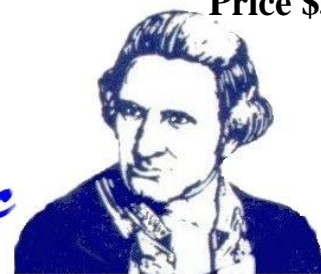


FEBRUARY 2012

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Sutherland Shire
Historical Society Inc
Bulletin



VOL. 15 No. 1

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The back to the twenties garden party

A riotous assortment of flappers, floozies, gangsters, glimmers, molls, musos, spivs and other shady characters masquerading as respectable Society members.

‘MINDFUL OF THE PAST; FOCUSED ON THE FUTURE.’

Contents:

	Page
President's report	3
Events calendar	4
Book launch	5
Excursions 2012	5
Meet the Executive	6
Heritage festival	6
When I was ten	7
What's in a name?	8
The Gympie pyramid	11
Back to the Twenties	15
Lope de Vega	16
Coastal shipwrecks	19
Delardes Reserve Illawong`	22
No ordinary manager	25
The Georges River gold rush	27
Can we help?	28
Lucas' Mill	30
Heritage week	30
Australia Day	30
Advertising	32
Membership renewal 2011/12	33

The cover – Some members at the 'Back to the Twenties' Christmas party – November 2011

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

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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.

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SUTHERLAND SHIRE HISTORICAL
SOCIETY INC
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President's Report

This is the first bulletin for the year but before we move on I would like to recognise the milestones that we achieved in 2011, thanks to our many members and their friends who have supported our activities. Our excursions, ably organised and run by Terry McCosker, our unflappable tour organiser and bus driver were interesting and well attended and our program of events for this year is equally as exciting. Events are organised on a cost recovery basis so members get a good deal. Check our planner on the next page for the first two of our excursions for 2012 and for other activities.

We moved our Christmas party to November and it was very successful. Our 'Back to the twenties' garden party at Nola Watt's home was a lot of fun. A collection of spivs, gangsters and their molls, jazzos, flappers and other appropriately attired folk descended on Kirrawee for a leisurely afternoon in the tranquil garden. As described elsewhere, the afternoon was relaxed and entertaining. Our thanks once again to Nola Watt for her thoughtful planning and hospitality.

I'm proud of the excellent standard of journalism achieved by our many competent contributors to the bulletin. Our literary luncheon developed wings of its own as the theme of 'when I was ten' was taken up so enthusiastically by so many participants. The proactive effort of several of our members, especially Angela Badger, Elizabeth Craig and Clive Baker has resulted in the collection and collation of thirty of these reminisces into a book which will be launched at our March meeting. This is the first Society publication of its type in a long time. It was with great sadness that one of our long time members, Marj Blackley passed away. However, it was her enthusiastic telling of her story of when she was ten at our luncheon, not long before she passed away, that inspired us to collect the stories and ultimately to publish them. It is in part a fitting memorial to her work with the society and the executive.

Enthusiasm in the Executive committee hangs like a heady perfume. This book is to be the flagship of several more to be commenced this year. 'The best of the bulletin', 'Strange tales from the Shire', 'Early days in the Shire', walking trails and suburb profiles are just some ideas. . Let us know if you have other ideas.

Heritage walks in various suburbs is another initiative. David Overett is still planning these and they will be up and running very shortly.

Jim Cutbush and several members mounted a display of historical photographs at the Australia Day exhibition at Cronulla Central. Member's books as well as our historical placemat series were on sale. Our thanks go to those involved for their time and in answering queries from the public. This was Jim's 28th consecutive display! Congratulations. Jim is the backbone of the Society.

Our January meeting featured an interesting presentation on Sir Charles Kingsford Smith. Today, even momentous occasions warrant only passing media coverage. Kingsford Smith was a superhero of his time, achieving superhuman feats and earning adulation from an adoring public. I was touched by the moving descriptions of experiences that he had whilst on his epic long distance flights. It was obvious that his daring physical feats were equally matched by a talent for literary description and expression of the surreal experiences. I must thank Angela Badger for the many things that she does for the society and in particular, for her selection of guest speakers. A new and informative web site will be up and running by February. More on this as it develops

Our two articles on the Gympie pyramid and Lope de Vega add another dimension to historical understanding. They rock conventional histories. I would be interested in your feedback.

After 46 years the bulletin is accepting paying advertisements (see last page) It's the way of the world! Membership fees have not changed in 12 years. Any income is ploughed back into running and improving our service delivery.

I trust that you enjoy this edition of the bulletin. Encourage friends to sample what we have to offer this year.

Bruce Watt

SUTHERLAND SHIRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

EVENTS CALENDAR: 2012

Month	Date	Event
January	7	Museum open
January	21	Meeting - Sir Charles Kingsford Smith
January	26	SSHS display in Cronulla Mall
February	4	Museum open
February	18	Meeting - Bruce Shying 'Women and the sea'
March	3	Museum open –
March	17	Meeting and Book launch: When I was 10
March	28	Excursion: Telstra and Airport museums
April	7	Museum open – also during Heritage festival (14 -19)
April	21	Meeting Heritage Festival luncheon seminar. 'Amazing stories'
April	?	Heritage walk: Cronulla?
May	5	Museum open
May	19	Meeting speaker to be confirmed
May	26	Excursion: 'Wivenhoe' and Camden
June	2	Museum open
June	16	Meeting speaker – Peter Tyler
June	23	Local Heritage Walk: To be announced
July	7	Museum open
July	21	Meeting Colin Burgess – the history of space exploration in Australia
July	?	Excursion: to be announced
August	4	Museum open
August	18	Meeting Daphne Salt 'The Eternity man'
August	25	Local Heritage Walk: To be announced
September	1	Museum open
September	15	AGM Bob Osborne 'Nelson'
September	?	Excursion: to be announced
October	6	Museum open
October	20	Meeting James Bird 'Mercy ships'
October	27	Local Heritage Walk: To be announced
November	3	Museum open
November	17	Christmas party
November	?	Excursion: to be announced
December	1	Museum open
December		No meeting
December	8	Local Heritage Walk: To be announced

Don't miss this!
Book launch – our latest publication

‘MY WORLD WHEN I WAS TEN’

Thirty stories and photographs of members’ childhood memories and experiences across the 20th Century and from many different countries and situations.

What was the world like when you were 10?

**Join us at our regular meeting on 17th March.
It’s ‘show and tell’ time so bring an interesting item for display and discussion.**

Upcoming Excursions

March: Wednesday 28th
**Telstra museum and
airport museum
Bankstown**

Cost \$30.00

Includes bus, entry to both
museums and buffet lunch at
Bankstown RSL Club.
Discount at club if seniors
card presented.

Departs **MPC* 9am.sharp**
(Multi Purpose Centre)

*

May

Sunday 26th

‘Wivenhoe’ and Camden
township.

Cost: \$40 per person

Includes bus trip and guided
tour of Wivenhoe and bus
tour of Camden township.

Wivenhoe was built in 1830
for Charles Cowper, 5 times
Premier of NSW. Now
owned by Good Samaritan
Sisters

Departs **MPC* 9am.sharp**
(Multi Purpose Centre)

*

Bookings

Pat Hannan 9528 8294
patricia.hannan@bigpond.com

MEET THE EXECUTIVE Leanne Muir



Hi, I am Leanne Muir;
I joined Sutherland
Shire Historical Society early in 2011 and
recently became the Treasurer.
I have lived in Kirrawee for about 2 years
with my husband, my parents and my son
along with two dogs and a cat. My
daughter lives at Jannali.
I work full-time in the city as the Finance
Manager for a group of three companies
that are in the Public Relations and
Marketing sector. I have recently
commenced studies to complete the CPA
program (better late than never) and
completed the Company Secretary diploma
about 3 years ago. I gained my Accounting
degree about 10 years ago after working in
the field for quite a few years. I have done
more study in my 30's and 40's than I did
in my teens, but that is just how it has
worked out.
I was born at Kogarah hospital on New
Year's Eve 1961, so I have just celebrated
my 50th birthday, and there is always a
party somewhere on my birthday. My son
was born on Australia Day, so he too is
never short of a BBQ to attend.
I was brought up in Hurstville, as were
both my parents, two of my grandparents,
and one great grandparent. My family
have been in Hurstville since the 1880's,
and it was only last year (2011) that my
grandparents' home, purchased in
Hurstville in 1930 was sold, breaking a
long association. My grandfather was a
local postman in the St George area for 50
years.
When I was younger I was a Brownie, I
played tennis, played the guitar and was
involved with acting through a local
theatre. When my children were young I
was the treasurer at Old Bar preschool and
assisted with school reading programs, and
some tutoring.

My interests are local history, genealogy,
reading, sewing and various crafts, but
unfortunately time is in short supply for
these while working full time and also
studying.

From my involvement with the society I
hope to develop an interest, and hopefully a
passion, for the future when I have more
time to devote to other past times. I hope
to be able to maintain the financial records
to their current standards, and going
forward provide a businesslike perspective
to the society to ensure it has a secure
future.

NATIONAL TRUST 2012 HERITAGE FESTIVAL

The National Trust Heritage Festival
is an annual event run by the National
Trust...Our Society in company with
the Botany Bay Family History
Society, Sutherland Music Club,
Sydney Tramway Museum,
Sutherland Spinners & Weavers,
Royal National Park, Hazelhurst,
Green Point Observatory, Woronora
Cemetery and the Sutherland
Mediaeval Regiment put on programs
of interest to residents of the Shire
concurrently with events throughout
New South Wales.

The Festival runs from 14-29th April
and brochures will be available nearer
the event.

The theme for this year is *Amazing
Stories: Innovation & Invention*. Our
Museum will be open during that
period and we will be hosting a
Seminar on Saturday April 21st
followed by a Ploughman's Lunch –
\$10. A number of speakers will each
talk for a short time telling us of
inventions which have been
discovered in the Shire.

When I was Ten

Bruce Howell (Part 2)

When I was ten, pretty much the most important thing to me was my transistor radio¹. A transistor radio was the sixties' version of an *ipod*, although it did only one thing – played the local radio stations. In Sydney the stations that I found interesting were 2UW (now MIX 106.5), 2UE and 2SM. All three of these stations played top 40 music, 24 hours a day², so the only thing that distinguished them was their presenters. Some of the presenters were: Jeff Hall and Ward Austin (on 2UW); Garry O'Callaghan (on 2UE) and Bob Rogers, Mike Walsh and Mad Mel (on 2SM). Ward Austin specialised in being “over-the-top”, in the style of a 50's disc-jockey from the United States. He'd frequently use nonsense phrases like *a rickapoodie and a fandoogle*, and in one of his promos for 2UW he said *2UW...triple-one-naughtable, on your transistor portable*, referring to the station's radio frequency, 1110 Kilohertz³. Jeff Hall hosted a show every Saturday night called *Dial-a-Hit*. I liked this show because Jeff would play songs in brackets of five, and pre-announce them, so that you knew what was coming up well in advance. This made it easy to record the songs I liked on my tape-recorder (another important thing in my life) and I ended up with tape after tape of my favourite top 40 songs. Garry O'Callaghan hosted the breakfast show on 2UE, which he did for many years to come. Garry had a special character on his show called *Sammy Sparrow*, who was great for young kids. I remember a similar character who featured on morning radio, called *Gerald the Talking Grasshopper*. Garry would also make a bit of a play on pretending that he knew which pilots were taking off from Kingsford Smith airport at any given moment. Bob Rogers was very successful and has been presenting radio shows ever since then, (as has Garry O'Callaghan). Bob has the distinction of having accompanied the Beatles on their

Australian tour in 1964, which in hindsight must have been an incredible experience for him. Mike Walsh went on to host a very successful midday talk-show on Channel 10 and Mad Mel was just plain mad.

Life was much simpler when I was ten. If you were at home there weren't many choices on how to entertain yourself – you could watch television (we had an EKCO black and white TV that by today's standards was primitive) or listen to the radio⁴ or record player. This meant that there weren't many things that I needed. My father gave me 2 shillings (2/-) a week pocket money, that I was usually able to save. When decimal currency was introduced in 1966, “two shillings” was replaced with “20 cents”, so 2/- pocket money doesn't sound like much, but it bought a lot back then. For example you could buy 6 paddle-pops with 2/-. These days it would cost you about \$9 to do that. I used my savings to buy things like tapes for my tape-recorder, batteries for my transistor, and the occasional record. The first record that I paid for with my own money was “With the Beatles” in 1964 – I know I drove my Dad crazy playing that thing over and over and over. I bought it from McDowell's in Caringbah, which used to be situated on the corner of the Kingsway and President Avenue. The building is still there, but has been given a make-over at some stage. I paid £2/12/6 for that record, which equates to \$5.25, but if we use the “Paddle Pop index” given that you could've bought 125 paddle pops with £2/12/6, it's equivalent to about \$180. Well, that sounds like a *lot* of money, maybe the “paddle-pop index” has a few bugs in it, but suffice to say that recorded music was much more expensive to buy, relatively speaking, in the sixties than it is today.

I had earned my transistor radio as a reward. My father offered the reward to motivate me to learn to swim well enough to swim the width of Shelly Beach Pool in Cronulla. In summer my brother and I were

frequent visitors to the pool, but neither of us were strong swimmers. I only too clearly remember the day that he and I were in the pool and I was pushing him along on an inflatable float (he was about 6 years old). I had unwittingly walked into water in which I could barely stand, when he fell off the float and clung desperately to me. Of course this made it very difficult for me, and I was on the verge of panic, when by a stroke of good luck I realised that if I kept calm, I had just enough height (on tippy-toes) to keep my mouth above water, (with my brother still clinging to me), and maintain my balance long enough to slowly inch my way back into shallower water. I suppose someone would have saved us, but if the water had been even an inch deeper, you never know what the result might have been. Well, that scared me a bit, and perhaps it was after that incident that my father employed Frank Jordan to teach me how to swim. After a few lessons (that were given by Mr Jordan actually in Shelly Pool) I eventually achieved the goal of swimming the width of the pool, and that transistor radio was mine.

I took that radio everywhere I went. I took it to school one day, to listen to music at recess, but one of the school prefects (whose name I won't reveal here) confiscated it from me and I had to do without it for a whole week – well, that almost killed me. That radio opened up a new world to me. I'd listen to it late into the night by holding it to my ear on the lowest possible volume. Always curious as to which song would be played next, I found it very difficult to *stop* listening. When the battery ran out, I learned that I could still use the radio for a few nights longer on the lowest volume, because the battery would regain a tiny amount of power during the day. That was important because there was never the money to replace the battery straight away. Although my parents had it much tougher growing up in the depression years of the 1930's, my brother and I grew up in a time when material possessions were harder to come

by than they are today. But I'm glad of that now - we knew no better so it didn't worry us, and I think it instilled an appreciation of the "little things in life", that at the end of the day, are the most important things.

¹ *In those days everyone called their transistor radio, their "tranny", although you wouldn't use that term loudly in public today.*

² *Although on Sundays, 2SM broadcast the Rugby League in the afternoon, with Frank Hyde, and a short religious item in the evening.*

³ *In 1963, all the radio stations were AM, broadcasting in frequencies measured in Kilohertz. Today's FM stations broadcast in Megahertz.*

⁴ *My parents referred to the radio as "the wireless", and up until recently, if you used the term "wireless", it was a sign to others that you are really quite old.*

What's in a Name?

Part 2

(Bruce Howell)

Some place names are like fossils. Forgotten links to the past can be given new life by discovering the origin of a place name. The fascinating link between the *Whitby Cliffs* and the *Caedmon Steps* (both at the southern end of North Cronulla Beach) has already been explained in this bulletin¹ and is one of the best examples you'll ever find of what can be revealed by being curious about simple place names. Living in South Cronulla and driving along Nicholson Parade each day, I recently noticed a street called Gunyah Street. I know that *gunyah* is a name for an aboriginal dwelling, usually made from a framework of branches, over which suitable foliage can be laid, but *gunyah* can also refer to a rock shelter. Now, Gunyah Street terminates at the north-eastern corner of Darook Park, and Darook Park Road is the next street north of Gunyah

Street, along Nicholson Parade. Darook Park itself, is well known for its shell middens, in fact if you walk across the elevated southern section of Darook Park, you are walking right over the top of a vast shell midden. Accumulations of shells anywhere in the Cronulla and Port Hacking area usually mean one thing – evidence of the occupation of the area *before* European settlement. Now, *Darook* is very similar to the word *Dharug*, which refers to a specific language group of people who inhabited the Sydney area before the arrival of the First Fleet. *Dharug* can alternatively be spelt *Darug*, *Dharuk* or *Daruk*, so it's fair to assume that the naming of the park was related to the perception that the people who lived there, before modern settlement, were of the Dharug language group.

So the name of the park is really telling us something of the prehistory, or the perceived prehistory, of the Darook Park area, prior to modern settlement.

Now, consider also the nearby line of white sandstone underhangs – now of almost mythical significance – contained in what was once called the *Wahgunyah Cliffs*. The Wahgunyah Cliffs commence at the northern end of Darook Park and stretch for almost 200 metres further north. The exquisite white sandstone underhangs are now mostly privately owned, but one² lies within the boundaries of Darook Park itself. In 1929, Frank Cridland wrote of the Wahgunyah Cliffs³, as well as a creek that flowed into the northern end of Darook Park. He spoke of grinding grooves and rock engravings that once could be seen associated with the cliffs and the park³. *Wahgunyah* translates as *big camp* or *big shelter*, presumably describing a meeting place, or a place where people lived. An early photograph of the cliffs⁴ is inscribed as the *White Gunyahs*, which probably refers to the underhangs themselves as likely places of occupation – indeed the one underhang that can be seen in the park, clearly contains shell midden soil, the strongest evidence of prolonged occupation.

One time resident of the Wahgunyah cliffs area, Olive Watkins (1916-1989), describing one of the underhangs⁵, said:

“Their hand and foot marks were in the rock, worn into hollows over the years. There were lots of carvings and sharpening tool marks...at the Cronulla end of the cave was a huge midden of shells. It was a real treasure to us.”

So there it is: the street named Gunyah, alongside Darook Park and Darook Park Road, and adjacent to the now virtually forgotten⁶ Wahgunyah Cliffs, tells us a story – a story of the *prehistory* of Cronulla, when people lived in and around what we call *Darook Park*.

In a wider sense, we are fortunate that the first explorers of our shire were mindful of its “prehistory” when place names were first coined. Consider the surveyor Robert Dixon, who was charged with the job of surveying most of the Botany Bay and Port Hacking area in 1827. Keeping in mind that the earliest true settlers in the Port Hacking area did not arrive until say, the 1840's, it appears that Dixon asked the *local people* what names they had for the places he came across. So place-names like Cronulla, Gunnamatta, Burraneer, and Woolooware⁷, (all mapped by Dixon in 1827) have a tremendous significance in that they freeze in time the day that a surveyor, in carrying out his duties, was enlightened enough to ask the people who were already living there about the names they had been using, rather than name a beach or bay after a person or thing with no real connection to the area.

Might we also infer then, that Dixon was able to secure *friendly* contact with the original occupants? At such an early point in the history of European settlement (only 39 years after the arrival of the First Fleet) it is unlikely that Dixon could have communicated with the local people by any other method than “sign language”, yet he successfully posed “questions” and

transcribed the responses (in a language presumably unfamiliar to him) into English spellings. There must have been a spirit of patience and co-operation amongst Dixon and the people he met. This might not be surprising, since it appears from the writings of Matthew Flinders (no less), that when he and George Bass, in 1796, sheltered at what we now call Salmon Haul, (curiously only a very short walk from Darook Park), the local people were friendly:

Flinders wrote:

*“Before noon, we entered Port Hacking, and landed in a small cove on the north side... we amused ourselves in the evening with fishing; but... night drawing on, we retired to our cove, where we had prepared a place... two natives had visited us in the afternoon and had behaved very civilly. We understood them tolerably well, and were not under the least apprehension, considering ourselves as almost at home...”*⁸

Perhaps we can thank Dixon too, for setting an example that has been emulated time and time again when choosing names for new localities in the Sutherland Shire – with suburbs like Bundeena, Caringbah, Jannali, Gymea, Illawong, Kirrawee, Kareela, Woronora and Yarrawarrah, street names like Alkeringa, Wandella, Nullaburra, Girrilang, and Parraweena (and hundreds of others), and beaches like Elouera and Wanda and Deeban Spit, the link to the prehistory of the Sutherland Shire, *our* prehistory, is “writ large”.

So, what’s in a name?

Well in the case of the names for some of the key localities in the Cronulla area, they tell a story of a people who had been living here before European settlement, and long enough to have names for the beaches and bays that were part of their environment. It also tells of a certain enlightenment shown by the surveyor Dixon, or those who gave him his instructions, in naming the

localities using the original inhabitants’ language. Perhaps too, it tells of a friendly people, who were helpful to surveyor Dixon, no matter which beach or bay he visited.

¹ See the *Sutherland Shire Historical Society Bulletin*, May 2006 (p8) and February 2010 (p 15, 16).

² *One of the Wahgunyah Cliffs underhangs lays at the most northern part of Darook Park Beach.*

³ See “*The Story of Port Hacking, Cronulla and the Sutherland Shire*”, by Frank Cridland, Angus and Robertson (republished 1950) pages 16, 17 and 33.

⁴ See the “*Picture Sutherland*” website page (below) to see two photographs of the underhangs taken in 1899, titled “*White Gunyahs*”(1&2) - <http://picturesutherland.sutherlandlibrary.com/Results.asp?search=darook>

⁵ See “*Pictorial History of Cronulla*”, by Pauline Curby, Kingsclear Books (1998), page 5.

⁶ *There is a block of home units called “Wahgunyah”, on the corner of Nicholson Parade and Richmount Street in Cronulla, very close to the northern most section of the Wahgunyah Cliffs*

⁷ *Dixon also named Weeney, Bonna, Quibray & Gwawley Bays and Towra Point, plus Jibbon Beach and Yennabilla Point, and also Woronora in 1827, by recording the native names.*

⁸ *Transcribed from the plaque situated along the walkway at Salmon Haul Beach, at the tip of the Cronulla Peninsula.*

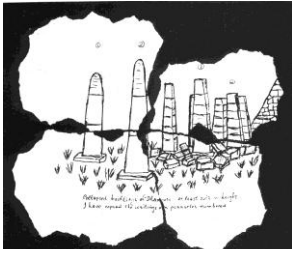
Quotes

John Oates (member of Scott’s last expedition to the Antarctic –died 1912)
I am just going outside and I may be some time.

Ned Kelly (hanged 1880)- last words
Such is life.

THE GYMPIE PYRAMID

by Gordon de L. Marshall



Original drawing by John Green of standing stones at the Gympie Pyramid

What is known as the Gympie pyramid, near the town of Gympie in Queensland, is an archaeological anomaly which has long been a source of mystery and speculation.

Unfortunately all this will come to an end in the near future if the Queensland government goes ahead with its plans to bulldoze the site and construct a highway through it.

Academia and the government dismiss the site on the grounds that it is a nineteenth century or even more recent construction, despite evidence to the contrary, which is ignored, and refuse to conduct an excavation which would determine the age and nature of the site.

The Gympie pyramid is located north of Gympie, five kilometers from the centre of the town, on the Tin Can Bay road. It currently has tall trees growing on it, which make it difficult to recognize or to photograph.

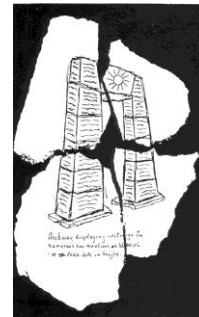


John Green

The pyramid itself is the rounded end of a sandstone ridge which has had stone terraces cut into its sides, giving it a pyramidal impression. It is not a pyramid in the Egyptian or

South American sense. The pyramid is 100ft (30.4 metres) high and has six stone terraces, varying in width from 10 metres at the bottom to two metres at the top, and incorporating natural stone features. Some of the stones in the terraces have been shaped and squared, and some of the larger

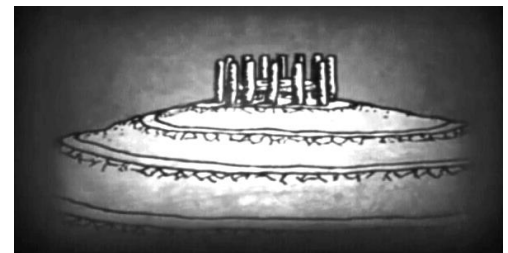
ones would weigh many kilograms. On the summit are two heavy stone grinders, possibly for preparing offerings, and a sort of turret, an upstanding section of drystone wall with a depressed centre, ideal for defensive purposes, and a pile of stones which look like a collapsed construction of some type. Also, three large, flat, diamond or shield shaped stones have been found which have slightly depressed centres leading to slots, suggesting liquid offerings. Iron bars found on the site fit into these central slots precisely, but their function is unknown. The interior of the pyramid is unknown, and there are believed to be three or more entrances, some blocked, leading into it. The pyramid is thought to be terraced on three sides with the standing up metres high, have been by the of cattle, and settlers



Original drawing by John Green of Gateway on the Pyramid

away stone for construction purposes.

Early records indicate that when the pyramid was first discovered, it had thirteen pillars on the summit, surrounding a circular stone table with a hollow centre. Further down were



Reconstruction of the summit of the Pyramid with 13 pillars surrounding a round stone table

standing stones inscribed with symbols, and a gateway. It is believed that the terraces, with the gateway, may have formed a way up the hill. It is thought that the stones were taken by early settlers for constructing new buildings, which is understandable. Fortunately, drawings of some of the standing stones were recorded in a diary by John Green, a great

grandfather of Brett Green, a local historian who has spent much time researching the pyramid, and is the author of a book entitled *The Gympie Pyramid Story*.¹ Gold was found in Gympie in 1867, and construction of town buildings began. However, inscribed stones from the gateway were apparently found quite recently under the floor of one of the Gympie Churches – from where they vanished².



(above) Flat stone with central hole for offerings.

(below) Iron bar found on site, one of several



Another pyramid, or a construction which looked like one, is said to have existed at Tin Can Bay, on the coast from Gympie. The area was taken over as an army base, and the pyramid was covered with

earth and used as target practice. Subsequent damage resulted in carved stones used in the construction of the pyramid. The army then became worried about losing land for heritage reasons, and destroyed the pyramid. The carved or inscribed stones were reputedly taken out to sea and dumped in deep water, or used to fill a creek. This is believed to have taken place after the Second World War, possibly in the 1940s.³

There is said to be another pyramid on the Nullabor Plain found by Len Beadell, the well known surveyor. He is said to have been told by the local aborigines that the pyramid was outside the dreamtime, and that it was very bad luck to talk about it. Other pyramids have reputedly been sighted in central Australia, which used to be a lush area several millennia ago.

Interest in the Gympie pyramid began to grow in the 1950s, in part owing to unusual

phenomena experienced on it and unusual artefacts found nearby.

There has been no major archaeological excavation of the Gympie Pyramid. An archaeological survey was undertaken by Michael Morwood in 1967, who dismissed the site as a recent construction by Italian migrants for growing grapes, a view supported by a local historian. For some reason Morwood's report is totally unavailable. The pyramid was surveyed by Greg Jefferies, who did a survey while still a student in 1990 and another survey and minor excavation in 2007.⁴ Jefferies found that the soil in the terraces was poor and infertile native soil, becoming sandy in the top trenches, with no sign of backfilling with more fertile soils. There was no trace of cultivation in the form of remains of vine cultivation in the form of roots or stems or trellises, and there was no trace of equipment for wine making on site. Irrigation would also have been necessary, and there is no trace of storage tanks, pumps or pipes that would have been required, and no record of their existence. Even the orientation of the existing terraces, which face south east, is considered unsuitable for vine growing, and vine cultivators are advised to use slopes facing north. Work with a bobcat in 2007 revealed how very poor the soils in the terraces were.

Jefferies found that there had been no Italian community in Gympie before World War II, and did research in the land titles office which indicated that people credited with constructing the terraces in the nineteenth century had never actually owned the land the pyramid stands on, so why should they go to so much trouble on land they did not own?



Shaped stones found on the site

Jefferies also found that the terraces were in some cases constructed with large

stones which would have been extremely heavy, in some cases in excess of one ton in weight, and could see no reason why anyone should wish to construct such terraces at the cost of so much effort, as well as that of shaping some of the stones, when there was plenty of far more fertile land available nearby. The terraces would also have been too high for cultivation, and become more pronounced towards the top of the pyramid. In any case, terraces for cultivation are usually only constructed where arable land is in short supply, due to mountains, as is the case in Peru and the Philippines.⁵

The origins of the Gympie pyramid are not known. The aborigines did not build it, and they are not known to have constructed terraces anywhere in Australia, or to have shaped stones or to have carried large stones any distance. If anything, they appear to have been afraid of the site, and left it alone. Possibly it was regarded as a place of evil spirits, and avoided. Aborigines taken to it in recent times have declared that they feel sick, and want to leave.⁶

The pyramid is not of European construction, and existence of drawings in John Green's diary suggest it is of pre-European origin, and also of ancient origin.

Jefferies points out that the Polynesians have a tradition of terracing hills for forts



Stone terrace on the Pyramid

or religious purposes of which examples exist in Raiiati and Tonga which bear a resemblance to the Gympie terraces, so the pyramid could be of Polynesian origin, or from a mutual ancestor. Apart from that, nothing has been found on the pyramid to support this idea.⁷

The original purpose of the pyramid is not known. Jefferies points out that it would

have made a good fort given its location⁸, but there is no evidence for this, and it seems to have been much more likely to have had a ritual function, particularly given the inscribed standing stones and the pillars on the summit. Quite possibly it was an observatory, and may have been for star rituals etc. With the lack of further evidence or excavation we have to conclude that it was built by unknown people at a time unknown for unknown purposes.⁹

People have had various spiritual experiences on the pyramid, varying from experiences of higher consciousness to unusual healing and encounters with spirits, which have included soldiers in bronze armour and white-clad female spirits who have identified themselves as guardians.

In the 1960s, the summit of the pyramid was bulldozed by a person who wanted to build a house there. In doing so he is said to have destroyed the remaining two columns and dumped them in a mineshaft. However, after that he had a lot of illnesses, bad dreams and mechanical trouble, and started seeing figures in his house near the period, and strange faces looking in at the window. He was thoroughly "spooked" and left the area.¹⁰

A number of unusual artefacts have been found in the Gympie area, some near the pyramid. These include a carved yellow stone head found near the pyramid, suggesting South American influence, an ancient statuette of the Indian Goddess Lakshmi, a Grecian urn, an ancient Chinese teapot or wine pot, and a stone statue of what may be the Egyptian god Thoth in ape form, known as "The Gympie Ape." The archaeological value of these objects has been reduced by being taken out of context, but they are still interesting. A piece of "bloomery iron" was found on the pyramid, along with other smelting remains. According to aboriginal legend, lakes or seas used to extend from the coast almost to the base of the pyramid, which is

apparently supported by geological evidence, seismic uplift having since emptied the lakes. This would account for foreign contact and possibly trade in the area.



Yellow stone head found next to the Pyramid

The carved yellow stone head was found near the Gympie pyramid in 1985 after a railway line was constructed alongside. It is carved from a yellow conglomerate stone that is not found in the Gympie area. It has strong central or South American connotations, and it has been suggested it may be of Toltec origin. It has been suggested that construction of the railway line revealed one of the entrances to the pyramid which contained artifacts, removed by the railway, and this was during the excavation.

The “Gympie Ape” was found in a paddock diagonally opposite the pyramid by Dell Barry and Ken Blakemore, a former owner of the pyramid. It has been thought to have been a statue of the Egyptian god Thoth in ape form, or the Hindu god Hanuman. The statue is in the Gympie museum.



The Gympie Ape



Bronze statuette of Tara

A bronze statuette depicting the Indian goddess Lakshmi or the Tibetan goddess Tara was found in clay in a creek bed in the Gympie region. The amount of corrosion on the statue suggests it must be of ancient origin.

An ancient bronze and copper Chinese tea pot or wine pot was found on Frazer Island near Tin Can Bay. The corrosion on it indicates its age, and it may have come from a shipwreck. The fact that it has three legs suggests it is a wine pot.



Bronze teapot/wine pot



Grecian urn found by Brett Green

A bronze Grecian urn was found in the hills north of Gympie by local identity Brett Green.¹¹

A piece of ‘bloomery iron’ was found on the pyramid during attempts to excavate a possible entrance during the 2007 visit by Greg Jefferies.¹² This type of smelting has not been used in Australia and the last mill making it in England closed in 1770.¹³, with some exceptions in Asia. Other smelting material was found near it, suggesting that smelting was carried out on the site.



Bloomery iron found on site

The Gympie pyramid is a tourist attraction, and brings people in to Gympie from around the world. Despite that, many Gympie residents still regard it as a myth. The Queensland government intends to destroy the pyramid without any further investigation. A lecturer at the University of Queensland, Dr. Pranganell said in an interview with the editor of the Gympie Times on 9th September 2006... ‘the university has no intention of trying to test the myth as any digging on the site (of the Gympie Pyramid) would just give credibility to something that was impossible’¹⁴

The Gympie pyramid is unique in Australia. If it is destroyed, particularly with no further investigation, much will be lost including information about early visitors to Australia.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Mae West

You only live once, but if you do it right,
once is enough

Oscar Wilde

I'm not young enough to know everything.

'Back to the twenties' CHRISTMAS PARTY

Our Christmas Party at Nola Watt's in Kirrawee was a great success. Her lovely garden and ample supplies of tables, umbrellas and chairs made it easy to enjoy the company of our members. She had chosen the theme of 'Back to the Twenties' and set out printed topics for members to deliver. Our contributions ranged from Birth Control to the Growth of the Car Industry and in that relaxed atmosphere there were quite a few laughs amongst the considerable amount of information. There was even a reference to Tilley Devine.

Of course it was the variety of dress which caught the eye and set the tone: the feathers, the frills and the natty head gear. Our president was the epitome of the 20's with his smart black wear and two-tone shoes...not to mention his smart red sports car parked in the driveway to welcome all. Other men did their bit too with a couple of shady characters and suave gentlemen as well. Three judges circulated, unknown, during the afternoon and their pronouncements were given at a dress parade later in the day. I think all would have been unanimous in the choice of best dressed lady being Pauline, she looked completely the part with her fringed dress and nodding ostrich feather headband. Brian Saunders was the Best Dressed Gentleman and with his bowler hat and suit filling the bill, his ukulele put the finishing touch and later in the day he entertained us with his guitar.

The hallmark of the afternoon was STYLE. Not just 1920's, but style in general. Against the lovely garden setting the afternoon unfolded with easy charm which completely hid the hard work lying behind it. Nola's imaginative ideas kept us all entertained and she had everything organised to maintain the pace of the afternoon. An innovation was the entertainment, including background music of the period and renditions of events of these times when QANTAS was formed

and discoveries in the medical field gave us penicillin. The famous identities of stage and film were recalled, as well as The Henry Ford Story. There was also a popular display of items on display and photographs put together by Jim from the collection held by the Society plus some items from a personal collection. We had many willing and able workers, setting out and packing up being paramount in the planning, everyone did their bit, but Jim, Terry, Bob and Maurie certainly took the lions share. Perhaps, most of all, we were very lucky to have Clive at the BBQ toiling away in the heat. Bruce thanked all for attending and Nola for allowing us to hold the event in her magnificent garden, also mentioning that whilst being an Historical Society, we particularly enjoy hosting events of a social nature.

In hindsight we were incredibly fortunate with the weather as about Tuesday the following week the skies opened and solid rain deluged down....so bad the National Parks & Wildlife had to cancel their event at Audley. So we can only thank the Clerk of the Weather, and most of all Nola, for our perfect Christmas party.

Angela Badger and Bob Osborne

George Orwell

At fifty, everyone has the face that he deserves.

Maurice Chevalier

Old age isn't so bad when you consider the alternative

I think that crime pays. The hours are good, you travel a lot. (Anon.)

Larry Lorenzoni

Birthdays are good for you. Statistics show that the people who have the most, live the longest.

Lope de Vega

Bruce Watt

This is a book review about a book that was never published, written by an author whose pioneering work in a number of fields did not get the recognition at the time that it deserved.

The unpublished manuscript is titled Lope de Vega and was written by Lawrence Hargrave. A couple of versions are held in Australian institutions. I obtained a photocopy of the 63 page manuscript which is held in the Mitchell Library when I was researching other pre – Cook discoveries of Australia. Accompanying the manuscript is a handwritten letter addressed to George Collingridge, a fellow member of the Council of the Royal Geographic Society. The letter, sent from his home address at Woollahra Point, March 18th 1914 is canvassing support for the concepts addressed in the manuscript. In 1895, George Collingridge had published *The Discovery of Australia. A critical, documentary and historic investigation concerning the priority of discovery in Australasia by Europeans before the arrival of Lieut. James Cook, in the 'Endeavour', in the year 1770.*

Lawrence Hargrave was an explorer, engineer, inventor, astronomer, cartographer, aeronautical pioneer, town planner and ethnographer. He was born in Greenwich England in 1850 and died in Sydney in July 1915 very shortly after the death of his only son at Gallipoli in May 1915, an event which devastated him.

In 1856, Hargrave's father had left his wife and three children behind in England and with his brother and eldest child had sailed to New South Wales where another brother was a member of the Legislative Assembly. When Lawrence was 15, his father sent his son back to bring him to the colony. Whilst destined for the law, he failed his matriculation exams and became apprenticed as an engineer. He spent

several years on expeditions in ships, circumnavigating Australia and undertaking exploration in New Guinea where he was particularly interested in native culture and artifacts and where he first heard reports of ancient shipwrecks around the New Guinea coast. In 1877 he was elected a member of the Royal Society of New South Wales.

After his wanderlust years he settled down. His father had made some prudent and extensive property investments and his sons were well provided for. This enabled him to retire at a young age and concentrate on hobbies that included passionate research into kites and powered flight by humans. His belief in flapping wings as a method of achieving man powered flight hampered his progress but his observations on the aerodynamic shape of wing tops allowing lift ultimately saw the achievement of the first flight by the Wright brothers at Kittyhawk in the USA in 1903. Hargrave's willingness to publish his findings and refusal to patent his ideas meant that others received recognition that he should have shared.

Another passionately held belief was that the Australian continent had been visited and explored by others long before Cook's exploration in 1770. Indeed, George Collingridge's book examined the extensive evidence from maps and documents of exploration by the Spanish, Portuguese and Dutch from the 15th to the 18th centuries in the Oceans surrounding Australia.

In 1909 Hargrave presented his ideas before the Royal Society in a manuscript titled Lope de Vega. His theory was that two Spanish ships, the Santa Isabel, under the captaincy of the Spanish navigator Lope de Vega and the Santa Barbara had become separated from Alvaro de Mendana's ill fated colonization expedition at Santa Cruz in the Solomon Group in 1595 and had found their way to Sydney Harbour. He speculated that they stayed for several years and left in 1600 but were

wrecked on the Queensland coast and in Torres Strait.

Mendana's four ship expedition had been sent out to found a colony on the island of San Christobel, one of the Solomon Group, previously discovered by him in 1567-69 and from there, to search for the Great Southern continent. As it was intended to settle a colony on the Australian continent, many, including Mendana and Lope de Vega took their wives with them. An attempt was made at colonisation on the island of Santa Cruz but sickness, native hostility and a mutinous spirit saw the colony's demise. Mendana himself fell sick and died. Two ships became separated and were never seen again. The remnants of the expedition sailed on to the Philippines and returned to Spain in 1596. The grand idea of founding a Spanish empire on Terra Australis or the Australian continent was abandoned.

The reception given to the Lope de Vega theory by the acknowledged historical authorities was not favourable and despite several attempts to attract interest in it, it remained unpublished upon his death in 1915 (and remains so today).

In 1912 he revised the manuscript and included photographic evidence and hand drawn impressions of rock carvings from the Sydney area and other evidence purporting to support his theory.

Hargrave conjectured that a large number of rock carvings in the Sydney basin were made by the Spanish using sharp edged metal tools. He also cites similarity in the spelling or pronunciation of certain Spanish and aboriginal words such as Jibbon – jibion (Spanish – cuttle fish), Cronulla – Corulla (Spanish – room under a deck on a row gallery), Maroubra – Marrubra (the sea, red or ruby). Hargrave found what he thought was evidence of ancient iron rings on rocks at Woollahra, directly in front of his home, that he claimed were used to tie ships to.

Near Bondi he found drawings of two ancient ships with poop decks that he maintained represented The Santa Barbara and Santa Isabel. An accompanying script contained the letters

B A L N

Z A I H

W O

Which he speculated read
*‘we in the Santa Barbara and Santa y
Zabel conquered west from point to point
by the sign of the cross’*

He also cites newspaper accounts that purport that a surveying party appointed to layout the town of Gladstone in Queensland in 1853 found an ancient bronze cannon in the sand and also on Facing Island was the remains of a very ancient ship with oak trees growing out of its gaping sides.

It is often said that history is written by the victors. Whilst Hargrave’s theory can be dismissed as pure speculation based on flaky evidence, it is evident that two ships, capable of long sea voyages disappeared without trace. On the balance of probability, they were most likely lost at sea, however given that the expedition was about exploration and settlement and the relative proximity to the Australian coastline and favourable currents, it is at least plausible that a landing on the Australian continent occurred.

Secrecy was paramount amongst the great seafaring countries of Europe at the time as the prize for discovering and claiming a potentially rich new continent was tantalizing. It is speculated that Joseph Banks may have possessed a copy of the ‘Dieppe maps’ of the east coast of the Australian continent drawn up to 200 years earlier when he and Lieutenant Cook sailed

for the south Pacific in 1768. This points to the extent of European exploration that had already been done, mainly before the 18th Century. Most Australians have been taught to repeat the historically incorrect mantra that ‘Captain Cook discovered Australia in 1770’. This is incorrect in several respects. Certainly a century ago, at the height of British power, it would have been considered heresy to deny that the British weren’t the true discoverers and rightful inheritors of the Australian continent and was at least amongst the reasons why Hargrave failed to secure approval from more expert historians.

It is interesting to note some geopolitics of the era preceding Cook’s discovery. In the 15th and 16th Centuries Portugal and Spain were European naval superpowers. In 1494, the Treaty of Tordesillas struck a deal that effectively divided the as yet undiscovered lands outside Europe between Portugal and Spain. All of the lands to the east of the Cape Verde islands in the Atlantic were Portuguese and all to the west were Spanish. This is why Brazil’s official language is Portuguese whilst countries to the west speak Spanish. Spain reaped an enormous fortune from the conquest of the Inca empire on South America’s west coast.

In 1529 the treaty of Saragossa between these two superpowers set the boundaries on the opposite meridian, effectively dividing the world in two. Any land to the east of modern day Timor (135°East) was Spanish and to the west was Portuguese. So Spain got most of the Pacific Ocean including the Philippines and most of Australia and Portugal got the rich East Indies, the Indian Ocean and what is today Western Australia.

It’s ironic that when Governor Phillip claimed the continent of Australia on the 26th January 1788 he was doing it only as far as the 135th parallel (ie to the line of the present day Western Australian border) in accordance with his commission. Adoption of the 135th meridian as a boundary would

minimize provocation with Portugal. (note that this is 250 years after the Saragossa treaty!) By this time Spain was no longer a threat so Britain claiming the east coast would not cause a political stoush. By 1825 however, Britain was powerful enough and found it convenient to annexe the rest of the Australian continent. This was how the whole of the Australian continent was eventually amalgamated as one country.

McIntyre, (The secret discovery of Australia 1977) is totally dismissive of Hargrave's claims. Hargrave's 'missionary advocacy' concealed a 'blind spot' for Spanish voyages that amounted to clutching at straws and drawing incorrect conclusions.

So the lack of firm historical evidence and the timing of the claim at the point of Britain's greatest power relegated Hargrave's theory to the dustbin of history. However, some archaeological finds support the broad notion that previous contact had been made. Who knows what future research or archaeological discovery may help to resolve the mystery.

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Wendell Phillips slavery abolitionist
 (Lincoln) is a first rate second rate man

COASTAL SHIPWRECKS Off Sutherland Shire

Merle Kavanagh

1891 – 1905

1893 *Hilda*

This ship was a steam collier belonging to the Coalcliff Company and was worth about £3000. She was heading for Sydney on the 19th July 1893 carrying about 240 tons of coal from the southern collieries when disaster struck about 1.30 a.m. The Captain, Charles Phillipson, had left the bridge for some minutes, having given the course to the helmsman. On his return he found his ship was close to the shore off the north head of Port Hacking and he called to the engineer to reverse engines. But it was too late and the ship struck a reef. The crew below hurried onto the deck and, as the ship was leaking badly, the boats were lowered and the ship's company of 11 scrambled into them. The ship had become covered in ashes, issuing from the funnel, caused by the sea smothering the fire as it rushed through the broken hull. She sank within minutes and the crew landed at Botany about 3.30 a.m. then walked to Sydney.

An enquiry was held and there was some dispute about the course given to the helmsman by the Captain. Peter Martin, an A.B. was at the wheel when the *Hilda* went ashore and he was steering N.E. by N., the course he had been told. George Henderson, Engineer of the *Hilda*, said he heard the Captain tell the man at the wheel that the ship was heading W.N.W. The Board of enquiry found that the ship had been lost due to the wrongful act or default of Captain Phillipson, the Master, for careless navigation of the ship and not taking care to see she was properly steered.

However, at a hearing a few days later it was announced that the Master had given the correct course on the night of the wreck but had erred by not leaving someone in charge when he left the bridge. Ultimately the Board dealt leniently with the Master and suspended his certificate for three months, dating from the

time of the vessel's loss and agreed to issue a Mate's Certificate in the meantime.

1898 *Koonya*

The *Koonya* was a wooden screw coasting schooner ten years old and was owned by the Moruya Steam Navigation Company. She left Moruya on 24 January 1898 with 14 passengers, some of them ladies and children, and a mixed cargo of food and pigs. A day out the weather turned nasty with heavy rain and the ship ran ashore about 3 a.m. on the northernmost end of Cronulla Beach, near today's Boat Harbour. No lights could be seen on land but the crew gathered on deck and the stewardess, Miss Rankin, roused the passengers and issued them with life belts. Soon after, Captain Thomas Nicholson, who was at the wheel when the ship struck, assessed that there was no immediate danger and they could take off the life belts.

At daylight the boats were launched and a line taken ashore and tied to a tree. This enabled the passengers to be brought ashore, followed by their luggage and the crew's gear, except for that of the Stewardess who was busy taking care of her passengers. They 'camped' on land and breakfast was provided by making several trips to the ship for supplies.

However, although the tide was low, the ship was being buffeted by the sea swell and, with a weakened hull, the *Koonya* split and broke up. Her stern was the only part visible at high tide. Wreckage and cargo was strewn along the shore and some 20 pigs were trotting along the beach.

Although an earlier message of the wreck was sent, no response had been received. Another message was sent to Sutherland and then on to Sydney and as a result a 'conveyance' arrived to take the party and their gear to the hotel at Port Hacking. The road was very rough and the party had to walk at times. Captain Webber of the Shipwreck Society called in at the Hotel to give what help he could, but Miss Rankin was the only needy person, being barefoot

and without her possessions. The wreck was put up for sale a few days later and after a starting bid of £5 she was sold for £50 to a Mr. Zimmerman.

At the Marine Enquiry on 8 February, 1898, the Captain maintained that the ship was on a N.E. heading which, everyone agreed, including the Captain, would have made the accident impossible. The enquiry was adjourned for a few days then resumed, gathering evidence from the Chief Officer, the look-out man, two passengers and a master mariner who thought the compasses must have been wrong or affected by their nearness to the iron ventilators. Adjourned again, the Chief Engineer gave evidence that the speed of the vessel had been full ahead all the way and never altered. The Board found the master should have reduced speed during the bad weather and that he had not taken sufficient precautions to avoid the land.

1898 *Marion Fenwick*

Another steamer from the Moruya Steam Navigation fleet was actually chartered to replace the *Koonya* and it too was driven ashore and wrecked a few miles from where the *Koonya* met her fate three weeks earlier. She even carried some of the crew from the *Koonya* and only two passengers. The ship ran ashore on the rugged rocks of Marley Pt. on 13th February and the Sydney Morning Herald in its report recorded "Here the breakers roll with tremendous force". All the crew and passengers reached safety including Captain Farrell who remained with the wreck while it gradually broke up.

On 19th February it was sold at auction for £25 to Messrs. Allen and Hunter of Balmain. They succeeded in securing the boiler and engine from the vessel five weeks after the wreck.

The Marine Board found that the wreck had been caused by the act of the Master (Farrell) in beating his ship near Port Hacking to save life during a heavy gale, but no blame was attributed to him or any other person.

1904 *Nemesis*

The first inkling that this ship had been lost was the appearance of wreckage along Cronulla Beach, over a three mile area. On 12th July crowds had begun to gather and amongst them were Captain Langley Webb of the shipping line, Huddart Parker and Captain Sangster of the Department of Navigation. The previous day Mr. W.H. Davies of the Cronulla Hotel had been standing on the northern headland known as Longnose Pt. when he saw a large box floating in the water. When it was brought to the beach there was clear evidence of its origins. On the front of the box were the words 'S.S. Nemesis – Parcels'.

A lifeboat had been washed onto the beach previously and there was much speculation, but finding the box had almost certainly ascertained the true identity of the wrecked ship. There were numerous pieces of wreckage – hatch covers, life belts, buoys, a cabin cushion and deck fittings, most of them damaged in a gale which had struck the area. A large number of Police were stationed on Cronulla Beach to guard the wreckage, including the local man Snr. Constable Lewis.

The *Nemesis* had sailed from Newcastle on Friday 8th July bound for Melbourne with a cargo of coal and coke. A gale sprung up and she made little progress, being seen off Wollongong at 2 p.m. on Saturday 9th by another ship. However, the gale increased to a hurricane and it is thought the *Nemesis* was driven back. Frequent rockets were sighted off Port Hacking on Saturday night, but nothing could be done in such turbulent weather. The signals ceased before midnight. There were 32 crew on the ship, including two survivors of the *Elingamite* which had been wrecked some time previously. There were letters to newspapers about the necessity to sail when such extreme weather conditions were expected. Suggestions were made regarding a search for the remains of the wreck by trawling.

One body was washed up on 18th July near Boat Harbour, possibly a deckhand and it

was then taken to the Cronulla Beach Hotel. Relatives of the missing crew viewed the body to check if it was their missing family member. He was interred at Sutherland on 20th July 1904. Another body was recovered on 29th July. One of these bodies was subsequently identified in Adelaide by the description published in the newspaper.

Two more bodies were recovered on 9th August. One wore a blue suit with brass buttons, black socks and lace-up boots, no doubt an officer. He was identified as J. Linklater, 3rd Officer of the *Nemesis*. The second man wore a dungaree suit, woollen Guernsey and lace-up boots, and was thought to be a fireman. None of the four bodies recovered wore a life belt. Another body was spotted on 15th October and suspected to be from the *Nemesis* but not recovered and therefore unconfirmed.

An enquiry was held mid-August and found the *Nemesis* was almost fully loaded. Also it was considered by one expert that the vessel foundered off Wattamolla, five miles from Jibbon Pt. and as there were steep cliffs in the area, it was likely that the ship had struck land and sunk in deep water.

This disaster inspired the presentation of a Matinee performance where every performer or artiste gave half their fee towards a disaster fund for the widows and orphans who had lost a husband or father in the disaster.

1908 Thode Fagelund

The steamtug *Fearless*, towing the schooner *Lady Mabel*, arrived in Sydney early on 23rd January and reported a steamer in distress off the point at Port Hacking. It had been close to the land and showing blue lights, a signal for help. The pilot steamer, *Captain Cook*, left Sydney about 2 a.m. and lifeboat crews were put on alert.

The weather the previous day had been thick and dirty all along the coast, so much so that the outline of the land had been obscured. The *Thode Fagelund*, a steel screw vessel, launched in 1904, had been

on her way to Sydney from Adelaide. She had gone ashore at Potters Point, close to where the *Koonya* had struck, and there she remained, fast on the rocks at the northern end of Cronulla Beach. The ship was upright and there appeared to be no danger so the crew remained on board with the Master, Captain Agerup and his wife, while the weather was clear. The Master told of being unable to ascertain his true position because of the misty rain and haze obscuring the land. They had missed the Wollongong light because of the poor visibility. Just prior to the accident soundings had been taken which he said indicated they were five miles off land. When the land was sighted a few minutes later 'Full astern' was given but it was too late. When asked by a Sydney Morning Herald reporter if there was any panic, the Captain's wife interjected "No, certainly not! Nothing like that occurs on our ships!" However, despite the appearance of normalcy, the ship had been severely holed and salvage operations would prove to be difficult.

The wreck became a focus for visitors to Cronulla. From the Hotel at Cronulla Beach the ship appeared to be well out to sea (she was a hundred yards offshore) and that nothing was amiss. Many visitors began the hike along the beach about 4 miles to the wreck, but some turned back half way. Other visitors came via Kurnell. The crew fished over the side and posed for photographs.

Being a Norwegian owned ship, arrangements were made for salvage operations by the Consul for Norway, Mr. Olav E. Pauss. There were several attempts to move the ship over the next ten days using the tugs *Hero* and *Advance* and eventually the ship was dragged off and with her engines working she floated into Mort's Dock. It was quite a feat for Capt. C.C. Spinks in charge of the event as this ship was the largest that had ever been successfully refloated in Australian waters. Twelve hours later a gale struck which certainly would have wrecked the ship had

she still been stuck on the rocks. Mort's Dock & Engineering Co. tendered successfully for repairs which cost over £20,000 and employed 250-300 men on the job for several months and gave employment to nearly all boilermakers then out of work.

Ref.

Loney, Jack, *Wrecks on the New South Wales Coast*, Oceans Enterprises, Yarram, Vic. 1993.

Trove.nla.gov.au. *Sydney Morning Herald*, various issues 1891 – 1905.

Delardes Reserve Illawong

Greg Jackson

In the SSHS bulletin Vol. 14, No. 3 Aug. 2011, the article '*Crossing the Georges River*' looked at the first ferry crossing of the Georges River in 1843 bringing Major Sir Thomas Mitchell's Illawarra Road into the Sutherland Shire and the archaeological remains of that convict built road. This is only a part of the fascinating history of this small riverside reserve located in what is now the suburb of Illawong. This area was obviously of importance to the aboriginal living in this area. On a promontory, at the eastern end of the reserve are the remains of a large shell midden; the midden has been robbed of most of its shells to feed the lime kilns that supplied mortar to the early settlers. The kilns that obviously existed in Lime Kiln Bay would be prime suspects although the shells could have been burnt on site. Limestone suitable for making mortar was not found in NSW until after a road across the Blue Mountains was built in 1814 by William Cox. Even up to the 1870's the shipping records show boats bring shells

to be burnt for lime¹ which sold for 1 shilling a bushel in 1819².

The suburb of Lugarno originally included that part of Illawong containing the ferry crossings and the Albert Delardes Reserve was originally named Lugarno Park. Following the railways crossing the Georges River in 1886 the three enterprising Sanbrook brothers began the operation of Paddle Wheel ferries on the Georges River from Wills boatshed adjacent to the southern end of Como Railway Bridge.

The photo over shows one of several paddle wheel ferries in use on the river (probably the *SS TELEPHONE*) near Wills boatshed Como c.1895. These paddle steamers were substantial vessels; The '*SS TELEPHONE*' had a length of 31.7 meters, a beam of 4.9 meters and carried 352 passengers³.



The photo over shows the TELEPHONE docking at Wills Wharf in the early 1900's with the Como train bridge in the background.

The ferries travelled up the river to a pleasure reserve called Parkesvale near Sandy Point, opposite East Hills. They stopped at the stone wharf still standing in Lugarno Park. Both Parkesvale and Lugarno Park became popular excursion destinations, excursion tickets being advertised in Sydney papers with combined train-ferry tickets to Parkesvale from



Sydney for 1/6d second class and 2/6d first class⁴.

The Sydney Morning Herald on Saturday 27th January reported:

PARKESVALE PLEASURE GROUNDS

These new pleasure grounds at George's River were largely attended yesterday, two steamers plying throughout the day from Como up the George's River to Parkesvale. The combined ticket issued by the Government was largely availed of. Dancing and various games were freely indulged, and all seemed thoroughly to enjoy the outing and the fine scenery up and down the river.

The photo below shows Lugarno Park in 1905. The building shown above the wharf is the tea rooms and dance hall. This building survived for many years and is clearly visible in a 1955 aerial photo of the area⁵. David Albone, who was the Lugarno ferry master ran the Lugarno Picnic Grounds and Tea Rooms. While only a couple of holes in the rock above Griffin Parade survive from the kiosk the footings for David Albone's small boatshed shown in the right of the photo are still to be found on the rivers edge.

The photo below shows the old ferry wharf today. Originally this wharf had timber side extensions, which can just be seen in the photo above (if you have good eyesight). The iron bolts for this structure can be seen in the photo below. A pontoon extended the wharf into deep water as the ferries typically drew 1.8 meters³. This pontoon was still visible in 1955 and 1961 aerial photos of the reserve⁵.



A good friend of Mr Albone was the poet Henry Lawson. He would certainly have visited the Albones at Lugarno Park many times from Como where he was a regular at the Como Hotel⁶. The beginning of the First World War (1914) saw the end of the ferries to Lugarno Park and Parkesvale. Parkesvale was mined for sand for many years and nothing now remains of its substantial pleasure grounds.



Lugarno Picnic Grounds & Tea Rooms.

"We make a speciality of catering for Picnic and Fishing Parties. Hot and cold water, summer drinks, summer houses, cigars and cigarettes, crockery and billy's for hire. These ground are pleasantly situated on the banks of George's River, near the old punt, within 20 minutes from Como. Splendid landing for launches and boats, also accessible by road for vehicles and cyclists"

History Time passed Delardes Reserve by till in 1948 a government decision was made to build the Lugarno Power Station in Illawong on a 90 acre site that would have included Delardes reserve (this part

of Illawong was then still known as Lugarno). This was to be a major coal fired power station (larger than the power stations at White Bay or Balmain) with the coal being bought by rail to the site on a line along the southern side of the Georges River. Water from the Georges River would be used for cooling. We can only be thankful that this proposal never went ahead with a decision made to build power stations on the coal fields in 1955. Delardes reserve would now be an industrial wasteland if this power station had eventuated.

An artist's impression of the proposed power station from the Sydney Morning Herald 23rd January 1950 follows.

Power Site

THE SYDNEY COUNTY COUNCIL'S £30,000,000
PLAN TO PROVIDE THE MOST EFFICIENT ELEC-
TRICITY SUPPLY SERVICE IN AUSTRALIA IS
PROGRESSING STILL FURTHER.



In August 1949 a number of police surrounded a small shed beside David Albone's old house. The well known criminals Darcy Dugan and William Mears had escaped from jail and were hiding there. They gave in without a struggle. In the 1960's this area became known as Illawong⁶ and the name of Lugarno Park was changed to the Albert Delardes Reserve. The Delardes family selected their land at

Bangor in 1907 and farmed there for a number of years. In later years they had a poultry farm. Albert was active in community activities including early Progress Associations, School of Arts and also the Bush Fire Brigade. Albert Delardes was the son of Charles Dalardes⁶.

The photo below shows Albert (centre) and his brother Les and a sister Elsie in the 1920's.



In the last Sutherland Council budget an amount of \$250,000 was allocated for work on Delarde's Reserve. It is hoped that as well as restoring and beautifying the park some of the parks rich historic heritage will be highlighted and protected.

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greg.jackson100@gmail.com

1. For example see:
Australasian Chronicle
(Sydney, NSW : 1839 - 1843)
Saturday 12 December 1840
and Australasian Chronicle
(Sydney, NSW : 1839 - 1843)
Saturday 12 December 1840

2. Pearson Michael, 1990, *The Lime Industry in Australia - An Overview*. Australian Historical Archaeology, Vol 8
3. See The Sydney Morning Herald Tuesday 6 August 1907
4. See The Sydney Morning Herald Saturday 20 January 1900
5. I am indebted to Clive Baker for pointing me to aerial photos of the Sutherland Shire, they are available at:
<https://mapping.ssc.nsw.gov.au/Sutherland/>
6. *Illawong A Place in History* 1982/1992. Illawong Parents and Citizens Association
7. Wilkenfield G. and Spearritt P. 2004. *Electrifying Sydney 100 Years of Energy Australia* Energy Australia, Sydney

NO ORDINARY MANAGER A BANKER OF JANNALI

Some people might remember Ted Coates, a manager of the Bank of New South Wales at Jannali prior to 1982.

Ted's life was more than shuffling papers in an office – he had been a bomber pilot over Europe in the dark days of the 1940s.

His active war came to a halt in November 1942 when his Sterling bomber was hit by anti-aircraft fire and was doomed. The crew jumped by parachute but two men did not make it and died in the wreck.

Ted found himself in northern France – at night and, “For what might have been minutes or hours, I lay where I had fallen, stunned, wounded, alone in enemy territory – but thankfully alive”.

He had shrapnel in his leg but was not too seriously hurt and over the next 90 days, Ted walked, bicycled and caught trains across France. With schoolboy French, he was able to get help from locals who assisted him to travel south towards Spain. On one occasion he was on a train, pretending to be a local when a dilemma arose:

As I sat down, I noticed a German soldier and two Gendarmes sitting directly opposite. Hell! It was too late to retreat. The train moved off and with a sinking feeling I slumped into my seat. The Germans soon settled down, resting their heads on the backs of their seats with eyes closed. Pulling my beret over my eyes, I pretended to doze and actually fell asleep.

No one noticed his flying boots and he finished his train trip safely and eventually faced the crossing of the mountains between France and Spain. He was able to locate a guide and in winter they set off:

I guessed his age to be at least 60 but he seemed wiry and very fit ... for the next few hours, as we climbed over rough hilly country, I suffered agonies from blistered feet and from my toes pressing into my boots...

After about three days in freezing weather and inadequate clothing the guide stopped:

Pedro mentioned the magic words, "le Frontier" ... I took off like a flash, passing him in a second ... as we scrambled over a hill, I instinctively bent double expecting to hear at any moment, rifle fire or the chatter of a machine-gun.

Ted was safe and a few days later returned to England where he qualified as a member of the 'Flying Boot Escaping Society' and was also the first allied airman to get out of occupied France without the help of the famous 'Underground'.

Ted visited the RAF parachute packing facility and thanked the lady who had attended to his life-saving chute. He was not fit enough to go back to flying and eventually sailed for home.



Ted Coates' new ID Card issued at Gibraltar after the escape.



The badge of the FBE Society.



*Ted (R) meets Nancy Wake (L)
at a function in the 1970s.*

After the war he returned to France to thank the people who had helped him at great risk to themselves.

Ted Coates died in 1993 as his heart failed – at the age of 82.

Source: *Lone Evader*. Ted Coates.

Published by
AMHP. Loftus.
1995.

The Georges River Gold Rush

Greg Jackson

Edward Hargraves left Sydney for the Californian gold fields in July 1849 and was unsuccessful there in his search for gold. To stop the exodus of people from the colony the Government of NSW offered a substantial reward to the discoverer of gold. Hargraves was determined to claim that reward and set about searching. Although a scoundrel, he mainly got others to do the searching for him¹ Gold was found in substantial

quantities at Ophir near Bathurst and by 15th May 1851 300 diggers were at work there, the first gold rush had begun. Gold was quickly located at other locations and it was not long before the Georges River was affected by gold fever. The following article appeared in the *Empire* on the 30th May 1851:

‘Gold Near Sydney.- A rumour has been current for some days past that gold had been discovered on the banks of the Georges River within ten or twelve miles of the metropolis. We have made every enquiry, but have been unable to obtain any definite information on the subject. The attention of government, however has been so strongly directed to the matter as to induce them to dispatch Mr M^cLerie to the spot to make enquiries. Having no means of crossing the river, Mr M^cL was obliged to return from his first trip without succeeding, but started on a second yesterday. The country presents a formation of quartz and schist similar to that of the gold fields; and it is added that crystals of quartz are plentiful. We confess we are puzzled how to account for these indications in connection with the surrounding country; but if they really do exist, the gold may also be there. Parties of workers have, we understand already started to try the ground.’

On the 30th August 1851 the *Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Advertiser* ran the following article:

‘Gold at Liverpool.- To the Editor of the Empire.- Some of our people went out yesterday to the reputed gold regions have returned, after exploring Harris² and the Mill Creeks without any success. They met on the former six or seven persons who had traced the creek upwards, but no gold on the Mill Creek: they met with two Californians, but these at once pronounced the place as unpromising. None of our people, owing to the heavy rains reached Woronora, therefore we have no correct information from thence, where we understand several persons are at work

digging, but I am still sceptical of any gold having been found, although persons in town speak positively that it has been conveyed to Sydney. From many enquiries I am inclined to think that the rocks supposed to be quartz are nothing more than compact sandstone, and the particles of quartz scattered about are pieces embedded in the sandstone, which is in many places decomposing. The specimen, with appearance of gold, which I mentioned in my last, is under examination, but we want quicksilver to put the matter beyond doubt. Captain Scott and the chief constable reached here to-day on their way to Woronora creek; probably they may find a still or two to repay them for the journey, as much has been done in that way towards raising gold and cheating the revenue,- R.S. Liverpool, Aug. 28, 1851.'

The next mention on the Georges River gold rush was in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 21st April 1852:

'In another column, will be found a letter from Mr. W G. Moore, the auctioneer, respecting a discovery of gold within eight miles of Sydney. It is stated that on Monday afternoon, when washing out a teakettle, a man named SMITH found a few specks of gold. He then went to the banks of the creek and washed a few tins of earth from which he procured about two pennyweights of gold, which was exhibited in our office last night. Yesterday a number of persons were busily employed sinking a hole hoping to come to the slatey rock, and cradles will be taken out from Sydney this morning, so that in the course of the day it will probably be determined whether or not a new gold field has been discovered. "We tell the tale as it was told to us," and hope to-morrow to be able to speak more positively. The land belongs to Mr. Badgery. (the owners of Major's Creek³) and is under lease to Mr Borton. The Creek, which is a tributary of George's River, contains plenty water.'

Whether this gold rush was the result of hoaxes or just over enthusiasm we will never know but this seemed to be the last word in the Georges River Gold Rush story.

I

Greg can be contacted at:
greg.jackson100@gmail.com

1. <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/har-graves-edward-hammond-3719>
2. It is not clear if this is the creek now called Harris Creek or Williams Creek which was formally called Harris Creek. Both are tributaries of the Georges River near the modern suburb of Holsworthy
3. Major's Creek was the site of substantial gold field in the Araluen region.

CAN WE HELP?

This is a new and regular feature of the *Bulletin*, where members can put their questions to the combined knowledge of the Society.

1)

ECKERSLEY

If any member knows the names of Eckersley pioneers and/or the whereabouts of their descendants, please contact Clive Baker:

9521-6515

(warbookshop@bigpond.com)

Some names already discovered:

BULL John

D'APICE John

ETCHELLS Frank and Harry

FRERE George and Leonce

HIMMELHOCH Isaac

LONGHURST James, George and Elizabeth
TESTER MR?
WROBLEWSKI Charles and J

2) **ARTHUR MIDGLEY**

If anyone can pinpoint the exact location of this man's house or farm at Menai-Bangor around 1910 – please contact Clive Baker:
9521-6515
(warbookshop@bigpond.com)

3) **SITE OF CAVE-IN THAT KILLED ABORIGINES**

Can anyone pinpoint the exact location at Lilli Pilli where an aboriginal tribe that was sheltering in a cave was buried when the rock caved in during a violent storm? The site was investigated by one of the Simpsons about 1918.

Contact Bruce Watt (0405 493 187)

Notice to members

The by-laws of the Society state that if payment for annual membership is more than three months in arrears then their membership is terminated. That means that membership fees should be paid no later than the end of September.

Have you paid your membership fee?

Memorabilia??????

Sometimes when we were moving house, downsizing, clearing an estate or just plain cleaning up, we come across items that have been put aside for many years for whatever reason. These days there's a tendency, especially from younger family

members to just throw it out. Now not everything is valuable or worth keeping and a good clean out is often just what's required so you can get on with your life and function effectively.

But if you are in the position and are unsure if an item, book, map etc would have historical significance, especially in the local context, contact Jim, our museum curator or other members who may be able to research it, write about it in the bulletin, display it or save it for posterity.

Friends of Sutherland Shire Historical Society **You can help by**

- donating items or whole collections of significant local interest and provenance 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

****purchasing display equipment for the museum***

Lucas' Mill - Woronora

John Lucas built the earliest industrial structure in the Shire in 1825. His father, Nathaniel Lucas arrived in Sydney Cove on the first fleet in 1788. He and Olivia Gascoigne, another convict whom he later married were selected to start a settlement on Norfolk Island and arrived in March 1788. They had 13 children and arrived back in Sydney in 1805.

John Lucas was born on Norfolk Island in 1796 and he worked with his father in the building trade. In 1821 he was granted a licence (sic) for the hotel called 'The Black Swan' at Botany. He applied for a spirit licence (sic) and was granted it in 1822. In the same year he built his first flour mill at Harris Creek, Hammondville and a second mill at Woronora in 1825. The site of this mill was at the head of the tidal waters, adjacent to the old ford, near the Lucas Heights reactor. John had stated that there was sufficient water to grind one thousand bushels weekly.

The mill was operational in 1826. Shallow draught boats were able to sail into Botany Bay and up the Woronora River. Here the wheat was ground into flour without custom or wharfage charges which were levied in Sydney Cove. Unfortunately the mill burnt down in the late 1830s and to discourage John from rebuilding, a Customs Officer was stationed at Botany Bay to intercept any further boats. The mill estate was offered for sale in 1843 but failed to arouse any interest and was abandoned.

Reference

'My roots in Liverpool' –
Rhonda Kroehnert

HERITAGE WEEK

**Don't forget our National Trust
Heritage Festival Week 14-29th April.**

The Museum will be open and on the 21st we will be hosting a Seminar and Lunch at our usual meeting place in Stapleton Street. The theme for the Seminar is *Innovation & Invention*. A number of speakers will give short talks on inventions and new ideas which has originated in the Shire. There will be a Ploughman's Lunch \$5 and if you wish to come please making a booking, this is not absolutely essential so if you forget – still come please, but it helps with organising refreshments. And members are asked to bring cakes or biscuits for afternoon tea.

Apart from our Seminar there are numerous activities during that week, a brochure will be available and will detail events at other venues.

For further information and to make a booking ring Angela 9528 6251.

AUSTRALIA DAY

As usual this event was well attended and we sold a number of our member's books as well as some of our table mats.

This was our third Australia Day in the Community Central Hall, Cronulla, the large area adjacent to Cronulla Library. This is a central position with excellent facilities.

Though it was our third time in that location it was Jim Cutbush's 28th Australia Day presentation. How lucky we are to have his experience and expertise in mounting these displays. For a time before the actual day he had worked down at the Museum selecting the photographic material and organising the presentation. Then on the day he picked me up at 7 am and we drove to Cronulla and with the help of Terry McCosker, David Osborne and Maurie Beaven set up the whole exhibition. Pauline Curby, Leanne Muir and Clive Baker all came along to help, and from the interest shown by the many

visitors, this was a successful day for the Society and certainly a credit to all who participated.

Angela Thomas

This space could be yours!

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

Do you have historic photos that could be copied?

Perhaps you know someone whose story deserves to be told

There is always help available in drafting or editing your article

Contact the editor (details in the committee notice).

If you have enjoyed this edition of the bulletin then let the writers know or show a copy to a friend or colleague who may also enjoy it. Become an ambassador for the Society

Overleaf is a membership form. Encourage a friend to join or give a membership as a gift.

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Sutherland Shire Historical Society wished to express its gratitude to
Sutherland Shire Council for its on-going support for this publication.
Advertising revenue is used to finance colour pages and to cover postage costs.

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 2011/12 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

Family name: -----

Given name: -----

Postal address: -----

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