



*Sutherland Shire
Historical Society Inc*



Bulletin

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A Short History Of Grays Point

Grays Point is one of our lesser visible Shire Villages. To really get into Grays point it is required that you travel some kilometers down Northwest Arm Road, but that just gets you to the place.

To meet the people is to get to the heart of the place. The Grays Point Community is composed of a rich variety of well known Shire identities and deeply committed community members.

Earlier this year I was approached by one of the Grays Point community with a request for assistance in getting together a history of the community.

That member was Bill Barton, Bill is a member of the Grays Point Progress Association and they are keen to get a written history of Grays Point.



Grays Point Boat Ramp and Hacking River.

and later meetings with Harvey Nation, Ted Lawes and others of the Grays Point Progress Association, a local History project has taken off.

In this issue of the Bulletin there are some sections of that history. One written by myself and another by Beryl Tope, a local Historian.

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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 car-park)

VISITORS ARE WELCOME

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Disclaimer

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President's Remarks

Sutherland Shire Historical Society's AGM

Christmas Greetings to you all! For those of you who are *seasoned* members you will no doubt be expecting the usual contents of our Bulletin, Treasurer's Report, AGM Agenda etc. as we lead up to our AGM. No, no, no! At your last AGM we decided to change our financial year, (from December through to November) ----to the more conventional year: July through to June. This has been occasioned by the new reporting requirements, BAS, GST etc. and no longer can "ancient" societies like ours please ourselves as to when we have our AGM. We have to be "in the swim" with everyone else! Renewal notices will be placed in the May 2003 Bulletin, and our annual General Meeting will now be held in October, 2003, so your August Bulletin will contain all the relevant Annual Reports.

Our Christmas Gift to our Members

Now this has given you an unexpected BONUS! Your memberships, usually due in December,--will now not be due until June! Our Christmas present to all our members is six months free membership! Howzat! Merry Christmas everyone! It seems that your current executive and President, will go down in our Society's history as serving the longest term in the Society --eighteen months! Nevertheless now we are in step with every other incorporated society.

Christmas Lunch We had our Christmas party/lunch much earlier than anticipated at the Gatewood Restaurant, due to Loftus Tafe's catering arrangements (1st Nov.!) but everyone said what a great day they had. The food was superb, and we were supposed to get only one free glass of refreshment, but I think many received free top-ups! We ended up with 40 members present, our full complement booked, so we had the place to ourselves, and could have had a guest speaker, but I thought it was nice, just to be informal and enjoy ourselves, chatting to our friends instead

of being regimented. It was so well-received, that members are asking can we have another--and not wait until next Christmas! I am endeavoring to arrange for a lunch at the Gatewood: Christmas in July, on Friday, 25th July, 2003 so put this date in your diary!

Christmas History We all know when the first Christmas occurred, but I am indebted to Cellarmasters for the following information: Christmas Carols were banned in England from 1649-1660 by Oliver Cromwell, who thought Christmas was a very solemn day, and he forbade carols and parties (he must have looked into the future and heard some of our rock bands playing carols!) The first Christmas Card was designed by JC Horsley in 1843, and Sir Henry Cole was the first person to send Christmas cards to his friends. (The postal service should strike him a posthumous medal for increasing their profits billion fold!) The Christmas stocking was first mentioned in the Oxford Dictionary in 1854. (I wonder when the first pillowslip was used in Australia instead?) The first Christmas tree lights were invented in 1895 by Ralph Morris, an employee of the US Telephone company, and were telephone switchboard lights --- this must have outdated small candles alight on Christmas trees?(surely dangerous and not recommended during the Australian Christmas and bushfire season!). Apparently the custom of hanging gifts on Christmas trees stemmed from tree worship by the Druids, as the tree was the giver of all good things--- (I'd always thought of the Druids as bloodthirsty, destroying the occasional young maiden---I didn't know they hugged trees--so they were misjudged and were environmentalists after all!)

Historical Christmas Fare Matthew Ford, Rothbury Wine Society Manager, supplied the following information: In Charles Dickens's: A Christmas Carol, Ebenezer Scrooge sought a re-union over some "smoking bishop". If you haven't tried this mulled wine, now's your chance.

Recipe for Smoking Bishop: Take six oranges and insert six cloves evenly into each orange. Place them in a bowl, and

cover with red wine, and place in a warm (not hot!) place for the day. (In Aust without air-conditioning that's probably on your kitchen bench!) Next day squeeze the oranges into the wine and strain, adding a glass of port. Place in a stainless steel or pyrex saucepan, add a cinnamon stick and warm gently (do NOT boil!) Serve warm (and don't drive afterwards, if you drink a few glasses!). Serve with a cheese platter and biscuits. Guaranteed to give you a warm glow, especially if the air temperature is 37 degrees Celsius!

Recipe for Mediaeval Christmas Pie (this feeds the whole manor, including all your servants) This pie is nine feet (c. 3 metres) in diameter (how did they make the pie dish?) and is cooked in the baker's oven, (how did they get it in,--and then out?) and weighs 165 lbs. It contains 20lbs butter (Matthew says that his arteries gave a little cry of pain as he wrote that!) four geese (Woronora?) four wild ducks (ANSTO swimming pool?) two wood cocks (?), six snipes (I don't think my deli has these!) four partridges, (wot, no pear trees?) two neat's tongues, two curlews (Prince Edward Park?), six pigeons (Sutherland railway station?) and seven black birds(Sutherland Shire Council's address in Eton Street is "4-20"perhaps they have some?) I think they have left out some of the herbs and seasoning; also no onions? Matthew has asked that if any member makes it could he be invited to try it---otherwise he won't believe you!

Mrs. Beeton's Advice, (if you're game to look for game) Whilst you are buying/catching your game for the above pie, Mrs. Beeton gives some sterling advice:

Turkey: When selecting your turkey see that the legs are smooth and black, its spurs short and neck long. The eyes should be bright and full, and the feet supple. If the eyes are sunk and the feet dry the bird is stale. (If I see its beady bright eyes looking at me at the butcher's--I'm off!)

Goose: A young goose has a yellowish bill and pliable feet, with few hairs on either. If the bill and feet are reddish with many hairs, the bird is old, and if the feet are dry it is stale, (and a bit dead). (If you are going to catch your own, the Woronora ones have seen that movie:"The Empire goose strikes back"--- you don't have to

chase them to catch them — they will chase you!) Ducks: Whether wild or tame, they should have pliable feet, the breast should be full and hard, and the skin clear. (This is the unexpurgated edition of Mrs. Beeton!)

Pigeons: The vent should be close and hard and the feet pliable. (I don't think I want to know about this!)

After all that, I think I need a glass of smoking bishop! Remember we have NO CHRISTMAS MEETING this year, due to liability problems and being unable to hire performers unless they have insurance. Hopefully next year the Public Liability Bill will have sorted out these problems and we can get back to normal. Have a wonderful Christmas, that really makes history—and I look forward to seeing you all at the Members' Night,--and we may have a little surprise for you! The President of the Royal Australian Historical Society, Dr. Carol Liston may be attending that night also!

Forthcoming Meetings:

Friday, 15th November, 2002: Ms. Linda Kelly, from the Australian Museum, asking members for your advice on the Kurnell Master plan--how should we present the most significant historical place in Australia's modern history, and the Meeting of Two Cultures?

Friday, 20th December, 2002: NO MEETING

Friday, 17th January, 2003: Members' Night: Andrew Platfoot: Harrison clocks at Greenwich; David Overett: Australian Desert trip; Betty Greentree: W.A. trip.

Friday, 21st February, 2003: Brian Madden: Hernia Bay, accompanied by slides

Friday, 21st March, 2003: David Campbell – Celtic Council of Australia.

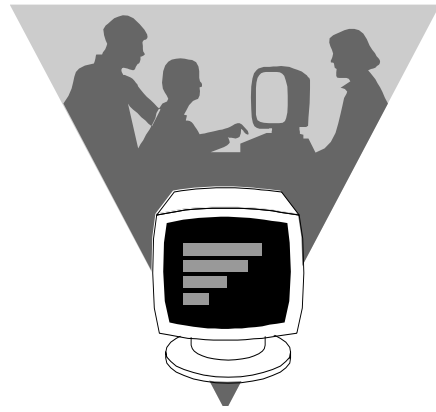
Friday, 18th April, 2003 (Good Friday) No meeting? as the next Friday is Anzac Day, and also a holiday!

Friday, 16th May, 2003: Jim Cutbush “Royal Flyng Corps”.

Dawn Emerson

*Councilor, Sutherland Shire Council and
President, Sutherland Shire Historical Society.*

From The Editors Desk



Recently I was very proud to receive a call from a researcher doing some work at the Australian National University (ANU) He was enquiring about some historical facts in Sutherland Shire's past. He made some very flattering comments about our Bulletin and our Web presence (www.suthshirehistsoc.da.ru).

He indicated that we were active and out there doing it. I could not of course embarrass myself by explaining to him how hard it is to get articles from members.

He was joking around and saying how hard it was to get someone to publish historical work, a complaint I often hear from Dr Ed Duyker. If only this researcher lived in the Shire, I would publish his work with glee and gusto.

I remind you all that we send out about 200 Bulletins each quarter and that those copies go to Universities, Libraries and other Historical Societies as well as members.

In the recent past I have been contacted by Schools, Universities and the Media. All who found our articles and web pages useful?

Our web page has had >2000 visitors, that's 7 times the total membership of the Society!!

Ok so enough! I'll get off my high horse; now to tell you what is happening to me.

As many of you are aware, Barbara (my wife) has Cancer and is fighting that with Chemotherapy and medical interventions.

We have had a particularly rough 3 months and she has been hospitalized twice for various side effects and illness.

Why is this of interest to the members? Well it means that I cannot attend as many general meetings or Executive meetings as I would like and therefore I am not as active as I should be.

Finally, I have included in this issue an incomplete history of Grays Point. This local community is very keen to set its history down and publish it in the near future.

They have a very long history with indications that settlement first happened in the mid to late 19th Century.

If you have information, stories, pictures memories of Grays Point they would like you to get in touch. You could do that by ringing me on 95207394 and I will pass on you information or materials.

If you would like to develop a history of your suburb please contact me for assistance and guidance.



Les Bursill

The First Community at Gray's Point

By Les Bursill

Prehistorically speaking human habitation of Grays Point is a relatively new occurrence. Changes in the weather and temperatures throughout the world are implicated in a reversal of an ice age in Australia about 16,000 years ago (about 14,000 years Before the Common Era [BCE]). This reversal and general warming of the earth's atmosphere melted a large area of ice in the Antarctic regions and locally in the Australian Alps. This warming generally caused an increase in rainfall and a prolonged period of sea level rise. Australia was, for a short period, warmer and wetter than it had been for many thousand years.

During that period there were probably Aboriginal people living along a coastline that was then some 20kms further eastward than today. As sea levels rose to their present level Aboriginal people followed the rise to occupy parts of the foreshore that we now recognise as Grays Point, the Hacking River and the flooded river valley of Port Hacking.

Heavy rainfall and regular flushing of the Bay and River had probably reduced to the present regime of gradual silting by the time Aboriginal people moved into to the area. Grays Point has, according to archaeologists and anthropologists, been occupied by family groups since about 6,500 years BCE. There is evidence to suggest that at that time there was more water in the Hacking river and consequently the Hacking was wider and deeper. There is some evidence that it was a cleaner River (sandy bottomed rather than muddy) and that the environs of Grays Point were a rich animal, plant and sea food resource area.

The first inhabitants of Grays Point were probably not the same group as were there in 1780 when the first European settlement was undertaken at Port Jackson. The cultural remains of artefacts tools and Paintings Engravings, Drawings and Stencils (PEDS) have changed substantially over time but there

is some evidence that there have been three distinct cultural groups in the area we now think of as the community (language group) known as the Tharawal people.



The cave drawings above there are very interesting with graffiti featuring the name K. Gray?

The Tharawal, of whom I am a descendant, have probably occupied this area of the coast of NSW since about 500 BCE (2,500 years). The Art (PEDS) of the Tharawal people is highly distinctive and realistic in form.

The Tharawal PEDS show Kangaroos and Wallabies with rounded ears and they draw Human (Anthropomorphic) figures with distinctive flared head shapes. The shapes appear to indicate hair at the back of the head.

The engravings that remain around Grays Point are probably all from the Tharawal community of stories and drawings. Certainly the PEDS most clearly associated with the Tharawal are orcas (Killer Whales) Biamee figures (male sky heroes) a kangaroo cult (rounded ears and natural outline style) and their paintings were multi coloured and in filled (Bi and Multi Chrome). The favourite colours for this area are whites (clay) blacks (charcoal) Yellow and red ochres and a blue grey colour derived from plants.

There are many drawings and paintings of other animals, including dingo and porpoise with a large array of drawn and engraved fish. Hand stencils and axe and tool sharpening grooves are extremely common. The remaining tools indicate that women fished with hand lines from crude bark canoes and that they collected mussels and oysters and other larger shell fish to eat. They also collected shell from which they made fish hooks with a shiny Mother of Pearl edge that acted as a lure to fish, they did not use bait but rather jigged for fish.

Some more recent evidence from around Mansion Bay indicates that men hunted for shallow water fish with spears especially designed for fishing. Fish remains, with part of a bone point embedded, indicate that large flathead were probably commonly speared and eaten in the area.

Of the other food resources, possum, lace monitor, snakes and frogs, eels and turtles were gathered by the women whilst the men hunted the larger marine animals and marsupials in the local grasslands. Many varieties of plant foods were also available and some of those plants are still available today. Around Grays Point there are a number of campsites associated with fig trees and others associated with yams and other root crops whilst berries and fruits were also available (even today).

The oysters of that time were mud oysters (now extinct) not the smaller varieties of today. The modern oyster is the Sydney Rock Oyster. There is also some indications that larger conch type shell fish were available but they became extinct about 800 years ago in the Bay (so I am informed).

The evidence from campsites indicates that women and children occupied the shore line of the Hacking and Muddy Creek and also into the Bay itself. Men probably spent time with the family but would also be away hunting and doing other important men's business for large parts of the weeks or even months they were in this area. The occupation of Grays Point was only for about 18 weeks each year though that is more a guess than evidential, though we do know that people moved into the area during the warmer parts of the year and moved inland for the cooler months.

The large number of occupation sites indicated that two or three families (30 to 45 people), all probably related, lived along the Hacking river edge and in shelters above the shore line. The favourite camping places appear to be those with a good northerly aspect and well sheltered from winds and drizzle (lee shores are most preferred). The best sites also have a commanding view but are difficult to see into therefore being ideal places to see and not be seen.

The lifestyle appears idyllic with children able to play and collect marine foods as they played

whilst the women fished from flimsy canoes. The bay is today a sandy bottomed place and the children and women would have splashed and played on the sandy shores. During periods when I was exploring the Bay and River for research purposes I noted that fish can be trapped in holes dug in the sand at low tide and that crabs and crustaceans are easily available to the determined gatherer.

Muddy Creek has a number of shelter sites and those closer to the river seem to be family places. Other shelters on the high northern part of the hill behind Muddy Creek appear to have been used by men in ceremonial times and are often full of red and black drawings of events of religious importance, higher and more easterly there is a Bora Ground where young men were inducted into the hunting of wallabies and fish spearing. Each of these activities required initiation before they could be practised by the new hunters.

People living in and around Grays Point would have used possum skin cloaks to keep warm and the women would have woven and plaited bags and other goods for the comfort of the community and for warmth and protection. We know from information gathered by people like Watkin Tench (a marine officer of the colony) that they also covered themselves in animal fats and grease to keep themselves warm and safe from Mosquito or Sand Fly bites.

There is good evidence that the Tharawal traded with the First Fleet and exchanged goods and services for access to steel axes and other iron goods. Evidence of this trade still exists on Muddy Creek in the form of square edged sharpening grooves and a steel axe recovered from the shoreline and dated to the 1740's. Almost certainly the trade itself and close contact with the Europeans and their diseases facilitated a rapid extinction of the local clans. The appearance of the colonists in the warmer part of the year certainly contributed to a large community of Aboriginal people being nearby in their traditional hunter gatherer communities and thereby accelerating contact with a large group of very susceptible people to contact with European disease and predation.

Les Bursill
Sunday, 10 November 2002

A SHORT HISTORY OF GRAY'S POINT

By BERYL TOPE

THE EUROPEAN DISCOVERY OF PORT HACKING

It was not until Governor Hunter arrived at Port Jackson, in 1795, on the "Reliance" and the "Supply" that the wider exploration of New South Wales was attempted. Governor Phillip was far too concerned with the feeding of his starving colony to be too concerned with exploring the coastal waters. There was a preponderance of natives in the region which added to the problem.

On the "Reliance", Surgeon George Bass and Midshipman Matthew Flinders were men of high character and similar interests. They were prepared to navigate the coast and were prepared to face any dangers together. With them on the voyage, a small boat, named aptly "Tom Thumb", eight feet long was carried, although a replica was built in Port Jackson. It was in this replica that they started their travels, when they inspected and mapped out Botany Bay. They travelled up the Georges River as far as Liverpool.

They explored Norfolk Island and in March 1796 they desired to explore the area south of Botany Bay. A pilot, named Henry Hacking on his kangaroo shooting expeditions talked about "a large river, flowing to the sea, a little south of Georges River." As he was the first white man of modern times to discover this river, they named it after him. This made a considerable impression in Port Jackson at the time as there was no mention of such a river in Captain Cook's charts. *Bivouac Tale by Reginald Harris or Fires of the North West Arm, 1985*

Bass and Flinders were determined to investigate this River. They left Port Jackson in the "Tom Thumb", with ten days rations and a crew of one, a boy named Martin on the 25th March, 1796.

Captain Cook had explored most of the coast from Victoria to the north of Queensland, but somehow he had missed Port Hacking. Even today the area is still unspoiled, and for half a century the south coast was comparatively uninhabited. Bass and Flinders discovered and charted much of the coastline of New South Wales.

A strong current took them further down the coast past their objective towards Port Kembla. Fierce winds and a heavy surf carried them into Tom Thumb Lagoon (now the site of Port Kembla Steelworks.) While searching for wood and water, Flinders came upon some natives, who were most intrigued by their beardless faces. While George Bass fixed a broken oar, Martin collected water and Flinders decided to cut the native's beards. They Flinders asked them the name of the area, which they were told was Wattamolla. Bass and Flinders named the islands off the coast "Martins Isles" which was later changed to "Five Islands".

Flinders spread their gunpowder out to dry. The natives tasted it and spat it out. Flinders was careful not to pick up the guns as the natives knew how dangerous they were. After Flinders cut their beards and hair, relations between the two groups improved, although Bass and Flinders returned to their boat without turning their backs. In the end, the natives swam out and pushed their boat out to sea.

Doctor George Bass noticed some black shale on the beach and wondered if it was coal. Unfortunately they had no room on the boat for specimens and left it on the beach. Later, they remembered and further explorations investigated the black shale.

On the 29th March, they left, travelling north determined to find their primary objective but struck some bad weather and rode into a storm. They held on to the sail as they came into the beach, not knowing if they would survive or not, when they sailed into a "white surf-line", but luck was with them and they came into shallow water. Thankfully, they called the beach "Providential Cove." They were exhausted and all three slept in the bottom of the boat.

In Flinder's diary, he wrote, "As day broke I was the first to wake refreshed from sleep. The water was calm, and the light in the east was beautiful. The rising sun glistened on the most perfect little beach that I have seen in this world. Beyond it, a clear waterfall fell into a lagoon. It was a beautiful little cove, and I felt it was our salvation."

They went north again, determined to find Port Hacking River, which was called Deeban by the natives. On 1st April, they entered the wide mouth of the Port Hacking River. They charted the entrance of the river, which was over a mile wide and that the river divided into several arms, which was about three to eight fathoms deep. They noticed that the shore was rocky, especially on the north side. They left Port Hacking 2nd April. They sailed for Cape Solander and by nightfall they were safe in the harbour, by the side of the Reliance.

They spent three days exploring and examining the estuary, and navigated the salt river to its junction with the freshwater stream at the spot now known as Audley. Three months later, in December, 1797, when Bass set out to prove the existence of a strait between Tasmania and the mainland, he used Port Hacking and Wattamolla for a night's anchorage. With that he passes out of the history of Port Hacking, together with his companion Flinders, who, next to Cook is the greatest figure in Australian navigation and cartography." *Port Hacking, Cronulla, and Sutherland Shire* Frank Cridland, 1924.

In 1948 a monument was erected in Glacier Point Road, Cronulla to commemorate Bass, Flinders and the boy Martin who sailed past the headland in *Tom Thumb 11* on 30th March, 1795, which they named Port Hacking. It is a granite tablet, with incised letters, mounted on a pillar of rusticated sandstone blocks, stepped at the base and again at mid level, mounted on a double stepped dressed sandstone base, 240 cm. High. A142.P – p. 174 *Monuments and Memorials, 1988* by Beryl Henderson.

HON. THOMAS HOLT'S "SUTHERLAND ESTATE"

"The Hon. Thomas Holt arrived in the colony from Yorkshire in 1842 at the age of 31 and soon became interested in the Queensland

Pastoral Industry. He became a leading figure in Sydney with many and varied commercial and public undertakings. He took a deep interest in educational development, and was one of the founders of the A.M.P. Society, a member of Parliament and befriended many a charity organization as well as actively supporting the Congregational Church."

The Crown Lands sales began in 1856 and Thomas Holt proceeded to buy up vast quantities of land from anyone who would sell to him and soon he had accessed some 12,000 acres, virtually the whole area between George's and Port Hacking Rivers.

He also built three grand homes in the south of Sydney, the first was called "Sans Souci" at Kogarah, the second "The Warren" at Tempe and the third was a magnificent home of 40 rooms called "Sutherland House" in 1878-80. Mrs. Holt found the first home "Sans Souci" too isolated while the second was inconvenient for Thomas Holt to administer his business interests in the Sutherland Shire. The latter he left to his eldest son, after he went back to England. It was gutted by fire in 1918.

Holt was a great admirer of James Cook. He was interested in preserving Kurnell as the birthplace of the nation. He built an obelisk to commemorate Cook's century of his arrival in the colony. He did this at his own expense. Later he built a tall slim obelisk in Hyde Park to commemorate James Cook in Hyde Park when the Duke of Edinburgh visited Sydney and laid the foundation stone.

Holt bought the whole of Gwawley Bay, drained the marshy areas against the advice of the locals who said that the ground was too damp to grow oysters. He spent forty thousand pounds and his oyster growing pursuits were generally unsuccessful. Holt also tried sheep farming and found that the rocky coastal shore, lack of suitable grasses and footrot made this venture unsuccessful.

One of the main considerations to Thomas Holt's business enterprises was that of access. At first the only means of transport was by water. The first road in the Parish of Sutherland was an "access road" from Botany Bay to the site of Burraneer Bay Road in 1842.

Surveyor General Mitchell considered a new road to Wollongong from Liverpool.

After crossing the George's River at Lugarno the road continued southwards through Menai and descended steeply down the hill surrounding the upper Woronora River, through the Pass at Sabugal to the Woronora Ford.

This road (*ED. The Needles*) was never popular and the Government wanted an easier road to Wollongong. The Legislative Assembly granted four hundred pounds towards the cost of building a road "from the landing-place of the Punt at Georges River to a point on the Bulli Mountain. The landing-place of the punt was the entrance to Holt's "Sutherland Estate" which would run through Holt's land which would come through where Park Street, Sutherland is now. Holt promised an annual donation of thirty pounds towards the punt expenses, which would benefit his Estate plans.

The new highway, which was called Princes Highway until it joined a track now the Grand Parade Sutherland, then turned southward. However, with the coming of the railway in 1885, the area opened up.

With the coming of the steam railway in 1885-6 small settlements soon began to grow around the three railway stations of Como (1885), Sutherland (1885) and Heathcote (1886). Sutherland quickly became a popular terminus for access to the "country retreats" and "holiday homes" of the wealthy businessmen who began to erect homes in secluded locations of the many lovely waterways. With the dedication of National Park in 1879, the "National Park Road" was put through from Holt's boundary road (Park Lane), Sutherland to Audley. About 1903 this section was named Lady Rawson Parade in honour of the State Governor's wife. The lower half was later named Farnell Av., after the Hon. James Squire Farnell, one-time Premier. From Audley the road continued south as far as the present turnoff at Garie Beach Road (known as the Saddle.)

Holt returned to England and it took many years and an Act of Parliament to sort out his mass subdivisions. Holt's business enterprises, his vast commercial undertakings made him our first entrepreneur. *Bygone Days of Sutherland Shire* by M. Hutton Neve, 1970

THE NATIONAL PARK RAILWAY SPUR

Lack of access and communication has always been a problem in Gray's Point and the Sutherland Shire.

Until 1885 there was no rail link to the Sutherland Shire. Travel to and from the Shire was by horse-drawn vehicles via the Tom Ugly's Punt. Then the rail link was extended from Hurstville to Sutherland and in 1886 the railway was extended to Wollongong.

In the same year a military branch line was extended from Loftus Junction to the military training grounds in the National Park, terminating at the platform which now forms the northern side of the National Park Railway Station.

The western approaches to the National Park had been chosen as the site for an Infantry, Cavalry and Gunnery Training area because of its isolation and undeveloped state. The military forces were mainly volunteers.

Personnel stores, field guns and horses were transported to the encampment area by rail for the annual camps.

The Loftus Junction Station (where the Southern Pacific tramway is now) was the station for those who wished to visit the National Park and a horse-drawn coach plied from there via Lady Rawson Drive and over the bridge across Temptation Creek to join the old Audley Road near National Park Station and thence to Audley. The fare was 6d. each way.

Gray's Point residents alighted at either Sutherland or Loftus Junction station and walked through the bush to their homes. With the advent of Federation in 1901, local military training diminished, although the park was used by the N.S.W. Field Artillery until just after the outbreak of war in 1914.

In 1915, Farnell Avenue was laid down by military authorities and planted with ornamental trees. The southern side of Lady Rawson Drive then fell into disrepair.

The terminus for Park visitors then became National Park Station and Loftus Station was no longer used. "*Guardian*" – Nov. 1976

THE GRAY'S OF GRAY'S POINT

To this day, there are two Grays who share the distinction of being the Gray's Point and nobody knows which one it is.

First, there is Samuel William Gray, who was a prominent man in the 1880's. He was a member of the Legislative Assembly, representing Richmond and Tweed and he was instrumental in the construction of the Clarence and Richmond railway. He was known as a free trader and liberal. He later lived at Kiama and he was also instrumental in the construction of the Illawarra railway.

Samuel Gray was actively connected in the Free Selection Act of 1861, which gave squatters the 'preempted right' to own the best pockets of land outright." (*Australia – A Short History* by Russel Ward, pp. 86-90)

He never lived in Gray's Point, but owned land there, he actually lived in Kiama. He was considered a fine type of public spirited man and it was believed that he was the man after which Gray's Point was named.

Then there is John Edward Gray, a ranger of the Royal National Park who lived there for over 40 years. He lived at Gundamain, with his wife and ten children. This Gray, used to row people across the Port Hacking River for the children to go to school each day. The area was so isolated that the only access was by boat. A ferry would run twice daily for the small proportion of people living in the area. The wharf was situated at the end of Gray's Point and the ruins can still be seen today. On the other side of the river a bus service operated so the people could travel to other areas of the Sutherland Shire.

Three of the sons because of their affiliation with the water, grew up to be Sydney Harbour ferry skippers.

In the *Leader*, 19/11/1987, it stated that "Food for the Gray family of 10 children was packed in a large crate and picked up from the train and sent down to Audley, collected from there and rowed back to Gundamain."

In 1987 the remaining seven Gray children had a family reunion, the first in 69 years to

celebrate their brother George's 87th birthday. They remembered fondly their birthplace in the Royal National Park.

They stated that Gray's Point was named in honour of their family. So, from which family was Gray's Point named?

A local resident, Mr. Syd Anstee has lived in Gray's Point Area all his life explained life in the early days. The area was totally surrounded by bush, people found Gray's Point an ideal place to escape and enjoy the peace and quiet of the bush environment and it was a great fishing spot. All along the river there existed holiday shacks made of corrugated iron.

EARLY SETTLERS IN GRAY'S POINT

One hundred years ago Gray's Point possessed no Stepping Stones or houses. North West arm terminated in a deep, crystal clear swimming hole surrounded by sandy beaches and groves of swamp oak. The area was secluded and miles from human habitation .

Many young lads camped by the waterhole, fishing and swimming. One young lad swung out from an oak branch and dropped into 25 feet of water beneath and was taken by a shark His name and the letters 'R.I.P.' were later carved into a rock, and remained there for many years. Young Ted Derry remembers this tragedy when he was about seven or eight years of age .

Mick Derrey states that the first man to build a hut at North West Arm was Bob Dashwood, a New Zealander in about 1911. Conditions must have been pretty harsh. He married in 1914 but his wife died of pneumonia from the harsh conditions under which they lived. They had one son, Bob. Dashwood must have had a hard time bringing up a child after his wife died.

His cart used to get bogged in Saville's Creek at night. Mick Derrey would put him up in the kitchen in his shack in President Avenue. Bob Dashwood would then try to get his horse and cart out in the morning with his load of timber. Mick Derrey's Dad would help him unharness the horse.

Both men lived in wattle and daub houses. Ted's family built his house in 1906 and conditions in the winter time were harsh.

Mick Derrey stated that the only way out of the bush was to go through the gullies with bullocks, coming out at Coles timber yard in President Avenue, near Acacia Road.

In 1922, North West Arm Road, (then called Coombes Road) was built with a bridge crossing Saville's Creek. This really opened up the area and the residents were able to get in and out by sulky and carriage.

The waterhole became a favourite picnic spot. A Baptist holiday camp was built on the high side of North West Arm Road, overlooking the pool. Alternate groups of boys and girls were brought to spend long weekends of swimming and camping.

With the building of the bridge, the river silted up and it was the end of the swimming hole and other swimming holes along Dents Creek, including one pool below the Bridge which the children called The Basin. It included a large flat rock which the children used as a jumping platform.

In the early 1900's, Gray's Point (or North West Arm, as it was called) consisted of people who lived there in weekenders or temporary dwellings.

The first man to reside on the peninsula of Mansion Point was Con Gerhig. He came just after Bob Dashwood, a New Zealander who built his "home" in 1910 near the present day junction of North West Arm Road and Gray's Point Road.

Con Gerhig, was a bachelor who had been a cabinet maker at Beales Piano Works in Sydney. He was tired of his trade and moved to this isolated spot and opened a boatshed. It was at Beales that Con met William Thomas Coombes, who worked there as an office boy. William Coombes visited Cons retreat and decided that he would build a weekender at Gray's Point in 1914.

William married and lived at Bexley. After 43 years he decided to build his weekender in 1956 with his wife and four daughters. William Coombes was secretary and later the Accountant at the OK Jam Factory. He finally retired and built the two roomed weekender. He had to bring all the timber and materials up

by Port Hacking River by rowing boat. Everything had to be carried up the steep hillside to what is now Mansion Point Road.

William Coombes built this house himself including the piers. The walls and ceilings of first two rooms were lined with tongue and groove boards. The house originally had tiered bunks on the walls. A Gloria lamp was used for lighting. There was not much time for fishing.

Mrs. Coombes always kept a first aid box and plenty of food for visitors. With their four daughters they loved swimming in the bay with the Grays at Gundamain.

In the early days the family used to walk to National Park Station along Florence Parade to the weekender at Gray's Point.

William Coombes became the well known owner of a T-Model Ford motor car. The family helped him make a road along the same route to National Park Station. Sometimes the girls would get out and put rocks under the wheels when the car became bogged. The track came out about where Gray's Point School is now. At one time, with the hood down, the car carried galvanised water tanks. One of the tanks rolled free and went down the gully, but was recovered.

On Saturday nights the family travelled to and from Marshall's Picture Show on Florence Parade. This was after the Saville Road Bridge was built.

As the Coombes were only there at weekends, "Old Charlie" looked after the house while they were away. Before the car was purchased a clinker boat was used for provisions from Yowie Bay. On one occasion, Charlie reported they were all caught in a violent thunderstorm.

During World War II, the boat was impounded with other boats at the National Park. It was returned to them however, when the seams opened up. It was repaired and was still going strong in 1983. An early resident near the Coombes was a Mr. Conrad, who had a motor garage at Newtown.

It wasn't until WW 2 that people began to come to the area in any number. About 1953, Hughie Wilson who had a stiff leg as a result of being dragged by a horse and baker's cart after

colliding with a car, came to live near the Coombe's. He had a small house near the road and had a special path made so that he could get to the waterfront where he hired boats from the boatshed.

In the late 1920's many of the residents started off in weekenders, living in temporary accommodation, in whatever they could find.

The Conyards arrived in 1915 although they didn't come to live until 1917 when they got things organised. They first lived at Hurstville. They lived in railway workers huts. They had two of them and they are still standing now. They had to replace the old original iron roof. Don Conyard still lives on the property today. He built a house on the water about fifty years ago. Don worked on the farm, while his father went to work.

Syd Anstee talks about the "mansion" he built out of bush poles and wheat sacks made of dripping and lime, right near where John Law's bedroom is now. John now lives next door. Syd told about a cave that once belonged to the Aboriginal people of the area. Mr Anstee indicated that the cave is in pristine condition, well hidden, not invaded by anyone, because the people guard their property. It has a beautiful view, and they had wonderful Saturday nights together, with sing songs. It was in the 1930's in the Depression and they had wheat sacks, air conditioned but the walls were movable. They were sealed vertically with a mixture of lime and dripping and the wheat sacks became the forerunner of fibro cement, very light, easily transportable to the district and this happy valley. They had a concert every Saturday night. Syd remembered ones woman's voice as she sang "Oh, Sweet Mystery of Life." It came across the water and with such a beautiful melody they would all stop what they were doing and listen entranced.

The beer was only two bob a flagon, in a colourless glass bottle and it was elliptical. You talk about the Good Old Days, it was definitely the beer.

It was on the site of an aboriginal midden about seventeen foot thick of shells which Syd excavated. The aboriginals had long since gone

and they left there the remains of animal skins. They were wallaby skins, but not foxes, the foxes were all killed by dogs. Don Conyards had a mob of Beagle Hounds and they hunted them, never kangaroos, only wallabies. The residents found the remains of some of the animal skins that the aboriginals had used for clothing and also the remains of some animals that they had eaten.

Sid stated that the first permanent residence here was a tramcar donated by the NSW Dept. of Transport. It was called a Jumping Jack Tram because it had only four wheels. When the tram was in use in Kings Cross and Surry Hills, men jumped up one end of the tram and seesawed, so they called them Jumping Jacks. Because it was given to them for nothing, they thought it was a Godsend. It weighed about four tons and took nine months to get it down to Gray's Point. They paid a lot of Craven A cigarettes and a lot of flagons of beer for the labour.

They transported the tram down to Peninsula Road and with forty four gallon tar drums, unpainted and they drank the water out of those tar drums from the canvas roof, so at each end of the tram, there was a down pipe which gave them their water.

They needed some water to mix up a bit of cement so they dug down about seventeen feet until they came to some beautiful white pipe clay which provided them with bathing and frogs. Some Russian people bought the property in the last couple of weeks and they paid \$420,000.00 for it. This was top quality for which we paid 2/6 per week, free of interest and all our land upon the waterfront and Mac only paid 2/6 per week.

Syd said the tram was about the size of a living room and a bedroom. There was also a shack which slept eleven people in it. It was reasonably big. Many a concert they held there, at Christmas time and so forth. It was a long time ago.. There were four trams altogether, the others were more conventional, although the Jumping Jack was unique.

When it ran in the city, the Jumping Jack used to go up and down on a four wheel bogey and

the conductor must have had a terrible job trying to collect the fares. It ran up King Street, in the city to Darling Harbour with solid rubber tyres. It was rolled into position over a cliff that was five feet high, doing the same method. All down one end and up she'd come.

They smoked a lot of cigarettes and drank a lot of beer transporting that tram to Gray's Point but the men said it was the only day of the week they worked so bloody hard, much more than they did during the week.

Early industries in Gray's Point were farming, Law's farm had 2000 fowls, they also grew passionfruit and vegetables. Times were hard then. Men got 6/8d. per week on the dole. They lived on spuds and onions.

PROVISIONS AND AMENITIES

The early residents' provisions at Gray's Point relied upon themselves to a great extent. Randolph's store at Gray's Point sold goods from his verandah. Neighbours took along a sugar bag to collect potatoes etc.

Syd Anstee says that people obtained their basic provisions at Randolph's and Vollance's Store, Sutherland. The Anstees moved to Gray's Point in 1932.

The Stunz family stated that all basic provisions were brought in from Sutherland. Goods also came from Gynea by boat, horse and cart or by walking.

Tarzan, bought goods along from Yowie Bay. At North West Arm, "Tarzan" Lawes also brought fruit, vegetables, soft drink and grog for sale from his launch from the river.

Ted Lawes tells a story about one young man who collected steak for his father and used some of it to catch yabbies before returning home.

Milk supplies from Marshall's of Kirrawee, people walked from Gray's Point to collect milk or milk was conveyed by horse and cart.

Eggs were supplied from Lawes Farm, as well as other local produce. Farming in the early days was poultry, goats, vegetables (potatoes

mainly, stated Syd Anstee and oyster farming which was done commercially in North West Arm. There was no road access only water access in front of Conyards.

Bread was baked by Sam Miles' Bakery at Gray's Point. Sam built an igloo-shaped bakery on the slope about Gray's Point Road between the intersection and Budyan Road. He also sold old flour bags which were used in home construction.

Unfortunately Sam's business was never approved by the authorities and he was forced to close down.

The Stunz family, Bob, Beryl, Jeanette and Helen arrived in 1942. Fear of the Japanese bombing and also the cheapness of accommodation were some of the reasons they came. They first lived opposite the point at National Park in a fishing hut for about six months, then moved to a house at North West Arm on the river near the Stepping Stones. Originally there were just loose stones, but in 1949, Bob Stunz, helped by Tom Bonds, built the 'permanent' stones'.

At National Park, they had a rowing boat to get across to the Point. All other boats except theirs were confiscated for the duration (for fear the Japanese might get them). Beryl had to provide a ferry service for the owners of other fishing huts when they came down for weekends. Once across the river, the weekenders walked along Mansion Pt. Rd., to the bus stop, to catch the bus to Sutherland. Mr. Stunz was a shift working fireman and his wife Beryl had to row across to pick him up at all hours. She wouldn't leave the children so she took them with her.

It was a sparse settlement, no shops or schools. At National Park there was no electricity, water or septic. At North West Arm, there was electricity, but only tank water, but no phone, no septic, sewerage, garbage or postal service.

Permanent families were Boadjeff, Brack, Hayhow, Montgomery, Lawton, O'Brien, McGuinness, Knaggs, Higbid, Jaeger, Squires, Batterham, Lawes, Scarff, Bonds, Smith, Ralston, Waite, Baker, Penfold.

When the Anstees' moved into North West Arm in 1932, 95% of the residents were weekenders. Weekenders were Bruce, Ashton and Cooper. In the 1940's there were more permanent residents than weekenders. People lived in shacks made of bush poles covered with wheat bags. They used the local stone, which was free and also bricks from the Sutherland Brickworks to build their homes. They also lived in caves and the Kinnanes lived in log homes. George and Amelia Anstee, hauled a tram from National Park Station to 105 Peninsula Road, where it was used as a weekender until approx. 1960's.

For water and fuel Syd Anstee states that he obtained water from a well and from rainwater tanks. He obtained fuel – kerosene for lamps and Primus for cooking and used wood for warmth.

In the early days they travelled by horse and cart or walked. In the 1940's transport was by bus, bike and cars for the lucky ones. There were two morning bus services, one quite early for the workers, and a later one for school kids and shoppers. Similarly, a school/shopper bus home in the afternoon and a 6pm-ish "Drunks" bus for the workers.

The roads were unmade, rocky and sandy. Taxis wouldn't take you if you asked for Gray's Point.

One memory relating to Audley was the time an army truck carrying foodstuffs tipped over on the causeway, with boxes of butter, carrots and other food floating down the river. To the Stunz family it was a treasure and they took the boat out to collect this bonanza.

Industries were shell grit, wood cutting, cutting sandstone, boat hire, in particular Pop Wilson's Boat shed, and later the shops that eventually came, Jack Cleland, Joe Dimarco, Ernie Arnot and Pat Thorpe, and Tom O'Connor, who has a memorial to him in the shopping centre.

Social functions were held at the Progress Hall. It was sometimes rented for private parties too. Bush Fire Relief Fund raisers where everyone rallied around to fight bushfires.

Gray's Point was a kid's paradise. They swam in the river at North West Arm, rode bikes, played in the bush, (there were excellent caves around), went fishing and had boat picnics. The kids also played skipping, marbles, walking and helping Mum.

The Stunz family had their electricity poles burnt down in the bush fires. When the river flooded their boat (they used to cross the river at high tide when the Stones were covered) and it was usually washed away. When this happened they used to swim across the river to catch the bus – holding clothes above their heads. There was an old hut near the bus stop where they would change their clothes.

Christmas bush and bells were abundant in the bush behind the Stunz's place at North West arm. There were lots of birds and at National Park they had snakes, goannas and deer.

Flathead, blackfish and oysters were abundant. At North West Arm, there would often be an influx of what they called 'sick' mullet coming up the river to spawn. They'd get trapped at low tide when they couldn't get past the Stepping Stones shallows. Someone would see them and the cry, "Sick Mullet" would go up, everyone would run down to the beach with nets, buckets, whatever and just scoop them out. Sick or not, everyone ate them.

In the forties and fifties the river at North West Arm was deep enough for use of a diving board rigged up near the "Diving Rock" opposite the Stunz's home. At high tide boats often came up and down the river. Even at low tide it was possible to come by boat following the channel. Because of dredging and silting, this would be impossible now.

Syd Anstee stated that they were always ready for natural disasters such as bush fires by keeping boats at the ready.

After WW11, efforts by individuals and community groups such as various Councillors and people from the Progress Association such as Mr. G. Anstee, Mr. S. Anstee, Mr. Lawes, Mr. Moses, Mrs. Brack, Mr. Woodward, Mr. Leddy, Mr. Batterham, Mr. Turner Mr. Hyslops, McNeils, Kinnanes etc. all helped to

work for better ancillary services and communications in Gray's Point.

Before the Community Hall was built, meetings of the Progress Association were held at Mary Brack's house.

After WW11, Gray's Point obtained water, electricity. In the 1960's they received a bus service and in the nineties, telephones.

The provision of medical services in Gray's Point were an essential part of facilities. Dr. Sommers practiced there in the 1970's and delivered many Gray's Pointers, as Helen Foster relates. It was a blessing to have a kind and capable doctor locally when public transport was almost non-existent. He actually did house calls and at night as well.

Joe di Marco was the chemist in Gray's Point for many years. His calm manner reassured many a new Mum upset about a minor ailment in her precious baby. He had a charming and lovely assistant and they would home deliver prescription medicines if you could not leave a sick child or get out.

Mrs. Emery lived at Mansion Point and was known as the "Cat Lady". Helen Foster contacted her when a stray cat had four kittens in her back yard. She found homes for the kittens and had the cat de-sexed. At the end of the week when Helen paid for the operation, she mentioned the cat was still weak. "Give her a shot of brandy in an egg nog" quote she. She was remembered with great affection.

The Bingham's lived in the house on the corner of Swallow Rock Drive and Gray's Pt. Road. On the lawn outside their house were two large concrete frogs painted green and white. Little children loved them and always stopped to pat them. They were a landmark in Gray's Pt. for many years and there was universal condemnation when they were eventually stolen.

Part of the development of cultural and sporting groups in Gray's Point did much for the growth of the area. One could mention Kath Anstee with the Octoberfest, as well as Mrs. Moses, Mr. Batterham and Mrs. Turner. Pat Thorpe

and Harry Batterham for the sporting history and of course the Theatre Group.

Helen Foster moved to Gray's Point in 1969 and remembers when Peninsula Road was a dirt track. There was one general store and a small community hall. Flannel flowers were dotted everywhere and there were several grass trees near their block.

They lived on top of the cliff and the only access from the end of Peninsula Road near the shops was to climb up a fallen gum tree from the block next door. Her husband had worked on the Snowy Mountains River Catchment Scheme and was familiar with demolition work. He blew up three massive boulders and replaced them with sandstone steps. These slabs came from a demolished convent. He carried bags of soil up the 60 steps so they could have a lawn and a garden. The bricks for the house were brought up by a flying fox he made.

Gray's Point Bus Service made a tremendous difference to the residents. It was the only way out of Gray's Point unless you wanted to walk the three kilometres to Gympie or had a car. It played a vital part in the life of the elderly, or people with small children and teenagers too young to drive.

At first it ran very infrequently and it was not uncommon to see people trying to hitch a ride as they walked in and out of Gray's Point. As the buses were rare, we all had to leave at the same time and made many friends this way. The buses were not in good repair in the 1970's and frequently broke down. Helen remembers a bus stopping in Budyan Road, while the driver dashed into the nearest garden with a can for water to cool the radiator. A hush would fall over the passengers as the driver turned from Gray's Pt. Rd. to the steep incline of Inglewood Rd. Usually they made it and conversation would resume, but it was a nerve wracking moment.

The opening of Westfield Miranda made a big difference to people who relied on public transport as it had everything under one roof. At first they had to catch a train from Gympie but eventually the company ran buses directly to Miranda. It was absolute bliss and pure

luxury as it cut out the waiting on stations in very cold winters and suffocatingly hot conditions in summer. Even better they had buses running Saturdays and Sundays and people without cars were no longer trapped in Gray's Pt. over the weekends.

One of the most popular identities was a bus driver called Max. He was the main driver on the bus in the 1970's and 1980's. Max was kindness itself. He always had a joke for the tiny tots and made their first venture into the big wide world a happy one. Going off to kindergarten later held no fears with Max as the familiar bus driver.

Helen Foster mentions the flora and fauna of Gray's Point. As a keen gardener she mentions the bane of her life, the deer. One of two began appearing in the 1980's until whole families visited daily. They eat all the new shoots, their horns destroy the ground cover and their antlers brake off small branches. Some shrubs are no more. Ditto the bushland. An article on the subject appeared in the local magazine "Shire Life", published by Jenni Gormley and Graeme Booth of Peninsula Road, Gray's Point.

There was an unusual lyre bird who used to visit the garden and throw mulch all over the place as he feasted on worms. The lyrebird would fossick along a rock shelf covered with bushes and leaf litter just below the cliff edge. Occasionally he would pop his head up to see any action on our back lawn. Woe betide any crested pigeons peacefully sunbathing there. With a screech he would dart out and wings flapping scare them off his territory.

One beautiful spring morning Helen was waiting for the bus to leave the stop opposite the shops. As she looked at the houses in their leafy surrounds, across the bush to the sparkling river and National Park, the bus driver said, "You are blessed to live here." I think he was right.

Syd Anstee states that in the thirties no mail was delivered to Gray's Point. All his mail was addressed to "Via Sutherland" and had to be collected. In the 1950's Joseph and Barbara Connolly stated that mail was left at the post office. and general store, run by Mr. and Mrs. Grice. However, if you worked, Grice would

not give you the mail at the weekend as he didn't open on Saturday.

One of the most notable changes to Grays Point after WW11 was the replaced trams- buses in Peninsular Road. The increase of women in Gray's Point population was a significant change. Before WW11 there were 80-85% men.

LONG TIME RESIDENT MARY BRACK

Mary Brack's parents came out to Gray's Point Her father bought the land as a wedding present for her mother. That would have been in 1915. They lived in Peninsular Road. They lived down by the water first and they moved up to the house in 1919. There were five children and Mary was the youngest.

The house on the waterfront had a few rooms but it was really only a tin shed. It has since been demolished and there is a brick building there now. The builders built the other house in 1919. Mary was only a little girl at the time. She remembers the Conyards, they came a year after the McNeals.

There were no facilities there. They used the waterfront house as a weekender and brought all their food with them. Their father used to work in Grace Bros. in Glebe and they had use of a Grace Bros. truck. In the beginning, there were no roads, they used to walk down the track and carry all their stuff with them. You couldn't get a truck down the track. They lived at Sutherland at the time and before that at Dulwich Hill. Mary was born at Dulwich Hill.

They used to go to the Methodist Church in Sutherland. Her brothers used to carry her, as she was the youngest.

Mary was educated at Dulwich Hill Home Science School up to year nine. She did not go to work. When she left school, she worked on the farm. They had two and a half acres and they grew all their own vegetables. That is how they managed. They had cows, goats, chickens and horses. Mary's father owned a block of land up there, but they sold it. They said that that proximity to the water would ruin their piano. Steve Walker bought their piano and they bought an organ for use at home. They used to go up to Gynea and have concerts. Her

brother played the guitar and they used to sing songs on the river. They sang songs around the piano and during the depression, they used to go out walking. My brother was the only one who had a job in town and he used to go in with Mr. Conyard, Don's father. He worked in the city, went to Sutherland and caught a steam train to the city.

Mary said they'd always had trouble with bush fires, especially before they had the Bush Fire Brigade. The women used to get sacks and wet them to fight the fires. In the 1980's ten houses were burnt down.

Mary remembers the shark tragedy. It was in 1927, right near the boat shed in Mansion Bay. A man named Gibbs jumped on the back of the shark. I can't remember exactly but the victim died just at the top of our place. I went into town to see the young man Gibbs get his bravery award. He couldn't save him but he fought him, but it was too late. It was the only tragedy we ever had.

After the Bracks moved to their new house at the top, they conducted religious services. Mary's father was a lay preacher. They asked around all the churches to see who would come out and hold services in Gray's Point, but the only ones who would come out were the Baptists. They came out and held services at Rushdene. They used to have a camp opposite the Stepping Stones. Mr Brack had two trades. He was a baker and a lay preacher. They had the bakery, they still have the stones on the steps. They used to bake bread there, otherwise there would not have been any bread.

SWALLOW ROCK

Swallow Rock was previously a small island in the middle of the Port Hacking River, surrounded by white sand banks. Over time, changes brought about by reclamation and dredging, the island turned into a reserve, part of the mainland of Gray's Point. Today Swallow Rock Reserve is a tranquil park utilised by the people of Gray's Point.

Swallow Rock was transformed from a separate island surrounded by mangroves and marsh to an elevated car park and reserve of today. The channel-deepening for the earlier ferry service

was affected by deposition by dredging from a pipe line about half mile long from upstream.

A lot of local input has gone into the future of Swallow Reserve, and in 2002, \$250,000 is planned to upgrade the Reserve.

SAVILLE CREEK BRIDGE

The bridge was built in 1922 and this opened up the area. North West Arm Road was built (previously called Coombes Road) and Gray's Point had access to the Sutherland Shire. It was now accessible by carriage, sulky and motor car. At the bridge a swimming hole was popular with children and became a favourite picnic spot. A Baptist holiday camp was built on the high side of North West Arm Road, overlooking the pool and alternate groups of boys and girls were billeted on long weekends, swimming and singing camp songs.

In the 1930's, Mr. Reg Harris, who owned most of the land thereabouts, put on a swimming contest for those who lived in the district. It was he, who, as a member of Council had been instrumental in the construction of North West Arm Road.

Ted Lawes' sister Mrs. Pedersen, remembers their father building a large comfortable four roomed wattle and daub cottage, thatched with grass tree leaves.

When asked whether they feared bush fires in such a highly inflammable home, she replied that she "never saw a bush fire, there was nobody there to set a fire alight."

WILLIAM ATKINSON (1920's)

William Atkinson lived at Gray's Point from 1921-1927. William's father made weekend visits to Gray's Point when William was about seven years old. He came from Surry Hills. His father was a barber and charged 1/- for a haircut and 6d. for a shave. Beer was then 1/6d bottle.

The holiday homes were made of saplings and had hessian walls. They were equipped with camp beds and a meat safe. They were owned by boatshed proprietor, Con Gerhig. Regular bookings cost 10/- per week – which included fishing, the most popular pastime.

The family caught the trains Saturday afternoon (Dad worked in the morning) to National Park Station. They then walked along Florence Parade (current park track to National Park Station). They later walked back to National Park Station, the last train went at 6.30p.m. If they missed it they had to walk to Sutherland Station.

There were approximately four homes on the Point and none along North West Arm Road. Permanent residents were families. Gerhig, Coombes, Anning, Allum, Gatley (Bill) Regular weekenders were the Campbells.

William Atkinson said that there were plenty of fish, caught with hand lines mainly. Sandflats, Ballast Heap and Angel's Nest were the best spots. On the Sandflats he caught whiting (40 in 3 hours) Ballast Heap – he caught large bream and jewfish Angel's nest – named after the movie, also bream and Jewfish House had a dam (old parish maps named this area "The Fountain.")

THE HISTORY OF EDUCATION AT GRAY'S POINT

As early as 1895, a letter concerning the establishment of a primary school at Audley was written by the Inspector of Schools, Mr. H. Skillman, at Arncliffe. The children of mainly rangers in the National Park had to travel from Audley each morning in the Park Trustees' Coaches which ran to Sutherland each morning for mail and passengers, arriving at Sutherland at 9.a.m. However, the children had to walk three miles home each afternoon from school. In the winter the younger children left school for home at 3.30 p.m. It was suggested that a school at Audley would barely maintain an average of twelve pupils, and it would be within four miles of a Public School.

However, early records show that a primary school was in opened at Audley in the early 1900's and was in operation until around 1916. It was presumed that attendance dwindled off about that time. Secondary school students went to Sutherland.

By the early 1920's, parents of children living in North West Arm (now Grays Point),

petitioned for a school at Audley, which was closer than Sutherland

Mr. William P.Lawes, of Lawes' Assembly Hotel, Sydney, wrote a letter to Mr.Vol. Molesworth Esq., Parliament House, Sydney 24th January, 1922, petitioning for a school at Audley. The children of that district had to walk six or seven miles each day to and from school. In the winter months when it rained it was impossible to send them.

A letter was written to E.A. Riley Esq., Inspector of Schools, Kogarah, by Louisa Triglone, Teacher, that she had travelled to Audley and saw the Overseer of the Park who drove her to North West Arm where she interviewed the parents and teachers. She found that there were seven children of school age, who were not attending any school and only one child was being taught any school work..

Gray's Point children attended this school by walking along Florence Parade which was the only road into Gray's Point at that time.

It was proposed in 1922 that the original Audley school should be relocated to near the railway station in Royal National Park. The children were mainly Lawes, Turners and Conyards. In 1927, the school was closed and the children once more went to Sutherland school, due to lack of pupils.

As early as 1946, The Progress started petitioning the Education Department for a school in Gray's Point. The problem of a suitable block of land for a school had to be overcome because of the uneven blocks of land in Gray's Point. One block was deemed suitable, but one of owners did not want to sell. It was not until 1950 that the block of land was purchased.

It was becoming urgent that a school be built in Gray's Point. District Inspector White wrote on 29th September , 1947 "About forty children now travel to Sutherland, both Public and Roman Catholic Schools by bus over a rough and rather dangerous road; of these, twenty are infants. The early establishment of a Public School seemed necessary, and the acquisition of a site is urgent."

THE SHARK ATTACK

Harvey Nation has lived in Gray's Point for seventy years.. He remembers that fatal shark attack 3rd January, 1927 in Mansion Bay, (previously called Bream Bay). It happened very near where Harvey and his wife live today.

It was reported in the Propeller, 7th January, 1927. "Mervyn Allum, aged fifteen years, of Ashfield, and several friends arrived at Gray's Point on a camping expedition. It is one of the most popular seaside resorts owing to its bathing facilities. With its gently shelving beach and still water, it was considered fairly free from sharks.

Allum, with several friends, was on the outer fringe in the water that reached no higher than his chest. Suddenly a large shark, with its fin showing above the surface, made its appearance a few yards from the crowd. The fin disappeared from sight and a few seconds later the bathers were startled by a piercing scream from Allum. The shark had seized one of his legs, and struggling frantically, he disappeared beneath the surface. His head and chest appeared again shortly afterwards, but several yards further away from the spot where he had been seized. Several swimmers made towards Allum but foremost was Stanley Gibbs. Swimming powerfully he quickly reached the boy and grabbing his arm, attempted to beat off the monster. The shark was holding tenaciously to Allum's leg and for several seconds, Gibbs punched it with all his strength. Suddenly both he and Allum disappeared, but when they reappeared it was apparent that the shark had released its hold.

Gibbs came around swimming towards the shore, and in front of him, he pushed Allum. The water was stained crimson for many yards around with blood from Allum's wound. The shark, apparently eager for more blood, made another dash at the boy and his rescuer. Before it could obtain another hold on Allum, Gibbs again beat it off. At that moment, a rowing boat manned by Donald Campbell of Devonshire Street, city, who had been fishing some distance away, arrived where the struggle was taking place. With difficulty Allum and Gibbs were dragged on board and taken to the beach. Here it was seen what frightful injuries

Allum had suffered. The flesh of one leg had been completely torn off, except for one small strip from the thigh to the ankle bones exposed. There were teeth marks on the boy's body, evidence of the shark's attempt to close its jaws on him during its second attack. This had been partially successful, for a small piece of flesh had been taken from his side.

It seems that William Coombes, with his wife, wrapped the victim in sheets and then transported him to an ambulance which was waiting on the other side of the Georges River. This version of the attack was confirmed by William Coombes.

It was usually believed that sharks only attack lone swimmers and will not attack swimmers in a crowd. This was not the case, in this instance.

In an unconscious condition, Allum was raced in a wagon of the St. George Ambulance and taken to St. George District Hospital. However, it was found that he had been dead for some time. A special meeting to inaugurate a fund to recognise the bravery of Stanley Gibbs, was proposed. Later he was presented with a bravery award."

In another version of the story, the victim, was swimming from two boats filled with teenagers, Mervyn Allum was attacked and in panic, Don Campbell fell into the water. Campbell swam to the victim, fought the shark and dragged the badly mauled boy (one leg gone) back to a boat.

The victim died soon after of blood loss and shock. Don Campbell later received a bravery award.

One witness stated that after everyone had left the water following the fatal attack, he watched the shark cruising around Mansion Bay and the finally it left.

Harvey Nation states that sharks travel at 60k., once he saw a shark come from behind him, flying out of the water after a fish, the shark was from eight to ten foot long. Young people have no idea how powerful sharks can be, they have several rows of teeth and can rip off a leg or shoulder.

He believes that no one should swim in the water. Harvey's family do not swim in Mansion Bay at all. People get too close, when

launching a boat on the slipway, a shark can come flying out of the water. Fishermen have seen many sharks. In a later attack, a shark came in and took a dog.

TED LAWES

Ted Laws and his family came to Gray's Point in 1920. His father was a wool classer and Ted was the youngest. He had two elder brothers. His mother died when he was four years old, in 1924. He has been a resident of Gray's Point for eighty two years His elder brother was called "Tarzan", who used to be a wrestler. He had a fruit and vegetable run, right around the river. He was well known for his "Tarzan" calls, to let residents know of his arrival.

In 1922 they had their photographs taken with a lot of other people on the concrete bridge when it was built on Saddler's Creek. They had a large farm, about sixteen acres. They had half a mile of passionfruit fences, some pigs and a couple of thousand fowls. They had two hundred pigeons and some ducks.

The Depression set in badly and Ted's father being a wool classer, was away most of the time. Everything went bad and a lot of people went bankrupt. He left home in 1934 and wandered backward and forward from other areas until just before the war.

Charles Chauvel filmed the film "Forty Thousand Horseman" and Ted and his two brothers were in the film. This was in 1939.

Within twelve months, Ted had joined the A.I.F. He served in New Guinea fighting the Japanese. He spent nearly all his time in New Guinea. There were plenty of Japs there, about 30,000 of them and the Japanese chopped a lot of heads off.

When the war finished, Ted had woken up to the fact that there was so much poverty at Gray's Point. The Government had found so much money for the war, now it was time they should try and channel the money into the development of Gray's Point. Ted worked on the trams in the city and as an ex-service man, he was in a position to help his friends own their own homes, if they would help him to organise and they were good organisers.

Two of Ted's friends were Harry Batterham and Charley Baker. Charley was an artist while Harry was interested in theatre work and elocution. Harry was also interested in physical fitness and ran in marathons. He ran in Australia and overseas. He was still running when he was over eighty. He died at eighty eight. His wife died and he got married again.

Ted's wife also died while he was in the process of organising. Ted wanted to see Gray's Point develop. He realised that if he bought in some good organisers to help him, he was in a position to help them get War Service Homes. That's how he was able to help other people. They wanted money to develop Gray's Point. They didn't even have tarred roads. They had no water laid on or sewerage. They had no halls. All their meetings were held in the grandmother's house, because there was a great big room in the middle. They had concerts every second week. They had young people who bought their children and babies with them, because they couldn't go anywhere with children. They were on the beds, under the beds and on the chairs. Everybody had to do something, miming, singing etc. Everybody doing everything, the kids racing up and down on the verandah or out the back, having a whale of a time.

They developed unity between the people. It didn't matter what their religion was, they concentrated on being friends and doing these other activities.

So, with the money raised, they built the first hall. The land was given to them by the man who ran the Post Office. He gave them the land and they raised the money for the hall. They made a deal with the council. If the council built the big hall, they would get the other hall for the Girl Guides.

Previous to the big hall being built, they built a little school, because nearly all the children coming home from school were cut off by the bush fires. All the children ran down the track right in the face of the big fire, so they decided they would get a school for their children. That was the motivating force for building the first school at Gray's Point.

They then decided that the school was not good enough because it was on a slope as the land was not level enough. They decided to build a big hall where the school was, abolish the small school and then they fought for the big school because they had to get a fire break. Every six years or so, a bush fire came out of National Park.

Gray's Point then had a preschool at the back of the hall. They organised the littlies. They also had the Girl Guides operating as well as the Seniors Learning and the Theatre Group. The Theatre Group was very popular.

In one play, there were seventeen women shipwrecked on a island in the Indian Ocean and two of them were pregnant. Eighteen years later, a lonely man was also ship wrecked with the (now) twenty women. They gave him hell. They were dressed as you would have expected them to be in grass skirts.

When Ted was nominated to be the leading man, his wife read the script and said, "That's not for you, that 's not for you!" So he had to decline and missed out on being the leading man.

The play went on for five weeks, on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. What a lot of fun they had! They had some marvellous people. They never had any differences. They all worked together, loved each other and fought for the development of Grays Point. They wanted tarred roads, kerb and guttering, sewerage and the Bush Fire Brigade.

Ted stated that they lost fifteen houses in one hit, in one of the big bush fires. They decided that they would have to have a Bush Fire Brigade. In 1973, Ted became the Assistant Leader of the Bush Fire Brigade. Ted's son John became the Captain, and went on to become the Group Captain of the Brigade.

The Bush Fire Brigade Headquarters built up from there. They went on and got the big school, built up on the edge of the National Park, because the land was level and the two Ovals were built. They were mainly for firebreaks. They had to have a firebreak to stop people being burnt out. They knew that if they

got the school built, they'd have to build a fire break on the National Park side of the school. The big ovals that they built became wonderful fire breaks.

Later in the eighties, two men and one woman were burnt to death very close to the big oval. So the Bush Fire Brigade was the driving force of Gray's Point. They did get a lot of wonderful things to happen at Gray's Point and the community is all the better for it.

JOHN LAWES

John Laws was born 8th August, 1943 and he was one of the first pupils to attend Gray's Point School and he considers this his one claim to fame. He is also a fourth generation Gray's Pointer.

John is the son of Ted Laws. His father lived at Gray's Point and when the Second World War broke out, he joined up and was sent to Cowra. Subsequently, he met John's mother. John was born in Cowra and after the war he came home. Ted wanted to move back to Gray's Point. The grandmother, who was John's great grandmother, was reasonably well off. She had a hotel in Sydney and a big house on Yowie Bay. She also owned fifteen acres at Gray's Point. In the mid twenties she built a farm house there. That was where she was based. She had a garage separate to the house where the car was housed and where the chauffeur lived. She had a brand new car. It was an Essex. The chauffeur would stand to attention.

The old grandmother, who was Ted Lawes grandmother sold this property to Ted's father. He was by himself. He had six children to look after when his wife died. In the late twenties, the Depression started. John's grandfather was a wool classer and had to go away for long periods of time. Things were a bit tough and whatever the deal was with his grandmother, he couldn't fulfil the deal, so she took a lot of it back. Whatever he paid, she let him have part of it, which also included the house which is on the corner of Gray's Point Road and North West Arm Road. Tim Bailey lives there now in a nice little brick house on the corner, near the hotel, which is now known as Lawes' corner.

So John's grandfather went to live in this house which cost a lot of money, I think it was about 4,000 pounds. To recoup some of the money, Ted Lawes had the bright idea that he would subsidise some of the land. He was working in the trams in Sydney. He would sell the blocks of land to his friends on the trams and then he would be surrounded by his friends. The most notable of these friends was Harry Batterham who only died a few years back. Harry brought his wife there in 1948, so you can realise that this happened just a few years after the war.

They had this great big typical farmhouse, with a great big verandah, an open fire, big french doors opening up n to the verandah. In the early days they didn't have a community hall at Gray's Point. What evolved was that the community would hold get togethers in their house, which went to raise money for the Gray's Point Community Hall, which is now the Girl Guides Hall, opposite the shops. The big old house is where John Laws grew up. When John's mother died later, they sold the house and moved down the road, at 152 Gray's Point Road.

The original house was 141. John's sister built a house at the back of the original house, between Dad's old house and Harry Batterham's house. That was known as 141 Gray's Point Road, because that was known as the original roadway and Dad's original old house. I was living a few doors down. My sister moved to the country and someone else bought the house. A few years later, he had a few more children, was looking for a bigger house and when the house came back on the market, he moved back to 141, where he lived for another two years. Then he moved to the house next to Sid. It came up for auction. That is where he has lived for thirty five years.

John concurs with what Sid said about the middens. The whole hillside, where they are is full of aboriginal middens shell. He is glad he lives on the warm side of the hill and not on the cold side. It is his little bit of paradise.

This side of the bay is the preferred side of the bay so the part that the Park has now is really the reject part, the least evidence of aboriginal

occupation. There are only three paths that face north. A small section in Gynea Bay, Burraneer Bay and the rest of Port Hacking is facing north and it is ideal to live on South West Arm and the Basin –very rocky. All the area where North West Arm Road comes down to the Gray's Poin Road where Kyogle Place is, is a flat area where we got our water.

Grays Point School have asked several times to do a short segment on John Laws because it almost seemed as if the punishment was a miraculous deal because he was the first (actually the second) in the Punishment Book but then went off to Sydney Boys Tech. High. Syd said that he opened that school in 1926.

John stated that he believed the Inspector of the Punishment Book had an area to go round and oversee some of the unfortunate young miscreants. To top it all the inspector's name was Laws (no relation).

John was also interested in a letter from an uncle of his written in 1922 on "Laws Hotel " stationery asking to bring up the school from Audley to National Park. He also noted that his grandmother, who died when his father Ted was only four had an identical signature to Johns.

John spent most of his primary school education at Sutherland Primary and then at the beginning of fourth class went to Gray's Point. As he was put up into 5th and then 6th class ahead of his peers, it seems that John Laws was a bright boy who was bored in class.

THE BUSH FIRE BRIGADE

John Laws remembers the Bush Fires in 1955, when he was at Sydney Tech. At that time Gray's Point was under the control of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade. The law as it stood then was that you couldn't have a Bush Fire Brigade in the Metropolitan Shire Area. So the Bush Fire Brigade was disbanded in 1954-5. This went on for ten years and there was no Bush Fire Brigade in Gray's Point, until about 1965-6.

John Laws remembers the 1955 fire when he was going to school at Hurstville, where

Sydney Technical High School had moved. The children from the Gray's Point School were evacuated, together with John's younger sister and they were all taken down to Swallow Rock. When John came home from school by bus they all had to get off the bus, at the Stepping Stones. They then had to walk up the river. Ten to twelve houses had been burnt at Gray's Point, one right next door to where they lived.

After the fire in 1964-5, a new Bush Fire Brigade was formed. They had a hand me down vehicle, (a Ford that was donated by one of the other brigades) which John kept in his backyard. He ended up with quite a few vehicles in his backyard.

They looked for somewhere they could build a Fire Station. The reason for their existence was that the Bush Fire Brigade could help look after the Royal National Park. They had a few Rangers, but nothing as such. If there was a fire in the Park, they were called to the Park. It was reasonable then that the NP&WS should give them a small piece of land adjacent to the school at Gray's Point. NP&WS thought that was very unreasonable. John said that looking back, he can now see their point of view. Every piece of land they alienate from the Park, they feel they have a good excuse for having the land that belongs to the Park and looking back they'd end up with no Park because everyone wants a piece of it, a little bit here and a little bit there.

So they ended up working with the council and they got a piece of land for the Progress Association and the land went right through out at the top with nothing on it. So now, they have the preschool behind it and then up the back, the Fire Station. In 1974, the current Fire Station was built. They went from the mid sixties to the red seventies. In the summer, they have the hot westerly winds blowing, the fires start in the Park, until they had the Bush Fire Brigade, so, they needed the fire break. Virtually the fires went right through the Park and there are all these settlements around there, such as Maianbar and Bundeena.

For seven or eight years, John Laws was Captain of the Brigade. He was then elected as a Deputy Group Captain. The Sutherland Shire

was divided up into three main areas in charge of what they called the Northern Zone, - Loftus, Gray's Point and Kurnell. John was always going from Gray's Point to Kurnell which has its own gigantic Oil Refinery Fire Brigade.

For another seven, eight or nine years, John Laws was promoted Deputy Group Captain. They fostered a lot of young people into the brigade, round about the age of eighteen. The young people used to clean the equipment and odd jobs. He likes to think that they helped them to do well in life and they helped a little bit into doing this.

In 1974, A Bush Fire Brigade Station was officially opened at Gray's Point by the Sutherland Shire President (Cr. Kevin .M. Skinner), watched by the station officer, Mr. R. Esam and the Sutherland Shire Clerk, Mr. Athol Hill. (*Sutherland Shire Leader 18-9-1974*)

The double brick garage building held a fire truck and equipment. For the past five years the brigade operated from the backyards of two of their members. The volunteer group was known as Gray's Point-Kirrawee Bush Fire Brigade.

It covered an extensive area between Gray's Point and the Princes Highway at Loftus, and will be available to help in other districts in an emergency.

The authorities described the Sutherland Shire as a particularly dangerous bush fire zone. The fire-fighting organization at Gray's Point was established in the early 1950s when an auxiliary brigade was formed.

Although it had no authority outside its own area, the brigade formed a close liaison with neighboring groups, who were assisted when major outbreaks occurred. In 1968 extensive fires raged through bushland in Sutherland Shire and endangered many homes.

Fires approached Gray's Point on two fronts from Royal National Park and it was only through the combined efforts of bush fire brigades that homes were saved. After this experience local residents petitioned Sutherland Council to establish a registered bush fire brigade in the area.

A public meeting was called and the brigade came into existence late in December, 1968. The brigade's first vehicle, a reconditioned ex-army "blitz" truck, was commissioned in September, 1969.

Before then brigade members used their own vehicles. The vehicle and its equipment deteriorated over the next five years because the truck was exposed to the weather and it was returned to headquarters.

A Studebaker truck was bought in 1973 after a fund-raising campaign. The chief ranger of the National Park (Mr. K.R. Ayers) warned that bushfires in 1974 could be the worst in five years. The absence of serious fires in the past five years had aggravated the situation.

In 1985, the area had been victim to two fatal bush fires, one in 1981 at Waterfall which claimed five lives and another at Gray's Point in 1982 which killed three people and seriously injured six.

Gray's Point disaster was the subject of the longest coronial inquiry in Australian history. The inquiry, headed by magistrate Mr. Bert Wilson, lasted a record 267 court days and cost millions of dollars.

Harold Henry Batterham was born 23 May, 1911, at Glennifer, near Bellingen in Northern New South Wales.

In the Publication – "Introduction to Harry Batterham", a book of poems and prose, written in Harry's declining years, when he was no longer physically fit, we are introduced to the man Harry Batterham, by his friend of long standing, John Turner.

Harry spent most of his working life working on the Trams. Through this occupation, he learned a great deal about the people he met, he listened to them, he was interested in their welfare. As John Turner states, "Harry had the widest interpretation of the term neighbour, partly due to his Methodist upbringing." He was always active, in the Trade Union movement, in community affairs, promoting the advancement of Gray's Point where he lived for fifty years. Not forgetting his sporting activities. He ran marathons, both here in

Australia and overseas. He was deservedly honoured by the award of the Medal of the Order of Australia.

John Turner tells us of Harry's interest in writing, especially his poetry, which shows of his love of his fellow man, especially the "bushies". It must have been very hard for Harry when his health failed and he lost his wife after fifty five years of marriage. He developed rheumatism and his eyesight failed, John Turner became his "amanuensis" and typist. They sat together on Harry's back verandah while he sorted through his scraps of paper, on which he had written his poems and parts of his autobiography. Through his writing we learn more about Harry, from the man himself.

Harry instigated the "Parrot Club", a group of runners who ran in the National Park. In 1972 he formed this group to introduce them to the fundamentals of running and keeping fit. These Parrots were housewives. Harry believed that they chattered like parrots and the only time they kept quiet was when a male jogger passed them! The Parrots still exist today. They meet at 5 a.m. and run in the National Park. Through this activity, the women state that they went on to run in the City to Surf, they made many friendships and enjoy the tranquility of the bush. Harry was still running at eighty eight years of age. He won the Cronulla run. Harry put messages on the Notice Board at the start of Florence Parade or as he called it "Friendship Way".

Ted Laws met Harry when he worked on the trams and was the instigator of bringing him to Gray's Point in 1948, not long after the war. Ted was organising War Service Loans for his friends to buy their own homes. They had many fund raising activities in Ted Lawe's grandmother's house. Harry Batterham, amongst his other talents, was interested in theatre work and formed the Theatre Group with a lot of help from enthusiastic local talent, including Charley Baker, the artist. As Ted Laws said, they developed a unity between people.

From the man himself Harry introduces us to his early life and his arrival into Sydney. Through his eyes we learn that Harry was a

country boy from Bellingen on the North Coast, who came to Sydney and attended Rozelle Public School in the 1920's.

Even then, he loved all things physical, always ran, home to lunch, back to school, walked miles to pay the rent and seemed to enjoy this activity. He sold papers before and after school. In the holidays he went by train to Nowra Hill and Bolong with his mother's relatives, riding horses and chasing rabbits.

As Harry states, he was always on the move, "never one for a sedentary life or passive living. He talks about his first job as a junior traveller selling Columbia and Regal gramophone records. With the introduction of radio, demand for records fell and he was retrenched. Times were hard, apprenticeships were unobtainable but he eventually obtained work in 1928 with the Government Railway and Tramways.

He was active in swimming, surfing and lifesaving, playing Rugby League and Soccer. After one failed marriage, Harry married Bette with whom he was happily married for fifty five years.

He states that he was active in distance running on a regular basis at forty eight years, training in the Centennial Park. He mentions that he was a successful competitor in numerous road races conducted by various Bus Depots. In 1971 (at sixty years of age) he joined the NSW Veterans' Athletic Association, and competed successfully over all distances, specialising in marathons. He ran marathons in every State of the Commonwealth and in Canada and Honolulu- the only time he didn't win his age division was in Canada, where influenza interfered with his preparation and performance.

On retiring at sixty, he joined the Retired Tram and Bus Workers Association and held the position of secretary for eighteen years, organising outings and interstate tours for members. After retiring he also obtained the contract for the delivery of mail at Gray's Point and carried out this activity with his wife for seven years.

Harry mentions that when his wife died in 1992, he kept on the move visiting his son in Northern Territory and his grandsons and a lot of other relatives.

He belonged to Wanda Surf Club Callisthenics Class on Wednesday nights and a member of Billy's Bushies Running on Saturday mornings. Then he developed rheumatism and eye trouble and could not run through the bush any more. After these outlets seem to be closing up, Harry took up his old love, ballroom dancing, attending Alan Glynn's Studio at Hurlstone Park.

"I enjoyed the movement. I am most happy when I am on the move. It seems this is the pattern of my life."

A most remarkable man. Harry was remarried to Ellen and they went to live in Mascot. He died at the age of 88. He is sorely missed.

The End of the Beginning.

The history above is a draft version of the initial research by Beryl Tope. The book to be compiled now awaits deeper and wider efforts in research and input from our members.

The Grays Point Progress Association is now undertaking further development of the History but would love to hear from you or others who have information and or pictures. Please help.

Les Bursill.

Just Remember... To Not Forget.

By Nigel Dawe

History for mine, has never seemed anything but present - in an immediate, retrievable sense that is - somehow it's only ever one simple story, artefact, survivor, photograph, witness or descendant from the surface of our daily existence. Always 'around' to remind us of all that's gone before, and perhaps all that's still to come?

An Unusual Fishing Adventure

Not that history reveals itself in completely legible terms at any one time, it is we who must apply or make ourselves available to it. As Lord Chesterfield observed "History is only a confused heap of facts." Facts that evidently offer themselves to be made sense of, and rendered significant enough to be 'remembered' at a later date.

Time and memory are perhaps the absolute contenders for being the archaic parents of history. Without the presence of one the other as a result has its significance erased entirely. Umberto Eco captures my sentiments more elaborately when he suggests "the true measure of time is an inner measure... There is no use denying how useful clock time can be, but it is clear that it is entangled in our everyday lives with the time of consciousness and of memory." And thus history could be conceptualised in terms of being a discipline actually 'felt' more than thought.

'Emotional archaeology' is how pre-eminent documentary maker/historian Ken Burns aptly describes this approach to history, going on to state "The pitfalls of history are many. At a basic level it can be nostalgic and sentimental, ... [however] we trust to logic and reasoning in the presentation of facts but we hunger for something more, for a higher truth.

We can get that from art that eschews the plodding logic of the dialectic we live. The world is so often presented to us as good-bad, in-out,, black-white, male-female. I've found in the harbour of history a way to find reconciliation and some grace in the chaos." Grace that is derived from the authenticity of acquaintance, acquaintance with the souls and circumstance of those now departed, brought back to life if you will, by our relatively untapped inclination for remembrance. Because it is only through our conscious remembering of others that others in turn might care to remember us. As Cicero vaguely laments "To be ignorant of what happened before you were born is to be ever a child. For what is man's lifetime unless the memory of past events is woven with those of earlier times."

The Port Hacking river, both before and after the arrival of Bass and Flinders into the area, has always produced an abundant supply of edible marine life. For the indigenous inhabitants of this particular coastal region, marine life constituted a more than adequate, nutritious food source. With the concentration of colonial settlement around the Port Jackson area and the consequent demand being made upon local resources a shipment of fish from the Port Hacking River was sent to Sydney Cove in 1806 to supplement the needs of the expanding colony.

During the depression years at the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, again, this abundant, natural resource adequately and cheaply, met the food requirements of local inhabitants who had settled around the foreshores of the Port Hacking River. The area abounded with numerous species of fish including sharks, groper, schnapper, stingray and manta ray, which fed abundantly off the extensive mudflats near the entrance to the South West Arm and other areas of this unpolluted and deep channelled river system.

Life for young boys was a learning experience, centred as it was in this particular area. From a very early age they were taught to swim in Port Hacking's pure, clear waters in a protected area. They learned to handle large rowing boats and the wisdom of soaking fishing lines in the bathroom basin prior to rolling the lines onto large fishing corks. They acquired the know-how to attach different weighted lead sinkers and large or small hooks to their fishing lines; how to thread prawns onto hooks so they did not come off, where, and how, to attach floats to their lines and slippery green weed to hooks to catch blackfish.

They explored the adjoining National Park collecting blackboys for spears; found the local aboriginal midden of shells; climbed to the top of the windmill on the property and roamed the parkland during the Christmas/New Year holiday period for deer antlers. Life for these junior

explorers was never a dull moment. They rowed to Maianbar and Jibbon Heads; dug for beautifully coloured, plump, round blue crabs in a sheltered area along their shoreline and waded onto the mudflats at low tide to dig for long, fat, red worms which provided them with fresh bait.

When not on the river they applied coats of linseed oil to weft used and new cricket bats to season them and listened avidly with the adults to the exciting test matches played by Don Bradman and the Australian cricket team. They watched through binoculars every Boxing Day as the yachts in the Sydney to Hobart race passed the heads of the Port Hacking river. They clambered over large boulders to the top of the trig station to bring back sprigs of Christmas Bush for the dining room table and to enjoy its heady isolation and magnificent view.

They explored a cave on the property by crawling on their stomachs through the cave's entrance, totally oblivious of red bellied black snakes and spiders. They were coerced into collecting basins of mulberries off the mulberry tree on the property to have delicious mulberry pies baked for them.

Boys naturally initiate their own holiday experiences when they had done it all and want new adventures and excitement. Taking their father's 16 foot rowing boat out on to the river at high tide two boys aged 14 and 12 set out with the intention of spearing stingrays with a long iron spear found left over from the front fence railing. In the mudflat area off Costens Point however, they espied large manta rays splashing around, a more interesting and challenging target than stingrays. These two brothers, great mates, with a fisherman's interest in any form of marine life in the area and with all the confidence of young teenagers, knew no fear and were quite oblivious to any potential danger associated with their activities.

They rowed across to the mudflats and actually managed to spear one of these large manta rays. Between the two of them they hauled it into the rowing boat with its thick leathery flaps hanging over each side of the rowing boat and its long spear tail thrashing about behind it. The manta ray occupied the whole area of their 16' rowing boat leaving only a small space for - the older boy at the front of the boat, with the younger boy

squeezed at the back keeping his legs clear of the manta ray's long stinging tail as it thrashed backwards and forwards. The weight of the manta ray was so great that the water the boat was in was only an inch (2.5cm) off the gunnels (each side of the boat).

Naturally there was no way they could row the boat back to shore, with each boy a prisoner at either end. Such an eventuality had not occurred to them in their concentrated and exuberant excitement. Rescue was at hand however to release them from their predicament. They were seen by a local fisherman out on the river in his motor launch and their rowing boat, which was now doubling as a barge, was towed back to the shoreline.

With great difficulty and also great ingenuity they cut down a small tree and managed to get the manta ray placed somehow over this and it was manoeuvred up the hillside to the house and proudly displayed for all to view on one of the large flat rocks at the front of the house. The boys then set to work to cut off the flaps so that manta ray steaks could be on the menu for the evening meal. This they discovered was an impossible task so an axe was resorted to. Much later when the steaks were being prepared for pan frying, some of this delicacy was fed to the family cat who after digesting a few mouthfuls became violently ill. It was considered unwise therefore to serve these succulent looking white manta ray steaks to the family and they were replaced by something much less interesting, but safer. The next morning the boys laboriously manoeuvred the manta ray back down the hill where it was returned to the river.

D J Turner

Pushbike, Punts, Piggeries, Putt Putts, Captain Cook and My Grandfather.

When you are around retiring age and children refer to you as an antique it means that you are valuable. Children like to hear stories of what it used to be like. What we took for granted as children is not what children experience today. Our childhood was in a different era. We look

through wonderful rose coloured glasses and reflect upon our childhood.

SWIMMING:

My pushbike was my transport. Fifty miles an hour heading towards Deadman's Creek on the Heathcote Road was exhilarating. It was great to swim in the now extinct Heathcote Weir. I know what you might be thinking but you are wrong. We were fully clothed. We saved the skinny-dipping for Kingfisher Pool. Sure there were snakes, eels and large crayfish. I remember landing on top of a black_snake. There was nothing I could do. I was already in the air when I saw_the snake wriggling in the water below me. We, as children, enjoyed life. As an adult I have hindsight on my side. What painful damage the crayfish could have inflicted!

PUNTS:

Vehicular ferries we called punts. I know that drivers had other names for them as they sat in a line of traffic, sometimes for hours, waiting to board the punt. I saw punts grow bigger and bigger. Ah, push-bikes, last on, first off. I saw my friend fail to stop on his push-bike, hit the boom gate and slide into the Georges River. I saw people trying to crank start cars like the "A Model Ford and I saw other cars, bumper to bumper, just push them off the punt on the other side of the river. The old bumper bars allowed you to do that. When the punt sank that was exciting!. It was also exciting when the punt floated away!.

ILLAWONG:

Illawong was a smelly place. We couldn't wind up the windows on our push bikes. I don't think there are any piggeries left in Illawong. Well, I suppose that's progress.

CLINKER BOATS:

River transport was by heavy clinker rowing boat or by clinker rowing boat fitted with a single cylinder Chapman inboard motor. The boats were called "Putt Putts". They were easy to start. You just wrapped your trouser belt around the heavy fly-wheel.

The clutch mechanism was simple and effective. The fuel tank was usually home made out of soldered copper. Most people could solder. The tank was fitted up the very front of the boat and then petrol gravity fed to the engine we called a motor. Clinker timber boats had the habit of going straight through the waves and Botany Bay in a storm with a westerly wind blowing created challenge (if we attempted to return to Sylvania). Sylvania Waters used to be a "useless swamp". What a transformation!

I remember reading Captain Cook's Log in a little private museum (at Kurnell. The house in which the collection was housed was a strip of sand back from Botany Bay. Maybe your members have knowledge of this museum. It is sad to see your grandparents home disappear. I loved that old home. It had character. It used to be in The Boulevard Kirrawee. It was a couple of houses from Acacia Road. You could walk to Jannali Station along The Boulevard, however you couldn't drive because the road did not go through. Recently I saw the "vacant block" with the coral tree still growing in the back left hand corner and the lemon tree still standing.

My grandfather grew vegetables in the back yard. He used to supply the neighbours with fresh vegetables. As a child I loved this "big acreage". In reality it would be lucky to be 500 or 600 square metres. The axe and tool sharpening grinding wheel was a large circular block of sandstone with a crank handle. It lived its life beside the house. My Grandfather was the Council Ranger at Prince Edward Park on the Woronora River over fifty years ago. He also swept the streets of Sutherland, even when he was well past "Retirement Age". What is fascinating is that he had one arm. He could sure swing an axe to cut the household wood. His name was Theodore Cupitt. We called him, Grandpop.

My wife, Maureen and I sell plants at Como Marina on the Second Sunday of each month. We enjoy talking about old times, "The Way We Were". The artist at the marina sketches the old Como Hotel from memory.

Regards, Ed Cupitt.