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*Sutherland Shire
Historical Society Inc*
Bulletin



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The 'Herald shed', Kurnell. Old enamel advertising signs.

When newspapers cost one penny.

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The cover – The Herald shed, Kurnell-lined with enamel advertising signs. (see page 11)

The Museum is open on the first Saturday of the month from 10 am to 3 pm and at other times by arrangement with Jim Cutbush, curator. He can be contacted on 9521 3721.

Donations of materials with a local provenance are welcome.

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.

SUTHERLAND SHIRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

Bulletin copies are supplied to all branches of the Shire Library; to the Mayor, General Manager and all Councilors; the Royal Australian Historical Society; National Trust (NSW); State Library, NSW; National Library, Canberra; University of Sydney and University of New South Wales; State Rail Authority; Australia Post Archives; Sydney Water Board Historical Research Unit; Sutherland Shire High School libraries.

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Meetings of the Society

held on the third Saturday of each month at 1.30 pm at the Stapleton Centre, Stapleton Street, Sutherland.

Visitors are welcome.

All correspondence should be addressed to:

**The Honorary Secretary
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President's Report

Welcome to the second issue of the Sutherland Shire Historical Society, Inc Bulletin for 2011. Again I have been very slow in writing this report (much to our Editor's ongoing dismay), but as always there have been some great things happening and much to be thankful for with respect to our Society.

Our Heritage Week lunch "When I was 10" was a marvellous success. I must admit when it was first suggested by our tireless Secretary I was worried if it would work. We seeded the day with a few good speakers to ensure it would not be a complete disaster, but when we opened the floor for contributions from the members it was like the first rays from the Sun breaking forth after a dark storm – just about everyone had a story to tell. It was wonderful to hear from members who would never dream of standing up and telling their story. Yet as the topics were suggested and different ones shared bits of their past others gladly put their hand up to share their story.

Some might wonder why we did not have any wine this year. However government licensing laws are now so strict we were not able to organise the various things you need for a license in time. However I think you will agree the atmosphere, the food and the nice non alcoholic wine meant lack of alcohol was not an issue. Thanks to one of our committee members, Elizabeth Craig, we hope eventually to transcribe the stories into a booklet so the stories will last forever. (Note this is a huge task and so will take some time to complete). It was good to see our Mayor (and Society Patron) and his wife attended the lunch despite the heavy call on their time as they support our Shire and its many activities. It was clear they enjoyed the lunch staying right to end of event. Our thanks go to **Councillor Phil Blight** and his wife for their support of the Society. As always my special thanks go to those who made the day go so well, especially to Pat and her team of caterers who would give any professional outfit a run for their money in terms of foods and service.

Years ago the Society used to stage weekend trips to various interesting sites that could not be reasonably covered in a one day Saturday trip. Given the ongoing success of our one day trip we are again looking at the possibility of a 3 day trip. At this stage we are planning a trip to the Bathurst region including the famous Abercrombie House. Organising an excursion of this scale is no small task and it would be sad if our multi-talented excursion convenor Terry McCosker did a lot of planning work and no one wanted to go. Please give it some thought and talk to Terry so he can give you some early details and get an idea of the number of likely participants. It has been good to see a number of new members join. On one weekend we had 5 new members sign up. I think the fun, the friendship and the quality of our speakers is a major reason for the growth. Our recent talk by Dr Lesley Muir on "Sydney's Garden Palace Scandal" held everyone's attention from beginning to end. Who would have thought Sydney had its own Crystal Palace. If members know of other good speakers who have an interesting topic please let our Secretary know so we can find out more about them and look for a suitable time for them to come and speak to us.

It was interesting in May to meet with another local Historical Society. We often growl at our Council about levels of support and we will continue to push for better storage of our collection of historical items. However when we heard about the costs other Societies face for publications, insurance, rent, utilities and so on we realised while we will always look for more, we are not doing too badly compared to others. People poke fun at "the Shire" sometimes but we do enjoy a good environment and good support from our Council. I hope all members feel proud of our Society and the benefits and fun that come from being an active member.

As the first half of 2011 draws to a close, I want to thank everyone for their support so far

and to encourage members and friends to be involved, to help where possible and to enjoy what is on offer. I am sure the best is yet to come.

Andrew Platfoot

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

June	Clive Baker ... War Books.
July	Angela Badger The Cruise of the Ophir, 1901.
August	David Overett...life of the woman who produced the Australian Woman's cookbook

September	AGM
October	Mercy ships
November	Christmas party – 'back to the 20s and 30s'
December	No meeting

Sutherland Shire Historical Society Excursions 2011

* MPC (Multi Purpose Centre)



3. **July** Friday 29th
**Janet's British Royal
Museum**
Cost **\$29.00**
Includes bus, tour museum,
morning tea & lunch at Bulli
Workers Club.
Departs **MPC* 9am.**
4. **September** Saturday 24th
**Motor Museum at Kembla
Grange**
COST **\$30.00**
Includes bus, entry museum
and lunch at Master Builders
Club Wollongong.
Departs **MPC* 9am.**
5. **November** Saturday 26th
**Experimental Farm
Cottage & Parramatta
Tour**
Cost **\$20.00**
Includes bus, cottage entry &
city tour. BYO morning tea
and lunch.
Departs **MPC* 9am.**

Bookings **Pat Hannan 9528 8294**
patricia.hannan@bigpond.com

From The Editor's Desk

Whilst I have been blessed with a wealth of articles and reports over the recent past, I feel especially pleased with the response for this bulletin. We have several new contributors who are beginning to make a mark with their regular contributions and of course, our faithful regulars are just that; eager and very worthy contributors who enliven the Society's output. We were heartened recently by a visit from members of the Kogarah Historical Society who were seeking ideas that could help to refresh their operations. They said that they eagerly await the publication of our bulletin and that there is always a waiting list to read its contents. We are making waves beyond the shores of the Georges River!

The meeting with Kogarah highlights a very real situation facing many organisations including our own. They are experiencing an aging membership, financial and resource restrictions and a heavy workload for the small band of active executive who must adopt and adapt to changing technology and demands for which they are not well equipped. We don't pretend to have all the answers. What has emerged in recent times though is a willingness to meet the challenges by adopting some sound management practices.

Our cover photo of the 'Herald shed' as Kurnell locals call it is partly clad in old blue enamel advertising signs for the Herald when it was priced at one penny. At the rear of a house on Silver Beach road, it is adjacent to the old museum which operated at Kurnell from the 1940s by Bob Mackie and contained many oddities and curiosities. (see p)

We are encouraging members to submit short 100 word 'fillers'. Do you have an interesting anecdote that doesn't necessarily require much effort to write. Mary Small has kicked off a small segment called 'Did you know?'

Another interesting photo competition is 'What is it?' where readers are invited to guess the use of the featured item.

Congratulations to our new member, Clive Baker, who has contributed an article on an

airman from the Shire. Clive is a keen historian and author who runs the War Bookshop and specializes in military books.

In early May I attended the funeral of Phyllis Farleigh.

Phyllis is

remembered as the winner of Miss Cronulla Surf Queen in 1927. She was one of the 100 Faces of the Shire in the Centenary celebrations of local government in 2006. Phyllis led a remarkably full and active life and her memory until the very end was remarkable. I interviewed her couple of years ago and she recalled the minutest details of her life. She was able to recite whole poems taught to her by Mr Tonkin, her Primary School teacher when she was twelve. Phyllis died about two months short of her 106th birthday and her funeral was a celebration of a remarkable life that was attended by several generations of her family.

Phyllis's father (Mr Stroud) was a founding member of Cronulla Surf Club and he hosted Duke Kahanamuku, the Hawaiian surf legend when he visited Cronulla and Manly in 1915 and first demonstrated surf board riding. The Stroud home in John Street Cronulla has been Mimi's kindergarten since 1962.

Finally, annual membership is from 1st July to 30th June. Please ensure that you remain financial. Perhaps consider giving a membership as a present.

Membership forms are on the last page.

Bruce Watt

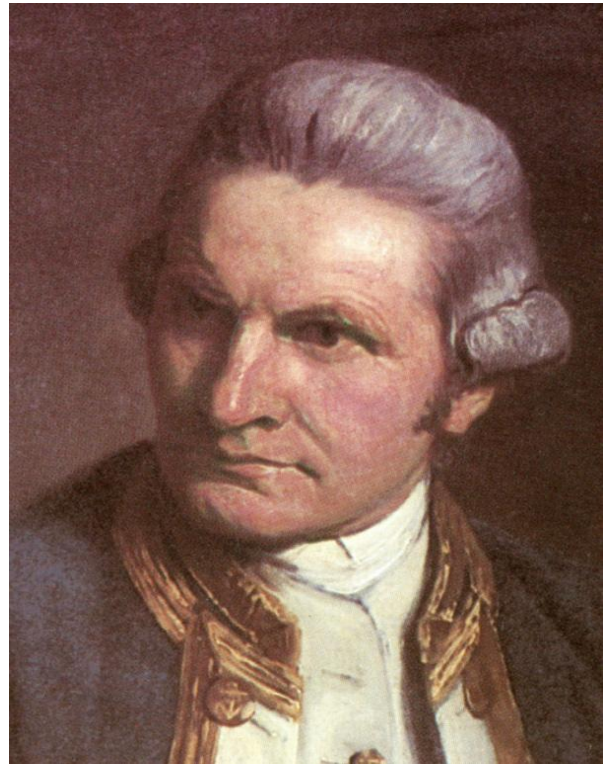


Sutherland Shire Historical Society

is a not-for-profit volunteer organisation that has served the people of the Sutherland Shire for nearly 50 years.

Its proactive membership is actively involved in researching, recording, publishing, collecting and preserving our social and built heritage, and developing and presenting educational materials through the museum and at heritage events.

Monthly meetings and day trips to historical venues provide an educational and social context for members and guests.



***PRESERVING OUR HISTORY IS AN
EXCEPTIONAL GIFT FOR FUTURE
GENERATIONS***

How can you help?

You can assist the activities of the Society by

- **donating items or whole collections of significant local interest to our museum**
- **making a cash donation for our targeted projects**
- **remembering the Society when planning your estate.**

Donations and other bequests can be directed to:

**The Treasurer
Sutherland Shire Historical Society
PO Box 389
Sutherland NSW 1499**

MEET THE EXECUTIVE

Andrew Platfoot



I was born in St Margaret's Hospital at 3PM on 23 April 1953. Since it was St George's day, and my father's name was George Anthony my middle name became George. My mother was born in

England and she came to Australia on SS Ranchi on one of its first trips to Australia after being reconverted back to a passenger ship after wartime duty. After the war, England was bombed out and impoverished. Australia however was a vibrant country that had shaken off the horror of war and was forging ahead. In 1948 Australia was the place to be and so after a 6 weeks journey, my mother landed in Sydney and secured a job in the accounting department of John Vickers working a large accounting machine. At just 21 years of age and with no extended family in Australia, it was a brave decision.

My father lost his parents at an early age. Through a family connection he joined a sea school in Wales and trained as a merchant seaman. On graduating he and two friends headed north to Liverpool to pick up their first ship. My father's friends both got a berth on a convoy going to Malta known as Operation Pedestal. Only 5 of the original 14 merchant ship made it to Malta. Both young men along with 400 other sailors died in this horrific journey.

After the war my father continued to sail the world as a merchant seaman. In August 1951 he was onboard a brand new ship J.P. Webb bound for Melbourne. Sailing down the coast of Western Australia they battled storms and overcast skies for days. Around midnight my father who was on watch called out to the officer "White water ahead". The officer thought he was crazy until moments later the ship hit one of the many reefs along that part of the coast at a place known as Ledge Point. He had escaped the clutches of the sea only to

be wrecked on the lonely and desolate coast of Western Australia. Fortunately no lives were lost and he made it to shore in the ships boat with just the clothes he was wearing and a pair of binoculars. A small cargo plane bringing the weekly load of crayfish from a town called Lancelin just up the coast spotted the crew on the beach and dropped a bottle with a message inside telling the crew to walk north to the fishing village from where they were all flown south to Perth. My father travelled to Sydney where he met my mother. (They had known each other in England before the war). Six months later they were married.

Although a qualified merchantman, he had to start all over again. In those days, gaining a qualification meant working during the day and studying at night. By hard work and application he became a boiler maker – a skill that would be useful to the Sutherland Historical Society 30 years later when he welded up some of the Tramway tracks in exchange for the Museum storing a Howard tractor left to the Society by Fred Midgley. At the same time he bought a block of land in Hurstville Grove for £400 and together he and my mother built the family home. A year or so later I arrived and so I became a *Grove* boy as distinct from people from the *Shire* who were born south of the river.

My first school was South Hurstville Primary and being just over 4 it was a struggle especially when I was pushed into 1st class and then 2nd class. But the teachers were marvellous and helped me to learn to read and write and catch up with my class mates. Two events stick in my mind from those days. Each week in 1st class we had to write a composition on a topic of our choosing. On one occasion I wrote about a pet dog that was trapped in his kennel by bad weather. I remember this particularly clever dog looking out and seeing the rain said "Damn it raining". Well that little four letter word drew dreadful wrath and fury – such profanity, such bad language was completely unacceptable. (I wonder what Mrs Greaves would think about today's colourful schoolyard language). The other event was Mrs Wheeler and her Friday afternoon story time. She would sit there after lunch sharpening the pencils while reading us stories like the Faraway Tree. On another

occasion she told us about the submarine attack on Sydney harbour. I seem to recall her husband was on boom defence and would have been in the thick of the battle with the mini submarines. Perhaps it was this story or my father's wartime occupation, but about that time I decided I wanted to join the Navy. However my father would not have a bar of it. I suspect the hardship of coming ashore with skills that were of little use in securing employment stuck in his mind. He was insistent in his requirement that if I wanted to join the Navy, I had to learn a trade and not just be a sailor.

After Hurstville South I moved to Sydney Tech High School. It was a wonder school. Curiously both the head master and deputy headmaster were named Mr Brown. In good school boy fashion we called them Bing and Bong. Later when the school installed its own swimming pool, it was known as Bing-Bong's billabong.

While in high school my father did allow me to join the naval cadets at TS Sirius in Arncliffe. There we learnt all about the Navy, seamanship, discipline and other nautical skills. We would often spend weekends on board warships docked at Garden Island. While many might sneer at the cadet force, it was a wonderful opportunity to learn self confidence and team skills. The ability to think, plan and control a squad of cadets marching in close order without driving them into a building or off the bank into the nearby Cooks River developed confidence and basic management skills that would be a good asset years later in daily business life.

After 10 long years in primary and high school I finally got my chance and presented myself as an officer candidate to the RAN. I passed all the tests and physical inspections and headed into the final interview. During the *interrogation* an august looking four ringed captain asked "What do you want to be when you grow up". Nervously I said I wanted to be an electrical engineer. The captain (without even looking at me) said "And of course if you can't be an electrical engineer, you will be a mechanical engineer". Too scared to reply I mumbled my agreement. He then went on to say "And of course if you can't be an engineer you will be a seaman officer" (navigation, gunnery, or something similar). However my

father's words "You must have a trade" was imprinted on my mind and so in my loudest squeaky voice I replied "No sir". The captain stopped, put down his pen, straighten himself up and looked at me with dark black eyes that could burn paint off a wall and said "Son we train naval officers, not engineers. After you have been in for a year we will tell you what you are going to be in the Navy". Well that blew that dream to pieces. While I was offered a place in the RAN as an officer cadet at HMAS Creswell I decided life on the ocean waves was not a life for me.

At my parents insistence I had apply for a few scholarships, but nothing really appealed to me and I am sure most of the interviewers realised I was not that keen. In fact the interviewer from the Electricity Commission of NSW suggested I look elsewhere as they had nothing to interest me. However by the Grace of God, the ECNSW did offer me a scholarship. At a time when most scholarships consisted of university fees plus an allowance of \$7 per week, the ECNSW offered me full fees, books, \$30 per week and work experience at Christmas. Finally with a first class honours degree in electrical engineering, plus a science degree, I started work as a qualified engineer in 1976 at a time when the ECNSW as at its zenith.

A couple of years after graduating, I became involved with the 1979 Billy Graham Crusade. While working as a volunteer in one of the administrative groups I met my future wife. Her father, Harold Ivers (who was also an electrical engineer), had a keen interest in a numbers of areas, one of which was history. Her mother Athalie was a little more direct pointing out that the whole family was involved with this group called the Sutherland Historical Society. I took this as reasonably firm hint what was expected of me.

In the early days the Society was very large and vigorous - it was also very political. The AGM was always an epic battle as various factions tried to get as many friends and acquaintances to join so they could vote for the nominated leader of their particular faction. In one contest the Honorary President was ousted on a Constitutional technicality and Harold being a quiet and inoffensive chap, was elected in an attempt to appease the various warring parties. Harold's easy and

accommodating style brought peace and although there were always some person or group looking to exert control the Society settled down and grew.

In those days the Council had a float known as the *Good Ship Sutherland Shire* which was mounted on the back of a Council truck and used in the processions for the various street fairs such as the GyMEA Lilly Festival and the Engadine Festival. Under the urging of the formidable Mrs Thompson from Council the Society provided the crew for the float at the various outings. Jim's mum Ada Cutbush, Aileen Griffiths, Doug Archer, Harold, Athalie and Jenness Ivers, Jim Cutbush's two very young children and I would clamber aboard for the parade. Some years later my own children were press ganged into the crew. The most memorable parade was the 1988 Bicentennial Celebration in which the float joined the parade through Sydney. On this occasion I was dressed up as Captain Cook in a replica 18th century naval uniform and Harold as Sir Joseph Banks. As the float proceeded down Macquarie Street it was forced to halt temporarily due to congestion. Unfortunately the float stopped right alongside a group of aboriginal people loudly protesting against the events of 1770 and 1788. Great care had to be exercised as we waved to the crowd less any awkward gesture was misinterpreted by the protestors and ended up on the front page of the newspaper as misunderstood response to the many comments and taunts by the protesters. Long before privatisation and dis-aggregation and a competitive energy market, the ECNSW was training around 30 engineers and several hundred apprentices each and every year.

They were also adding a new generator every year, investing money in research and development and holding electricity prices steady. But over time, various investigations and reviews suggested that the situation could be improved and the ECNSW was broken up. Staff were encouraged to take a redundancy package and 22 years after joining the ECNSW I went from being a public servant to a private industry engineer. In more recent years I have continued to be involved with power generation although now rather than build plant for the state power utility, my efforts take me around the world building private power plants for others. The training and background gained in ECNSW coupled with the Australian habit of doing a lot of work with comparatively few people has made Australians highly sought after in almost every field of engineering.

As for the Historical Society it has gone through many changes since the early days. After 1988 interest fell and the Society dwindled down to a handful of regular supporters. But in recent years we have developed a new formula. We still get high quality speakers to come and address the meeting and our excursions have once more become very popular. But we have become more inclusive and more supportive of each other. While there is still a serious educational component, the Society has become fun and people meet and chat and learn and just enjoy what is on offer.

Despite the twists and turns and surprises, in the words of Albert Facey my life to-date has been a Fortunate Life.

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INDIAN SUMMER

Angela Thomas

Everyone needs The Holiday of a Lifetime and mine came as a real Indian Summer, certainly late in life, with a privileged visit to India.

Spending time in a country where history is deeply respected proved a refreshing experience and I had a unique view of a nation positioning itself in the 21st century

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with an eye to caring for its treasures and developing a sensible approach to marketing and sharing them with the world.

I spent fifteen days aboard The Maharaja's Express. Travelling by train from Delhi up to Lucknow and back down to Mumbai proved an experience I will never forget. The name, Maharaja's Express, was not an advertising gimmick; you truly met the Maharajas and landowners and could appreciate their efforts with local village life, tourism and animal

conservation. The message was there, one of our group mentioned how much more sensibly they were entering the 21st Century than China where many old buildings were bulldozed and new roads and railways rolled out. India was getting its new six lane highways and overhead railways but the ancient history remained diligently preserved. When pollution snatched at the marble of the Taj Mahal they did not sit around and wring their hands and mutter about 'progress' instead industry was shifted and no one can approach within a mile or two of that national treasure in a petrol driven car...all is electric - positive action, conservation and care. Take for example the Maharana of Mewar and his palaces. "The House of Mewar acknowledged as the world's oldest-serving dynasty, has faced challenges, which have tested the maintenance of the Custodianship form of governance"...and they have certainly succeeded. They have fifteen palaces transformed into hotels and the logo "Eternal Mewar. Custodianship has been unbroken since 734 AD."

The present head of the family is 76th in line. I loved the enthusiasm of the house of



High tea with the Queen of Vadorado

Mewar, I receive their Newsletter now. Our journey proved no relaxing luxury trip. We mostly ate and always slept aboard the train which travelled quite slowly and stopped often at suburban or country stations where we did not interfere with busy mainline traffic. Trains are the lifeblood of the

country, the arteries of Indian life. Often up at 5 am we would disembark, stepping on to a red carpet with a band of dancers and acrobats to greet us. And then we spent the day visiting heritage sites and landmarks. At last I could see The Temple of the Rats where for 300 years the rats have ruled, no outside rodents venture in. Priests feed them milk and I took biscuits but they were definitely lactose friendly rats.

The rats certainly had it made, though of course they would have a fair way to overtake the cows. Those sacred animals sauntered round the streets, eating whatever they could find and jostling with the motorbikes and cars. We even saw one bovine beauty lounging on the floor of a milk bar late at night. Dogs did not have a very good life, their emaciation was pathetic and I asked if anyone ever fed them, our guide said each morning the dogs sit by the road facing out to the suburbs and people throw away their waste food as they drive to work. At night the dogs sit on the other side of the road and catch them going home with their lunch scraps. You have to use your wits to survive in India.

We visited one village where their local landowner had been a fashion photographer in New York but had come back to save his people from the terrible drift to the towns. Building work, construction and all the allied trades lure people from the countryside to live in shanty towns (at the best) more generally just under tarpaulins, and one does wonder at the wisdom of this ancient culture competing for Western luxuries such as stadiums and overhead railways etc. We had the chief engineer of the Indian Railways with us and I did ask that, but was immediately told their GDP was 9.2%, and that was paramount. Well, I wondered. All that misery, all that dirt, babies born under canvas, choked roads, endless toil...a cruel life for so many. This feudal landlord had come back to his village and rebuilt the school, instituted school dinners, medical aid and set up a large plant nursery to encourage his people to supply big towns nearby with trees and shrubs on a commercial scale. They could use their rural skills instead of seeking that backbreaking work in the cities. He took us through the "Forest for Tigers" project that he

supports, involving reforestation of the tiger's habitat.

There are only just over 1000 tigers left in India. Later in one of the cities we lunched with another dedicated tiger preservationist, an English woman who has been awarded an MBE for her work. She sits up all night working on the programme.. She says she has informers everywhere and harries authorities mercilessly. Every tiger's habitat is known to her.

Another night we had dinner at the home of the Maharaja of Kolwara, a Bollywood film director and a poet, so we enjoyed an evening of Indian music and dance in his rooftop ballroom and on another evening we were served the finest delicacies from the kitchen of the royal family of Gwalior. The two largest chandeliers in the world illuminated the marble and gold leaf of their palace. Their ancestor had built a ramp on to its roof and sent up two elephants to see if the structure would stand the weight...one learnt some useful building tips from our hosts. They also owned a dining table about 20 metres long with a track and a solid gold train taking round the drinks, unfortunately we did not get invited to dinner at this particular home. But we did enjoy High Tea with the Queen Mother of Vadorado and her grandchildren in her family's palace built by Maharaja Sayajirao in 1890, with its Venetian mosaic floor, Belgium stained glass windows and sculptures by Fellici. myself and cousin suitably dressed in saris by staff on our train were presented and entertained with dancing and food.

So to say it was a Maharaja's Express proved no misnomer. And to see those erstwhile rulers converting their private wealth into such public amenity and pleasure came as a revelation.

They were so proud of their achievements too, so eager to show us. And our guides likewise, most of them did charitable work several days a week and worked for tour companies otherwise. One could ask them anything, questions of caste and colour, religion and politics, all well informed and not always saying what people wanted to hear, but obviously stating a viewpoint. The English language was of primary importance and came quite easily but after that they

varied in their choice of country for further education, many went to America or UK, New Zealand was a great favourite and it was sad to hear that Australia was not well considered. One guide who was sending his brother overseas to complete his education said he had been going to Australia but recent events changed his mind for him and New Zealand would be the goal.

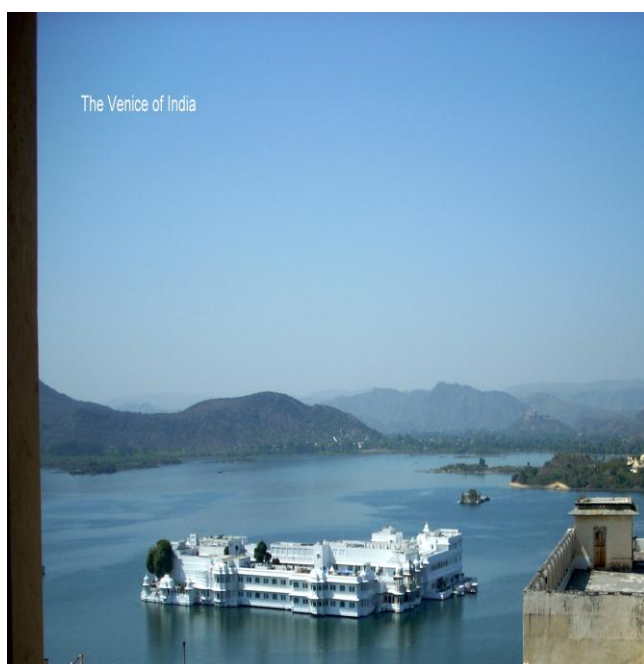
Our group was composed of all nationalities, American, Swiss, Danish, British, South African, I was the only Australian. Several times I heard questions regarding the Indian attitude to the British and their colonial past, especially having seen the ruins of Lucknow, still a ruin after the Mutiny of 1857 and hearing constant reference to the Raj. On each occasion the reply was roughly this... 'the British, well they gave us unification, the law, the railways and cricket, we have much to thank them for,' whereas it was pointed out that from the more recent world they had received the Union Carbide disaster.

Since Partition in 1947 we have an image of a much divided and antagonistic society but when you study those palaces and temples you cannot help but marvel at the melding of Islam and Hinduism over the centuries. And that can happen again, anything can happen in India, believe me. Harmony as well as hatred is always there in the background. Everywhere in ancient monuments we saw combined decorations and compromises in architecture and even one Moghul ruler's palace with three adjacent palaces for a Hindu bride, a Moslem bride and a Christian one too, each allowed one child and a separate entrance.



Sikhs, Christians, Hindus, Moslems, Parsees, Buddhists all had their own space and following but the most strikingly displayed belief which I saw was that of the Jains painstakingly making their way along the streets in their white raiment, eternally bent over sweeping and sweeping the ground in front in case they trod on an insect. One could never cease to learn in India. There are 300,000,000 Hindu deities and women are very strong and important in that religion. Mothers mean something...there are four. Birth Mother,
 Mother Earth, Mother Ganges and
 Mother Cow.

I had been there three days and wondered why Indians do not drive on the left as they still retain that British influence. Their roads are a heaving mass of carts, cars, motorised rickshaws, bicycles, no order at all, but also not one sign of road rage. I asked and was told "Of course we do. We just never get over to the left. In our country you need three things on the road, good horn, good brakes and good luck and the white line is just for decoration." And that summed up my wonderful fifteen days. Optimism, good will and above all, a great sense of history which puts us all in perspective.



WHEN I WAS TEN

by Rhys Pidgeon

'When I was ten' dates to 1957 in my particular instance. I did not live in the Sutherland Shire, but in Wellington, New South Wales.

School finished at 3.30pm and I needed only to cross one road, walk two houses down and let myself in, before settling down in my bedroom and turning on an old Bakelite mantel radio I inherited from my grandparents in time for the fifteen minute radio serials from 3.45pm. There was of course no television.

"Search for the Golden Boomerang" was broadcast by 2DU (Dubbo) and sponsored by Gibb and Beeman mobile optometrists, whose two-tone beige bus appeared in Wellington's shopping centre maybe every three months, parked outside the newsagents' and the Golden Key café – an event well publicised on radio and local newspapers. (Those shops are still there today – Wellington has not changed much).

From the Internet I learned that around 1500 episodes of "Search for the Golden Boomerang," about a family of prospectors rescued from starvation by aborigines, were written between 1941 and 1951. 2DU played them from tapes – sometimes station staff played them out of order, or the same tape several days in a row.

For some reason, during afternoons I could only receive 2DU and the ABC, although more country stations came on air during evening.

Having a captive audience, there were many advertisements, most simply spoken by station announcers, although the Aeroplane Jelly song – they were not called jingles then – formed a notable exception. Birthday and anniversary announcements cost 2/6, at a time when the basic wage was thirteen pounds ten shillings.

"Search for the Gold Boomerang" was followed by "Presenting Rod Craig," more adult, each episode ending in a cliff hanger – Craig and his assistants Kel Kellaway and

Sammy tied to railway tracks (really!), their serials and hour-long radio plays each Sunday evenings.

Vehicle's brakes sabotaged by master criminal Mr. Smith – making the next episode commence somewhat lamely, as their inevitable escape was hurriedly explained. Even schoolboys quickly became cynical. Rod Craig, originally an island trader turned private detective, also featured in a Sunday newspaper comic strip for a time.

“Rod Craig” was followed by a half hour of “Tunes for Teenagers” which took me up to dinner. At night my parents listened to the ABC news, Jimmy Edwards ‘Take it from Here,’ Hit Parade on Wednesday nights.

More on our cover photo

This is an extract from Daphne Salt's book, Kurnell Birthplace of modern Australia. A pictorial history (2000)

Kurnell resident, Robert (Bob) Mackie, a journalist and cartoonist, wrote and published *The Sentinel* newspaper, *Who's who in business in the Sutherland Shire* and *Pacific Portal*. In 1956 he wrote and published the *Golden Jubilee of the Sutherland Shire* from his Caringbah newspaper office. Mackie was an insatiable collector of unusual, nautical and Cook-related artefacts. So extensive was his collection that publicly spirited Bob opened a museum in the 1940s near the Roman Catholic Church on Prince Charles Parade. He decorated the exterior of a shed with old oil company signs such as Mobil Pegasus, Standard Oil, Golden Fleece and Purr Pull. Inside his ‘Captain Cook’s Australian Museum’ he had such items as Aboriginal weapons, early newspapers and cartoons, a series of British, German and Japanese helmets dating back more than 100 years, a ‘genuine Crusader’s helmet 700 years old’, and another which he reckoned to be a 1300 year old Roman helmet. There were newspaper clippings about Cook’s voyages, memorabilia from the early days of the Sutherland Shire, and a model of the *Endeavour*. Bob offered to sell the museum to the Sutherland Shire Council, which

showed little interest, and the museum was taken over in 1958 by Stan Unwin, hitherto a dealer in old wares.

Unwin added to the collection and maintained the decrepit look of the building. He also extended it using flattened kerosene tins for the cladding.

Even before one entered the property, it was said ‘you got your money’s worth by reading the signs’. His charges: *Single Adults* – 2 shillings, *Man and Wife* - 3 shillings; *Man and Wife and one child* – 3 shillings; *Man and Wife and 2 children* – 1 shilling and sixpence. The more children you had the cheaper it became! A lateral thinker, he told an old friend on the quiet that the shed and most of everything came from the tip; yet of anything that looked remotely nautical or doubtful he would say, ‘Yes that definitely a Captain Cook relic!’ He had all manner of specimens – odd, unusual, inique, natural and not so natural – mostly displayed in glass jars. When the museum closed, the National Parks and Wildlife Service took its contents to the NPWS Discovery Centre for critical examination. The building, an eyesore, was then demolished and the land left vacant.

Editor’s Note: the location of the museum was directly adjacent to the Roman Catholic Church on Prince Charles Parade. The shed on the cover page is located two doors along. It doesn’t have any relationship to the museum however, it too has a significant history that will be explored in the next bulletin.

Perhaps as interesting is the fact that Kate Leigh, a contemporary of Tilly Devine, who was known as ‘Queen of the underworld’, owned the shack next to the shed. Being a very remote place, criminals used it as a hideout to avoid the police

ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO

“A Cronulla Mystery”

Merle Kavanagh

This was the title given to a report in the Sydney Morning Herald on Wednesday 30th August 1911 and it referred to a ‘lifeboat washed up’ and ‘fears for overdue vessels’.

Senior Constable Tugwell of Cronulla reported that a small girl named McDonald had found a ship’s lifeboat on the beach at Cronulla. Though damaged by recent heavy seas, it was still possible to make an identification. The boat was double-ended, painted white and showed the words *Laura CALLAO*, the latter indicating the home port of the vessel. There were two overdue vessels from Callao at that time – *Laura* and *Inca*.

Curiously, the young girl’s brother had been the first to find wreckage from the steamer *Nemesis* in 1904 when it was wrecked off Port Hacking during a raging gale whilst on a voyage from Newcastle to Melbourne with a cargo of coal. There were no survivors.

The *Laura* lifeboat contained two davit rings and had a hole large enough to fit a mast. The davit rings indicated that the boat was one that had to be lowered off the davits and was not one stowed on deck chocks.

A Peruvian barque, the *Laura* was on a voyage to load coal at Newcastle on behalf of the Scottish-Australian Mining Company Ltd. and deliver the cargo to the west coast of South America. The ship left Callao on 18th April and the voyage was expected to take 70 days, so the ship was then more than 130 days overdue. The *Inca* apparently foundered near Port Stephens about the same time and its wreckage, including a name board was found north of Newcastle. It also was well overdue.

Acting on Senior Constable Tugwell’s report, the Navigation Department sent Captain Veitch to Cronulla where he confirmed the details, adding

that the boat showed signs of having been in the water for a length of time and it had probably been lost in the July gales. He gave a detailed report on 30th August 1911 to the Chief Shipwright Surveyor.

The Sydney Morning Herald reported on 31st August 1911 that the lifeboat was found about two miles north of Cronulla. It was 24 ft. long with a 6 ft.9 inch beam and 2 ft. 5 inch deep. It was evidently English built and had been “fitted with five thwarts and side benches, but only two of the thwarts remained, the boat having been ransacked by some people when on the beach”. He advised that information was given to him by the local constable “that there were three copper flotation tanks in her and her name plates had also been stolen”. Tugwell considered that the boat “had not been torn off the vessel’s skids and from the amount of barnacles clinging to the gunwale, it was evident she had been floating bottom up for some considerable time”.

Some time later Captain Veitch discovered on the reverse side of the name board the word *Claudova* which was the name of the ship when under the English flag. When it was taken over by Peru, the name had been changed to *Laura*. There were reports of wreckage - floating masts - and part of a ship’s wheel was found at Lord Howe Island which showed both *Laura* on one side and a corruption of *Claudova* on the reverse side. There was no doubt that the *Laura* had foundered and her lifeboat washed up on the beach north of Cronulla – 100 years ago.

ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO

“KURNELL CELEBRATION”

Breaking the Flag – Historical Society to the Rescue.

Merle Kavanagh

Having a long connection with celebrations of the landing of Captain Cook at Kurnell in 1770, (yes, we know he was actually a Lieutenant at that time), it is interesting to read the Sydney Morning Herald’s report on the 1911 ceremony – the 141st anniversary held on 22nd April, 1911.

It was reported in the Sydney Morning Herald of 29th April 1911 that the ‘ceremony was robbed of much prestige and official patronage’. It seemed that there was no vessel at anchor in the bay as a representation of the *Endeavour* and not even a salute from the batteries (the Army sort). Neither the Governor nor the Premier attended as they were on their way to the Coronation (of King George V). Other dignitaries were either ill or engaged in more important duties. “If it had not been for the efforts of the Historical Society there would have been no function this year.”

Steamers and launches conveyed the party to the ‘historic spot at Kurnell under the southern headland of Botany Bay.” Mr. John Nobbs, M.L.A. was a trustee and the host for the occasion which welcomed 300 to 400 members of the public. He broke the flag with the assistance of the president and secretary of the Historical Society and said they were there to ‘keep green the memory of that great circumnavigator Captain (there’s that word again) James Cook.”

Mr. Nobbs linked together the event they were celebrating with the arrival of the first Governor (Phillip) but considered that they should be celebrated separately. He put forward the name of Joseph Banks who had sailed with Cook and who had advocated the colonization of Australia and hoped it would not be long before a suitable memorial was erected to Banks.

Rev. W.H.H. Yarrington recited the University prize poem “Captain (again!) Cook meditating on Australia’s future” which was written by the Reverend gentleman and which he had recited at the University commemoration in the year 1859.

Mr. Nobbs broke the flag, the audience saluted, the king was cheered and it was all over.

P.S. The 1920 commemorations (150th Anniversary) included the Governor-General and a long list of celebrities. A Navy ship was anchored nearby and a guard of honour was provided by H.M.A.S. Huon. Cronulla school had a party of 70 children present as they usually made an annual pilgrimage to the landing place.

PORT AITKIN

Sydney Morning Herald,
Tuesday 11th August 1863

To the Editor of the Herald.

Sir,

In your issue of Wednesday you make mention of a prize-fight that occurred at Port Hacking the previous day.

While I perfectly agree with you in your expression of disgust at the brutal scene, I must take exception to the name of the spot in took place at.

The bay was called after the late Captain Aiken whose remains were interred in the George Street burial ground between fifty and sixty years ago; a large stone slab marked his grave, which was scarcely injured until within the last fifteen years, but now is totally demolished and since his last resting place has been destroyed from the gaze of those he has left behind him, pray leave to his memory the name of the Port – Port Aiken that was called after him so far back as the first days of the colony.

ONE OF HIS GRANDCHILDREN
August 6th.

(N.L.A. Trove)

DID YOU KNOW?

June 12th 2011 marks exactly 100 years since the steam tram from Sutherland to Cronulla commenced.

It operated for 20 years until 1931 when competition from motorised buses made it uneconomic. It wasn’t until 1939 that a steam train replaced the service to Cronulla.

A derailment on the steep dip along Kinsway between Kiora Rd and present day Westfields led to the death of the driver.

The tram terminated at Shelly Beach.



A steam tram to Cronulla

EARLY COMMERCIAL BOATSHEDS

Boat Building, Industrial and Hiring
Pt. 3 Shire Rivers

Audley – Matson family, later H.C. Press, then Stan Gray (for the National Park Trust)

Matson Senior had the boatshed at Audley from the 1890s where many boats were built. He had been a Finnish sailor who jumped ship in Sydney. Initially he had a shop repairing umbrellas and leather goods and working with canvas, but began hiring out boats on the Parramatta River. He married Rebecca Johnson and together they ran the baths at Woolloomooloo. Matson bought a fifty-four ton ketch and called it Rebecca and then set up another boatshed on Cooks River. From there the family moved to Audley to run the boatshed at the new National Park. People would often book to hire a boat by mail, but as Audley was outside the one penny radius for postage, many such bookings carried insufficient postage so Matson was often forced to pay the extra if he wanted the bookings. Hiring charges for boats at that time were three shillings (30c) for half a day and double for the whole day. Launches could be hired for 20 shillings or £1 (\$2) per day. Persons staying at the pavilion had free use of the boats, except on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays. Hirers needed to specify whether they required the boats for use in salt or fresh water.

In 1908 **H.C. Press** moved from Como to the National Park and operated this shed prior to its takeover by the National Park Trust. The Matsons at this time had established their Pleasure Grounds at the head of Yowie Bay.

In 1929 **Stan Gray** returned to work as a Ranger in the National Park which he had left in 1921. Stan was born and bred in the park, as his father, John Gray, had brought his family to live at Gundamaian, opposite Grays Point, which Stan said was named for his father. John Gray worked in the National Park for 40 years, and was a resident Ranger in the late 1800s. He was a tough man, a boxer and a hard worker. He cut the stone for the house at Gundamaian where he lived with his wife and ten children. He had been with a circus at one stage of his life and at Gundamaian he sometimes rode around standing on the back of a horse.

All the Gray children worked in the park at some time, Stan beginning at age 12 by building the road from Gundamaian to Audley and working on such projects as clearing and causeway construction. As a Ranger he cleared the park of offenders and abusers, being assaulted many times by vandals. He also rescued people from the river, was shot at and fought many bush fires. With boating popular, Stan patrolled the waterways and subsequently took over management of the Audley boatshed in 1938. On 22 October 1938 new boatsheds at Audley were opened by the Minister for Lands, Colin Sinclair. These sheds, operated by the National Park Trust, were said to be the largest

in the Southern Hemisphere and could accommodate over 200 boats. Boating was very popular at that time and the Eight Hour day holiday that year saw every boat hired out. Stan Gray managed the busy shed with his wife, Iris, until his retirement in 1970. The boatshed is still in business.

The Matsons also established a boatshed with 24 skiffs at the head of Yowie Bay in the early 1900s and then added a number of attractions, calling it the Matson Pleasure Grounds. There was a scattering of summer houses, a dance hall, three restaurants seating two hundred people, a rifle range, cricket pitches and a children's playground. The September 1911 issue of *Australia Country Life* noted 'Boating, fishing, oysters and wild flowers. First class boats for hire, launches by arrangement.' The dance hall of the Pleasure Grounds at Yowie Bay was later used for boat- building from c.1909-c.1921. Young Fred Matson was taught the boat building craft by his Finnish grandfather, Francis Frederick Ferdinand, who also encouraged his interest in the outboard motor. He was the first to fit a two horse power motor to a small rowboat. Sadly, Francis Frederick died by his own hand, by hanging, aged 81 years in January 1920.

'**Shaver**' and **John Goddard** were employed as boat builders at one time. Up until 1924 the Matson twins Fred and Oscar, sons of Frederick Francis, milled logs for house building which met a growing demand but this building is no longer there. Fred Jnr. moved to the eastern shore and later to the site of the present Kareena Hospital, operating there from 1946 – 1964. Their largest boat built there was a 50 ft. Fife Yacht of a Scottish design for Sydney Flour at Glebe in 1944.

The Matsons also had a shed with 20 boats for hire on the southern side of Wonga Road during the late 1800s/early 1900s, and this was sold to a Sydney chemist in 1903 and has been long gone. 'Tarzan', Bill Lawes, built a mixed goods shop on the site in the late 1930s and plied his trade by launch on the bays of the Port, giving his 'Tarzan' call to advertise his approach.

The Matson family were very talented in art, sport and music, prominent in local concerts and entertainments and successful in these fields.

Fred Matson Jnr. was a good artist and also a roller skater, being a Champion of Australia in the latter more than five times. The twin brothers also excelled in athletics, with Oscar becoming State Champion for discus and javelin in 1924.

Illawong, 203 Fowler Road – Don Roberts.

c. 1960s onward. The boatshed was constructed either in 1963 or 1964 for Bindley and Roberts Pty. Ltd. Shipwrights, known as B. & R. they built boats, canoes and similar vessels for use on the Georges River. From photographs of the shed in the 1980s, this company still appeared to be in business then and it is thought that the B. & R. business operated in the area for 30 years or more. In 2007/8 Pat Furci was the owner.

Illawong, 45-53 Fowler Road

In August 2008 it was advised that the shed would be demolished.

Woronora River, Price's Shed.

John Price's shed was the earliest in that area. It was situated on the western side of the river, opposite Prince Edward Park and Forbes Creek and near the present foot bridge. Tom Price was born in Victoria in 1858, the son of Welsh parents, John Thomas Price and Margaret Evans. Young Tom came to Sydney in 1880, marrying Mary Charlotte Baglin in 1884. In 1890 he was sent to the Woronora River to do some clearing and dig a well on the 150 acre property of P.B. Walker, travelling there by train to Hurstville, on foot to Connell's Bay where a boat was hired for the long row up the river. Some years later Tom purchased 52 acres of the property and brought his family there in 1899, operating the boatshed from 1900. The Swain family were living on the property but they moved down the river, towards Como so the Price family were the sole occupants above the Swains. For years they were the only people there.

The track from Sutherland was difficult to negotiate so all heavy goods had to come by boat from Como. Tom Price at that time was working for the Parramatta River Ferry Company at the foot of King Street and walked to Sutherland to catch a train, then said to be few and far between, at 8 am, 1.30 pm, 2 pm (funeral), 5.30 pm and 9.30 pm.

The river was 'fairly good for light navigation', the channels being more open. The only bad place was at the crossing used to drive cattle over the river, just below the site of the old (1912) bridge. A small tug drawing about 3 or 4 feet of water, used to come up river towing barges and take them back loaded with sand for Shea's Creek works at Botany.

There were two daughters and three sons – Pearl Benetta and Dulcie Marguerite, both born 1893, Thomas John Lewin born 1885 known as Lew, Norman Llewellyn born 1888 known as Norm and Albert George Nelson born 1897 known as Albert. In December 1907 the *St. George Call* reported that the '12 year old son' of Mr. Price, probably Albert, got into difficulties in the river and Mr. Adams of the Sutherland Railway staff and Mr. J. Gardiner both dived in to rescue the boy.

Tom raised some cattle and with his knowledge of boat building he built his own. A rowboat ferry operated in 1902-3 when schoolteacher Henrietta McAnne was at Menai. Visitors would hail from across the river for someone to collect them. Threepence each way was the fee charged to be rowed across the river by Tom Price, son Norman or 'Old Ted'. It was well patronized by the small group of Menai settlers who scrambled down the hillside to the boatshed. At Menai, Owen Jones was the earliest resident and other families included the Midgleys, Webbs, Bentleys, Smiths, Popperwells and Dawsons.

The *St. George Call* reported on 30 December 1911 that council had accepted Tom Price's tender of £35 for lavatory conveniences to be built at Boyle Park, Woronora River. Tom was able to build structures as well as boats.

There were sometimes organised swimming and rowing events held at the river. The Woronora Weekenders Association was formed, holding picnic races, events and balls to raise money for St. George Cottage Hospital. Lew Price organised most of the activities with the support of the Sutherland business people.

Tom Price died on 22nd August 1921 aged 63 years after stepping out of a boat on the eastern side of the river, taking his grandson to school. The coffin was taken by water to Schofield's

boatshed where it remained overnight and rowed to Como the following day, an indication of the difficulties of living on the river. It was then transported by rail to the Woronora Cemetery. The Price property was sold to **Amies**, who were in Real Estate, but, even though they put a road in to the shed, it was not very successful as a tourist enterprise. The boats were transferred to Anderson's boatshed on the river bend when it was completed. The old shed was pulled down in the early 1920s, having been eaten away under the decking. The family, without their capable father, moved to Kogarah.

Woronora River, Capt. William Rice

c. 1890s+ The Captain built a boatshed on a block of land he owned on the western side of Woronora River, from which he hired rowing and sailing skiffs between voyages and after his retirement. He also had a few craft for rent in a large boatshed on the waterfront behind the Rice home at Sylvania.

Woronora River, Cook's Shed, later Schofield's

The family was living at the river in 1907, the *St. George Call* reporting in December that year that Councillor **Bob Cook** was working on a cottage home and boatshed then. The report described the project as 'a commodious residence, on the stone-walled terrace ... some 20 feet from the water's edge, where a shed to house a dozen new skiffs, now being built, will provide for the wants of fishing and pleasure parties'. At that time the article '*Way down upon the Woronora*' mentioned the corner where Swains refreshment rooms stood and the tented camps on the flat and at Price's.

In 1908 Cook was interviewed for the Tramway enquiry as a 'coach proprietor', having purchased Charles Diston's coaching business in 1901. Around that time the shed was said to have twelve boats for hire, and a picnic and camping ground. The shed was at the bottom of the hill from Sutherland, near where the old bridge still stands, and was run by Robert Cook. The *Australian Country Life* in September 1911 noted on page 33 that boats were for hire, 'also bathing costumes, and special attention paid to camping and picnic parties'. It was also operating in 1914, when **Stockmans** opened their shop almost opposite Cathedral Rock. The Cook children were Evelyn who married a

Payton, and sons George and Bob, a builder in the shire for many years. This shed was taken over by **Schofields**.

Visitors to Schofield's shed would walk the cemetery track via Prices Cave, past Forbes Creek which was then known as Brown's Creek. At the river there was a little flat-bottomed punt on a rope, hooked to a tree, and they pulled on the rope to move punt and occupants across the shallow water. At Schofield's shed there was Johnny, Dave, who married one of the Gilmours and Colin. The youngest son was Rodney who was described as 'hunched over'. Bill Barnidge, a local Ambulance Officer, recalls getting boats from Schofields to row up river to patients and bring them back in the boat when necessary..

Woronora River, Anderson's Shed

c. 1920s. This operated on a corner near the river bend. After Tom Price's death, his boats were transferred to Anderson's

Woronora River, Cox's Shed.

c. 1940s – 1950s. On the west side, just north of the hairpin bend of the river.

Woronora River, Star Boatshed – Woronora River Canoe Centre

The Star Boatshed was built in 1946 by Albert Makin. There were a number of owners who carried on the business of boat and canoe hire after Makin relinquished the property. From about 1984 to 2000 Ken and Claudia Howland ran it, before retiring to Port Macquarie. It was then purchased by Jim Higgins and his sister Donna Robinson, who lived in the home with their families. In 2007 and 2008 the property was on the market and included two separate refurbished residence. In 2009 it was sold at Auction for \$1.29 m

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CATALOGUING OUR HISTORY

Merle Kavanagh

When I became Archivist in 2008 I began attending the Museum to check what had to be done. Finding that a shelf length of about 18 metres held our considerable library holdings, I began recording them in subject groups, then alphabetically by title. I considered this the simplest solution to recording and locating when needed. The list is 99% finished, but arranging the books in their appropriate groups is yet to be accomplished owing to lack of space to do such work. Hopefully this might occur when the current display is changed and a new one created. The estimated number of books held is over 500.

The next challenge was the recording of photographs. Jim Cutbush, as the Museum Curator has an enormous collection of large photographs for display and I have not ventured into this group as yet. There was a large number

of normal sized photographs of events, changes etc. in the Shire taken over the last few years by Doug Archer, which is a wonderful service given freely by Doug. Organising a system combining easy location and photo-friendly storage (not in plastic) was vital. I combined both the small number of larger photographs in this group with the normal sized photos in the same catalogue, but the two groups are stored separately. They are stored under such headings as suburb names, sport, people and places, vehicles, trams and trains, etc. Of those which have passed through my hands at this time, I would estimate a total of over 450.

There are other items which come under the Photographic Collection banner and these include D.V.Ds, C.Ds, tape recordings and albums with some very early photographs.

Other items needing cataloguing include documents such as Articles, Brochures, Certificates etc. and I call this my Documents ABC group. There are maps, posters, Information sheets, brief histories, newspaper cuttings, etc. and these are stored in plastic sleeves in groups of Sutherland Shire and non-

Sutherland Shire. As it builds there will be an index.

The major collection is, of course, the display items, which I am recording under Acquisitions. There are many large and small items – doyleys and dressing tables, teaspoons and toys. I have listed most of the items on display, slotting them into their type groups – Bath & toilet, Children & babies, Kitchen equipment, Service and War items, School furniture, etc. What is still packed away will be recorded as time permits.

If I could have a few more years and a bit more space in which to work it would be wonderful! Currently I sit on a bed on display to compile

my lists, sharing the bed with large maps and notices which must be stored flat. I sometimes take work home to identify and mark items and I do most of the typing on my own computer. My daughter has a list of the files which need to go to the Museum should I not have it all up to date before the inevitable.

Space is our BIG problem at the Museum! We have willing workers but are hampered by the lack of display and convenient storage space. We certainly welcome donations and are always grateful to those who take the time and trouble to add something special to our collections, even when it means more work for me!

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The Road South to the Illawarra - Cooks River to the Georges River

Greg Jackson

In the last bulletin the southern portion of Thomas Mitchell's 1843 road to the Illawarra was discussed. In this article we will look at the section of the road closest to Sydney.

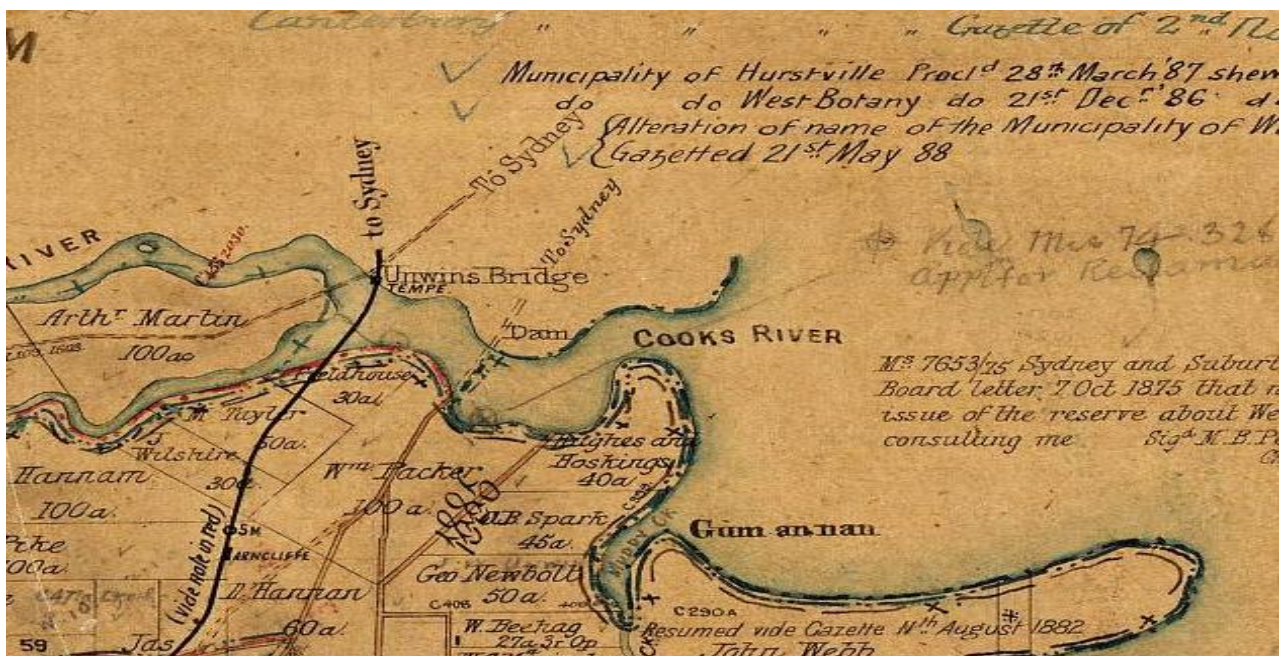
There are three rivers between Sydney and the Illawarra, the Cooks, Georges and Woronora. Mitchell's Illawarra road was made possible by the damming of the Cooks River between 1839 and 1841 using convict labour¹. The dam was built across the river on the approximate line of today's Princes Highway, well below the fresh water. It was hoped that floods would flush out the salt water and provide a supply of fresh water for Sydney. As a dam it was a failure, the water remained brackish and industry upstream, especially around Canterbury polluted the water. There was an outbreak of typhoid fever affecting swimmers in 1896. The dam

was lowered to improve flushing, and eventually demolished entirely.

The painting below shows the dam as it appeared in about 1860 looking south east, from near modern Tempe railway station on the Sydney side of the river, Botany Bay is in the distance and Sydney Airport would be behind the schooner. The bay containing the schooner is still there and now contains a motley collection of small craft; there is now not enough water in this bay to float a boat of that size. The hill on the southern shore is a rocky outcrop called Mount Olympus now largely quarried away and surrounded by the high rise of the new suburb of Wolli Creek. Tempe House is just out of view on the right of picture (in mythology the Vale of Tempe was located below Mount Olympus). The buildings on the northern end of the dam contain the sluice gates for flushing the dam when required. The sluice gates gave continuous trouble and an article in the Sydney Morning Herald 31st October 1851 even proposed another dam above the existing dam as a solution to the salinity problems, but fortunately wiser heads prevailed.



Portion of a Parish Map² below shows the dam topped by the road south to the Illawarra crossing the river.



It is worth pausing here to consider three canals proposed for this area. Sydney was developed after the great age of canal building in the UK and with the coming of the railway, canals were generally not considered a viable option. The only canal in Sydney that came to anything was the Alexandra Canal, one of only 2 canals in NSW³ it was constructed downstream of the Cooks River Dam. At 3.9 km long it follows the line of Shea's Creek (a tributary of the Cooks River not shown on map above but opposite Muddy Creek) and was built between 1887 and 1900 by unemployed relief workers. It was originally intended to link Botany Bay with Sydney Harbour. Looking at a map it appears to be

heading towards Rushcutter's Bay but information on a Water Boards web site⁴ describe its path as past Buckland St Redfern, and this would suggest it was headed towards Darling Harbour, a more likely destination. Like the Dam, this canal was beset by problems, as well as never being finished. Industry along its banks and sewerage outfalls caused major pollution problems. During excavation of the canal, dugong bones, aboriginal axes and the remains of an ancient forest below the low tide level were discovered. As late as the 14th January 1935, in the Sydney Morning Herald calls were again made to complete this project.

PROPOSED CANAL

The mayor of Redfern (Alderman J. H. Gardiner) will this week head a deputation representing ten councils to the minister for works to ask that officers of the department co-operate with the officers of the Water and Sewerage Board in considering the practicality of a navigable canal to link Botany Bay and Port Jackson and furnish an estimate of the costs of construction and resumptions, as well as prospective earnings.

In the early nineties Sir Henry Parkes's government put in hand the construction of the Alexandria canal and it is suggested that this should be dredged and the canal completed.

Another canal proposal from Rockdale Council detailed in the Sydney Morning Herald, 13th December 1890 was to extend Muddy Creek (seen in the Parish Map above) all the way to Kogarah Bay, Georges River.

... It was ordered that a letter be sent to the Minister for Works asking him to proceed with the widening and deepening of Muddy Creek. It was resolved that steps be taken with a view of having Muddy Creek extended to the waters of Georges River, so as to provide a canal suitable for purposes of navigation.

This canal was not as silly as it seems. It would link up and drain the line of swamps which still exist behind the dunes fronting Botany Bay. These were bordered by market gardens and when linked to a completed Alexandra Canal (which was under construction at that time) would provide a means of bringing produce swiftly into Sydney's Markets. Market gardens are still to be seen along Muddy Creek Road (now called West Botany Street). I would have thought that the Illawarra Railway, completed in 1884 would have made this canal unnecessary.

In the Australian, 9th June 1843 an article appeared (almost certainly written by Sir Thomas Mitchell⁵) proposing a canal from the end of George Street Sydney to Cooks River (this may have been an earlier version of the Alexandria Canal; the proposal does not give enough details). A steamer would then ply from Muddy Creek to the needles, the head of navigation of the Woronora River.

...where the tide meets a fall of water at an old mill dam... (ie Lucas' Woronora Mill). ... The proposed line for steam navigation promises to be a permanent one, as connected with the ultimate extension of George-street Sydney, which, as it now traverses the Redfern Estate, (according to a very judicious plan of town arrangement, by Mr. Knapp,) reaches to within three miles of the shore of Botany Bay, at Muddy bank; the intervening space consisting of a low flat or swamp of blue clay, through which a canal may easily be cut, which would bring a line of steam navigation of eighteen and a half miles, in contact with the end of Sydney's principal street;...

This proposal was never adopted although it would have been far more pleasant to catch a steamer half way to Wollongong than walk or ride on the roads of 1843. Given the paucity of traffic on the Illawarra road in the early years this ferry service would not have been viable.

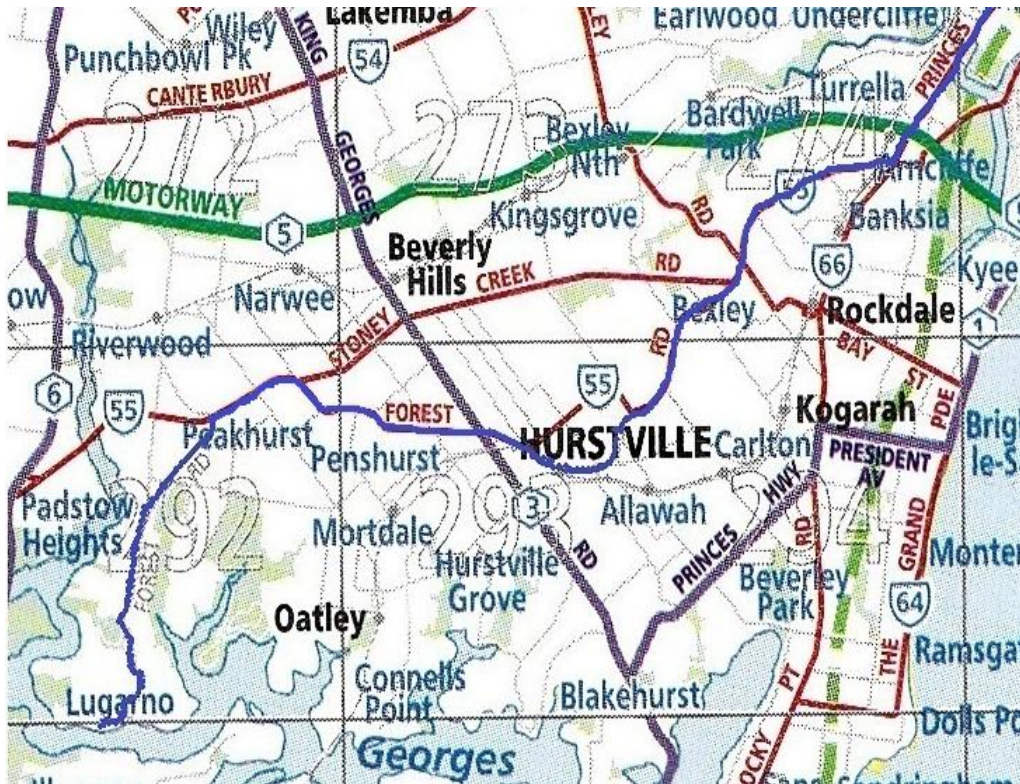
Back to the road south:

Below is a digitally cleaned copy of most of survey SR5276⁶ showing Mitchell's Illawarra Road from Cooks River (top right) to the Georges River (labeled, bottom left). The map is signed by Roderick Mitchell, assistant surveyor, son of Sir Thomas Mitchell but the date is illegible⁷. The road across the dam is labeled "Rocky Point Road" presumably a reference to the rocks of Mount Olympus; this road is unrelated to the later "Rocky Point Road" from Kogarah to Sans Souci.

Comparing this survey to the modern road map we can see that Mitchell's road follows modern Forest Road except at the Tempe end where it travels up Wollongong Road, meeting Forest road at Bexley. The dotted lines

crossing the road on the survey denote existing roads (dirt tracks) and many of them can be identified. The crossing in the center of the survey (below the arrow denoting mag. north) is modern King Georges Road. As the road approaches the Georges River all is confusion, the road winds down the hill and

Mitchell's triangulation construction lines make the line of the road difficult to follow. In the next article we will look at the Georges River crossing and the archaeological remains of the first vehicular crossing to the Sutherland Shire.



Forest Road is outlined from Lugarno to Tempe (top right)

1. <http://www.cadigalwangel.org.au/MenusPages/ColonialImpact.aspx?Id=60>
2. Parish Map No 14019801, Parish of St George: undated but canceled in 1889 available from the Dept of Lands.
3. The other canal is at the entrance to the Shoalhaven River built in June 1822 by Alexander Berry and still in use to this day.
4. <http://www.sydneywater.com.au/Sustainability/OurHeritageAssets/itemview.cfm?hi=4571712>
5. This article is attributed to "the New South Wales Magazine for June" and is unsigned but I believe it to be written by Sir Thomas Mitchell. On stylistic grounds Mitchell's mark is all over it and at this time the Illawarra road was still incomplete and Mitchell would be the only one with the facts and figures contained in this article.
6. Available from the NSW State Archives.
7. Probably drawn in 1838 as Roderick Mitchell is known to be working on this road at that time

AN AIRMAN OF THIS SHIRE

Clive Baker 95216515

Most readers know that former Prime Minister Whitlam was a resident of the Shire in earlier years but few might know of his wartime career.

Flight-Lieutenant Gough Whitlam enlisted in the RAAF in 1942 and became a navigator on a Ventura bomber of 13 RAAF Squadron.

In January 1945, he was on a bombing raid to an island near Bali, when the aircraft was hit by anti-aircraft fire. Turning back, one of the motors began to fail as they headed back to 'Truscott' air base on the northern tip of WA.

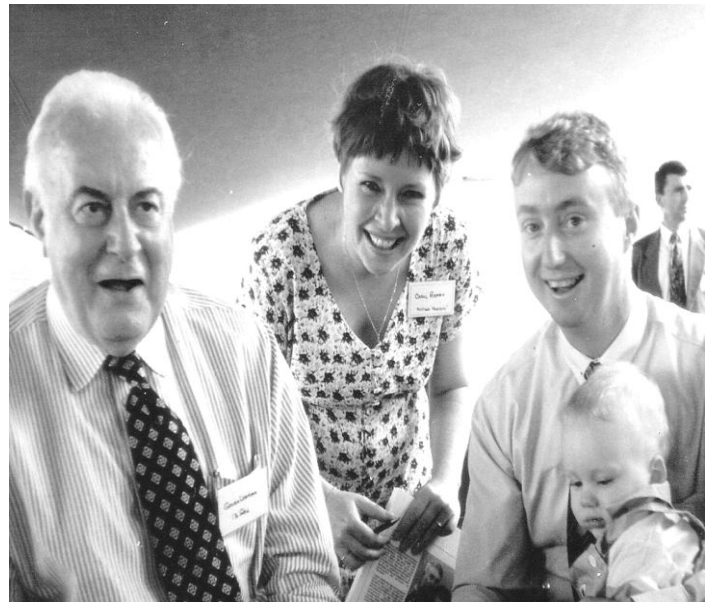


When the book *Truscott* was launched in 1995 Gough and his wife Margaret were guests at the function (shown here with John and Carol Beasy).

The crew began throwing everything they could out of the plane as the pilot tried to gain height in case they had to bail out. A Catalina Air-Sea Rescue aircraft was despatched as the Ventura tried to reach the coast. Historian John Beasy continues the story:

At this stage of the flight the navigator was working furiously to provide the most expedient route back to Truscott ... the rescue plane intercepted the inbound Ventura ... then escorted it to a safe and thankful landing on the strip.ⁱ

It was considered that Whitlam's precise navigation had been the difference between making it back to safety or ending up in the sea.



Australian political history might have been completely different had that aircraft not made it back to base in 1945.

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YOWIE BAY UPDATE.

Merle Kavanagh

When one writes a book of local history, prints, publishes and virtually closes the last page, it can be very aggravating to find some really interesting facts which should have been included. Such is my position now. So

hopefully I can bring to all of you who purchased "*Echoes from the Bay*" the latest finds in the Sydney Morning Herald. Photocopy and put it inside your copy.

pp.30-31 Yowie Name – Reminiscences of Old Sydney. (S.M.H. 18 Jan.1922 p.12)

Captain W.A.B. Greaves met Sir Thomas L. Mitchell (Surveyor-General of N.S.W.) when he visited England, and accepted Mitchell's offer of a job in the Survey Dept of N.S.W. During his

time here, he was assigned to the Port Hacking district c.1854/6 (where land was \$1 per acre.)
“While carrying out surveys there he gave native names to various places – Yowie Bay, Wattamolla and Cronulla.”

pp.62-63 Yowie Bay Hotel. W.S. Smith, Licensee. Wife's Strange Death. (S.M.H. 25 Sept. 1905 p.8 and 30 Sept. 1905 p.13.

“The inquest of Elizabeth Mary Smith, wife of Walter Sydney Smith, Licencee of the Yowie Bay Hotel showed that Smith and Mrs. Smith were under the influence of liquor on 17th inst. and quarreled. He struck his wife on the head and she fell against a stove. Subsequently the domestic servant, Matilda Jones heard Smith say to his wife. “You are like a cat. You have nine lives”. That night she saw blood on Mrs. Smith’s dress, on the floor, the dressing table, the counterpane and the washstand. Next day Mrs. Smith vomited blood and subsequently took to her bed. On Saturday Mr. Smith called witness at lunch time and told her that Mrs. Smith had fallen out of bed. They lifted her into bed and shortly afterwards she died. Mrs. Smith had told witness that her husband had her on her stomach in bed and punched her back. On Saturday last Mrs. Smith said to her husband ‘You’ve killed me’ and he replied “I know I have, girl”.

Cross-examined the witness said that Mrs. Smith was often drunk ... Apart from drink, Smith

seemed kind to his wife. Smith charged with manslaughter.”

“On Saturday Smith told the witness that his wife was not going to get better and asked her to sign a paper, but she refused. She then had another look at Mrs. Smith and thought she was asleep. The witness went to the kitchen and soon after heard someone moaning. She went into the bedroom and found Mrs. Smith dead and her husband lying on the floor with blood running from his throat. On the dressing table was a blood-stained razor. The deceased was of intemperate habits. Except when Mrs. Smith was under the influence of liquor she and her husband lived a happy life, and that was very seldom as she was generally intoxicated. The Coroner found that the deceased died from haemorrhage caused by the rupture of a blood-vessel of the stomach and that death was accelerated by the treatment the deceased received from her husband.”

“Constable Miller removed the publican to St. George Cottage Hospital where he was admitted for treatment. His condition is not regarded as serious. About an hour before Smith was found with his throat cut his wife, Elizabeth, 43 years, died. The cause of death, in the opinion of the doctor who attended, was cancer, accelerated by some contusions.”

(He obviously got off lightly, as he continued at the hotel until at least 1907.)

Did you know

1. In 1788, Australia's first bridge was made of logs and straddled the Tank Stream in Sydney Cove.
2. For convicts, the most unpopular recommendation by Australia's founder, Governor Arthur Phillip, was that those sentenced to death in the late 1700s should be thrown into the hands of the head-hunters of New Zealand. "Let them be eaten" was his suggestion.
3. During the voyage of the second fleet of convict ships which sailed from

England to New South Wales in 1789, many prisoners died from starvation, chained to their living companions. But the living said nothing about the dead in order to gain extra rations.

4. Labourer Samuel Terry, who had been transported to Sydney for stealing 400 pairs of stockings, married a rich widow, became the colony's wealthiest trader and was referred to as the Botany Bay Rothschild.

5. Quong Tart, who came to Sydney from China in 1859, joined the Highland Society, became an authority on Scottish history

spoke with a Scottish accent, donned a kilt and called himself MacTart!



THE PRINCIPALITY OF HUTT RIVER

Daphne Salt

The Principality of Hutt River is situated 595 km north of Perth, Western Australia and is about 75 square km in area, consisting of some 18,500 acres of land.

Hutt River is an Independent Sovereign State having seceded from Australia on the Twenty First Day of April 1970 and is of comparable size to Hong Kong (not the New Territories).

The Principality consists of undulating farmland well covered in places with a wealth of shrubs and glorious wildflowers.

After passing through the impressive gates at the border we were greeted at the Government Offices and Post Office by Princess Shirley who stamped our Passports, issued us with Visas, converted our Australian money to Principality currency and told us a little about the Principality before escorting us to the Conference Centre and Museum where Prince Leonard elaborated on his realm.

The Principality of Hutt River (PHR) is 41 years old. Prince Leonard's three sons now look after the agricultural farming. He explained his awards and how the wheat quota forced him to declare his land an independent country with a constitution. Prince Leonard then gave us a personal guided tour of the facilities which include The Administration Building containing the Government Office and Post Office, Tea Rooms, Swimming Pool, Caravan Park, Museum and Archives housing the Memorabilia Dept. and Historical Society displays; a Secession Monument, the Pyramid

of Hutt and an Information Bay. Prince Leonard is proud of his Non-Denominational Chapel housing massive oil paintings of the Holy Land and a 20' x 10' piece of red carpet from Windsor Castle when it was refurbished after the fire.

THE SECESSION OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF HUTT RIVER ON 21ST APRIL 1970

Leonard Casley had cropped 13,000 acres of wheat annually for many years. With the introduction of Wheat Quotas in 1969, the Casleys were given a quota equivalent to 100 acres after thousands of acres of wheat had already been grown.

Upon investigating the West Australian Legislation, he discovered that the proposed Bill had not been passed and two clauses in the Wheat Quota Bill concerned him greatly:- "No Compensation" and "No Appeals" would be permitted!

On lodging his protest to the Wheat Quota Board, the West Australian Government and the Governor of Western Australia, Major General Sir Douglas Kendrew, only the



Governor replied emphasising "No alteration to the Casley quota would be allowed".

Two weeks after Leonard Casley had lodged Western Australia's largest claim, a Bill was introduced in Parliament giving the Western Australian Government power to resume Casley's farming land. Leonard immediately pointed out to Sir Douglas Kendrew that resumption was unlawful because his land title, a legal document, was signed by the Governor and it stated that "No more than

1/20th of any of the lands can be resumed for any purpose whatsoever”, therefore his land could not be resumed and he had the right to secede his lands to protect his lawful rights.

Following one month without response from the Government who were still rushing their Bill through Parliament, Leonard issued the Secession Documents.



Sir Douglas convened a meeting in Government House, Perth with Lt Col. John Burt and Leonard

Casley. Leonard walked out of that meeting virtually with the Queen’s permission to secede. The same day Leonard confirmed in writing to Sir Douglas all that had been said at the meeting. The Commonwealth Government responded that they “could not interfere in the Secession” because it was unconstitutional for the Commonwealth to intervene in secession and from that point onwards the Governor-General of Australia, Sir Paul Hasluck’s correspondence to Leonard was addressed to ‘Leonard George Casley Esquire’, replicating the addition of ‘Esquire’ as had been done when America seceded from Britain.

It is worthy to note:

Lt. Col. John Burt, of his choosing, became a Citizen of the Principality of Hutt River and the Principality’s Representative to Australia.

Sir Paul Hasluck died Stateless, an alien. Prince Leonard posthumously bestowed Citizenship on him and had the Principality’s Special Envoy, Sir Peter Thompson KRO, present the Citizenship for Sir Paul to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. This was accepted.

Prime Minister Sir William (Billy) McMahon wrote to the Premier of WA offering Commonwealth powers to the State in severely dealing with Hutt River Province, which was at that time a Republic. Leonard addressed his people on the seriousness of the Hon. William McMahon’s intentions, pointing out that

should the Province become a Principality then the British Laws of Treason would protect them. The people voted to raise the status of the Territory from a Republic to a Principality guaranteeing protection by Law, thus the Hutt River Province (HRP) became the Principality of Hutt River (PHR) as it is known today.

When Malcolm Fraser was Prime Minister he instructed the Taxation Department to investigate and pursue Leonard to break him. In response, Leonard pointed out to the Principality’s Cabinet that this was waging a Cold War and that he proposed to change the situation by declaring that a State of War existed between the Principality and Australia. Leonard notified the Australian Government who laughed and said - ‘the Prince had flipped his lid, he has declared war!’ Three days later Prince Leonard notified the Governor-General that the State of War had now ceased and that he entrusted that the Governor-General would inform his Government and that they observe and conform to the Laws of War, under which Sovereignty goes immediately to a Government undefeated in a State of War. The Australian Government conceded “He has caught us again”.

At this time Prince Leonard notified the Swiss Federal Council, the Governor-General and Malcolm Fraser PM, that the Principality “Accepted and applied the Geneva Conventions of 12th August 1949 Act 1043 of Australia.” Under these conventions, once the notice of acceptance and application is given, then the conventions apply over their relations even if one party does not recognise the other; and where one party to the conflict is not a signatory to the conventions, these conventions shall apply. In doing this Prince Leonard undertook a Political Duty. Hence, should anyone hinder Prince Leonard in his Political Duty, under Act 103 of Australia, they are guilty of an offence under the Australian Crimes Act of obstructing a person performing their political duty.



The emblem of the Principality, the Great Seal, is consistent with ancient heraldic tradition in that animal and plant forms were adopted to represent various attributes and principles

espoused by the new state and its head. Bull's head - rural, strength; Eagle – freedom; Scales – justice; Thistle – independence & defence of right; White – purity & perfection; Blue – faith and justice; Gold – honour.

H.R.H. Prince Leonard, a keen supporter of both the Arts and Conservation, has named parts of the Principality with such identities as Lake Beginning, Mount Secession, Lake Serenity and Wild Boar Gorge. His town site, Nain, has been developed with many buildings to provide facilities for the tourists who visit in their thousands each year.

It is perhaps of interest to note, that Western Australia was actually never proclaimed by Captain Stirling as British Territory, as was required of him under his Letter Patent. He only Proclaimed a Settlement (the Swan Settlement) in Western Australia.

The Australian Tax Office has formally declared all resident citizens of the Principality as non-resident in Australia and therefore not required to declare or pay taxes to Australia on monies earned in the Principality. Taxation on Principality earnings is under the jurisdiction of the PHR Taxation Department and PHR taxes at minimalist rates. Postage stamps, currency, citizenships and passports are issued by the Principality and are in wide use. All non-citizen visitors to the Principality are required to obtain an entry Visa on arrival, available at the Government Offices for a fee of only \$2.00 and entered into your passport or as a printed document.

The Principality of Hutt River is considered to be a small country by international standards. Its area of territory covers 75 square kilometres. It is the second largest country on this continent.

During the decades since the secession there have been many and varied political disputes with the Government of Australia. Upon reflection, these clashes speak highly for the politics of Australia compared to the manner on other continents where such occurrences and disputes are dealt with in a very different style of diplomacy.

COAT OF ARMS

The Full Heraldic Achievement of H.R.H. Prince Leonard, Sovereign of the Principality of Hutt River

Parted per pale, first argent, a scales or, second, sky blue a bald eagle proper salient, in the chief, the Ephraim arms proper, namely azure, a bull passant gules, in the base, a Scottish Thistle proper.

THE CREST

An engraved helm, affrontee, or, with open visor, lined gules, surmounted by the Prince's crown: the neck garnished with the neck badge and ribbon of 'The Most Noble and Most Worthy Order of the Crusaders' Cross of Jerusalem'. (As His Royal Highness is the Royal Protector of this Order.)

THE SUPPORTERS

Lions proper, counter-rampant reguardant, mounted on a rock.

THE ORDERS

Displayed beneath the Arms on the train of the Pavilion in order of Precedence.

- 1a. The Collar of Princely Office.
- 2a. The Collar of 'The Royal Order' (R.O.)
- 3a. The neck ribbon and badge of 'The Most Noble and Most Worthy Order of the Crusaders' Cross of Jerusalem'. (C.C.J.)
- 4a. The neck ribbon and badge of the 'Serene Order of Leonard'. (S.O.L.)
- 5a. The neck ribbon and badge of 'The Illustrious Order of Merit'. (I.O.M.)



THE PAVILION

The Royal War Tent of a Monarch; domed, gules embroidered with lions rampant guardant, line ermine, the dome encompassed with the Prince's Motto, MORS SUPER DEDICUS; or on azure, surmounted with the Prince's Crown shelters the display of the Prince's full arms, crest, mantling, orders and supporters.

(Motto = "Death before Dishonour")

THE BANNERS

Displayed behind the Pavilion in order of Precedence.

1. Banner of H.R.H. Prince Leonard's Personal Arms.
2. H.R.H. Prince Leonard's Personal Banner (Cipher).
3. The original State Banner.
4. The Banner of 'The Royal Order'.
5. The Battle Banner of 'The Most Noble and Most Worthy Order of the Crusaders' Cross of Jerusalem'.
6. The Banner of 'The Serene Order of Leonard'.
7. The Banner of 'The Illustrious Order of Merit'.

Compiled by Daphne Salt from material published by the Principality of Hutt River with the kind permission of Prince Leonard.

The website

<http://www.principality-hutt-river.org/gov/>

WHEN I WAS TEN –

Daphne Salt (nee McCarthy)

We lived in 1 Belgrave Street, Sylvania just off Tom Ugly's Bridge. I have two brothers – George, two years older than I am, Brian two years younger and one sister Dianne, two years younger than Brian. I was ten in 1955, the year Albert Einstein died, the first stage of the Snowy Mountains Scheme opened, Edna Everage was created by Barry Humphries, Disneyland opened, Bob Menzies



was Prime Minister, Marilyn Munro filmed 'The Seven Year Itch', Donald Campbell broke the water speed record in his 'Blue Bird' and Maralinga Atomic Test Site was established in SA.

Like most families of the 50s, we went into Sydney to Grace Bros for our Santa photo. Santa asked me what sort of lovely dolly I wanted for Christmas? Dear little Daphne emphatically replied – 'I want a tool set or fishing rod!' But instead received a beautiful walking, blinking doll that said 'mamma' when you tipped it forward or backwards. It was about 2 foot tall and came in a blue box. Very nice. Well, it came out of its box again when I dressed it as our high school mascot, then again when I gave it to my daughter; it stayed out of its box for a few weeks then went back in, it is still in its box.

We embarked on a caravanning holiday to Queensland, fishing the rivers and cooling off in rock pools – Brian's leg was in plaster at this time so he sat in the pool with his leg stuck up on a rock. We camped at Surfers Paradise in a Melaleuca grove 2 dunes back from the beach where all the high-rise apartments are today. We collected dozens of long neck tortoises from the road to save them from being 'road kill' and had tortoise races – one or two somehow found their way into the car and crawled under the seats to the front, much to Mum's annoyance.

George and I dismantled our outgrown tricycle and put the fork on upside-down turning it into a 'stretch-racer'. We also built a 'land yacht' out of water pipe with push bike wheels and a purloined sheet for the sail. We were always creating something. We made bilycarts with noisy ball bearing wheels and raced them down our side path from the garage to the front gate and down the footpath from the Sylvania Cong. Church across Endeavour and Ellis Streets then skidded around the corner into Belgrave. We raced our bilycarts, grass skis and scooters down a grassy hill, jumping or rolling off as our dubious conveyance hurtled over the bottom wall into the Georges River and had fun in the Kurnell dunes which were so high you could see them from the Blue Mountains.

Photography has always been a family passion, so Dad and I climbed to the top of the Norfolk Island pine that my forebears the Rices had planted in front of their home



(opposite ours), to photograph the vicinity. I learned to swim in these Sylvania Baths and Mum won the cup in the first swimming races there when they opened in 1935; the sunken hulk was the old tug, Minerva that the Sea Scouts were going to rebuild for their headquarters, and the boat approaching the jetty where we used to fish was the pan collector from the waterfront homes on the Georges and Woronora Rivers. The pans of night soil were collected by council truck from the jetty and taken to Menai sewage dump. We had to help clean up the muck when the dunny man miscalculated the height of the new gate between the garage and the house with a full pan on his leather shoulder pad as he ran back to the 44-doorer.

We graduated from paddling around on Dad's old cedar surf board to building our own canoes of corrugated iron – a piece of wood for the transom, the bow folded and nailed, a wooden spreader in the gunnels and the holes from the roofing nails sealed with tar when we could find a tar road and 'borrow' some of the pitch to heat in a jam tin – we paddled these all around Gwawley Swamp among the mangroves and along the line of bridge poles that Thomas Holt had put in to Taren Point before they reclaimed Gwawley Bay as Sylvania Waters Estate.

During the 1950s Donald Campbell was doing a world tour with his boat "Bluebird" it was the Campbell's 7th Bluebird – he named all his boats and cars „Bluebird“ – he had it on the river at Tom Ugly's Point and somehow or other Dad must have used the old McCarthy Blarney because George and I were taken for a

brief run in it. (Blarney Castle was built by a McCarthy).

I taught Hoppy, our Australian Terrier, to climb a ladder so he could join us in the cubby house in the mulberry tree. We experimented with umbrellas for parachutes from the roof of the shed and made shanghais out of a mulberry tree fork and cut up car tubes and had mock wars with our cousins over the back fence and rigged a flying fox to light the cracker night bonfire.

Mum and Dad used to take us to a spot south of the Mad Mile, near the water tank just before you get to Engadine, for train watching picnics. The steam trains were on the final stretch of the longest uphill gradient in the state, steam full-on, chugging away pretty slowly and the driver always hooted his whistle for us. We generally went home again with a bag of coal from beside the tracks for our fireplace.

The Easter I turned ten we were camped in a tent at Lake Illawarra on our block of land in Peterborough Avenue while we sawed and hammered and built the 3 room weekender. Hoppy must have watched the Easter bunny because in the morning all we found was well chewed foil on the ground near our pillows. Dad had a baby Austin and like most kids we all learned to drive. I went with him up to the camping area on the sea front to get a few buckets of water – it wasn't yet connected to our block – Dad got into a lengthy chin wag with someone there so little Daphne – all of 3 foot tall – climbed into the driver's seat – stood up behind the wheel and drove back with Dad huffing, puffing and waving his arms in pursuit. He was too exhausted to scold me and Mum was clutching her sides and trying unsuccessfully not to laugh.

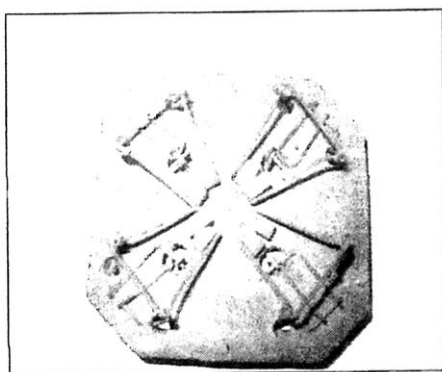
During the drive down to Lake Illawarra we had to pass through the middle of the steel works and across what is now the Port Kembla



Inner Harbour. There was a small airport there where one of the unemployed former WW2 pilots operated joy flights in his Tiger Moth. I had saved my pocket money for more than a year and on my 10th birthday I was allowed to take a joy flight over Port Kembla and Lake Illawarra in that Tiger Moth. I can still recall the exhilaration of my first flight in that open cockpit with the wind in my face, looking down between the flimsy wings and wire struts with the sound of the motor screaming in my ears.

ATTENTION

Could the member who handed the story on 'Doreen's childhood memories' to our Secretary, Angela Thomas, please contact her on 9528 6251



What is this object?

In this segment, readers are invited to guess what the object might be. The first of these should be easy! Readers will be notified of the correct answer in the next bulletin.

Excursion Report

On a bright and sunny March morning (State Election Day), the Society set off on its bi-monthly excursion. As usual our Excursion Convenor discussed interesting historical features along the way. However for once he was overshadowed as we passed through Enfield – home of the Beavan clan. It was a battle royal as Terry's vast historical knowledge was pitted against stories from Maurie's boyhood growing up in the area. This month we visited one of Sydney's best kept secrets – the Yaralla Estate at Concord. The house stands on land originally granted to Isaac Nichols in 1797. Like many early settlers Nichols was originally a convict. On completion of his sentence he became a businessman and later the colony's first postmaster. For many years the early settlement was desperately short of food and Nichols used this land grant to establish extensive orchards and vegetable gardens to feed the growing and hungry colony. Following his death, the land pass to Nichols family who built a small wooden cottage called Woodbine which still stands on the grounds today. In the 1840's, Thomas Walker (who migrated to Sydney from Scotland in 1822) began acquiring land in the Concord area and he acquired the estate from Nichols sons in the 1840's. In the 1860's Walker who was a wealthy merchant and philanthropist commissioned Edmund Blacket to design a "cottage" on the low rise adjacent to the Parramatta River. The Walker family moved in and celebrated their first Christmas in 1870. Sadly Walkers wife died the next day of TB leaving Thomas with 9 year old Eadith as an only child. (But to get the rest of the story you will have to visit Yaralla for yourself.) Their home Yaralla was the centre of high Society in the early 20th century and over time stables, a dairy, extensive gardens and farming were established making it a thriving and profitable estate the equal of anything in England. For many years the Yaralla cattle were noted prize winners at the Sydney Royal Easter Shows. Our visit started well as we all sat down in the restored Dairy which was part of the Jersey

Stud Farm designed by John Sulman in 1893. Here we all “tucked into” plates of fresh scones, jam and cream while local society people told us something of the history of Yaralla. This was followed by a tour of the grounds of this magnificent estate. As we walked along the foreshore of the Parramatta River our guide pointed out the site of the former ferry wharf which also had an orchestra pier for the pleasure of the guests arriving by boat. (It seems driving out from Sydney was just as dangerous in those days as today so people preferred to come up the river by boat.) We then walked past the former swimming pool which had its own waving making machine, and could see the spot where the first privately owned power station in Sydney stood.

Lunch was in the old Coach house next to the stables where there is a display of names of the horses that once lived in there. Inside the Coach house there is a collection of marble headstones from the pets’ cemetery from the Estate and the remains of the Indian House brought home from the Coronation Durbar of Delhi in 1903 by Eadith.

While much of the grandeur of those years has faded, the magnificent house, the grotto and tennis court still stands. There is even a purpose built squash court especially erected for the visit of the Prince of Wales (later Edward VIII) who stayed for a week on a private holiday after his official visit to Sydney in 1920. While Edward never played on it as it contained a concrete floor, he noted in his diary that his aide-de-camp Louis Mountbatten and another staff member played a game. Dame Eadith also entertained the Duke and Duchess of York later King George VI and Queen Elizabeth there in 1927. Following Dame Eadith Walker’s death in 1937 the land comprising the Yaralla Estate became vested in the Crown under the Walker Trusts Act 1938.

All in all it was a magnificent day and I wish to thank our host and guide Sandra Elliot who provided us with a very interesting and enjoyable day as she shared her knowledge and passion for Yaralla. I think the Society will return to this magnificent treasure hidden behind Concord hospital in the not too distant future to learn more of Sydney’s early aristocracy.

I am pleased to report on the way back home Terry our driver was able to avoid Enfield although we did see parts of Strathfield rarely visited by people from the South including several dead end streets.

Museum Report

Attendance at our museum opening in May was 17 persons. Thank you Merle, David, Terry and Norma Jean for helping. I have returned photos loaned to us for copying of Woronora township and ‘Bedford Cottage’ Loftus. I will be needing a letter of thanks to go to a number of people who donated items of interest for Woronora Dam exhibition. We have been asked for copies of some of our exhibition photos.

New museum booking for Saturday 25th June 12-12.15pm by ‘Top Tours’ run by Kerima-Gay Topp for 25 people (made of National Trust members, donation to society will be made).

New donation offered and accepted from SSC via Planning & Events is the 2000 Olympic torch that was carried through the the Shire at that time.

Phone call was received about a special request by Johnson & Johnson (Samantha Northern – co ordinator) for a loan of some items from our Parke Davis collection for a display to help celebrate J&J’s 125th Anniversary. Items mentioned...old packaging i.e. sudaphed, codral, benadryl, zertec, Listerine, old photos that are of interest all required by early June 2011 (help will be needed).

A Special meeting was held with Kogarah Historical Society at SMSA to share some information/guidance re museum curator’s duties etc. In attendance were Merle, Bruce, Terry, Pat, Andrew and Angela and Jim. Copies of Business Plan and Collection Policy were tendered.

An enquiry was made by Alice Ford for WTFM Entertainment...has done

documentary, historical Botany Bay area for pay TV. A question was raised as whether the entrance to Botany Bay always been deep enough for ships to anchor, ie tanker and container ships, they are doing book as well. (Bay average depth 2.5m)

There had been an information request about Oak park toilet block by Mr.Mark Arena, Planner, Heritage listing SSC – would like to remove or re locate building, local studies info will assist, Helen off for another week.

This space could be yours!

Do you have a short story or anecdote that we could use in the bulletin?

Forward it to the editor.

Sutherland Shire Historical Society

Membership application or renewal 2011/12

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

TO ASSIST WITH ACCURATE RECORD KEEPING EACH MEMBER IS REQUESTED TO COMPLETE AN INDIVIDUAL RENEWAL FORM EACH YEAR

Applications should be completed and handed to the Honorary Treasurer at the monthly general meeting or posted to the Society at the address shown on the renewal form. The new / renewal application should also contain the appropriate subscription fee.

It should be noted that a failure to pay the membership fee within three months from the end of the financial year will result in a lapse of membership.

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.

This membership application is a -Renewal () New Membership () (please tick)

TITLE: Mr, Mrs, Ms

Family name: -----

Given name: -----

Postal address: -----

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

Please find subscription for 2010/11 enclosed

Annual adult subscription = \$22 junior member / full time student = \$11

Signed ----- **Date** -----

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

This membership application is a -Renewal () New Membership () (please tick)

TITLE: Mr, Mrs, Ms

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