



*Sutherland Shire
Historical Society Inc*



Bulletin



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A SHORT HISTORY OF OYSTER BAY

(story starts Page 15)



By Jan Etteridge

by Jan Etteridge

**By Mark Florence and Sue Gardiner
for Sutherland Shire Council and the Oyster Bay Working Party**



September 2001

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PRESIDENT:	Dep.Mayor, Clr. Dawn Emerson, B.A. (Lib Sci), Litt. B.(Soc), AALIA. JP. Ph: 95431060 Fax: 9543 0191
DEPUTY PRESIDENT:	Mrs A. Griffiths. O.A.M. J.P.
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HON. SECRETARY	Mrs. M. Whybourne. P.O. Box 389, Sutherland, NSW, 1499 Ph: 9525 – 4339
HON. TREASURER:	M. Beaven. Ph. 95287826
RESEARCH OFFICER ARCHIVIST & BULLETIN EDITOR:	Mr. Les Bursill, AIM. B.A. (Arch) J.P. M.Litt, (Anth). Ph: 9520-7394 Mob 0419 298 018
PUBLIC OFFICER & ASSISTANT TREASURER:	Mr. A. Platfoot.
MUSEUM CURATOR:	Mr. A. McGrath Ph: 9521 - 2227
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SUTHERLAND SHIRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

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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**

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Disclaimer

The individual comment, articles and Office Bearers reports that appear in this Bulletin are the responsibility of the writer and in no way reflect the opinions or beliefs of the members or Executive of the Sutherland Shire Historical Society.

President's Remarks

Whenever I return to Australia from a trip overseas, I always feel like kissing our soil---it's so nice to be home! The recent tragic events in USA destroy any complacency that we may have that any country is "safe", but I certainly feel that Australia is literally thousands of miles from the turmoil overseas, and one is as safe as one can be anywhere! (Our Australian tradition has been that aeroplanes are Angels of Mercy, e.g., our Flying Doctor Service--we don't think of them as dealing out death on a massive scale, particularly in a time of peace.)

The Cook Look vs the "No Go" Logo Before I left to go overseas, I was alerted by our General Manager that a new logo was being proposed: a dolphin and gumleaf forming an "S". You may remember at the May meeting I asked you your opinion of the Cook logo, and did you think it important to retain. You unanimously asserted that it was. I also asked one of the Gweagal elders, who thought for some time then replied: "Cook is part of our combined history, and the Meeting of Two Cultures. Perhaps if we had had some input in 1906 when Cook was chosen for the logo, we might have suggested something different; but we are so pleased at Sutherland Shire Council's genuine efforts at Reconciliation we would not ask for the logo to be changed."

Too many Cooks? When I returned from overseas, I arrived at 5am in the midst of the furore of Council's staff report to change Council's Cook logo, and had to go to Council that night and argue for Cook's retention! As I said on the night at Council, whilst I was overseas trying to get back the spears which Cook had taken from Australia,-- there were moves afoot here, to spear Cook! In my opinion, it seems that the whole situation had been created by one of our daily newspapers--trying to politically assassinate our Mayor, and I was proud to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with her on this, so she did not face it alone as the figure-head of the Council; if an error is made we both have to wear it: the "buck stops here",

even if we are not responsible for the situation. Suffice it to say that when voting ensued it was 15-0 in Cook's favour, so there was certainly no push by our Councillors to depose Cook, and the staff report has been suitably filed in the round bin under the desk! The Ombudsman's report fully vindicated our position, and Cook, 232 years later has permanently claimed a place in our history! On meeting nights I proudly sport the "Cook Look" and wear **two** Cook logos, that of the Council on my badge, and that of the Society on my President's badge.

Temples in Turkey I was surprised that our Editor had faithfully copied both the postcards into the Journal that I sent to him, but it did give you some idea of the places we visited. When I last reported we were about to go to Turkey. Our first archaeological site was **Priene**, an Ionian settlement, c.800 BCA, one of twelve Ionian city-states, with Ephesus and Miletus, forming the Pan-Ionic League. These cities were blossoming when mainland Greece was in decline. Priene was once a port, which is hard to imagine, now looking out over a plain, instead of a harbour, evidencing the receding sea. The Temple of Athena showed remnants of its former glory with five columns still standing, and the marvellous amphitheatre with marble thrones for the Emperor and VIP's, where drama and poetry recitals were performed, and even today conversations on centre stage are heard at the top of the amphitheatre! Alexander the Great was believed to have lived here for a time. We next visited **Miletus** which until the 5th Century BCE was the greatest Ionian maritime power in the region. Again it is hard to picture it being on the coast, as the sea is so far distant now, and it is also landlocked due to the silting up of the Maeander River. The Graeco-Roman theatre here seated 15,000 spectators, and its vaulted passages are remarkably intact. The Temple of Apollo in **Didyma** is like a huge cathedral, the original being destroyed by the Persians. The great statue of Apollo was removed, but returned by Alexander, and the temple was partially restored in Roman times but not completed. In Ephesus the Temple of

Artemis was *three times the size of the Parthenon* in Athens, and was one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. Ephesus was founded in 10th Century BCA by Ionian Greeks from Samos, and ruled in turn by: Lydians, Persians, the Attalid Kings of Pergamum and finally by the Romans, under whom it became the capital of Asia Minor, with a population of 200,000. The Library here is still partially standing, and was quite exciting for me, a librarian by profession to view its lofty columns, and slightly curved building to give the perception of being much larger. The harbour began to silt up, and the city declined, until by 6th Century AD, it was almost deserted.

Gelibolou (Gallipoli) One cannot describe the feeling of approaching this area by sea. It is as if one fully expects the scene to erupt before you like a film set of "Anzac". The topography puts the epic struggle in context, the valiant attempts to scale the cliffs, due to a bungling by the bureaucracy, landing the men at the wrong location. We went to the clifftop and looked down on the trenches, imagining what it must have looked like so long ago. The perfect summer's day, the heat haze, the gently stirring breeze and the tranquillity of the scene belies its tragic history as one pauses before each cross reading the inscriptions, in the memorial cemetery. Such young men in the flower of their youth; such wasteful squander of human life. Our Turkish guide was quite surprised when I asked to see the Turkish cemetery, in addition to the Australian, British and New Zealand. Young men, just like ours were evident, but many elderly Turkish men also featured. Whilst many of the inscriptions were translated into English, the Turkish Memorial Monument was not, and I made a special request to the authorities that a transcription be provided in future. The Gallipoli Museum has very poignant memorabilia, such as bullet shells, dioxies and cutlery used by our Diggers, - and a soldier's boot, with the chilling remains of a leg bone protruding from it. A copy of the New Testament carried in a top pocket over a soldier's heart, which had stopped a bullet from killing its devotee was on display, along with many other items. I had collected a few little pieces of pine cone, from the Lone Pine tree, which was guarding our soldiers' memorial like a sentinel. As prohibited vegetable matter, I duly declared them in the red lane at Customs

at Sydney, so I could have a keepsake, and the kind officer gravely returned them without a word. He respected its symbolism.

I could not end my report on this sombre note. I must say what a great night we had when Mr. George Roberts regaled us with tales of the Redex Trials, 1953-55, and the characters who drove the cars, and the funny incidents which ensued! I remarked that this had been the "guys' night", and that next month was the "gals night" when we hear all about miniature furniture and houses etc. with Nora Lee Mainguard-- but we expect the guys will be just as interested in miniatures, as *we* were with the cars! I look forward to seeing you all at the next meeting--and see if you can bring along a visitor or two with you-- we love having guests along! See you at the next meeting!

*Dawn Emerson
Deputy Mayor and
President, Sutherland Shire Historical Society*

Speakers and Meetings for 2001-2:

16th November: Mrs. Estelle Geering: Colonisation by the British in the Northern Territory

14th December: Christmas Entertainment Evening. The District Singers. (Note Change of Date and Venue: Sutherland School of Arts) .Bring a plate for supper.

18th January, 2002: Members' Night: Doug Perry, Dawn Emerson (Members' contributions welcome!)

15th February, 2002: TBA

15th March, 2002: Our AGM

19th April, 2002: Mrs. Mary Small: "Simpson and his donkey"

From The Editor's Desk



How quickly the year goes by and to help it in its acceleration I saw my first Christmas tree and Santa for sale on the 28th of September at Woolies in Miranda Fair!

I also can mark the years progress by the amount of copied material in the Bulletin each quarter and can report that we have not used any un-sourced material or photo-reproduced material in the last three issues of the Bulletin.

That outcome has come in the main from the untiring efforts of the Duyker family whom have been unfailing sources of rich historical material. In the last 12 months Dr Ed. Duyker and his sons Sam and Pier have all contributed many articles.

I must also mention both Daphne Salt and Pauline Curby who have also contributed several items for publication. Some of those items appear in this issue.

When I look around at the other Historical Society Journals and Magazines I can easily envisage the day when Sutherland Historical Society could be pre-eminent amongst those other publications.

Les Bursill. Editor, Archivist & Research Officer

Letters to the Editor

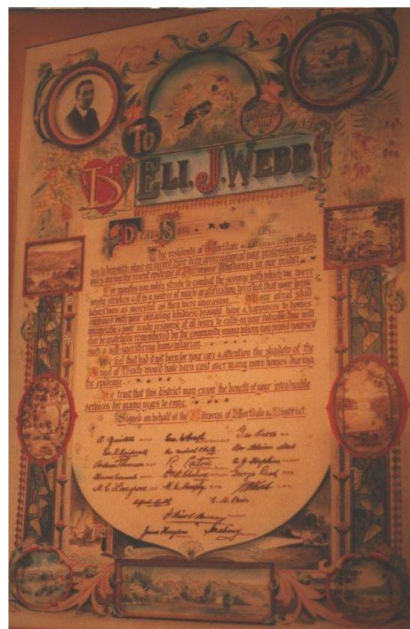
Just before going to press on this issue, Deputy Mayor Dawn Emerson wrote to me with the **article at right**. You will find the rest of the story in our main article on Oyster Bay residents.

The original house in Hurstville "Gladwyn" is now preserved as a local history repository and is an adjunct to Hurstville Library.

The staff at Gladwyn are pleasant and helpful and only too pleased to assist with any research you may wish to undertake. They are open each Wednesday and Thursday, contact phone number is 95802160 or 93306126

Letters continues page 9.

ILLUMINATED ADDRESS FOR DR. ELI WEBB. Oct. 1919



appears today at Gladwyn

To Dr. Eli J. Webb Dear Sir, The residents of Mortdale and District respectfully beg to herewith, place on record their deep appreciation of your professional services during the recent epidemic of Pneumonic Influenza in our midst. For months you nobly strove to combat the scourge with which we were sorely stricken and it is a source of much gratification to reflect that your heroic labors were as successful as they were unceasing Your great skill combined with your unfailing kindness brought hope and happiness to homes enumerable, and your ready response at all hours to calls on your valuable time will ever be gratefully remembered by the community among whom you proved yourself such a self sacrificing humanitarian. We felt that had it not been for your care and attention the shadow of the Angel of Death would have been cast over many more homes during the epidemic. We trust that this district may enjoy the benefit of your invaluable services for many years to come. ***Signed on behalf of the citizens of Mortdale and District.*** A. Newton. Geo. McGrath, Geo. Cross, Rev. R. Maidement, Rev. Michael O'Kelly, Rev. Adrian Steel, Andrew Thomson, R. Caton. A.G. Hopkins. Florence Cormack, Chas. Cherbury, George Read, A.C. Lonegrove, W.C. Murphy, Alfred Smith, E.M. Prior, B. Nicol Murray, James Haydon, S. Mahony.

Excursion Report

All is in readiness for the week-end trip to Bathurst. Our accommodation is at Country Lodge Motor Inn 145 William St. Phone 02 63314888.

It is a bed and breakfast motel: On Saturday we will have morning tea and luncheon in our donation to the Hill end Society people as well as the guided tour of that interesting place.

Friday and Saturday evening will be at Bathurst Leagues Club: Quoted as being “a couple of blocks next door”.

It was decided that no excursions will be held in February 2002 due to the hot weather experienced in the last couple of years, but we'll make a special day for the May outing (probably on the 25th) – hopefully it will be a lovely autumn day.

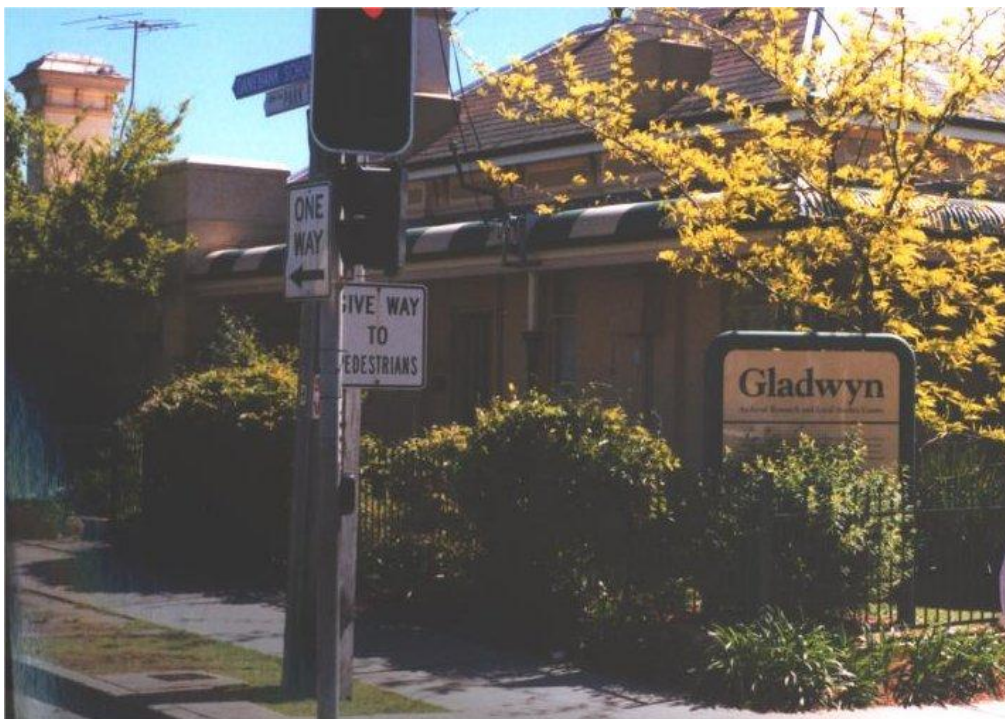
Thank you to members who have supported the outings during 2001 and my grateful thanks too to the Excursion Committee folk for their assistance to me.

With the Christmas period quickly approaching compliments of the season to all and I hope you will have a happy time with your loved ones.

Aileen M Griffiths
O.A.M.

Aileen M. Griffiths, O.A.M.
Deputy President and Excursion Officer

Gladwyn – Historical Dwelling Hurstville



Vale Jim Russell MBE



Jim Russell MBE

Jim Russell, 'retired' on Wednesday 15th August 2001, aged 92 years. Jim swore that he would never retire until the day he died. As with everything he said, Jim again

kept his word. In fact he had already submitted another month's work for publication at the time of his death [The Potts cartoon which he has drawn for 62 years]. Jim often commented that the rogue 'Uncle Dick' which he began adding to the comic in 1924 was very much like himself. Jim has been entered in the Guinness Book of Records for the single-handedly drawing a comic strip [The Potts] longer than any other artist in the world. He made an annual trip to the USA to attend the National Cartoonists Society Awards and this year was no exception. The range of Jim's interests and activities were abundant. He has been the Art Director for *Smiths' Weekly*, a sports' writer, radio and television commentator, public relations officer of the Australian Lawn Tennis Association, Australian Representative of *Newsweek* magazine. He began the first travel agency in the Sutherland Shire and was for some time the president of the Australian Federation of Travel Agents and Australian president of the American Society of Travel Agents, International Division. Jim was an active member of the Sylvania Rotary Club and enthusiastically lent his support and expertise to a wide assortment of people and organisations. Jim touched the hearts of all who knew him. His door was always open and he warmly welcomed visitors.



Jim was thrilled to have been chosen to carry the Olympic Torch even though his 500-metre stretch was in the NSW country town of Aberdeen.

In years gone by Jim frequently drove through Sylvania and commented that his first impression was one of great beauty. He fell in love with the proliferation of Christmas bush and the accessibility to the river. When he turned north into Kangaroo Point he turned into a new world. "It looked and felt like an island — no traffic, friendly people, a river frontage for every home site, birds, trees, flowers and native animals in the scrub." As soon as the toe of the boot-shaped peninsula became available he snapped it up about thirty-five years ago. When asked what his thoughts were on the origin of the name 'Kangaroo Point', Jim replied in typical Jim Russell fashion with a cartoon.

Daphne Salt



HOW KANGAROO POINT GOT ITS NAME.

Editors Note: Our President and Deputy Mayor Dawn Emerson, reminds me that Jim was honoured in a Mayoral Minute on 20th August 2001. She also pointed out that Jim was always to be found supporting worthy causes and that he was a great fundraiser. He will be sadly missed as he gave laughter to millions.

Letters to the Editor

The Editor Sutherland Shire Historical Society Bulletin

Dear Sir,

Now that the dust has settled on the 'Great Logo Debate' (debacle?) I would like to suggest that Sutherland Shire's logo should be changed, but not in the way recently suggested. While we are probably all partial to dolphins and wild flowers, they do not portray an image that is unique to the Shire. Neither does the present Cook logo.

I have great admiration for Cook. His achievements in navigation and cartography were remarkable, and the details of his naval career and personal life evoke interest and compassion. None of these (which also apply to Matthew Flinders) are sound reasons for retaining Cook's image on the Shire logo. Neither does the fact that his image has been there since 1906.

Cook's place on the logo is justified by his role in a dramatic meeting of cultures that took place at Kurnell in 1770. But he should not be there alone. At the beginning of the 21st century as Australians move towards reconciliation with the first people of this nation we need to make a change. Cook should share the logo with an appropriate Dharawal image, decided upon after consultation with descendants of the people who met Cook on the beach at Kurnell in 1770.

In 2006 when we celebrate the Shire centenary I would like to see a modified and inclusive logo adopted. A logo that includes representations of Cook and the Dharawal people would show how we cherish our history but would also be a statement about our hope for the future.

Pauline Curby

Presidents remarks: *Suth Shire residents have shown overwhelming support for the logo and the vote of 15-0 on the matter indicates that change is unlikely in the near future.*

Happy Birthday Sutherland Shire



How are we going to celebrate the Shire centenary? It may be a few years away but we need to start thinking about it now.

When Sutherland Shire turns 100 years old in 2006 the event should be celebrated in style, but not just with fireworks. I would like to see the Shire's birthday marked by the production of high quality local history projects. Shire residents and visitors would then be left with something lasting long after the party is over. The centenary is a unique opportunity to commemorate an important event in a creative way. It should not be missed.

While events management people may need only a few months to organise 'party' celebrations, four or five years is not a long period in which to gather support, obtain funding and implement worthwhile historical projects. If major centenary projects are planned for 2006 funding will need to be organised during the life of the present council. Council elections will be held in September 2003 and by the time a new council settles in it will be a little late for anything other than small projects.

Support from a broad range of groups and individuals in the community is important initially, and then a majority of councillors and key council staff need to back any proposal to allocate funds to historical projects.

Many years can sometimes pass before everything comes together. At Manly, for example, it took a dedicated band of local people the best part of a decade (and one false start) before a comprehensive history of the district was commissioned.

There is a wide range of project/s that can be undertaken to celebrate the Shire centenary. Careful consideration should be given to what is most appropriate.

A comprehensive history in book format is only one of many options. Conducting an audit of what history works/resources are already available is a good idea, and then a decision can be made about whether a centenary project/s should 'fill the gaps' or take a completely different tack.

Some of the possible print-media projects that could be considered are:

- a post-World War II history of the Shire
- an oral history project to augment the existing collection with associated publication
- a thematic Shire history such as an environmental history or one that focuses on the history of leisure and tourism
- a series of booklets featuring various themes/aspects of local government history
- booklets on individual suburbs

There are many other possibilities across a range of mediums that would result in different outcomes.

Members of the Historical Society will have plenty of suggestions for a centenary committee to consider.

I propose that Sutherland Shire Council establish a small centenary committee/working party which, as 2006 approaches, can be expanded as the need arises. *Pauline Curby*

Editors Note: These comments and ideas are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent the policy of this Bulletin or of the Historical Society.

Email for Ms Curby may be sent to;
pcurby@primus.com.au

THE FOUNDATION OF PERTH. W.A.

By Walter Abbott.

Before May 1819 the British, Dutch and French explorers had shown interest in the southwestern coast of new Holland. In that year Phillip Parker King explored and completed the maps of Matthew flinders from Albany to the Swan River. By December 1826 Edmund Lockyer founded a small convict settlement on King George Sound to forestall a French settlement.

The following March Captain James Stirling, with Charles Fraser, the colonial botanist from NSW, explored the area from the Swan River to the eastern hills, now known as the Darling Ranges. Although this area was all sand they gave a glowing report to Governor Darling and recommended that a settlement be established without delay. Sterling had good connections in London and permission was not delayed.

On the 2nd May 1829 Captain Sir Charles Howe Fremantle, RN, Commander of the "Challenger" arrived at the Swan River, hoisted the flag on the southern shore formally claiming New Holland for the British crown.

On the 18th June 1829 Captain James Sterling RN arrived on the HMS "Parmelia", proclaimed the colony of Western Australia, making the entire continent British territory. He then named the port "Fremantle" in honour of the commander of the "Challenger."

The six officials, who all arrived with their wives, were:

Captain James Sterling RN. Age 38, later Governor

Captain Sir Charles Howe Fremantle RN, age 29.

*Captain (later Admiral) Mark John Currie, RN
explorer*

*Captain John Septimus Roe, Surveyor-General of
W. Australia.*

Surgeon – William Mulligan

Captain Frederick Chidley Irwin, 63rd regiment

With the exception of Captain Sterling who was 38 years of age and 10 years older than Mrs Sterling, the other five officers were middle to late twenties, married and had no children. Officers with children were not chosen for the colony because there was no accommodation suitable for families.

The surveyor marked out an area suitable for the establishment of a capital city, ten miles up river from Fremantle and it was approved. Each one of these officers had a staff of men and from them a committee was formed to plan a foundation ceremony. Part of their plan was that the new city was to be founded by a woman, and this plan was submitted to Sydney and London. This meant that the women chosen would be carried across the mud at Fremantle to a longboat, taken 10 miles up the river, carried to shore and walk through the scrub for about 10 minutes and then up a hill to the site.

The committee approached Mrs Sterling. She thanked them but declined. The lady explained that she was expecting her first baby and thought it might be unwise to undertake such a task.

The committee approached Mrs. Fremantle and to their surprise she declined for the same reason, her first baby. Well it would have to be Mrs. Currie. When she was asked she told the committee that she was expecting her first baby and therefore declined their kind offer.

They had informed both Sydney and London that the ceremony was to be conducted by a woman so fortunately there were three more ladies: Mrs. Roe, Mrs. Mulligan and Mrs. Irwin in the colony. To the amazement of the committee they found that the three ladies were in the same state of health as the first three, all six mothers-to-be were expecting their first

babies. There was only one other chance of carrying out the plan – Helen!

Accompanying the “Parmelia” to Fremantle was the HMS “Sulphur” a store ship carrying both stores and troops. commanded by Captain William Townsend Dance RN. Also on board was Helen Barbara Dance, the wife of the captain, who travelled with her husband, the only other woman in the colony. The six wives of the officers did not rate Helen as one of them; they considered themselves the society ladies of Fremantle.

Helen was really a ‘nobody.’ but she was not pregnant. She was liked and always considered to be clean and polite but because of her shipboard living she had no good clothes and was somewhat careless in her appearance or so the six thought. However, the ladies got together and made sure Helen was suitably clothed for the important day. Borrowed clothes, including a new bonnet, one that had just arrived

from London for Mrs. Sterling and had not yet been worn.

On 12th August 1829 the official party, with Helen got into the boats and sailed 10 miles up the Swan River. Helen was carried across the mud and they all walked up the hill to the chosen site. The proclamation was read, Helen struck the chosen tree with an axe, the men of the 63rd regiment fired three volleys and they all gave three hearty cheers. Some bottles of porter were produced with the necessary glasses, and toasts were proposed to the King, the Queen, and the Prince of Wales and to Perth .The tree was felled and the wood used as souvenirs, including a jewel case later presented to Queen Victoria.

That site today is the corner of Hay and Barrack Streets, Perth. The army barracks were built on the site and later demolished in favour of the Perth Town Hall. So, a woman – a most unusual event in 1829, founded this beautiful city.



A NOTE ON CURRENT CURRENCY

We were having a little pre-meeting ‘chat’ here at the Sutherland Society with friends before starting the more serious business of the evening. Someone remarked that the centenary year of the Federation was drawing to a close and we had a few laughs thinking just how different things would have been comparing the way things were then to what they are to-day.

As an example of that;

It was usually only men who set down those foundation stones!

Women no doubt were considered too emotional to make important decisions. As a group we decided that in their own modest, non-obtrusive way women *have* made their mark! Such clichés as. “*the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world.*” were quoted and we were sure the best decisions were made after discussion on the marital bed.

We were thinking about just how hard it must have been for highly intelligent women to get a hearing and someone looked at a banknote and said “Who was Edith Cowan?” Well that led to a bit of interesting research on “women on banknotes.” and our clever group came up with the following titbits.

\$100.00 note: Nellie Melba who changed her name from Helen Porter to Nellie Melba (Melbourne) later Dame Nellie Melba. Famous Australian Opera singer

\$50.00 note: Edith Cowan 1861-1932 Australia’s first female Member of Parliament. Cowan was elected to the Western Australian Parliament in 1921, one year after legislation preventing women entering politics was repealed.

\$20.000 note: Mary Reibey, a pioneer who started and ran a successful shipping business in Sydney in the early 1800’s.

\$10.00 note: Mary Gilmore. Poet and Activist. On the \$10.00 note the rectangular border framing Gilmore’s face is made up of a micro-print of her most famous poem *No Foe Shall Gather Our Harvest*, written and published during the darkest years of World War 11 as an inspiration for the people of Australia

\$5.00 note: Catherine Spencer 1825-1910 Novelist and Social Reformer.

We might find a way to research the men on the notes next time. Can you help?

Maybe the “group” with it’s font of knowledge should try for “Sale of Century or “Wheel of Fortune.”

Marjorie Blackley
Publicity Officer

Membership Renewal 2002

The Society's financial year commences 1st of December each year and concludes on the 30th November of the following year.

In accordance with the above, membership renewals are due on the 1st of December each year. Renewal forms on this page (below) should be completed and handed to the Honorary Treasurer at the monthly general meeting or posted to the Society using the address shown on the renewal form. The renewal application should also contain the appropriate subscription fee.

To assist with accurate record keeping each member is required to complete an individual renewal form. It should be noted that a failure to pay the membership fee within the three months from the end of the Financial Year will result in a lapse of membership.

RECEIPTS Receipts may be collected from the Treasurer at monthly meetings. If you wish to have your receipt posted to you a stamped self addressed envelope must be included with your renewal form and payment.

Sutherland Shire Historical Society

Application for Renewal of Membership 2002

TITLE: Mr.Mrs.Ms.

Family Name.....

Given Name.....

Postal Address.....

.....Postcode.....Tel. No.....

Please find my Subscription for 2002 enclosed herewith
Annual Adult Subscription - \$20.00 + \$2.00 GST = \$22.00
Junior member / Fulltime Student - \$10.00 + \$1.00 GST = \$11.00

SignedDate.....

Post to -Treasurer, Sutherland Shire Historical Society, PO Box 389, Sutherland NSW 1499

Sutherland Shire Historical Society

Application for Renewal of Membership 2002

TITLE: Mr.Mrs.Ms.

Family Name.....

Given Name.....

Postal Address.....

.....Postcode.....Tel. No.....

Please find my Subscription for 2002 enclosed herewith
Annual Adult Subscription - \$20.00 + \$2.00 GST = \$22.00
Junior member / Fulltime Student - \$10.00 GST + \$11.00

SignedDate.....

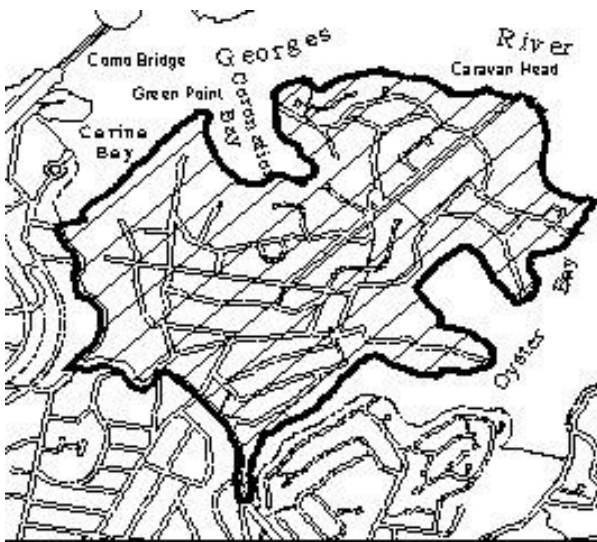
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A Short History of Oyster Bay

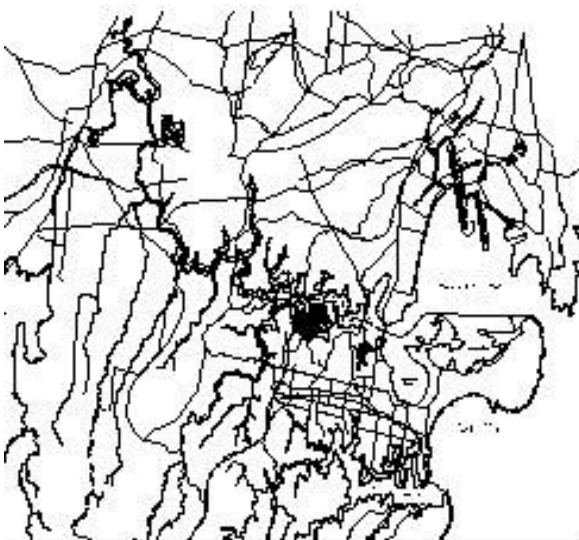
Oyster Bay is a suburb of Sydney, in the State of New South Wales, Australia. Oyster Bay is a very leafy suburb - particularly noticeable are the large eucalypts that dominate the suburb.

Figure 1. Locality Map of Oyster Bay



Much of the suburb of Oyster Bay is contained in a peninsula, known as Caravan Head. Being situated on a peninsula means that many Oyster Bay properties have water frontages to the Georges River, and many more have excellent river views.

Figure 2. Map of Oyster Bay



Oyster Bay has a strong village atmosphere. The residents of Oyster Bay have always had a well-developed community spirit and interest

in local affairs, and have been prepared to fight to preserve the beauty of their suburb.

This short history of Oyster Bay has been researched and prepared by members of the Oyster Bay Working Party, with assistance from Oyster Bay residents.

It traces the development of the suburb of Oyster Bay, from when it was first described by Robert Cooper Walker in 1868, to when it was part of Como and called the "By The Water Estate", and from then to the present day.

In the Beginning

Until the 1920s, areas which now encompass the suburbs of Como, Oyster Bay, Jannali and some other neighbouring river suburbs were all called Como ¹ simply because Como had the closest railway station (the railway bridge over the Georges River at Como was completed in 1885) ².

A Parish of Sutherland map drawn in 1925 shows the "Village of Oyster Bay" as a separate suburb ³, but the name does not appear to have been officially proclaimed under the Local Government Act until November 17, 1933 ³. The bay itself had been called "Oyster Bay" (because of the plentiful supply of oysters) much earlier, the name for this body of water first appearing on a survey map in 1840.

The history of Oyster Bay is inextricably linked to the history of Como and to the landowner, politician and visionary, Thomas Holt (1811-1888).

Figure 3. Hon. Thomas Holt.



Thomas Holt (*Figure 3*) came to Australia in 1842 and immediately became involved in property acquisition and politics. He was also interested in coal mining, oyster farming, sheep raising and agriculture ^{1,4}.

Between 1861 and 1875, Holt had purchased so much land in southern Sydney that his estate comprised about 13,000 acres, including almost all of the Sutherland peninsula, from Kurnell and Cronulla in the east, and to the Woronora River in the west ^{1,4}. He originally called this large tract of land the “South Botany Estate” ⁴, but by 1868 he had changed the name to “The Sutherland Estate” in memory of Forby Sutherland who was a seaman on the *Endeavour* ¹. By 1880, Thomas Holt had purchased some 3 million acres of land in New South Wales and Queensland ².

In 1881, the Holt-Sutherland Land Company Ltd. was formed, just before Holt returned to England where he died in 1888. The objective of this company was to permit leasing of the Sutherland Estate from Holt ¹. Soon after its formation, the company began subdividing large sections of the estate.

Descriptions of Life in the Early Days of Oyster Bay

Robert Cooper Walker helped to manage Thomas Holt’s affairs while he was overseas from 1866 to 1868. In 1868 Walker prepared a detailed description of the Sutherland Estate ¹. This report ⁵, written in copperplate handwriting, provided information on the topography, vegetation, soil type, and waterways of the estate.

The report describes the area around Oyster Bay under “Oyster Bay Paddocks No. 1 to 4 and Green Point Paddocks No. 1 and 2”. A number of paddocks and some fencing existed even then, and many trees had been ringbarked and the area burnt to assist clearing. The land in Oyster Bay was described as generally scrubby and rocky.

Walker observed a small freshwater creek running into the head of Oyster Bay, “*which comes down at the back of the hill.....through a deep gully.....and at the head of the gully,*

there is a small drip of about 20 feet fall, of good clear fresh water”. He also found that there was good grass feed around the banks of this gully. He describes Green Point as “*....an extraordinary shaped point of considerable size*” which was rocky and with little feed.

Valuable information on what Oyster Bay was like in the early days of settlement is contained in the unpublished book by Phyllis Alder, “*Mementos of Oyster Bay*” ⁶, and the unpublished memoirs of the Hall family members ⁷.

Additional information was obtained from a gathering of about 20 residents who had lived in Oyster Bay for more than 50 years. A morning tea, organised by Sutherland Shire Council, was held on 13 March 2001 so these long-term residents could relate their experiences of living in Oyster Bay in the early years. A list of long-term residents who attended the morning tea is included at **Appendix 1**.

The “*Sands Directory of Como, 1920*”, which is in the possession of Mr John Crumpton, lists the 19 residents of the Oyster Bay area in the year 1920. They were: Robert Love, Alfred Bateson, Herbert A. Hall, Henry J. Hall, R. Mathews, H. M. Forrester, Mignon Rowland, W. Hall, George Bell, Patrick Ryan, W. J. Smith, T. E. Withnall, Miss I. Gilmer, Thomas Gillogly, William Mosely, John Owen, Charles Cooper, J. Sauz and W. Romer.

Members of the Hall family relate how the creek described above by Robert Cooper Walker flowed from the direction of Green Point Road through Oyster Bay and ran into the bay. In the area where the newsagent now stands in Como Road, there was a “fairly deep waterhole” from which people carried water to their homes in kerosene tins and stored it in 44-gallon drums. Another creek ran from Georges River Road and Phillip Street into the bay. A reticulated water service from Woronora Dam was not connected to Oyster Bay until 1940.

In the early years, sandy beaches were present at the head of the bay and extended right up to Como Road ⁷. The water was crystal clear and the sand flats were covered with soldier crabs at low tide. Fish and prawns were plentiful in

the bay and in Oyster Creek and there were yabbies in the fresh water streams. People would often net prawns in the bay, then cook and eat them on the beach.

Locals claim that Oyster Bay was then nearly half a metre deeper than it is now, before the development of Kareela in 1968, which caused run-off into the bay of water containing large amounts of sediment from building sites.

The people of Oyster Bay have traditionally been devoted to fishing in the Georges River and Botany Bay, and the rate of boat ownership has always been high.

During World War II, when invasion of Australia by the Japanese seemed imminent, the authorities decided that all boats, no matter how small, had to be removed in case the Japanese used them to cross the river. Consequently, all the fishing boats and dinghies were collected and towed upstream to a holding area where they were to be destroyed as soon as the invasion occurred. This caused great angst amongst the fisher folk - one gentleman supposedly pleading that they take his wife but leave his boat⁶. The boats were returned at the end of the war, unfortunately in poor condition.

Until the late 1920s, there were no constructed roads in Oyster Bay⁷. A bush track to Como railway station began at the bay and led through a gully which started at about the present intersection of Green Point and Oyster Bay Roads. Stepping stones were then used to cross Carina Creek and the track then followed across what is now Carina Bay Reserve. This track was used by children to go to Como School or, before this school opened in 1921, to catch the train to a school in Mortdale. The track was very rough - cows grazed on it, snakes abounded, and Aborigines (always friendly) were camped in the area⁷.

Other bush tracks led towards Jannali and to what is now the suburb of Kareela. One track through heavy bush followed, in general, the present roads of Loves Avenue, Carvers Road and Bates Drive towards the Princes Highway, and led over Oyster Creek (earlier called "Kidd Creek"). A log over the creek was the only means of crossing it. When people at Connells

Point wanted to get to Caravan Head they used a pre-arranged signal by standing on a certain rock, calling "Coo-ee" and waving a white handkerchief. It was hoped that a boat would then row across from Caravan Head to pick them up⁶.

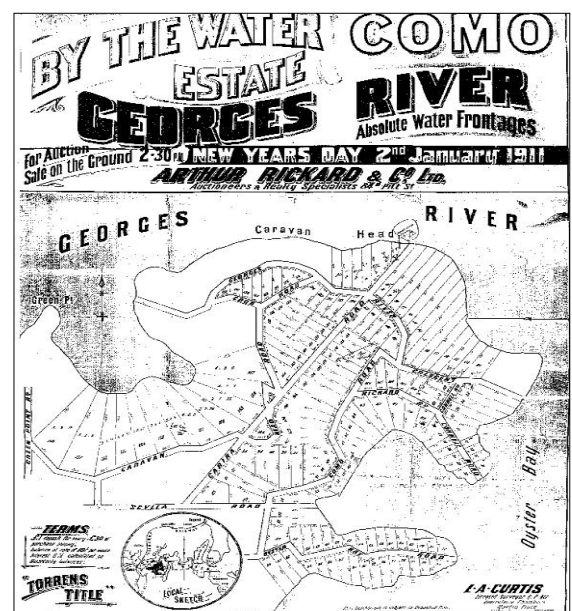
Many Aboriginal middens were present on the shores of Oyster Bay. People would find large deposits of shells when digging in their back yards, and others were discovered when the suburb of Kareela was developed. Rock carvings by Aborigines can still be found at Caravan Head⁶.

The closest doctor in these early days was Dr. Eli Webb at Mortdale (**Ed:** See P6). When someone in Oyster Bay was seriously ill, a friend or relative would go to Mortdale by train to bring Dr. Webb back to Como station on the train, where a sulky would meet him⁷. Alternatively, people would row across to Neverfail Bay and bring a doctor back from Oatley. By the 1930s, Dr. Sanbrook could be called from Sutherland.

The Subdivision and Development of Oyster Bay

Arthur Rickard was a prominent estate agent and developer in Sutherland Shire in the 1910s and 1920s. After an Act of Parliament to break Holt's will he was able to lease land in the Oyster Bay area from the Holt-Sutherland Land Company on the condition that he developed and sold it quickly under Torrens Title¹.

Figure 4: By the Waters Estate



In the 1910s and early 1920s, Oyster Bay was called “By The Water Estate” and was included in the suburb of Como. “By the Water Estate – Como” was the first major sale of land in Oyster Bay and was auctioned by Arthur Rickard and Co. Ltd on 2 January 1911 (Figure 4). The poster advertising the sale of the subdivision included the street layout, which remains the same today. A notation on this poster indicated that building blocks (31m x 89m) in Carina Road sold then for £14 (\$28). Despite this seemingly low price, sales were slow, many people considering that Oyster Bay was too far from their workplace.

Many purchasers erected tents on their blocks, which prompted the Sutherland Shire Council to prohibit tents on blocks less than 250 feet (76m) long¹. “Ward’s Estate” (Ward Crescent) Oyster Bay was not subdivided and sold until January 1936. The land was advertised as “some of the best water frontages ever offered for sale on the Georges River” (Figure 5). Mr Harry Ward, who owned the land, was one of the original oyster farmers. A vineyard occupied the area until it was subdivided⁶. Note that the estate agent’s brochure shows the position of the post office in 1936 as being on Como Road, about where the entrance to the playing fields is now situated.

Figure 5: Wards Estate



The “Getyunga Estate Como” was subdivided by Arthur Rickard & Co Ltd, and was sold in 1922 (Figure 6). It comprised properties on

Juvenis Avenue, Getyunga Road and Georges River Crescent. The advertisement describes the Estate as being subdivided “so that the most beautiful natural features are not only preserved but made available to all residents” and it claimed that going to Getyunga Estate would rejuvenate you!

Figure 6: Getyunga Estate



Other major subdivisions in Oyster Bay were:

- “Como Park Estate” subdivided and sold in 1928, and included Oyster Bay Road, Phillip Street, Waterview Street, Georges River Road, Carvers Road, Short Street, Green Point Road, Caravan Head Road, Scylla Road, Drummond Road, Highview Crescent and Riverview Road.
- Rickard’s “Coveside Estate” subdivided and sold in 1912, and included the southern side of the headland of Oyster Bay Road.
- Craig & Holman’s “Jannali Station Estate” subdivided and sold in 1935, included Loves Avenue, Short Street and Tenth Avenue
- Tiranna Place and Farrer Place were developed in the 1960s⁸. Max and Ann Kolln owned land on Caravan Head Road, and were involved in the subdivision of this area, including the development of both Farrer Place and Shipwright Place. Their children, Ian Kolln and Patty Kolln still live in Oyster Bay.

In 1919, Sutherland Council announced that owners of waterfront blocks would be allowed

to reclaim an area of the Georges River in front of their property, as long as the work was completed within two years⁶. Separate titles were issued for this reclaimed land. Several owners, particularly in the Caravan Head area, took advantage of this opportunity and constructed sandstone seawalls into the river up to 15 metres below the mean high water mark. These still stand today. In 1963 Sutherland Council resumed all boatshed sites in Oyster Bay below high water mark.

Oyster Bay Road was bitumen sealed in 1950, and Georges River Crescent, Caravan Head Road and some other main roads in Oyster Bay were sealed by the mid-1950s. There was considerable controversy over road sealing, in that some of the roads were “one-coat tar sealed” – a cheap and temporary method.

In 1936, Oyster Bay residents petitioned Sutherland Council for the construction of a causeway from Kangaroo Point to Oyster Bay to decrease travel time to Sylvania.

Bates Drive was opened in 1962, despite initial problems with the road surface, and significantly shortened the time taken to drive to Sylvania and the CBD. Bates Drive was used for the first time by the funeral procession of Mr Alec Jones, who was the manager of the Bank of New South Wales, Jannali.

The first cottage in Oyster Bay was built in 1910 on what is now No.96 Como Road, opposite the present shops. It is still standing today (*Figure 7*). The cottage, named “Coo-ee”, was built by Samuel and Eliza Hall⁷. Two years later the couple moved to Tivoli Esplanade to be closer to the railway station.

Figure 7: No. 96 Como Road (the first cottage in Oyster Bay)



A second cottage, at No.102 Como Road, was built a few months after “Coo-ee” by Herb Hall, Samuel Hall’s son. This cottage is also still standing⁶. Other cottages were built by Bill Hall and Henry Hall in the vicinity of the original “Coo-ee”⁶. At high tide the water would sometimes flood into the backyards of these houses. The Halls dug a channel in Oyster Bay which ran almost to the back of these houses, so that at high tide, goods could be unloaded from a barge close to the back door⁷. This channel also allowed them to go fishing at night. The channel is still present and is used as a stormwater drain. The Council for future expansion of the playing fields has purchased some of the houses in this row, opposite the shops in Como Road.

The conversion of the intertidal region (“the mudflats”) at the head of Oyster Bay into a sports field began in July 1960, when the Council resumed the rear of some properties in Como Road. Digging commenced in November 1960 and the area was filled with rubbish then topsoil. The first soccer field was completed in time for the 1962 season. The Oyster Bay Sports Fields (*Figure 8*) were completed by 1963⁶.



Figure 8: Oyster Bay Playing Fields

The Origins of Oyster Bay Road Names

Many Oyster Bay roads were named after local identities or famous persons⁶. The following list identifies the origins of some of Oyster Bay’s streets:

<i>Bates Drive</i>	Named after Councillor Keith Bates, councilor of Sutherland Council between 1954-1968 and also President.	<i>Farrer Place</i>	Named after William Farrer, famous for his development of disease-resistant strains of wheat.
<i>Borambil Place</i>	Named after the Aboriginal word meaning “place near an initiation ground”.	<i>Getyunga Street</i>	Named after the name of the first house in the area.
<i>Caravan Head Road</i>	Caravan Head is named after “Caravan Rock”, a large rock standing on the point of Caravan Head.	<i>Loves Avenue</i>	Named after Mr & Mrs R Love, who were local identities in Oyster Bay.
<i>Caroline Street</i>	Named after Caroline Chisholm (1808-1877) the female emancipist.	<i>Manning Street</i>	Named after Mrs Manning of Oyster Bay Road, a local identity.
<i>Carvers Road</i>	Named after Mr Carver, the original land owner.	<i>Phillip Street</i>	Named after Governor Arthur Phillip.
<i>Como Road</i>	Named after a lake in Milan, Italy.	<i>Rickard Road</i>	Named after Mr Arthur Rickard, estate agent and developer who developed much of Oyster Bay.
<i>Connell Road</i>	Named after John Connell, a rich merchant who, in the mid-1800s, owned large tracts of land in Sutherland Shire.	<i>Sage Avenue</i>	Named after Mr Fred Sage, an Oyster Bay pioneer who came to the area in 1918.
<i>Cook Road</i>	Named after Captain James Cook.	<i>Scylla Road</i>	Named after the sea monster in Greek mythology.
<i>Drummond Road</i>	Named after James Drummond, the 16 th Earl of Perth.	<i>Ward Crescent</i>	Named after Mr Harry Ward, the original owner of the land.

Aboriginal Presence in Oyster Bay

The *Dharawal* tribe of Aboriginals occupied the land south of Botany Bay down to Bulli⁹. Aboriginal tribes are groups with a common language, and tribes are divided into “clans” or “hordes”. A clan is a group of people descended from a common ancestor and who claim a definite area of land and its sacred sites.

The clan who lived in the Oyster Bay area was probably part of the *Gweagal* clan, who lived on the southern shores of Botany Bay and occupied much of the Cronulla-Sutherland peninsula⁹. They were the northernmost clan of the *Dharawal*-speaking people, and were distinctive because they put resin in their hair to give it a mop-like appearance⁹. It was probably *Gweagal* people who witnessed the landing of Captain Cook at Kurnell in 1770.

Oyster Bay, being such a prolific source of fish, oysters and other shellfish, would have been popular with the Aboriginals, and the large number of middens found in the area is a testament to their presence.

Caravan Head was named after Caravan Rock, which is a large, long, hollow rock shaped something like a caravan or a covered wagon. It is situated on private property right on the point of Caravan Head. Legend has that it was used as an Aboriginal meeting place.

Heritage Houses in Oyster Bay

The only heritage-listed building in Oyster Bay is “Deseret” at No. 2 Sage Avenue (*Figure 9*). Robert Love built “Deseret” over a 10-year period, from 1920 to 1930 where he lived until he died. The home is constructed from cast concrete blocks^{10,11} which were made by crushing local sandstone and mixing it with cement (brought in by boat) and water, and casting the blocks in a mould.

After Robert Love’s death in 1967, Dr. Graham Smith, who still lives on the property, bought the house in 1969. Mrs Enid Maguire of Short

Street is a daughter of the Loves, and grew up in “Deseret”.

Figure 9: Deseret (2 Sage Ave)



Other cast concrete block houses were built in Oyster Bay, at No. 26 Rickard Road, No. 22 Como Road, 119 Oyster Bay Road and No.76 Drummond Road. The houses in Rickard Road and Como Road were built and owned in the early 1930s by William Merchant, while the house in Drummond Road was built and owned in 1948 by Jack Midgley¹⁰.

The houses at No. 2 Sage Avenue, No. 22 Como Road, No. 119 Oyster Bay Road and No. 26 Rickard Road were all part of the “By the Water Estate” subdivision of 1911 (*Figure 4*), and No 76 Drummond Road was part of the “Como Park Estate” subdivision of 1928.

No 26 Rickard Road (“Remington”) was assessed in 1998 for its heritage value and, despite a favourable report¹⁰, it was demolished (except for a few walls) and a new house was built on the site. All the other concrete block houses are still standing.

Schools, Shops and other Services in Oyster Bay

This section gives an overview of the history of schooling, shopping and other services in Oyster Bay. A separate directory of services in Oyster Bay for 2001 has been written as a companion document to this history and is included at **Appendix 2**.

Schooling in Oyster Bay

Prior to 1921, when Como Public School opened, the children of Oyster Bay had to catch the steam train at Como station to attend a school at Mortdale. The first schooling available at Oyster Bay was in a private home at 31 Georges River Crescent, and was run by Miss Heffernan⁶. This school closed in 1935.

Oyster Bay residents continuously petitioned the government for “a public school at Oyster Bay”. The beautifully written letter by Mrs. Rose Love to the Education Department in 1918 ¹¹ is an example of one such petition. She explained the great advantages of raising children in Oyster Bay; all that was needed to complete their paradise, she wrote, was a government school! Many more letters were written by Mrs. Love, Mr Sage, Mr Hall and others before the Education Department finally agreed in 1941 to an Oyster Bay school.

Robert and Rose Love owned 25 acres in the Sage Avenue/Short Street/Phillip Street area, which included a substantial orchard. Between 1920 and 1930 they built the cast concrete brick house, which is still standing at 2 Sage Avenue. Mr Rose later sold a substantial part of his land to the Education Department as part of the new Oyster Bay school site for £200. The purchase of the site for the school was completed by January 1942 ¹¹. Rose Love died in 1960, aged 79 years and Robert Love died seven years later aged 89 years ¹¹.

A classroom from the Woronora Dam School was transported to the Oyster Bay school site at the end of 1943. The NSW Minister for Education officially opened Oyster Bay Public School in Sage Avenue in March 1944. There were 48 pupils in 1944, and a Mr Albert Ivers was the first headmaster. While the school was being built, primary education was given in the Oyster Bay Community Hall, and infant's education in the Congregational Church in Como Road. The Infants School was later built in 1955 in Phillip Street ^{6,11}.

Figure 10: Oyster Bay Public School



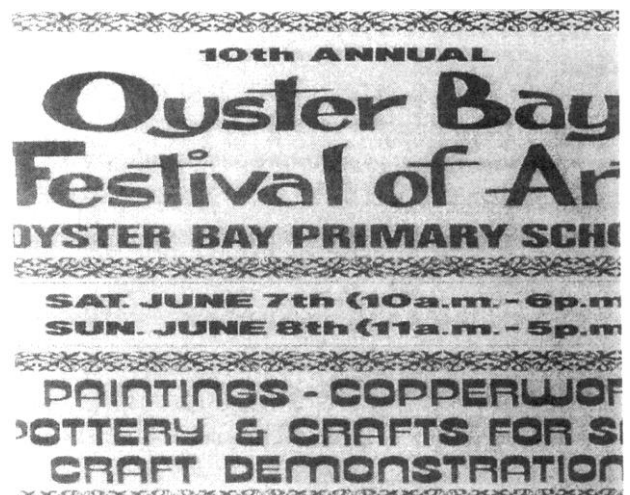
St Joseph's School in Oyster Bay Road opened in 1953 with 45 students and two Presentation

Sisters (an order of teaching sisters based in San Francisco). In 1978, Mrs Maureen Cosgrove became the first lay principal of St Joseph's after the Presentation Sisters withdrew from their school duties. The school now teaches from the kindergarten level to Year 6.

Since 1971, the Oyster Bay Festival of Arts has been held annually to raise funds for Oyster Bay Public School. The festival is run by local volunteers, and has always been very successful. Paintings, pottery, plants, and a wide range of other crafts are sold at the Festival by local people as well as by artists from wide afield.

Oyster Bay has been home to some well-known artists, including Bert Flugelman who lived in Oyster Bay Road, Leonis Urbonus, who lived in Como Road, and Jan Etteridge, who still lives in Green Point Road. Many residents of Oyster Bay will remember the time in the early 1970s when the oxy-acetylene gas bottles used by Bert Flugelman for his metal sculptures exploded with a tremendous bang that was heard over most of the area.

Figure 11: Oyster Bay Arts Festival Poster



Shopping in Oyster Bay

There were no shops in Oyster Bay until 1925, when an old Scottish couple, James and Annie McMillan opened a general store in the front of their house on the corner of Oyster Bay Road and Sage Avenue, opposite where the post office now stands ⁶. This store was affectionately dubbed “Anthony Horderns” after the large city store of the time.

Figure 12: General Store, Sage Avenue (circa 1954)



Some other early shopkeepers in Oyster Bay included: Greentree and Voyce, who operated a large general store in the 1940s-1950s, the Camillos family who traded in electrical and hardware in the late 1950s, John Prendergast who opened a hardware store in 1975, and Peter Webeck who opened the first pharmacy in 1954, and later moved to Picton and became the first mayor of that town⁶. The pharmacy was taken over by Brian Daley in 1959.

The Crumptions ran the general store in Oyster Bay for many years, while Ernie Denford became a legend in Oyster Bay for his fruit and vegetable shop. The Denford family owned a large farm on land off Carvers Road, near Oyster Creek, where they grew vegetables and fruit for their greengrocers shop. Ernie Denford operated this shop for many years and retired only recently.

There is also a general store at Caravan Head, on the corner of Carina Road and Georges River Crescent, which has been operating since 1954. It has had many owners - noteworthy were the Crimmins family, who ran it successfully for many years.

For a short while in 1958, there was a butcher's shop next to it, followed by a hairdressing salon. Another general store that operated for many years was the one on Riverview Road, just around the corner from Green Point Road.

The Oyster Bay Auto Centre at the corner of Georges River Road and Carvers Road was first built in 1963, and expanded and re-built in 1974⁶.

Getting around in Oyster Bay

In 1932, when the population of Oyster Bay was about 300, Mr Frank Lissman of Rickard Road began operating a two-horse stagecoach from Oyster Bay to Como station, terminating at Birk's store, where the Café de Como now stands⁶. The fare was sixpence (5 cents)⁶. This was the first public transport in Oyster Bay. A year later (1933), the Progress Association provided a second-hand Chevrolet, driven by Mr Arthur Frey, to replace the stagecoach.

Figure 13: Getting around in the early days



Vic Britten bought the first bus in 1938, and transported children from the Oyster Bay Post Office to Como Public School and back for a fare of one penny (1 cent). Mr. Mick Jennings bought out Mr. Britten in 1943 and introduced larger buses. The bus route to Jannali was established in 1953⁶.

Mr. Reg Lee purchased the first private car in Oyster Bay in the 1930s and had to compete with the children in their billy carts for the road, which they gave up reluctantly.

Working in Oyster Bay

Mr. Bill Sheldon operated the first factory in Oyster Bay from 1945 at 23-25 Riverview Road, on waterfront land. The company was called South Bridge Tool and Instrument Company, and Bill made tools such as clippers and gauges, steel fences, and steel garden furniture. He also repaired organ pipes for the City of Sydney Town Hall organ and other large organs along with undertaking contract work for the railways and repairing boat engines. Bill died in Oyster Bay in 1974.

Long-term residents recall that there was also a small shoe polish factory, and a boat repair yard operated at Green Point.

Is there a Doctor in Oyster Bay?

At one time, there were two medical practices in Oyster Bay, one in Como Road, and the other in Oyster Bay Road ⁶. The Oyster Bay Road practice closed in 1958. Doctors Pearson, Alchin, Maybloom and Gaal ran the practice in Como Road, on rotation with their Jannali and Como surgeries. Dr. Lester Fuller took over in 1959, and was joined by Dr. Roberts in 1977.

Postal Services

In the early years of Oyster Bay, several sites served as the local post office. In 1923, the Loves conducted postal services from “Deseret” in Sage Avenue. During the 1930s, Mr and Mrs Bell and their daughter, Mrs Reid, provided a postal service from their house in Como Road. next door to “Coo-ee”. Mr. and Mrs. Love resumed a postal service at “Deseret” during World War II (they built a small hut near their front gate for postal purposes).

When the Loves retired from this work, postal services were provided by Mrs. Murray from a garage in Oyster Bay Road, just up from Waterview Street. In the late 1940s, the post office moved to its present site on the corner of Oyster Bay Road and Sage Avenue in a newly constructed building. The first managers were Mr and Mrs Mudge. The Worthingtons took over in 1965 ⁶.

Mail deliveries began when the permanent post office was built. Mrs. Daisy Larkin made the deliveries on horseback ⁶.

The Eventide Homes

A retirement village, The Eventide Homes, was built in two stages, during 1961 and 1965, in Oyster Bay Road, near the post office. The complex consisted of 43 units. The site was sold in the mid-1990s and the residents gradually moved out. A new retirement village is planned for the site.

Community Enterprises in Oyster Bay

Progress Associations

The first Oyster Bay Progress Meetings began in about 1920, and were held on Sunday mornings in the open air outside the home of Barney Hall and George Bell in Como Road. Later the meetings moved to Herb Hall’s shed

where they were held at night. The original members of the first Progress Association were Mr and Mrs Sage, Mr and Mrs Love, Mr and Mrs Bell, Paddy Ryan, Herb Hall, Arthur Tovey and Joe Ward ⁶.

Mr Paddy Ryan was an expert stonemason who owned several blocks of land in the Carina Road area. The first Oyster Bay Community Hall was built in Como Road in the late 1930s using volunteer labour, including that of Messrs Sage, Love and Almond. In the early 1950s, a new hall, an ex-army hut, was situated further along Como Road. Sutherland Council built the present Community Hall, which was opened in April 1970 ⁶. A range of organisations currently uses it.

Figure 14: Oyster Bay Community Hall



East Como (Green Point) Progress Association meetings were first held in the home of the Stevensons in Caravan Head Road. In 1950, the Association approached Sutherland Council for land for a Progress Association hall. The Association was granted an area of land of about 50 x 300 metres on the corner of Caravan Head Road and Green Point Road. This is the site where the Community Hall, Scout Hall and Kindergarten now stand.

Before the Progress Association had a hall, they would hold open-air dances using packing case timber for a dance floor ⁶. On one occasion, a visiting Scottish pipe band piped their way by road from Como Station to Green Point. The first part of Green Point’s progress hall was built in 1956, and the first Community Centre Committee meeting in the hall was held in October 1958 ⁶. After the East Como Progress Association moved into their new hall, the organisation was re-named “Green Point Progress Association”.

In one meeting of the Green Point Progress Association in the 1960s, a Councillor from Sutherland Shire Council attended to hear the pleas of the residents for steps to be constructed on the rough track from Riverview Road to Carina Bay. Many residents used this track as a shortcut to Como railway station, but found that it was slippery and dangerous, especially after dark. The Councillor said that funds could not be found, as there were other more urgent projects. However, on his way back to Como station after the meeting he slipped and had a nasty fall on this very track. Funds were made available for the steps shortly afterwards.¹

Scouting and Guides in Oyster Bay

The scout hall in Como Road was built in the early 1950s from an ex-army hut, and was used for meetings of the 1st Oyster Bay Scout Group and the 1st Oyster Bay Brownies⁶. The first meeting of the Scout Group took place in August 1954. The first Guides Group meeting was held in 1959. Later, some of the group moved their headquarters to Green Point and the remainder followed in the mid-1990s.

Since 1997, the hall has been used by the Wood Turners Guild, who call the hall their “Cubby House”. Notable amongst many people who gave their time for the scouts was Mr. Tom Sawyer, who was also prominent in the Oyster Bay Progress Association.

Figure 15: Oyster Bay Scout Hall



Astronomy

The Sutherland Astronomical Society was formed in 1961 when a small group of people,

including Keith Selby and Frank Napier, decided to form an astronomical society and build an observatory south of the Georges River. Until the late 1970s, the society was known as the James Cook Astronomers Club.

The Green Point Observatory was built on council land at the corner of Caravan Head Road and Green Point Road. Stage 1, which consisted of a dome, library and a 41cm Newtonian telescope, was completed in the mid-1960s. Stage 2, consisting of a building housing a 50-seat meeting hall, was completed in the early 1970s. The final stage (Stage 3), being a roll-off roof observatory and storeroom, was completed in 1996. A state-of-the-art 35 cm Schmidt Cassegrain telescope is now mounted in the roll-off roof observatory.

Important astronomical observations and measurements are made routinely by society members. The society has over 120 members and has hosted many amateur events. In addition, annual public open nights are held.

Religious Services

The first religious services in Oyster Bay were held in the early 1920s in the home of Mr and Mrs Herb Hall. Pastor Phil Duncan and his wife Molly, who were Pentecostals from Oatley, conducted Sunday School and a service for adults afterwards^{6,7}. In 1926, Herb Hall donated part of his property for the building of a church hall. Donations were collected and the hall was built by volunteer labour, under the supervision of Mr. Henry Kolln and Pastor Duncan⁶.

Catholic services were first held in Oyster Bay in the late 1940s, when Mass was conducted by a Father McManus in the home of Mr and Mrs Hoskins in Oyster Bay Road. A small wooden church was built on the site of the present St. Josephs Church, and it opened in 1952. Dr. E. B. Clancy, the Archbishop of Sydney dedicated the present St. Josephs Catholic Church, on August 3rd, 1985.

Oyster Bay Congregational Church opened in Como Road in October 1956. It became the Oyster Bay Uniting Church in June 1977. It closed in 1988, and most of its members transferred to the Jannali Uniting Church.

¹ Mr David Farr-Wharton, private communication

Oyster Bay Baptist Church, in Caravan Head Road, opened in 1962. In the three years prior to 1962, Sunday School had been held in the Green Point Progress Association hall.

Caravan Head Reserve

Caravan Head Reserve is a 2-hectare area of natural bush situated on the corners of Caravan Head Road, Cook Road, Georges River Crescent and Tiranna Place. The re-zoning of this parcel of land as passive recreation is a classic example of how a determined group of citizens can save bushland from development.

The land was owned by the NSW Department of Education for at least 50 years (the block was shown as a school site on a 1933 Parish of Sutherland map), but had never been used for a school. The bush had been used by generations of Oyster Bay children as a natural playground. In 1982 the Education Department declared the land surplus and offered it to the Land Commission for disposal. In 1991 the Land Commission invited tenders from private companies for the development of the land. Detailed sub-division plans were drawn up; these involved the building of a large number of town houses and villas on the block.

A committee of local residents, led firstly by Ms. Lyn Lee of Georges River Crescent, and then by Mr. Peter Webb of Caravan Head Road, had been active for over 10 years in an attempt to save the bush for passive recreation. A census of flora and fauna in the bush had been carried out, and an architectural plan commissioned for future organisation of the area as a park and native flora reserve. Council was intensively lobbied. However, with the imminent sale of the land for development, all appeared lost. In a last attempt to save the bush, Mr. Bob Carr, then Leader of the Opposition, was invited to visit the site, where he spoke to committee members and pledged his support. A deputation of committee members also visited the NSW Parliament and convinced most independent members of Parliament to give their support for saving the bush.

The result was that the government withdrew the development approval and allowed Sutherland Council to rezone the land in 1993 to “6(a) - public recreation and environmental protection and bushland reserves”. A Bush

Care Group now operates in looking after Caravan Head Bushland Reserve.

The Oyster Industry

When settlers first arrived in the Oyster Bay area they found huge numbers of oysters freely attached to the aerial roots of the mangroves. Oysters were also in abundance growing on rocks and in the mud of deeper water.

However, by 1870 oysters were so depleted in some parts of the Georges River, as a result of over-collection, that the government placed a ban for several years on oyster removal¹². The public was stripping the foreshores of oysters, while professionals were removing huge quantities by dredging. Both mature and immature oysters were being taken indiscriminately.

Despite this ban, the Sydney Rock Oyster had almost disappeared from Oyster Bay by 1874. In 1884, an Act of Parliament was passed for the preservation of oysters by regulating their rate of collection¹².

In the early 1870s, Mr Albert Emerson (the great grandfather of Councillor Dawn Emerson’s husband, Cliff) won a tender for the harvesting of oysters from the whole of Botany Bay, Georges River and its tributaries. For this purpose he employed men in diving suits and South Sea Island divers. He also developed a successful method for cultivating oysters on sandbanks according a a 1873 Fisheries Inspector.

Thomas Holt, in the early 1870s, introduced the French method of oyster cultivation in Gwawley Bay, Sylvania¹². This method involved digging drains or channels (“claires”) in which oysters were placed to fatten. Holt constructed a large system of claires in Gwawley Bay to establish, in Georges River, the first private commercial oyster farm in Australia.

Commercial oyster farming in Oyster Bay commenced in the late 1920s¹³. The Sydney Rock Oyster (*Saccostrea glomerata*; previously *S. commercialis*) is recognised as one of the best eating oysters in the world. By 1968, the popularity and value of these oysters were so high, and the Georges River was such a prolific source of them, that oyster farmers had to begin armed patrols to prevent theft from their leases.

Oyster farming in the Georges River, as with all other forms of farming, has always been threatened by diseases and pests. In 1888 the fledgling industry was almost wiped out by the oyster mud worm¹². Later threats involved toxic algae, water pollution, tributyltin (TBT), and the Pacific Oyster.

The latest threat to the Sydney Rock Oyster is QX disease, which first appeared in the Oyster Bay region of the river in 1992. QX (Queensland Unknown) disease is caused by an organism called a *protozoan* (not a virus as is commonly written), which affects the oysters in the summer months¹⁴. Georges River oysters have always been affected in the winter months by another protozoan-caused disease, Winter Mortality. The origin of QX disease is unknown, but it may have been brought to Australia in ballast water from a foreign ship.

There is no evidence that general water pollution is involved in the toxicity of the QX protozoan to oysters. However, with the QX protozoan active in summer, the oysters cannot recover in the summer months from the effects of Winter Mortality¹⁴.

Production of oysters in the Georges River is still continuing, but at a greatly reduced rate (about 70,000 dozen oysters were harvested from the river in 1999-2000)¹³. The number of oyster farmers now is about half of that in the early 1990s. The future of the Sydney Rock Oyster seems to depend on research currently being carried out by the NSW Department of Fisheries and the Oyster Farmers' Association to select and develop a strain of this oyster that is resistant to QX disease¹³.

Pollution in the Georges River

The salt water section of Georges River can be divided into *The Upper River* (Liverpool Weir to Salt Pan Creek) and *The Lower River* (Salt Pan Creek to Botany Bay)¹⁴. Oyster Bay is on the Lower Georges River.

As a result of massive sewage input into the river from the Glenfield and Liverpool sewage treatment plants, water quality of the Georges River deteriorated steadily from the 1950s, and

was poorest in the late 1970s to the mid-1980s. However, in the mid-1980s, the effluent from the Glenfield and Liverpool plants was diverted and pumped directly to the Malabar ocean outfall. This brought about an immediate and dramatic improvement in the levels of the nutrients nitrate and phosphate, of the faecal coliform count, and of heavy metals in the river water.

Heavy metal concentrations in sediment and in oysters have also fallen significantly over the past 15 years¹⁴. Except after periods of heavy and prolonged rain, water quality and sediment quality in the Lower Georges River now meet health guidelines. Heavy metals, pesticides and other pollutants in fish and oysters taken from the Lower Georges River are well below maximum permissible levels.

There are no health risks in eating fish from the Georges River except, perhaps, in those taken from the upper reaches of some of the tributary creeks, especially Prospect Creek and Salt Pan Creek.

By far the greatest source of pollution in the Georges River is now urban run off from stormwater drains¹⁴. Water from roads and other paved and non-absorbent surfaces contains a host of pollutants, including animal faeces, cigarette butts, heavy metals from cars and guttering, pesticides from gardens, general rubbish, illegal substances put down drains, massive amounts of suspended solids and huge volumes of fresh water from rain and domestic uses (eg, washing of cars).

Much of the rainwater that would normally be absorbed into the bush, is now directed from paved and other non-absorbent surfaces into the river via stormwater drains. The result is that the river is now almost certainly less saline than it was in the past. No-one knows what effect this decrease in average salinity has had on aquatic life. Suspended solids in urban run off decrease photosynthesis and smother seagrass beds. Also, seeds and cuttings of exotic plants are washed down the drains and into the river, where they can then establish themselves on river banks¹⁴.

The effects of urban run-off can be minimised through increasing public education, the use of water-permeable paving, and the installation of more sediment traps and litter screens on stormwater drains. It is also important that traps on stormwater drains be regularly cleaned.

Overflow from sewerage systems during heavy rain also leads to pollution of the river by adding faecal bacteria and suspended solids. This problem is being addressed by Sydney Water in a \$2 billion project which aims to reduce the sewage overflow problem by 80-90% by the year 2015¹⁴.

Oyster Creek has also suffered pollution in the past from a variety of domestic and industrial sources. It was also subject to flooding, especially in the 1980s, which affected some nearby houses. Oyster Creek is now dredged to prevent serious flooding.

A Community Profile of Oyster Bay in 1996

This section gives a brief overview of the population of Oyster Bay. The data are drawn from the 1996 ABS Census^{15,16}.

Population

In 1996, there were 4,970 people living in Oyster Bay, which represents 2.5% of the population of the Sutherland Shire. A high percentage (38%) of the population in Oyster Bay is within the 25-49 year age group.

Birthplace & Religion

A high percentage of persons living in Oyster Bay were born in Australia (83%), with 9% being born in Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa, UK & USA. Christianity is the dominate religion in Oyster Bay (83%), which reflects the homogenous ethnicity of the area.

Dwelling Structure

The majority of dwellings in Oyster Bay are separate houses (96%). The remainder of the dwelling stock in Oyster Bay is generally semi-detached accommodation.

Income & Employment

On average a lower proportion of Oyster Bay households are in the lower income brackets and a higher proportion of Oyster Bay households are in the higher income brackets than households in the Shire as a whole. These relatively high-income levels reflect the high employment rates (96%) and high number of Oyster Bay residents employed in professional fields (22%).

Car Ownership

70 % of households in Oyster Bay own two or more vehicles however shire wide only 55% of households own two or more vehicles.

Oyster Bay 2001 Community Directory

Oyster Bay is in E Ward

E Ward Councillors Genevieve Rankin

Dawn Emerson Steven Simpson

Members of Parliament

Mr Barry Collier MP

State Member for Miranda

4/50-52 Urunga Parade, Miranda. 9525 6370

Mr Bruce Baird MP Federal Member for Cook

551 Kingsway, Miranda 9525 8200

Children's Services

Oyster Bay Before and After School Care, Oyster Bay Primary School, Short Street. 9528 5009

Long Day Care – Commercial

Oyster Bay Pre-school Kindergarten, 60-62 Georges River Crescent 9528 4982

Pre-School Kindergartens – Community Based

The Point Preschool, Green Point Road

Schools

Oyster Bay Public School, Short St, Oyster Bay 9528 7525

Oyster Bay St. Joseph's Primary School, Oyster Bay Road, Como 9528 8716

Precinct Residents' Association, Oyster Bay

Secretary: Steve Fisher, 118 Oyster Bay Road, Oyster Bay 2225 95891087

Australian Christian Churches

Oyster Bay Christian Church – 78 Caravan Head Rd, Oyster Bay 2225 9528 9357

Arts and Crafts

Sydney Wood Turners Guild – Southern Region. “The Cubbyhouse”, Como Rd, Oyster Bay 9589 0648

Sydney Woodcarving Group Inc. Scout Hall, Como Road, Oyster Bay 9807 9546

Sutherland Astronomical Society

Green Point Community Centre, Green Point Road, Oyster Bay 95286095

Special Use Reserves

Dog Exercise – Carina Bay Rsve, Oyster Bay
Horse Exercise Area – Carina Bay Reserve, Oyster Bay

Regular Events

Astronomy Open Nights 9589 1014

Oyster Bay Arts and Crafts Festival

Community Centres and Halls

Oyster Bay Community Hall, 115 Como Road, Oyster Bay 9528 4660

Oyster Bay Christian Church Hall, 78 Caravan Head Road, Oyster Bay 95286997

Oyster Bay Primary School, Short Street, Oyster Bay 95287525

Sporting Fields

Oyster Bay Oval, Oyster Bay Road, Oyster Bay

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Figure Legends

Figure 1. Map of Oyster Bay in 2001.

Figure 2. Map of *South Botany Estate* (Thomas Holt).

Figure 3. Portrait of Thomas Holt

Figure 4. Poster for the first subdivision of Oyster Bay (then *By the Water Estate*, Como) in 1911.

Figure 5. Poster for the Subdivision of Wards Crescent, Oyster Bay, in 1936.

Figure 6. Poster for the subdivision of Getyunga Estate, Oyster Bay (then Como), in 1922.

Figure 7. Number 96 Como Road.

Figure 8. Oyster Bay Playing fields.

Figure 9. Deseret (2 Sage Ave.)

Figure 10. Oyster Bay Public School.

Figure 11. Oyster Arts Festival Poster.

Figure 12. General store sage Ave. Circa 1954.

Figure 13. Getting around in the early days.

Figure 14. Oyster Bay community Hall.

Figure 15. Oyster Bay Scout Hall.

Appendix 1. Attendance List at Morning Tea for Long-Term Residents of Oyster Bay

Residents who have lived in Oyster Bay for 50 years or more

Ms. Jan Etteridge, Green Point Rd.
 Mr. Paul Demysers, Carina Rd.
 Mrs. Margaret & Mr. R. Edmondson, Carina Rd.
 Mr. David Farr-Wharton, Green Pt. Rd.
 Mr. Ernie Fisher, Waterview St.
 Mrs. Dot Gamble, Green Point Rd.
 Mrs. Marita & Mr. J. Greenwood, Loftus
 Mrs. Audrey Hollands, Loves Ave.
 Ms. Gwen Hopkins, Oyster Bay Rd.
 Mrs. Adell Littlejohn, Caravan Head Rd.
 Mr. Sam McKay, Riverview Rd.
 Mrs. Joan & Mr. Bruce Morrison, Oyster Bay Rd.
 Mrs. Gloria Reynolds, Georges River Cres.
 Mrs. Eileen and Mr. Edward Sawyer, Carina Rd.
 Ms. Daphne Sellings, Como Rd.
 Mrs. Thea Van Gastel, Loves Ave.
 Mrs. Joy and Mr. Neville Weekly, Waterview St.

Others present

Ms. Jenny Andriadis, SSC
 Dep. Mayor, Cr. Dawn Emerson, SSC
 Dr. Mark Florence, Connell Rd., Oyster Bay
 Ms. Jacquelyne Jeffery, SSC
 Ms. Patty Kolln, Caravan Head Rd., Oyster Bay

Power Women link Up at Brinsley's



From left to right Cllr and Deputy Mayor Dawn Emerson, Centre Hazel Hawke, Chairperson Heritage Council and Mayor Tracie Sonda

Sutherland Shire Council (Heritage Committee) were host to members of the Heritage Council of NSW and their Chairperson Hazel Hawke.

Sutherland's own Heritage Committee members were also present along with representatives of our Historical Society.

The group visited a number of sites including Brinsley's and Heathcote Hall, where we all climbed up the five flights to the lookout tower.

It was a great experience to see the number of politically powerful women on the tour. As well as those mentioned above Aileen Griffiths (OAM) and Deputy President of the Historical Society also attended

The Bulletin Editor, Les Bursill and Treasurer, Maurie Beaven were also there and reports that all residents should be proud of the efforts made on our behalf by the Councils' Heritage committee and the Council Heritage staff.

Unfortunately our Museum curator was unable to attend.

BOOK REVIEWS

Editor Dr. Ed. Duyker.

Australia: 300 Years of Botanical Illustration

Reviewed by Edward Duyker

Helen Hewson, CSIRO Publishing (P.O. Box 1139, Collingwood, Victoria, 3066, e-mail sales@publish.csiro.au), 1999, Hardback, pp. 240, illustrations, notes, glossary, bibliography, index, ISBN 0 643 06366 8, \$64.95, Collector's Edition, ISBN 0 643 06365 X, \$380.00.

A history of the illustration of Australia's remarkable flora is long overdue. But if the wait has been long, it has also been worthwhile. This is not only a very beautiful book, rich in the finest examples of the botanical illustrator's art, it is also a valuable overview of the history of botany in Australia. Dr Hewson effectively begins her account with the simple engravings for William Dampier's *A Voyage to New Holland* (1703). She then examines the masterly work of artists such as Sydney Parkinson (1745-1771), Franz Bauer (1758---1840), Ferdinand Bauer (1760-1826), James Sowerby (1757-1822), Pierre-Joseph Redouté (1759-1840), Pierre-Antoine Poiteau (1766-1854) and Pierre Turpin (1775-1840) during the era of later exploration and early colonization. In examining the methodical age of Ferdinand von Mueller (1825-96) and Joseph Maiden (1859-1925) she reviews the impressive artistry of Walter Fitch (1817-92), Edward Minchin (1862-1913), Ellis Rowan (1848-1922) and many others. Finally she surveys the splendours of the modern revival represented by major artists such as Rica Erickson (b. 1908), Stanley Kelly (b. 1911), Celia Rosser (b. 1930), Margaret Stones (b. 1920) and Margaret Menadue (b. 1942).

FIRST FLORA OF AUSTRALIA -Solander

Who then published the first flora of Australia? Although Daniel Solander (1733-82) compiled a four volume manuscript 'Plantae Novae Hollandiae', as a result of his collecting with

Joseph Banks (1743---1820) during the *Endeavour's* landfalls on the east coast of Australia in 1770, his work was not published. According to Hewson, the honour of being the author of the first published flora of Australia belongs to the English botanist James Edward Smith (1759---1828), who described sixteen Australian species in his *A Specimen of the Botany of New Holland* (1793). But is a published work describing a mere sixteen Australian species a true flora--even if it is the first to focus on a particular region? The breadth of such a work would appear to be an important criteria. In their book *People and Plants in Australia* (Academic Press, Sydney, 1981), Denis Carr (b. 1915) and Maisie Carr (1912---88) give the honour to Jacques-Julien Houtou de Labillardière (1755-1834) who published the magnificent two volume *Novae Hollandiae plantarum specimen* (1804---06) containing 265 copper plate engravings of Australian species. As the Carrs put it: 'In practical terms', the *Novae Hollandiae plantarum specimen* 'was the first general flora of Australia'. While a Frenchman, Charles Louis L'Heritier de Brutelle (1746-1800), named the first *Eucalyptus* in his *Sertum anglicum* (1788), he, like James Edward Smith, never visited Australia. Pierre-Joseph Redouté's (1759-1840) beautiful engraving of *Eucalyptus obliqua* (reproduced by Hewson from L'Heritier's pioneering work), was based on specimens cultivated in Britain from seeds or seedlings brought back from Van Diemen's Land in 1777. James Edward Smith's descriptions, were based on plants and specimens sent to Britain by John White (c.1756-1832), Surgeon-General to the new British penal colony in New South Wales. Significantly, however, Smith's artist, James Sowerby, appears to have been assisted by watercolours executed by the convict artist Thomas Watling (1762---c 1814).

Although Dr Hewson accords precedence to Smith, she certainly celebrates the work of Labillardière who served as a naturalist on

Bruny d'Entrecasteaux's expedition (1791-93) in search of La Pérouse. She also reproduces several images from the *Novae Hollandiae plantarum specimen*, with valuable critical analysis. I have to say, however, that I disagree with her assertion that Labillardière was born 'of a wealthy family' (page 58). Similar claims have recently been made by Jill, Duchess of Hamilton in her book *Napoleon, the Empress and the Artist* (1999). The archival evidence in Labillardière's native Alençon leaves little doubt that he was the ninth of fourteen children born to Michel Jacques Houtou, sieur de La Billardière, a lace merchant (and town clerk) of relatively modest means, and his wife Madeleine, a lacemaker.

PIRON

The artist on d'Entrecasteaux's expedition was a man named Piron. He too has an important place in the history of Australian botanical art and Dr Hewson has reproduced an engraving by Auguste Plée based on Piron's drawing of *Cyathodes glauca* from Labillardière's *Novae Hollandiae plantarum specimen*. Hewson gives Piron's first name as 'Nicolas', but her only source for this is the 32 page catalogue for the *Dare to Know* exhibition held by the State Library of New South Wales in 1998. Wanting to know more, I was disappointed to find that no other source at the State Library could confirm the artist's first name-'only known recently' according to Hewson. Hélène Richard, author of *Le voyage de d'Entrecasteaux à la recherche de Lapérouse* (Editions du Comité des Travaux Historiques et Scientifiques, Paris, 1986), was never able to find Piron's first name despite exhaustive research. As to Piron's fate, E. T. Hamy asserted in an article entitled 'Collection de dessins provenant de l'expédition de D'Entrecasteaux' (*La Nature*, vol. 24, 1896, pp. 86---7), that he died in Java (circa 1795) after d'Entrecasteaux's expedition disintegrated on royalist and republican lines. Hélène Richard, however, noted a comment in Jacques-Malo La Motte du Portail's (1761-1812) journal, which indicates that he was seen in Manila in 1799. Dr Hewson, therefore, has reasonable grounds to assert that Piron 'survived the privations of Batavia', but she is on shaky ground when she writes of 'work that

Piron did back in France' (page 58). As yet no documentary proof has been found that he ever returned to France or even reached the Ile-de France (Mauritius) from Java or the Philippines.

HEWSON'S ERRATA

Although I may run the risk of carping, I feel an obligation to point out a number of other minor errors so that they can be corrected in any future edition of this fine book. Joseph Banks was not elected a fellow of the Royal Horticultural Society in 1766. Nor was he elected its president in 1788 (page 22). The Royal Horticultural Society was not established until 1804. In fact, Banks was elected a fellow of the Royal Society of London in 1766 and became PRS in 1778. Claude-Antoine-Gaspard Riche, zoologist on d'Entrecasteaux's expedition, did not die in 1779 (as is stated in the endnotes on page 201 and in the index on page 226), rather he died in 1797. Some readers may assume from the discussion about the artists Gerardus van Spaëndonck (1746-1822) and Redouté (page 69) that the Jardin du Roi and the Museum National d'Histoire Naturelle co-existed. In fact, the museum was created in 1793 when-with the establishment of a republic-the Jardin du Roi became the Jardin des Plantes. These are not the only historically problematic descriptors in the book. Hewson describes Franz Willem Sieber (1789-1844) as a 'Czechoslovakian' when Czechoslovakia did not exist in his lifetime-or for that matter in 1909 and 1910 when Karel Domin did his botanical fieldwork in New South Wales and Queensland. Perhaps Bohemian, or Czech would have been more appropriate. (Ironically, 'Czechoslovakian' is now an archaic term given the separation of the Czech Republic and Slovakia.) I also had difficulty with some of Hewson's chapter titles. In particular, I felt that the botanical work of Delessert, Lamarck, Poiret, Levrault and de Candolle would have been better discussed in the chapter 'The French Impression' rather than in the chapter entitled 'The Banksian Collectors'. These men were never employed by Sir Joseph Banks.

These minor criticisms, however, should not detract from a well-researched, well-written and sumptuously illustrated book containing

some 160 colour images drawn from a host of important Australian and overseas libraries and museums. The glossary is also destined to be a useful source of explanation for terms and abbreviations associated with botanical illustration and scientific publication in

general. Finally, the index will serve as a ready source of biographical reference thanks to the inclusion of biobdates for most personal names listed. This is a superbly produced book. Bravo CSIRO!

Introducing 'Antony and Cleopatra'

A Few Words on Shakespeare
Edward Duyker

at the performance at *Hazelhurst* 8.00 pm 11
November 2000

William Shakespeare was forty-two years old when, in 1606 (though some say 1608), he is believed to have written *Antony and Cleopatra*. In the same year, the Dutch explorer Willem Jansz charted the north-west coast of Cape York. Shakespeare died ten years later, in 1616, the year Dirk Hartog reached Western Australia. Although there are at least five shipwrecks in Shakespeare's plays, the little known Southland is not mentioned in any. There was, however, at least one edition of his plays aboard Cook's *Endeavour* when it arrived on the shores of our present Sutherland Shire in 1770. Later, a number of other early Australian explorers paid tribute to the Bard with their placenames. Among these Australian toponyms is our own suburb of Miranda (named for the heroine of the *Tempest*).

It was not until 8 April 1800 that the first Shakespeare was actually performed in Australia. Therefore, this year marks the 200th anniversary of that performance. The producer was Robert Sidaway an emancipated convict who had been transported on the First Fleet. He staged the two parts of Shakespeare's *Henry IV* in a consolidated abridgement. Sidaway had opened his first theatre in 1796 on what is now Bligh Street, but it was closed by Governor Hunter in 1798, because of the number of robberies which took place while patrons attended performances. (I find it ironic that Sidaway was a convicted housebreaker.) I am pleased to note, however, that our mayor, Tracy Sonda, has not emulated Governor Hunter's depressing crime control measures! Sidaway's theatre reopened briefly in 1800 and he had a cast of 12 mostly ex-convicts.

(The producer and cast of this evening's performance are, I am assured, a far more respectable lot.) Although an original playbill is preserved in the Mitchell Library, we have no idea

what the critics thought of that historic performance two hundred years ago.

Othello was the first Shakespeare play performed in both Adelaide (1840) and Melbourne (1843). During the Gold Rush, theatre boomed in Australia. While there were more polished performances, thanks to the arrival of noted actors such as the great Edmund Kean's son, Charles, in 1863, rowdy miners sometimes tossed nuggets onto the stage in appreciation of thespian talent or offered technical guidance to the gravediggers unearthing poor Yorick's skull! I am sure that we will all be much better behaved this evening, although I doubt if the actors will mind if you throw the gold nuggets, given current federal arts funding levels.

In Shakespeare's work there is a universal appeal which transcends the centuries and touches the human spirit in countless ways. To paraphrase Enobarbus in *Antony and Cleopatra*: age cannot wither him, nor custom stale his infinite variety. Although his plays are a precious part of the cultural heritage of all humanity, he has a special place in the English speaking world because of his role in actually shaping the language which we speak today. Many English words appeared in printed form for the very first time in his plays: 'obscene' in *Richard II*, 'premeditated' in *Midsummer-Night's Dream*, 'accommodation' in *Othello*, 'Assassination' in *Macbeth*, and 'submerge' in this evening's play *Antony and Cleopatra*. And if you've ever wondered about the origins of the expression 'salad days' listen to Cleopatra tells us of her 'salad days' when she was 'green in judgment, cold in blood'.

The bard has long been a mine of memorably apt quotes and on this occasion a memorably apt quote:

*with thy sharp teeth this knot intrinsic
Of life at once untie. Poor venomous fool,
Be angry, and dispatch.*

On that note I will dispatch myself, so that we can all be submerged in this enduring tale of sultry adultery and suicide.

Ed Duyker Book Review Editor.

Frederick McCubbin *A Bush Burial* 1890



**By Sam Duyker
Caringbah High School**

The thing that first drew my attention to this painting was the title, very similar to the poem, *Beach Burial*, by Kenneth Slessor. The painting captures the feeling of the bush well, with its delicate soft light. The scene is serene and isolated. It was painted in 1890, when Australia, though still a collection of colonies, was close to Federation. The image looks back to the time of the gold rush. It is also known as *The Last of the Pioneers*.

The vision of Australia depicted in this painting is idealistic but melancholy. On the surface it is simple but the subtext is more complex with regard to Australia, the Australian people and Australian ideals. Many of these are enduring ideas. The image shows how Australians are informal yet hard working and respect and admire the bush. Our country is beautiful yet can be a dangerous place.

One aspect of the vision is the myth of the bush. This is how many Australians understand their origins and rationalise their national identity. They ignore uncomfortable parts of their history of which they are ashamed. Examples of this are the appropriation of Aboriginal land by the early settlers, or the destruction of the natural environment to make way for farmland and cities.

The widow in black is young, which suggests that her husband was too. This makes it likely that it was an accident that killed him. Perhaps it was a gold mining accident. An Aussie battler, trying to

make a living on the gold fields, has lost his struggle. Colonial life can be dangerous and this is just one of the common tragedies.

The pick and shovel which have been used to dig the grave are the kind of tools that a gold miner uses, symbols for the hard working Aussie. The grave itself has been dug in harsh, stony ground, representing the harshness of life for these people.

The man holding his hat has helped to dig the grave and is probably a friend or mining partner of the deceased. This implies the idea of mateship. He may be supporting the widow now and this shows a sense of community.

The fact that the minister (or the performer of the last rites) is dressed casually suggests the informal nature of Australians. The whole ceremony is make-do, just as the people of the time had to make do with what they had in their poverty and isolation. A farm dray has been used to transport the coffin, and there is nothing fancy about the burial.

The sorrow of the family shows the importance of family and community to the people. The deceased is buried in the bush, not in a cemetery, as one is yet to be forged from the wilderness. Nevertheless the closeness to Nature makes it a suitably serene place to be laid to rest.

Editor: Of course others of us may have different interpretations? Perhaps other readers could submit theirs.