



Sutherland Shire Historical Society Inc Bulletin



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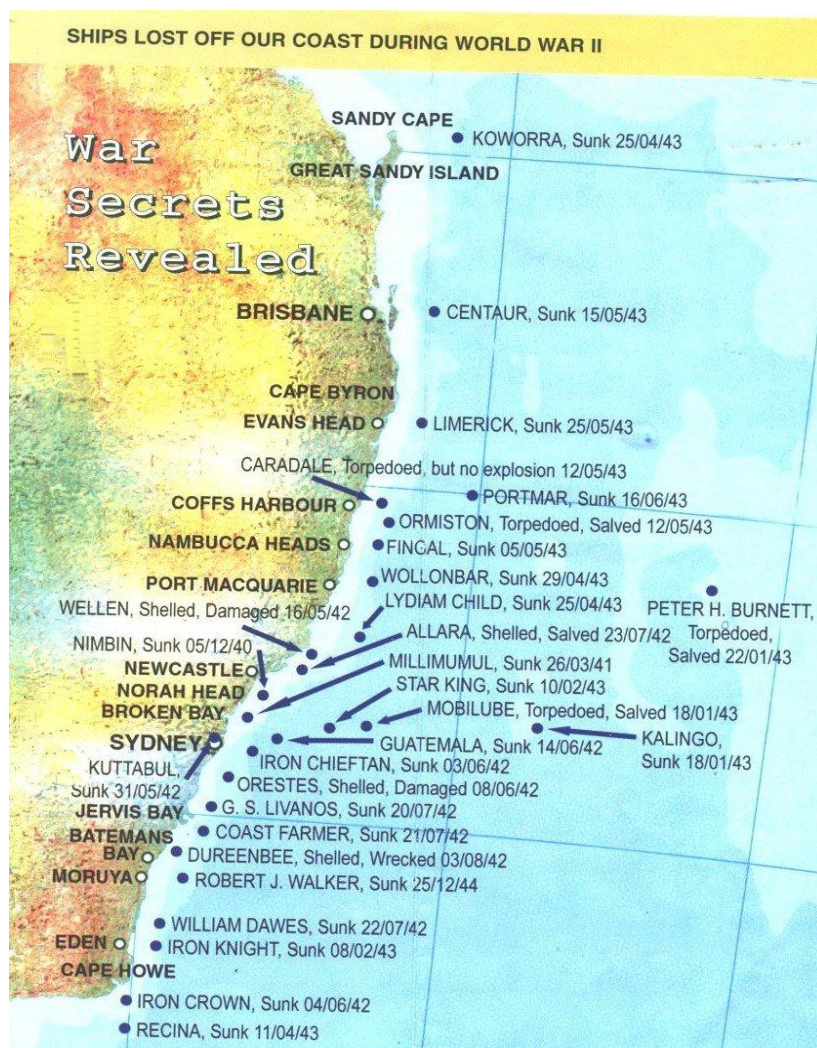
Submarine Attacks on Shipping off Sydney Coastline

Jim Baker, our erstwhile reporter in "Port Hacking – Fisherman's Paradise" has returned to tell the members about the wartime activity of submarines off Sydney and environs during the Second World War.

The map to right shows us how dangerous it was to travel by sea; 29 vessels sunk off our coast from 1941 to 1944. Those three years co-incide fairly well with the apparent push by the Japanese to invade Australia.

Jim Baker has written a "third person" history of the area around Blakehurst and Tom Ugly's detailing life and work in the area. Jim's book is just too large to print in the Bulletin and he is keen to get it published locally.

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PRESIDENT:	Clr. Dawn Emerson, B.A. (Lib Sci), Litt. B.(Soc), AALIA. JP, D.Va, Ph: 95431060 Fax: 9543 0191
DEPUTY PRESIDENT:	Mrs A. Griffiths. O.A.M., J.P.
VICE PRESIDENT	Messrs. J Cutbush, David Overett.
HON. SECRETARY	Mrs. M. Whybourne. P.O. Box 389, Sutherland, NSW, 1499 Ph: 9525 4339
HON. TREASURER:	Mr. Andrew Platfoot
RESEARCH OFFICER ARCHIVIST & BULLETIN EDITOR:	Mr. Les Bursill, AIM. B.A. (Arch) J.P. M.Litt, (Anth). P.D.A.W.A. (Pres). Bus 92891457 A.H. Ph: 9520-7394 Mob 0419 298 018
PUBLIC OFFICER	Mr. A. Platfoot.
MUSEUM CURATOR:	Mr. A. McGrath Ph: 9521 - 2227
DEP. MUSEUM CURATOR:	Mr. J. Cutbush.
EXCURSION OFFICER:	Mrs A. Griffiths. O.A.M., J.P.
BOOKING CLERK:	Mrs Betty McGrath. Ph: 9521 2227
PUBLICITY OFFICER:	Mrs M Blackley. Ph: 9521 1343
BOOK REVIEW EDITOR	Dr. Edward Duyker B.A. (hons) PhD (Melb) FLS, FRGS, FRHist.S, J.P.
COMMITTEE:	Mr. N. Martiensen, Dr. E. Duyker, Ms W. Fyfe Mr. D. Nichol, Mrs B. Nichol. Mrs N. Tunks
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SUTHERLAND SHIRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

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Contributions: Members are invited to submit material for inclusion in the Bulletin which need not be confined to local history, although this is especially welcome. If material is extracted or re-written, please state the source. Care should be taken with material still in copyright and written permission should be obtained from the author and the publisher. Please submit A4 typed pages of text and include your name, address and phone number. Legible hand written articles may be accepted in some circumstances.

Meetings of the Society are held monthly on the third Friday at 7.45pm at the Stapleton Centre, Stapleton Street, Sutherland.

VISITORS ARE WELCOME

*All correspondence should
be addressed to*

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

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Disclaimer

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

President's Remarks

Bankstown Historical Society

Despite my busy schedule with council's meetings, occasionally I see meetings in the paper which I think I should attend, and Bankstown Historical Society's was one in point. It was held in the Mayor's Room, at Bankstown Council, and the President tells me they hold their committee meeting at 10am go home and have lunch, and return for the general meeting at 2pm. They have a brief report from all the Society's officers, including the Treasurer, which we have omitted in recent times. An officer from the Royal Hist Soc was present and commended them on the brevity of their reports which keeps the membership informed, and is followed by the guest speaker. I was taken with the solid support Bankstown City Council gives their Hist Soc.: free meeting rooms, and even the Mayor's room for their meetings, and they don't even have a councillor who is an officer in their society!. We have to pay for our meeting rooms, but in recent times Council has permitted our committee meetings to be held at council. Bulletin This day the guest speaker was the officer from the Royal. She commented on their Bulletin, and apparently they have "themes" for their Bulletin; one issue might be devoted to historic homes in the Bankstown area, and members put in articles, or even paragraphs about some house in the area they knew well, accompanied by a photo. Another theme might be "Schooldays" and members write in with their memories of where they went to school, their teachers, their schoolmates, or the mode of transport: horseback, rowboat etc. with photos where possible, or drawings. They all love these themes and there is no lack of material for their Bulletin. Isn't this a great idea? Would you like us to try a similar "theme" idea? Excursions Whilst I was sitting in the meeting a member came up to me, ecstatically saying I was an answer to a prayer. Somewhat overcome with this welcome, I questioned her enthusiasm. Apparently she had suggested that the BHS members should have a bus excursion for the day to Sutherland Shire, they had all heartily agreed--and she hadn't know whom to contact. The trip is to be in October, so I offered our services to assist with a morning tea



Cllr Dawn Emerson

President; Sutherland Shire Historical Society Inc.

at our Museum (which won't be finished then, but we can show them where we are at with the Menai Pioneer Home, and give them a cup of tea in the foyer so they can admire our flags!) and for one of our members to act as their guide, and work out an itinerary and somewhere they can have their lunch. Following my generous offer I now realise I will be in Britain, during that time, so I am relying on my long-suffering committee to help me out with my promise. Help! Guest Speaker I am trying to think of the member's name (Marie...?....). She said she was not going to speak on a particular topic; they, the members, would provide the information and she would direct the topics. She then proceeded to name the suburbs of Bankstown LGA, and asked the members how did the suburb get its name. The information held in the collective minds of these members was astonishing--and I bet we could do the same! You all have so much accumulated knowledge I feel like the baby in the outfit. Wouldn't it be fun one night to do this? But let's record it on tape and get it transcribed, as so much info comes tumbling out it's amazing. We could do this one Members' Night, couldn't we? So if you have visited another Historical Society and have some ideas to bring back to us, do let us know.

Christmas Film Meeting and Christmas Party

This is to be held on Friday, 19th December, 2003 at Audley in the old Dance Hall at 7.30pm. We will hold our Xmas Party first, so would all members BYOE, (bring your own everything) and make it a picnic tea, or just a "high tea" and after a little Christmas "spirit" we will repair to the hall to settle down and watch the old Cronulla sandhills epic movie "Forty Thousand Horseman", which Helen McDonald has obtained for us on video, and Les Bursill, with the aid of his computer, will put it on a large screen. At one stage Les was trying to get the movie for us, and said he had not had much success getting Forty Thousand Horseman; so I said "Not even 20, 000 Les?" But Helen tells me she has the full complement. We are most grateful to Mike Patrick and NP&WS who are giving us the room cost free (normally \$800 for the night) so we are extremely honoured with this wonderful community gesture by NP&WS. we have asked the Bundeena Film Society to join us, and to party with us too, so it will be nice meeting new people, and you will hear all about their film society--so we might have some cross-fertilisation. Remember that your fees are now due, and we are looking forward to an exciting 2003-4, and please ring Jim Cutbush if you can paint, wash, or help clean any of our items for the Museum at our next working-bee. We actually DO get some work done, and have great fun whilst doing it!

Presidents Addendum

Remember I said I would take the chair until you managed to get another President? That was five years ago, when I was hijacked and I am still here. Admittedly we have had rocky times, and I even resigned once, but somehow I was put back in harness. I really enjoy working for the Society, and if you are happy with our changes to make the Society more vibrant and relevant then let us know. We have re-vamped the Bulletin, and I wouldn't be able to be your President if it wasn't for the solid back-up of the Executive Council members. You are truly the salt of the earth, and no matter what idea I throw at you, you are off and running--and it's done! You are the most supportive committee, and members, any President could have. Whilst we have participated in the Celtic Heritage Festival,

Australia Day, and many other council events, we feel that this last year has been one of our most productive. We provided a Cook display for National Trust Heritage Week, in the Members' Room and we have continued all our activities as previously: guest speakers; excursions; research and assisting people seeking information about their ancestors, and past locations. We have also branched out into a new project: building a replica Menai pioneer home, using the home built by Owen Jones as a model, inside the Sutherland Memorial School of Arts; and displaying our collection of flags in its the School of Arts foyer. Menai Pioneer Home

Council enthusiastically gave us a \$3,000 grant towards it, and Tom McMahon, who is building our "project-home" is being assisted by council-officer "look-outs" who scrounge wonderful "bits'n'pieces" from demolished houses about to go to the tip. Thanks everyone! This makes our grant spin out quite well. We emptied the Museum, no mean task, putting aside the furniture we require to furnish our 1900-1920's home and the rest went into storage.. Our curator Allan McGrath, and his brother Jack came with a trolley, and with Neville Martiensen, moved stoves, fridges, icechests etc. Allen keeps saying he is going to hang up his boots, and I must commend Allan for his support and amiable versatility watching his Museum display for the last 20 years, being completely erased, and coping with the demands of a new project by pitching in to help move everything. This shows a real commitment to the Society and his desire to showcase our wares professionally, as he knows that when we open our Museum in future we will have a really unique display. As Allen isn't well, and currently in hospital, (Get well soon, Allan!) Jim Cutbush, our Assistant Curator, and a Vice-President, has been a tower of strength, suddenly being thrust into the overseer's role, deciding what items will be used in the display, and organising painting, working bees etc. Quite a few of us have been busily painting "walls" and doors: Doug Perry, Doug Archer, John Riseborough, me and my long-suffering husband, Cliff --who isn't even a member as he says he doesn't have time to go to meetings, but still gets roped in to help paint! I dispense coffee and tea at intervals, and Doug Archer keeps up our spirits by doing acrobatic

turns around the foyer, leaping over carpets when carrying painted doors whilst walking backwards, to the astonishment of Cliff left holding the other end, whilst Doug lies down on the job! (What's OH & S mean?)

Flags

A project very dear to Allan McGrath's heart is the public display of our collection of flags. We have been given permission to erect these across the back wall of the foyer of the Sutherland Memorial School of Arts, and with the presentation of three more flags by the Celtic Council of Australia this display will shortly be in situ. Our thanks to Bob Connors, and Dave Gilmore from Council for their help with this project. With the assistance of our Local History Librarian, Ms Helen McDonald, we will also have a short description of each flag, with its history, so that patrons who may be attending a play in the foyer of the School of Arts, can discuss the flags during Interval, as they sip on their glass of wine and nibble their cheese.

Members of the Committee

I thank our secretary, Mina Whybourne, for her exemplary efforts as secretary, as she has kept up with our copious correspondence, referring, advising, reporting, and as ever keeping our Members and interested correspondents informed by responding to each letter. Apart from this she also records our minutes meticulously, and very efficiently keeps me "in the know" so I keep on top of what's happening. To our treasurer, Andrew Platfoot, who is supposed to be the Asst. Treasurer, but no kind soul came forward to relieve him of his post, no one knows what torture this man endures in our service. He has to send several copies of our BAS statement, as the tax office loses them constantly, and somehow keeps us solvent, calculates our GST, pays our bills and keeps our books, and all without a single word of complaint. His stoic service is certainly above and beyond the call of duty, and we greatly value Andrew's commitment. (I do hope someone comes forward to lend Andrew a hand this year--we can't afford to lose him). Our Deputy President, Aileen Griffiths, OAM, has again ably led coach excursions to interesting parts of Sydney, and suburbs, and provided enjoyable days out for our members, as well as reliably taking meetings for me when the

Council or Mayor asks me to attend functions on their behalf, which conflicts with our meeting dates. This excellent support enables me to continue my duties at Council, as well as hold office in the society, and I couldn't do this without Aileen's stalwart support. Betty McGrath, our Booking Clerk, ever cheerful, efficiently takes our money, and produces tickets for everything. Whilst I worry myself sick as to numbers and costs, it always turns out exactly right, such as the other night at the Xmas in July dinner after pluses and minuses and I ended up with exactly the number of people for whom I had booked (despite flu, family crises, relatives and friends extra!). Why did I worry! (Betty you are an absolute treasure.) As to our superb Bulletin Editor, Les Bursill, no job is too large; whatever I ask of Les it is done in a twinkling, and so professionally, too. Whether it is to help someone put in a submission for an award, or print a book, Les complies. He has just done the groundwork for the book celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Engadine Auxiliary of the Northcott Society, which I proofread and provided headings and it is now on sale. He also did the Sandy Point Secrets, and the Grays Pt book. Amazingly, in his spare time, (continually exhorting his President to get her President's Report to him) he competently produces our Bulletin which has won acclaim from many readers, and rightly so. In addition Les is updating our Web-site, fielding research queries from it, and passing them on to us for our resolution, or in many cases researching the information himself. I don't know where our Book Review Editor, Dr. Ed Duyker gets the time to review books for us, in between dashing to the Continent, and interstate to attend Ceremonies honouring him and his books, but his comments are always well-received and very informative. Sometimes I joke with him and tell him he has "too many dates in the pudding" as Ed is so meticulous in his reporting of history he catalogues every event of import, and my poor over-worked brain can't cope, but we are so proud to have an historian of Ed's stature reviewing our books for us and alerting us to what banquets of literature are awaiting to be devoured. No organisation can function without publicity, and Marj Blackley does a splendid job getting out notices of our meetings to the Leader, Shire Life, and ArtBeat, even organising people to pin notices up on doors when the newspapers

get the date or the venue awry. To our committee members; Betty Perry, Wendy Fife and Nola Tunks we greatly appreciate your support at committee meetings, coming out on cold nights, to help us do the "bread'n'butter" chores to keep the society running smoothly. Stewart Roberts has been on the sick list and was unable to attend committee meetings, and we lost Ishabel Cadell, such a willing worker who always helped out on excursions. The biggest thankyou of all must go to Doug and Betty Perry, and their willing band of helpers who provide our cuppa each meeting. This is so very much appreciated--and yet we rarely even think to say thankyou, so a great big thirsty THANKYOU from us all! Our gratitude also goes to our auditor Carole Draper, and our solicitor Mr. M. Solari, as well as our patron, Mayor Phil Blight and the General Manager, Mr. John Rayner who still battles on to find us a new

home for our Museum. This need has become very pressing as we have nowhere to store our gifts from the community, except in the old loading dock at the School of Arts. This is open to dust, leaves and papers which blow in from the street, and trying to find stored items stacked at the back is a real headache, especially now we have dismantled the old Museum and there are so many more to store. (If any member ever felt like leaving us your home in your will, you will gain the Society's eternal gratitude!) Lastly to you the members, who send in articles for the Bulletin, rally on chilly nights to come to meetings, even to be excellent guest speakers yourselves, (like Jim Cutbush, and Terry McCosker) attend outings, and come away for weekends with us to exotic venues, I thank you for a wonderful 2002-3 and look forward to an even more exciting 2003-4. Dawn Emerson.

A Trivia Question and a \$10:00 prize to the first member (not the contributor) who can identify the place and the decade this photo was taken.

The Clue – This is not the Loftus Rail Crossing but it is in the Shire. The editor will name the winner in next issue. Replies to Les Bursill 10 Porter Road Engadine 2233



From The Editor's Desk

The Internet is today's wonder tool. I have the internet connected at my desk at work and in my home office. The World Wide Web is, when used with regularity an amazing oracle.

The number and accessibility of search engines means that almost any question can be answered (with some care taken).

The availability of encyclopaedias, dictionaries and thesauri on line means that while you work and write you can access information to better prepare documents and use words in their correct context.

Preparing invitations and graphical presentations are made all the easier for the accessibility of images and clip art files are freely available on the web.

Email: email means that you or I can write to people with a speed and frequency that was unheard of 10 years ago. I may have written as few as 20 letters a year (called "snail mail") before my 40th birthday and yet I now write as many as 10 a DAY in my 6th decade.

Email is cheaper than a phone call (if you write multiple emails after log-on they may be as cheap as 1 or 2 cents each) and they are immediate (providing of course that the recipient is also logged on). I go to a party or family get-to-gether and email the photos back to my children or my relatives that evening.

The virtual world of the computer gives us wonders and miracles every day. I regularly discuss issues on line with colleagues in other countries and around Australia. I am able to access newspapers all over the world every day for nothing. I subscribe to the New York Times, The London Times, The Los Angeles Times and The Sydney Morning Herald every day for free. Just log on and type the name of



the paper and there it is. I and you, are able to follow news items in capital cities around the world and truly understand the issues behind world events at no cost but the dial in cost of 25c. With the advent of Broadband networking the internet can now supply movies and music on demand. Virtual banking and working from home are everyday realities for many people.

A new theoretical physics is now looming on the horizon. This new theory is called "Quantum Physics"

"Quantum physics tries to explain the behaviour of even smaller particles. These particles are things like electrons, protons, and neutrons. Quantum physics even describes the particles which make these particles! That's right; the model of an atom that you were taught in high-school is wrong. The electrons don't orbit like planets; they form blurred clouds of probabilities around the nucleus. Protons and neutrons? They're each made of three quarks, each with its own 'flavour' and one of three 'colours'."

So! What is the point of all this? Well the society has its own Web presence and it is very popular. So perhaps you should get onto the www and check us out before it all goes the way of the typewriter and we shift to a new and even more unfathomable technology based on Quantum Physics.

Les Bursill – Editor

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EXCURSION REPORT

The trip to Dural on May 31, 2003 was an exceptional outing and we are indebted to the President Michael Bell and other members for their hospitality. A full report is presented separately by Mrs Whybourne, of historic places vie inspected.

And now to our September outing, following requests that we hold our weekend excursions earlier than November, arrangements are in hand to visit the Shoalhaven District on Friday 12, Saturday 13 and Sunday 14 September.

Friday we have an appointment to meet Shoalhaven Society in Nowra at 10a.m. for a full tour of their area.

Saturday we are expected at Jervis Bay Naval Base (HMAS CRESWELL) for a guided tour of the Base at 9.30 a.m.

Sunday we will spend the morning at the "Lady Denman Museum in Huskisson, commencing at 10 a.m. Accommodation will be at Huskisson Beach Motel - Bed and Breakfast; Dinner will be at Huskisson R.S.L. Club.

We leave Cronulla at 8 a.m. Friday 12th September; to save costs please take Friday morning tea and luncheon needs. Cost of the week-end will be \$288.00, which includes all GST charges being Coach, Motel, all admission fees. We have not included a charge for Dinner at the R.S.L. Club, thinking you would prefer to make a Choice of menu. (Non members price \$293.00)

Bookings with Mrs Betty McGrath, 9521-2227; 141 Loftus Avenue, Loftus, 2232.

Enquiries either Mrs. McGrath or myself 9523-5801.

SPECIAL NOTE: Please be sure to bring details of your NEXT OF KIN on a card and in a sealed envelope name of doctor and any medication you are taking; this will be returned to you unopened if the information (hopefully) has not been required.

Aileen Griffiths OAM
Excursion Officer and Deputy President

ANNUAL REPORT

In the year under review circumstances have reduced the number of outings we have been able to arrange for the Society.

May 25, 2002 we travelled to Berrima to revisit an area not been on our agenda for a very long time, with Terry McCosker as the guide. Unfortunately, it was one of those very rare occasions when we had inclement weather, but we were able to refresh our memories of a very historic village.

Week-end Tour November 29-30, December 1, 2002 (in the midst of flood and bushfires) our travel arrangements were restricted, but we were able to visit the chosen places of Crookwell and Taralga and Goulburn. Unfortunately the Bungonia Lookout and other Bungonia sites were closed indefinitely.

Following Terry's retirement and with only a week before we had planned the Goulburn, etc. tour I was most grateful when we were able to have Keith Wood take us, with the blessing of his father. Thank you Ron! It must be at least fifteen years since Keith was our regular Coach Captain.

Being the Annual Report we take the opportunity of saying a special "Thank You" to Terry for your care and consideration to Society members, for your expert guiding of the trips for so many years, and especially for joining us at meetings so often.

May 31, 2003; Tour of Dural with their President Michael Bell as guide; this was a very successful day tour and we thank members for their hospitality.

Finally, this report would not be complete without extending thanks to Mr. Ron Wood and Mr. Dennis Batchelor of Tiger Tours for their help when I am endeavouring to get a tour "up and running". And thanks to Betty McGrath for the amount of work she does taking the bookings and pre-paring the lists of names etc. with the details we Need.

Aileen Griffiths OAM
Excursion Officer and Deputy President

SECRETARY'S REPORT.

As you all know, we have had an extension of our year and members have enjoyed seventeen monthly meetings with excellent speakers and good fellowship.

JANUARY 2002

Members' night was as usual a very special occasion. David Overett showed his fascinating collection of Cigarette Cards covering all sorts of items first. produced in 1880 by the American Tobacco Co. One set was of British Submarines -First World War - a set of which was found in the locker of a German submarine and had been used for identification purposes.

President Dawn and her husband Cliff. spoke of their wonderful tour of Greece, Crete, Turkey, Europe and U.K. - and showed some of the beautiful scenery. Our President had visited the Archeological Museum at Cambridge University where the shield and spears taken by Lieut. James Cook and his crew from the Gweagal Clan at Botany Bay, in 1770, were housed. She had hoped the University would release them to Sutherland Shire and the Hazelhurst Gallery but received a negative response. The National Museum in Canberra might be considered an appropriate recipient.

FEBRUARY, 2002

Mrs. Daphne Salt, an esteemed member of our Society, was our speaker -she spoke of her book "Kurnell" which had been very well researched. and truly a contribution to our heritage. It is a tribute to ordinary Australians who loved Kurnell, perceived its historical significance and worked for its recognition. It is also a reproach in as much as the "Birthplace of modern Australia" has been mistreated since the first settlement. (Our meetings of 20th September and 15th November 2002 also featured Kurnell and some positive ideas for the future.)

MARCH 2002

The 34th Annual General Meeting was held - we were sorry to receive the resignation of Mr. Stewart Roberts who had been a very active member of the Committee for many years. He and his wife Mary have been-missed at our meetings. Mr. Beaven who had carried on as Acting Treasurer resigned much to our regret and Mr. and Mrs. Perry resigned from Committee but were happy to continue with our supper arrangements. We were so pleased that President Dawn Emerson would continue as our President.

APRIL 2002

Our meeting was held in Heritage Week and followed a Mayoral Reception at the Sutherland Entertainment Centre. Mrs. Dianne Smith was our guest speaker and she gave us a wonderful insight into the lives of some of the soldiers who were involved in the First and Second World Wars - she had extracts from a letter of a young Australian soldier written before on and after Gallipoli - she also spoke of the Vietnam War- - she and her husband had items from the Wars, a thermos flask, a shirt, etc. "hands on" experience. Very inter-esting and thought-provoking.

MAY 2002

Mrs. Pauline Curby, another esteemed member of our Society, was our speaker; she had been commissioned to write a book on Manly - "Seven Miles from Sydney - a History of Manly" , for which she received the Energy Australia National Trust Award 2002. She spoke to us of the fascinating experience the researching and writing of the book had been. Ruth Park had commented on the back cover of Pauline's book "this book is everything a local history should be - scholarly but

lively, jumping with picturesque characters who range from squabbling town builders to barking eccentrics. A book streets ahead of anything yet written about Manly"

JUNE 2002.

This was a memorable and very special meeting ~ Mr. Gordon Hill, President of the Morsecodian Society and two colleagues (Telecommunication Engineers) gave us the history of telecommunication in Australia - from smoke signals - Overland Telegraph – overseas cables - an enthralling story.

They demonstrated two Morse Code transmitters as had been used in the Post Offices - and despatched and received "Get Well" telegrams - (subsequently delivered to Mrs. Perry and Mrs. Ada Cutbush who were unwell and not at the meeting).

JULY 2002

Mr. Les Bursill, our Bulletin Editor and Research Officer, gave us a most interesting insight into the history of "PEZ" containers - through his computer. He had a very attractive collection of these containers - all sorts of Mickey Mouse & friends characters Pokemon, Star Wars, etc. We were quite amazed at the variety and found Mr. Bursill's address very enlightening and entertaining. We were all given a packet of "PEZ" to sample - made in Austria.

AUGUST 2002

We were privileged to have Mrs. Daphne Salt, yet another esteemed member of our Society and also an author, to speak on a visit she had made to England and to the district where Captain James Cook had lived as a boy and had become involved in seamanship. "Nobody knew that he would change the map of the world and be called by some, the greatest seaman-explorer and by others, the greatest navigator of all times". Daphne had some superb photographs of Cook's boyhood homes and places of work and she gave us a brief history of his life in Whitby and his subsequent voyages, to Canada, to the Pacific, to Australia of his marriage to Elizabeth Cook - (the only memorial to Mrs. Cook is in our E.G. Waterhouse Camellia Gardens).

Many memorials to Captain Cook in New Zealand, U.K. and Australia. We also have the privilege of several of his descendants through his sister living in the Shire, Councillor Jennie Gormley being one. (Daphne's photographs were used in * a display in our Museum for Heritage Week 5-13 April 2003.)

SEPTEMBER 2002

Ms Georgina Eldershaw from the National Parks & Wildlife Service was our guest speaker - she spoke of the plans for the re-development of Kurnell as a tourist attraction - the history of the site - Thomas Holt's grant - re-furbishment of the Museum. Many questions were asked by members - we were delighted that plans were in hand.

OCTOBER 2002

"Colonial Women and their Weapon" was the intriguing subject on which Edgar Penzig chose to speak to us. Mr. Penzig is an eminent historian and has published several books on early Colonial history. He demonstrated the various pistols the ladies of the early-19th Century were forced to carry - hidden in their crinolines or their reticules. He emphasised that Australia has always been a "multi-cultural" society; in the Gold Rush era there were Chinese, Irish, Canadian, German, Italian, English, etc. He was sorry that more attention is not given to our past - he said we had more bushrangers than USA - and more colourful characters! No-one interested in making films, etc.

NOVEMBER 2002

Mrs. Linda Kelly from the Australian Museum was our guest speaker. She had been commissioned to gather information regarding Kurnell and its importance especially to residents of the Sutherland Shire. She asked for suggestions from members - regarding landscaping, memorials, a statue of Captain Cook would be appropriate (rather than have "him" in Sydney City) important that the indigenous people be recognised. Possibility of a larger Museum - and an attractive Tea-room or Kiosk. Re-instatement of Ferry Service – La Perouse-Kurnell - very important. Mrs. Kelly promised to keep the Society informed re development of plans.

DECEMBER 2002

Because of the proximity of our meeting date to Christmas holidays, it was decided to cancel the December meeting for this year.

JANUARY 2003

For our Members' Night, we were delighted to hear of a tour Mrs. Betty Greentree had made with the Bush Church Aid Society from Darwin to Perth visiting areas where the various Churches have been supported by the Society - they travelled through Kakadu, Katherine, Katherine Gorge, Turkey Creek, Wyndham, Ord River Scheme, flew over the Bungle Bungles, visited Broome, Port Hedland, Carnarvon, Geraldton and on to Perth - an exciting and interesting tour covering the beauty and vastness of our "Outback".

David Overett had also been exploring the Centre "Outback" - he travelled from Kalgoorlie on the Nippon Highway, hundreds of camels in the Great Victoria Desert, spinifex - came through the Simpson Desert from the West to the Olgas and Uluru - an incredible adventure David had some wonderful photographs of the superb scenery.

As a complete contrast, Doug Archer showed some of his Royal Crown Derby pieces - beautiful paper weights, a black swan and others - five exquisite plates - Doug has such knowledge.

FEBRUARY 2003

Mr. Brian Madden spoke on his book "Hernia Bay" - the story of the construction of the huge hospital complex at Herne Bay (now Riverwood) in World War II, of the various service hospitals which used the buildings and of: the Herne Bay housing settlement after the War? a very enlightening and enjoyable address.

Mrs. Linda Kelly also attended our meeting to thank members for their Input re Kurnell and that a Master Plan was in progress.

MARCH 2003

Because of our involvement with Park Menai Celtic Festival 7-9 March we had the privilege of Mr. David Campbell from the Celtic Council as our speaker. It was interesting to hear of the activities of the Council and to hear of the contribution those of Celtic background have made to Australian culture.

APRIL 2003

Mrs. Mary Small was our special speaker. Mrs. Small had written a special book for Anzac Day for children "Simpson and Duffy" - the story of the heroism of Simpson and the faithfulness of the little donkey. She also spoke of her book "The Unknown Australian Soldier" of all the research she had

undertaken of the unknown soldier who had been brought from a cemetery in France and placed in a tomb in the Hall of Memory behind the Pool of Reflection in the Australian War Memorial. She had written the book through the eyes of two children who had been visited by the Unknown Soldier and taken on a visit by him to Gallipoli, Beersheba, to France ... The book was very well illustrated - a moving and graphic story. Mrs. Small gave a copy of both books to our Society.

MAY 2003

We were very privileged to have Mrs. Leanne Mundy, the wife of the Consul General for Canada as our guest speaker. Mrs. Mundy was a charming eloquent speaker telling us of Captain (then Lieutenant) Cook's exploits in Canada where he is greatly revered. He surveyed the coasts of Labrador, Newfoundland and Nova Scotia, inter alia.

Mrs. Mundy also spoke of the close links between Canada and Australia of the many airmen who trained in Canada during World War II and the Canadian girls they married. Our countries have the Queen as our Head of State - and it works well.

JUNE 2003.

Mr. Jim Cutbush, our Vice President and Deputy Museum Curator, gave us a most interesting and informative account of the formation of the Australian Flying Corp. - of its development. He showed some very interesting slides of various models and many questions were asked.

We are very fortunate to have Councillor Dawn Emerson as our President and we do appreciate her experience and expertise. May I say a sincere thank-you to President Dawn and all members of the Executive Council for their support and helpfulness over the past eighteen months.

Mina Whybourne

Hon. Sec.
July 2003

Trivia Question; What village is this and when was the picture taken. \$10:00 prize for the first correct response (not the contributor) to Lea Bursill 10 Porter Road, Engadine 2233



MUSEUM REPORT

Australia Day 2003 - The photographic exhibition held in the North Cronulla Surf Club was successful after having 830 visitors, who saw a good cross-section of the Shire in old photo's, which bought back many memories to a lot of people.

The Museum in the School of Arts has had two exhibitions during the year. The first was an upgraded one of the people in the Shire who had served in our forces during all wars and conflicts. The exhibition proved to be very interesting and a big Thank You must go to those who contributed photos and memorabilia, which helped to make it such a success.

The second was for Heritage Week 2003. Held from the 5th to 13th April 2003, the theme for this exhibition was "Fresh Water - Water, Waves & Wanderings". From this theme we selected James Cook - Navigator.

The Society would like to thank Daphne Salt for the loan of her extensive collection of James Cook's life and also the Sutherland Shire Council for the loan of a wonderful wooden model of Cook's "Endeavour" and an original piece of the Endeavour's Ballast which along with our chart's & painting's, made a very successful Heritage Week that 647 people chose to visit.

Our Museum is currently going through a large stage of change after we were successful in receiving a Heritage Grant from the Sutherland Shire Council. This grant will enable us to build a replica of the first home in Menai that the Jones Family owned. Construction is now well underway thanks to Mr Tom McMahon and a willing work crew from our Society Members.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Sutherland Shire Council for it's ongoing support. Also thank you to the Members that help in the running of the museum and to those that have contributed to our collection.

Allan McGrath

Museum Curator.

VALE **IDA MARY** **MOWBRAY**



22/3/1910-12/7/2003

Ida was born in the Windsor region to a pioneering family of farmers and was very proud of being descended from early settlers named Graham.

She attended the local school and often joked that the other pupils were brothers, sisters or cousins and then attended Parramatta school for a year before moving to Sydney to keep her grandmother company. There she met and married a young policeman Bill Mowbray and bore and raised two sons in difficult times and ensured they had the education she missed.

When she had achieved this she moved to the Sutherland Shire where she blossomed with a host of activities in the Liberal Party, Red Cross, United Hospital Auxiliaries and a variety of other charities. This was the happiest period in her life and she was busy with this till she nursed her husband in his final illness and age forced her to stop.

She maintained her interest in politics and the Shire till the end. She is survived by her two sons four grandchildren and six great grandchildren.

**Sutherland Shire Historical Society,
Inc
Revenue Account for the Period
Ending June, 2003**

Previous Years

This year

2001	Income	2002/3
1,738.18	Members Subscriptions	2,533.73
719.50	Donations / Grants	3,851.70
0.00	Sales	18.18
10.44	Interest - Commonwealth Bank	12.25
452.17	Interest - St George Bank Fixed Deposits	432.57
506.30	Interest - Commonwealth Bank Fixed Deposits	117.81
8,741.85	Excursion Deposits	10,425.27
12,168.44	Income Total	17,391.51
2001	Expenditure	2002/3
856.16	Bulletin Expenses	787.92
72.00	Australia Post PO Box	150.91
10.09	Postage / Phone Calls	14.50
480.00	Website Maintenance	0.00
60.07	Purchases	18.64
285.78	Miscellaneous	408.82
110.00	Subscriptions	224.00
364.55	Insurance	1,208.00
117.33	Suppers	93.75
546.00	Hall Rentals	907.77
0.00	Out of Pocket Expenses - President, Secretary, Treasurer, Curator	0.00
31.49	FID GDT - Operating Account Commonwealth Bank	6.80
0.00	FID Commonwealth Bank Fixed Deposit	0.00
0.00	Account Keeping Fees St George Step-up Account	0.00
801.82	Donations	173.11
7,328.09	Excursion Payments	9,465.45
567.63	Museum	2,203.19
-230.04	GST (Previous Year)	165.46
11,400.97	Expenses Total	15,828.32
767.47	Surplus / Gross for year transferred to Accumulated Funds	1,563.19
12,168.44		17,391.51

2001	Accumulated Funds	2002/3
7,000.00	St George Fixed Term Account 015-152-672	7,000.00
7,227.72	Commonwealth Bank Fixed Term Account 2259-5009-3603	7,227.72
2,301.10	Commonwealth Bank Savings / Cheque Account 0090-5269	3,886.08
<hr/> 16,528.82 <hr/>	Total	<hr/> 18,113.80 <hr/>
15,926.81	Period Asset balance	16,528.82
767.47	Add Surplus from Revenue Account	1,563.19
-165.46	Less GST Liability	23.97
<hr/> 16,528.82 <hr/>		<hr/> 18,115.98 <hr/>

It should be noted that for this report, the end date was extended from 30 November, 2002 to 31 June, 2003

This change was approved by the members.

Letters to The Editor

The Editor

Sutherland Shire Historical Society

Dear Les,

After reading your article 'From the editor's desk' in the May edition of the SSHS's Bulletin, I wondered if you would be interested in the enclosed article. I submitted it to the Sydney Morning Herald recently but their editor did not respond.

Yours
sincerely,
W.J.Green, B.Sc (Hon 1),
M.Eng.Sci, M.Sci. Soc.

Has the prelude to World War III begun? Does history provide any clues for the answering of such a question?

Just a few months ago during the build up to war with Iraq some commentators drew parallels between Saddam Hussein and Adolf Hitler. Alistair Cook for example, in one of his letters from America (Radio National 576), implied that a war on Iraq was justifiable because, like Hitler, Hussein was a threat to world peace. Scrutiny of such a comparison showed that it was based more on emotional rhetoric than cogent facts. But it did stimulate this writer to examine what happened in the 1930s and to compare the political, social and military events that led to World War 2 with events that have happened recently. Firstly, when Hitler came to power he did so without ever receiving a majority vote from the German public. The maximum vote that the Social Democratic Party ever received was 43.9%. Despite this, through chicanery and political skill, Hitler quickly managed to manipulate the Reichstag and Germany's aged President Bismarck to become Germany's supreme leader (Führer).

George W Bush became the President Elect of America in 2000 and he, too, did not receive a majority of the votes cast by the American

public. Moreover, before a full and detailed recount of the votes cast in Florida could be done, Bush was declared the winner and duly nominated as President Elect. When the election dust had settled, a US senate committee re-examined and recounted the votes cast in Florida. It discovered that, in reality, George W. Bush lost in Florida. But, by then, it was too late. Bush had been inaugurated. So like Hitler, Bush became his country's leader as a result of cynical manipulation of the political system.

Once elected Hitler became much admired in Europe not only by the Germans, whom he had raised from the depths of poverty, hyperinflation and oppression, but also by citizens of other nations. Workers in England, where there was mass unemployment, looked with envious eyes at the full employment and prosperity Hitler had brought to Germany. Hitler's popularity soared in 1936, when he used the Olympic games as a showcase not only for German athletes but also his revitalized modern Germany. After his inauguration, Bush also quickly achieved high popularity. His tax cuts were welcomed but the attack on the USA on 11 September 2001 was a godsend. This event enabled him to strut his military might and to promise aggrieved Americans revenge. So, before they began to implement their long-term political plans, both leaders had secured high popularity amongst their respective peoples.

In "Mein Kampf" Hitler wrote of the need for Germany to gain 'Lebensraum', and the resources concomitant with that "living room". George Bush adopted the Wolfowitz Plan which, simply put, stated that America should proactively protect its military and economic interests everywhere in the world. The plan went on to state that pre-emptive strikes against any nations who stood in the way of American interests should be undertaken.

Hitler stated that members of the Aryan race were the natural masters of the world. George W. Bush has declared that Americans are the greatest nation on earth. With regard to military might, during the late 1930s Hitler's regime developed the most modern and sophisticated war machines in the world at that time. He realized that in modern warfare, control of the

skies would be vital so new aircraft designs were needed. For the "Blitzkrieg" type of warfare his generals were proposing, a specialized dive-bomber, the Junkers 87, was developed. This aircraft was able to dive almost vertically at its target thereby ensuring that its bomb load would be delivered precisely where it was aimed.

Today, America has the largest and most technologically advanced military in the world. It has developed laser guided missiles capable of precisely destroying the targets at which they are aimed. Its generals have invented their own "Shock and Awe" methods for not only fighting enemy armies but also terrorizing the enemy's civilian populations. Having established both popularity and military might, in 1938 Hitler began implementing his world plan. He issued an ultimatum to Schuschnigg, the Austrian Chancellor, that he must resign in order that Austria could be ruled by Seyss-Inquart, the Austrian leader of the Nazi Party. Schuschnigg refused and so Austria was invaded. Then again later in 1938 Hitler made the accusation that the Czechoslovakians were treating German citizens living in Czechoslovakia like "niggers" and was terrorizing them. He deemed such behaviour as unacceptable and his indignation ultimately resulted in a British Prime Minister (Chamberlain) acquiescing to demands that part of Czechoslovakia should be annexed to Germany. Within months the whole of Czechoslovakia was occupied and the rest of Europe did nothing. It could not, or would not, believe that war would again erupt in Europe.

In 2002 with the full backing of the American people George W. Bush invaded Afghanistan. His aims were retribution for the attack on America on 11/09/01. The alQaeda terrorists, who operated from Afghanistan, were quickly and ruthlessly destroyed. After the invasion of Afghanistan, once again with the aid of a British Prime Minister (Blair), Bush demanded that Saddam Hussein, the leader of Iraq must resign because he was a threat to the world (Echoes of Austria 1938). To gain public support for his demand, Bush, as Hitler did in 1938, put his propaganda machines into overdrive. In both of their invasion programmes Hitler and Bush were successful.

Countries were invaded and the underlying reasons for such invasions were obfuscated. With Hitler, the reasons were his needs for the resources of Czechoslovakia and the elimination of its armed forces. With Bush, the goals were the control of the oil and the wealth of the Middle East.

After his incursions into Austria and Czechoslovakia in 1938, Hitler became super confident that he could do what ever he wished and that the armies of other European nations would not oppose him when he invaded other countries. After a brief respite during which European leaders were allowed to gain a false sense of security, Hitler invaded Poland in 1939. His victory was swift and spectacular. Poland fell within a month. But its invasion let the cat out of the bag. World War II had begun in earnest. In 1940, Hitler invaded Norway, (to procure iron ore), Holland, Belgium and France. Bush conquered Iraq in less than a month with minimal loss of military hardware and soldiers. Like Hitler after the fall of Czechoslovakia, he is brimming with confidence and the similarity between his progress to world domination and that of Hitler up until 1938 is extra-ordinary.

If these historical similarities continue, then Iran will be Bush's next primary objective with possibly Syria as a diversion. There is no nation in the Middle East capable of stopping him, and the rest of the world will be wary of acting. Once it controls those countries, America will have power over, either overtly or covertly, more that two thirds of the world's oil resources. With command of such resources, George Bush, like Hitler, will see his goal as world domination and, if history is any guide at all, he will, like Hitler, turn America's attention to Russia.

In the Regan years Russia was described as evil and, after Putin's attempts to thwart Bush's invasion of Iraq, will once again be seen as a *bete noir*. It will be argued that Russia has been assisting terrorism covertly. Bush will note that Russia's nuclear arsenal is in disrepair and that its ability to respond to an attack decreases with each passing year. America meanwhile has re-opened its nuclear bomb making facilities. The hawks in Washington will argue that America has an increasingly good chance

to make a first strike against Russia without being subjected to massive nuclear retaliation. A quick and decisive victory by America would also have other benefits. It would neutralize Europe as a world power.

World War III could be started and be over in days rather than months. Few people in the late 1930s believed, or wanted to believe, that a massively destructive war would eventuate after Hitler's invasions of Austria and Czechoslovakia. The world is no different today. The prospect of World War III will be consigned to the impossible basket. The future looks terrifying.

William John Green
May 2003

Richard Peir
June 2003

Dear Editor,

I am a Foundation Life Member of the S.S.H.S. and am writing to add some information to two reports in the May 2003 Bulletin.

Firstly - Dr. Mark Florence.

About 1959/60, I ran a Microbiology Laboratory near the laboratory of Mark Florence who was at that time an Experimental Officer; we both worked in a restricted wing of the chemical services section of what was then known as the A.A.E.C.

He was a bright, quiet, gentleman (he was very young in those days) who was interested in everything and was a joy to talk to. Our laboratories were opposite to that of the Principal Research Officer and also being on a restrictive level, there were very few "drop in" visitors.

I returned to Medical Microbiology when I found the pace of research too slow after some years on call in hospital pathology. I then lost contact with Mark.

Secondly - Stella Ericsson.

As laboratory equipment became more and more electronic, I found that I needed to go back to "school" and learn electronics.

I found that a Noel Ericsson VK2MF (mike fox) who was an ex Dept. of Civil Aviation official (due to a cardiac condition) was conducting classes for the Wireless Institute of Australia. Well, the class was mainly senior high school students with a few older students, me included.

We met on Tuesday night and studied theory and a great amount of practical electronics.

Noel had contacts everywhere; we visited VKG police radio, O.T.C. at La Perouse, and even Kingsford Smith Airport where they were programming their computer to replace the punch hole ticker tape message service - airport to airport. They had great trouble doing this as their large radar was overlaying a signal. They built a Faraday Cage to isolate these signals. Due to the high frequency of this signal, it was chicken wire over a 2" by 1" wooden cage. What a sight. A very large and modern electronic unit inside a chicken pen - it worked and the "Ericsson" class saw all.

The absolute BOSS of everyone in this electronics class was Stella, Noel was always 21C even when holding lessons.

We were organised, given supper, orders and advice from "Mother". We also observed how Stella looked after Noel who had not recovered 100% but who would not admit of any infirmity.

She did everything "HER WAY". On the way I learnt a lot about life, electronics and obtained a Senior Wireless Operator's Certificate.

Yours faithfully
RICHARD PEIR

Please note that due to size limitations and a very abundant supply of letters and articles not all letters to the Editor or articles submitted have been published.

In particular, a letter from Mrs Pauline Curby has been withheld. That letter and several other articles and photographs will appear in full in the November issue of the Bulletin.

Les Bursill Editor SSHS Inc.

From Page 1.

SINKINGS & NAVAL ACTIONS OFF NSW COAST, WWII

Jim Baker

One of the objectives of the Japanese naval command was to sink large troopships such as QUEEN MARY, QUEEN ELIZABETH, and MOUNT VERNON, or USA aircraft carriers. Dept. of Defence, Navy Office information lists the ports of call for some of these ships when visiting Australian waters, as follows:-

QUEEN MARY	CAPETOWN
	- 15 March 1942
FREMANTLE	- 23 March 1942
	- 24 March 1942
SYDNEY	- 28 March 1942
	- 6 April 1942
FREMANTLE	- 11 April 1942
	- 12 April 1942
CAPETOWN	- 21 April 1942
QUEEN ELIZABETH: SAN FRANCISCO	
	- 19 March 1942
SYDNEY	- 6 April 1942
	- 19 April 1942
FREMANTLE	- 23 April 1942
	- 24 April 1942
CAPETOWN	- 3 May 1942

I recall my stint of duty on QUEEN ELIZABETH during April, 1942 when she was docked in Athol Bight, Sydney Harbour. It was considered appropriate for us, as experienced Bofors Lt A/A gunners, to take over the A/A defence on this huge ship while her permanent crew were enjoying Sydney leave. The main guns to be manned were American 3" and scores of 20mm Oerlikon cannon on the upper decks.

Thousands of Australian troops taken by sea to various places have remembered the name of the ships that usually got them there safe and sound. A few examples are:-

* 7th Aust. Div. A.I.F. fondly remember the USA troopship MOUNT VERNON which brought them home from Suez during a very

alarming period of the war, to Adelaide in February, 1942.

* Both Australian and American servicemen travelled safely on the Australian troopship WESTRALIA. I witnessed her last voyage after the war. She sailed proudly down Sydney Harbour with her 'paying off' pennant fluttering in the breeze.

* USA troopship EVANGELINE carried Australian & American troops. I was transported from Lae in August, 1944 for a very welcome home leave. After the war EVANGELINE returned to her previous tourist cruise trade in the Caribbean. Disaster struck when on Friday night 12th November, 1965 this ship (now named YARMOUTH CASTLE) having just left Miami, caught fire and sank. Of its 375 passengers 84 would die and many more were injured.

2. The map of "Ships lost off our Coast during World War 11" The information provided by Dept. of Defence, Navy Office, however, on "Incidents in Australian Coastal Waters during WWII" is more comprehensive. It includes all ships attacked by torpedo or gunfire, or which struck mines, whether sunk, damaged, or undamaged.

It begins with sinking of UK merchant vessel, CAMBRIDGE, by a mine 6 miles east of Wilson's promontory on 7-11-1940. The attack was carried out by STORSTAD (renamed PASSAT), a Norwegian vessel captured by, and operating with, the German raider PINGUIN. It ends with the attack by torpedo on USA merchant vessel, ROBERT J. WALKER, by German submarine U862 on 25-12-44, and its sinking on 26-12-44 out in the Tasman Sea, about opposite Batemans Bay.

The list includes the following that are not shown on the NSW/Queensland Map:

3-6-42 - IRON CHIEFTAIN, Australian merchant ship, torpedoed and sunk off

16-6-43 - LST 469, US landing ship tank, torpedoed and damaged off Smoky Cape.

The NSW/Queensland Map includes the following which is not included in the Naval Office listing:-

22-1-43 - PETER H. BURNETT, torpedoed & salvaged, off Port Macquarie.

The Sydney "Naval Office" list of 47 allied ships includes 37 being attacked off the NSW coast, which was the favourite hunting ground of the Japanese subs. The remaining 10 are equally spread off the Australian coastline near Fremantle WA, Neptune Island (Spencer Gulf, SA), south & east coast of Victoria, Brisbane and also just below the Great Barrier Reef QLD, Gulf of Papua, and off Port Moresby.

3. The chronology indicates a substantial increase in losses of allied shipping after the entry of Japan into the war. Security was tight during those worrisome days and the Australian public seemed to be unaware of the tragic events taking place just off their coastline. Even the Japanese midget submarine raid on Sydney harbour on the night of 31st May – 1st June, 1942 was played down, although Sydneysiders would have been well aware of its significance.

A recent publication by the Dept. of Veterans' Affairs to mark the 60th anniversary of the raid as "the darkest hour in Australia's history" is no doubt entitled "No Cause for Alarm" to acknowledge the way this matter was handled at the time. The publication quotes from the editorial 'Shells on Sydney', The Sun, 8th June, 1942:

The damage done was less than that caused by any heavy storm, and the effect on morale was nil, though it was an engrossing subject of conversation in Sydney this morning.

Actually this raid showed up only too well the colossal inefficiencies of defence security for the harbour. My personal experience of those times is somewhat different as I sailed out of Sydney Harbour on board troopship KATOOMBA, together with troopship ORMISTON, at 1.19 pm on 31st May, 1942, as part of the 223rd Lt A/A Battery of 12 guns, bound for Townsville. Our Convoy ZK9 was escorted by HMAS WARREGO and USS SELFRIDGE. News of the raid on Sydney did not reach our troops until the night of 1st June

when we were almost off Brisbane, where our convoy was joined by 7 more vessels, being troop carriers and naval escorts.

We considered ourselves extremely lucky that the Japanese fleet of 5 large subs hadn't finished us off outside Sydney heads on 31st May. Fortunately the Japanese fleet followed explicit orders to keep the element of surprise and to attack Sydney Harbour shipping under the cover of darkness.

The unfortunate but terribly brave crews of these 3 midget subs had to endure the result of unsolved mechanical problems that occur so often with prototypes of vehicles of war, so their efforts were for very little gain. The Japanese naval command had gambled on catching one of the QUEEN ships in port, or some of the mighty American aircraft carriers that they were so desperate to destroy.

The true capability of these midget subs was shown in early 1945 during the invasion of the Philippines when four of them were operating from an on-shore base in the Mindanao Straits. They sank 14 allied naval vessels, mainly American, over a 10 week period. This impressive list included 2 cruisers, 1 sea-plane carrier, 5 destroyers, and 6 more ships, probably transports.

All the more lucky for the members of my battery and the many others who escaped similar carnage in Sydney Harbour on the night of 31st May, 1942!

References:

Dept. of Defence, Navy Office, Canberra ACT – **Letter of 9th July, 1992** to WW11 Vet, Max Berman, Deakin ACT

The 25 Pounders, from Egypt to Borneo – published by 2/6th Field Regiment Association, Pymble NSW

Sinking of EVANGELINE (Yarmouth Castle) – "84 died when liner became a blazing tomb" Daily Mirror Tuesday, 4th September, 1973

Map **"Ships lost off our coast during World War 11"** excerpt from Masonic Club, Syd.

Dept. Veterans' Affairs, Canberra, ACT (2002) "No Cause for Alarm" *Submarine attacks on Sydney and Newcastle May – June 1942*

Carruthers, Steven L. (1982) "Australia under siege : Japanese submarine raiders 1942" Solus Books, Sydney.

An Evening with the Sutherland Shire Historical Society

May 16, 2003

Madame President, Dawn Emerson, Mrs. Mina Whybourne, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, thank you very much for your kind invitation to come and speak to you this evening about the famous explorer Captain Cook, the history we share and the friendship between Canada and Australia. I am delighted to be here.

Comme mon pays est bilingue, permettez-moi de vous remercier tres sincerement pour cette opportunit  de poser quelques idees sur la theme du fameux explorateur, Capitaine Cook, notre histoire partagee et l' amitie' entre le Canada et Australie.

In fact over the next few minutes you will hear about:

- Captain Cook and Newfoundland,
- marino sheep and rebels,
- red granite and the stars,
- the Cenotaph at Martin Place and war brides,
- Cooperation in East Timor and Afganistan

Australians and the Whistler Ski resort in British Columbia Canada,

Let me begin with history. Picture a young lad named James Cook growing up in Yorkshire in the 1730's. His family, originally from Scotland were poor and on the move quite a bit as his father searched for work as a labourer. One account has said that this young lad was hard at work on the farm even as young as five years old. He did attend school and although not a notable student he showed an aptitude for maths which would serve him very well later as he developed his skills for charting and surveying.

His path, as it did for many young men at that time, led him to the sea and in 1755, at the age of 26, young James joined the Royal Navy. Of course, Australians know a lot about this remarkable explorer and his voyages to

Australia and the South Pacific. This evening I would like to tell you a little bit about his earlier career in Canada which spanned from 1758 to 1767.

The Seven Years War in Europe had intensified the conflict between the British and the French over North America and James Cook was on *HMS Pembroke* when it reached the blockade of Louisbourg fortress in Eastern Canada in 1758. So successful were the British in this endeavour that they not only blew up the fortress but they took the town as well. You will be happy to know that two hundred years later, the Fortress has been rebuilt and is now a major Canadian historical site.

As the British made forays into the French positions along the St. Lawrence River, Cook developed his skills as a surveyor and map maker under the tutelage of an Army surveyor-engineer by the name of Samuel Holland. He was talented and ambitious and his aptitude for maths served him well. In fact his first chart was of the Gasp ' after General Wolfe's attack on the Gasp ' in July of 1758.

At that time, the only knowledge of the St. Lawrence that the British had was through captured charts, so the *Pembroke* with Cook aboard was sent ahead to establish a route. He was kept busy over the summer of that year ferrying troops to positions down the river and charting the area.

I should interject here that, over the next couple of years as Cook participated in the fighting, he crossed paths with two other young Frenchmen, Bougainville and LaPerouse, who were themselves to become famous explorers in the South Pacific.

On September 13, 1759, the British under General Wolfe won a decisive victory against the French in the famous battle on the Plains of Abraham. It was a battle that determined the course of Canadian history. And, it was here that, Bougainville, was aide-de-camp to the French General Montcalm.

Cook was then transferred to *HMS Northumberland* under Lord Colville. The charts that he had made of Canada's east coast and the St. Lawrence were taken back to England where they were published. The

Northumberland remained in Halifax until news arrived of the French attack on Newfoundland.

For over 150 years French, British, Spanish and Basque fishermen came to fish the rich cod stocks of the Grand Banks off the coast of Newfoundland. Control of the Banks then, represented a huge prize. In a last effort to protect their interests, the French captured St. John's. LaPerouse, who would become one of the France's most famous Pacific explorers, was in the French fleet. (He later escaped)

When the Seven Year's War ended, Cook was given command of *HMS Grenville*. He spent the next 4 years meticulously surveying the coasts of Labrador, Newfoundland and Nova Scotia. His routine was to spend the summers exploring and charting in Canada and then he would return to England to his family for the winter, to publish his charts and maps.

In 1766, he observed the solar eclipse which he used to determine the longitude of Newfoundland. He wrote the details of it in a paper that was presented to the Royal Society.

But Eastern Canada was not the only region of our country that he explored. In January 1778, Cook sailed from the Hawaiian Islands along the west coast of North America, landing at Nootka Sound near Vancouver. He sailed on through the Bering Strait into the Arctic Ocean only to be stopped by the ice.

Sometime later when he returned to Hawaii, as you probably know, Captain Cook met a most unfortunate end at the hands of Polynesian inhabitants. Interestingly, his remains were identified by the scars on his hand, received when a powder horn exploded during his period in Newfoundland.

Now, as a result of Captain Cook's further explorations in the South Pacific, NSW was founded in 1788 when the First Fleet arrived in Sydney Cove and the fateful collection of convicts, sailors and administrators pitched their tents around the area in the Rocks where the Canadian Consulate's offices are now located.

From that incredible beginning, Australia grew. It was nurtured not only by Britain's framework of government and law but also by the spirit of

its founders who were looking for a fresh start and a second chance. Over a couple of centuries you have adapted and evolved this framework to suit the unique conditions of your continent and the spirit of your people. And you can be justifiably proud of what you have created.

At the same time something similar happened in Britain's Canadian colony. With help from the British Army, a small group of dispossessed and demoralized refugees crossed what is now the Canada-US border and pitched their tents in the wilderness of what has become our main English speaking province of Ontario.

They were mostly poor frontier farmers who had been thrown out of their homes in upstate New York because they had championed the Loyalist cause during the American Revolution.

From that beginning they too had to begin life again starting with the same British laws and institutions bequeathed to NSW, which they adapted over the centuries to conform to Canada's unique conditions.

So the beginning of English-speaking peoples in my home coincides almost exactly with the planting of NSW. In our case we can thank the British Army. In yours it was the British Navy.

Our first people-to-people contact with NSW was not perhaps the most promising start. In the 1840's a group of French Canadian rebels were transported to Sydney and imprisoned at Exile and Canada Bay on Parramatta Road. One of them wrote a secret journal. He describes how one day he sat by his prison compound door - security sounded a little lax - and watched, amazed, as huge flocks of Merino sheep were driven into Sydney. He couldn't believe how prosperous the colony was. I often think of him when I am driving down Parramatta Road today.

When I came to Sydney 3 ½ years ago with my husband to represent our country he picked up a book about the Federation Debates in the 1890s to see whether there were very many references to Canada. Canada had federated in

the 1860s and he expected that the Australian colonies would have studied our example.

Sure enough there were many references to Canada. The fathers of Australian federation liked Canadians but they all agreed that they should not/not follow the example of Canadian federation. Your founders believed that our federation was too centralized. Over time both have evolved. Your federation gradually became more centralized while ours primarily because of Quebec nationalism, has moved in the opposite direction.

Both countries have been extraordinarily successful in evolving societies which put us at the top of the UN Leagues for overall quality of life. Canada and Australia seem to trade places. Sometimes we are on top of the league, sometimes you just nudge us out into second or third place.

You celebrated your Centenary in 2001. Let me tell you about Canada's official gift to Australia which is a rather nice one even if I do say so myself. Its known as "Speakers Square" and is located in a prominent spot in Canberra. Let me describe what it is and where it is.

Australia's stone is sandstone, the colour of honey and beautifully veined. Canada's stone is granite, tough as iron and ranging through many different colours. Speakers Square is a granite platform roughly 20 metres square. It is located in Commonwealth place in front of the Old Parliament buildings now the National Portrait Gallery on more than 50 metres from the shore of Lake Burley Griffin. The area has been landscaped into a beautiful natural amphitheatre and our stone platform will benefit speakers and performers in the future.

A word about its design - it's a specially commissioned mosaic. Within the rectangle are two large hemispheres in red granite joined together by two small circles representing arms of friendship. You can walk across it and you soon see that little stars are embedded into each hemisphere. At first you think that it is just an abstract pattern but you soon realize that it is the constellations of the night time skies of the northern and southern hemispheres that are represented.

When groups visit it there is an interesting dynamic. When groups visit it they divide into

northern hemisphere and southern hemisphere people. The southerners seek out the Southern Cross. The northerners seek out the Big Dipper. Then in a spirit of discovery you just naturally want to explore the other hemisphere and take a look at the less familiar constellations. The observer naturally takes part in an exploration that symbolizes the friendship between the two countries. It's rather nice don't you think. I invite you to take a look at it the next time you visit your beautiful capital.

Let me turn to the many important shared experiences of Canadians and Australians which are the bedrock of your relationship. We were comrades in arms during both world wars and in many subsequent peacekeeping operations.

My husband represents Canada at the cenotaph in Martin Place twice in April and once in November - so this shared military experience is rather poignant for us.

At Australia's legendary field of honour, Gallipoli, the Royal Newfoundland Regiment was also present, as were Canadian medical personnel at the treatment centres just off the beaches. Our soldiers fought side-by-side a few years later at the 1918 victory on the Western Front in France.

During the Second World War, a regiment of young Canadians fought and died or became POW's defending the British Colony of Hong Kong and a Canadian signals contingent served in Darwin.

The main Canada/Australia connection from the Second World War however, involves almost 10,000 Australian aircrew who trained in Western Canada under the Commonwealth air training program. Many brought home

Canadian war brides and there are a lot of dual citizens today with links to those airfields. I was actually surprised to find out about this because there are a lot of British war brides who came to Canada in 1945 - including my mother-in-law. So I knew all about Canadian soldiers poaching in Britain but did not know that the Australians had been up to the same tricks in Canada!

Here's another example. In April the Australian citation for bravery at the Korean battle of Kapyong Hill is read out to the crowd at Martin Place. It commemorates a joint action of Australians, Canadians and New Zealanders who fought side-by-side in that UN action, 50 years ago.

The partnership continues. More recently the call went out to Canada by your government for support in East Timor. We were there with a company of mostly French Canadian troops, as well as aircraft and ships to support your magnificent leadership and help to stabilize that troubled area of the world.

Both Canada and Australia gave significant contributions, including military contributions to the war against terrorism in Afghanistan.

But our military actions in Afghanistan have been only a small part of an overall strategy. And we have contributed a significant humanitarian effort as well.

Moving on to happier topics, I think what has struck me most since coming here is the very large number of contacts between Australians and Canadians. I would like to say a few words about this vibrant relationship.

To begin with, about 270,000 Australians and Canadians visit each other every year. And for those of you who are thinking about a North American holiday, you should not forget that the Aussie dollar is worth about 30 per cent more in Canada than in the US.

Every year, under something known as the Working Holiday Program, about 6000 young Canadians visit Australia and a similar number of young Australians visit Canada with special working holiday visas. This allows them to work in each other's countries for short periods. I understand that in the major tourist centres such as the Whistler Ski Centre near Vancouver, Australian accents predominate given the large number of young Australians manning the ski lifts. My Consulate administers this program and we are going to have another record year.

There are also very considerable cultural relations between our two countries. Canadian

writers have participated in the Writer's Festivals of Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide.

In the performing arts, the internationally acclaimed, Montreal-based, Cirque du Soleil has made its second Australian national tour.

Our musicians, classical, soft jazz, pop, and country and western have all played to sell out audiences across Australia.

In the field of foreign policy, Canada and Australia have a long tradition of cooperation. There are numerous issues on which we share a close identity of views: UN reforms, non-proliferation and arms control, landmines, Asia Pacific security, the current SW Asian turmoil and cooperation under APEC.

There is no surprise in why we get along so well: we occupy large, resource-rich land masses, relatively recently and thinly populated. Our British Colonial heritage has led to the evolution of federal states, with similar legal and other social institutions. We share a social ethos based more on equality of outcomes rather than the American touchstone of equality of opportunity.

We are also an excellent gateway into North America for Australian businesses who wish to participate in this incredible marketplace. They will find business partners of similar size, legal and banking systems similar to their own, and a style of living and government familiar to them. We have been doing business together for over a century. Trade between our two countries is roughly in balance, and is substantial, about \$3 billion annually.

Ladies and gentlemen, in closing I hope that I have added some new dimensions to your understanding of the Canadian-Australian relationship and our shared history. It has developed because millions of people in the two countries have found common cause in a wide spectrum of interests.

Merci beaucoup a tout le monde.

Leanne Mundy

Wife of the Consul General for Canada

Membership Renewal 2003/4

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

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

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

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

Sutherland Shire Historical Society

Application for Renewal of Membership 2003/4

TITLE: Mr.Mrs.Ms.

Family Name.....

Given Name.....

Postal Address.....

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

Please find my Subscription for 2003/4 enclosed herewith
Annual Adult Subscription - \$20.00 + \$2.00 GST = \$22.00
Junior member / Fulltime Student - \$10.00 + \$1.00 GST = \$11.00

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

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Book Reviews and Reports

By
Dr. Ed Duyker

SEARCHING FOR THE SOUTHLAND

Philippe Godard, & Tugdual de Kerros, *Louis de Saint Aloüarn, Lieutenant des vaisseaux du Roy: Un marin breton à la conquête des Terres Australes, Les Portes du Large, Saint-Jacques-de-la-Lande, 2002, pp. 362, ISBN 2-914612-08-7, Euros 60.*

Louis François Marie Aleno de Saint-Aloüarn (1738---72), commanded the 16-gun *Gros Ventre*, as part of Kerguelen's expedition in search of the Southland. Kerguelen commanded the 24 gun *Fortune*. Both vessels set sail from the Ile-de-France (now Mauritius) on 16 January 1772. Not long after discovering the island which still bears Kerguelen's name, the *Fortune* became separated from the *Gros Ventre*. Kerguelen decided to return to the Ile-de-France on 16 February, expecting Saint-Aloüarn on the *Gros Ventre* would do the same.

SAINT ALLOUARN REACHES WESTERN AUSTRALIAN COAST

Saint-Allouarn, however, continued to sail eastward until he reached what we now call Flinders Bay, near Cape Leeuwin, on the south of the Western Australian coast on 17 March. The expedition then travelled north without sighting land for another seven hundred nautical miles. On the afternoon of 28 March 1772, Shark Bay was sighted. The following day the *Gros Ventre* anchored at Turtle Bay and on the morning of 30 March Ensign Mingault was despatched in a longboat to survey the north of Dirk Hartog Island. This same officer took possession of Western Australia in the name of the King of France – a form of political pantomime which was fashionable at the time.

RETURN TO ILE-DE-FRANCE

Saint-Aloüarn then sailed back to the Ile-de-France via Melville Island and Timor. The expedition arrived in Port Louis on 5 September 1772 in a deplorable state. Most of the men were suffering from scurvy. Saint-Aloüarn,

himself, died on 27 October 1772. He was only thirty-five years old. The documentary record for the voyage is very limited; like the manor house of the explorer's family near Quimper, not a great deal remains. Although a number of shipboard journals have survived, they contain little ethnography or natural history. It is on the basis of this sparse canvas that I must judge this book. I am impressed that the authors have discovered a portrait of the explorer, hitherto unknown, and also an important letter written a week before Saint-Aloüarn died.

FRENCH COINS DISCOVERED

One of the most engaging parts of this book is the account of the 1998 expedition to Dirk Hartog Island led by Philippe Godard which discovered a silver Louis XV coin, dated 1766, in a lead capsule on top of a French wine bottle. Two months later, Myra Stanbury of the Western Australian Museum discovered a second bottle containing yet another coin dated 1767. As a tangible link to the past, the discovery of the coins captured the public imagination. President Jacques Chirac sent a personal message of congratulation to Godard and he has since been made a Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur. As an historian, however, I consider Saint-Alloüarn's final letter, far more significant than the coins. To be fair, the coins give veracity to the letter and confirm a landing place, but they do not tell us much more. (If one ignores indigenous rights and accepts the very questionable logic of such acts of possession, 130 years before, the Dutch - in the wake of Tasman's voyage - had already pre-empted Saint-Aloüarn's claim by naming the entire continent 'Nova Hollandia'!)

This book is richly illustrated, beautifully produced and very similar in style to Godard's earlier book on the *Batavia*. It contains a useful geopolitical and historical orientation for the French navy in the eighteenth century and tells us a great deal about the history of the explorer's family. Louis's father, for example, was killed in the Battle of Quiberon Bay (Combat des Cardinaux). Although the book contains substantial narrative sections about the voyage, it is in great part made up of vignettes which are sometimes quite superfluous in character. Do we really need so much heraldic content (regardless

of how beautiful such coats-of-arms are) and extraneous detail such as the 'Brief History of the House of Orange-Nassau' on pages 286-7? While there will be many readers who will enjoy some of these tangents, others may be disappointed that the book is not more coherently integrated. It is, however, the result of a great deal of meticulous research – both documentary and pictorial – and remains a welcome contribution to the history of the French in Australia and the Indian Ocean.

Edward Duyker, Department of French Studies, University of Sydney.

Stuart Macintyre and Richard Selleck, A Short History of the University of Melbourne, 2003, 193 pp, ISBN: 0 522 85058 8, 80 b. & w. illustrations, Hardback, \$24.95. Reviewed by Dr Edward Duyker

SESQUICENTENARY

This year we celebrate the 150th anniversary of the University of Melbourne, Australia's second oldest university (only three years younger than the University of Sydney). The university's act of incorporation was passed in 1853, but teaching did not begin until 1855 when three professors took on a mere sixteen students keen to imbibe the classics, history, literature, philosophy and science. Student numbers have risen steadily ever since, but the ratio of teachers has not remained so favourable! The pass rate, however, has improved: of Melbourne's first intake, only four graduated. I am proud to be a subsequent University of Melbourne graduate and I look back with great fondness on my studies at an institution with such a sense of history and excellence. Ironically, it was not until I left Melbourne that I learned that the university's arms bore Nike the Greek goddess of victory. For me, she was always an angel amidst the Southern Cross.

A short history always requires an enormous amount of discrimination and judgement. It is hard to condense 150 years into less than 200 pages including index, bibliography and illustrations. Many remarkable men and women have taught and studied at the University of Melbourne. I found myself wanting to know much more, and will no doubt find my way to

Geoffrey Blainey's Centenary History and The Shop (2003), written by Richard Selleck, co-author of this present Short History. I was pleased to see Manning Clark mentioned on page 104, but his Quest for Grace (which is rich in Melbourne university lore and reminiscences) is not cited. Perhaps the desire to know more is the mark of an engaging work, but I was struck by the lack of mention of important figures such as Prof. Vincent Buckley (though his autobiographical Cutting Green Hay appears in the bibliography) and Prof. Augustin Lodewyckx (whose librarian son Axel's book The Funding of Wisdom also makes the list of sources). Essentially there is still a need for more scholarship in this area. Blainey's work was published in 1957. Selleck's parallel recent work covers only the first eight decades of the university's history. A lot has happened since. Indian Studies, the department from which I graduated, is no more. Macintyre and Selleck make a brief mention of its demise, but one could be forgiven for thinking (from the context) that this department simply taught Indian languages when in fact it also taught important subjects on the history, politics and culture of a significant chunk of humanity. French fares little better, although the towering figure of A. R. Chisholm is referred to on page 91 as confirmation of a growing trend for Australian appointments'.

This history may be short, but it is also sweet. Despite their rapid pace, the authors are occasionally able to stop and dwell on a tale or two. One charming example, perhaps apocryphal, relates to a hot summer afternoon in 1971: building workers on a construction site to the south of the Quadrangle were pouring concrete, and to keep it from setting too quickly they played water from hoses onto the formes. From cooling each other in the spray it was a short step to directing streams at passers-by. Suddenly they were confronted by a choleric man in a suit demanding to know what they were doing. They looked at him, they looked at each other, and they turned the hose on him. Thanks to the foresight of his predecessor, the Vice-Chancellor was able to retreat to his adjacent residence.

There were many other issues hosed-down at the University of Melbourne over the years. The

authors certainly examine issues such as sexism and intellectual bullying (including numerous incidents in which those who held unpopular ideas were driven into the lake and forced to recant before they were released from humiliation and torment). It may come as a surprise to some to learn of the role of Edward “weary” Dunlop in one such intolerant incident. The reader is also reminded of how the election of the Whitlam Government and later the Dawkins reforms changed the face of university education in Australia. Today, the University of Melbourne is not just a teaching institution, but a centre of excellence in scholarship and research. Yet Australian universities are now at the crossroads and those of us who hope desperately for equality of opportunity in education cannot help but be anxious about the prospect of a two-tier system where the wealthy can buy admission ahead of those who have merit. This book may be a celebration rather than a controversial summary, but towards its conclusion Macintyre and Selleck do allude to some of the challenges of corporate involvement and changing identity:

”The university has always been a cumbersome institution composed of intensely intelligent and stubbornly independent individuals, strongly attached to the ways of their particular discipline; the academic vocation depends on the capacity of teachers and researcher to make their own judgements. If those charged with leading the university sometimes despair of its protean nature, their plethora of plans and targets, incentives and disincentives risks becoming the lightning-rod of resentment. Today’s university is a semi-public corporation, increasingly reliant on contracts and customers to make good the deficiencies of public provision; it is more independent of government and yet more dependent on commercial forces beyond its control”.

Dr Edward Duyker: Cité internationale des Arts residency, January – March 2003 Report to the Australia Council

RESEARCH ON FRANCES PERON

Members of the Literature Board will recall that I was awarded a three-month residency at the Cité internationale des arts in Paris to research a biography of François Péron, naturalist on the

French expedition of Nicolas-Thomas Baudin between 1801 and 1803. I have also been awarded a two-year grant for new work as an established writer. This enabled me to do two months research in Germany, France, Spain and the Canary Islands before commencing my residency. In this report, however, I will confine myself to the fruits of my Paris-based sojourn in the first quarter of 2003. (This was my seventh visit to Paris since 1977; indeed I was already very familiar with the neighbourhood of the Cité internationale des Arts, having resided in Le Marais with my wife and children in 1989.)

I began my research at the Bibliothèque nationale, exploring printed sources that offered clues to various aspects of Péron’s life and work. The collections are vast: over 11 million books, 12 million prints, 225,000 manuscripts and 350,000 periodical titles. Although I had worked in this great institution in the 1980s and 1990s, it was my first time in the new François Mitterand building on the Quai François Mauriac. While I marvelled at the computerized catalogues and document delivery systems of the library, I am sorry to declare that the building - with its four wind-blown glass towers, massive stainless steel doors and concrete escalator wells of pharaonic proportions - left me feeling numb. In Australia we take for granted free access to our national and state libraries, but the 1900 seats of the research library of the Bibliothèque nationale not only cost 30 euros for 15 days, they are often completely booked well in advance. To make the most of my limited time in Paris, my working week was usually spent in a variety of institutions with meshing opening hours. The Bibliothèque interuniversitaire de Médecine and the Bibliothèque de l’Histoire de Médecine (located in the medical faculty of the Sorbonne) provided extremely valuable orientation prior to archival research at the Archives nationales. At the archives, seats are also very limited, but three alternate days seating were ‘created’ as a favour to me as a foreigner from distant shores. There I unravelled François Péron’s medical studies: the subjects he studied, the professors who taught him and even the locations of his lodgings. At the Bibliothèque centrale du Muséum nationale d’Histoire naturelle, I consulted numerous rare and precious natural history works from the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, including Georges Cuvier’s personal copy of

Péron's account of the Baudin expedition. In particular, the seven volumes of Jean-Baptiste de Lamarck's *Histoire naturelle des animaux sans vertèbres*, enabled me to record over 1,100 species referenced to François Péron's specimens and publications. At the Service historique de l'Armée de Terre (France's military archives), at the Château de Vincennes, I consulted the muster roll of the battalion in which Péron served from 1792 until his capture by the Prussians in 1794. I also extracted fascinating historical details from the dossiers and memoirs of his commanding officers. At the Bibliothèque historique de la Ville de Paris (located in the majestic late sixteenth-century Hôtel Lamoignon), I pursued numerous clues associated with Péron's life in Paris before and after his voyage with Baudin, but also trawled through periodicals from his native Bourbonnais. On Sundays, when research libraries were closed, I took slide photos of Paris localities associated with my biographical subjects (to illustrate future conference papers and lectures) and I visited museums with particular relevance to my historical endeavours. These included the Musée Carnavalet (devoted to the history of Paris), Les Invalides, the Louvres and the Empress Josephine's home, Malmaison (where kangaroos, emus and swans brought back by Baudin's expedition once graced the grounds).

Using Paris as a base, I also undertook research at the Lesueur Collection of the Muséum d'Histoire naturelle in Le Havre. I was greatly assisted there by the retired conservateur Madame Jacqueline Bonnemains. (For her assistance to Australian scholars, Madame Bonnemains was recently decorated with the Order of Australia – an honour that is certainly well-deserved.) I also made a brief trip to England (4-7 March) where I visited the libraries of the Royal Geographical Society, the Royal Historical Society in London and the Bodleian Library in Oxford. Furthermore, I was very pleased to attend a meeting of the Linnean Society of London (the oldest natural history society in the world) and participate in a formal 'admission' ceremony in the wake of my election as a fellow some years ago. Despite a baggage handlers' strike and having to take an alternative flight from Gatwick (which got me to Paris at 1.30 am in the morning), I reached Saint-Malo safely on 8 March for a pre-arranged

speaking engagement on the Breton explorer Marc-Joseph Marion Dufresne (1724-1772): the first European after Tasman to reach Van Diemen's Land and the subject of my book *An Officer of the Blue*. I was given a reception at the Hôtel de Ville with two journalists in attendance. Some 60 to 70 people attended my lecture which had been publicized in the press. 'Australian [sic] Council' support was acknowledged. I was surprised to meet several people who brought copies of my books for signing – especially since it has so far only been published in Australia. Aside from the local Malouin, there were people from Rennes, Le Havre and even Paris in the audience. To my surprise, three people who attended shared common ancestors with me in the 18th century. With my mother's help I had prepared a one-hour lecture in French. My wife Susan also sent 40 slides from Australia to help illustrate the address. The audience was warm and enthusiastic in the Chapelle Sainte-Anne located in the old walled city. I was then given dinner by the municipality. The next morning I broke my return journey to Paris to meet the publisher Bernard Le Nail in Rennes and receive a draft contract for a French edition of my biography of Marion Dufresne. Dr Françoise Debarb, of the Association François Péron, also joined us for a simple meal. At a subsequent meeting at the Salon des livres in Paris (France's national book fair) we were able to make further progress with our negotiations. I expect to finalize matters soon.

My time in Paris enabled me to visit bookshops and buy many useful reference works unavailable in Australia. Conversation with the locals, French newspapers, books, television and radio really helped reinvigorate my French. I discovered that Josette Zéphir, the former concierge for my building at the Cité internationale des Arts, was from my mother's native island of Mauritius and she invited me to lunch with her charming family on a number of occasions. This enabled me to establish connections with other members of the Mauritian community in Paris. Martine Marin (President of Les amis de Nicolas Baudin) also maintained friendly contact, as did the former French cultural attaché in Australia Alain Monteil and twice I called at the Australian Embassy and met with staff involved with cultural exchange

issues. Nevertheless, my life in the French capital remained fairly simple and self-reliant. I made good use of my little kitchen. In the depths of a Paris winter (it snowed several times during the first half of my sojourn), I preferred porridge to croissants! Working all day in archives, libraries or museums, I welcomed my evenings in the studio and suffered little of the 'cabin fever' experienced by some of my compatriots at the Cité internationale des Arts. Furthermore, I was not isolated by language. Certainly I missed my family, but the Bibliothèque nationale provided me with free and readily accessible internet facilities to keep in touch. I feel very privileged to have resided at the Cité and believe that many of the friendships I have forged will endure. It gave me particular pleasure to assist a number of Australian artists with research projects during my stay.

I feel a need to say something of the origins of the Cité internationale des Arts, since I was struck by the misconceptions of many residents and by errors even in Australia Council documentation. In 1947, Félix Brunau (inspector general of public buildings and national palaces) was sent on a mission to South America and Scandinavia. He returned home convinced of the urgent need to assist foreign artists who wished to visit France during the difficult post-war

period of reconstruction and shortages. With the aid of Paul Léon and the Finnish painter Eero Snellman, he convinced the City of Paris to make available a 15,000 square metre site in the historic Marais district on the right bank of the Seine. The French Government also made available 2,000,000 Francs credit from its budget for the fine arts and ultimately exempted the foundation from taxes. It was some years before architectural heritage and design issues were surmounted. (Some local artists even voiced opposition to the prospect of assistance to competing foreign artists!) Construction began in 1962. In July 1965, five painters and two musicians arrived. Six months later 136 studios were occupied by artists from 37 different countries. An auditorium and exhibition room were constructed in 1969. An engraver's studio was opened in 1970 and a TV room and other buildings followed. There are now some three hundred studios in the complex at the disposal of a host of foreign governments and organizations, but also the City of Paris, the French Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

One final observation (given recommendations in Australia Council papers): I felt no need to buy bottled water in Paris. What comes out of the tap is a lot better than the water in Adelaide and many other parts of the Australian outback!

