

SUTHERLAND SHIRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC QUARTERLY BULLETIN

Design by (the late) Fred Widgeley



VOL. 2 No. 27

AUGUST 1999

PRICE: \$1.00



*THE TURNING OF THE FIRST SOD
CAPTAIN COOK DRIVE, 28 FEBRUARY, 1953, BY THE
NSW PREMIER, JJ CAHILL (STANDING)
ALSO PRESENT WERE FROM LEFT, STATE MP, MR T. DALTON
FEDERAL MP, MR EG WHITLAM AND FAR RIGHT (FRONT),
FORMER SHIRE PRESIDENTS, SEYMOUR SHAW AND JOE MUNRO.*

*SUBSIDISED BY THE OIL REFINERY, THE ROAD WAS CONSTRUCTED
BY SUTHERLAND SHIRE COUNCIL AND COMPLETED IN MID 1954.*

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF AUSTRALIA CARD No. & ISSN 0536 - 0261

REGISTERED AT THE GPO FOR TRANSMISSION THROUGH THE POST
AS A PERIODICAL (CATEGORY B) NBH 2071

COUNCIL OF THE SUTHERLAND SHIRE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC

PRESIDENT: Councillor Dawn Emerson
64 Moreton Road, Illawong, NSW, 2234
Ph: 9543 - 1060

HON SECRETARY: Mrs M. Whybourne
PO Box 389, Sutherland, NSW, 1499
Ph: 9525 - 4339

DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Mr. D. Archer

VICE PRESIDENTS: Mr J. Cutbush, Mrs. A. Griffiths, OAM

HON TREASURER: Mr M. Beaven
Ph. 9528 - 7826

RESEARCH OFFICER/ ARCHIVIST: Ms. H. McDonald
Ph: 9710 - 0225

MUSEUM CURATOR: Mr. A. McGrath Ph: 9521 - 2227

PUBLICITY OFFICER: Mrs. M. Blackley

EDITOR: Mr. D. Overett Ph: 9524 - 8721

HON AUDITOR: Mr. R.H. Lavers

HON SOLICITOR: Mr. M Solari

COMMITTEE: Mesdames: B. Greentree, B McGrath, I. Caddell, B. Perry,
Messrs: S. Roberts, A Platfoot, D. Perry.

SUTHERLAND SHIRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

Bulletin copies are supplied to all branches of the Shire Library; to the Mayor, General Manager and all councillors; the Royal Australian Historical Society; National Trust (NSW); State Library, NSW; National Library, Canberra; Universities of Sydney and NSW; State Rail Authority; Australia Post Archives; Sydney Water Board Historical Research Unit.

Society Publications are registered with the National Library, Canberra; in accordance with International Standard Serial Numbering. This automatically includes copyright to the authors of all articles. The Society's registered number appears on all of the Bulletins vis ISSN 0586 - 0261; The Society's occasional publication carry an ISBN number.

Bulletin Extracts: Editorial material may be reprinted in other publications provided that acknowledgment is made both to the author and the Society's magazine. Copyright is retained by the author.

Contributions: Members are invited to submit material for inclusion in the Bulletin: this need not be confined to local history, although this is especially welcome. If material extracted or re-written, please state the source; care should be taken with material still in copyright and written permission obtained from the author and the publisher. The date on the article or publication will tell you this.

Meetings of the Society are held monthly on the third Friday at 7.45pm at the Multi Purpose Building, Flora Street, Sutherland. (Next to Council carpark)

VISITORS ARE WELCOME

All correspondence should be addressed to :-

The Honorary Secretary
Sutherland Shire Historical Society
PO Box 389
Sutherland NSW 1499

**QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF THE SUTHERLAND SHIRE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.**

VOL. 2 NO 27

CONTENTS

PRESIDENT'S REMARKS	D. EMERSON	659
RECOLLECTIONS OF KURNELL (1928-1932)	F. BALLINS	660
VALE ALF HUMPHREYS	J. CUTBUSH	663
MEMORIES OF MIRANDA	E. J. WILSON [G. HEAVENS COLL.]	664
ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS	A. GRIFFITHS	667
MEMORIES OF CHILDHOOD	R. COLEMAN	671
JOADJA CREEK		677
EXCURSION REPORT	A. GRIFFITHS	678
FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK	D. OVERETT	679

President's Remarks

"History is something that never happened, written by a someone who wasn't there."

This report comes to you from Britain, where my husband and I have been for the last couple of weeks, and the above saying made me realise that the more I travel, how very little I know of history, and how much is conjecture!

Last week we visited Fishbourne, a 1st century Roman palace near Chichester. It has spectacular mosaic tile floors, some laid over the top of others, much as we would replace linoleum when it becomes worn, —or we tired of the pattern! It is interesting how firstly geometrical shapes are used, then as the art becomes more advanced, we see dolphins and sea creatures depicted. With modern technology these have been lifted off and re-laid, so that all are revealed. They were discovered when the local Council went to put in some trenches for drainage. I am convinced that the midday temperatures of an English summer day are very similar to those on a sunny Sutherland Shire winter's day, - except that the English go swimming! It is obvious why one needs central heating here in England, in winter, and the Fishbourne palace had underfloor heating and warm baths, which is quite amazing all those centuries ago! We don't even have these improvements in many of our modern houses!

After wandering along the walkways looking at all the tiled floor areas, one steps outside to magnificent geometrically sculptured hedges, bordering lawns and gardens. It was exciting seeing plants only known by name from Shakespearean plays, or recorded by Roman and Greek historians. I never knew what the woad plant (Boadicea's war paint) looked like, or the hellebore, or the mallam, which latter flower stems were dipped in wax and used as torches. This weed now grows all over our Snowy Mountains region.--so perhaps our pioneers planted it to use it similarly to light their way!

It is also surprising how painstaking "brushing" amongst the ruins by archaeologists has elicited golden rings, silver coins and beaded jewellery, found in nooks and crannies, where they had rolled and were lost (or hidden during warfare!) by their owners. Reconstructing the lives of these Romans and the ancient Britons has been a laborious process by the artefacts found and the extant writings by scholars of the period, --hence my opening quote.

Members would have heard at our June meeting of the sudden passing of our popular and well-liked committee member Alf Humphreys. Alf never missed a committee meeting and helped Allan McGrath with every museum display, moving, arranging and even "babysitting" it. He always gave wise advice, and diplomatically withdrew from controversial discussions. I never heard him utter an unkind word about anyone, and he was always positive in his attitudes and fervent in his support for the Society. His cheery face presiding over supper every meeting will be sadly missed and we send Val and family our sincere condolences on their sad bereavement.

We were delighted to have Mr. Bruce Baird, M.P. as our guest speaker for June on his recollections of his childhood spent in Cronulla, and Clr. Anne Field speak in July on the Moorefields racecourse, which I was sorry to have missed as I was still overseas. Our Rouse House excursion was most informative, and even the grouse Rouse House mouse was espied by an alert member -- and spouse! See you at our next meeting!



Clr. Dawn Emerson,
President

1999 Meetings:

20th August: Mr. Les Bursill: Aboriginal culture on the Web.
17th September: Mr. Charlie Banks: Early furniture -- "House of Convict Cove"
15th October: Mr. Gordon Geering

Recollections of Kurnell 1928-1932)

By Frank Ballins

Our first family visit to Kurnell was during the year 1928.

My grandfather, Herbert George Parsons, had a small cottage in Horning Street, Kurnell and we set out to visit him in that year.

At that time we lived at Binnaway a small country town where my father was employed as a Rail Motor Fitter.

On arrival at Central Station after an all night journey from Binnaway we caught a tram to La Perouse. This tram ride in that period was an exciting experience.

After it's many stops through the built-up areas the ride became an express service. I can recall flashing past Long Bay Prison as we headed for La Perouse where we were to catch the ferry to Kurnell. As we had time to wait for the ferry's departure we were able to wander around La Perouse.

At that time there seemed to be a substantial population of Aborigines. We observed of them producing, by their customary methods a variety of artefacts which were to be sold to the tourists. I can recall one of them displaying his prowess in not only carving a boomerang but skilfully throwing them as well.

Soon we were to commence our ride by ferry to Kurnell. And what a ride it was.

The ferry, built and operated by the Fisher family, a sturdy little craft, was well able to withstand the variable weather condition of Botany Bay. I can recall the captain pointing the bow towards the open sea and at the appropriate time reducing speed to await a suitable wave or swell to sharply turn the boat stern on to the swell at full speed until the calmer waters of Kurnell were reached.

In that period the wharf, or jetty as it was then popularly called, projected a fair way out from the shoreline [since demolished].

Not only did it serve as a terminal for the La Perouse - Kurnell Service, but also for a larger steam ferry that used to run excursions around Botany Bay, starting I think from Brighton during the weekends.

During the weekends the jetty was the haven for many 'Blackfish' fishermen. They would sit shoulder to shoulder on the ocean-side of the jetty adroitly casting their lines from long slender blackfish rods and from time to time casting burley into the water. Woe betide any careless person who allowed his line to float over that of his neighbour.

The fortunate ones who caught a table sized fish would then tie it into a sugar bag and allow it to float until the days fishing was ended.

My grandfather met the ferry with his pony and sulky. [it never ceases to amaze me how we were able to communicate in those days. Every communication was by letter or in some instances by telegram, but not Kurnell as there was no telephone service in that period].

And so we proceeded to Horning Street, my mother and grandfather and luggage in the sulky and my father and two brothers and self walking behind.

All of the roads, if they could be called roads, were just a buffalo grass covered cutting through the trees. We proceeded along Torres Street and then down Dampier and Tasman Streets into Horning Street.

On arrival at grandfather's cottage we found it to be very small in size. - a small kitchen cum living room - a very small bathroom and two small bedrooms. The verandah, built around three sides of the cottage was covered with wire gauze as protection against mosquitoes which, because of the close proximity to the swamp of Quibray Bay, plagued the area.

All of the cooking was done on a fuel stove - likewise clothes washing was done in an outside copper.

Domestic and cooking water was dependant on tank water and because of the small roof area, the supply was limited to cooking and food preparation.

The meagre supply of tank water was supplemented by a manually operated semi-rotary pump which consisted of a two inch pipe driven into the sandy soil on top of which the semi-rotary pump was fitted. The pump was operated by swinging the pump handle through a half circle movement, hence the name semi-rotary. As the water was quite brackish it could only be used for clothes washing and personal bathing.

However the water was quite suitable for gardening. Grandfather had a well laid out vegetable garden and a number of fruit trees including a beautiful fig tree with a crop of luscious black figs with which I managed to stuff myself.

Toilet facilities were in accordance with common practice of that era. The 'dunny' with the pan system installed was as far away from the house as possible to reduce the obnoxious smell. In this instance the 'dunny' was covered with a passionfruit vine which helped a little to make a visit a little more comfortable.

I cannot recall ever seeing a general store in Kurnell. Obviously people needed food - if there was no shop they either had to visit La Perouse or arrange a visit with the Fishers, the boat people, or pay a visit to Cronulla.

The trip into Cronulla was indeed a hazardous experience as I was later to find out. The road was a roughly formed track through the

swamp area of Quibray Bay which could only be traversed at low tide and then skirting the sand hills into Cronulla.

The overall population in Kurnell was relatively small. Most were either retired or unemployed. The unemployed suffered the same disparaging remarks as do the current unemployed.

Those who were on the dole, including my grandfather, had to make regular visits to Cronulla to receive their sustenance.

In that period the main residential area was situated along what is now named Prince Charles Parade but was then commonly referred to as the 'Front'.

All along this area the water was infested with a heavy growth of 'sea grass' which made swimming impossible. In addition to this, at low tide particularly, a terrible stink pervaded the area. How the residents put up with it I do not know.

Before completing this section of the Kurnell Story there are two aspects that bear mentioning.

The first is that in the area between the bay side and the ocean was a very densely bushed swamp area. As well as being the home of a large and dangerous snake community it was also a suitable area for orchids.

I was introduced to a person who made his living by foraging or fossicking through the area for wild orchids and then culturing his finds in his glass orchid house that he had built on his property. The second interesting feature was the herds of small ponies that wandered around the area. These ponies were generally referred to as 'Pit Ponies' were used in the South coast coalmines for the haulage of coal waggons from the coal face. They were regularly brought into the Kurnell area for 'Rest and Recuperation'. Kurnell was an excellent environment as there was plenty of grass to feed on and a limited scope for escape. Not that they wanted to.



VALE

ALFRED DANIEL HUMPHREYS II

Born 16/12/1927 in Glebe, NSW.

Alf passed away on the 17th May, 1999 at the age of 71.

In the earlier part of his life, Alf worked for Playfairs Smallgoods and McNivens Ice Cream companies in Sydney.

He moved to Jannali in 1953 to make a new start for his family. It was here that he started driving a cab and liked the job so much that he struggled hard to buy his own cab. At this point Alf became his own man, and also became an owner/driver for RSL Cabs for 30 years. Alf served on various Health Committees both in the Sutherland Shire and Rockdale areas, and was also a well respected Executive member of this society, always doing what he could at anytime.

He will be sadly missed by us all. Our condolences go to his Family,
Val, Danny, Margo, and Mother
in Law Mrs Olive Coleman.

Jim Cutbush

The following article originally appeared in S.C.A.M., Saturday, February 26, 1935 and was sent to the Bulletin by the late George Heavens who thought it deserved to be re-typed in full.

Memories of Miranda

By E. T. Wilson

While the Shire is busy working up a very pardonable enthusiasm over celebrating its honourable association with the founding of the British colony in Australia, Perce Stevens smiles whimsically as he recalls the good old days - less than 50 [years] ago.

'Most of the big events of those times began in our big kitchen,' said Perce. 'It was about 30ft x 12. The old house stood back from the main road about 200 yards and was a regular rendezvous.

" I remember the first Progress Association which met in the kitchen. It consisted of four members - Wm. Macfarlane, the shire clerk; my father, Mr H.D. Stevens; Wm. Douglas and Mr Wiggins.'

Perce went on to explain that though then only a lad of 15 his own services were co-opted as secretary. 'Let me see - I'm just 60 now, so that must have been forty five years ago'

Many a step in the Shire's progress was a direct result of the imagination and determination of the first "Big 4" with Stevens junior duly recording their doughty deeds.

Maybe some of the old hands remember Jeremiah Cashen - a fine old character. Jeremiah gathered the local talent together in the kitchen and formed a 'singing class'. As their leader was no mean musician himself being then conductor of the choir at St Mary's Cathedral, Sydney, the musical standard was set fairly high. Though the first efforts were the humble 'Old Black Joe' and 'Tom Tom the Piper's Son' they reached such creditable accomplishments as 'Elija' and the 'Messiah'.

Who can recall the proud days when the practices of the old kitchen resulted in the elaborate programme rendered in connection with the Flower Show? It was held in a big marquee on the present site of the school - at that time called Lahane's Paddock, where they drafted cattle for the market. The show was an annual affair, and bore the rather broad title of 'Horticultural, Agricultural and Industrial Musical Society's Show'. 'They were great times,' mused Perce, 'with Amy Ludwich as leading soprano, Bessie Peer as contralto, Miss Marcer at the piano and Percy Pickering as flautist.'

Miss Marcer was an accomplished musician, but she did not despise the little harmonium which served in the early kitchen practices of the singing class.

'By the way, do you know how Miranda got it's name?' I had to confess I did not. 'Well' says Perce 'I'll tell you.'

'It happened at one of the early meetings of the singing class, and, no doubt, you would find it recorded in the beautiful copperplate handwriting of Wm. Douglas, a braw Scot who kept the minute book.

"The question arose as to choosing a suitable name for the class or club. After some discussion up jumps Jeremiah Cashen who always seemed ready for an emergency, and said in his deep voice - "Well, my thought at random - call it 'Miranda' for short."

And so from Miranda Singing Club the name was applied to Miranda School and other local activities, till it became the name of the district itself. The first school, opened chiefly through the influence of Mr Skillman, Chief Inspector of Schools, was a small weatherboard building on the opposite side of the main road and closer to Sutherland than the present school. But within its unlined walls the young hopefuls learned the three R's tolerably well.

It is interesting to know that the musical traditions of Miranda are still being carried on by the hero of this article, for Mr Perce Stevens will conduct his 'Boys Novice Choir' of Bathurst in a broadcast of three numbers over 2GZ some time this month.

Another association with the big kitchen was the first religious service held in the district. At that time there were only two churches in the whole of the Shire. One was at Sutherland on the western side of the railway, and the other at Sylvania. Both were Congregational.

The services in the Miranda kitchen however, were as delightfully undenominational as those of the first church meetings of New Testament times. Mr Orr, who passed away only about three months ago, came from Penshurst or thereabouts to conduct the services, which were attended by all and sundry in the wide fellowship of the gospel.

Life was hard however for the farmer folk of the district. Mr Stevens kept bees, but unfortunately the bees failed to keep him. The growing family, of which Percy was the eldest, felt the pinch of poverty until fortune smiled on them by a most unusual circumstance.

A large whale stranded on the northern beach just below the only hotel of Cronulla's early history. Aborigines came over the sandhills and assisted in the rendering of the whale blubber. Perce Stevens still chuckles at the memory of those Abos carrying huge junks of blubber by cutting a hole in the centre and putting their heads through the holes, and thus carrying the blubber on their shoulders!

The pieces were cut smaller and spread on sheets of galvanised iron tilted at an angle so that the oil would run down into kerosene tins, a fire being lit underneath. The happiest result of this unexpected visitation was that the Stephens family netted £150 and were thus rescued from the stress of poverty.

They left the district in May 1894 [a few months before the writer was born] and the members of Miranda Musical Association presented them with 'A History of the World's Progress' a large illustrated quarto volume of 1,100 pages by Chas. E Beale, published in Sydney about 1887.

While in the Bathurst District Mr H. D. Stevens became interested in metallurgy and many exhibits in the Technological Museum bear his name

[wrongly] as Mr G. H. Stevens. This worthy pioneer died on January 24th 1922, Mrs Stevens passing away only last year at her daughters home in Pennant Hills.

As I coaxed these memories from her eldest son, and visualised the transformations in a tract of country once owned from Sutherland to Cronulla, by F. Ellis Holt, with Sutherland's only store [Wm. Bramleys] surrounded by market gardeners I mused on the memories that may crowd in the minds of some of our children as fifty years hence, if spared, they celebrate the Shire's association with Captain Cook and Australia's 200th Anniversary.

Death of Joseph Mondel

At the meeting of the Council held on Wednesday night, 3rd May, various members of the Council spoke of the loss this district has sustained by the death of Joseph Mondel, of Parraweena Road, Miranda.

Mr. Mondel was a very old resident of this Shire, and has been associated with various movements from time to time for the advancement of the district.

He was for many years honorary treasurer of the Miranda School of Arts. 'His was a face that will be missed at elections, as he assisted at almost every Shire and State election during the past twenty years.

The Council directed that a letter of sympathy be sent to his family.

13 MAY 1939

St. Luke's Church of England, Miranda

A social gathering of parishioners and friends will be held this Saturday afternoon, December 12th, in the church grounds, from 3 to 6 p.m., to welcome the Rev. A. W. Setchell and Mrs. Setchell. Should the weather prove unfavourable, the gathering will adjourn to the School of Arts.

There will be a stall of useful and fancy articles, and produce for sale, and afternoon tea will be served at 6d each. Please roll up and give our new rector and family the right hand of fellowship, and make them feel they have come amongst friends. As the new Minister is anxious to liquidate the parish's indebtedness to his predecessor, at his wish the proceeds of the afternoon will be devoted to that object.

12 DEC 1931

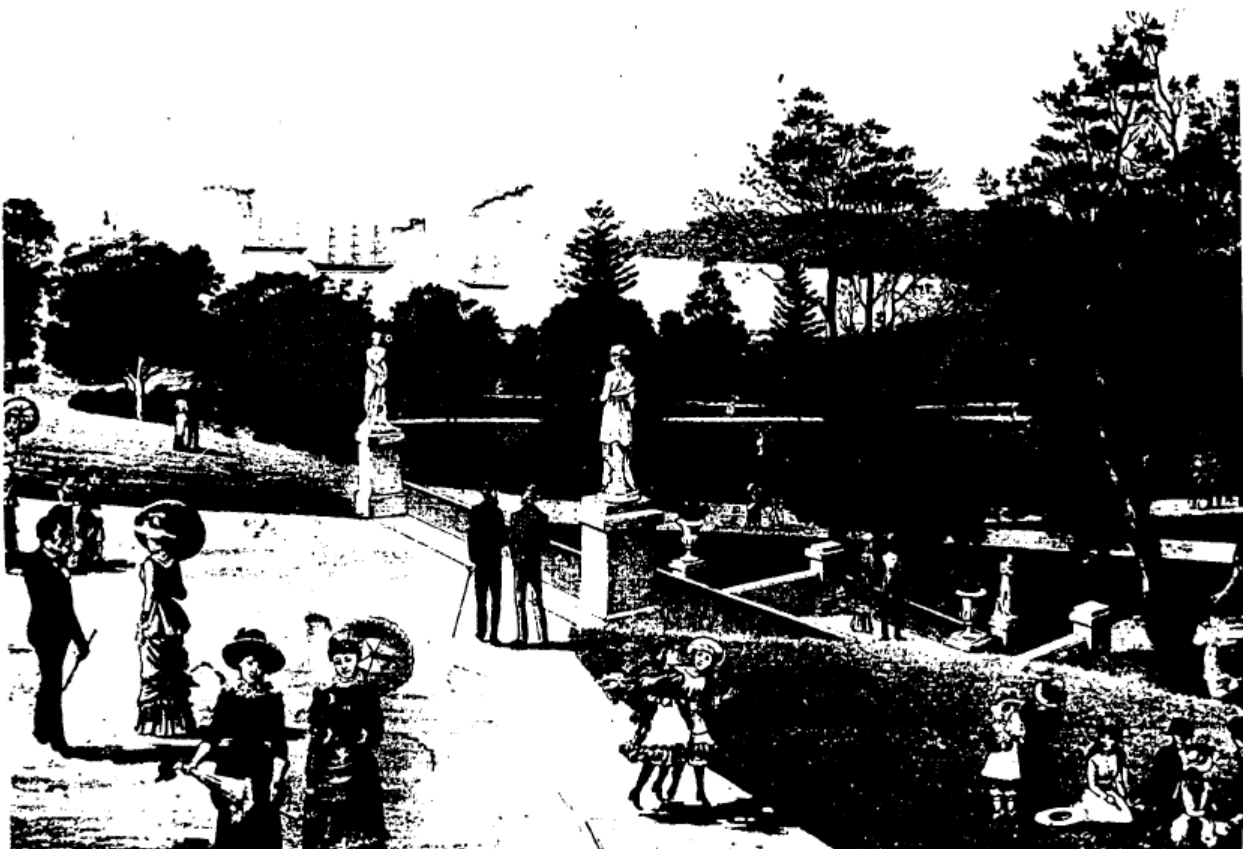
ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS SYDNEY INC.

By courtesy of Ms Brenda Venton, our Society has been given permission to reprint the history and map recently sent to all members of the Friends of the Gardens.

My interest has been instilled in me from very early childhood because both my Grandfather and Great-Grandfather were employed there; Grandfather firstly as gardener and later in the way we would now call security spanning a period of just over fifty-five years, from 1862. He was Charles Ulrich Peters.

In giving permission for the reprint, Ms Venton asked if I would extend an invitation to any folk interested there-in to become a member of the 'Friends'; the contact number being Cottage 6, Mrs Macquaries Road, Sydney, 2000, telephone 9231-8182. This was approved by the Bulletin Editor.

Aileen Griffiths OAM



FRIENDS OF THE GARDENS

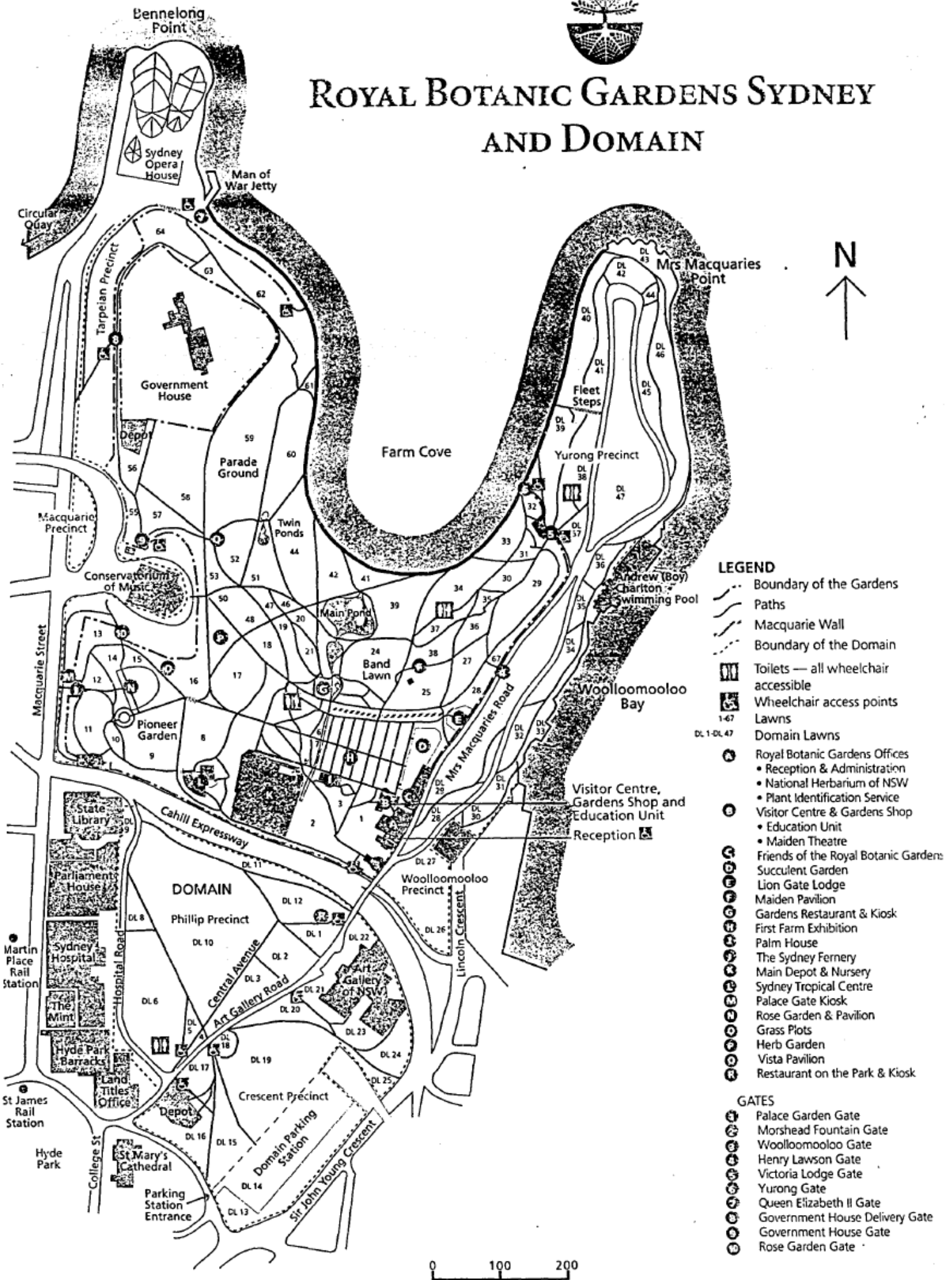
A SHORT HISTORY OF THE ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS SYDNEY

- 1788 The first farm on the Australian continent, 'nine acres of corn' was established by Governor Phillip using seeds and plants brought on the First Fleet.
- 1816 The Botanic Gardens of Sydney was founded on this site by Governor Macquarie as part of the Governor's Domain.
- 1817 Charles Fraser, first Colonial Botanist was appointed, thus making the Royal Botanic Gardens the oldest scientific institution in Australia.
- 1847 After a succession of colonial botanists and superintendents John Came Bidwell was appointed as the first Director.
- 1848 He was followed by Charles Moore, a Scotsman who had trained in the Botanic Gardens of Trinity College, Dublin who remained as Director for 48 years and boldly tackled the problems of poor soil, inadequate water and shortage of funds to develop much of the Gardens in the form we see today. The Palm Grove, which now has 140 different species of palms and the reclaimed land behind the seawall which added a significant area to the Gardens, are a reminder of the foresight.
- 1862 Sydney's first zoo opened within the Gardens and remained until it was transferred to Moore Park in 1883. During those years much of the remnant natural vegetation of the surrounding Domain was removed and planted as parkland including the Moreton Bay figs which continue to dominate the landscape.
- 1879 A substantial area of the Domain south of what is now the Conservatorium of Music, was taken to build the Garden Exhibition Palace. This was an outstanding example of Victorian architectural exuberance covering over 2 hectares and dominating Sydney's skyline. The International Exhibition held here attracted over one million visitors. The building was destroyed by fire in 1882 and the land, now known as the Palace Garden was added to the Gardens.
- 1896 Moore was succeeded by Joseph Henry Maiden who during his 28 year term (1896 - 1924) added much to the maturing landscape. A new herbarium building was constructed, opening in 1901.
- 1924-1944 During the First World War and during the Depression the Gardens suffered due to the loss of staff. From 1945 on Robert Anderson worked to reunify both the living collection and the Herbarium.
- 1959 The title "Royal" was granted. Knowles Mair (1965-70), Dr John Beard (1970-72) and Dr Lawrence Johnson (1972-85) further developed the organisation and in 1982 the Robert Brown building was opened to house the Herbarium.

- 1982 Formation of the Friends of The Gardens.
- 1986 Professor Carrick Chambers (1986-1996) became the ninth Director at a time when large-scale changes were being planned. He was an enthusiastic advocate of plants being displayed as collections and during his term he supported the development of several new gardens made possible by generous donations obtained through his encouragement. He oversaw many significant developments as follows:
- 1987 Mount Tomah Gardens opened. This is on land explored in the early 1800s and acquired in 1935 by French-born horticulturist Alfred Brunet and his Australian wife, who operated it as a cut-flower farm. The Brunets presented their land of the Royal Botanic Gardens in 1972 and it has been developed as a cool-climate garden with particular emphasis on southern hemisphere plants.
- 1988 Mount Annan Botanic Gardens opened. This is a native plant garden on a 410 hectare site which has been grazing farmland since earliest European settlement. The site was acquired by the Royal Botanic Gardens in 1984.
- The Rose Garden, Sydney opened on the site of the old Palace Garden. It has a collection of almost 200 varieties numbering 1300 plants.
- 1990 Tropical Centre opened. Consisting of 2 modern glasshouses - the Pyramid featuring Australian tropical plants and the Arc which displays plants from other parts of the world.
- 1993 The Fernery, Sydney opened funded by the Fairfax Foundation (Lady Vincent Fairfax). The architecture student (John Barbacetto) design was an award winner and provides a striking backdrop for the spectacular display of ferns.
- 186 hectares of sandstone woodland and deep gullies north of Mount Tomah was purchased by the Trust giving protection to the outlook and a reliable source of water. Future plans include walks through the sandstone vegetation.
- 1994 The Herb Garden, Sydney, opened with more than 232 species or varieties displayed in specific arrangements such as medicinal, culinary and oriental groups. The garden is complimented by an armillary sundial, sensory fountain and other sculptural pieces.
- 1996 The last major collections' work to be supported by Director Carrick Chambers, the Oriental Collection refurbishment, was almost completed by his retirement and was opened in early 1997. There are almost 250 different species of plants from eastern Asia including a rich collection of wisterias.
- 1997 At Mount Tomah, nearing completion is the Asian Botanical Explorers Walk. This will be followed by the North American Explorers Walk and the Heath and Heather Garden.
- 1997 Frank Howarth became the tenth Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens in November following more than a year acting in the position. The Oriental Garden, completed - sponsored by the Hong Kong Bank.
- 1998 The Rare and Threatened Plants Garden donated by the Friends of The Gardens was opened in February.



ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS SYDNEY AND DOMAIN

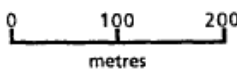


LEGEND

- Boundary of the Gardens
- Paths
- Macquarie Wall
- Boundary of the Domain
- Toilets — all wheelchair accessible
- Wheelchair access points
- Lawns
- Domain Lawns
- Royal Botanic Gardens Offices
 - Reception & Administration
 - National Herbarium of NSW
 - Plant Identification Service
- Visitor Centre & Gardens Shop
 - Education Unit
 - Maiden Theatre
- Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens
- Succulent Garden
- Lion Gate Lodge
- Maiden Pavilion
- Gardens Restaurant & Kiosk
- First Farm Exhibition
- Palm House
- The Sydney Fernery
- Main Depot & Nursery
- Sydney Tropical Centre
- Palace Gate Kiosk
- Rose Garden & Pavilion
- Grass Plots
- Herb Garden
- Vista Pavilion
- Restaurant on the Park & Kiosk

GATES

- Palace Garden Gate
- Morshead Fountain Gate
- Woolloomooloo Gate
- Henry Lawson Gate
- Victoria Lodge Gate
- Yurong Gate
- Queen Elizabeth II Gate
- Government House Delivery Gate
- Government House Gate
- Rose Garden Gate



Memories of Childhood

By Ruth Coleman

My childhood was spent in the southern Sydney suburb of Taren Point. I might add it was a vastly different place to the Taren point of today.

My grandfather, John O'Meagher, was a businessman who owned a music store situated in the inner Sydney area of Paddington. his shop was much in the tradition of Nicholsons and Palings, who were considered to be the ultimate in music stores in latter years.

Apparently it was a profitable concern, as he had a wife and seven children [five girls and two boys] -to support. My grandparents also employed a live-in maid by the name of Emily, who my mother often spoke of in relation to. the pranks those 'seven little Australians' used to play on the hapless girl.

In those days, Taren Point was only a fishing spot. My grandfather accepted an invitation from a business acquaintance to accompany him there on a fishing trip. My grandfather was quick to realise the future potential of the area.

Accordingly, he purchased five blocks of land, four adjacent blocks in Holt Road [named for Thomas Holt, a prominent identity in the Shire] and the fifth in Taren Point Road, which backed on to the third of the four blocks in Holt Road.

At the time of purchase Taren Point was only directly accessible by launch from Sans Souci. Later the ferry [which accommodated both people and vehicles] came into service and was promptly christened 'The Floating Scandal' by one of the local wags.

With the advent of the ferry, grandfather decided it was time to build his dream home which he duly named 'Tarentelle'. This house had the distinction of being the first 'permanent' home on 'The Point' as it was referred to by the residents. It was an imposing house for its era, being situated on the second of the four adjoining blocks in Holt Road, whilst the third block was destined to be for gardens and rockeries, along with a washhouse and workshop which stood at the rear of the block. I suspect the workshop was grandfather's haven, where he could indulge in his hobby of woodcraft without interruption.

I think his ambition was to eventually purchase an additional four blocks of land, so when his children married, they would still be in close proximity, thereby creating his own dynasty. The reason for this supposition being that when my cousins journeyed overseas to research that branch of the family tree they found to their amazement our ancestors date back to Charlemagne [742-814 AD], king of the Franks and founder of the first empire in western Europe after the fall of the, Roman Empire. Maybe the empire

building tendency was in grandfather's genes. Seemingly he was a man who considered himself to be of importance as I never heard my mother or any of his other children refer to him as anything other than 'The Gov', a shortened form of Governor of course. I'm told my father wrote a poem dedicated to him with the opening lines:

*There is a little man called 'The Gov',
Who thinks he is the Lord above*

To be fair, it is true that he was considered worthy of note by the other residents and he was very much involved in local affairs. In the absence of a church, the first services were held on the front porch of my grandparent's home. Grandfather also toiled long and hard to support the residents who were most enthusiastic in their quest to establish an Anglican church. He spent many hours seeking second hand building supplies at auctions and was a familiar figure at demolition sites. A great deal of the building materials eventually used came from St. Stephen's Presbyterian Church in Macquarie Street, Sydney and was instrumental in the local church bearing the same name.

Another pet project was the long and arduous wrangle for assistance from the Education Department to establish a school at Taren Point, as the nearest school was at Sans Souci and children had to travel there by ferry then walk approximately one mile to reach their destination.

When my mother married, the house was built on the block of land next to the 'paddock' as we called the garden block of my grandparents' property. This home was built of fibro and cement areas with a red tiled roof, as the galvanised iron roofs were beginning to lose their appeal. The rooms were huge by today's standards.

Unfortunately, my mother was destined to become a widow when I was three and a month before my brother was born, my father succumbing to tuberculosis, which was quite common at that time. It must have been difficult for my mother being left with three children to provide for.

Despite this we were always well dressed thanks to our mother's prowess with needle and thread. She began her working years as an apprentice milliner at the grand wage of 2/6 per week. Later she was employed as a tailoress at a much improved rate. Many of the garments she made were beautifully smocked or embroidered. My sister, my niece and great niece have all inherited the ability to create beautifully delicate articles, whilst I can manage most crafts but not with the same finesse.

Our diet was unremarkable - consisting of 'good wholesome food' as my mother categorised it. I have memories of Junket [yuk!], Rice and sago puddings also come to mind. As we had a guava tree in

the backyard, my mum became a dab hand at making jelly and jam from the fruit and these we enjoyed.

Local fishermen walked the streets with their freshly caught hauls, calling 'Fish-O' to attract the attention of the local residents. I remember my mother used to steam the fish she had purchased, squeezing juice from the lemons which grew in such profusion on the tree which dominated our backyard.

The streets also echoed to the call of 'Rabbits!' We thoroughly enjoyed the meal when our mother would purchase one of these which she would bake along with an assortment of fresh vegetables. Sadly when it became necessary for the authorities to introduce mixamitosis, rabbit disappeared from the menu.

Yet another cry of significance in the area was that of 'Props!' expounded by a character who drove around in a derelict cart pulled by a very lethargic horse. This man's wares were of course clothes props, which consisted of a long pole with a forked top which held the strand of wire or rope line, so after the washing was duly pegged on the line, it could be hoisted, according to the angle of the prop, to catch any prevailing breeze, which with help from the sun, would result in effectively dried garments. Hurrah for Mr Hills and the advent of his clothes hoist.

The baker also exercised his vocal chords as he brought his horse and cart to a stop in front of each house, so his progress was quite slow. In comparison to the 'prop' man his horse was a well-groomed and pleasantly natured animal. The cart was painted in an impressive shade of blue whilst the letters proclaiming it the property of 'Packhams Bakery' appeared in gold leaf and fairly sparkled when illuminated by the sun's rays. The best memories of the baker's deliveries were hot cross buns at Easter.

As there was no domestic refrigeration in my early years, it was necessary to have the 'iceman' call, usually three days a week. The ice chest was kept in a cool place, usually on the back verandah. the chest itself was usually of timber construction divided into two sections; the top being for the block of ice and the lower section contained the food. Both areas were lined with enamel-coated metal. The ice would be transported as quickly as possible, the block of ice being swathed in a hessian bag and gripped by very strong metal spikes, complete with a heavy metal handle. Sensibly, the ice was usually delivered as early as possible to minimise premature melting by the sun. Later, kerosene refrigerators became available, but it wasn't until Sir Edward Hallstrom introduced his electric 'Silent Knight' model that efficient domestic refrigeration was achieved. In my mind's eye I can still visualise those refrigerators with their 'knight' trade mark resplendent on the door.

My days at Taren Point Public School were happy days indeed. My first teacher was a Mr William Loosely who is still my idea of 'an

unforgettable character'. He was a tall man with aquiline features, of quite slim stature and he sported a crew-cut long before they became fashionable. His attire always consisted of a black sateen jacket, immaculate white shirt, subdued tie, grey pin-striped trousers and shoes which were so highly polished one might think they had been given a coat of clear lacquer. Children being as they are, in his absence referred to him as 'Mr Looselegs' though not motivated by any disrespect. He was a wise man who quickly assessed the strengths and weaknesses of his students and was always prompt to give encouragement when it was needed.

Of course we had other local 'characters' too. I remember one lady in particular. She gave the impression of being very well educated, was beautifully spoken, was pleasant to everyone and always spoke with kindness to children who crossed her path. This however changed dramatically when the notion took her to over-indulge in alcohol.

On these occasions she would swear and curse and chase any child who dared to look in her direction. Eventually she would sit in the gutter and alternatively take a swig from her bottle and burst into song. We would be terrified if we encountered her on one of her 'bad' days. Nobody knew the underlying reason for this complete reversal, as she kept her own counsel. When we would question our mother, she would reply 'Just make sure you don't come to such a sorry state'. I know our mother had an intense dislike for alcohol as she would cross the street rather than walk past a hotel.

Other characters of note were the Auld family. They provided the 'comic relief in the area. The father, Ernie, was a police sergeant. He was a tall heavily built man and his wife, Pearl, was a lady of generous proportions, though quite attractive. They had four children, Marie, Ken, Elaine and Dorothy, and Mrs Auld's sister, May, spent most of her time with the family. The whole family seemed to be forever smiling, perhaps because of their laid-back approach to life, but the two outstanding comics were Ken and his Aunt May. They always had people in hysterics at their antics, so it wasn't surprising when they eventually staged reviews, the venue being the local 'Welfare Hall'. Ken would dress in 'drag' [although he was as straight as it was possible to be] and he and his aunt would sing and cavort, sometimes producing very thinly veiled skits aimed at some hapless local resident. This however was carried out light-heartedly and with complete absence of malice. Even Ken's pet goat took part in some of the farce.

Ken was always late in his endeavour to catch the ferry on his way to work. He would come racing down the street, briefcase in one hand and breakfast in the other, whilst everyone on board held their breath to see if he would arrive on time. On one occasion he came charging down the street as usual, breakfast of toast and eggs

in hand. As the ferry had begun to move he made an almighty leap but alas misjudged the distance and there he was - face down in about six inches of water, so he had egg on his face literally as well as metaphorically. He could however laugh at his own expense and the event was re-enacted during the next revue.

The only other sources of entertainment were the Fancy Dress Balls held twice yearly [organised by the school committee], and the Sunday School Annual Picnic. On this occasion we travelled by chartered bus to Gunnamatta Park to indulge in races and novelty events such, as the three legged race, sack races etc.: This was followed by' an abundance of tasty sandwiches, cakes and copious amounts of raspberry cordial gushed from huge shiny metal teapot-like containers with elongated spouts.

In those days the atmosphere of 'The Point' was decidedly village-like. There were market gardens in profusion and well groomed horses spent lazy days in lush paddocks, showing only a token interest should a random vehicle chance to pass by.

There was a local dairy which supplied all the needs of the community, as far as milk and cream were concerned. The milkman always rewarded his horse with an ice-cream, after their final delivery and of course indulged in a treat for himself.

As blackberries grew wild and with amazing plenitude, in company with friends, my sister and I would often gather enough berries to fill a billy-can and these made beautiful jam. On suitable days we would visit the mangrove swamps to view with fascination, the tadpoles, frogs and crabs which inhabited the area in great abundance. Sylvania Waters has now engulfed this area and I often wonder about subsistence as it was a subject of much discussion that the land had not been allowed to settle for a sufficient period of time before the area was developed.

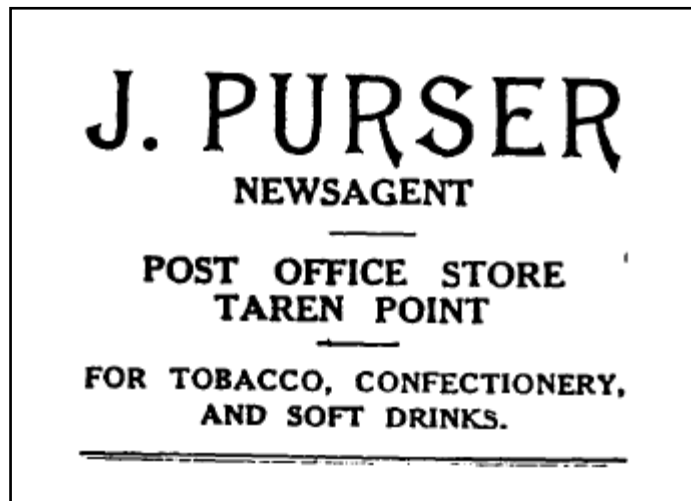
The local shops of which there were three, were all located on Taren Point Road. The first was the General Store and Post office combined, where one could 'tick up' goods for two weeks and when the account was paid at the end of the period, one was rewarded with a free bag of boiled lollies. I remember the war years when one had to present coupons for the purchase of butter, sugar, tea and meat. The purchase of clothing, fabric and shoes was also regulated by these stamps which were contained in 'ration books'.

Situated halfway between the school and the general store was a barber shop, but it is doubtful as to whether the proprietor made a profit from the enterprise.

The third shop was located in close proximity to the ferry. This housed a Milk Bar and Newsagency combined. In contrast to the barber, the owners, Jim and Em Harding, did a roaring trade especially with people waiting for the ferry to return from Sans Souci.

I often think the former residents would be mortified if they were to return today to witness what inroads 'progress has made to this one time haven. The commercial and industrial worlds are well represented since the advent of The Captain Cook Bridge. The old landmarks have all but disappeared. The three shops have long since gone, necessary because of the widening of the main road to provide suitable access to the bridge. The Welfare Hall which was used for a multitude of social; occasions was another casualty. The only relic remaining is St Stephens Church although it has been removed from the original site because the land was valuable and has been sold to developers. The church is now incorporated in the Taren Point primary school which would at least be of some solace to the people who worked so hard for its development.

Many of the original houses which had such individuality have been replaced with 'mansions. It is a true saying that 'nothing stays the same forever', but in this instance I feel that it is to be lamented this is so.



JOADJA CREEK

Those I have spoken to regarding the Society's recent excursion have all agreed that the visit to Joadja Creek was a magnificent and interesting day out.

We are indeed fortunate that one of our members, the artist John Green, was with our group that day and managed to capture the spirit of the place with his fine representation of Carrington Row.

Formerly known as Brick Row, the cottages were built to house the management of the Australian Kerosene Oil and Mineral Company (1870-1911). The timber cottages of the workers have since disappeared.

I hope that the reduced reproduction of John's excellent work will give as much pleasure to you as it has to me.

The Editor.



EXCURSION REPORT.

From remarks made to members of the Excursion Committee, the trip to Joadja was very much enjoyed; it certainly was a much overdue outing, but finally we made it!!

And the outing to Rouse Hill House, followed by Hambledon Cottage and later the old Parramatta Cemetery was much appreciated.

The outing usually undertaken in November is in limbo at present due to the celebrations being planned in Cronulla around the date we would normally be having' our outing, to commemorate the one hundred years of the 'Village of Gunnamatta', now Cronulla, and the Society being involved we are uncertain of exact dates. However we will keep members informed about the events and our possible 'day out'.

WEEK-END TOUR TO KEMPSEY: This has been a case of 'on again' 'off again' - due to the desire of the President that we make this tour because of the friends she made in that town while she was living there, and the wonderful museum and Historical Society members who would make it such a memorable occasion. After a lengthy discussion following our return from Rouse Hill, we are going ahead with the trip.

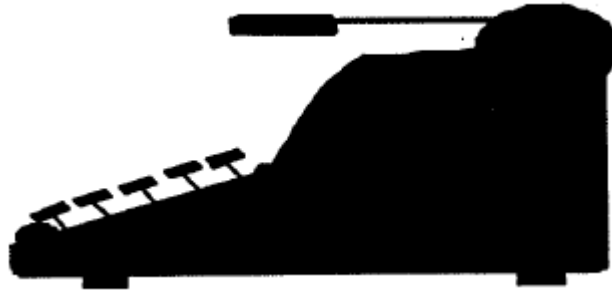
To prevent any misunderstandings, during discussions last Saturday when on tour of the Parramatta areas attractions, we quote; we shall, as always, Travel by Tiger Tours Coach and Terry McCosker will be the Coach Captain and guide to Kempsey and return.

We shall leave Cronulla at 7.30 am, Sutherland 8.00 am: take your morning tea and luncheon needs with you and the costing of the tour will include from Dinner on Friday evening until after Breakfast on Sunday. We shall make a stop for luncheon on the way home and you may choose from a light or full meal as you desire, at your expense, which appears to be the most desirable for members. The cost to members is \$210.00 and visitors \$215.00, quoted when the original bookings were opened. All costs must be finalised by the August Meeting, Friday , 20th, to enable us to confirm with the Historical Society, Motel etc. the exact number travelling.

Bookings to Betty McGrath 9521-2227, 141 Loftus Ave., Loftus, or enquiries to Clr. Dawn Emerson, 9543-1060, or myself, 9523-5801.

Aileen M. Griffiths, O.A.M.

EXCURSION CONVENER.



FROM THE EDITORS DESK

It seems no time at all since the last Bulletin was out and about. Some wonderful articles have come in since and I hope you get as much pleasure reading them as I did.

For the November issue we hope to have a special feature on the 60th anniversary of the opening of the railway between Sutherland and Cronulla. So I need your help. If you have any memories of the opening, or the building of the line, and would like to share them with us, please write them down. It doesn't matter how long your story is; even a few lines would be very much appreciated.

I know how interested people are in this subject just by seeing the numbers who attended the Society's museum during Heritage Week where the theme was the opening of this Railway.

Any other historical articles on the Shire of course are always needed and always appreciated by our members.

Through the efforts of Les Bursill the Society now has its own web site and I encourage all of you to have a look as it is truly worth it. The site address is at the foot of the front cover.

DAVID OVERETT

Sutherland Shire Historical Society Inc.

FOUNDED
1966



VISITORS AND
INTENDING MEMBERS WELCOME