



*Sutherland Shire  
Historical Society Inc*  
**Bulletin**



VOL. 8 No. 2

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May 2005 \$1.00

# The Shire beckons

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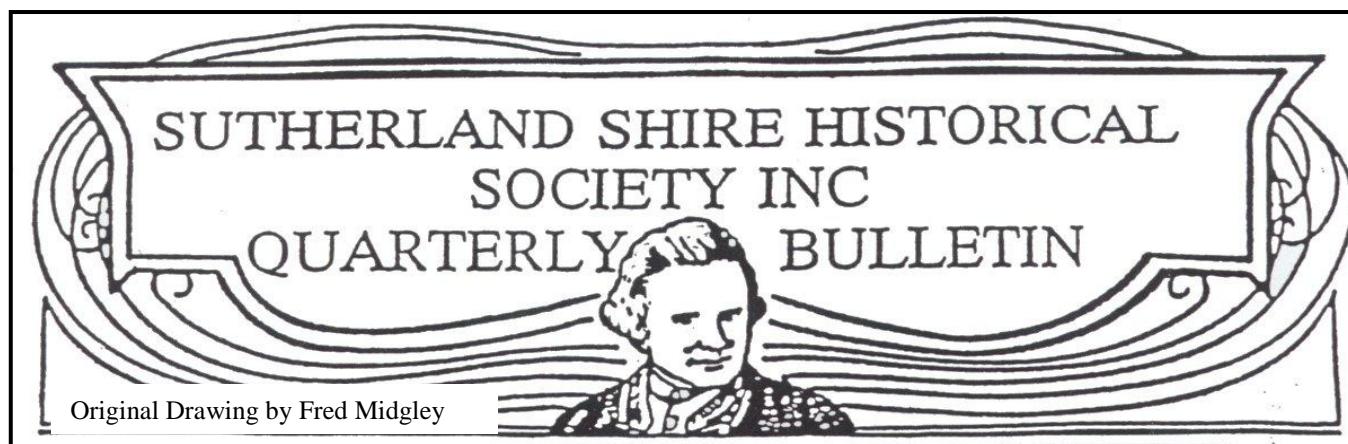
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# SUTHERLAND SHIRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

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

## VISITORS ARE WELCOME

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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 Report



**Como Heritage Festival: Community + Heritage** Once again we were delighted to assist Council for their Heritage Festival, 2005 in Sutherland Shire. This year the National Trust Theme was: Community + Heritage.

Council had chosen this year to highlight Como, as its Pleasure Ground was to be refurbished, and also to explore the history of this beautiful suburb overlooking the Georges River which celebrated its heyday in the 1880's up until the turn of the century! Sadly the face-lift plans went very awry. While I believe that Council tried to refurbish it in good faith, our members found some of the measures taken by its staff and the contractors, totally unacceptable: the destruction of the original Wedding Cake, by removal of many of its boulders and its vegetation; the use of stone unsympathetic to the area to face walls; and the flattening out of the hillock, which had given the Pleasure Ground its character. Our National Trust members of the Society were concerned as to the outcome. We can all be wise after the event and to council's credit they did try to redress the situation, but much of it could not be reclaimed. Our SSHS was in a difficult situation; we have always supported our Council, and we were distressed at being at variance with them—but we must also support heritage and our past history, so our duty was clear. In this instance we had to indicate our disappointment to Council. Let's hope that council and its officers have benefited by this costly lesson in heritage. Refurbishing does not mean changing; it means capturing the nostalgia and essence of what had been before, so that as little as possible is *changed*. To Council's credit, once the mistake was realised, the SSHS was included in the consultations thereafter,—but we wish we had been consulted initially, so the mistakes did not occur. We take our duty to support our Council seriously, and only close communication can eradicate errors in future. Nevertheless the Heritage Picnic and the concert which included the “Como Waltz” a tribute to Louiza Buchholtz went well, although attendances were not as great as expected.

**Como Celtic Oyster Banquet:** Some of the members of our Society, in conjunction with the Sutherland Music Club, and the Celtic Council of Australia highlighted the cultivation of oysters in Australia, with a dinner, the oysters being supplied by oyster farmer, Mr. Bob Drake. The Drake brothers have in their possession the first minute book of the Oyster Farmers' Association, with Albert Emerson, signing it as the first President. Albert Emerson also held the first oyster lease for the whole of Botany Bay, and its tributaries. Whilst Thomas Holt chaired the Royal Commission into oysters, it was noted in 1874 by the Inspector of Fisheries, William Langan, that Mr. Emerson had been cultivating oysters on a large sandbank, and what well-grown oysters they were! This dinner was held to commemorate the growth of the oyster industry in Australia and to set the history books straight at last. The evening was over-booked as it was so popular and everyone had a great time. Thank you to all who assisted!

**SSHS April Meeting:** We were delighted to again have our member, Dr. Maryanne Larkin, as a guest speaker at the Como Hotel. Dr. Larkin gave a most informative talk, and debunked all the myths about the Como Hotel having been the site of various activities: a brothel, a nunnery, the German Ambassador's residence, a German railway workers' hostel, and many others! It has always been an hotel! And we were most grateful for its support during our Como Heritage Festival for our SSHS events which were held there, and a big thank you to the Perry's who provided a welcome cuppa to all assembled.

**Sutherland Shire Historical Society Museum:** Where were you, our members, when we needed you most during this busy week? I know some were on the sick list, and of course these are exempted, but if we have 200 members, surely you can help when I ask you to do a couple of hours on a roster for Heritage Festival? *No one* put their names down when I asked for volunteers at the meeting in March! We only have the same willing few who lent a hand to assist at the Museum. Our Deputy Curator, Mr Jim

Cutbush held the fort during Heritage Festival as our Curator, Mr. Allan McGrath is still not in good health, and Jim also had to contend with the health problems of own his family, yet he did not let us down. The Museum was open every day and Terry McCosker, our erstwhile Assistant Curator, and Excursions Officer also reported daily to keep the doors open and talk to interested members of the public about the display. Next time, can more of you come along and lighten the burden of these few? To those of you who answered our plea and came and helped, my heartfelt thanks—we could not have done it without you.

**National Trust Events:** Cliff and I visited the following displays: The Balmain Watch-house; the Beale Piano display at the Leichhardt Library, and its part in the building of Mosquito bombers during the war; The Parramatta Heritage Centre, the Lindfield production of the “Messiah”, The Newport Arms photographic exhibition; the Manly Ferry exhibition and the Fairfield Museum’s display on the Male Orphan School. We visited Campbelltown to see how their school-children’s history essays went—and found they had been cancelled due to only two children entering, despite copious advertising! Nevertheless we met up with Verlie Fowler, their Historical Society President, who has been a guest speaker at our Society on Eckersley, and had dinner with her. We were delighted to hear how supportive Campbelltown Council is to their Historical Society, having just appointed a Museum Planner on a 3-year contract to assist with their Museum. Verlie was very appreciative of her Council’s support, and we were quite envious of the assistance her Historical Society is receiving to plan their exhibitions.

**Woronora Cemetery Walks.** We were delighted with the assistance we received from Ivan Webber, Steve Donaldson and the Woronora Cemetery staff. Helen Rae from the Lioness’ Club conducted the tours with my assistance, and we chose graves or memorials of past people from the community to talk about, particularly those who had an association with Como: such as Louiza Buchholtz, John Emerson, and the Murphy’s. Both tours were extremely well attended.

**Display for Sutherland Shire Council’s Centenary year, 2006.** Daphne Salt, who lent us our wonderful display about James Cook, and the Endeavour, and the landing at Kurnell, has offered us a further display from her collection for next year. We realize we must change our displays regularly as people like to see something different each time they come along for Heritage Festival, and we are most grateful for Daphne’s superb offer of photographs etc. for a new exhibition in 2006. This enables her marvellous Cook display to be shown at another centre in the Shire so more people can get to see it and learn about our Shire’s history. Thank you Daphne for your outstanding support to our Historical Society.

**Captain Cook Society:** Daphne invited Cliff and me to attend her talk at the AGM of the above society at the 150<sup>th</sup> Philatelic Exhibition at Darling Harbour. It was an excellent presentation and we were so proud to have been there to lend our support.

Again Cliff and I apologise for being absent for the next two meetings, as we are going to London to see our grandchildren, and then to USA to visit a cousin and the Grand Canyon, so I will ask Jim to ably take the meeting in my stead. I look forward to seeing you all on my return.

*Dawn Emerson,*  
**President**

### **Meetings for 2005.**

Friday, 20 <sup>th</sup> May:	Terry McCosker: Sydney Water--From Tank Stream to Now
Friday, 17 <sup>th</sup> June:	Bronwyn Hanna: Women Architects
Friday, 15 <sup>th</sup> July:	Dr. Wayne Johnson: Archaeology of Darling Harbour
Friday, 19 <sup>th</sup> August:	Battle of Vinegar Hill
Friday, 16 <sup>th</sup> September:	AGM plus a Heritage Movie from Library Collection
Friday, 21 <sup>st</sup> October:	Mr. Bob Walshe: Eureka Stockade
Friday, 18 <sup>th</sup> November:	Tim Narraway: The Boer War
Friday, 16 <sup>th</sup> December:	Xmas Party at the Sutherland School of Arts



# From The Editor's Desk

**Our aims** In reviewing the four objectives of the Sutherland Shire Historical Society, I am mindful of the second. This is “the collection, acquisition and preservation of all materials relevant to the history of the Shire”. The society has a good collection of artifacts in the museum and in storage that describes our pioneering past. In the antiques world, it is generally considered that anything over 100 years old is considered an antique. However, in the world of collecting, more recent “collectables” from the 1950s to 1970s have been attracting considerable interest. We need to be conscious that our collection needs to keep pace so that it doesn’t become just a charming anachronism. As a society, we must be mindful that artifacts and print material from our more recent past need to be collected and preserved also. Now where to house it all is another matter! We have had several meetings in the past with Council regarding a purpose built museum and meeting rooms.

**Film records** The saying that “a picture tells a thousand words” is very relevant to historians. The most fragile items from our past are often film or photographic records. The earliest films were on acetate which is very unstable. It is likely to burst into flames so needs to be stored correctly. Ten or fifteen years ago, the National Film and Sound Archive, the forerunner of ScreenSound Australia, conducted a last roundup of old film throughout Australia so that our early history could be properly documented and preserved.

With our centenary coming up, it is important that we roundup any old film or photographic evidence of life in the Shire over the last 100 years. Gordan Presland made a documentary called “In the Wake of the Endeavour 1970” and George Heavens produced a 3 hour documentary about the Shire. Ask around for any other old home movie footage or photographs and let us know. It can readily be converted to video or DVD format.

**The Bulletin legacy** Happily I had sufficient articles for this edition but don’t lapse into complacency. We need a constant supply of good stories so keep them coming in. I have read through the entire set of past bulletins and have photocopied many articles. I intend to run excerpts in future bulletins. The society has had some great historians. It is an observation that in the past, many of the articles were shorter and generally easy to read. Of course, many of our more prolific contributors at that stage could write from life experiences and the nature of the articles was anecdotal and interesting.

Bruce Watt   Editor 2005

## MUSEUM REPORT

At the close of Heritage Week 2005, our museum's exhibitions of the Owen Jones replica house from 1895, James Cook's life and a nice mix of old Shire photos worked well for this year's theme of 'celebrating 60 years of community and heritage' of the National Trust.

The museum received many favourable comments from a large variety of visitors from as far away as Cooktown and Carseldine, QLD, Malaysia, London, Port Macquarie and Melbourne, along with members from other Historical Societies including Hurstville, Mount Victoria and Ryde. It was a pleasure to see local MP for Miranda, Mr Barry Collier visit the museum as promised. Thank you Barry. 286 visitors attended the museum and a large number said that they would be bringing family and friends back.

I was very grateful to the following people who were kind enough to donate items to the museum: Mrs June Miller of Gynea, Norma-Jean Taylor and Beatrice of Kirrawee, Mrs Jean Small of Loftus, two Sutherland gentlemen, and Bruce Watt of Cronulla.

The museum would not function without its volunteers. Thank you Mr Terry McCosker, Dawn Emerson, Norma-Jean Taylor, Nola Tunks, Betty Greentree, Doug Archer, Cliff Emerson, Bruce Watt and Maurie Beven. Well done! Alan McGrath, our curator, is still not on top of the health parade but I'm sure he'll pick up soon as he is still helping with research and advice about the many enquiries he receives.

Due to my family's recent health problems, I would like to say a special thank you to Vice President Terry McCosker for helping me in running the museum during Heritage week.

*Jim Cutbush*

Assistant Curator

**REMINDER: The museum is open on the first Saturday of the month**

## EXCURSION REPORT: -

Well my first excursion is over and I think it went well. Twenty three members attended on a not so beautiful day. Most of us travelled to town at the rear of the 8.52am train from Sutherland and on arrival we were ushered onto the James Craig for morning tea.

Our guide, Howard Courtney, did a fine job of conducting a very interesting and comprehensive tour of the James Craig. After the tour Howard took us through the Wharf 7 workshop and showed us, among other things, a small boat or canoe which had been built by the crew of the James Craig while they were in Tasmania recently. The crew had entered a competition which required them to build a small boat and then enter it in a race. **THEY WON !!!** We were then taken into a display room which contained many old restored sailing and rowing boats which were the property of the Heritage Fleet. After this we saw their display of model ships and a couple under construction.

The next part of the day was a ride in a small ferry, not the Harman as promised but I don't think anybody cared, we just sat back and enjoyed the cruise and Howard's commentary from Darling Harbour, through Mort's Bay to Rozelle where the Heritage Fleet Has its major workshop. At this site we saw the Kanangra, an old steam driven ferry waiting patiently for restoration, the Freedom, last of the steam tugs, the Harman, Boomerang, a beautifully sleek yacht which originally belonged to the Albert music family, the Kookaburra, a petrol driven speed boat and a large vessel called the John Oxley which is being restored after years of working along the Queensland coast. During our walk around this site the rain started and while it dampened our clothes it did not dampen our spirits.

From Rozelle we boarded the ferry again for a short run across Blackwattle Bay to the Sydney Fish markets for lunch. For me the markets were the downside of the day. The fish and chips were no where near as good as those from the Shire and it was crowded with tourists. In spite of the markets, the long walk in the rain to the bus stop, the long wait in a crowded shelter for a bus and the train ride home with the school kids and their bags, I enjoyed the day and hope everybody else did.

**NEXT OUTING.** City church walk on **Thursday 26th May**. Same train, i.e. 8.52am from Sutherland in the rear carriage. Alight at **Martin Place** then to **St James** for a guided tour of the church and crypt, **commencing at 10.00am** then to **St.Marys** for a tour of that church and crypt then on to **St Andrews** for a tour.

**Cost \$10.00 plus your fare and B.Y.O. morning tea and lunch.**

*Terry McCosker.*

# **Historical publications about the Shire.**

The serious reader of local history will no doubt be familiar with many of the following publications about the history of the Sutherland Shire. For the general reader or those new to the area however, the following list provides a fairly comprehensive starting point. It lists what has been published about local Shire history, the early discovery and settlement, or written by or about prominent local citizens, institutions or events. Many of the titles are out of print or are obscure. However, the local history section of the Sutherland Shire Library has copies which can be viewed.

It is pleasing to note that a significant number of publications have been written in recent times, reflecting a healthy interest in local research. One of the seminal publications about the Shire is Frank Cridland's "The story of Port Hacking, Cronulla and the Sutherland Shire" which remained for many years, the only comprehensive history of the Shire.

Another document is of particular local interest as it is such an early source document. The Sutherland Estate Report is a hand written journal written by R C Walker in 1868. It contains a description of the physical characteristics and uses of the large paddocks that made up Holt's early estate that covered much of the pre Shire when there was virtually no settlement.

Another important early, comprehensive work was "From Sails to Atoms" by David Kirkby who was Shire Clerk from 1929 to 1963. It was written for the Sutherland Shire Council to coincide with the bi-centenary of the discovery of Botany Bay in 1770. The Kirkby manuscript is the far more comprehensive research document upon which the book was based.

Because of his prominence in our early development, the book on Thomas Holt, "An Energetic Colonist" (1972) is of significance.

Daphne Salt's book "Gateway to the South" is another seminal book, being the first monograph written on a Sydney suburb and used as an example of how a local history should be written. Copies of her book are held in prestigious world libraries including Trinity College, Oxford, Cambridge and the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. Daphne is a descendant of very early Shire pioneers and a member of the Sutherland Shire Historical Society.

Excellent and very readable recent histories include A Pictorial History of the Sutherland Shire by Joan Lawrence and A Pictorial History of Cronulla and Pictorial History of Sutherland Shire by another Society member, Pauline Curby.

"I Can Hear the Horses" by Mary Gifford is a novel that deals with the life of the Allen Family who owned "Moombarah", the Shire's second oldest home, from 1903 to 1938. It describes the life of a very wealthy and influential family whose playground was Lilli Pilli before closer settlement. Guests at Moombarah included Dame Nelly Melba who sang from the balcony and the Body Line cricket team.

Two local mysteries are explored in "The Shark Arm Case" and "Wanda The Untold Story of the Wanda Beach Murders".

As Cook assumes such an important place in the Shire's history, his biography is an important reference.

Of course, in any such compilation there will be omissions and questions as to which books should be included. For example, Neville Cayley was a very prominent early Shire resident whose book "What bird is that?" is significant but not strictly about the Shire.

I would be very pleased to hear of further histories that can be added to this initial list that appears on the following pages.

**Bruce Watt, Editor**



# Shire histories

Title	Author	Date
Sutherland estate report (handwritten descriptions of Holt's paddocks in 1868)	R C Walker	1868
Kurnell, 28 April, 1770 – 298 April, 1899. A Biographical sketch	Alfred McFarland	1899
Official guide to the National Park of New South Wales	The trustees	1902
Oyster culture on the Georges River NSW	T C Roughley, Technology Museum , Sydney	1922
The Story of Port Hacking, Cronulla and Sutherland Shire	Frank Cridland	1924, 1950
Kurnell The birthplace of Australia	A G Alanson	1933
Royal visits to Captain Cook's landing place 1881-1946		1948
Engadine NSW. An outline history. (booklet)	J E Thompson	1956
Cronulla sewerage scheme- official opening	Sydney Water Board	1956
The Sutherland Shire golden jubilee (booklet)	R D Mackie	1956
The Story of Sutherland Shire (booklet)	Keith Bates	1958
Sutherland Shire Historical Society Bulletins (quarterly)	Editor, Sutherland Shire historical society	Sept 1966 →present
Forby Sutherland	John Walker	1968
Two hundred years in retrospect. Kurnell – Sutherland 1770 – 1970	John Walker	1969
Illustrated history of the Sutherland Shire. Birthplace of a nation. (Children's Shire history)	F Midgley	1969
From sails to atoms	David Kirkby	1970
The Kirkby manuscript	David Kirkby	1970
A short authentic history of Cronulla (booklet)	M Hutton Neve. Drawings by F Midgley	1970
The Hon. Thomas Holt. wool merchant, politician, churchman, MLA. "lord of the manor" (booklet)	M Hutton Neve	1970
Bygone days of Sutherland Shire. A concise and authentic history.	M Hutton Neve	1970
Sutherland Shire 1770 – 1970 (booklet)	Cronulla Rotary Club	1970
The story of Loftus, Woronora, Engadine	A and F Midgley	1970
Employ'd as a discoverer. Papers presented at Captain Cook Bi-Centennial Symposium.	JVS Megaw (editor)	1971
Sutherland Shire studies. <b>pamphlet</b> No.1 A brief history of Sutherland Shire	M Hutton Neve	1971
Sutherland Shire studies. <b>pamphlet</b> No.2 Sutherland Shire Council	Sutherland Shire Council	1972
Sutherland Shire Studies. <b>pamphlet</b> No.3 Geography and geology. Aboriginal archaeology	Dr D F Branagan Prof J Megaw	1985 (reprint)
Sutherland Shire studies. <b>pamphlet</b> No. 4 The development of commerce	M Hutton Neve	1985 (reprint)
Sutherland Shire studies. <b>pamphlet</b> No.5 Parks and recreation		1980 (reprint)

Sutherland Shire studies. <b>pamphlet</b> No.6 Railways (and Tramways) in the Sutherland Shire	Peter Neve	1989 (revised)
Sutherland Shire studies <b>pamphlet</b> No.8 The ancient river systems of Botany Bay	Dr A Albani, P Rickwood, B Johnson, J Tayton	
An energetic colonist.	Henry E Holt	1972
Martha Matilda of Sydney town (Wife of Captain James Birnie of Alpha Farm, Kurnell) (booklet)	M Hutton Neve	1972
A shade of blue ... A touch of gold. A fifty year history of North Cronulla Surf Life Saving Club	Ted Larsen and Theo Belbin	1976
Sutherland. birthplace of a nation	Phillip Mathews	1977
An official guide to the National Park. A facsimile reprint published to mark the centenary of Royal National Park	National Parks and Wildlife Service	1979
The Bundeena book	Les Philpott	1979
The story of the Woronora Cemetery (booklet)	M Hutton Neve	1981
Illawong Public School's Illawong A place of history	P&C	1982
The early days of Kurnell to Cronulla	M Hutton Neve	1983
The early explorations of Sir Thomas Mitchell (booklet)	F Midgley)	1984
A short history of St Andrews Anglican Church, Cronulla	Graeme Cole	1985
Sylvania back then. Aspects of local history	Sylvania High School	1985
Sutherland Shire Historical Society Journal Index and Titles Sept 1966 to Feb 1986	R L Sowden	1986
Sutherland. Australia's birthplace	Kevin Hilferty	1986
Heathcote Public School 1886 - 1986		1986
Ink from the bottlebrush. Writings from Sutherland Shire. The Australian bi-centenary	Laurel Dumbrell (editor)	1987
Gateway to the south. First stop Sylvania. An intimate insight into the origins of the Sutherland Shire	Daphne Salt	1987
Sutherland school centenary 1887 - 1987	Pam Thomas	1987
Historic buildings of the Sutherland Shire (10 sketches)	Drawings by George Youssef for Sutherland Shire Council	1988
Woronora ripples. An oral history of the Woronora Valley and its community	Beryl Dunnett	1988
Como public school	Megan Cole	1988
A walk around Sutherland	Helen McDonald for SSC	1990
A walk around Cronulla	Megan Pitt for SSC	1990
Local studies notes, 3 booklets, Como hotel, Heathcote hall, Menai	Helen McDonald	
The thirty nine years of Jannali Girls High School 1953 - 1991		1991
Sutherland Shire heritage study (3 volumes)	Sutherland Shire Council	1993
Miranda public school 100 years 1893 -1993	Centenary committee	1993
Nature's doorstep. The Bonnet Bay story.	Colin Burgess	1994

Oyster Bay public school 1944 -1994		1994
St John the Baptist Anglican Church Sutherland 1894 – 1994	M Knight and K Oates (ed)	1994
1994 Bushfires - stories	K Williams, S Collings Caringbah ambulance	1994
Sutherland Shire Birthplace of modern Australia	Kevin Hilferty for Sutherland Shire Council	1995
Sutherland remembers 1945 - 1995	Judith Frenda (ed)	1995
Miranda Congregational Church 189 -1995		1995
Como: A boating resort since the 1880s (thesis)	Maryanne Larkin	1995
A club called Wanda 1946 – 1996	Brad Forrest	1996
A pictorial history of the Sutherland Shire	Joan Lawrence. Captions by Pauline Curby	1997
Sutherland Shire. A history to 1939	Dr Maryanne Larkin	1998
A pictorial history of Cronulla	Pauline Curby	1998
From Bottle Forrest to Heathcote. Sutherland Shire's first settlement.	Patrick Kennedy	1999
Kurnell. Birthplace of modern Australia – A pictorial history -	Daphne Salt	2000
Building strong traditions. A history of the Cronulla surf life saving club 1908 - 1957	Faye Young	2000
Hazelhurst cottage (booklet)	Dix Hawke	2000
Engadine 1825 – 2001	Ron Seville	2001
A Caringbah childhood in the 1920s and 1930s	Joan Goddard	2003
Sandy Point secrets	Louisa Singleton	2003
Pictorial history Sutherland Shire	Pauline Curby	2004
Echoes from the bay. The Yowie Bay story.	Merle Kavanagh	2004
<a href="http://www.ourshire.com.au/suburbs/">www.ourshire.com.au/suburbs/</a>		
<a href="http://www.ssrguides.org/about.php?sub=areahistory">www.ssrguides.org/about.php?sub=areahistory</a>		
A short history of Jannali		
The Barden bush		

## Novels and/or books about the Shire

The shark arm case	Vince Kelly	1975
The minister for murder	Dan Morgan	1979
Puberty blues	C Carey and K Lette	1979
I can hear the horses	Mary Gifford	1983
Taken for granted. The bushland of Sydney and its suburbs	D Benson and J Howell	1995
Burnum Burnum	DR M Norst	1999
Wanda. The untold story of the Wanda Beach murders	Alan Whiticker	2003

## General histories relevant to the Shire

Dedication of Captain Cook's landing place Kurnell, Botany Bay	Department of Lands	1899
The landing of lieutenant James Cook, RN,		1901

commander at Botany Bay 1770.		
Sydney's first four years. A reprint of a narrative of an expedition to Botany Bay and a complete account of the settlement of Port Jackson.	Captain Watkins Tench of the marines	1961
Sydney Cove 1788. The first years of settlement of Australia	Original diaries edited by John Cobley	1962
Remarks on a passage to Botany Bay 1787 – 1792. A first fleet journal	James Scott sergeant of marines. Public library of New South Wales	1963
Captain Cook and Australia	Sylvia Corner	1965
Captain Cook The seamen's seaman	Alan Villiers	1967
The explorations of Captain James Cook in the Pacific	A Grenfell Price (ed)	1969
The life of Captain James Cook	J C Beaglehole	1974
Handbook of the Botany Bay region	D J Anderson (ed)	1975
Botany Bay sketchbook	Drawings by Allan Gamble, Text by Valmai Phillips	1977
In the footsteps of Captain Cook	Tom Kenny	1979
Sydney and suburbs. A history and description	Brian and Barbara Kennedy	1982
Henry Hacking 1750 – 1831 An early Australian at Sydney and Hobart (booklet)		1982
The Aborigines of the Sydney district before 1788	Peter Turbet	1989
Captain James Cook. A biography	Richard Hough	1994
Elizabeth Cook. The captain's wife 1741 – 1835 (booklet)	Shirley Sinclair	1995
The Endeavour journal of Joseph Banks	Paul Brunton (ed)	1998
Southern focus. (20 years of photojournalism in southern Sydney)	John Veage	
The Kurnell story	Caltex Australia Ltd edited by Barry Pearton	
A place on the coast. Life in a beachside suburb	Craig Hempstead	2001
The life of Matthew Flinders	Miriam Estensen	2002
Southern colour (photography Cronulla)	John Veage	2004

## So you think our drought is bad

There was a particularly harsh drought throughout Southern Australia in the 1830s and 40s. The Chambers Encyclopaedia of 1874 records:

'In the drought, for instance, from July 1838 to August 1839 – during which "not a drop of rain fell in Sydney', even the Murray, generally described as the only permanent river of magnitude in the country, dwindled away into a chain of ponds.

In Bathurst, the drought began in 1837 and for three years not a shower of rain fell.

***This would have to be a record!***

## Memories of a Shire Life – Well, not Quite.

Pauline Curby, in the “Foreword” to her recent book on the Sutherland Shire provides an entertaining anecdote illustrating the attachment of residents of the Shire to their Shire. If you need to ask, “Which shire?”, then you obviously don’t live in the Shire. I have lived all my life in the Shire. I was brought to it as a 10 months old baby in mid 1949 to a blackberry patch, that later was 29 Chamberlain Ave., Caringbah. As a child, I lived in a Chamberlain Ave. that was both pre-curb and guttering and sewer. My memories also include the building of Sutherland Hospital, Caringbah and Endeavour High Schools and, of course, Captain Cook Bridge. Hang on! Obviously, it’s not memories of my life – I don’t fit the second half of the title. The life is that of my father, Robert Duncan (1916-1999) and as you will find out, he did not live all his life in the Shire.

Robert Duncan (b. 1916) passed away on December 19, 1999, just a few weeks into his eighty fifth year. A native of Broxburn, Scotland, his family migrated to Australia in 1926 and except for a few short years in Wonthaggi, Victoria, Robert spent the rest of his life in Sydney. Yet, it was his years spent living in the Shire that he fondly, and bitterly, remembered to his final days.

Robert Duncan was born on October 16, 1916, in Eastbourne Place, Broxburn. He was the only child of John Duncan (1885-1957) and Helen (nee Potter) Duncan (d. 1938)

The first phase of my father’s life ended in 1926. I guess he would have been pretty surprised when his father said the family was moving to Australia. His eldest surviving cousin remembers a family gathering with much weeping. However, my grandmother suffered badly from arthritis and the doctors advised a warmer and dryer climate. So, at the age of ten, my father embarked on his one and only overseas trip. In Australia, the Duncan family first lived in Wonthaggi, in a simple dwelling with hessian walls. Robert’s father was a shale miner and I guess this was the reason to move to Wonthaggi. At some point my grandfather was injured in a cave -in, severely enough to limit his working prospects. The family moved to Sydney and lodged with friends, the Taylors, in a vibrant Anglo-Celtic community - more Celtic than Anglo, it seems - in Undercliffe Road, Undercliffe.

My father, by now thirteen, would have had an exciting time there living on the edge of Wolli Creek with friends his own age. I doubt that life would have been easy. After all, it was a working class migrant community and in late 1929, the Depression struck. The men worked if they could; the women looked after the house and family and the children began that slow process of assimilation by which migrants became Australians. At least in this case, they all spoke a form of English.

However, I should not slight my father’s sense of being a Scot. It never left him. He may have sounded the genuine article, a dinky-di Aussie but put him in the same room as another Scot and without realizing it he would drift back into that slight lowlands Scot’s brogue - always a delight to grandchildren.

The community provided a lot of entertainment for its members - dances, a Ladies Club, Soccer Club and eventually the 1st Undercliffe Scottish Boy Scouts Troop. They had hoped to wear the kilt but the money was never there. However, they were granted one concession to their background; they wore a tartan neckerchief.

My father left school at fifteen with his Intermediate Certificate and joined the workforce. It would have been c. 1931 and jobs for school leavers were hard to find. He became a markets man and except for a few years as a truck driver with J J Fields, he worked all his life in the City Markets first with Silk Brothers and finally with Col Johnson and Son. Little now remains of the markets. Silk Brothers’ building was approximately where the Entertainment Centre monorail Station now is and the facade of the old markets building he worked in was kept for the Market City development.

My father was a gentle man, but there was another side to him. He was a tough man. Picture yourself at 2.00 am watching the tarp come off a semi trailer loaded with twenty tons of watermelons; each one to be

unloaded by hand and then stacked and re-stacked by hand. My father gained the respect of the world he worked in. One anecdote; my only part time work at university was in the markets. Early in my market career (1966), my fellow workers suggested that I was working too fast and if I didn't slow down they would re-educate me. I merely informed them that Bobbie Duncan was my father. The re-education of young Garriock was never mentioned again. My father left the markets when he retired in 1984. By then the Markets had moved to Flemington and my father felt out of place.

His youth passed and war came. My father got caught up in the wave of patriotism that swept the country and he joined the militia. Eventually, his unit was transferred to the AIF. Unfortunately, his military career was spectacularly short - a mere ninety days. My father had been born without any arches in his feet and in 1942 the AIF still marched everywhere; he was out. His service was so short he does not rate a mention on the Australian War Memorial database. Even the RAAF wanted pilots who could march and the RAN sailors who could march. He spent the war years driving truckloads of bombs, without fuses, of course, through the streets of Sydney. I would think the fact that the bombs were without fuses would have been lost on the passengers on one particular tram. The brakes on his truck had failed and he let the truck graze against the tram to slow it down.

It was during the very early war years that a young Joyce Pierce was taken by Stan Taylor, one of those Undercliffe Taylors, to see a pantomime starring as Goldilocks an athletic young Scotsman, Robert Duncan. Within a year, they were married; it was December 27, 1941. Most of my parents' male friends were overseas or at least in uniform. Beer was hard to get and it was as hot as buggery - even the butter melted. The honeymoon was a day in Manly. In those days, married women were automatically dismissed. So, it was back to work the next day for Joyce, a mechanic at W D & H O Wills. They lived with his parents for a while in Juliett St, Enmore, before moving to Clovelly. In 1944, my mother became pregnant with my sister and complications forced them to leave Clovelly and move in with my mother's parents. Their first child, Rhondda Mae, was born in 1944, the last girl in the family for thirty three years. I was born in 1948 and early the next year, the Duncan's and their two children move to a blackberry patch in Chamberlain Ave. Caringbah. This was to be home for the next thirty five years.

My father was an avid sportsman - he had played Aussie Rules as a teenager. Later he took up tennis. He became an A grade player but his tennis career was cut short by his flat feet. He was a powerful swimmer and became the quintessential Aussie - a lifesaver - at the club at Steel Park, Undercliffe, on the Cooks River. It was my father's lifesaving background that helped him to become a reluctant hero. He had been married for a year. It was the day after the party - they had not been home all night - and the gang had gone to Taronga Park by ferry to kill some time. The trip over passed uneventfully but on the return trip my mother noticed an object in the water. It was a young woman who had decided that she did not want to die that day after all. With great reluctance, my father -he would certainly have been the worst for wear from the night before (he had a legendary thirst) - was persuaded to save her. My mother remembers that with almost slow motion precision he took off and carefully folded all his clothes before diving in the harbour clad only in his underpants and socks. He rescued the woman who was then picked up by another passing boat leaving my father to swim back to the ferry. He was none too keen to get back on board - he had lost his underpants in the swim and Duncan men are shy when it comes to displaying their manhood. However, the young woman belonged to a wealthy and influential family for whom the prospect of a failed suicide bid was not welcome. My father's role in saving their daughter never gained the recognition he felt it should have.

He was a lifelong St George man. In later years his wife's family had a close connection with Cronulla-Sutherland and so he was torn between two loyalties but in his heart he was always a red and white man. It was at St George that his sporting career reached its climax with the one and only appearance of that well known Jewish Scottish wrestler, "Rabbi" Duncan. He had been celebrating at the club with my mother and another couple. In his naivety he felt the contest was genuine and, of course, his vision would have been clouded by amber ale. He disputed the referee's decision in a bout and got in the ring to sort things out. His wrestling career lasted a few seconds. He almost lost his membership of his beloved club.



However, for once in his life he had powerful friends - on the board of the club - but he was only allowed to stay a member provided "Rabbi" Duncan never made another appearance. He never did.

In the early 1980's my parents moved to Macquarie Fields to be near my two grandmothers – my paternal grandfather had remarried shortly after the death of his first wife in 1938 - and my sister's family. The rest of my father's days would be spent at Macquarie Fields, far from his beloved Shire. It was a move he was to regret bitterly for the rest of his life.

In the last ten years, his robust health began to decline. He had begun to have serious falls around the home. He was admitted to the Frank Whiddon Masonic Homes from which he ever dreamt of escape. There was to be none and he entered into a continuous decline. He took a bad turn on his 83rd birthday. He could no longer support himself sufficiently to sit upright and he soon became confined to bed. He began to lose interest in food. He quickly became weaker and began to have trouble speaking. The life of Robert Duncan, formerly of Broxburn, Scotland, lately of the Sutherland Shire, and more recently of Macquarie Fields ended at about 10.00 pm, Sunday, December 19, 1999.

However, in death, he managed to return to the Shire. My father is buried in Woronora Cemetery.

Garriock Duncan

## Did you know?

Thomas Holt was well known as a wealthy large landowner, entrepreneur and financier. Not all of his enterprises were successful however. At his Tempe home, "the Warren", Holt attempted to breed rabbits for sport and his agricultural experiments in oyster farming and sheep raising in the Holt-Sutherland Estate were financial disasters. He also tried unsuccessfully to import alpacas, Llamas Vicuana sheep although these and 'squirrels, eland and elk ran free on the Holt-Sutherland estate before construction began on Sutherland House' (Gateway to the South).

It is interesting to note that in Frank Cridlands book, 'The story of Port Hacking, Cronulla and the Sutherland Shire' (1950), page 182, the Robinson map (unchanged from the 1924 edition as it shows the tram line to Cronulla), Bate Bay is referred to as Whale Bay. It also shows the point, just south of the natural stone bridge at Gynea where a coal bore to 2400 feet was sunk by Holt. The Fisheries at South Cronulla is shown as a defence reserve.

A tip for cleaning grime off oil paintings. Wet a cotton bud with saliva and gently wipe over small sections of the painting. Enzymes in the saliva help to dissolve grease.

SOUTHERLAND. A parish in the hundred of Woronora, and county of Cumberland, NSW; bounded on the N by Botany Bay from Cape Solander to Georges River, and by that river to Woronora river; on the S.W. by a line bearing S.E. to Port Hacking creek and Port Hacking to the sea coast; on the E. by the sea coast to Cape Solander, including the islands in the ports Woronora and Port Hacking creeks, bounding this parish. It contains 10 houses and 41 inhabitants.

from *A geographical dictionary or gazetteer of the Australian colonies. 1848*

Of the 60 foundation members of the Sutherland Shire Historical Society - first General Meeting held April 15 1966; - there are 6 members who are still financial. These are:- Mrs E Carmichael, Mrs D Cosgrove, Mrs A Griffiths, Mr R Pier, Mr B Sargeant and Mrs N Whitaker.

editor

# The First Three Years of Menai District Neighbourhood Services Inc.- 1983-1986

*From a talk given at the 20<sup>th</sup> AGM (but 21<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of MNS) by Dawn Emerson, inaugural secretary, 1983 and current Vice-President.*

## Small beginnings

As one of the “pioneer” members of this group I have been asked to record some of our history in setting up this community service umbrella, the Menai District Neighbourhood Services Inc.

On the 7<sup>th</sup> July 1983, I attended a meeting with Peter and Gail Roberts, Peter Ikin, Mike Ohehir, Michelle Cook and Carmel Tulinsky, the Community Development Officer from Sutherland Shire Council. Six people out of the whole of the Menai District, who thought they were going to change the world!

Carmel outlined the lack of facilities in the area. I had arrived in 1982 to find dirt roads and although Bangor public school had just been erected, no high schools, no playing fields, no parks and no churches, except the Menai Uniting Church at the intersection to Menai Road and Illawarra Road. There weren't even any street lights in my area of Menai—it wasn't even known as Illawong where Moreton Road is today! I had to write to the council and tell them that the Menai location sign was erected near present Oriana Drive, approaching Menai, therefore we must live in Illawong, and could they please inform the Post Office and adjust our rates notice address accordingly. They obligingly did so, and I also informed the Water Board and Pacific Power too so they could adjust their addresses. Previously all addresses in the area were just “Menai” with only a few around Fowler Road being “Illawong”!

## Wish list for Menai Neighbourhood Services

We responded enthusiastically to Carmel's assessment of the problems and when she put some butcher's paper on the wall, we came up with lots of suggestions for committees required: a Friendship Club for the Seniors, Youth Group for the teenagers under 17 who could not drive to get out of the area for entertainment, Occasional Care for Children after school, (as most parents worked and there was no one to care for the schoolchildren from 3.30pm to 6pm when Mum and Dad arrived home from work), Playgroups for isolated mothers and children and so the list went on. Carmel asked us how we would fund all these groups? Tentatively someone suggested perhaps we could put in \$2 each? This meant we had now the grand sum of \$12 We now felt a little foolish at our grandiose plans, but then Carmel advised us we had \$2,000, which had been raised by Bangor Community Aid, a previous committee, so we had this as our establishment funding.

At our next meeting, on the 21<sup>st</sup> July 1983 Peter Roberts was elected interim Chair and I was elected interim Secretary and we put in a submission to YACS for \$5,000 for a Youth Worker. We chose our name as the Menai Neighbourhood Services.

## Guidelines

Guidelines were set up for a Neighbourhood Centre:

- Has its location near a shopping Centre: e.g. Bangor, Illawong, Menai
- Links to all other community resources in the neighbourhood
- Has a resident/voluntary management committee representative of a broad cross section of residents
- Will ensure that each request for help or information is met either directly or by appropriate referral
- Will stimulate community development in its local area (community development in this context refers to processes aimed at: promoting a consciousness of the community or involvement of members of the community in matters affecting their lives and catering for the needs of the community and increasing their self-reliance.)
- Is available to all persons and groups.

Once we established we had formed a Neighbourhood Centre, then we could ask for funding for a co-ordinator.

## **Setting up committees**

At our third meeting on the 4<sup>th</sup> August 1983 Peter Roberts was elected President, Glen Wells was elected Vice President, I was elected Secretary and Michelle Cook became Treasurer. At that stage she didn't have too many funds to treasure, but the situation soon changed. We divided up the areas of concern amongst the few members present. I found I was responsible for Youth, Isolated Women and Mothers, and New Residents in the district and these all became sub-committees. I had to actively go out and drag in people in the district to run these committees, or run them myself. As I felt a little overstretched I co-opted my long suffering friends and neighbours, and fellow members from the Menai District Progress Association which I had now joined. I became Publicity Officer and Newsletter editor of that organisation, MDPA as well.

## **Need for a bus service**

Now, when I had arrived in 1982 we had NO bus service whatsoever, and I had had a wonderful house cleaner who lived at Otford and said she would love to come and clean our new house but had no car and there was no bus. Undaunted I wrote to the Woronora Bus Co. and asked why had they not established a bus service from Padstow to Sutherland; we were a growing area, and I was sure they would have commuters if they started such a service. To my delight, within a fortnight or so an ad appeared in the Leader asking for expressions of interest from possible commuters and travellers. Apparently they had an overwhelming response and a bus service began early morning until 10am, and from 3pm until 7pm five days a week.

## **Welch festival commenced**

In late August, 1983 we had our first BBQ for young people and about 15 teenagers attended. At our 4<sup>th</sup> meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> September 1983 it was suggested we hold a Welsh Bangor Festival, with Welsh cakes and Welsh pony rides for the children.

I had been invited to join the Bicentennial Committee which was to have its first meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup> March 1984, and the Progress Assoc. had asked me to organize a Welsh festival for the Bicentennial. Our district history shows that our first pioneer, Owen Jones, was Welsh.

Incidentally, we doorknocked every house in Illawong, Alford's Point and Lucas Heights to establish how many children there were and what ages, to prove we needed to establish a new high school, and armed with this information went along to Mr Maurie Keane our local MP. He was stunned with the magnitude of the numbers, and set the wheels in motion to build us Menai High School, Lucas Heights Community School, Gerald Road PS (Tharawal), and Alford's Point PS.

## **First AGM**

The first AGM was held on 24<sup>th</sup> May 1984 at Bangor Community Centre. Our Management Committee had now become an organization and had applied for funding for a co-ordinator for the Neighbourhood Centre and for a YDO. Unfortunately our request for a Youth Worker had been rejected.

The opening of Bangor Library was imminent at the Bangor Shopping Centre, upon urging from the Menai District Progress Association that it should have a shopfront image. It was thought the opening would be a good opportunity to promote MNS with literature and a stall at the Shopping Centre.

Fundraising was painfully slow. It was noted at the meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> July 1984 that the Youth Committee Cake Stall had raised \$55.79. MNS had decided to fund a couple of Youth Discos, and then the YC had to refund the outlay. We lived on the edge of a shoestring. They had one disco on 24<sup>th</sup> August, and also one on the 12<sup>th</sup> September 1984 and a Drama course was to commence after the school holidays. A new submission for a Youth Worker was to be compiled.

Adult Education classes commenced on 10<sup>th</sup> September 1984 but an advance of \$630 had to be given from MNS as the grant of \$1,000 to this committee would not ensue until later.

A Volunteers' Subcommittee was formed and an executive elected. It was decided to apply for funding for a co-ordinator for the Information Centre.

## **Funding for a youth worker**

It was noted that 1985 was the Year of Youth, so an all-out campaign was commenced by MNS to gain funding for a Youth Worker. At the November meeting John Fischer spoke of a Safety House Programme

being set up in Illawong, and 3,200 copies of the Newsletter had been printed for distribution. The Occasional Care Committee requested \$100 petty cash so it could commence operation in February 1985. In the meantime it had been decided that as our funds were less than \$2,000 there was no registration needed to become a charity.

On 28<sup>th</sup> February 1985 it was decided that we should form a company to limit liability for damage or accidents. The ad for the YDO had cost \$145.80 and there were 15 applicants of whom six would be interviewed. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1985 Lyn Luxford, our new YDO gave a report on her first 3 weeks' employment, and we were delighted that at long last in the International Year of Youth, the MNS and the Menai District had their first Youth Development Officer.

## **Second AGM**

It was with some feelings of achievement and confidence that we approached our Second AGM on the 30<sup>th</sup> of May 1985. Reports were given from each of the committees showing the excellent progress we had made with a few people and very little resources. The Treasurer reported a \$21,000 balance at bank. We spoke of the possibility of getting a police station in Menai, and Inspector Sinter talked about setting up a Neighbourhood Watch.

It was reported that with no high school opened yet in the district we had difficulty in communicating with the youth of the district. The Newsletter Committee noted that eight editions of Menai Neighbourhood Services Newsletter had been published since February 1984. It now went to 3,400 homes and ranged from 8-12 pages. The Menai Information Centre was open on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Fridays from 10am to 1pm.

It was stated that there was nowhere for seniors to meet, and they currently met in each other's homes. It was moved that we approach Woronora RSL to establish a Friendship Club.

## **Council funds High School hall**

Clr. Don Carter, representing the Shire President, was then invited to address the meeting. He said he looked forward to Gerald Rd school (Tharawal) being completed in 1986 and then the High School, and noted that council was contributing to the cost of the high school hall and it was costing far more than expected, but would provide a large hall which is desperately needed in the district.

At the meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> June 1985, Lyn Luxford and the Youth Committee recorded they had established a separate youth group from the Housing Commission, which met at the Menai Cottage, which they could access without transport. Over 110 teenagers attended the last disco, and a disc jockey was donating his service free, so money could be spent on lighting.

## **Our community directory launched**

On 27<sup>th</sup> June 1985 I was elected as the NECSPT rep from MNS. An ad was placed for a Co-ordinator for the OCC. I asked for support from MNS in writing to council for a children's play area to be erected at Blaxland Drive Tennis Court, so children were safely enclosed and under supervision whilst mothers played tennis. A submission for OCC for grant in aid totalling \$7,800 was tabled. A Youth Newsletter was being established. Lyn Luxford was getting a Class 5 licence so she could drive the Community Bus for youth activities. It had been decided to produce an annual Community Directory. People were now complaining if they did not receive a copy of the Newsletter in their letterbox, as it was greatly valued as to what was happening in the district!

Peter Roberts and I were elected as the delegates to NCOSS. We were now getting requests for food parcels from needy families in the district. A "Meet the Police" night was to be held on 11<sup>th</sup> December 1985. As each sub-committee had grown and was now handling considerable sums of money, they had asked for advice on bookkeeping, so books may be kept correctly.

At the January 30<sup>th</sup>, 1986 meeting it was noted that a grant had been received for \$4,700 for a women's assistance scheme: "Women in Menai: new directions". An advertisement for a co-ordinator was to be placed in the paper. It was proposed that although MNS would sponsor all sub-committees, each sub-committee had to run itself. The "umbrella" was distancing itself from its committees, and making them independent, but still arching over them for security.

The 27<sup>th</sup> February, 1986 meeting noted that Sue Humphrey had been appointed as the co-ordinator for the Women's Assistance Scheme, "Women in Menai". A Senior Citizen of the Year Award was to be

established by Sutherland Shire Council. The first meeting of the “Over 55” group was held on 25<sup>th</sup> February 1986, and it is pleasing to note that it is still going strong today. The third AGM was to be held on the 10<sup>th</sup> April 1986 at Bangor Public School.

## **Achievements so far**

This was the end of our first three years. The only hiccup had been that the night chosen for the Third AGM was a night of many other meetings, and even I did not attend, as I had another engagement. The enthusiasm was still there, but we had become a victim of our own success, and the whole district was now jumping with meetings everywhere for various purposes. The commencement of the MDNS Inc. as it is now known was an unrivalled success story, and owes its beginnings to a few dedicated people. I haven’t mentioned them all, and some came, stayed for a few months and then moved on, but all contributed greatly during that time.

Nowadays if you try to establish a new volunteer group, it may be met with apathy and lack of interest. People are either stretched to their limits trying to pay off their mortgages, so work long hours to achieve this, or prefer to spend their free time on sports or leisure. Also as most of the groundwork is now done, people can’t see the relevance of giving up their leisure time to volunteer. There is not the same willingness to “be a good neighbour” or to help others. We are fortunate in MNS that we have attracted wonderful people who give freely of their time and find satisfaction in assisting others, and have never lost our core of supporters. We, the initiators, also brought a lot of experience with us; I had been a member previously of a progress association and a service club, and others had similar experience from other organizations. This knowledge gave us an edge. In those days, we had nothing, so any advance was a bonus, and I think we had confidence in ourselves and in others, so we all worked unitedly and without complaint. Knockbacks meant we dusted ourselves off, got up and went back into the fray. We did not understand the meaning of “No!” I know Peter Roberts, Peter Ikin and I often worked until the early a.m. some nights writing submissions. There were no coffee breaks; it was sheer hard slogging, and then when we were unsuccessful---oh, well ---back to the drawing board, and off we went again. Our respective spouses understood and helped us wherever they could. We were a team.

One thing, which hasn’t changed, is that there are still a few dedicated people around who really care about MDNS Inc. and have been the backbone of the organization. These are the people you see on the committee today. We have been blessed with wonderful employees, such as Anne Iacovella, and Gary Yeates who don’t really need supervision, as they are “part of the firm”. To the present and past members of MDNS Inc., I say “may the force be with you”.

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## **A vision for the Shire**

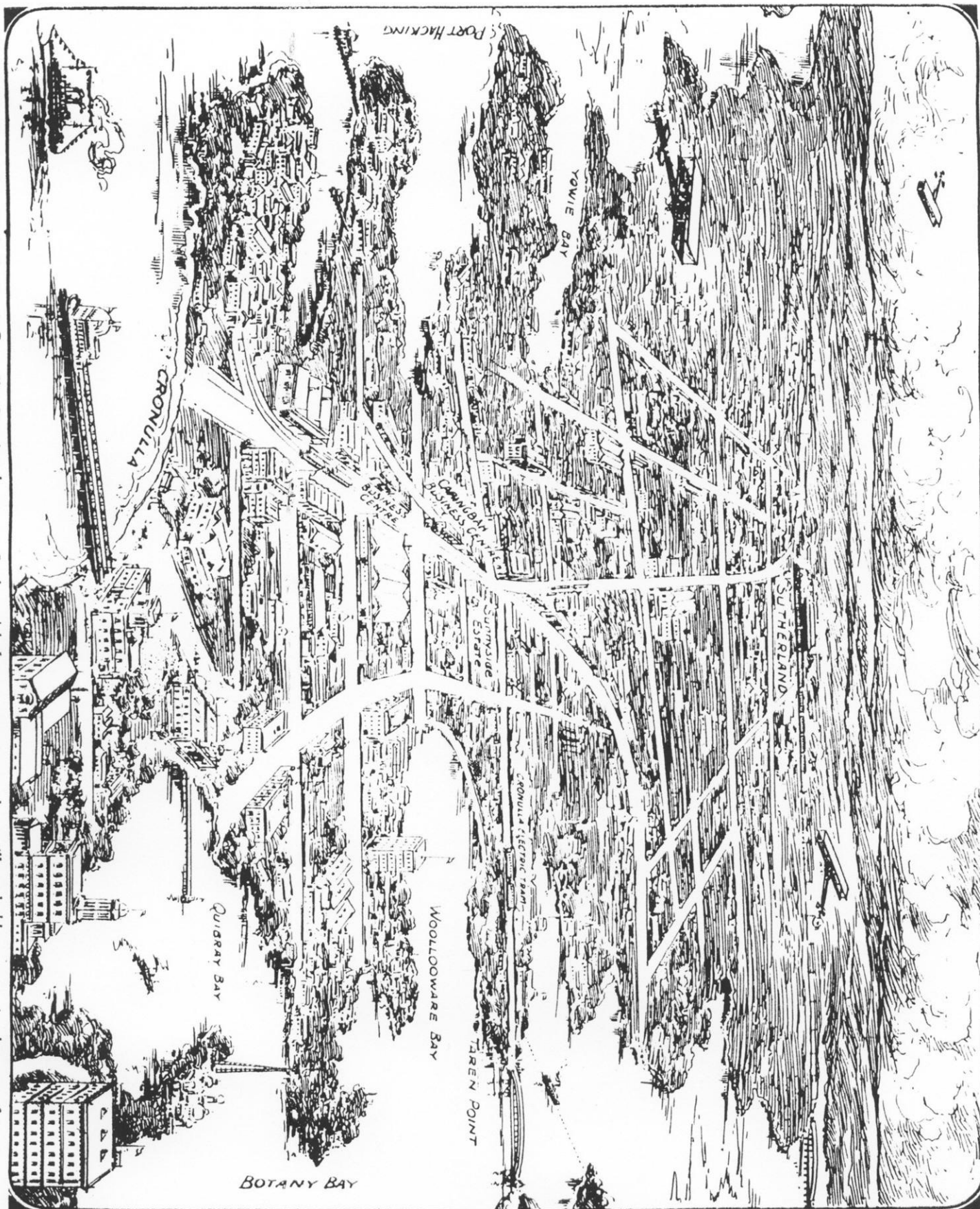
The coming of the steam tram in 1911 led to a great influx of settlers and gave great impetus to the opening up of land adjacent to the tramway route.

‘Sunnyside Estate’ was offered for sale on October 4 1915 by Frank Cridland and the sale conducted by C O J Monroe, one of the more ardent supporters of development and progress in the Shire. The estate was bounded by Curranulla Beach Road (The Kingsway), Willarong Road, Dianella Street and Cawarra Road.

Accompanying the glossy brochure was a map drawn by Joe Monroe that forecast the amazing development that the Shire would undertake in the future.(see overleaf) This included high rise development at Cronulla, an elaborate amusement pier and significant development on the Kurnell peninsula. It is interesting to note the number of bi-planes circling overhead.

His visions are amazingly realistic He envisaged a bridge at Taren Point, the coming of the electric railway, high rise development and a variety of public transport modes.

*Bird's Eye View of Sutherland-Cronulla District drawn to Scale, with Improvements as they will probably appear in the near future.*

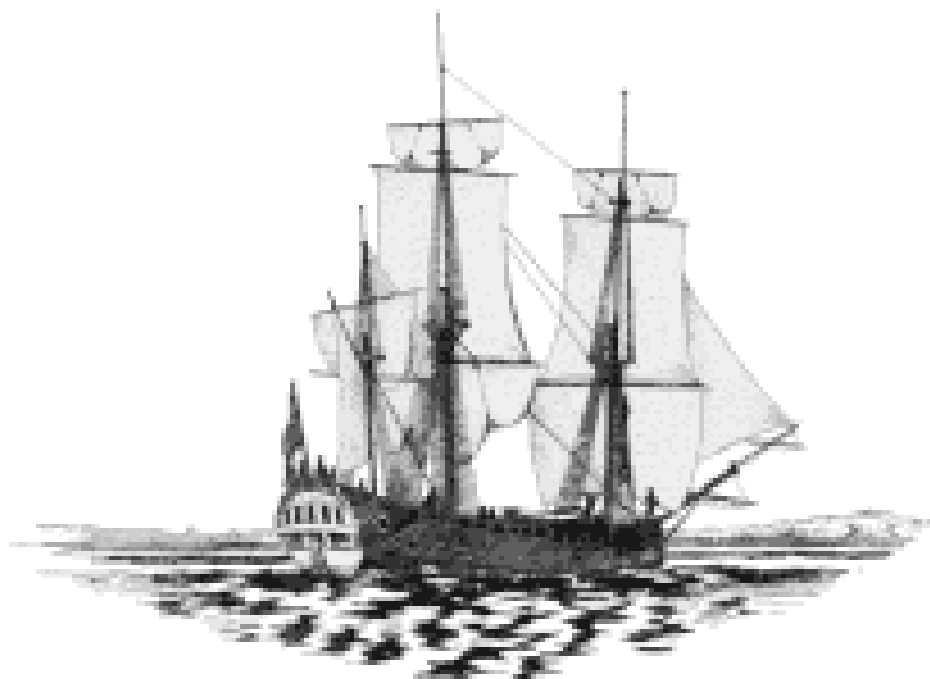




# Of Lost Shipwrecks and Stolen Maps:

## An often untold story of the discovery of Australia

Garriock Duncan



### The Endeavour

For the first time, since the inception of the HSC in 1967, Ancient History is more popular than Modern History. Most History teachers have a ready answer to how this has happened. I quote Pam Panczyk, vice president of the NSW History Teachers Association: “Kids identify Modern History with Australian history, which they don’t want to study. The last part of the 20th century (i.e. the Year 10 course) has a lot of politics and it is fairly dry”.

However, there are parts of the Australian story which are worth telling and which do engage students. One such part is the story of the discovery of Australia. Yet, this is a story students do not often, if ever, hear. Primary school students do not get to hear of it apart from the traditional story of Cook’s “discovery” of the east coast of Australia. For secondary school students, the only opportunity to learn about discovery is in Year 8. Even then, teachers are more likely to teach the discovery of the Americas rather than of Australia. From Columbus, and the Americas, you can lead into the Aztecs or even North American Indians - much more exciting than dreary Australian history.

Yet, it is a story that needs telling. The following table is taken from a textbook, purposely written for the Year 7-8 history course in NSW :

“The Europeans arrive.

Here is a list of the first Europeans to come to Australia:

1520’s Captain Cristavao de Mendonca (a Portuguese) led a fleet of three caravels (small ships) to the southern Australian coast.

1606 Willem Jansz (a Dutchman) visits the Gulf of Carpentaria in Queensland.

1606 Luis van de Torres (a Spaniard) sails through Torres Strait”.

The list continues to mention Jan Carstenz (1623), William Dampier (1697) and James Cook (1770). This is in the chapter on “The original Australians” and follows a list of the “archaeological” evidence to prove that others predated Cook. All except the first are acceptable history. However, there is no indication about the questionable nature of the evidence to support the first item in this table; it is simply presented as historical fact.

However, I do not want to tell you the whole story. Rather, I want to direct you to two recent (i.e. mid 1990's) books, which do tell the story and do it well and place Cook in his historical context. This is a topic that should be of interest to those who live in the Sutherland Shire. After all, Cook's bust appears on the official logo of Sutherland Shire Council and signs at the entry points to the Shire proclaim it as the birthplace of 'modern' (i.e. European) Australia. And, of course, there is that question: Was Cook the first European to discover the east coast of Australia?

The books are:

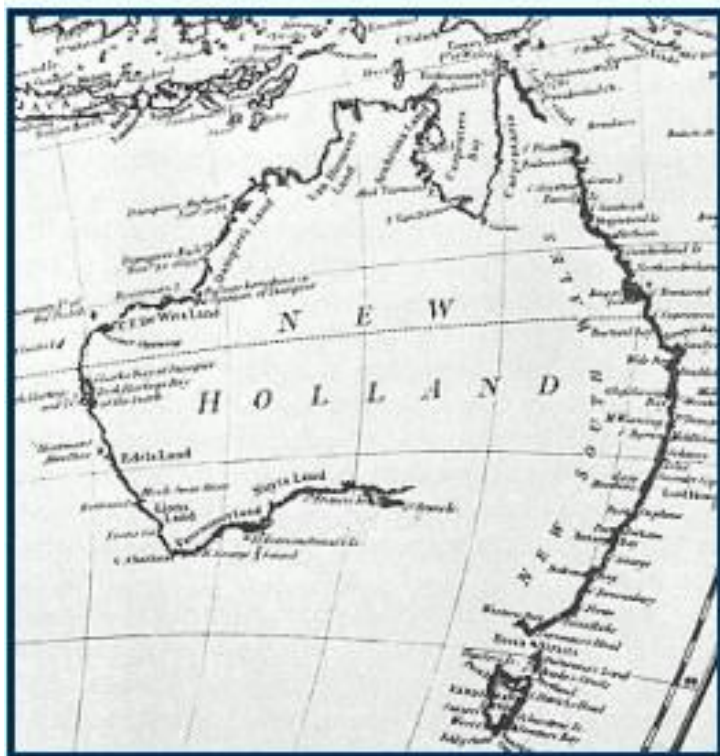
- (i) P Burnett, Rediscovering Australia, published by the author, 1996 , and
- (ii) M Estensen, Discovery: the Quest for the Great South Land, Allen & Unwin, 1998 .

A copy of each book is held in the Sutherland Library.

Burnett's book is not as an attractive product as Estensen's; the difference between a major publisher, (Allen & Unwin for Estensen) and printing the book yourself. Burnett's one hundred and thirty five pages include twelve pages of maps, specifically drawn for the general reader, but the notes and bibliography are obviously intended for those, who take their reading somewhat seriously.

Apart from black and white line drawings at appropriate places in the text, Estensen provides four colour plates (between pp. 54 and 55), including Mercator's' World Map of 1587 and Ortelius' of 1570. It comes with notes (pp. 255-264) and a bibliography (pp. 265-273). Works mentioned in the notes are not necessarily mentioned in the bibliography and vice versa. Finally, a thirteen page index (pp. 274-286) should help readers find their way to whatever topics they wish to pursue.

In books dealing with the "discovery of Australia", the standard approach is to start usually with what is acceptable historical fact and so begin with the Dutch or the Spanish. Both Burnett and Estensen have to confront the dilemma faced by all those who travel familiar territory: how do you make your book different when the broad outlines of the story are so well known. The approach of both is not radically dissimilar.



Burnett wishes to set the "discovery" of Australia in as broadest sense as he can. Accordingly, ch.1, "The Earliest Discoveries" covers the Aboriginal discovery of Australia. In about six pages, he covers some fifty thousand years of Aboriginal activity; nonetheless, he manages to mention Lake Mungo, the Kow swamp and the "Bradshaws". Ch. 2, "the Old Horizon Extends" brings the story up to comparatively recent times and covers the contribution of the various Pacific peoples.

Estensen begins her book with a brief introduction about the formation of the Australian mainland (ch.1), She continues to examine the classical world's contribution to this topic and its influence on later medieval and Renaissance thought (ch. 2). Estensen follows this with a potted history of the developments which led to

the discovery of the New World (ch. 3). These developments, in turn, would ultimately lead to the discovery of the Great South Land. In ch. 4, she discusses the arrival of the Asian visitors to our north. The next stage of the discovery story I wish to deal with in some more detail. This stage, the question of the alleged Portuguese discovery of the east coast of Australia, some two hundred years before Cook, is

both controversial and highly interesting. This theory of Portuguese primacy rests on two pillars: firstly, the so-called “Mahogany” ship and related material; secondly, the class of French maps, the Dieppe Maps. These maps show a large landmass, “Jave la Grande” (i.e. “Java, the Great”) roughly (actually “very” roughly).

In spite of Pam Panczyk’s comments, this is one part of Australia’s story which does have appeal. I know this from personal experience and that of former colleagues. To quote one:

Despite my initial scepticism re the interest value of the topic, both the students and I really enjoyed it. It’s a good introductory topic for looking at evidence and deciding ‘What is evidence’. Good to challenge traditional theories.

It surprises me that teachers do not make more use of this byway of the story of Australia. In fact, units of work already exist.

To return: the argument is that a Portuguese flotilla sailed down the east coast of Australia in c. 1520. Various reasons are given for this expedition, including the interception of Magellan, a renegade Portuguese sea captain sailing for Spain. The expedition reached the site of Warnambool, where one of its ships was wrecked in a storm, i.e. the Mahogany Ship, last seen in the 1880’s and defying all recent attempts at its rediscovery but clearly a vessel of non-English construction. Charts were, of course, compiled. While the originals of these charts are now lost, they survive, in a form, in these Dieppe maps, i.e. French copies of Portuguese originals.

The shape of Jave la Grande bears no relation to the shape of Australia, as shown on modern maps. On this map the northern coast line of Jave la Grande is aligned with the northern coastline of a modern map of Java. The land mass of Jave a Grande is seemingly too far to the west and only includes within its borders parts of Western Australia, South Australia and south west Victoria. But does it? There is another representation of Jave la Grande. This new shape figures prominently in the work of Gordon McIntyre. McIntyre argues for a known mathematical error in the Dieppe Maps; however, this error can be rectified. When it is, the emergent shape is one which is much more like the shape of Australia, as we would recognize it.

This approach to Australian history was first popularized in 1895 by George Collingridge and, again, in a second book in 1906. McIntyre gave it more publicity in the mid 1970’s. However, the golden age for the Portuguese discovery of Australia seems to have been from the mid 1980’s to the mid 1990’s: added impetus, no doubt, provided by the Bicentenary. A fascinating academic dispute developed. Helen Wallis, the former Keeper of Maps in the British Museum, supported the authenticity of the Dieppe maps and postulated 16th century voyages to the Pacific by French navigators, including the Parmentier brothers, as the means by which secret Portuguese data reached France. Wallis’ views have been strongly attacked by Bill Richardson, the former Reader in Spanish and Portuguese at Flinders University, South Australia. He has argued against their authenticity, claiming that Jave la Grande is actually an upside down map of Portuguese origin of Vietnam.

The first shot in this academic war was fired by Helen Wallis in 1982; Richardson responded almost immediately. However, the dispute seems to have declined in the mid 1990’s

Burnett arrives at this issue in ch. 3, “The Coming of the Portuguese”. The motives of the Europeans were complex; partly scientific, partly religious and a big part profit. Australia is first mentioned on p.26, and the next chapter, no.4 “The Struggle for Dominance Continues”, introduces us to the enigmatic figures of Mendonca and the shadowy Parmentier brothers. Taken together, these gentlemen are held responsible for the emergence of the Dieppe maps (pp. 24-35). In spite of wishful thinking about the “Mahogany Ship” (largely dismissed on p.89), these maps, if they actually portray the east coast of Australia, are the only evidence for European activity on the east coast of Australia before Cook.

In ch. 5, Estensen examines the notion that a small flotilla of Portuguese caravels, under the command of Cristavao de Mendonca, sailed down the east coast of Australia, reaching as far, perhaps, as Warnambool, on Victoria’s south west coast before turning back after one of their number was wrecked on the beach. This unfortunate wreck is the “Mahogany” ship. Unfortunately, the wreck has not been seen for over a

century and Estensen rightly uses “conjecture” to describe this scenario (p. 56). The supporting archaeological evidence is unconvincing and is dismissed by her (pp. 56-58).

With ch. 6, Estensen enters upon firmer ground. After all, the maps she discusses still exist. While these maps require a voyage along the east coast of Australia, the leader of the expedition does not have to have been de Mendonca. The jury is still out, but there is no firm account of how these maps came into being. As a probable cause of this lack of knowledge, successive disasters are cited: the sack of Dieppe in 1694 by the English and the Lisbon earthquake in 1755 (pp. 78-79). In spite of her language, there is, at least, one indication that Estensen may be sympathetic to the Portuguese hypothesis. As the frontispiece for her book, she reproduces the title page of de Jode’s atlas, “Speculum Orbis Terrae” of 1597. In the bottom right hand corner is a strange animal (she even places a reproduction of this animal on the dust jacket), nursing two young in a pouch. Her caption describes the animal thus: “a strange long necked marsupial with twins in a pouch. Decades before Cook set foot on the Australian mainland, was this the imagined form of a kangaroo?” Perhaps, but it is clearly a four legged kangaroo. If it were not for the pouch, the animal could be mistaken for a camel, too!

Burnett returns to less contentious history in ch. 5. The activities of the Dutch and Spanish are described at some length (pp. 39-61). Estensen treats these in ch. 7 (the Spanish), and in chs. 8 and 9, (the Dutch). The broad outline of his story would be familiar to most of us from our own school days. But how many of us know that a Dutch “colony” was discovered in 1834 in the Northern Territory (p.58) ?

The next to arrive were the French and Estensen turns to this “French connection” in ch. 10; Burnett treats their arrival in ch. 9 (“the Colony of NSW is Founded”). This is a story that is probably, also, not so well known. However, a close look at the map of Australia would reveal a large number of French names, particularly in southern Western Australia.

Estensen’s book ends with Cook’s departure from New Zealand and his decision to return to England via the east coast of New Holland (ch. 11).

Burnett takes the story a little further. The remaining chapters (ch. 11, “The Remaining Gaps are Filled”; ch. 12, “Britain expands in Australia”) complete the “Rediscovery of Australia”. These chapters cover firstly the work of Bass and Flinders and finish the story with filling the gaps from the inside, i.e. by land. However, Burnett, also, in ch. 10 looks closely at the second stage of French exploration of the Australian coastline, particularly the activities Nicolas Baudin in 1800-1804. The discovery of Australia was an international achievement and Dalrymple was right - Cook was not the first, though probably not in the sense Dalrymple had in mind. It is a very great strength of Burnett’s book that he covers this international effort, though his term is “multicultural”.

I have spent some time on a murky byway of Australian history partly because it is intrinsically interesting. However, there is another reason and it concerns Cook and it should, therefore, be of great interest to those of us who live in the Shire. Was Cook the first European to discover the east coast of Australia? This question was first asked by Alexander Dalrymple and answered by him resoundingly in the negative.

Dalrymple was the foremost Pacific scholar of his age, prominent member of the Royal Society and Hydrographer (i.e. chief map expert) for the Royal Navy. It was his project to chart the transit of Venus and he had been appointed by the Royal Society to command the expedition. It was even said that he had chosen the collier, “Earl of Pembroke” (later HM Bark, “Endeavour”) to be the expedition’s vessel. Unfortunately, the Royal Society could not afford the costs of conversion and the Society approached the Royal Navy for help. The Royal Navy would not accept a civilian (Alexander Dalrymple) in command of a naval vessel, and so Lt. James Cook, instead, received the command. The rest, as they say, is history. Unfortunately, the Royal Navy’s choice soured the relationship between the two men.

Dalrymple would later argue that Cook had in his possession, in some form, one of these Dieppe maps. In other words, Cook did not so much as discover the east coast of Australia as merely revisit it.

Dalrymple also found convergences between names on the Dieppe maps and Cook’s charts. One example will suffice. The Dieppe maps name an indentation in the coast of Jave le Grande as “coste des

herbaiges” (i.e. “coastline of plants”). If one rescales the map according to McIntyre’s mathematics, this location approximates to “Botany Bay” on a modern map of Australia.  
Did Cook have a French map? It is a question I hope to raise in a future edition of the Bulletin.

## **Appendix: “the Discovery of Australia”**

A quick survey of major Sydney bookshops revealed no new material. However, for the latest summary, see:

F Walsh, Great Southern Land, Allen Lane, 2004, pp. 1-13.

### **(i) General Works**

M Cannon, The Exploration of Australia, Readers’ Digest Association, 1987.

R Clancy, The Mapping of Terra Australia, Universal Press, 1995.

So they came South, Shakespeare Head Press, 1988.

W Eisler, The Furthest Shore, CUP, 1993.

et al., ed., Terra Australis - the Furthest Shore, AGNSW, 1988.

J Kennny, Before the First Fleet, Kangaroo Press, 1995.

A Sharp, The Discovery of Australia, OUP, 1963.

E Whitehouse, Australia in Old Maps, 820 - 1770, Boolarong Press, 1994.

G Williams, ed., From Terra Australis to Australia, OUP (Melbourne), 1988.

### **(ii) the Portuguese Voyage and the Mahogany Ship**

J Anderson, “The Mahogany Ship: History and Science”, The Great Circle, 8(2), 1986, pp. 122-126.

L Fitzgerald, Java la Grande, The Publishers, 1984

The Mahogany Ship, Proceedings of the 1st Australian Symposium, Mahogany Ship Committee, 1985.

W Potter, ed., The Mahogany Ship - Relic or Legend, The Mahogany Ship Committee and the Warnambool Institute Press, 1987 .

### **(iii) Wallis -Richardson Dispute**

#### **(a) Overview**

S Duncan, “Shaving with Ockham’s Razor ; a Reappraisal of the Portuguese Priority Hypothesis”, The Globe, 39, 1993, pp. 1-10.

O H A Spate, “Java la Grande: the Great Whodunit”, The Great Circle, 6(2), 1984, p. 132-134.

#### **(b) Wallis**

H Wallis, “The Challenge that is an Australian Map”, The Globe, 37, 1992, pp. 4-12.

“Java la Grande: the Enigma of the Dieppe Maps, in Williams, op. cit., pp. 39-82.

The maps and text of the Boke of Idrography presented by Jean Rotz to Henry VIII, Oxford, 1981.

“A Portuguese Discovery? The Enigma of the Dieppe Maps”, in J Hardy, et al., ed., Studies from Terra Australis to Australia, Australian Academy of the Humanities, Occasional Paper no. 6, 1989, pp. 47-56.

#### **(c) Richardson**

W Richardson, “Java la Grande: a Case Study in Place-name Corruption” The Globe, 22, 1985, pp. 9-22.

“Java la Grande: is not Australia”, The Globe, 37, 1992, pp. 13-19.

“Java la Grande: the Interpretation of Evidence”, The Globe, 26, 1986, pp. 42-57 ,

“Java la Grande: a Place-name Chart of its East Coast”, The Great Circle, 6(1), 1984, pp. 1-27.

“Mercator’s Southern Continent”, The Globe, 37, 1992, pp. 1-17.

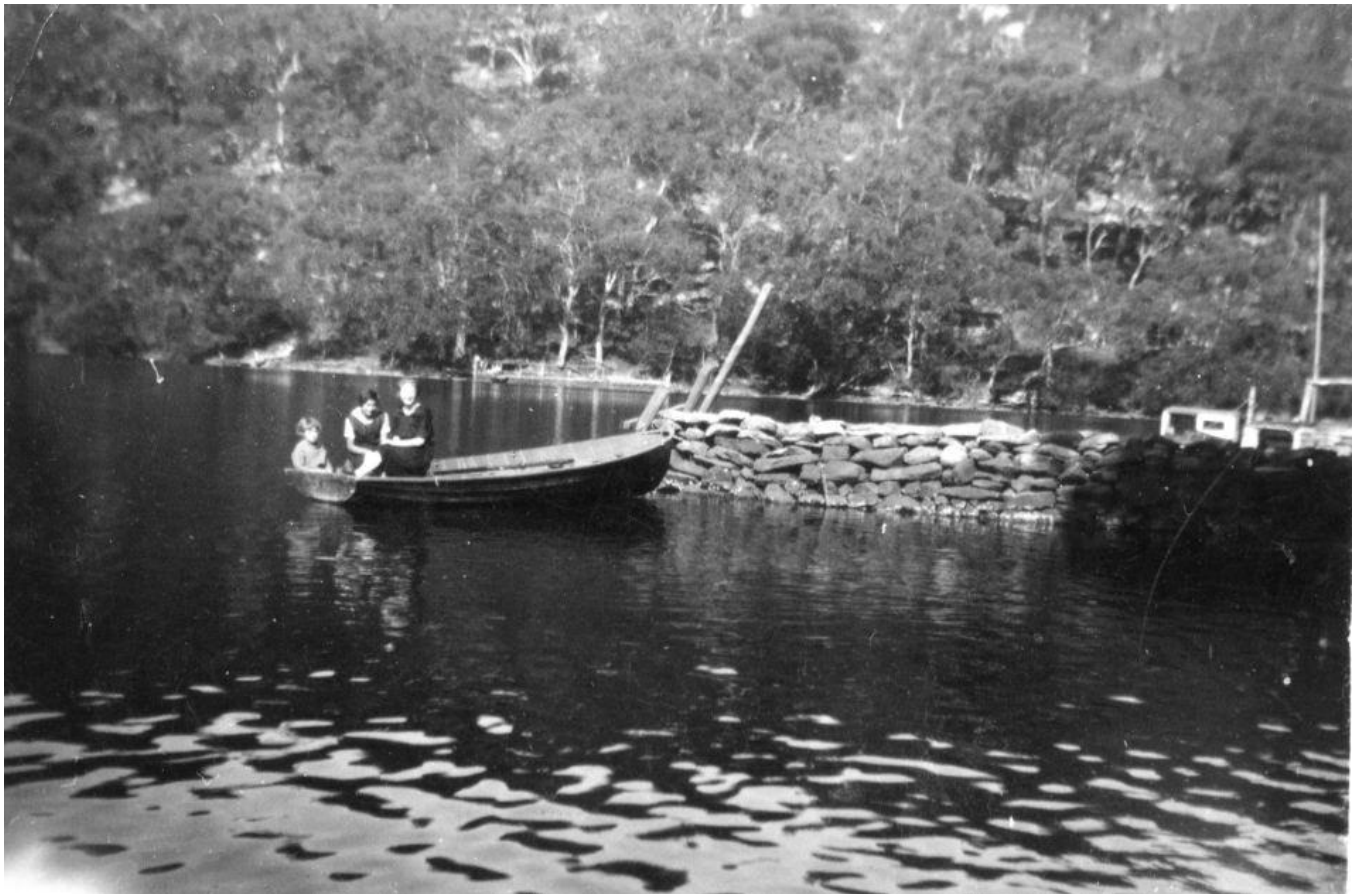
## Holidays at Leg of Mutton Bay

During the 1920s many residents of the St George district enjoyed holidays and weekends in Sutherland Shire. While the majority were captivated by the buzz of Cronulla, a smaller group preferred the quiet solitude of the National Park. They came to coastal beaches such as Garie and Burning Palms or camped on Port Hacking.

Kogarah residents George and Sarah Demond and their good friends Fred and Florence Foster had 'camps' next to each other at Leg of Mutton Bay opposite Grays Point. Most weekends and the Christmas holidays were spent in these 'weekenders' built on land leased from the National Park. If you are boating in this part of Port Hacking note the remains of the old camp wharf that are still there.

The Demonds travelled from Kogarah by train to National Park station, walked down the hill (taking a short cut) to the Hacking River and then rowed to the camp. As it can take an hour to travel from Audley to Leg of Mutton Bay by motorboat, this would have been quite an arduous journey for those who rowed. When George Demond wished to commute to work from Leg of Mutton Bay he would be rowed across to Grays Point, then catch a bus to Sutherland Station. On his return, when his 'coo-ee' was heard in the still evening air, someone would row across to fetch him.

Florence Foster on the other hand, used to drive to Grays Point with her children. Fred who travelled to the 'camp' the same way as the Demonds, rowed over the river to collect his family when he heard their 'coo-ee'. Holidays at Leg of Mutton Bay were bliss for the children with swimming, fishing and playing at low tide on the sand flat opposite the camp. The parents must have loved it too, not only because it was relaxing, but there was nowhere to spend money.



*Leg of Mutton Bay, c1925. Shells around the shores of this bay – suggesting the presence of Aboriginal shell middens - indicate that this was once a popular spot with the Dharawal people as well as these visitors. (Photograph courtesy of Esme Morton, nee Demond)*

**Pauline Curby**



# **The Poems of Henry Kendall**

Sonnets on the Discovery of Botany Bay by Captain Cook

(written in the 1860s)

**Henry Kendall**

Lieutenant James Cook



## **I**

### **The First Attempt to Reach the Shore**

Where is the painter who shall paint for you,  
My Austral brothers, with a pencil steeped  
In hues of Truth, the weather-smitten crew  
Who gazed on unknown shores—a thoughtful few—  
What time the heart of their great Leader leaped  
Till he was faint with pain of longing? New  
And wondrous sights on each and every hand,  
Like strange supernal visions, grew and grew  
Until the rocks and trees, and sea and sand,  
Danced madly in the tear-bewildered view!  
And from the surf a fierce, fantastic band  
Of startled wild men to the hills withdrew  
With yells of fear! Who'll paint thy face, O Cook!  
Turned seaward, "after many a wistful look!"

## **II**

### **The Second Attempt, Opposed by Two of the Natives**

"There were but two, and we were forty! Yet,"  
The Captain wrote, "that dauntless couple throve,  
And faced our wildering faces; and I said  
'Lie to awhile!' I did not choose to let  
A strife go on of little worth to *us*.  
And so unequal! But the dying tread  
Of flying kinsmen moved them not: for wet  
With surf and wild with streaks of white and black  
The pair remained."— O stout Caractacus!  
'Twas thus you stood when Caesar's legions strove  
To beat their few, fantastic foemen back—  
Your patriots with their savage stripes of red!  
To drench the stormy cliff and moaning cove  
With faithful blood, as pure as any ever shed.

### III The Spot Where Cook Landed

Chaotic crags are huddled east and west—  
Dark, heavy crags, against a straitened sea  
That cometh, like a troubled soul in quest  
Of voiceless rest where never dwelleth rest,  
With noise “like thunder everlasting.”  
But here, behold a silent space of sand!—  
Oh, pilgrim, halt!—it even seems to be  
*Asleep in other years.* How still! How grand!  
How awful in its wild solemnity!  
*This* is the spot on which the Chief did land,  
And there, perchance, he stood what time a band  
Of yelling strangers scoured the savage lea.  
Dear friend, with thoughtful eyes look slowly round—  
By all the sacred Past 'tis sacred ground.

### IV Sutherland's Grave

'Tis holy ground! The silent silver lights  
And darks undreamed of, falling year by year  
Upon his sleep, in soft Australian nights,  
Are joys enough for him who lieth here  
So sanctified with Rest. We need not rear  
The storied monument o'er such a spot!  
That soul, the first for whom the Christian tear  
Was shed on Austral soil, hath heritage  
Most ample! Let the ages wane with age,  
The grass which clothes *this* grave shall wither not.  
See yonder quiet lily! Have the blights  
Of many winters left it on a faded tomb? \*  
Oh, peace! Its fellows, glad with green delights,  
Shall gather round it deep eternal bloom!

- A wild lily grows on the spot supposed to be Sutherland's grave. –H.K.

Another version was also published by Henry Kendall.

\*Forby Sutherland, one of Captain Cook's seamen, who died shortly after the Endeavour anchored in Botany Bay, 1770. He was the first Englishman buried in Australia.



**Boab Tree**

**Kingsway, Woollooware**

A rare tree in the Shire, it is Indigenous to the Kimberley region of Australia.  
The trunk can grow up to 20 metres in circumference

# Membership Renewal 2005/6

*The Society's year commences 1<sup>st</sup> July each year and concludes on the 30<sup>th</sup> June of the following year.*

In accordance with the above, membership renewals are due on the 1<sup>st</sup> 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.

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