *BULLETIN* in 1896.

It was made into a (silent) movie by Beaumont Smith in 1921 with a cast which included John Cosgrove, Elsie McCormack and Tal Ordell. It is worth mentioning that Henry Lawson made a brief screen appearance in the Prologue.

Henry Lawson died (of a stroke) alone and in abject poverty in a little cottage at Abbotsford on 2 September 1922. On 4 September he was accompanied on his last journey (from St Andrew's Cathedral) by many dignitaries — Lt-Governor, Sir William Cullen; Prime Minister, Billy Hughes; Federal Treasurer, Stanley Bruce; cabinet ministers, representatives from many public bodies and some of the poet's old mates — George Robertson (Angus & Robertson), Roderick Quinn, Tom Mutch ... and, by no means least, Lawson's brother-in-law J T (Jack) Lang 'the Big Fella' — later Premier of New South Wales.

Most of Lawson's old mates would have been overawed by the pomp and ceremony ----- and probably stayed away because they would have felt too shabby to have attended the State Funeral. The irony of it all, as Jack Lang observed, was that only a few days earlier most of those dignitaries would have crossed the road in order to avoid Henry Lawson.

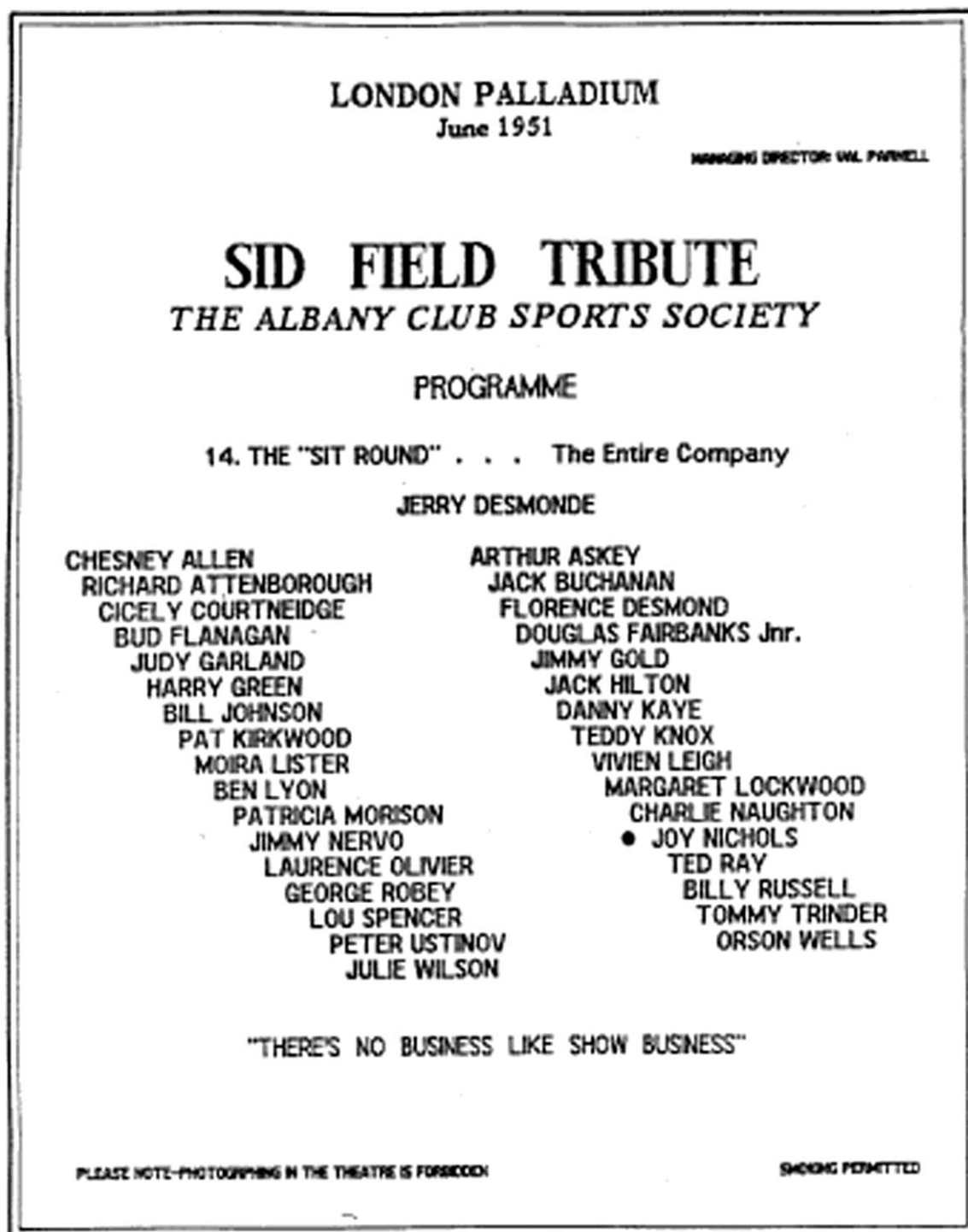
-- Will Newton



SPY-ON-DI JOURNALISM --

If you can't get a job as a pianist in a brothel, then become a Royal Family reporter.

- Lord Somebody-or-other



Reconstructed portion of a programme Joy Nichols sent me from London about 1983. SID FIELD was one of England's greatest stage comedians, who died suddenly on 20 February 1950 while starring in HARVEY at the Prince Of Wales Theatre. American Joe E Brown took over the role and later brought the show to Australia. (And that's a story in itself.)

The SID FIELD TRIBUTE was a midnight benefit attended by the Duchess of Kent who was escorted by Noel Coward. The star-studded bill was brought to its close by the 81-year-old George Robey singing the old favourite 'If You Were The Only Girl In The World'. The show raised £17,000 for Sid Field's wife and children — and as Sid may well have said: "What a performance:"

— Will Newton

A STAR NO LONGER SHINES

VALE JOY NICHOLS

JOY NICHOLS, one of the brightest stars ever to shine in Australian and British radio, passed away in a New York hospital on 24 June. A wonderful and vital theatrical personality, Joy reached the top of the local showbiz scene while still in her teens. Along with brother, George, who was a terrific impressionist, Joy Nichols was one of the busiest people on stage and in radio in the early 1940s.



Even while still very young Joy Nichols' stage presence made a big impact on audiences. Older readers may well remember radio's THE CHILDREN'S HOUR with 'Bobby Bluegum' (Frank Hatherley) that had featured lots of talented children who went on to become top professionals — John Unicom, Dorothy Dodd (who wrote the lyrics for 'Granada'), Brian Bury ... Joy had been appearing on the show when 2SM's John Dunne offered the outstandingly talented youngster double the fee to join his UNCLE TOM'S GANG — along with Babs Mackinnon, Kath Crawford, John Geary, Joy Cross, Gwenda Cogan, Angelina Arena ... (Oz was full of talented kids. -Ed.)

As a 15-year-old, in army uniform, Joy was always performing at war-rallies, entertaining troops in military camps and generally did an enormous amount for the war-effort during those dark years of World War II. Joy was clearly the outstanding female talent of Australian showbiz — actress, compere, comedienne, vocalist — and she could sure put over a song, whether humorous or sentimental, Joy could have her audience laughing or crying almost at will. At the age of 17 Joy Nichols was named Outstanding Radio Personality of the Year. That was in 1941 when she was one of the leading lights in that most delightful Colgate-Palmolive production YOUTH SHOW — with Robin Ordell, Margo Lee, Colin Croft, Bettie Dickson, Bill Kerr, Pauline Garrick, Patricia (Patti) Crocker, Reg Johnstone, Gweneth Friend, Richard Farrell ...

On stage at the Trocadero ballroom in George Street, where they were recording the YOUTH SHOW before a capacity audience of 1200, Joy read out a telegram from Judy Garland which concluded with the words: CHIN-UP, CHEERIO, CARRY ON — the title of a wartime hit song which Joy then introduced to Australian audiences. She had a number of song-hits, on the Regal Zonophone label — SWINGING ALONG THE ROAD TO VICTORY, BROWN SLOUCH HAT, WHEN A BOY FROM ALABAMA MEETS A GIRL FROM GUNDAGAI — and she never lost that wonderful husky voice. Joy was destined to become a super-star.

A favourite story from Joy's YOUTH SHOW days concerns the original producer and compere, Robin Ordell, son of actor Tal Ordell. Most of the girls in the show seemed to be in love with Robin Ordell, including the breathtakingly beautiful 'Golden Girl' Margo Lee. Many years later Joy commented to me: "Margo was very beautiful — but I got Robin." There is little doubt that

Joy would have married Robin, but he was killed in action during the war --a Flight-Lt in the Air Force, he was posthumously awarded the DFC.

The YOUTH SHOW, incidentally, was the best showcase of its type anywhere in the world and many of its performers — all of them under 21 — went on to become top-liners. Colin Croft was always envious of Joy being the highest paid of the young stars. They were both later engaged by Mel Lawton to appear on stage at the Prince Edward Theatre, at the afternoon and evening sessions, where they supplemented the movies. When Colin learned that Joy was earning twice his fee, he was really put out — but then, whilst Colin (like George Nichols) was GOOD, Joy was GREAT... and that was the big difference.

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It was at the Prince Edward Theatre that Joy held rapt audiences spellbound with her moving rendition of FUZZY WUZZY ANGELS — written on the infamous Kokoda Trail during the Pacific War — and which I am sure was the main reason for its great popularity. Bert Beros, the poet, thought so too when he inscribed a copy of an anthology of his works to Joy after the war -

Kitty Bluett and Willie Fennell were once walking down Wynyard ramp when a group of schoolgirls mobbed them and asked for autographs. Willie told me that they were signing away merrily when one little girl looked at Kitty's signature and lamented, "Oh gee, I thought you were JOY NICHOLS". (I don't know how Kitty reacted to that one.)

AFTER THE WAR Joy and George Nichols went to England to try their luck. They weren't having a lot of success and so George sent for some of the YOUTH SHOW recordings for the BBC people to hear. That certainly did it for Joy — she was teamed up (in 1947) with Dick Bentley and 'Professor' Jimmy Edwards to feature in TAKE IT FROM HERE, the most popular radio variety show in BBC history. By 1949 more than 14 million listeners were tuning in each week to TAKE IT FROM HERE. And for many



of us here in Oz it was the radio highlight of the week -- on Sunday nights. The show was also performed live on the London stage, where it was a box-office winner — although Dick Bentley pulled out after a dispute over his billing, if memory serves me correctly. The popular trio made a recording of LITTLE RED MONKEY which stayed high on the charts for ages and ages. The ultimate proof of Joy's fame overseas was the place of honour in Madame Tussaud's famous waxworks.

Joy's career was highly successful on both sides of the Atlantic. She played in stage shows on Broadway and in THE PAJAMA GAME in London's West-End -- and was a regular Royal Command Performer.

Joy Nichols was last seen on the Australian stage in 1953 at the Tivoli Theatre. On a working visit, Joy brought her husband (Wally Peterson, with the soft American accent) and her young daughter Roberta. But the pressure caught up with Joy — she suffered a nervous breakdown and had to withdraw from the revue. Babs Mackinnon, a beautiful performer, was able to fill in until Betty Driver arrived as a permanent replacement. And, believe it or not, Betty's husband was also named Wally Peterson.

A few years ago Wally picked up a recording of eight of Joy's songs from TAKE IT FROM HERE, recorded between 1949 and 1952, in some second-hand shop in New York. Wally sent it to Joy, who was then living in London, and Joy in turn sent it on to me as a present. It's battle-scarred and scratchy, but there's no mistaking the voice of Joy Nichols -- and it is one of my treasured recordings. When Joy left TAKE IT FROM HERE she was replaced by June Whitfield — who played 'Eth' — and Alma Cogan who did the vocals, but the show was never quite the same without JOY NICHOLS.

Joy and Wally had been separated for many years although they remained friends and were often in contact. Wally works behind the scenes, mainly in American showbiz, and was with Rex Harrison's production on Broadway when the latter contracted cancer and died in 1990. The eldest daughter, Roberta Peterson, is an actress who established her credentials by doing a two-year stint on the London stage in THE MOUSETRAP. The twins, Richard and Victoria (Ricky & Vicky) have inherited some of their parents' showbiz blood -- Richard is a sound-

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recording specialist and Victoria has a career in stage management and stage lighting, amongst other things.

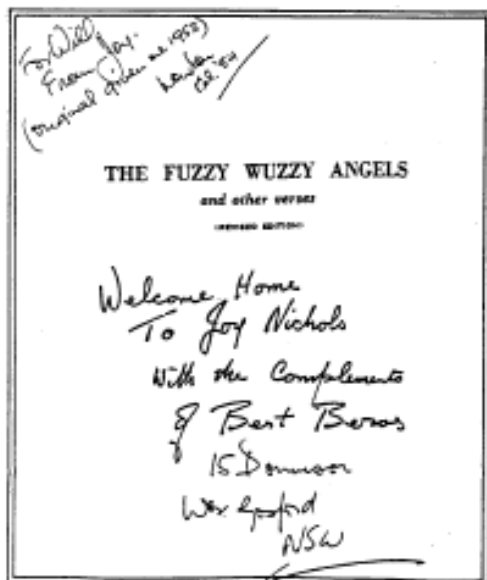
In the early 1980s Joy had contemplated a private visit to Oz — the first in thirty years — but decided against it after talking with Wilfrid Thomas and his wife, Bettie Dickson, both expatriate Australians who had lived in the UK for many years. Wilf scotched the idea by warning Joy that she would be hounded by the Australian media — something she didn't want.

When 2RES-FM (Radio Eastern Sydney) went to air about ten years ago, I spoke at the General Meeting Just before we did the opening broadcast. My comments were mainly to pass on good wishes for the station's success from a lot of old radio personalities — Margo Lee, Harry Griffiths, Queenie Ashton, Hal Lashwood, Babs Mackinnon, Nigel Lovell, Dinah Shearing, Willie Fennell, Amber Mae Cecil, Tom Farley, Patti Crocker, Terry Dear, Thelma Scott ...and, for the last name, I read part of a letter from Landon: "...wishing you all every success, etc, etc" — and signed JOY NICHOLS. Well, the effect that name had on the audience - it sure confirmed that, even after a thirty-year absence, Joy still had lots of devoted fans in Oz.

Joy had been living in semi-retirement in London for some years when she had decided to return to America about 1985. I think she had hopes of getting back on stage in the US but, unfortunately, her health deteriorated and her last few years were spent in a New York nursing home. Shortly before leaving London, Joy sent me a photo of the holiday home she and Wally had built on the little island or Tortola in the Caribbean. Joy had loved that retreat --away from life's hustle and bustle, and under blue skies.

A few months before she died Joy wrote to me from the nursing home: "What a strange place to be in — Brooklyn — when my thoughts stray back to the modest house 'Sunnyside' in Balmain Road, Leichhardt." But it seems fitting, somehow, that her ashes were scattered to the winds from Tortola — the final curtain for one of Australia's greatest ever entertainers.

Wally was at her bedside when the end came.



THE SHIRE CONNECTION --

The Nichols family had a week-ender, built by Joy's father many years ago, on the bank of the Woronora. And guess who had been their neighbour? — none other than our own esteemed GEORGE HEAVENS, who used to nurse the baby Joy.

— Will Newton

EVERYONE KNOWS THE POTTS -AND UNCLE DICK



JIM RUSSELL, AO, MBE, cartoonist, writer, magazine editor, radio/television commentator and former public relations officer for the Lawn Tennis Association, is a long-time resident of Sylvania's Kangaroo Point -- About 30 years, in fact.



IN THAT golden era when SMITH'S WEEKLY was at the height of its success as a purveyor of comic art — from about 1920 to 1940 — they normally took on only established artists. The only male artist to start as an office boy with SMITH'S and finish up a top-liner (of the Old Guard) was JIM RUSSELL.

Starting in his early teens, Jim worked his way to fame with his ready wit, clever pen and sparkling personality. His best known comic strip would have to be the internationally syndicated THE POTTS. In American newspapers the strip is presented as UNCLE DICK (to the Yanks the name THE POTTS would be suggestive of chamber-pots).

During World War II I came to know Jim Russell's art through his weekly satiric features ADOLPH, HERMAN & MUSSO and SCHMIDT DER SPY — essential reading for all true patriots. An oft-heard accusation around army camps was, "Hey, which one of you bastards pinched my SMITH'S WEEKLY?" (See Footnote)

Jim's colleagues at SMITH'S WEEKLY included some of the best artistic and literary talent this country has ever produced. Names like Kenneth Slessor, Lennie Lower, Virgil Reilly, Alexander MacDonald, George Finey, Stan Cross, Les Dixon, George Blaikie, Syd Miller, Joe Jonsson, Bernard Hesling, Eric Jolliffe, Edgar Holt, Bart Adamson, Hugh Dash, Jim Donald, Charlie Hallett, Cec Hartt, Emile Mercier, George Donaldson ... it seems to go on forever.

Kenneth Slessor joined SMITH'S as a journo in 1927 and became Editor in '38. It was around this time most of his noted poems were written. Slessor's poems, illustrated by Virgil Reilly, appeared each week in SMITH'S and were published in book form in 1933 as the classic DARLINGHURST NIGHTS.

When STAN 'Wally and the Major' CROSS resigned from SMITH'S in 1939 to work for the Melbourne Herald, it was Jim Russell who took over as Arts Editor. THE POTTS, incidently, started by Stan and taken over by Jim, is one of the world's longest running cartoon strips — with an unbroken run of more than fifty years. It is Jim Russell's proud boast that he has never missed a deadline or failed to come up with a gag.

It is worth mentioning how Jim Russell got started as a cartoonist. At about 12 years of age he was really taken with the then new SMITH'S WEEKLY — and in particular with the comic-strip art — and this was to determine the whole course of his life. He joined the Daily Guardian (sister newspaper to (SMITH'S) at the age of 15, and within a year was attending the Julian Ashton Art School by courtesy of the Art Editor and the staff artists who chipped in to pay the fees of this bright young bloke. In 1929 Jim joined the staff of the Evening News — their youngest ever political cartoonist.

During his stay in America, Jim was offered a lucrative job by none other than Walt Disney. It was a tempting offer but World War II broke out in 1939 so Jim returned to Australia to do his bit for the war effort. It was then that he took over the popular anti Nazi cartoon strips, mentioned above --and which must have really riled the Germans. After the war a 'hit-list' of writers and cartoonists was found in a filing cabinet at Goebbels' headquarters

in Berlin — and it pleases Jim Russell no end to know that his own name was on that list. So much for the Nazis.

A founding member of the Black & White Artists Club, Jim is now the club's Patron and has been honoured with the prestigious Stanley Award for achievement in this field. In 1976 Jim received his MBE and in 1987 was appointed a Member of the Order Of Australia.

Jim Russell is one of those creative people (like Norman Lindsay and radio icon Jack Davey in the past) — a human dynamo with an incredible capacity for work — and at 83 still shows no signs of slowing down. These days Jim produces one long (Sunday newspaper) strip and six short strips each week. On top of a full week's work he has completed a seven-minute pilot for an animated film of THE POTTS, is presently negotiating to do a musical, has only recently illustrated a travel book and is currently working on his autobiography. He has also bought back one of the four travel agencies that he started back in the 1960s. EVER INNOVATIVE, he has Just made a three-stage video titled "How to Draw" — an instruction system for use by students and art teachers. Jim's partner in the project is Harry Widmer, a Swiss-Australian television producer of Loftus (it's all happening within the Shire) and the videos will be available from libraries — and have the blessing of the Department of Education.

On top of all this, he has become ambassador for the NSW Office on Ageing for the AGE ADDS VALUE campaign which began in March of this year. (I wonder what he does in his 'spare' time. -Ed.) The AGE ADDS VALUE movement stresses that productivity and creativity are not the exclusive preserve of the young — and that the wisdom and experience of age provide an added value to employers. Jim Russell's advice to older people is to have a hobby so that they can go straight into it upon retirement — and so keep active and alert. (Who wants to rust, anyway?)

FOOTNOTE

SCHMIDT DER SPY at Romano's --

During World War II a couple of us were on leave from the AIF after three months in a training camp. Not exactly 'big bronzed diggers' — rather more like 18-year-old raw recruits, still wet behind the ears. Being a 'sophisticated' man-of-the-world (for the express benefit of my country-bumpkin mate) I suggested we go to swanky Romano's for the afternoon Supper-Dance. I was big-noting myself, of course, and the cost was only 'five bob' (50¢) anyway.

Romano's head waiter, who escorted us peremptorily to a table in an obscure corner, reminded me of a serious Groucho Marx — but to my bushwhacker mate he was Jim Russell's SCHMIDT DER SPY. Tears later I was to learn that he was Antonio Agostini — the bloke who was convicted of the famous 'Pyjama Girl' murder that baffled the police for years.

— Will Newton



THOSE MAGNIFICENT MEN (IN THEIR FLYING MACHINES) Ada Cutbush Collection

GEORGE DUSTING REMEMBERS —

MASCOT AERODROME was formed about 1920 by Nigel Love who was allowed the use of a paddock owned by the local abattoir where cattle were fattened for the slaughter. Nigel had a couple of old Avro 504K aircraft, left over from World War I, which he used for 'joy-rides' and charter trips.

Nigel and his friend Jim Broadbent started building Avros using Australian materials and the newly formed QANTAS became interested in these. But they were too underpowered for the hot flying conditions in Queensland — and so Nigel and Jim installed the more powerful 'Sunbeam Dyak' engine. I have an aerial photo, taken in 1920, showing the first Australian built Avro for QANTAS standing outside an old canvas hangar on Mascot aerodrome. It also shows the first QANTAS building in Sydney — an old crate used for an oil store.

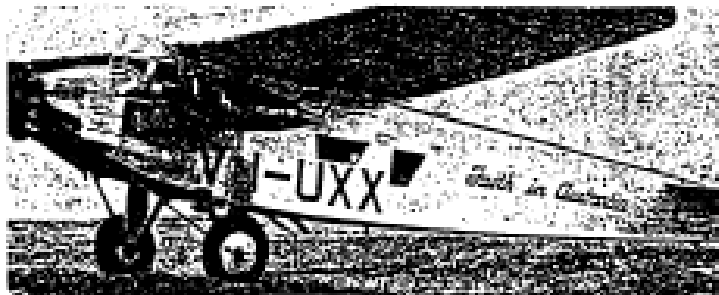
The aerodrome was taken over from Nigel around 1924 by the then Civil Aviation Department who built the first proper hangar which was known as the Government Hangar. This was occupied by the Australian Aero Club for many years — in fact, right through World War II.

My activities in aviation started early in 1929 as an apprentice with General Aircraft Co which was run by George Beohm. George had moved his small air-craft repair business from a garage in King Street, Mascot, into a small hangar he built on the northern boundary of the airfield proper. In this hangar we built the 'Moths' that were used to train the RAAF pilots — and they were much better than the English-built aircraft.

Adastra Airways was founded around 1929 by Captains Hammond and Follet as a flying school, and started the first South Coast air-mail to Bega using the Fox Moth. I spent a number of years at Adastra before going barnstorming out west. I had learnt to fly while I was a mechanic at Adastra and would take my leave, during 1929-30, to go barnstorming for ten shillings (\$1.00) a week plus my keep. (Gee, what luxury. -Ed)

I have many old pictures and lots of memories of those old days at Mascot. I also have an old film which Syd Wood (of Cinesound fame) and I reproduced from the old 35mm to the more modern 16mm — and this contains a wealth of info.

- GEORGE DUSTING is Honorary Secretary and Publicity Officer for THE EARLY BIRDS Association of Australia Inc - an organisation made up of lots of the veterans of those wonderful pioneering days of aviation.



On Monday, 19 August 1935, FAITH IN AUSTRALIA left Adelaide to inaugurate the Adelaide-Darwin-Adelaide airmail service. The pilots were John Chapman and Bruce Cowan — both members of THE EARLY BIRDS.

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Extract from letter to Ada Cutbush from Bruce Cowan --

- "Pic (photo below) taken about July 1930. The hangar with 'MASCOT' on the roof was Royal Aero Club of NSW (they started training in 1926) and the next one: Smithy and Ulm's ANA, where I was apprenticed, and later was NEW ENGLAND AIRWAYS, then AIRLINES OF AUSTRALIA where Doug and Bill Cutbush and I worked in the late 1930s. Between the two hangars is ANA Coach and on the corner is the Passenger Terminal.

Taxi way is made of railway sleepers. The aircraft 'Airliner' is about to take off for Melbourne. Only two other small hangars were on the 'drome at that time.

A second photo (not quite clear enough to reproduce here) has the description: "This pic taken a few minutes before Smithy (Sir Charles Kingsford Smith) and P G (later Sir Gordon) Taylor took off from Archerfield, Brisbane, in 'Lady Southern Cross' (Lockheed Altair - VH USB) on first ever flight from Australia to USA (21 October 1934). Smithy in front cockpit.



Smithy and Tommy Pethybridge were lost in this aircraft on 8 November 1935, during flight from United Kingdom to Australia. I am the only one still alive who ever flew in that aircraft — test flight at Mascot with Smithy early in 1934. Will forward more information soon."

— Bruce Cowan

- Doug Cutbush started with NEW ENGLAND AIRWAYS as an Air-frame Fitter, became an Aviation Engineer and later an Aircraft Inspector. Bill Cutbush, who had been a brake specialist in the motor vehicle industry, joined his brother in the aircraft industry around 1938 as a Maintenance Mechanic. Bill maintained passenger coaches (remember those long, silver coaches?) as well as aircraft. The Cutbush boys were involved in aviation through World War II. Bill was a charge-hand in building the Tiger Moths, used for training.

There was once a dramatic incident at Mascot — some of you may remember --when two KLM (now KLM) airliners were grounded because of defective braking systems. An expert in this field, Bill Cutbush was able to save the day and get the planes airworthy again — and thereby save KLM a hell of a lot of embarrassment, to put it mildly.

The aircraft industry — like most others — hold many of their most important meetings at the local pub. Most people wouldn't be aware that the well-known Tennyson Hotel at Mascot played a vital role in Australia's aircraft and aviation industry -- especially the Saloon Bar... Bottoms up'.



TO BE CONTINUED

GOOD QUEEN BESS — She may have been miserly with the purse-strings — but she was overly generous in the cot.

- Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex

(Or was it Errol Flynn?)

GEORGE HEAVENS LOOKS BACK...

RE-ENACTMENT OF THE LANDING OF CAPTAIN COOK AT KURNELL

(The S.C.A.M. - 24 November, 1951)

Councillor Monro reports that this film is nearing completion and will be the property of the Council. Mr McRorie, who is doing the work, spent all last Saturday with Mr Monro taking further snaps of the traffic coming into the Shire over the George's River bridge, and off the trains at Cronulla, as well as other interesting scenes, and the film will be an historical record, and can be used from time to time by the various Parents and Citizens' Associations. It is also proposed to add to it any important events which take place from time to time in the Shire. Mr Monro said that he proposed also to incorporate in the picture a close-up of some of the leading citizens in the district who have rendered charitable and public service, so that, in after years, they will still be remembered.

MIRANDA TALKIES

(The S.C.A.M. - 3 February, 1934)

Commencing this Saturday, 3rd February double feature talkie programmes will be presented in the Miranda School of Arts Hall every Saturday afternoon and night.

To ensure the highest standard of screen entertainment, the management have completed arrangements with Paramount Film Service whereby positively only the very finest of that vast organisation's productions will be screened.

The opening programme on Saturday clearly represents this policy, for by combining the hilarious Harold Lloyd comedy, "Feet First", with the stirring dramatic, "Scandal Street", featuring George Bancroft, Clive Brook and Kay Francis, excellent programme balance is attained. In soliciting local patronage, the management give every assurance that no effort will be spared to provide consistently high quality entertainment for all the family.

AID TO FIRE VICTIMS FILM NIGHT

(The S.C.A.M. - 1 December, 1951)

To aid the Shire Council Funds for victims of local fires, the Directors of the Jubilee Shrine will present, at their huge open air theatre, Bellongarra Road, Miranda, at 8 p.m. on Sunday, 16th December (opening day) a wonderful programme of suitable films.

This programme has been specially arranged by the N.S.W. Documentary and Educational Films Council, and will be projected by Mr George Heavens, well-known Sutherland business man.

ADMISSION WILL BE FREE. COLLECTION WILL BE MADE
FOR FIRE VICTIMS.

The theatre can be located behind the Methodist Old People's Homes in Bellingarra Road (off Box Road), Miranda (between Six Ways and Oyster Bill's Cabaret), on the Port Hacking Road.

Tell your friends.

Room for 10,000 people

BACK TO SUTHERLAND SHIRE MONTH
COUNCIL WILL CONTRIBUTE
(The S.C.A.M. - 25 August, 1951)

The Sutherland Shire Council has decided to subsidise all donations on a pound for pound basis up to a limit of £250, towards the expenses of the Jubilee celebrations. This decision means that the re-enactment of the landing of Captain Cook on Saturday, 27th October, will be on a scale befitting the historical significance of the event.

The President of the Jubilee Committee (C.O.J. Monro, M.L.A.), announced that Acting Rear-Admiral Showers would perform the dedication ceremony and that a suitable ship would be procured to represent the "Endeavour". The President also stated that the Kurnell Trust would fully co-operate in the ceremony, and the road from Cronulla to Kurnell would be placed in a trafficable condition.

ENTERTAINMENT OF PIONEERS

Women, aged 75 or over, who have resided in the Shire for 60 years or more, will be entertained at a mothers' luncheon at the Sutherland School of Arts on Thursday, 4th October, when the guest of honour will be Matron Shaw of the Crown Street Women's Hospital.

QUEENS NOMINATED

Two more girls have been sponsored in the Jubilee Queen Competition, Miss Margaret Graham will represent the Cronulla Chamber of Commerce and Miss June Harding is the Happiness Club nominee. Already Miss Grace Hutchinson and Miss Eileen Allen have been elected to represent the Shire Hospital and Ambulance. The Queen Crowning Ceremony will take place at Cronulla during December; many grand prizes have been donated for the winners.

FOOTNOTE: The Eileen Allen mentioned above is now Mrs George Heavens. -Ed.

FLOWER SHOW GREAT SUCCESS

(The S.C.A.M. - 6 October, 1951)

The Jubilee Flower Show staged by the Sutherland Horticultural Society was an outstanding success. A well-known member of the N.S.W. Horticultural Society (Mr Whiddon), who opened the show at the Sutherland School of Arts last Saturday,

30/9/51, said that the standard of exhibits equalled anything he "had seen in this State. The sponsors of the exhibition scooped the pool at the R.A.S. 1951 Easter Show and used their talent to stage a local flower show for the benefit of the Hospital and Ambulance during the Jubilee Month.

THE NICHOLS SAGA

Although I hadn't seen or heard of JOY NICHOLS for many years, it was indeed distressing to hear of her untimely demise. I knew Joy from her humble beginning - she was a funny, grubby little girl who liked to play in the mud with her brothers; we all shared the same muddy stretch of beach (on the Woronora).

No one would ever have thought that Joy would rise to become the famous Joy Nichols — on all the billboards around Sydney, eventually half the world; her name on everyone's lips — but it was the case. She was good, very good — and she will be missed.

Which brings to mind my earliest memories of the Nichols family. It was hot, a very hot Saturday afternoon; a man drove his truck to the end of the road and across our land. This was our domain, a fair sized hunk of absolute water frontage, a river frontage of 160 feet from the high water mark, back across the flat and half way up the hill for a distance of 1000 feet (305 metres) to the road. The road (then) came to an end at our side fence — it couldn't go any further. These days Prices Circle cuts across it and, whereas we had four allotments, created 12 lots — but we don't own it any longer anyway.

But back to the man with the truck; it was loaded with the most peculiar lot of building materials, including a huge ventilator with a top about three feet in diameter and about 12 feet high — like a sewer vent. This ventilator eventually protruded through the centre of the roof of his house when it was completed. The man, by the way, was Mr Bill Nichols --the type of man very sure of himself, good natured type and full of energy. Unhappily, his knowledge of building was nil — he was pretty hopeless.

Bill set up a camp between two trees, a large piece of canvas sheet, like a fly — this was his tent; it had no ends — must have been draughty sleeping. Dad gave him a hand to unload, but didn't stay long. Dad had been a carpenter all his life, but Bill knew more than him so Dad got on with his own work. By Sunday night a very red, sunburned Bill had erected four corner piers of his proposed house — he didn't have any Council plans, how could he? -- he didn't know what he was going to build. The piers were four 44 gallon drums and he put them in place then filled them with concrete. He had bags and bags of cement — and we showed him where to get sand.

Bill filled the drums with large rocks and poured in a sloppy cement mix until the drums were full. He levelled the floor joists with broken pieces of fibro. When he ran out of drums, he used 8'x 4' sheets of flat galvanised iron — an entirely new way of constructing house piers; he drove in four bush sapling poles, well into the ground, wrapped the galvanised iron around them, tied the lot with rope, then filled them as with the drums. Bill's piers would have held the Harbour Bridge. Go and have a look at them for yourself, they have got to be still there — they would be too heavy to move away.

Bill worked non-stop every weekend — telling us about his family and actress wife — he wanted to get the place finished before she saw it. he wanted to surprise her — and I'll bet she got a surprise too. To hide the ungainly piers, Bill nailed sheets of corrugated iron all around the house from the floor down, and then up to the verandah rail to keep the kids from falling off. It was a fair drop down to the ground. The good part of the Nichols' residence was proved when the flood came — the 44 gallon drums had determined

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the height of the floor — and brought it to about two feet (400mm) above the water level, whereas we had sixteen inches (400mm) of water all through our house — the Nichols' place was dry.

When the building was finished to Bill's satisfaction, the great day arrived for the official opening and dedication by Mrs Nichols. We all expected a fine buxom lady, bedecked in furs, big hat and all the trimmings arriving in a fancy car. But we were disappointed to perceive Mrs and Bill in the front of the truck, kids on the back with much furniture and junk — mostly junk. Mrs Nichols proved to be an ordinary woman, no world-beater — and very pregnant, Joy being the 'bun in the oven'. It was a hot day — the road from Sutherland to the river was a shocker — and they all had to walk up the hill on the bridge side, as the truck was so fully loaded. Her hair was dishevelled, she was red in the face and sweating profusely and the kids were tired. My mother gave them all cool drinks; Bill had a beer and the others drank our lemonade.

Dad helped Bill in with the junk; a little later they all decided to go for a swim. My mother said it was disgusting of Mrs Nichols to parade around in a bathing costume in her condition. I was about 13 or 14 at the time, and had never witnessed such a sight before. Bill strutted about, telling us about the improvements he intended to make and the boat he was soon to buy. Time rolled on and Joy was born.

The Nichols were a show family and, as the kids grew up, we had to endure concerts from Joy and George. George Nichols was a comedian — a real one; he didn't need to act, he was funny all the time. He was a great imitator of Harry Lauder, the Scottish entertainer of world acclaim. George was so good that Mrs Nichols took him to Scotland to audition for the great Harry. Lauder wasn't interested in child prodigies but conceded that the lad had prospects and made a point of saying that he would never be as good as himself. Quite true — George's name never equalled Harry Lauder's but, nonetheless, he was GOOD. Not as good as Joy, though.

Many a concert we attended — the audiences were the residents and campers of the river. The venue was the Heavens' front verandah as the stage, it being wide and long. As time went by, the 'great depression' came and ruined every-thing. I went off to New Zealand to work on the Wallaby (?). Then ; I think, Bill sold out.

Later, we heard of George Nichols, the famous comedian; and Joy she hit the top. I think they both finished up in America. Then we lost track — I think brothers Don and Cliff are still living in New South Wales. I don't know what happened to George, but I'll bet he still has people laughing. And although I hadn't heard of Joy for many years it saddens me greatly to hear of her leaving us forever.

-- George H Heavens

EDITOR'S NOTE --

I am not sure about Don Nichols (he was a bit of a 'loner') but Cliff and George are alive and well in Sydney. It was Cliff who phoned me with the sad news about Joy. George and his wife, Rosemary, have been making incredible progress with autistic children in recent times.



JOY NICHOLS AND 'SMITHY'...

KEN G HALL, the great Australian film-maker — now in his 92nd year and still bright as a button — was reminiscing about theatrical personalities he had worked with over the years. A listing of the actors/actresses alone would read like a 'Who's Who' of showbiz. I mentioned Joy Nichols' name and, quick as a flash he said, "Oh yes, Joy played 'Kay' for me in SMITHY."

— Will Newton

A GERMAN IN NAPOLEON'S ARMY - PART II
WAR DIARY (1807-1814) OF JOHANN ADAM IHRIG

Translated and edited by Ian Swords

There we were relieved by the 3rd Army Corps so that we could march to Madrid; 6 hours out of Madrid 2 men from each regiment were shot for stealing from churches, the next day we marched to Madrid where we arrived on 18th; there 110,000 men passed the Emperor in revue, then on 22nd December we went towards the English, over the Montanas-de-Leon, where such a terrible wind blew that stones like hazel nuts flew through the air, the wind went straight into our faces, it was so cold that half the army remained behind, and many people lost their lives; the English fell back to Galicia, and on the night of year 1808 and 1809 between Benavente and Astorga we forded a stream up to our arm-pits, where so many were soaked and chilled through. I held onto the tail of a hussar horse and luckily made it, from there we went to Villafranca, Doncos, to Orense, and Santiago-de-Compostela, where we had to fight often. The 6th Army Corps remained in Galicia, and the 2nd went to Portugal; we arrived in Santiago-de-Compostela at the end of January, 1809, and were there until the end of July, without having 3 days rest, for we were always fighting the farmers, where in the end we destroyed everything, and had to go back to Neukastillian. Then the English and the Spaniards attacked us in Santiago-de-Compostela, from where we had to withdraw to as far as Astorga after a murderous battle, in the retreat everything was burnt, where the Emperor left us for the winter in order to hurry to Austria, as we came to Luko from Santiago-de-Compostela in Galicia. There the Second Corps of General Soult arrived from Portugal without rifles or cannons, and we had to turn around for retreat, so that we finally we were unable to find any provisions, so we had to escape to Salamanca where we had several days rest. At the beginning of August we set out from there past Banos, Plasencia for Talavera and Robiska, where the 2nd Corps beat the English, then when the 6th Corps arrived the battle was over, but unfortunately provisions were no more to be found. There we mixed together and ate unripe grapes and honey, and very many became ill.

It is impossible to write down everything we endured before we returned to Salamanca, where we remained until 16th October, 1809. Then our whole army corps set out from Salamanca in the direction of the Spanish army, where we were commanded by General Marchand, and were approximately 15,000 men strong.

On 18th October commanded by the Duc de la Parc we met up with the Spanish army near Tamames, we attacked them but were totally defeated, and had to leave our wounded on the battlefield. We escaped to Salamanca, Zamoro, Toro, as far as Valladolid. In Toro I met up with Johann Schmidt. The Spaniards had burned our dead and, and who wouldn't shudder at the thought, our wounded alive. Near Valladolid we who were left of the 6th Army Corps camped until 22nd

November, then General Loison and General Kellermann came to our aid, where the latter took over command and we advanced, in three days we made 40 hours all the way to near Alba, where we caught up with the Spaniards, where on 28th November a terrible slaughter began, an encircled force of 10,000 Spaniards was chopped to pieces all at one time, no quarter was given, our general called out to us to take revenge for your comrades who they burned at Tamames, the whole mountain at Alba was covered in dead Spaniards.

The book would be too thin, if I wanted to write everything, so I want to record only that which is most noteworthy.

After the battle near Alba we were in Salamanca until 5th February, where we went from Ledesma to Ciudad Roderico, in order to besiege the fort, where on 16th June we entered the town after a long siege and 18 days bombardment, in the months of March and April it rained continuously, we were not able to be supplied with any provisions on account of the terrible state of the roads, there we had to suffer much hunger, a ration of army bread of 3 pounds cost 5 to 6 francs. On 1st July, 1810 the three army corps under the command of Prince Massenot went to Portugal, these were the 2nd, 6th and 8th Corps of approximately 80,000 men, arrived in front of the Almeida Fort on 5th July, and on 25th July one of our cannon shots caused its powder

magazine and the town to be blown into the air, where 10,000 people lost their lives, on 2nd September, 1810 we went from Almeida further into Portugal, up to the Pic Bussaco 4 hours from the town of Coimbra, where there was a very bloody battle where we lost 10,000 men, our company was 125 men before the battle, and when the battle was over 18 men survived, neither side had won, the English and Portuguese withdrew to Lisbon, at this battle the noteworthy generals were Masena, Neu, beloved by his soldiers, Suly, Junot and, on the English side, Wellington, the English lost few. We took after them, through Coimbra, Pombal, Leira as far as Villafranca, 3 hours from Lisbon, where on one side was the River Tajo and on the other a large mountain, where the English and Portuguese were terribly well entrenched, where it was impossible for us to advance any further.

There in Portugal we received no supplies at all, so each had to fend for himself in order to live. So the army distributed itself through all the provinces on the right bank of the Tajo, and fed itself as best it could, where admittedly many atrocities took place. Thus we were in Santaren, Thomar, Leira and in the surrounding areas until 5th February, 1811. Then we had to withdraw quickly, because 30,000 Englishmen had cut us off from all communication, they were 15 hours behind us, the going was good until Pombal, but from there starting on 15th February we had to fight every day, for twenty-three days the 6th Corps brought up the rear, without bread, we often had to eat half raw mutton. On 23rd April we arrived at a point past Guarda in Spain near Ciudad Rodrigo, where we rested until 3rd May; then we advanced again as far as Almeida, where we joined battled on 5th, 6th and 7th May, 1811, but both sides held to the battlefield. There in 5 days we received only 16 pieces of zwieback (similar to slices of dried toast), there we had to eat our first horse-meat; on 8th May our army withdrew back to Salamanca, Marshall Marmont commanded at this battle, when he came to us our misery began.

On 25th May we went from Salamanca to Badajoz, there we were first of all issued with zwieback for 22 days and meat for 6 days, in a terrible heat, for me it was impossible to endure it all, I threw everything away except rations for 4 days, one of my comrades shot himself because he could not bear it all, the heat was so great, and no water was to be had, so that in one day in the Dahlmerian Mountains 12 men from our regiment died of thirst.

For 22 days we were on the march to Badajoz, where we rested for several days, then we were back to Caceres, and then to Trujillo; where we stayed for 2 months and more than half our division died there, they all had heavy bruising over the shoulder and chest because of the heavy loads. From Trujillo we went to Talavera de la Reina, to Toledo, where we stayed over winter, suffering badly from hunger. On 6th February 150 of us were accompanying the war commissioner from Toledo in collecting contributions from the villages, when in the village of Sonseca we were raided by 1300 insurgents; we lost our cash box with 25,000 francs and 64 of our men; 86 men got out of it; when they had the money they left us alone, for they also had lost 120 men. At last my lucky hour had struck, that I should be delivered out of bandit country.

On 8th March, 1812 a cadre was formed for France, and I was made a corporal, thus we marched from Talavera and happily arrived in Bayonne on 2nd April, 1812, where on return we received our back-pay, and had some rest days. We arrived at our depot in Pfalzburg on 29th May, where we stayed until 7th June, from there I received leave, and on 12th June happily arrived in Kaulbach again after five years.

O, he who has not been away so far and for so long from his fatherland can have no idea of what one feels, when after a five-year absence one again treads the ground, where one spent his childhood years. I approached from Kollweiler; and when I stepped on the Kaulbach boundary line I had to cry, I went on through the Moerschwis (a field camp in Kaulbach), when I came to the well where I often drank in my youth, I sat down and thanked God that He had protected me so far away, and drank from it. O, how good that water was! No Spanish or Portuguese wine was so good.

But enough of that, only he can feel that, who has experienced it himself.

So I arrived in Kaulbach on 12th June, 1812. But how everything had changed there since the time I left; small children who I knew before were now big, nothing was any longer like it was

in my childhood years, for me there was no joy, my dear mother was no more; when I looked about I thought I would see her, but in vain, she was with the blessed, for me she was dead.

Only he can feel this, who has left his fatherland and had a dear mother alive, and then returned again and found her no more.

Rest softly, dear mother! Your youngest son cries tears of gratitude here today in his forty-eighth year, and perhaps soon comes to you. - So let's get on with things.

(This diary was written in 1834 as a transcription of an earlier version, which the author destroyed.)



MARSHAL NEY MEETS THE EMPEROR

I had only 3 days leave, and should have been back in Mainz by 16th June, I stayed in Kaulbach only up to 14th, as it no longer meant anything to me, and then went to Otterberg, where a second mother awaited me, namely my now dear wife, 0 to me it was much better there than in Kaulbach. But unfortunately I could not stay there long. For I should have been in Mainz by 16th June, but I did not leave Otterberg until 16th June, 0 how hard when two lovers, who have not seen each other for 5 years, and can no longer stay together. But duty called me. So I took leave of my dear Lisbeth and my child, I thought perhaps for eternity. But God and hope allowed me to overcome all, and I arrived in Mainz on 18th June; but how afraid I was when I heard my Battalion had already left the day before for Koblenz, I should have remained in Mainz; I did not want that, so at my own cost I had to catch up with the Battalion, so I went by land with a French driver for 4 francs, in Koblenz I embarked with transport recruits for Cologne, from there I went down the Rhine with a customs officer and his wife as far as Niederwessel in Holland. When I arrived there my battalion had just left, I hurried after it and in three hours I was again with my comrades, who were making a stop in a small town. My comrades were all happy when they saw me. It was warm, we drank beer there, and with the first glass I was overcome with a chill, and in half an hour I had a high fever, which remained with me for 3 months and lasted 4 hours every day. I warn all who read this to be careful of beer if it is very warm. We marched to Magdeburg, where we arrived at the end of July.

There I had fever every day for 4 hours, and needless to say, could eat nothing, so in some 30 days I was so weak, that I could no longer walk on my own, for about 20 days on the march I was driven, where often 12 to fifteen men sat on a wagon, and most of the time we had rainy weather, so each was able to think to himself what it is like to have a fever. When we arrived near Magdeburg it rained terribly, so the ambulance wagons were left in front of the fort; when we entered the great square the merciless farmers tore us from their wagons and we could go no further, but had to stay over, and I was one of those who had to remain in the square until our Battalion arrived, soaked to the skin, exposed to the elements and the cold fever, there each could think, and if one who was sick there still retained his common sense, who was not yet ready to die.

When our Battalion arrived, my comrades took me on two shotguns and carried me into the hospital, where I had good rest and care. I had to remain in hospital until 15th September, 1812 where thank goodness I completely got rid of the fever and was completely restored to health.

In Magdeburg we still had it fairly good, we received our due provisions and pay, and everything was low-priced. Also nothing special happened, until one morning we were standing in a line in the street in front of our barracks, when a powder magazine in the rampart blew up and the whole town was in terror. For all the chimneys and windows in the houses near the rampart were destroyed, and eight gunners lost their lives. We remained in Magdeburg until 9th December, 1812. It was terribly cold, but still little snow. On 7th December we received an order, that on the 9th we should leave for the Grand Army, and each should supply himself with fur. This opened our eyes, each would like to buy himself some fur, but fur would therefore become very expensive. A pair of fox-fur gloves cost 6 to eight Prussian taler, a lambskin for around the head 4 to 5 taler, everything that served to make you warm was very expensive.

So on 9th December, 1812 we left Magdeburg and good fortune left us. Already on the first day snow fell, so that we had to wade in snow up to our stomachs. A terribly cold wind blew straight into our faces, so that no trace was left open, we arrived at 11 o'clock at night in Burg, where half the men were missing, on 10th went to Genthin, 12th to Nauen, 15th through Spandau to Berlin, on this day we had to march for 12 hours in a terrible cold of 26 degrees; in Spandau 3 hours from Berlin we all cut off our moustaches, because the icicles on them froze us. It was soon no longer bearable. On 13th December, when we arrived in Berlin, 12 men from our Battalion were missing, who that day had frozen; we remained in Berlin until 23rd December, without us having to have a roll-call, because practically nobody could stay on the street, on 22nd the cold broke, then on 23rd we had to leave for Danzig, past Stettin through Pomerania to Koeslin, where we arrived on 1st January, 1813 in a terrible wind and rain. Three days after we arrived in our beloved Danzig. From Stettin on every day we met 30 to 100 men, some without weapons. Wrapped in furs and rags.

When we asked if we would soon be with the Grand Army, they gave us no answer or merely said just keep walking, you will find it. Unfortunately we found no more, on 2nd January, 1813 again snow fell knee-high and again it became terribly cold, on 3rd January we arrived in Danzig, at midday on 4th it struck General Marsch that we had to cross the Weichsel, we were marching up to the sea scarcely three hours from Danzig, when we saw the first Cossacks, on the night of 4th to the 5th we had to camp on the ice and snow half a man high, where there were still several villages, but in 2 hours time they had disappeared, for we broke them up to provide fire and shelter from the cold; on the morning of 5th the Russians arrived and attacked us. But we put them to flight, perhaps they thought they were dealing with refugees. That was their mistake. We drove them back for several hours, but to the right we heard very loud cannons, at once we received an order to withdraw to Danzig, where we arrived on the night of 5th at 10 o'clock, and on the morning of the 6th we were surrounded by Russians and Prussians.

Our Battalion, well noted of the 6th Light Infantry Regiment, came to the Weichselmuende Fortress, where we had to do a month's troublesome service, at the end of February we came to Danzig, where I was given accommodation in the house of Mr. Jusannobis near Breiten Strasse on the second embankment, where I remained accommodated until the month of July, after this I was accommodated with a Jew by the name of Wolf behind the second embankment, the months of Feb. and March were terrible for us, every night General Marsch sounded the alarm so that we could not get undressed at all, day and night there was no rest. Every day sorties were made and we had to fight hard in order to get provisions to the Fortress. In February, 1813 we were 55,000 men in the town, but barely 15,000 fit enough for duty, for the terrible nerve fever, which the army had brought from Russia, raged terribly in Danzig. In the months of February and March every day ten to fifteen wagons of dead were taken from the town like pieces of cord wood.

TO BE CONTINUED

BREWING IN NEW SOUTH WALES - PART IV

(Stewart Roberts Collection)

"Agreement between Officers and Others

Sydney, New South Wales

"We, the undersigned, and each and every one of us, to hereby covenant and agree with each other that on the arrival of any ships in any of the ports within the limits of this Government having goods, wares or merchandise on board for sale, two officers be chosen and nominated from amongst ourselves who shall, on the part of the whole, be authorised and empowered to treat with the captain, commander or master thereof for the purchase of such goods, wares and merchandise, signifying to such captain, commander or master by whom they are employed.

"And we severally and respectively bind ourselves to the performance of whatever agreement may be entered into by such officers so chosen and nominated as aforesaid in our names; and we further agree and engage that we will not directly or indirectly, either by ourselves or by any persons to be employed by us, attempt to make any purchase of such goods, wares and merchandises, contrary to the tenor of this agreement, or that shall in anywise be deemed (thereof) to interfere with any bargain that may be pending between those delegated and employed by us as aforesaid and the vendors of such wares and merchandises.

"And further, that at no time after it shall be declared to us by our agents that no bargain has been or can be made by them on our account will we purchase, individually or otherwise, any goods, wares and merchandises which they may have declined to

buy, or will be connive at or suffer them to be purchased for ourselves, our families or on our account, in any manner whatsoever, even tho' such goods, wares or merchandises, or any part of them, should be landed in any part of the settlement, and be reported or declared to be the property of an inhabitant, and exposed for sale, binding ourselves each to the other in the penalty of one thousand pounds, to be forfeited, recovered and paid by those presents from whomsoever shall be proved to the satisfaction of the majority of the undersigned, to have departed in any one instance from the tenor of this agreement.

"And we further bind ourselves and engage for ever after-wards to avoid the company of any individual, and to consider him an infamous character, who shall be convicted of a breach of these articles.

"And we moreover engage and bind ourselves each to the other that no person who shall sign and subscribe to this instrument shall be suffered to withdraw his name therefrom until after the expiration of twelve months from the day of the date hereof, and that if any dispute shall arise amongst any of the parties hereto a meeting shall be assembled, the majority of which shall decide upon the matter in question.

"As witness our hands, this 18th day of June, 1798."

Signed by some of the principal inhabitants and the whole of the military officers.

As a specimen of an Agreement in Restraint of Trade, this comprehensive document would take some beating.

This organised combination broke Hunter, and even King, despite his dominating personality and assumption of Royal authority, did not have things all his own way. The fruits of illicit spirit tradings, an easy and quick method of achieving a gentlemanly independence, were too sweet to be given up without a struggle, and no method was too blatant or too subtle for its beneficiaries to use.

Governor King, however, handled the situation with a combination of tact, firmness and tenacity of purpose which achieved his ends without leading him into an open break with those who were ranged against him. There are letters extant between King on the one hand and Surgeon Balmain and Mr D'Arcy Wentworth on the other - both of whom held



a large store of spirits at the time King's letter to Paterson was written - that are as amusing in their protestations of innocence and attempted extortion on the part of the two traders as they are illustrative of King's ability for the part he had been selected to fill.

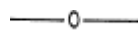
The foregoing survey of the liquor problem which confronted the early governors of the Colony has been necessary in order to explain the conditions under which the brewing industry was introduced and the official encouragement and private opposition which were features of its early history.

It will, no doubt, have been apparent, that despite the very plain and consistent opposition of both the Home Government and early Governors to the widespread distribution of spirits into the new settlement, not once has beer been mentioned as coming within the category of objectionable liquors. Indeed, this was not something at all likely to occur. At that time, malt liquors, then consumed by the greater part of the community of Great Britain, were to the middle and labouring classes an almost indispensable commodity. Beer was never banned by the Home Authorities. On the contrary, the adoption of Beer as a means of combating the devastating and increasing consumption of spirits was first suggested by the British Government as early as 1792, when Secretary Dundas, writing to Governor Phillip on January 10 said:-

"When the cultivation of the settlement is somewhat further advanced the means of supplying the deficiency in the rations with beer will, I have no doubt, be one of the objects of your consideration."

A happy thought, but one that circumstances and the Monopolists managed to keep from coming to fruition for some little time.

TO BE CONTINUED



- The harpsichord sounds like skeletons copulating on a tin roof - Sir Thomas Beecham

The Men Who Sailed with Tasman (PART II)

Haalbos, Henrik (fl 1642-1643) Barber-surgeon. Haalbos origins are unknown. He accompanied Abel Tasman as a crew-member of the 120-ton Heemskerck and his narrative of the voyage was incorporated into Arnoldus Montanus' geographical work *De nieuwe en onbekende wereld*, published in Amsterdam in 1671. A poor abbreviated translation, edited by J. Ogilby, appeared in London the same year under the title *Amer. i*. Haalbos' journal, as cited by Montanus, was the first published account of Tasman's voyage. Although his original manuscript has disappeared, his description remains one of only three known accounts of the expedition of 1642, besides Tasman's journal (of which there are two known copies) and the anonymous "Sailor's Journal". In his account, Haalbos described himself as the "wound-healer". It would seem he was also the ship's barber, because Tasman mentions the "upper- and under-barber" on September 12, 1642, a week after their arrival at Mauritius, treating Ioris Claesen van Bahaijs who was severely injured while cutting a log ashore. Haalbos recorded little of his sojourn in Mauritius other than the presence of the Amsterdam ship den Swarten Arend providing Fort Frederik Hendrik with victuals and loading ebony. He (or perhaps Montanus in editing his journal) incorrectly located the fort on the north-west harbour i.e. present day Port Louis. Haalbos departed Mauritius on the Heemskerck on October 8, 1642. The latter-part of his account contains colourful ethnographic descriptions of the Polynesian and Melanesian peoples encountered during the expedition's discoveries of New Zealand, Fiji and Tonga, together with amusing references to the amorous advances he personally experienced. Nothing is known of his life after June 1643.

Edward Duyker

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De nieuwe en onbekende weereld-- Of Beschryving van America en 't Zuld land

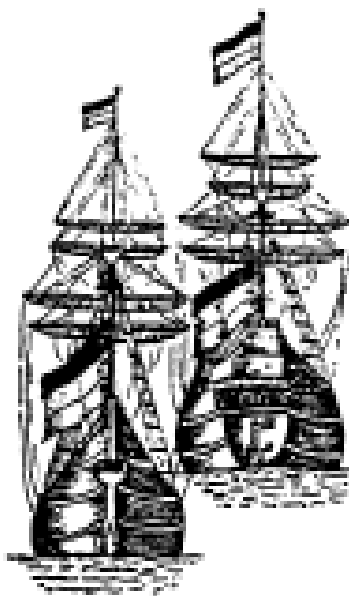
Arnoldus Montanus (citing Henrik Haelbos)

Translated by Herman Duyker

On the eighth of the month of the wine¹ Tasman. changing course towards the Southland. was overtaken by freezing storms: he discovered on the twenty-fifth of the slaughter month a barren coast against which the sea crashed violently. He followed the coastline and found a suitable inlet, but because of the bad weather had to go seaward again. He approached the coast and found thick trees which were hollow inside, around which lay mussel-shells. From the forest he heard a shrill sound from singing people. He took fright and went back on board, and saw thick smoke between the trees. Returning on another day he tied an Orange flag² on a pole on which the mark of the East-India company had been carved. He called the inlet Frederick Henrik, and the whole coast Antonius van Diemen and set forth in an easterly direction...

¹ Andrew Sharp translates this as October. He also points out that the whole journal is a month behind Tasman's.

² The flag of the House of Orange.



TO BE CONTINUED ...

FIFTY YEARS RECOLLECTIONS

Andrew Hanley

The following recollections have been recorded with mention only made of some of them in the hope that other residents may be able to write complete stories and/or answer the questions posed.

In respect of fifty years in which I resided in Sutherland Shire I recall:-

It was common for backyards to have large wells dug there with handpumps straddling them, for water supply; most of these were about ten feet (three metres) and ten feet diameter, and were the cause of occasional drownings.

Passengers often had to disembark from steam-trams going up the hill east of Miranda, in the Kingsway, where the tramline was situated, and were required to walk to the top where they would re-board them.

We had to carry water from the old pit in the Sutherland Tile Works located on the corner of Acacia Road and Princes Highway; Bill Semler also carted water to our place on his horse and dray.

At low tide in Gunnamatta Bay small aircraft used to land for joy flights; we also collected shellgrit for our fowls there. I wonder what the environmentalists would say these days. There was a very high diving tower in the corner of the cyclone-meshed swimming pool, which would be crowded with platform divers queuing for the thrill of plunging into the beautiful blue waters of Gunnamatta Bay.

As children, we stood in our pyjamas in Auburn Street and watched the biggest bonfire Sutherland ever saw - when the large Tile Works caught fire and burned to the ground.

Boxing contests were held regularly in Boyles Hall, which was situated in Boyle Street. I think catholic priest, Father Lloyd, promoted them. One boxer's name which comes to mind is Rattenbury.

Wrestling contests were held in the School of Arts; one contestant being Jumping Joe Savoldi.

The magnificent voice of famed Russian baritone, Senor Tchaicosticov (sp) rang out loud and clear and filled the Sutherland Picture Theatre, especially when he sang the Volga Boatman and held the final note for what seemed an eternity.

The Boyle Family from Boyles Hotel sponsored the annual picnics for the children of the Sutherland Convent School, providing ice cream, prizes for footraces and the double-decker buses for the necessary transport from Sutherland to Cronulla.

Keith Macnamara, one of my classmates, was drowned in the crowded Cronulla rock pool. He was the son of the local police-man and was only nine years old.

Children would ask for and receive one pennyworth of broken

biscuits from grocer shops; they would also ask for "any specs?" from fruit shops and receive a piece of fruit, perfectly good but slightly marked.

There was a soup kitchen located on or near where the Sutherland Commonwealth Bank now stands, probably in Lobbs Hall.

Bread and dripping was a common meal for many disadvantaged families in the Sutherland area. I well remember them.

There was a rifle range situated off the "mad mile" approximately where the cycle track or football field now is. Was it a military one?

Nurse Lobb, a midwife, was famous for her delivery of many babies in the Shire. Was she related to the Lobbs of Lobbs Hall?

We lived in Acacia Road just north of Clio Street and opposite us was Gilmores' large fruit orchard, which stretched from Waratah Street to the Highway and from Acacia Road to Kenneth Avenue. Flocks of flying foxes, which loved to eat the fruit were attacked at night by continuous shotgun fire.

We found a pair of leg irons in our garden which had once been used by convicts. We hung them in a shed for years with-out realizing the value of them.

Where the present Sutherland Oval now stands were two separate fields. On the eastern side was a football field with a fairly steep incline down the northern end of it. Spectators used to race along the sideline following the play, and I can still hear my father's coins jingling in his pocket as he joined the spectators' rush, especially when my brother, Frank, was playing. The ground was known as the "The Rec" and some barrackers unkindly called the Sutherland Team "The gravediggers".

The other field on the western side was a circular cricket ground which had little grass on it but a large number of pebbles.

Schoolboys were able to exchange Boys' Magazines at one penny each, I think, at George Heavens' Store. The most popular were "Triumph" and "Champion" magazines.

One extremely hot summer, before the advent of the present bushfire brigades, when Sutherland Police were out fighting bushfire, two gangs fought a pitched battle with fists outside Stewarts Hotel, resulting in a number of unconscious men lying on the ground. Such loutish and uncivilized behaviour proceeded, though was not excused by, uncivilized drinking hours prevailing in those days.

The annual Catholic Ball was held in the Sutherland Picture Theatre when the owner removed seats from the lower level for dancing, and someone else erected tables on the elevated slopes, for what was an Event of the Year.

Just south of Sutherland Railway Station there was a branch railway line which ran in a semi-circle westwards, right into the heart of Woronora Cemetery where a Railway Station was located, trains coming from the Mortuary at Redfern.

There was a farrier/blacksmith operating in a laneway just off the Princes Highway at Sutherland, either in a laneway near where the present State Bank is or a laneway near the Commonwealth Bank. This reminds me of the blacksmith who said to his apprentice,

"I'm going to take this horseshoe out of the fire and when I nod my head I want you to hit it as hard as you can with this hammer".

The apprentice is now the blacksmith!

The local dentist was a man named Swan who removed one of my teeth while I was on the kitchen table at home, after he himself had given me a full anaesthetic (chloroform) with my poor old mum acting as nurse - a terrifying experience for her. His surgery was on the corner of Eton and Flora Streets in Sutherland.

Garrawarra Hospital was a T.B. Sanatorium, where some of the patients had been for more than a decade and where many of them had been abandoned by their supposed loved ones.

There were two musicians named Hayhow, who also had a shop in Sutherland which would be called a delicatessen these days. They played at local functions.

With other boys I used to catch goldfish in the Tile Works pit at Sutherland.

There was a swimming hole in a creek at the north end of Glencoe Street which has now been filled in but which was very popular with children, big and small. It was large enough to dive into. We also caught crayfish nearby.

The foreshore of the Woronora River on the Menai side and south of the bridge would be crowded with picnickers in summer who would come from far and wide to spend the day there. We used to walk from Acacia Road, spend the day there, then climb the steep hill back to Sutherland at the end of the day. My father used to swim four or five double laps of the River, each time with a different child on his back with arms firmly locked around his neck. There was also a large boatshed beside the bridge on the eastern side of the River from which people would hire rowboats. The River would be packed with swimmers and rowboats.

Cocky Bennett, a cockatoo from the old "Seabreeze Hotel", was so old that he had lost all his feathers. He used to sit up on the pub counter and say, "If I had another feather, I'd fly".

For many years there was neither place nor railway station at Jannali. After the train left Como, the next stop would be Sutherland. Then painted signs - WANTED RAILWAY STATION HERE - began to appear on the large rocks beside the line until eventually the station was constructed and the shopping centre commenced to develop; this is why there is no early history of Jannali as such.

There is a dairy in Belmont Street where the Catholic Church now stands and cattle used to graze there between Flora Street and President Avenue.

Almost fifty years ago five young motor cyclists were killed in unusual accidents. In the first, two heavy motor cycles, each with a pillion passenger, were racing side by side at greatly excessive speed along Princes Highway, Sylvania when they touched and their pedals locked the cycles together. They then failed to take a bend in the road and became airborne when going up the camber of the road. They literally flew through the air over a fence and crashed into two trees of an orchard, when all four persons were killed instantly. In the other accident, a young motor cyclist riding along Princes Highway, Sutherland was struck by a heavy speedboat and trailer which had broken away from the vehicle which had been towing it, killing the innocent rider instantly.

EXCURSION REPORT

Although the number was smaller than is usual when we visited our neighbours, Hurstville Society in July, it was a most informative day and the places we saw proved how much history there is in that City. Again thanks to Hazel Blair, Joan Hatton and the other members who assisted make our day so pleasant.

On Saturday September 19, 1992 our Excursion will be to the Gerringong Area; the Hon. Secretary of that Society has been most helpful and the members are looking forward to our visit. Although we have visited most of the Illawarra District, as a Society we have not been to Gerringong!!

The weather should be much warmer in September, so we are leaving Cronulla at 8 a.m., Sutherland 8.30 a.m. It is our intention to have a comfort stop and "Cuppa" at Kiama, hoping to arrive in Gerringong about 10.45 a.m. Please take your Thermos and Food, as is usual.

Members \$16.00, Visitors \$19.00 which includes Coach and any entrance fees, etc.

Bookings for this outing will be taken by Mrs. Joyce Barrett up to the August Meeting -- 45 Judd Street, Cronulla, 523-5748 --and we do thank Joyce very much indeed for carrying on in this position once again, because of the emergency.

After August Meeting Mrs. Betty McGrath will be booking officer; her address is 141 Loftus Ave., Loftus, and the 'phone number is 521-2227; and we thank Betty for agreeing to do this work for us.

It has become necessary to change the date of the November Trip; it will now be on Saturday, November 28, 1992, so will you please change this date in your diary. We cannot announce the venue at this time, but we hope to make it a worthwhile tour, being day-light saving and long daylight hours. But, not as long as Stroud, last year!

I am also available regarding tours, if you have any questions, on 523-5801. Should I not be at home, there is an answering machine with my telephone, so please leave your name, and message if you wish, and I shall call you back.


EXCURSION OFFICER.



MAGNA CARTA (The Great Charter) a fundamental constitution which guarantees the rights and privileges of Englishmen (and women, do you suppose?). My copy of the Magna Carta is NOT the one that King John autographed (just in case you were wondering) — it was taken from the Lincoln Cathedral copy that was brought to Oz for WORLD EXPO 88. The bun-fight over how much money they lost on the Magna Carta project is still going on four years later. Of the twenty-four original documents only four have survived, but I suppose that's not too bad for eight hundred years.

There had been earlier Charters -- Edward the Confessor's, William of Normandy's — but the Charter of Henry I was important because it served as a basis for the MAGNA CARTA wrung from the pusillanimous King John on 15 June 1215. John wasn't at all happy about this — in fact, he thought those feudal barons were a bunch of low-down, conniving bastards. (I have that from an impeccable source — our milkman.)

I spent ten minutes trying to read my copy before realising it was in Latin. But the translation into (basic) English isn't much better -- it reads like a load of legalistic gobbledegook — you know, "...whereas the aforesaid..." that kind of stuff.

The most detested of monarchs, King John, surnamed as 'Lackland' — who ruled England from 1199 till his death in 1216 — was notable only because of the Magna Carta, the Charter of Liberties. The youngest of the four sons of one of England's greatest kings, Henry II --older brothers were Geoffrey, Henry and Richard ("the Lion-hearted") --John was the favourite, although it's hard to imagine why. He was such an obnoxious character I wonder if even his mother really loved him.

John sure as hell believed in "the divine right of kings" — and then some. One of the first kings to get into trouble as an absolute monarch, he ruled England so tyrannically and cruelly that he was soon hated by everyone. And it was John himself who had driven the barons to their rebellion — hence the MAGNA CARTA. He had taxed them to the hilt and violated many of their traditional rights. He had starved to death the wife and son of one baron. He had hanged 28 young Welsh princes who had been given as hostages by their fathers. He had murdered his young nephew Arthur (Duke of Brittany) in order to inherit the boy's right to certain lands in France. He was strongly suspected of having poisoned the daughter of the powerful Robert FitzWalter after the fair lady had refused his lecherous advances. Just think, if he had done all of this in Oz today he'd probably cop two-years week-end detention with a non-parole period of three months.

Apart from the above mentioned, treachery was also high on John's everyday agenda -- he conspired against his brother, Richard, in his attempt to claim

cont'd

the throne of England. And it was the treachery against his father, in seeking an alliance with Phillip of France, that really broke the old King's sad heart. He quarrelled with the Pope and that certainly didn't help him. To top it all off, he managed to lose just about all of England's territory held in France — Normandy, Aquitaine, Anjou, the lot — in record time. And this, at a period when there was more English-owned land in France than in Britain.

Things came to a head on 'Trinity Monday' in 1215 when King John met his barons on the little isle of Runnymede in the Thames and whacked his Royal Seal on the MAGNA CARTA. It set out plainly the rights of Englishmen -- but it did not apply to serfs and villeins, only 'freedmen' — and is regarded as the very basis of the Englishman's right to freedom. It was Robert FitzWalter who had nominated the time and place for the great event — Runnymede (The Running Mead) also known as the Council Meadow. It was NOT chosen because it was convenient for the King at Windsor, but because of its central location. Like our Sydney Showground, it was a popular venue for, amongst other things, conventions and sporting fixtures.



It was a colourful occasion (that lasted for several days) with knights in armour, mitred bishops, holy abbots, soldiers and boat-loads of people from far and wide — all come to witness the hated King sign away his despotic authority.

John was fully aware that he had 'done his dash' — and he wasn't happy about it, but he didn't show his true feelings at the time. Right throughout the proceedings the wily king maintained a polite manner, chatting freely with the barons and seemingly quite cheerful.

But, back at Windsor — after everyone had left the scene — he really went off his rocker. He ranted and roared like a madman — his retainers thought he had been possessed by evil spirits. After he had calmed down, John tried to renege on the agreement and even attempted to get the Pope to intervene on his behalf — but no go.

Right until his death the following year, John never let up with his plotting and scheming --but that's a story in itself. He died following a painful illness, from contemporary accounts, and I can't help but wonder if he hadn't been helped on his way — he sure as hell didn't have many friends.

Here was that Charter sealed, wherein the Crown
All marks of arbitrary power laid down;
Tyrant and slave, those names of hate and fear,
The happier style of king and subject bear;
Happy when both to the same centre move,
When kings give liberty and subjects love.

TAKE NOTE, all ye good folk and true --

The copy of the Magna Carta inside the back cover has been abbreviated (I cut a bit out of the middle) to fit our page. But don't worry, you probably can't read it anyway — and besides, I'm damn sure King John would have been more than delighted with the omissions.

— Will Newton

• Opinions expressed in this publication — AND the Magna Carta — are not necessarily those of the Sutherland Shire Historical Society Inc.

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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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MAGNA CARTA OF KING JOHN, AD 1215

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- One day, when I pluck up courage, I'm going to present my wife with a copy of the Magna Carta and demand a better deal for downtrodden husbands — and then run like hell.

- Ed.

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