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*MINDFUL OF THE PAST – FOCUSED ON THE FUTURE*

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**SOCIETY WEBSITE:** [www.shirehistory.org](http://www.shirehistory.org).

## **SUTHERLAND SHIRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

### **THE SOCIETY**

The SSHS has a proud tradition stretching back more than 47 years and is an entirely volunteer and not-for-profit organisation. Over the years the Society has taken on the responsibility of recording and preserving local history so that Shire residents can learn more about our past.

### **WRITING FOR THE *BULLETIN***

Since its beginning, the Society has fostered the skills of local writers and their work is recorded in the *Bulletin* – copies of which can be accessed in Sutherland Shire Library Local Studies room. Members and non-members are invited to submit material for future editions and although we give local history priority, we are happy to accept stories on Australian history generally. We ask that you quote your sources and acknowledge any material used as well as obtaining permission from authors.

The *Bulletin* 'style-guide' is available from the editor: Clive Baker. 13 Veronica Place, Loftus. 2232. [warbookshop@bigpond.com](mailto:warbookshop@bigpond.com). Make sure to include your contact details and/or email address.

### ***BULLETIN***

Copies of this publication are free to all Society members and are also distributed to all Shire council libraries, the Mayor, Shire General Manager, all Councillors, the Royal Australian Historical Society, National Trust of NSW, NSW State Library, National Library of Australia, University of Sydney, University of NSW, State Rail Authority, Australia Post Archives, Sydney Water Board Historical Research Unit and Shire high school libraries.

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### **REGISTRATION**

Apart from the *Bulletin*, other Society publications are registered with the National Library of Australia in accordance with International Standard Serial Numbering and usually have an ISBN number.

## **SUTHERLAND SHIRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEETINGS**

Monthly meetings are held on the THIRD Saturday of each month at 1.30 pm (except December) – at Stapleton Centre, 3A Stapleton Avenue, Sutherland (near the library). We welcome visitors to hear our guest speakers, mix with local history enthusiasts and share afternoon tea and a chat.

## **SUTHERLAND SHIRE MUSEUM**

Our museum is located in the School of Arts, 21 East Parade Sutherland (a short walk north from the pedestrian crossing and corner of Adelong Street).

Aside from the Christmas–New Year period, the Museum is open on each Saturday from 9am to 1pm and contains some gems of Shire history and a fine collection of old photographs. For schools and other groups requiring a special tour at other times: contact the Curator, Jim Cutbush (9521-3721).

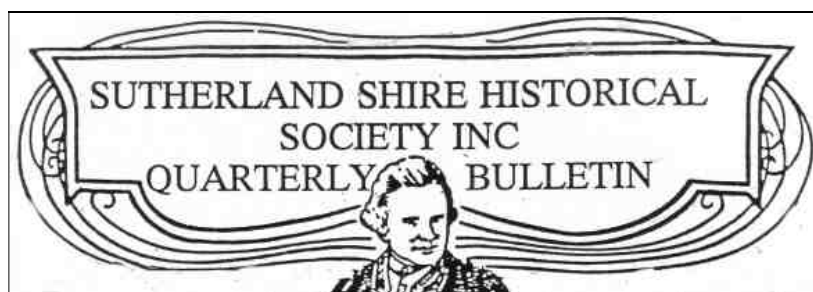
**DONATING MATERIAL:** If you have items of historical significance for Sutherland Shire, we welcome their donation to the museum to keep for posterity. If you do not wish to part with items, we would appreciate having copies of documents and photographs. Temporary loans for specific periods are also welcome. Cash donations and sponsorship assist us to improve the museum and perhaps you can keep the museum in mind when planning your estate.

## **CONTACTING THE SOCIETY**

All correspondence and membership enquiries should be addressed to The Honorary Secretary, Sutherland Shire Historical Society. PO Box 389. Sutherland. NSW. 1499 or [a.badger@optusnet.com.au](mailto:a.badger@optusnet.com.au)

## **THANKS TO SUTHERLAND SHIRE COUNCIL**

The Society is most grateful for the on-going support from Sutherland Council and the professionalism of the Print Room staff, for the production of our *Bulletins*.



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**Front cover:** A painting by Sir Erik Langker OBE, FRAS, FRSA , a well-known artist and President of the Board of Trustee of the Art Gallery of NSW when he painted this scene. On the back of the painting it says, "Evening light above Caringbah" and is believed to be from the 1940s. it was purchased with the SMART fund for the Museum.

**Back cover:** Items from our Museum (clockwise):

- (1) Port issued at opening of the Tom Uglys Bridge duplication, 1987
- (2) 'Dead Man's Penny' given to families of those killed in WW1
- (3) Bellows camera from late 1890s
- (4) Hot-coals heated iron from the 'good old days'.

## A LOST MEMBER:

It is with sadness that we mention the passing of a fellow member: John Risebrow. When He actually joined the Society is uncertain but his articles in the *Bulletin* go back to the mid-1990s. He was an avid photographer and a fine collection of Shire images.

# SOCIETY COMMITTEE: 2014-2015

## ELECTED MEMBERS

<b>PATRON:</b>	Shire Mayor		
<b>PRESIDENT</b>	Bruce Watt	9523-5294	<a href="mailto:watto51@optusnet.com.au">watto51@optusnet.com.au</a>
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<b>HONORARY SOLICITOR</b>	Michael Solari	<b>AUDITOR</b>	

## APPOINTED MEMBERS

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<b>PUBLICATIONS OFFICER</b>	Clive Baker	9521-6515	<a href="mailto:warbookshop@bigpond.com">warbookshop@bigpond.com</a>
<b>PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE</b>	Bruce Watt	Pauline Curby	Elizabeth Craig



BEST WISHES FOR 2015 TO ALL MEMBERS  
FROM YOUR NEW COMMITTEE

AND

A PARTICULAR "GET WELL SOON"  
MESSAGE TO ALL THOSE WHO'S  
HEALTH IS NOT THE BEST.

WE NEED YOU BACK WITH US.

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

BRUCE WATT

Our November issue marks the end of our yearly cycle and what a year it has been! It seems so recently that I was ringing in the new year with all its challenges and promises. People have commented favourably on the general feeling of progress and coordination within the Society with many new faces and willing hands contributing to the various aspects of running the Historical Society activities.

Our monthly meetings are at the core of what we do as that is when the bulk of our members meet. We have a very healthy attendance of 40-50 at each meeting. Inevitably with a 'mature' membership profile, some members don't renew but we have attracted many new members this year with some already taking up active positions. This 'churning' of positions is healthy as it provides experience and confidence in what we do. Our sincere thanks go to the 'tea ladies' who do such a great job in providing afternoon tea – Nola Watt, Anne O'Connor, Anne Steward, Mary Small, Mavis Sourry and Beryl Davis.

The Secretary's position is vital in the smooth running of the Society. Angela Thomas has once again been outstanding in this capacity as well as being the eyes and ears of the organisation through applying for grants, heritage matters and liaising with other organisations. Her planning for the excursion to the Buddhist Temple in November was outstanding. Carole McDonald is ably assisting Angela as well as taking responsibility in a number of other areas. We welcome Helen Rosner to the executive and thank Mary Small and Bob Osborne for their past contributions, as they stand down.

After many years as the excursion officer and bus driver, Terry McCosker has also stood down. Terry made every excursion enjoyable with his amiable personality and repartee. Fortunately David Jordan has volunteered as driver and is filling Terry's shoes admirably. Noel Elliot has also taken over Terry's excursion planning role. Pat Hannan has continued with excursion organisation, amongst so many other roles. What would we do without her! A couple of less formal walks have also been organised this year amongst some members.

The Society has produced many writers over time and this year we hosted two book launches which attracted large audiences. These were *The Shire a journey through time* By Bruce Watt and *The Hanging of Mary Ann* by Angela Badger (Thomas). These functions involve the efforts of a great many people who help the event to run smoothly. The first print run of *The Shire* is now sold out and Angela's book is enjoying international success. In the coming year our publications committee is planning another book, *Murder and Mayhem* based on Shire dramas and hope to have it for 2015.

Several members including Jim Cutbush, Clive Baker, Angela Thomas and Bruce Watt have given talks to a variety of community groups which have been well received and helped to raise our community profile. I'd like to acknowledge the assistance that the Sutherland Shire Council provides to the Society.

After many years on the Executive and as Museum Curator, Jim Cutbush has stood down. We thank him for his dedicated service. Jim has indicated that he will act in a consultancy role regarding the museum. Clive Baker has taken on the Museum Curator's position. A new set of hands and eyes provides a fresh perspective and we anticipate further improvements to the organisation and running of this vital part of our activities. Since last November the museum has been open every Saturday from 9am to 1pm and manned on a roster basis by over 20 volunteers. The extended opening hours would not be possible without their help. Over 1700 people comprising casual drop-ins and those on organised school trips or from other organisations have visited the museum this year.

The museum will always be a work in progress. Four significant collections and/or attractions have been added this year. A fine and extensive collection was donated when honorary life member, Daphne Salt, an eminent local historian left the Shire. It consisted of over 3,000 photographs alone!

A horse-drawn cart or dray was donated from the estate of Graham Kerslake of Illawong and had been used to take fruit and vegetables to the city markets in the 1920s and 1930s. This significant relic of the Shire's rural past is being restored by the Menai Mens' Shed and is housed in the garden area of the museum. Don Rothnie deserves special mention for the painstaking restoration that he has coordinated.

A significant Aboriginal artefact collection is on semi-permanent display and complements our existing collection to help explain Aboriginal culture. Margaret Simpson collected it, mainly from the western desert region and used it in her extensive role as mentor to teachers and students across Australia.

The Sutherland Shire Toy Restoration Centre at Jannali has loaned some early toys for our display. They are a graphic reminder of simpler times and we thank them for this opportunity.

Three new volunteer museum 'openers' have eased the burden on the regulars.

During the year the SMART fund was established – Sutherland Museum Acquisition and Restoration Trust fund. Separate from the Society's main finances, it can be used to purchase significant items that arise or be used on restoring museum items.

We already have a busy schedule of speakers and events lined up for next year. For now though, wishing you all a happy Christmas and New Year and let's hope that Santa is kind to you.

## EDITOR'S SAY

CLIVE BAKER

ALL COMPLAINTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO: [warbookshop@bigpond.com](mailto:warbookshop@bigpond.com).

Another year draws to an end and this is the last issue of the *Bulletin* for 2014.

I would like to thank all those at the AGM who felt confident enough to give me this much-loved job again. The 'clangers' of recent times were excused by you all and thank you for your votes.

We recently had the launch of Angela's latest publication (next, the Booker Awards of 2015) and I would like to add my congratulations to the many already made. The wealth of combined talent and knowledge in our little Society, never ceases to amaze me.

At the launch was the very welcome sight of Joan Morison off the sick bed for a day. Unfortunately, with husband Bruce on the improve, Joan has had a drop-off in health and is battling with setbacks. She apologised for not sending her latest article but she has a very good excuse for missing the deadline. Get well soon.

As always – keep your writings coming in because short or long, we will find space.

All the best to the readership for the coming year and stay healthy.

[illegible]

## MUSEUM REPORT

CLIVE BAKER

Despite earlier misgivings about taking on the Curator's job at the Museum, Bruce Watt asked if I would reconsider as Jim has definitely retired.

I agreed to take on the task for now and had the first meeting of the Museum Committee – Pat Hannan, Bruce Watt, Ian Kolln, Andrew Platfoot, Bruce Gill, Noel Elliot and I.

The first task is to lay down some tight rules, regulations and guidelines for the future running of the place and to produce a manual so that all who come after, have the same guidelines.

Bruce has also suggested that we have a 'larger picture' plan for the coming year and this will be adopted as the new committee settles in.

We have two new 'Supervisors' for Saturday mornings, Noel Elliot and Bruce Gill, with both conducting their first open days with the confidence of people with years of experience at the Museum. They actually have similar experience from their other activities!

We need more Saturday 'Museum Guides' so that people have widely-spread days 'on duty'.

For now, I am handling the roster so please phone me if you are able to help. It is important that you contact me if you cannot attend. Unfortunately, we have had a couple of 'no-shows' without any warning!

Also, please arrive about 8.30 to help get the place ready for opening time.

I would like to thank Joan Tangney who prepared a folder full of information that will provide ideas for the future. Also, Jim Cutbush is holding himself available for advice, occasional help and will continue to take the weekday museum bookings.

As always, that stalwart of the Museum, Pat Hannan (ably assisted by Carole McDonald), continues the long job of listing masses of information on the data base. Her new computer and printer should be arriving before long – we hope!.

The Museum is our prime public asset and our aim is to make it more attractive for Shire visitors in the future.



1939



1955

## JIM CUTBUSH SUMS UP THE YEAR

Jim presented his last Curator's report at the AGM in September 2014:

I am very proud to announce that our visitor numbers for the last 12 months have increased greatly with a total of 1,703. This figure doesn't include outside exhibitions for Australia Day at Cronulla Centre (198), or the one day heritage display at 'Celeste Cottage' in Woronora Cemetery sponsored by Olsen's. At least 372 people visited us – our best result for this event.

Our Saturday open days are growing in numbers of visitors thanks to better advertising and items of interest in the *Leader* and by word of mouth.

Special opening requests so far total 14 groups, all this was made possible with the help of the museum committee and our volunteers. A big thank you to you all, special thanks to Bruce Watt for support and wise guidance given the Society during your presidency.

Terry McCosker (my original second in charge) – what can I say? You have helped me move items, decorate and put up exhibitions, always there until your recent setback, hope you are on the mend – old friend thank you.

Clive Baker (our Archivist) has continued to work hard freeing up our storage area and moving non-vital items off site, listing and recording as he goes, what a great job.

Pat Hannan and Nola Watt recently provided a wonderful morning tea for 54 visitors from Cronulla RSL's, '55s And Over Club'.



*The Museum main room – stripped bare before the 2013 'make-over'.*



*Jim Cutbush and Pat Hannan sorting photographs at the Museum.*

Others I must mention who do a great job and are very dedicated:

Pat who continues recording and identification of photos and records listings onto the computer a BIG job.

Angela Thomas who keeps us all informed and up to date and works at the Museum as needed.

Merle Kavanagh who can also be called on and is always available and for her dedicated earlier work on cataloguing the books. David Overett has continued to stand in and help when asked at short notice even though not being on the committee.

Helen McDonald, Sutherland Library 'Local Studies Area' has always given us every help when called on over many years.

Scott O'Hara and all his staff at Sutherland Entertainment Centre, that look after the Sutherland Memorial School of Arts.

Olsens Funerals for their most welcome donation.

My wife Marjorie and the rest of my family, for putting up with me over many years of 'missing in action'.

Thank you all once again.

Jim Cutbush (Curator)

## MEET A COMMITTEE MEMBER

George Miller has been re-elected to the Committee for the 2014-15 year and he has written this insight into his life as a "Sutherland boy" and the changes in the Shire that he has witnessed:



When my parents, Dr George and Mary Miller, stepped off the train at Jannali in 1946 the first thing they saw was Mr Gray, a local dairy farmer, leading one of his cows up the main street – Box Road. Little could they have foreseen the huge post

war development that this semi-rural area was about to experience, or fully appreciate the major role that Sutherland Shire would come to play in their and their descendants' lives.

The area was not completely new to Mum and Dad. They had married in St Patrick's Church Sutherland in 1943 and had honeymooned at Cronulla while Dad was completing another of several locums he had previously undertaken for Dr Eric Miles of Sutherland. A more permanent arrangement would soon lead to a third share partnership with the Miles brothers, Drs Eric and Tom (the first doctors in the shire) with Dad conducting surgeries at Sutherland, Jannali and Oyster Bay. In 1958 Dad left the partnership striking out on his own with surgeries at Mitchell Avenue, Jannali and Glencoe Street, Sutherland. He was later a partner with Dr Tom Lee.

I was born in 1944 and lived with my Mother and Nana at Mascot until Dad was discharged from the AIF in 1945. We moved to Jannali in 1946. Mum and Dad initially boarded with Mrs Elsie Griffith in Alice Street from where he conducted a surgery. Mrs Griffith was the second wife and widow of the Hon Arthur Griffith MLA who as Minister for Public Works had inaugurated the Murrumbidgee Irrigation System in 1912. He had retired to Jannali and died in 1946.

In late 1950 the Miller family moved to Sutherland and lived at Dr Tom Miles' residence and surgery at the corner of Eton and Flora Streets. It was a large two-storey house with expansive grounds, later to be demolished for a motor service garage and where the Centrelink building stands today. Dad on occasions held surgery at the home of Dr Eric Miles at the corner of Princes Highway and Belmont Street a house that still exists today.

In 1951 our family purchased 68 Glencoe Street, Sutherland from Dr Tom Miles. The solid brick house had originally been built by George Heavens in 1935 for a local pharmacist Mr Cox.

George later had an electrical appliance store and

many a cold night was spent outside his Sutherland store, watching the early black and white television in the window.

With the death of my mother Mary, the family home in Glencoe Street was sold in 2013. No doubt the old family home is destined for demolition and the land used for home units.

In 1950 I started school at St Patrick's Primary in Sutherland while living in Jannali and travelling back and forth on the 'red rattler' trains. Unknown to me my parents arranged for an older student David Dee (later Deputy Headmaster of Jannali Girls High School) to oversee my train travel. No doubt it was a relief for David and others when we moved to Sutherland and I could walk to school.

The St Pat's Infants' classes were held in adapted ex RAAF Pay Huts converted by parents into four class rooms – each comprising about 70 pupils. The original proviso for the supply of the huts in 1948 was that they serve as temporary school buildings for two years; but they remained the Infants school until 1966. I recall the lovely Sister Julian who taught me in Kindergarten and Third class fondly. She liked to tell the story of two boys who dug up a dead cat to see whether it had gone to Heaven. Tony my best mate and I were those boys. Looking back those Nuns certainly devoted their life to God.

In 1954 I commenced Fourth class at De La Salle College Cronulla (DLS). At that time the boys left the convent school at the end of Third class to continue on to the religious brothers' schools. The choice for Catholic boys was to attend either Penshurst, Kogarah or Cronulla. DLS Cronulla was, in 1954, also a boarding school with many country boys in residence. The school had a very rural outlook with several cows in the expansive grounds on the western side of Gunnamatta Bay to provide milk for the Brothers and boarders. There was always a little tension at lunchtime between day boys and the boarders who scavenged for sandwiches from the day boys. I never learnt what the boarders were fed for lunch. Boarding at DLS Cronulla ceased in 1957.

In 1956 my parents gave me the option to transfer to the new St Patrick's Boys High School, at Sutherland staffed by the Christian Brothers of Ireland. I opted to stay at Cronulla, operated by the De La Salle Brothers, a French Order; a decision I have never regretted. During my time at Cronulla, DLS was a boys' only school. No doubt because of the French influence there was a relaxed feeling at the school with a keen emphasis by the Brothers on teaching social justice as well as a sporting emphasis.

Sutherland during my childhood and youth was a young person's paradise. By bicycle we could travel to Tom Ugly's, Como, Engadine, Audley and Cronulla. There was exploring the bush around Sutherland and Jannali and the Royal National Park was easily accessible at the southern end of Glencoe Street. We cadged timber off-cuts from the timber yard (on the northern side of the highway between Glencoe and Auburn Streets) much to the annoyance of the owner, Jack Hand. They were for cubby houses that we built on vacant blocks. Saturday afternoons were spent at the Odeon Theatre in Boyle Street.

Much time was spent in the old brickyard (corner of Acacia Road and the highway) and orchards at the end of Forest Road (near the now Percy Miles Aged Home) – paradise for young boys. One restriction was that we had to be home by dark. The local police sergeant (I think his name was Nixon) knew all the local boys and where they lived. His warning that he was going to see your father was always carried out and you knew you would cop it when you got home. A different approach to nowadays.

My regular tasks were to order the groceries at the corner shore then near the corner of Clio and Glencoe Street; buy the meat at the butchers, next to the Old Glen's hardware store on the corner of Merton Street and the old highway (and draw circles in the sawdust with my feet as I waited). I also queued to buy dinner on Friday nights at the fish and chip shop in Flora Street.

Glencoe Street in the 50s to early 60s was a lovely wide divided street from the Boulevard to President Avenue with parks and palms down the middle. Fetes and carnivals were held there. Billy carts were raced down the western side of the street from Flora Street to the Old Princes Highway. A large ditch ran between the old single-lane highway and the old tramway and this was used as an emergency stopping point for the bilycarts. I can recall the 1964 Shire President, Michael Tynan, sending a letter to my mother stating the Council was going to beautify this area. The Canary Island palm trees were pulled out, replanted at Wanda Beach where they promptly died. Glencoe Street was turned into the carpark of today. Beauty is in the eyes of the beholder.

The local boys formed groups (or gangs) and we lived in fear of being caught alone by a rival group. Perhaps that is when I learnt to run fast. On reflection, they were innocent days with a lot of name calling, pushing and shoving but none of the punching or violence that we now see. Many years later I bumped into a guy, whom I feared immensely in my youth, We greeted each other like long lost friends reminiscing about the 'good old days'. Coincidentally, this guy's older brother coached my son in sport at high school.

I left school and studied Law at Sydney University and soon met Patricia Day, from Seventh Avenue, Jannali. Her four brothers were well known in the Como Jannali Football Club and the Cronulla Surf Club. Her 'godmother was Anne Dee, a well-known early Jannali identity. I loved athletics (400 metres and 400 metres hurdles) so, with the young lady from Jannali, my studies took a secondary role. I hated study, much to my mother's and Patricia's distress. I joined the Federal Public Service in 1966 and was admitted to the NSW Bar as a Barrister shortly thereafter.

Patricia and I were married in 1967 at St Patrick's Sutherland by Father Richard Funcheon. We purchased an old house in Kurrajong Street, Sutherland. Our son Matthew arrived in 1969, Fiona in 1970 and Allison in 1973. They attended school at Jannali and Kirrawee High for their final years. Patricia died after a long illness in 1998.

Matthew now lives at Loftus with his family and his three children attend St Patrick's Sutherland. Both the girls live in Surry Hills in close proximity to where a paternal ancestor, Thomas Barnes, had a stone masonry works on the corner of Foveaux and Riley Streets (1840s to 1882), sand stone taken from the western side of Riley Street.

Joining the then NSW Department of Labour and Industry (DLI) as a Legal Officer in 1970, I worked as a prosecutor – specialising in Industrial and Safety Law. In 1987 I was appointed a Magistrate and Chief Industrial Magistrate for NSW. In 2005 following some health issues and being in the old NSW State Super ("the good scheme") I retired. However, for the next five years I continued as an acting magistrate regularly working in local courts in the metropolitan area. I continue to write for a legal publisher (*LexisNexus*) on work, health and safety law and lecture on a casual basis at the UTS on employment law.

All my life I have had a love of bushwalking and sport, particularly athletics – a major sport in the Shire in the 60s and 70s with Sutherland Athletic Club winning the metropolitan interclub A-grade finals in 1970 and 1973. I was fortunate to be a member of both those winning teams. I am a life member of the Sutherland Athletic Club. In recent years my interests have extended to Australian history, religion (particularly the connection between Buddhism and Christianity) and travel.

Except Madeleine, all my other siblings live in the Shire. She is near Bathurst – an area with a close connection to my mother's ancestors who settled in the Bathurst, Oberon and Lithgow areas.

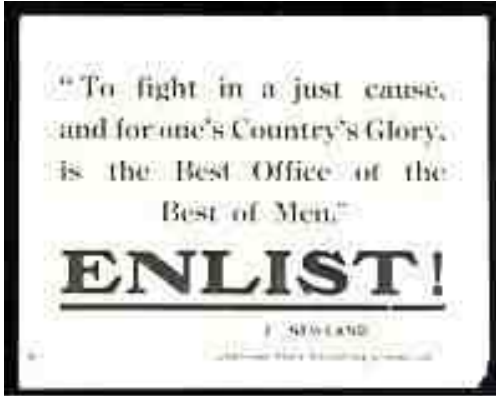
I am a Sutherland boy who has travelled widely but I am always pleased to return to the Shire.

# WAR NEWS: NOVEMBER 1914

THE EMPIRE CALLED! AND OUR MEN AND WOMEN STEPPED FORWARD!

FROM OUR WAR REPORTER: CLIVE BAKER

Since war was declared on 4 August, numerous stout-minded Australians have stepped forward to help the motherland and defeat the German menace.



Men have been flocking to the new Australian Imperial Force (AIF) and we have now filled the 1st Division of infantry that has finished its training.

Shire men know their duty and have left hearth and home to sign up for the King and our Country. Gordon Dall of Caringbah, although British born, has signed-up to fight alongside his Australian mates



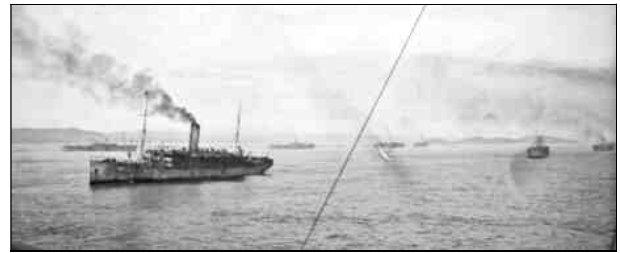
*Tents used by the trainees at Liverpool.*

Many of our lads have been training at the Liverpool camp where three square-meals a day and lots of physical training has hardened bodies to make soldiers of them.

Another recent Shire lad to join up is 19-year old Fred Curtis of Miranda. His mother is in China at the moment and may be surprised to discover that her son is now in uniform!

## ON THEIR WAY

The latest intelligence received by this correspondent is that our brave AIF troops are now sailing for Europe. A great fleet, carrying New Zealand and our soldiers, had been assembling in Albany, WA, and has now left port.



An observer wrote of what he saw:

*At 6.25 on the morning of November 1st, in bright sunlight, with the harbour glassy smooth, ...[ships]... up-anchored and moved out between the sun-bathed hills to sea.*

*At 8.55, the whole fleet moved ahead — 36 transports and three escorting cruisers. Two days later the Ibuki [Japanese escort ship] was found waiting beside the route on the high seas, half obscured by a rain squall.*<sup>1</sup>

We are led to believe that more than one lad from this Shire may be aboard that fleet, while some fellow residents continue training ready to join them later.

<sup>1</sup> Bean C.E.W. *The Story of Anzac*, Vol 1 p. 98

Thanks to Marilyn Hanley and Sue Hewitt for their advice.

## A 'ROYAL' HOLIDAY

JOHN CAMPBELL

In the summer of 1962 our family set out from Jannali in the old Fordson van for a camping holiday at Curracurrang, near Wattamolla in the Royal. The site had been suggested by a coal miner friend from Helensburgh, Billy Harrison – I believe that Helensburgh miners camped and fished there often.

My parents were used to camping as they had a permanent camp at Burning Palms from the 1930s to early 1950s. The Fordson was loaded up with the old and heavy 12x12 canvas tent, old army stretchers and lots of other essential camping equipment. That tent is still up in my garage and the poles alone are a heavy load for any adult. We set off for a week's holiday looking like the 'Beverly Hillbillies'.

There was a drivable track from the Wattamolla road to the ridge above Curracurrang. From there, all the camping gear had to be carried to the camping site on the far side of the creek – our water supply. The area was clear of scrub and the grass area had been used as a camp site for centuries as evidenced by the aboriginal midden under an overhang nearby.

After many trips, struggling down the hill with equipment, the camp was set up. The centrepiece was a table constructed from driftwood gathered in the cove. My parents were good at this as most of the furniture in earlier camps had been made from driftwood planks, washed up on beaches, apparently dropped by passing ships. A toilet pit was dug behind some trees and hessian screen for privacy.

Explored the little cove, we found several huts and boatsheds with boat ramps running into the cove (see photo on page 112 in Judith Carrick's book: *History of Royal National Park 1879-2013*). I believe at least some ramps were used by Helensburgh miners. As an eleven-year old, I thought that I wouldn't want to venture out to sea in small open clinker boats and having to broach the waves breaking into the cove. I guess that the fisherman knew what they were doing.



Further up Curracurrang Creek was a beautiful fresh water pool fed by a small waterfall – our regular swimming hole and a holiday highlight.

My Grandmother was about 70 at the time and as she and I ventured into the pool her famous last words were "I was a really good swimmer when I was younger." I can still see her calmly breast stroking while slowly sinking to the bottom.



As I dived in and brought her to the surface, she didn't struggle and took it all in her stride as I dragged her to safety. My uncle was a Bondi lifesaver and had regaled us with stories of saving people in the surf and of having to punch them unconscious if they panicked and drowned them both. The vision flashed across my mind, as I thought that I might have to render my poor old four-feet-ten Grandmother unconscious. Luckily she remained calm.

One day we walked over to Wattamolla to visit friends from Jannali (the Lambs) who, in contrast to our humble tent, were holidaying in a silver caravan. I was quite envious of their luxury.

One day a young English tourist walked into camp looking for a mate. He was dressed like a 'sharpie' of the day in city clothes, Brylcreamed hair and very flimsy pointy-toed leather shoes. I thought how unsuitable his footwear was for hiking. He had a meal with us and said that one of his mates had just drowned at Wattamolla. After he left, my parents expressed disbelief about his sob-story of the drowning. He left behind an English teenage weekly magazine which I enjoyed reading as they were frowned upon at home. A search on Trove shows that a German migrant HAD drowned whilst fishing at Wattamolla on 22 January 1962 – I am unsure of the date we were there.

The track to Curracurrang is now blocked off and overgrown. You will find no caravans at Wattamolla or fisherman's huts or even a 12x12 canvas tent at Curracurrang if you visit there today. However, the memory of those free and easy outdoor days are still with me today.

# THE WHITLAMs AT CRONULLA

CLIVE BAKER

The passing of Gough Whitlam on 21 October 2014, reminds us that he and his family had a strong connection with the Shire.

Readers might recall an article that appeared in the *Bulletin* (May 2011) that described the RAAF flying career of Flight-Lieutenant Whitlam as a navigator. Having survived a near disaster while returning from a bombing raid, after the war he and Margaret decided to live in the Shire. Susan Mitchell wrote:

*...They wanted something near the water and they could only afford that by moving south ... a far cry from the exclusivity of the Eastern Suburbs ... where they had previously lived but they were so excited about owning their first home they didn't care.*<sup>1</sup>



*Gough, Nicholas and Margaret, c 1946*

They used an inheritance to pay a deposit on land at 2 Wangi Avenue, Cronulla and began to build. Margaret was "thrilled when they finally moved in November 1947 ...[to]... a charming, pretty white cottage with a blue-tiled roof".<sup>2</sup>

They soon became involved in many local organisations as Gough tried to raise his profile in an attempt to enter politics: the RSL, Children's Library Movement, Parents and Citizen's Association and even a contestant in the ABC's *Australian National Quiz* – he won.

Gough earned a living as a barrister, catching the train from Cronulla every morning.

In 1950 he stood against Liberal, Joe Munro, for the seat of Sutherland but lost despite an increased Labor vote.

Meanwhile, Margaret was involving herself in local activities including tennis as Jean Appleton described in an interview with Pauline Curby:

*One of the players in her tennis club was 'a nice person' called Margaret Whitlam. Jean and [husband] Roy were 'quite friendly' with Gough and Margaret Whitlam ... in fact Roy went with the future prime minister to the Western Suburbs the night he won pre-selection for the federal seat of Werriwa. Jean considers Gough Whitlam was 'well ahead of his time; he got Australia going'. Roy and Gough saw 'eye to eye' on issues.*

*Jean smiled when she recalled the Whitlams' different personalities. Gough was a 'man in a hurry' and on one occasion turned over a new Holden as he was rushing up Nicholson Parade past Gunnamatta Park. Margaret, on the other hand, did not hurry or let trivia, such as an overflowing washing machine, worry her. She would calmly finish her game of tennis and attend to such small details later.*<sup>3</sup>

Pauline also interviewed ex-politician, Les Johnson, who comment on Gough's life in the Shire. At the time, Les owned :

*...a very big and busy – general store ... down the far end of Gympsea Bay Road. They sold 'everything'. One day a 'big bloke' came into his shop and said, "My name's Gough Whitlam. I've heard of you." When he visited Les' temporary dwelling "about the size of an average bedroom" with the "little chip heater annex with its tin bath", Gough was overwhelmed at the way the Johnson family lived. Gough, who came from a privileged background ... had "never seen anything like that before". Les took him around to meet people prior to standing for election. Gough stood unsuccessfully for local and state government but finally succeeded in being elected to Federal Parliament. Les often teased him about how unfortunate it was that he failed in his initial attempts to get elected as 'he would have made a great Shire president and a great State premier.*<sup>4</sup>

In 1957 the Whitlams moved from Cronulla after building a new house at Cabramatta in Gough's Federal electorate. Margaret commented that, "she had loved Cronulla but was looking forward to the next chapter in her life".<sup>5</sup>

## SOURCES:

- 1 MITCHELL Susan. *Margaret Whitlam*. Random. 2006. p. 109
- 2 MITCHELL Susan. *Margaret Whitlam*. Random. 2006. p. 110
- 3 SSSH *Bulletin* [ No 177 ] November 2010.
- 4 SSSH *Bulletin* [ No 178 ] February 2011.
- 5 MITCHELL Susan. *Margaret Whitlam*. Random. 2006. p. 136

## THE NAN TIEN TEMPLE VISIT

ANGELA THOMAS

We had a bus trip on 1 November, taking us down to the south coast. Unfortunately there were a few cancellations at the last moment bringing our numbers down to 17 and we felt sorry for them as they missed a great outing. With early good weather, everything else went like clockwork.

First we stopped for morning tea at Sublime Point, and it lived up to its name as the whole scene was bathed in sunshine and we could see up and down the coast for miles and miles. Easy to see why it is called 'sublime'.

Then on to the temple where we were greeted by our guide, Tess, who although not being a Buddhist – had an extensive knowledge.

The Temple was founded entirely by voluntary subscription and in the two shrines we visited thousands of little Buddhas lined the walls with the name of the donor inscribed. Everything was in cheerful red and yellow colours.

The site was chosen because of its position, between the sea and the mountain and the Buddhists were encouraged to take this area as it had lain vacant for a long while due to industrial shifts and was an unsightly wasteland. They were given 55 acres for \$100 and the original cash payment is in their museum. The temple is run by an order of nuns.

Certainly the planning must have been first class as the temple and pagoda which have arisen on the site are the epitome of excellence. Surrounded by lush gardens, the buildings dominate the landscape.

Fortunately lifts are installed as the flights of steps are daunting for older people, but some brave souls chose to walk up the hard way.

First we visited the shrine Kuan Yen, female Bodhisattva and goddess of compassion. This depiction of the goddess showed her with many arms to illustrate her widespread reach and influence. People were praying in front of her.

Then we lunched in the dining room eating a completely vegetarian meal which was really delicious – followed by tea and coffee.

Our next viewing was the main shrine to the Buddha, some five statues – the central one being the historical Buddha.

Tess explained how the Buddha, son of a wealthy father, tried to find the meaning in life and went to live amongst the very poorest of society. After much meditation he achieved supreme enlightenment or higher knowledge and taught the path to it through practicing meditation, non violence, correct living and good will to all creatures.

Tess then suggested we explore the rest of the complex, particularly the museum which was magnificent, with statues and relics in enormous numbers. Most fascinating of all was the work of a 75-year old man without spectacles who had drawn and written on objects as small as a grain of rice or a piece of eggshell. We had to view these through magnifying glasses.



Overlooking Wollongong is the pagoda housing the ashes of devotees, though ordinary people can also have their ashes deposited there if they wish.

So intrigued were we that we had not noticed a change in the weather! The sunny day was gone and first drops of rain came down as we left for the car park. David very kindly brought the bus right up to the entrance but before many of us reached it we were soaked and two of our number were still marooned at the temple. Maurie Beavan bravely set forth with umbrellas and soon we were all in the bus and heading home through the pelting rain.

A lovely day out and many thanks to David Jordan (new driver since Terry McCosker's ill-health) for his patience and relaxed driving style. We enjoyed every minute and hopefully went home wiser than when we started.

## LET US REJOICE!

MERLE KAVANAGH

'Advance Australia Fair' was proclaimed our National Anthem on 19 April 1984, replacing 'God Save the Queen', with a minor change in that "all" replaced "sons", so us girls would not get upset. Those who made the decision obviously thought "It's Time" as the pop song goes. At the same time they also declared Australia's colours to be green and gold, to save doubling up on the expense of the celebration party.

This "bold, stirring and decidedly patriotic" song, as described by the *Sydney Morning Herald*, was composed in 1878 by Peter Dodds McCormick, a school teacher and songwriter, who used the pen name 'Amicus'.

It was sung in Sydney on St Andrews Day – 30 November 1878 – the same year that Wirth's Circus was formed and the Kelly gang were rampaging around the country robbing banks and shooting policemen.

It is interesting that another great old popular song was in the running for our anthem. Yes, you guessed it – 'Waltzing Matilda'. There is, as you might know, another connection between these songs as a line in the second verse of the Anthem reads "Till he (Tilly) landed on our shore". Just a minor change of spelling!

'Matilda' was Australia's most famous song for many years and composed in January 1895 by A.B. 'Banjo' Patterson. He was a guest at Dagworth Station, (no! not Dagwood) a large property in Central Queensland and was quite taken with a tune that was often played on the piano by the property owner's sister, Christina Rutherford McPherson. It was the march 'Craigielea' which Christina had first heard at the Warrnambool races in Victoria the previous year. The marching tune had been adapted from the Scottish song 'Thou bonnie Wood of Craigielea'.

Patterson began writing verses and chorus to this tune and completed them over the next few days, sometimes basing the story on events he experienced at Dagworth – dead sheep, a picnic at a waterhole where a suicide had occurred and the phrase "Waltzing Matilda". He is said to have been influenced by the shearer's strike of 1891 in which the Dagworth shearers had participated.

The song was first performed publicly at Winton, in Queensland, on 6 April 1895 and became popular in no time. In 1903 it was re-arranged by Marie Cowan for an advertisement for 'Billy Tea' and that became the standard popular version.

The original music and words were recorded in writing by Christina and her copy was presented to the National Library of Australia in Canberra in 1970.

'Matilda' obviously appealed to the irreverent streak and the anti-authority and sympathy for the underdog that is part of the Australian psyche. So it was no surprise to find that the soldiers in the First World War took it up.

There are other writings that tug at Australian hearts one of them being Dorothea Mackellar's poem 'My Country' originally named 'Core of my heart'. Under this name it appeared in the *London Spectator* on 5 September 1908 and later that year, was published in the *Sydney Morning Herald*. It was also in *Mackellar's Verses 1907-1908* but in its early version, now revised to the poem we know today.

It was re-named 'My Country' in 1911 and I recall during my school days before World War Two learning by rote an abbreviated version which was also the revised one:

I love a sunburnt country,  
A land of sweeping plains,  
Of rugged mountain ranges,  
Of droughts and flooding rains.  
I love her far horizons,  
I love her jewel-sea  
Her beauty and her terror –  
The wide brown land for me!

I also recall this verse being used on the radio when a series of downpours were making life difficult, especially for country folk. The report kept repeating – "Flooding rains, flooding rains, flooding rains" – after the original one.

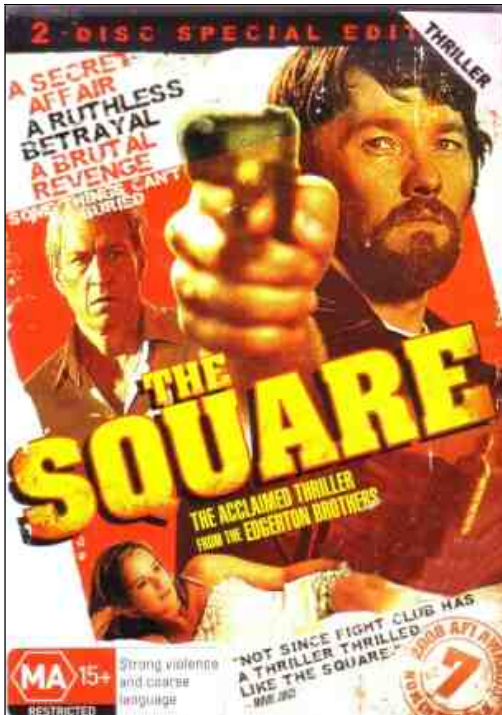
In 1908, Canberra was chosen as the site for the Federal Capital, the Federal Labour Conference adopted the title 'Australian Labor Party' and the Boy Scout movement began in Australia with groups formed in all states.

Writer, Peter Luck, called the poem "Australia's unofficial spoken National Anthem." These three literary and musical 'Anthems', define those feelings that touch the hearts of the vast majority of Australians, so "Let us rejoice!"

Thompson, John, *Documents that shaped Australia. Records of a Nations Heritage*. Pier 9, an imprint of Murdoch Books Pty. Ltd., 2010  
Barker, Anthony, *When was that? Chronology of Australia*. John Ferguson, Sydney. 1988.

# THE SQUARE

ANOTHER MOVIE MADE IN THE SHIRE  
CLIVE BAKER



Large parts of this movie were made on the Woronora river around 2006-2007. It is a tale of a love affair that goes wrong, drug running and eventual tragedy when a house is burned down intentionally but accidentally kills an innocent party. According to Wikipedia it is:

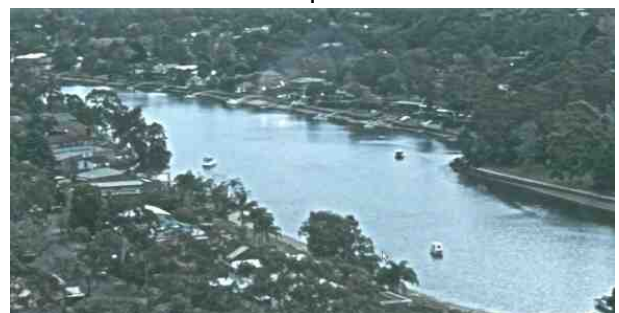
*...a neo-noir thriller film directed by Nash Edgerton, written by his brother Joel Edgerton and Matthew Dabner, and starring David Roberts and Claire van der Boom. Based upon an original idea by Joel, the project was written and then shelved by the actor because he felt it was not strong enough.*

*It was only made after his director brother Nash read the script ... the film premiered in competition at Sydney Film Festival on 15 June 2008 and after that had a limited release in Australia on 31 July 2008, and was released in North America in 2010 by Apparition ... filming took place in late 2007 at Sutherland, Cronulla and Caringbah etc...*

*The film won a commendation in the 'Best Australian Film' category of the Australian Film Critics Association awards for 2008.*

#### SOURCE:

(Wiki: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Square\\_\(2008\\_film\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Square_(2008_film)))



Above: Scenes from the movie, filmed in and around Woronora.

Below: Some of those thanked by the movie makers.

WILLIAM ELLIOT EARTH REMOVALS, WORONORA FIRE SERVICE, WORONORA RSL,  
WORONORA RIVER PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS & TEACHERS  
AND ALL THE RESIDENTS OF WORONORA

# CONVICTS ON THE WORONORA

PAM FORBES AND GREG JACKSON

Arable land in the Woronora valley is rare. It is steep-sided, rocky and inhospitable for Europeans. A small area of cleared land is located beside the Woronora about 45 metres from John Lucas' Woronora Mill. This patch of arable land may well have been used by Lucas' convicts in the 1820s and by any subsequent residents in this area including squatters in the depression of the 1930s.

Recent archaeological investigations at the Woronora Mill site show the outline of two small huts located on this land but it is not possible to determine, without excavation, if either were erected by Lucas as part of the mill complex or whether they belong to later settlers.

## History of the Woronora Mill

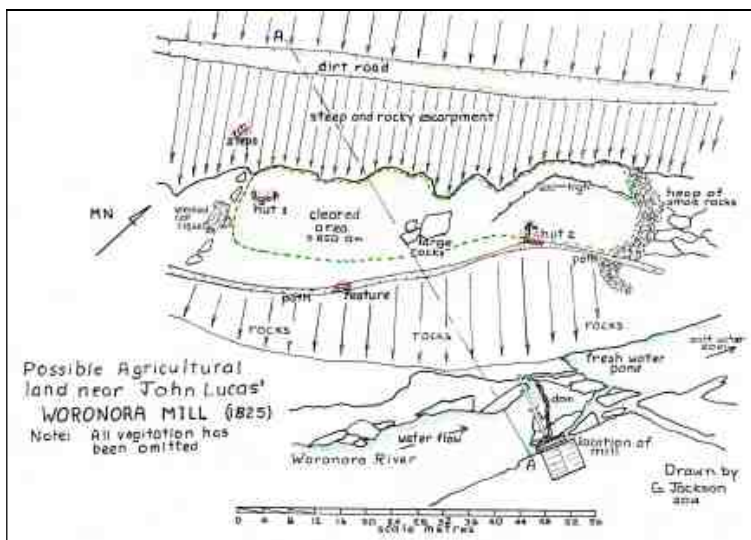
The Woronora Mill, built in 1825 was the second of Lucas' two mills. Their history and archaeology was described in earlier Sutherland Shire Historical Society *Bulletins* (Vol 15, Nos 3 and 4 and Vol 16, Nos 1 and 2).

The 1822 Brisbane Mill on Williams Creek, about 10 kilometres west, stood idle for lack of water due to drought, forcing Lucas to build a second mill which had a secure source of water.

Located in a deep river valley the Woronora Mill's access was by boat only and the shallow Woronora River restricted the size of the vessel that could approach the mill to about one ton burden (Jackson G., Forbes P. and Duncan B. 2013).

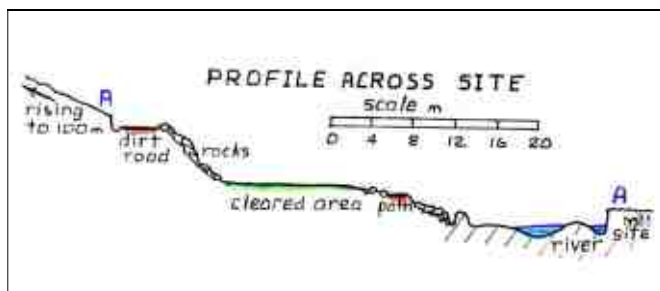
The Woronora Mill machinery would have been constructed at Lucas' Brisbane Mill and moved in pieces in small boats to the Woronora Mill site for erection. That would have been a process John Lucas was familiar with as his father, Nathaniel, had pre-fabricated two windmills on Norfolk Island. In 1805, he had taken them, with his young son John, to Sydney for erection (Forbes P. Jackson G. 2012).

Timber for the mill and associated buildings was available on site but the two mill stones weighed approximately a ton each and the iron mill machinery and mill wheel would be of considerable size and weight. They would have required considerable muscle to move from boats into position – a large part of Lucas' 14-strong convict labour force. A construction camp was required for the men and the map below shows a likely position.



SITE MAP

A survey of Woronora Mill and nearby archaeological features on 1 October 2014, revealed an area of approximately 650 square-metres cleared of field stones but containing some bedrock and large 'floaters' about 45 metres west of the Woronora Mill site. The bases of two small huts are located in this area.



In addition to this survey, a section from the mill through the settlement site on line A-A (opposite) was completed using a GPS.

## 1930s Depression Housing

No study seems to have been made of the considerable number of people who resided in this valley from the 1930s until late 1960s but evidence for their lifestyle is everywhere. At least eight house sites have been located in the bush within 350 metres of this small patch of arable land.

These houses were converted to weekenders and given 'permissive occupancy' by the council until the late 1960s when a large bushfire destroyed many of them. The council then closed them all and did a thorough job in removing their remains. The architecture of the housing was distinctive with poor quality concrete slabs on the ground, fibro-covered stud walls and galvanised iron roofs and water tanks.



*This small section of steps above and west of hut 1 (see map), is made from well-cut dimensioned sandstone. The steps lead towards a Depression-era house site on the dirt road above.*

Some community infrastructure is evident in the bases for water pumps beside the river used to replenish tanks from the Woronora.

## Nutritional Requirements

The Woronora River valley is rich in some food groups. Fish have always been plentiful and wallabies and kangaroos were and still are common in the bush. For those without 'bush tucker' knowledge and hunting skills, fruit and vegetables had to be sourced elsewhere.

Megan Jackson, Senior Dietician at Newcastle's Calvary Mater Hospital, advised that, in order to

maintain a person's health a reasonable quantity of fresh vegetables are required.

The convict mill workers would have had flour for damper but to get fresh vegetables required a long row. As part of this survey, a voyage was undertaken from Lucas' Woronora Mill to his Brisbane Mill on Williams Creek, a distance of 28 kilometres, using only the propulsion method available in 1825 – rowing and sailing and using the tides. The voyage took eight hours one-way (Jackson G., Forbes P. and Duncan B. 2013).

Growing vegetables locally was the only alternative to that long voyage in 1854 and the unemployed that squatted in this valley in the Depression would have also grown their own (or done without) as money and transport were in short supply.

## The Landscape

A steep and rocky escarpment towers over the site resulting in rocks of all sizes littering the river valley. The area between the two huts however, is almost completely clear of field stones although floaters weighing several tons protrude from the bedrock. At the northern end of the site, close to hut 2 there is a large pile of field stones (see site map p16).

These stones appear to be formed into a large rough rubble wall running from the escarpment down to the river side. A track of unknown age now cuts through it.



*Hut 2 base, now located partially on the path.  
(Photo P. Forbes)*

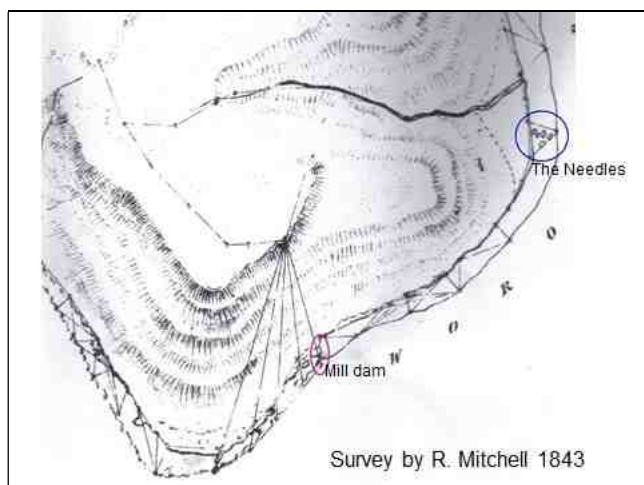
The clearing of stones from the site would have involved considerable labour but provided a reasonably-sized flat area for a camp site.

The exposed sandy loam could then have been used for agricultural purposes.

## Vegetation

Today the site is heavily covered by relatively small short-lived trees such as Sydney red gums (*Angophora costata*), Grey gums (*Eucalyptus punctata*) and She-oaks (*Casuarina*).

No contemporary description exists of the landscape at the site but we have some evidence of the vegetation in the survey by Rodrick Mitchell (son of Sir Thomas) from 1843, 15 years after the mill had ceased operation.



Mitchell's survey (above) shows the mill dam, and the Needles, a serious obstruction to navigating the Woronora River. The sighting lines can be clearly seen with the point from which the survey was taken now located deep in the bush. Today the vista towards the river from this rocky crag is completely obscured by tree cover. The landscape in 1843 must have been very open for the multiple sightings of the river to have been taken. Although by 1843 their numbers had been severely depleted the fire



*Part of the rubble wall at the northern end of the site running down towards the river.  
(Photo: Pam Forbes)*

regime of local Dharawal Aboriginals may account for this open landscape.

## Floods

There are no records detailing the flood levels at this point in this river valley prior to the Woronora Dam construction in 1940 about 10 kilometres upstream of the mill site. However since that event no serious floods have occurred on the Woronora.

Lucas' mill building would have been at serious risk from flood waters but the cleared land and huts, being about five metres above the normal river level, may have been secure from fast flowing floodwaters.

## Aboriginal Presence

The Woronora River valley was Dharawal land but there is no direct evidence of how John Lucas and his assigned convicts interacted with the local aboriginals – but interacted they must have.

Aboriginal resistance leader, Pemulwuy, had roamed this valley 20 years before the mill was built and his associate, Kogi was a neighbour of Lucas. He lived on land now known as Voyager Point, near where Harris and Williams Creeks join the Georges River and beside Lucas' Brisbane Mill (Goodhall H. Cadzow A. 2014 a).

Another resident at Voyager Point was Gogi, (born 1770s), one of the party who, in 1820, met with Governor Macquarie at the Cowpastures. He was given a 'King Plate' by the governor, identifying him as 'King of the Georges River'. Kogi and his clan continued to live in and move around their country along the river (Goodhall H. Cadzow A. 2014 b).

The Woronora Mill and the presence of convict labour on their tribal land may have been resented by the local aborigines. The burning of the mill, reported in an 1843 Auction Notice, following its closure in 1828 may have been the work of aborigines or a natural bushfire.



*The hut 1 base, made from several courses of flat stones, has been disturbed by trees roots. Some stones show pick marks. The above shows the eastern and southern corners of the base.  
(Photo B. Wharton.)*

### Operating the Woronora Mill

The Woronora mill operated for only the short period (1825-1828) with *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser* announcing on Wednesday 17 September 1828, that John Lucas was declared bankrupt with trustees appointed to wind up his estate.

There is no evidence that the Woronora Mill ever operated again despite repeated attempts to sell the mill from 1843 when Sir Thomas Mitchell's Road to the Illawarra passed within 150 metres of the site. The advertisement below is for the sale of the Woronora Mill, *The Australian*, 17 March 1843.

**BY PUBLIC AUCTION,  
THE WORONORA MILL ESTATE.**

**M**R. STUBBS is directed, by order of the Trustees, Captain Dacre and Mr. Gore, (Alex. W. Melkio, surveyor to the trustees) to sell by public Auction, at the Mart, King-street, on FRIDAY next, the 17th instant, sale at one o'clock,

**THE WORONORA MILL ESTATE,**  
as per description given, viz:—Situated on the Woronora River, in the parish of Holdsworth, in the county of Cumberland.

1. A Grant by Sir Thomas Brisbane, for the express purpose of a water mill, which was aptly placed near the junction of the salt and fresh water, on a natural dam, but which was burned down some years ago.
2. The Woronora, tributary to George's River, is a perpetual stream of the purest water; and vessels of light burden have discharged grain at the Mill, returning with flour to Sydney.

### The Latest Survey

The survey of the mill/camp site on 1 October 2014 was conducted by Karen Dye, Ian Clegg, Pam Forbes, Lloyd Hedges, Greg Jackson, and Ben Wharton.

This survey was combined with previous surveys of the Woronora Mill site to produce a more complete site plan, shown on page 16.

Plans and description of the archaeology of the mill building are available from previous publications and can be obtained from: <https://sydney.academia.edu/GregJackson>.

### Conclusion

Without excavation it is impossible to accurately date either of the two huts located. This small area would initially have provided a camp site for the convict workforce and their overseers, almost certainly including John Lucas, for the duration of the mill build. Once the mill was operational the cleared land would have provided much needed vegetables and possibly goat's milk for the small workforce that remained to operate the mill.

There were other European residents along that part of Woronora river, between the convicts of John Lucas and the Depression era squatters.



## NEWS IN PICTURES



Above left: Leanne Muir, Pat Hannan, Angela Thomas and Carol McDonald at the Society's table at Volunteers Day, Entertainment Centre, Sutherland.



Above right: Leanne Muir and Ian Kolln at Como Markets, promoting the Society.

Below: Cronulla beach with barbed wire across the sand, c 1942.



# HARGRAVE AIRPORT?

CLIVE BAKER

Our fellow member, Michael Adams, recently gave us a very informative talk on Lawrence Hargrave and his flying experiments at Stanwell Park.

Michael is also heavily involved in the Lawrence Hargrave Centre – an organisation that keeps the name of the famous man before the public and they have a mobile display with models of his inventions.

Michael is very keen for our Society to support an effort to have the new airport at Badgerys Creek named the LAWRENCE HARGRAVE AIRPORT.

If you would like to support the idea please write to your local Federal member and also to the minister with responsibility for the project: Warren Truss – PO Box 283. Maryborough. 4650.



Michael with a Hargrave box-kite model.

## LAWRENCE HARGRAVE: THE FAMOUS EXPLORER

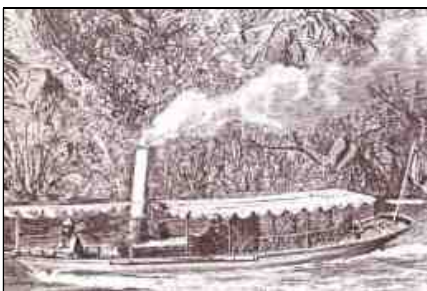
MICHAEL ADAMS

Most people think of Lawrence Hargrave as an aeronautical inventor, particularly of box kites. But he was more recognised and famous in Australia in his lifetime as a geographical explorer.

If you wanted to be a superhero in the nineteenth century you went off into the unknown and tried to fill in the 'bits of white' on world maps, the bits the cartographers knew little about.

Stanwell Park had two such superheroes – Major Sir Thomas Mitchell and Lawrence Hargrave. Mitchell purchased Stanwell Park and the Coal Cliffs in 1848 and commenced the first house, on the Dress Circle, in 1850. He liked the scenery and hoped in vain to exploit the coal that was so tantalisingly evident in the nearby cliffs. He also conducted four major explorations of inland Australia, and wrote a best-selling book about his adventures. When he died his funeral procession was over eight kilometres long.

Lawrence Hargrave came to Australia in 1865, aged 15. He failed to matriculate to the University of Sydney and begged his father to let him go exploring. He circumnavigated Australia, only survived shipwreck on the Great Barrier Reef by clinging to the mast of the sinking ship.



Neva

He then turned his attention to New Guinea where there was a lot of 'empty white' on the maps. Hargrave was involved with three expeditions in New

Guinea, the most productive being a journey on the *Neva*, up the Fly River in 1876 under Luigi D'Albertis, whose antics and maltreatment of the natives and crew drove Hargrave to distraction. On one occasion rockets were fired into a village, killing and decapitating a native, whose head was taken to Italy. One suspects that the reserved Hargrave, chose to work alone on future aeronautical research partly because of his horrendous time under D'Albertis. "I don't know whether to choke him or chain him", he wrote.

Hargrave, as engineer on the boat, accomplished wonderful penetration of the Fly River, discovered gold – below what is now Ok Tedi mine.

When Lawrence returned to Sydney he was their newest hero and was inducted into the Royal Society, a select body of intellectuals interested in furthering research into many fields.

He was given access to the *Royal Society Journal* which was disseminated worldwide and later had published, 19 articles on aeronautical research. The articles were immediately available to researchers worldwide, including the Wright Brothers in the USA.

Hargrave was also invited into the Sydney Observatory where he explored the heavens. He achieved commendation for connecting changes in the earth's atmosphere in 1883 to the volcanic explosion of Krakatoa volcano off Java – the dust and ash having travelled around the whole world.

Exploration was in his blood so he turned increasingly to exploring the secrets of human flight. He charted so much new territory that the world of aviation was to hail him as perhaps the greatest pioneer in the development of powered human flight in the late nineteenth century.

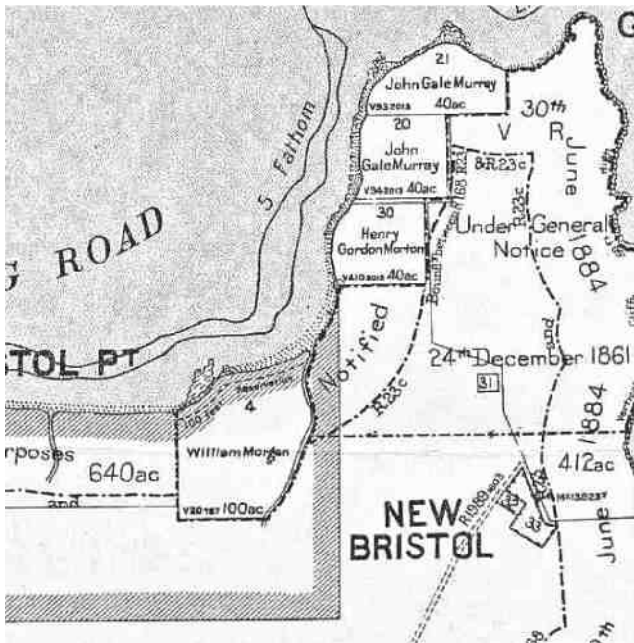
## THE CONVICT SHIP HIVE — PART 2

PAM FORBES AND GREG JACKSON

In this second article about the convict ship *Hive*, driven ashore in 1835 we look at the recent search for the remains in Wreck Bay, NSW. Here is the story of the *Hive* and its connection to the former nearby Jervis Bay town of New Bristol. <sup>1</sup>

### New Bristol

The *New South Wales Government Gazette*, 23 March 1836, reported the purchase of 100 acres on the south side of Jervis Bay, near Bristol Point by William Morgan for five shillings an acre. Such was the delay in registering land grants in the 1830s that it is entirely possible that Morgan had occupied the land for sometime before that date.



The south shore of Jervis Bay, showing William Morgan's land, (New South Wales. Dept. of Lands, 1909.)

Morgan was assigned at least one convict according to, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 November 1837, which reported the plundering of Morgan's possessions. It was done by escaped convicts, John Axhill and Joseph Docker, who put Morgan's assigned convict, John Oliver, in a state of 'bodily fear'. Both escapees were later re-captured and sentenced to death.

In the optimism of the late 1830s Morgan decided to cash in by subdividing his 100 acres into blocks of various sizes and establishing his own private town: New Bristol. Agents Foss & Lloyd were engaged to sell the land and a publicity blitz started in July 1841 with advertisements flooding the newspapers and exulting the virtues of New Bristol.

About 163 blocks of land on the subdivision plan, were offered for auction on 22 October 1841.



This inaccurate 1841 subdivision plan from Foss & Lloyd has north at the bottom.

The *Sydney Monitor and Commercial Advertiser* on the 25 October 1841 claimed that 92 were sold, for £160 per acre – a substantial profit for Morgan. There is no way of knowing how many of the allotments were ever built upon.



The two maps above, show the subdivision overlaying the land of Morgan's farm – on a different alignment.

The day before the sale the advertisement below appeared in the *Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 21 October 1841:

**NEW BRISTOL, at the NEW ROYAL HOTEL,  
TO-MORROW the 2nd instant, instead of in their  
Rooms as formerly advertised**

*F and L have omitted to point out, in their advertisement, the important fact, that a large STORE 70 feet long is erected on the Property, complete with Spanish Windless and every requisite for storing Wool. The Building is of the finest description and groved into sleepers of immense strength. The wood consists of Pine and Oak originally belonging to the ship Hive. It has a projecting roof equal to any in Sydney, and will store a thousand bales of Wool with ease. This erection renders the Allotments on which it stands is invaluable, as it is the possibility of a doubt, that the Wool from the new country must come to New Bristol for shipment to London and this is the only Store in the Bay capable of containing any quantity.*

*On another of the Allotments is erected a very large Dairy, weatherboard outside and plastered inside, it stands 12 feet high, and is sunk 5 feet into the ground, rendering it delightfully cool on the hottest weather; there are also Calf Pens, Stock Yards and every necessary for Dairy operation and at the back an extensive run capable of maintaining a large number of cows. View this property in whatever light you may, it must prove an eligible investment of capital. F and L feel perfectly justified in strongly recommending it to the notice of buyers. The Sophia Jane, steamer, will leave Sydney for Jervis Bay on the evening of the day of sale thus giving an opportunity of purchasers to go down and satisfy themselves as to the value of their Allotments.*

The article above states that much of the timber off the *Hive* finished up at nearby New Bristol as a large wool store. That implies that William Morgan had obviously been more than an observer of the wreck of the *Hive* and *Blackbird* in 1835. It is possible that other wreckage from the *Hive* also made its way there. There may be more of the *Hive* still to find.

An advertisement appeared in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Wednesday 10 December 1845, describing a cottage, store and potential salting works for sale at New Bristol. This is probably the cottage and store shown in the subdivision plan opposite. The salting works being the wool store described in the newspaper article as wool shipments had ceased from Jervis Bay due to the depression of the 1840s.

### **Where is New Bristol?**

The first map shows New Bristol as midway between Bristol Point and the Jervis Bay lighthouse and properties are shown at that location.

This is at odds with the subdivision plan showing that New Bristol is located on the shore of Jervis Bay.

The creek running along the eastern side of the subdivision allows us to accurately locate New Bristol on the land of William Morgan. This is approximately 10 kilometres from the wreck site of *Hive* and *Blackbird*.



*Approximate location of the cottage and store at New Bristol. Scottish Rocks are seen nearby. (Map by SIX)*

New Bristol had its own school and the decline of the town can be traced by looking at its history. It drew pupils from the town of New Bristol and the three families at Jervis Bay lighthouse – see the first map. In 1876 the school opened close to the township of New Bristol then, in 1885, it was moved to midway between the town and the lighthouse. In 1889 the school moved again to be very close to the lighthouse, all school children now coming from that location. The school closed when the lighthouse closed in 1899.<sup>2</sup>

**Conclusion:** The town seems to have never been a thriving community and disappeared rapidly from the historic record. The 1840s depression meant that New Bristol completely missed the wool trade and probably consisted of scattered fishermen's cottages with some small-scale farming. It remains for future archaeologists to locate the store built from the *Hive* timbers and test whether any remains of the ship still exist there.

### **ENDNOTES:**

1 A full report on a previous archaeological investigation of the *Hive* by NSW Heritage in 1995 is available from NSW Heritage (Nutley D., Smith T., 1995).  
2 (Sant B. 2007:16 - 18).

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# GYMEA BAY PUBLIC SCHOOL

THE FIRST DECADES

COLIN BURGESS

*Colin Burgess (brother of our member, Laurie) was a student at this school from 1952 to 1958.*

The original or 'old' Gymea Bay Public School occupied a flat, rock-hard swathe of dirt a few steps north of the corner of Vernon Avenue in Gymea Bay Road. By the time of the official school opening on 17 August 1935, about 63 pupils and two teachers were registered on the roll. Prior to the building of the school, children in that area either had to walk to Miranda to attend classes, or catch a bus into Sutherland.

The area around Gymea at that time was dotted with dairy farms, occupied by families who were snapping up fertile land where the Stapleton family once ran an extensive slaughter yard on President Avenue, midway between Gymea and Miranda. Gathering 63 children together in such a scattered farming community seems to have been a mighty effort for those pioneering days.

Plans for the building of the school were initiated in 1933, followed by two years of untiring agitation by local identity Mrs J. Coates, along with the support of Sutherland Shire Councillor Cecil 'Joe' Monro, MLA. In July 1934, Councillor Monro reported that the Education Department was securing "a suitable site for a public school in the Gymea Bay district."

The chosen site was on Gymea Bay Road and initially, only one building was erected on the site, comprising two classes and a hat room.

On opening day a large number of local parents and children made their way to the school for the festivities, with the newly-appointed president of the Parents and Citizens' Association, Mr A. Atkinson, acting as chairman of the event. The wife of Mr G. Ross Thomas, the New South Wales Director of Education, had the honour of officially opening the school and was presented with a pair of gold scissors. Speeches were then made by Director Thomas, Councillor Monro, first headmaster Mr R. Williams, Councillor and Shire President Seymour Shaw.



To the delight of the children present that day, was radio personality 'Uncle Frank' from 2GB. Shown here in his WW2 army (welfare officer) uniform

Pupils then performed some hastily-rehearsed songs.

To further mark the occasion a tree was planted on the school site by Mrs Hunter, one of the first P&C members and a tireless worker for the school. The tree was nestled into a prepared hole behind an inscribed plaque, which was also unveiled. At the conclusion of formalities a bazaar that had been organised by the school's P&C fledgling committee was enjoyed by all.

Two weeks later, on 3 September 1935, the school began full-time operation with its initial intake of students. Headmaster Williams taught the children along with a single assistant teacher, Miss Thomas, who left the school soon after, to be replaced by Miss Love.

Sadly the first headmaster died within months of taking up the position and was replaced by Daniel Cahill, a veteran of the First World War. With the passing of years, and as ever more children were enrolled at the school, their parents felt it their duty to become actively involved in the P&C. Evening meetings were held, with Mrs Cassell acting as president, Mrs Kerr as secretary, and Mrs Catly as treasurer.

The area was still remote as far as public transport was concerned, but substantial progress was made in 1939 with the opening of Gymea station on the railway line to Cronulla.

In 1941 the great global conflict of World War Two was hardly at the portals of Gymea Bay Public School, but headmaster Cahill organised the school's parents and pupils in the mighty effort of digging an air-raid trench, which bisected the school grounds. This wasn't a unique reaction to the war, but was in fact part of a parallel campaign in other local schools.

The finished trench, according to information located in the Sutherland library, was apparently 40 metres long by about a metre wide and deep. After the initial excitement of claiming this magnificent trench from the stony soil it slowly and inevitably found a new calling as a play area for pupils' war games. Eventually, concerned that some child might accidentally suffer a premature burial, the prudent decision was made to fill it in.

Mr Sheldrick took over the role of headmaster in 1946, at the same time teaching pupils in Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Classes, together with the assistance of Miss Bee, who taught kindergarten, First, Second and Third Classes.

Even as the local population swelled, the school was still only deemed to be a two-teacher operation by the Education Department. For a short time the school had a temporary headmaster, Mr Dunlop, while Mr Sheldrick was overcoming an illness.

In 1948 a new headmaster, Mr Keightley, arrived at the school, which was now operating at maximum capacity. For a time he endured the same class arrangements until the enrolment again grew and a kindergarten teacher, Miss Wilkins, was finally appointed. A portable army hut was erected on the school grounds and used as the kindergarten room.

Gradually, as the school population increased, two new classrooms were built and more teachers were appointed. However the population of the Gymea–Gymea Bay area had also grown rapidly, and it was time for the small school to expand.

The new infants' school came about through the efforts of local residents Arthur and Eileen Moroney. As a newly-married couple after the Second World War, they had purchased two blocks of land in Gymea. Like many other couples in the post-war era they built a temporary residence while Arthur scraped together enough scarce materials to construct a permanent home.

Meanwhile Eileen, whose first child Gordon was born in 1945, had become very active in the local community. Together with other interested parents she began petitioning Sutherland Shire Council for some family amenities in Gymea and Gymea Bay, including a request for the grant of an area of land that would be set aside for the construction of an infants' school. She was the one selected to stand up at a council meeting and make the case for some suitable land at the corner of Gymea Bay Road and Coonong Road to be allocated to that purpose. The grant was supported, and the Gymea Bay Kindergarten Committee undertook the erection of a suitable building. A monetary grant of £313 toward the cost of materials was approved by Council, and work began in 1953.

The infants' school was mostly built by volunteer labour, and young Gordon Moroney became one of the original pupils at the brand-new school.

In the meantime, Mr Keightley transferred to Grays Point Primary School and Victor Spongberg was appointed as the school's new headmaster.

At the time that the new primary school was being built, cheap land was becoming even more

readily available in Gymea, and a whole flood of Housing Commission houses had just been erected. As a result, the population of the area began to surge and undergo change.

There seemed to be some distinct groups, and others that blurred between groups. Firstly, there were the older inhabitants, many openly resentful at having their former farmland privacy invaded and disturbed, and then there were the early post-war homemakers with families already well established.

More families began arriving on the scene, building their dream, three-bedroom fibro or weatherboard houses on the plentiful, cheap blocks of land around Gymea and Gymea Bay. On the next strata down came the Housing Commission inhabitants. Finally, there was a sizeable body of residents living in the school district but who still preferred to send their children to either Sutherland or Miranda public schools because they imagined these bigger schools would provide a better education.

The infants' school was officially opened on 22 October 1954 – a momentous occasion for the school, with official guest the Honourable R.J. Heffron, MLA, the Deputy Premier and Minister for Education. Others in attendance included Vic Spongberg, the president of the P&C, Mr G. Monk and P&C secretary Mrs G. Malthouse.

On the day of the opening, the school had 378 pupils, while Mr Spongberg had nine assisting teachers. Four primary classes were still occupying the old school site with the eventual intention of transferring them to the new school. The school staff at that time comprised:

Kindergarten: Miss S. Jackson  
Transition: Mrs. M. Mangelsdorf  
1B: Mrs E. Taylor  
1A: Mrs J. Humphrey  
2B: Mrs T. Giles  
2A: Miss J. Morison

Primary school staff comprised:  
3A: Mr L. O'Neill  
3B-4: Mr E. Bryan  
5: Mr J. Bamborough (Deputy Headmaster)  
6: Mr V. Spongberg (Headmaster)

According to the official programme for the event, the younger students participated in infants' singing games ('The Grand Old Duke of York', 'The Paw-Paw Patch' and other songs), while the pupils of 2A presented some "Verse Speaking," conducted by Miss Morison.

Two years later, in 1956, Miss Cook not only became the Mistress of the Infant's School, but taught Second class. Things were rapidly becoming organised, and the P&C began to formulate plans along with Mr Spongberg for a school fete, to raise money for the building of a school assembly hall.

In 1957 the school uniform made its first appearance and the symbolic emblem of the GyMEA Lily (*Doryanthea excels*) was introduced. The suburb names of GyMEA and GyMEA Bay officially resulted from a name proposed by government surveyor William A.B. Greaves in 1855. He in turn took the name GyMEA from the local Eora aboriginal people, who used that word to describe the tall-stalked lilies in the area.

As plans for the building of the assembly hall were being developed, the school was rapidly undergoing further changes. Miss Frost was appointed Primary Girls' Mistress (the first time the school had been segregated in the Primary section), made up of a Teaching Mistress, eight assistant teachers and 240 girls. In the boys' section, Mr Spongberg taught Sixth class and had a total of eight teachers and 256 boys. The Infants' Department stayed the same, with Miss Cook as Mistress and eleven assistant teachers looking after 226 boys and 188 girls.

In 1959, Vic Spongberg helped inaugurate the 'GyMEA Lily Festival', which was always a marvellous occasion – when it didn't rain, that is. The festival was the original brain-child of Joe Storrie, a former Sutherland Shire councillor and secretary of the Architect's Association, who at that time was the president of the GyMEA Bay School's P&C committee. Funds were needed to construct an assembly hall at the school, and he put together a creative idea for a large festival to provide capital for the building.

Mr Spongberg in turn set out the cultural aims of the festival and parade, namely that residents should be made vividly aware of the identity of their local community, and in a wider sense more appreciative of their native land through a better knowledge of the indigenous people, its pioneers, and its flora and fauna.

The inaugural Lily Festival saw GyMEA shopping centre transformed into a bushland setting at springtime, and thousands witnessed what would be the first of many massive annual parades wending a path between the shopping centre and the school. It was given the name 'The Festival of Wild Flowers'.

A float carrying the Festival Queen, Nereda Davies, had been lovingly decorated by her mother Lil with GyMEA Lilies taken from her own property. Some children were made up as aboriginals who carried posters announcing each float as they approached, and later held a corroboree at the school. Channel 2 was there to record the event for television, and children eagerly lined up to get the autographs of such celebrities as 'Captain Fortune' and Reggie Quartley and a singer named Ross Higgins, who later found greater fame as Ted Bullpit in the TV comedy series, 'Kingswood Country'.

This parade soon became the biggest annual event in the Sutherland Shire, with people flocking from everywhere.

Needless to say, the necessary funds were raised, and the assembly hall eventually built. The official opening of the new hall by the Minister for Education, Ernest Wetherell, was held on 11 November 1961. Costing £9,000 (\$18,000), the hall was a tribute to the hard work and commitment of the P&C. In less than a third of a year, they had raised the £3,000 (\$6,000) required as their share of the building cost. Most of the money came from weekly collections of two shillings (20c) from parents and residents and the proceeds of the festivals.

Years later, the Lily Festival changed the name to the GyMEA Village Fair. However, just as Westfield Miranda will always be known as Miranda Fair to those who lived in the shire in the shopping centre's early days, so the GyMEA Village Fair will always be known to many older inhabitants as the GyMEA Lily Festival. Over many years, the GyMEA Lily Festival/Village Fair has grown from a wonderful school fund-raising idea into a major annual cultural event.

People do not realise that the school's anthem is not only associated with an early Lily Festival, but was created in part by one of Australia's most famous literary figures, Dame Mary Gilmore, whose image is on the Australian \$10 note. Following a request from the school, Dame Mary wrote the first verse for the anthem, and suggested that pupils organise a competition to compose the second and other verses. John Anthill, one of Australia's finest composers, then wrote the music.

"Dame Mary was a wonderful person with a tremendous interest in children," Mr. Spongberg said in 1974 on the occasion of his retirement ... "We simply wrote to her, seeking her cooperation and she responded immediately."



Above: The Hon. R.J. Heffron, MLA, Minister for Education, at official opening, 22 October 1954.

Below: Headmaster Victor Spongberg with Class 6A – Colin third left (top row), 1958.



The original school anthem began:

*Grant us, O Lord, to tend with care,  
This emblem of our land so fair.  
Help us to hold it as the crown,  
For Gymea school and Gymea town.*

The school's garden of native plants also developed from a competition held for school children at one of the early Lily Festivals. Naturally enough, it features the Gymea Lily among its wide variety of native plants and shrubs.

Along with its interest in Aboriginal traditions, native plants, birds and animals, the school built an excellent sporting tradition and reputation. It has a fine collection of trophies from inter-school competitions and rivalry is just as keen between the four 'houses' of the school.

The four houses were originally formed by Mr Spongberg and the children decided to give them aboriginal names for indigenous birds. They consulted a number of dictionaries and came up with the words Tywan (lyre bird), Thirrie-Thirrie (willy-wagtail), Kiara (white cockatoo) and Wonga Wonga (blue pigeon). Those names remain in use to this day.

The site of the original school is now a tranquil area, where families can relax and appreciate the serene beauty of the background bushland setting. As in the past, that memory-filled patch of land in Gymea Bay still echoes to the happy cries of young children, and in a salute to the passing parade of three-quarters of a century, it is officially known as 'The Old School Park'.

With acknowledgements to the staff and resources of  
Sutherland Shire Library

## BITS N PIECES

## PRICES TRACK

FRED MIDGLEY

An apparent letter to the editor at the *St George Call* (date no known):

*At the close of the year, 1906, an improvement was being made for tourists on the western side of the Sutherland railway. Here the travellers were being assisted to reach the winding Woronora River with its wealth of picnic spots by a much improved and convenient route.*

*The camper must have been agreeably surprised to find the track from the cemetery to the River had been in the hands of the men of the Roads Department and further delighted to know that the track has been made to the cemetery gate thus reducing the distance to the rail station from the delightful river resorts.*

Seven men were employed under the superintendency of Mr G. Perim of Heathcote. The complete work of the track was expected to be done by Christmas. It was hoped it was only a preliminary for a bridge over the river.

*The track became known as Price's Track after the pioneer family at the Woronora River. Along part of its route there was a cave known as Price's Cave in which a shooting tragedy occurred about 10 years later.*

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## THE SHIRE A JOURNEY THROUGH TIME

BRUCE WATT

Thank you to all who attended the book launch of *The Shire* on 16 August. Sales have exceeded all expectations and the last of the 1100 print run was sold in November – about 12 weeks after its release. It was gratifying that the Sutherland Shire Council ordered 100 books as gifts to delegations and to showcase the Shire. Copies are also available in all Shire libraries.

This 230-page book is the first of its kind to chronicle the Shire's entire history right up to the present day, befitting a region that played such a dominant role in the discovery and later settlement of the continent. *The Shire* also traces development within the global and Australian context. The Dharawal Aboriginal story has a chapter of its own and references to the first inhabitants, are liberally scattered throughout the book.

Attractively presented with many colour images, is a timely addition to our written history – an upgraded reprint is under way.

## KOALAS TO TAKE OVER KURNELL!

VIA LAURIE BURGESS

An article published in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 July 1945, proclaimed:

## KOALA SANCTUARY FOR KURNELL

*The acting Chief Secretary, Mr Clive Evatt, yesterday announced that approval had been given for a koala sanctuary to be established at Kurnell. Mr Evatt said that it was hoped to introduce about 12 koalas as soon as the Captain Cook's Landing Place Trust had ensured that there were no foxes and cats in the area.*

Alas! No other information has been found: did a ship full of emigrant koalas ever dock at Kurnell and disembark to seek a new life?



*Does anyone know what this 1944 product was?*

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## JOB VACANT

Due the illness of our in-house graphic artist, Joan Morison, we need the services of new person skilled in the art of calligraphy to write the occasional certificate for the Society.

If you know someone who can assist, please contact Angela Thomas (9528-6251) to negotiate wages, conditions, car allowance, annual leave and other matters related to position.



C 1960





FROM THE SUTHERLAND SHIRE MUSEUM COLLECTION

