

NUMBER: 206 — FEBRUARY 2018



Tom Ugly's Point, looking south to Sylvania 1910 by William Mitchell in 1980s
 [purchased by SSC for the 1988 Bicentennial Art Exhibition]
 To feature in SSHS 'Painting the Shire' Art Show – see report, p.9

MINDFUL OF THE PAST – FOCUSED ON THE FUTURE

EMAIL: shirehistory@gmail.com **SSHS WEBSITE:** www.shirehistory.org

FACEBOOK: Sutherland Shire Historical Society

WANTED



Darook in July, c.1980s by L. Gorman [SSHS]



*Taren Pt Bridge under construction, 1960s
By Helena Gibson [SSHS]*

Paintings and sculptures

For

PAINTING THE SHIRE

an exhibition of works depicting Shire scenes or by local artists

to be hosted by

Sutherland Shire Historical Society

at the

Sutherland Shire Memorial School of Arts

23 East Parade, Sutherland (opposite the railway station)

From Friday, 11th to Sunday, 13th May 2018

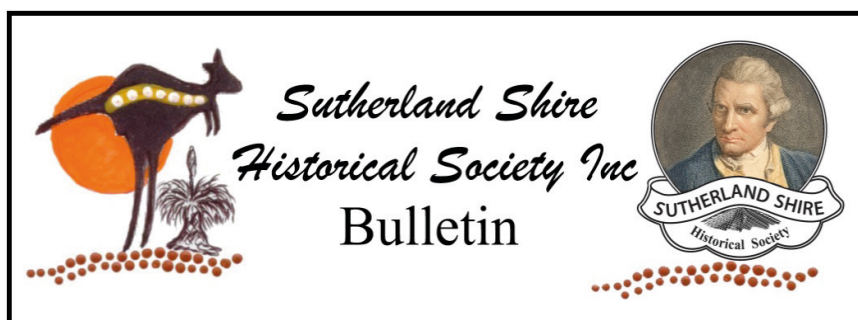
Featured will be works from some of the Shire's prominent or award winning artists, such as Otto Kuster, Jaiwei Sheng and Helena Gibson. Subject matter ranges from Shire landscapes, icons and features of the Shire, still lifes, portraits and abstracts.

We invite additional works for display and anyone who has a painting (or sculpture) they would like to exhibit or sell (with a small commission to SSHS) to contact us as indicated below. For cataloguing, indications should be submitted by early April, ideally with a photo, a description of it and some information about the artist.

Email: shirehistory@gmail.com

Phone: Bruce Watt on 0405 493 187

(See p.9 for full report on 'Painting the Shire')



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SUTHERLAND SHIRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

THE SOCIETY

The SSHS has a proud tradition stretching back 50 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: Elizabeth Craig at elizabeth.craig@y7mail.com or phone 9528 4707.

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, 23 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, Ian Kolln on 9528 3094 or iankolln@yahoo.com.au.

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

Alternatively, email us at shirehistory@gmail.com

+ SOCIETY COMMITTEE: 2017-2018

ELECTED MEMBERS

PATRON:	Shire Mayor, Clr Carmelo Pesce		
PRESIDENT	Bruce Watt	9523-5294	watto51@optusnet.com.au
DEPUTY PRESIDENT	Ian Kolln	9528-3094	iankolln@yahoo.com.au
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HONORARY TREASURER	Anna Estephan	9525-6441	annaestephan@gmail.com
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MUSEUM CURATOR	Ian Kolln	9528-3094	iankolln@yahoo.com.au
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	Helen Rosner	8539-7707	hmrosner@bigpond.com
	Angela Thomas	9528-6251	a.badger@optusnet.com.au
	Joan Tangney	9523-6774	jtangney@optusnet.com.au

APPOINTED MEMBERS

ASSISTANT SECRETARY	Carol McDonald	9528-5122	jmcDonald@optusnet.com.au
BULLETIN PROOF READER	Merle Kavanagh	9521-1043	
MUSEUM COMMITTEE	Bruce Watt Joan Tangney	Noel Elliot	Ineke Niewland John White
EXCURSIONS BOOKING CLERK	John Doherty	0402 848 344	johndoherty55@gmail.com
PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE	Pauline Curby Elizabeth Craig	9523-8814 9528-4707	pcurby@iprimus.com.au elizabeth.craig@y7mail.com
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SCHOOLS LIAISON OFFICER	Elizabeth Craig	9528-4707	Bruce Watt - 9523-5294
WELFARE OFFICER	Gloria Hans	9589-0251	
HONORARY SOLICITOR	Michael Solari		
HONORARY AUDITOR	Stuart Cole		

SSHS CALENDAR: March - May 2018
(See website: www.shirehistory.org for updates)

DATE		
	MEETING 1.30pm, 3 rd Saturday in month Stapleton Centre	EXCURSION EXCURSION OFFICER Noel Elliot – 9521 8622
MARCH 2018	3	Bus tour of historic Shire churches. Pick up 9.00am at Robertson St, Sutherland. Phone Noel Elliot for details
	10	
	17	Speaker: Rod Coy, Founder & Organiser, Shire's 'Relay for Life'
	24	
	31	
APRIL 2018	7	
	14	
	HERITAGE FESTIVAL - 18 April - 20 May	
	21	Meeting to be held at 1.30pm at SUTHERLAND MEMORIAL SCHOOL OF ARTS, 23 East Parade, Sutherland (opposite Sutherland railway station) Speaker: Gary Lester, author of <i>Colour Me Black White and Blue</i> , a history of Cronulla Sharks Rugby League Club. Gary will speak on the Sharks history
	28	
MAY 2018	5	Bus tour of Manly and North Head. Details to come
	12	Friday 11 th to Sunday 13 th – PAINTING THE SHIRE , SSHS art exhibition featuring Shire scenes and Shire artists at the Sutherland Memorial School of Arts, 23 East Parade, Sutherland NEED VOLUNTEERS TO MAN ART SHOW AND HELP WITH CATERING (Contact Elizabeth Craig – 9528 4707 or elizabeth.craig@y7mail.com) The Museum will also be open throughout the art show and will need volunteers
	19	Speaker: Duncan Sutherland, VP, Clan Sutherland Society of Australia. Duncan will speak on Forby Sutherland, a crew member of Captain Cook's <i>HMS Endeavour</i>
	26	

MUSEUM

Sutherland Memorial School of Arts, 23 East Pde, Sutherland
OPEN EACH SATURDAY, 9.00 am to 1.00 pm

*Please refer to the roster located at the Museum and at meetings,
email John Doherty (johndoherty55@gmail.com)
or phone Noel Elliot on 9521 8622*

Letter to the Editor

A fresh look at our suburbs and place names!

But more to be done! *Can you help?*

Dear Bulletin Editor,

At the meeting of Council's Aboriginal Advisory Committee on 10 February 2016, Pauline Curby, professional historian and SSHS member, gave a presentation on Suburb names which came from words in Aboriginal languages, and the question was posed as to whether 'we really know the meaning of these place names?'

There was at the time a list of Suburb and Place names on Council's web site. This was prepared as a companion to the list of the Origin of Street Names, which had been compiled as a private initiative by Society member Christine Edney. A project was set up to update the suburbs and place names items, with particular emphasis on determining not only a 'meaning' of an Aboriginal language words involved, but also to determine where possible which particular Aboriginal language supplied the word and the area of Australia where the word originated. It is unfortunate that only a few of the words come from the local Dharawal language.

Assistance was immediately sought from Bruce Howell, another SSHS Society member and actively involved in the Aboriginal Advisory Committee. He was delighted to help, and was able to provide detailed research on the origins of names originating from Aboriginal languages. It is of note that the research by Bruce and me disregarded any previous 'meanings' unless they could be supported by documentary evidence from reliable sources. Several long-standing and oft-repeated tales of the origins of names have therefore been omitted or, if retained, are explained as a possible source.

It was also noted that the history of some localities added to the reason for the name becoming known and accepted, so that information has also been included.

The fully updated version of the origin of all the Suburbs of Sutherland Shire has now been published on the Council web site: <http://www.sutherlandshire.nsw.gov.au/Home>. It is located by clicking the 'Council' Tab and is within 'About the Shire,' as 'Shire Suburbs Origins' where documents are located.

The Place Names (two documents) also at that location will have more entries included as research is completed (a number are in various stages of compilation).

Should any member of the Society be able to provide any additional information the contact details are included on the documents.

Regards,

Laurie Burgess

Editor's note: Laurie has advised that all contributions will be gratefully received, but would need full references so that the source of the information can be confirmed.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

BRUCE WATT



2018 will be a great year for the Society. We start with a full book of speakers and outings and an array of projects that keep the executive on its toes. Our annual planning day in August allows us some 'navel gazing'

and breathing space to initiate change and to conduct our normal functions. Our Website lists these matters and I urge our members to visit this, (www.shirehistory.org) and also our Facebook page (Sutherland Shire Historical Society) to see what's coming up. Our gratitude is extended to Creo Moore for maintaining both of these. Since becoming more active, especially with Facebook, we have managed to reach a much wider audience and to become more socially relevant.

As well as our regular executive meetings, a smaller, active 'promotions' subcommittee meets fortnightly to fine tune planning and initiate matters that are then brought to the executive meetings.

Belinda Hanrahan, CEO of Hazelhurst now has responsibility for all Shire halls including the Sutherland Memorial School of Arts. Her intention to improve these public facilities is already evident. The floor has been re-sanded, new furniture is being installed and areas are being repainted. Within our museum, the committee is waiting on the delivery of new display cabinets and will undertake a rationalisation of the displays. We are hopeful that some additional Aboriginal items will be donated as well. Work is proceeding in writing and uploading information on our interactive 'kiosk'. John Doherty and Noel Elliot maintain our museum

roster. We would like to spread the load and we ask any members who would like to be included on the roster to contact Noel. Duty is from 10.00 am to 1.00 pm about once a month.

The Australia wide Heritage Festival runs from April 20 to May 20. In the Sutherland Shire a special program of events is coordinated. Please note that our April meeting will be held at the School of Arts rather than at Stapleton Street due to the heavy schedule of attending to the museum and a stall at the Woronora Cemetery on the first day. Gary Lester will be speaking on the Sharks Leagues club. A very special and unique collection of pre 1990 football jerseys will be on display. Another special Heritage Festival event that we are initiating, called 'Painting the Shire' is detailed in another notice in the *Bulletin* (see p.9).

I am involved in a project through our local member, Craig Kelly's office. This year marks the centenary of the end of World War I. Across the nation, November 11 was celebrated as Armistice Day. A day's activities will take place at Parc Menai to commemorate this event.

A special 'night at the museum' is planned for the 26th of October with a 'hat' theme. Our last Christmas outing on Port Hacking was a great success. Another is planned for the 24th November. A regular train trip to Kiama (cost \$2.50) and picnic has been suggested.

It was with great sadness that many family and friends of our late Secretary George Miller farewelled him in December. Funerals are always difficult affairs. However, in a way George's was a celebration of a full life well spent. He was a good man and he is greatly missed.

MUSEUM REPORT

IAN KOLLN

The Museum committee thought that the Christmas break, when we were closed to the public for four weekends, would have allowed us time to install new display cabinets. Unfortunately, they were ordered later and delivery will now be this year. We will have a working bee to clear space, assemble the cabinets and install the display and exhibition items. This may mean the Museum is closed for another weekend while this work is undertaken.

In March a number of us are attending a training day, arranged by the Museum of Applied Arts & Sciences (aka the Powerhouse Museum) to learn how to curate a display. Our collection is much greater than we can display, and this training will allow us to more professionally present information and objects in an interesting display to entice visitors to our Sutherland Shire Museum.

Our focus in the Museum is the **Journey Through Time**. The history of the Sutherland Shire starts with geology of the Sydney Basin, Dharawal nation, first contact and then follows the growth of the birthplace of modern Australia, firstly with the settlers, then manufacturing and how life was for the ordinary people who built the Sutherland Shire in times of war and peace, creating for us what we see today.

We are regularly receiving donations of items which are added to our research and reference collection - thus the need to know how to curate and mount more exhibitions.

Bruce has mentioned in his report the Heritage Festival events which this year includes the 'Painting the Shire' exhibition. This is over three days in the Memorial School of Arts theatre spaces adjacent to our long established Sutherland Shire Museum.

The Museum will also be open for the duration of the Exhibition, and we will need volunteers for roster duty.

As a Heritage festival event our **21st April meeting** will be held at the Sutherland Memorial School of Arts at 1.30pm. Our guest speaker Gary Lester, who wrote the history of rugby league in the Shire, will talk about the Sharks history. An added attraction is a collection of pre-1990 rugby league jerseys to be displayed. The Museum will also be open from 9.00 am to 4.00 pm that day.

Museum roster

We need more volunteers to join the roster and keep the Museum open during these special days. Please email John Doherty (johndoherty55@gmail) or phone Noel Elliot on 9521 8622 to be added to the roster.

SEEKING

AN EXPERIENCED PROOF READER and

A SKILLED INDEXER

To take part in the production of a history of Kareela by Society member, Elizabeth Adams.

If you have expertise as a proof reader or an indexer and are interested in contributing to the production of this 60,000 word publication, please contact Elizabeth Craig for more information: elizabeth.craig@y7mail.com or phone 9528 4707 or 0416 234 272

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

ELIZABETH CRAIG

Happy New Year to all SSHS members!

Last year actually ended on a sad note with the death of well loved member George Miller after his long battle with cancer. He will be missed by so many of us. A moving tribute to him has been written by his partner, Helen Rosner (p 20).

The House I Grew Up In is another evocative account in our series about houses lived in in earlier times and the stories attached to them. Tamaso Lonsdale lived at 1 Melrose Place, Sylvania in the 1930s and '40s when it was still a rural area with few facilities. She speaks with great fondness of life with her intrepid grandparents who had arrived in 1911, and the home the family built with love and ingenuity over the decades. We learn of their role in helping to shape the local

community, the hardships, the good times - and of their brush with underworld figures! (Page 10)

One of our regular authors, Laurie Burgess, recently sent this note:

Having read through a great proportion of the articles published in the *Bulletins* over the years, I have noted that, with all good intentions by the author of an article, there are factual errors and opinions (disguised as facts). In some cases the articles have been repeated without amendment in later editions. [email, 26 January 2018]

This is just a reminder of the importance of providing sources to your articles which others can use with confidence for their own research.

Thank you again for all your contributions and please keep them rolling in.

SSHS MUSEUM LIBRARY

We have begun the practice of recording in the *Bulletin* the newsletters received in the previous three months from other historical societies. They are housed in the Daphne Salt Room at the Museum. You are welcome to browse through them when the Museum is open on Saturday mornings.

The latest magazines to arrive include:

Monumentally Speaking, National Boer War Memorial Association, Dedication Souvenir Edition, No. 32 – Oct. 2017

Descent, Journal of the Society of Australian Genealogists, Vol. 47, Pt 3, Sept. 2017 and Vol. 47, Pt 4, Dec. 2017. Note: the Society's 'Event Calendar' is published at: www.sag.org.au/events

Kogarah Historical Society Inc *Newsletter*, Jan/Feb 2018

History, Magazine of the Royal Australian Historical Society, Dec. 2017, No. 134

Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society, Vol. 103, Pt 2, Dec. 2017

Macleay River Historical Society, No. 210, Nov. 2017

Placenames Australia, Newsletter of the Australian National Placenames Survey, Dec. 2017

The Endeavour, Botany Bay Family History Society, No. 133, Dec. 2017

PAINTING THE SHIRE

ELIZABETH CRAIG

Our Society has long held a small collection of paintings acquired over time, but late last year Hazelhurst Gallery de-accessioned some of the collection passed on to them by Sutherland Shire Council, and offered them to us. Thirty-three paintings from various artists, most of whom were Shire residents, and most of the paintings were of Shire scenes. All had some connection with the Shire. We accepted them with the idea of holding a public exhibition of these paintings to showcase the Shire.



Bruce Watt with Carrie Kibbler at the handover of paintings from Hazelhurst to SSHS in October 2017
[Photo: E. Craig]

The Hazelhurst Collection

The landscapes range from quite early in the Shire's history, such as the one by Bill Mitchell whose painting on the front cover of this *Bulletin* depicts what Tom Ugly's Point would have looked like in 1910. Then there's the 1960s construction of Taren Pt Bridge by Helena Gibson (see inside front cover). Others include oils and watercolours of the Shire's iconic buildings, rivers and beaches, as well as still lifes and abstracts by local artists, reflecting the various interests and styles of our local artists over time.

Showcasing the collection

Hence was born the idea of a retrospective exhibition of the Shire in paint which we called 'Painting the Shire'. It is to be held in the Sutherland Memorial School of Arts (foyer and

auditorium) from Friday, 11th to Sunday, 13th May. We want this to be a memorable event which will raise the profile of the Society, and will invite Shire dignitaries such as the Mayor Carmelo Pesce and CEO of Hazelhurst, Belinda Hanrahan. Naturally, no exhibition opening is complete without wine and nibbles on hand. There will be a painting raffled on the evening. Learn more at the next meeting and on our website: www.shirehistory.org

Adding to the display

To make the exhibition even more comprehensive we are seeking submissions from people who have a painting with a connection to the Shire that they would like to include in the exhibition – either for sale (with a small commission to SSHS) or just on loan. One we have on loan is an oil depicting Gallipoli soldiers in 1915, painted by celebrated award winning Bundeena artist, Jaiwei Shen. Our Facebook followers have also responded positively to our ad for paintings, and we are looking at various means of publicising the event and attracting more submissions.

If you wish to submit a painting for this exhibition, please contact us at email: shirehistory@gmail.com, or phone Bruce Watt on 0405 493 187

Seeking volunteers to help

There is quite a lot of work in putting together this exhibition, manning it, providing security over night, serving refreshments, and cleaning up afterwards, and we are calling for volunteers to be included in a roster over the four day period (Monday 14th will be clean up day.).

If you are interested in taking part in this project, please contact us for more information: email: shirehistory@gmail.com, or phone me on 0416 234 272.

There will be a roster sheet at the February meeting, so be quick to get in first to ensure you get your preferred time.



THE HOUSE I GREW UP IN

TAMASO LONSDALE (nee LUCY SPEEDY)¹

The house I grew up in was 1 Melrose Avenue, Sylvania. It started as two rooms on a concrete block in the middle of the bush and grew to an elegant home with all modern conveniences surrounded by beautiful flowering gardens, lawns and a fountain, many varieties of fruit trees, a lush vegetable patch, a fowl-yard, a horse and cow paddock, stables and a milking yard, all flanked by a large area of virgin bushland.

But not overnight.

It began in 1911 when my grandfather, George Speedy, an English immigrant builder, cleared a small piece of bush and laid a concrete slab big enough for two small rooms. He built a chimney from the abundant sandstone in the area and constructed the walls by the lath and plaster technique, rendered all over with a coating of cement.

He and my grandmother, Maud, and their four sons Matthew, William, Sydney, Charles and baby daughter Dora then moved from their rented house into their new little home. Not very grand it may seem by description but this was the first home they had owned and mere ownership transformed it into a palace.

At first, candles and kerosene lamps lighted the home and meals were cooked on the open fire. When the new gleaming black cooking range, built by Metters, was installed Grandmother was delighted. The kettle was always on the boil, along with a steaming pot of soup in winter, and from the oven she produced, as if by magic, bread, scones, cakes and an endless stream of biscuits.

Water was carted up from the creek down the hill in two huge drums mounted on a wheeled trolley, pushed and pulled by the little boys, of whom Matthew, my father, was the eldest. Two large galvanised tanks were later installed to catch the roof water. The whole family worked very hard to create the home. Clearing the land provided fence posts and wood for the stove while the dead leaves were used as mulch for the small patches of sandy soil that they were trying to turn into garden.

The soil was so sandy that it could be used for mixing the cement when Grandfather was making additions to the house. A laundry-cum-bathroom with attached sleep-out was built a short distance from the house. It had a built-in copper with a wood fireplace underneath, a double set of cement tubs, a shower, and a bath made from cement trowelled to incredible smoothness by Grandfather's expert hands. He was a superb craftsman and everything that he built was made to perfection.

Two more rooms and a small verandah were added to the house by the time Grandmother gave birth to her next son, Stanley. As the house grew Grandmother painted the walls, made curtains for the windows and rugs for the floors and gradually collected second-hand bits and pieces, which she rubbed down and shellacked into highly polished beautiful pieces of furniture. Another son, Norman was born.

The school-age children walked five miles to school, except for my father who attended Sydney High School in the city. He walked a mile to the ferry across the river, then went five miles on a horse-drawn coach, twenty miles by train and further miles by tram.

Grandfather worked on building sites and often travelled great distances to get to work. It was dark when he left home in the morning and dark again when he returned at night. His mode of transport was a horse and cart. He liked his drop of beer after work and always stopped in at the Seabreeze Hotel at Tom Ugly's Point. Many were the times that he fell asleep on the way home but the horse knew the way and always brought him safely right to the door. On one occasion, Grandfather stumbled out of the pub, climbed into the cart, shook the reins and settled down to sleep only to wake an hour later at a stranger's gateway and with an unknown woman haranguing him as to her husband's whereabouts. Grandfather had climbed into the wrong cart!

Grandmother kept her home and her family scrupulously clean. Before the laundry was built she boiled up her washing in kerosene tins over an outdoor fire, and did her ironing on the kitchen table using heavy flat irons heated on the cooking range. Her floors were scrubbed once a week and her children scrubbed once a day. Their heads were regularly inspected for lice, which could be picked up from the children of not-so-fussy mothers.

She made the children's clothes, mended the sheets and made curtains and tablecloths, all on a Singer treadle sewing machine (always referred to as 'the machine', there being no other machines in the house). Late into the night she sat by the fire darning socks or sewing on buttons, and was never without a piece of knitting.

If a neighbour was sick, Grandmother visited, riding sidesaddle on a pony and taking along a cake or a jar of jam she had made, a few fresh eggs, or maybe just some greens from the garden and a bunch of flowers. She never went empty-handed. Likewise, when she was laid up with the babies, the neighbours visited her. Occasionally, there were little social events; an old couple's golden wedding anniversary, a twenty-first birthday or a wedding, when everyone in the district would gather in the local hall and someone would play the piano and someone else the fiddle while couples did the Barn Dance or the Gypsy Tap or glided around to the strains of the Blue Danube or Merry Widow waltz. The old men would sit around grumbling about new-fangled machines replacing the horse while the women talked babies and exchanged cake recipes and the young people shyly made eyes at each other while the children chased each other around the supper tables.

However, most of the entertainment took place at home. Games of Snakes-and-Ladders, Ludo and Tiddly-winks were played on the kitchen table, as well as various card games. On long summer evenings the whole family sat around singing old favourite songs while one of the boys played the mouth organ. Later, there was a piano.

Grandfather enjoyed carving wooden toys for the children and made several little dancing dolls with a stick handle in the back. The arms and legs were loosely jointed with tiny pieces of wire so that, by manipulating the handle, they could be made to jig around. Grandmother dressed the figures in fancy suits and the children loved them. Another toy he made was a pair of boxing men mounted on a push-button spring base. Held in the hand, the thumb pushing the button, the boxers would slog away at each other and collapse in a heap to everyone's great amusement. There was also an acrobat suspended from a pair of springy sticks. By squeezing the sticks together he would jump around, stand on his head and perform somersaults.

Then came the First World War. Most of the men of the district, Grandfather included, immediately joined up and disappeared, some for four years, many forever. The women banded together and formed a Red

Cross group knitting socks, scarves and balaclavas, making cakes and rolling bandages while fearfully watching for the dreaded message that they prayed would never come.

During this time Grandmother reared a young calf, which then became very fond of her. It would follow her around like a dog and came to be a great nuisance as it grew into a full-sized cow and still wanted to accompany her wherever she went. The children were required to hold the animal when Grandmother wanted to go out and its mournful bellows could be heard all over the district until she returned. She tried to sell it but it kept escaping and coming back home. One night it broke through a fence and followed her to a Red Cross meeting at Miranda, where it waited outside the hall for her. When the little group of women came out to go home the cow bounded up out of the darkness mooing delightedly at seeing Grandmother. All the other women ran away screaming.

The eighth baby, another boy, Douglas, was born soon after Grandfather sailed for the trenches. Grandmother's constant prayer was that the war would end before the boys were old enough to go and that Dad would return to them safe and well. Her prayers were answered, in part. None of the sons went to that war and Grandfather returned home safe but far from well. He had been gassed in Flanders and, for his few remaining years, was a mere shell of the man he had been. Not strong enough now to return to work he was given an Army pension and left to cough away the rest of his life. But he was determined to finish the house.

With the help of the boys he began work on the three front rooms and a front and side verandah with an ornate low wall around it. Then an enclosed verandah the full length of the other side of the house was added to give extra sleeping space. The original two rooms were modified to provide a bathroom. This had a cast iron bath, a wash basin and a septic toilet, which drained to a nearby tank and, from there, through a fifty foot gravel drainage channel to another tank. From this tank Grandmother bailed out fertiliser for her garden. A third tank was planned, which Grandfather vowed would contain water pure enough to drink. Many a doubt was cast on this assumption and the truth was never verified, as he was not able to finish the work.



The Speedy Family, May 1960 (at the Melrose Avenue house)
*BACK ROW: Patrick, Dora, Charles, Stanley FRONT ROW: William, James, Madge (Grandmother),
Matthew (Father), Sydney [Courtesy: Tamaso Lonsdale]*

One of the earlier rooms then became a huge family room with an immense fireplace and, in here, Grandfather proudly installed his latest toy - a billiard table that topped with large sheets of three-ply, also served as a dinner-table when necessary. Grandfather would work until he could do no more and then be forced to rest in bed while still giving frantic instructions and goading the boys into more and more effort to get the work done. Grandmother was hard put to keep the peace in the family as the older boys wanted to go their own ways. My father had hoped to go to University but dropped the idea in favour of taking a job to help support the family. The next two boys also started work very soon.

The fruit trees were bearing well now and Grandmother was forever making jams, jellies, pickles and preserves. Fruit flies, flying foxes and birds were her greatest enemies for all made tremendous inroads on the fruit. She designed traps for the fruit flies, and the children were expert shots with catapults and B.B. guns. Many native birds died at their hands. At night they all shouted and clapped their hands in a vain attempt to frighten away the flying foxes.

A few years passed before the ninth child, another boy, Patrick, was born and Grandfather was as delighted as he had been with the first. He had been concerned for his manhood in these recent times of illness but the new baby restored his faith in himself and, for a while, his health improved considerably. The baby soon became his constant companion and toddled around passing up nails and fetching little pieces of timber or running messages. They played endless games together and Grandfather grew much more light-hearted in the child's company.

Because the baby was so much younger, the other children tended to treat him as a plaything. One game they liked was to take him for a pram ride down the steep hill that led to the creek. They would give the pram a push, let go and run along beside it, to the great delight of the baby. Of course, the inevitable happened and the pram got away from them one day and ended up floating down the creek with the baby still laughing.

About this time, my father bought an automobile, a Model-T Ford, his most prized possession. Proudly he brought it home and the whole family gathered to see it driven around the paddock. The boys all wanted a go at driving it and, at last, so did Grandfather. Very impatient with instructions of what to do, he was sure he could handle it. He'd been driving a horse and cart for years, hadn't he? All went well as he steered an erratic path around the paddock but then he could not remember how to stop the vehicle. Everyone shouted instructions as he went by but he couldn't hear over the noise of the engine and around the paddock he went again, and again, and again, yelling and cursing all the while with everyone chasing after him. At last, my father managed to scramble on board and stop the car. Grandfather never drove again.

A garage was built to house the new machine. It had a roller shutter door and a boarded-over sunken pit for working on the car when necessary. The garage backed onto the laundry and spare room. The house was now the most elegant in the district with an ornate bowl of fruit, cast in cement and painted in appropriate colours, an added decoration on the apex of the roof; and its wide verandas and circular front steps, flanked by green lawns and exotic flowering shrubs, all enclosed by an impressive front wall styled to match the one on the front verandah. Consisting of square, pointed pillars with a decorated cement bay between them, the wall was painted cream to match the house, with green gates opening onto a long red gravel driveway. Grandfather was very proud of his handiwork.

Still, he was always looking for ways to improve it and his next idea was to build a fountain such as one he had seen in a book. A huge construction, of very formal design, it had a foot-thick wall and three deep holes for fish. A classic central column supported a birdbath where the water could either gently trickle or spray out in a large graceful arc. Grandmother protested that it was too much work. The boys argued against it for the same reason, knowing all too well who would be expected to do the work. But Grandfather's heart was set on it and his mind was made up.

Excavations commenced. Everyone who had a moment to spare was put to work digging out the grey sandy soil. The youngest did his bit with his tiny bucket and spade and Grandmother despaired of ever getting him clean again. The exterior of the fountain had an intricate classical pattern worked into the cement with black ash. It was a craftsman's job and Grandfather took great pride in his craft. The pattern was perfect in every detail and the ash maintained its colour for at least thirty years to my knowledge. One day, while working with the ash Grandfather went in to lunch leaving the bag of ash sitting in the sun. When he came back he picked up the bag only to find a black snake under it. Snakes were fairly common but still always gave a fright when encountered unexpectedly.

On another occasion, Grandmother had been boiling up the clothes when her four-year-old daughter wandered in carrying a snake in her hand. 'Poor fink's hungry, Mum,' she said. 'Dibbit a bitta bread.' Thoroughly alarmed, Grandmother grabbed the snake and threw it into the copper fire.

Finally, the fountain was complete and stocked with golden carp, water lilies and small floating plants. It soon became home to many large green frogs. Its wall was wide enough to sit on and watch the fish but the danger was that some mischievous child would sneak up and turn on the fountain, putting an abrupt end to the enjoyment. Two well-advanced palm trees were planted, one each side of the fountain, and the whole setting gave an air of European gentility to the house.

While the fountain was still being built my father fell in love and married my mother, Lucy Cox. However she developed diabetes and, at my birth went into a diabetic coma and died when I was three days old. She had chosen Isobel as a girl's name so that was my legal name but I was always called Lucy in memory of my mother.

Grandmother took over my care and, from now on, I shall refer to her as Mum for that's who she was to me. I knew no difference for many years and grew up thinking that all these boys, young men and one young woman, were my brothers and sister. As for Grandfather, I don't remember him at all. He died when I was ten months old.

And so I came to grow up in the house. My earliest memories were of its elegance and great size, the carpets on the floor and the pictures of the royal family backed by wallpaper intricately patterned with roses climbing interminably upwards. A chandelier hung over the billiard table and a roaring log fire sent flames and sparks soaring up the chimney.

The older ones in the family were all married by this time. My father also remarried when I was five but I never went to live with him. He was my Daddy, whom I visited on school holidays, and for many years I was not at all sure just how I was related to his wife.

Our house was always full of people. Many times I woke in the night to the sound of laughter, the clinking of glasses and the clicking of billiard balls. My 'sister' Dora and her husband Bill Skelsey had gone into business operating a nightclub nearby (Bill the Oyster King), one of the first in Australia, and they often brought people home after closing in the early hours of the morning.²

The site of their nightclub was one of the first motels to be built in Australia. My father had gone into partnership with a man who had travelled in the United States and come back very keen to introduce Australians to a motel.



Bill and Dora Skelsey and friend in front of Bill, the Oyster King Nightclub [SSL collection]



Inside Bill the Oyster King Nightclub [SSL collection]

They built a two-storey structure with MOTEL painted in huge white letters on the red corrugated iron roof. There was a dining room, kitchen and recreation room downstairs and a series of bedrooms upstairs. Later, they erected small cabins in the grounds. Unfortunately, the idea did not take off. For years afterward, even when the original building was demolished, bus drivers would call out 'Motel' when approaching the bus stop there for it was the Sylvania terminus for the bus from Hurstville or Kogarah.

Early in my childhood, the billiard table was replaced by a beautiful expanding dining table with lovely carved chairs. On Sundays, most of the family came to visit, bringing their children. Dinner at midday was generally eaten in at least two sittings. Later, the women and older children cleared up the dishes while the men sat around in the garden drinking beer and talking with Mum, or practising golf shots on the lawn, or riding the horses over the steeple-chase we had set up in the paddock.

I had learned to ride about the same time I learned to walk and don't remember either event. As a ten-year-old I had a little pony of my own and went for long rides through the bush. I also loved going over the hurdles when the family came on Sundays.

Mum loved the house and garden and was forever making changes and improvements. Trees and shrubs would be moved from one spot to another, fences put up only to be taken down again the following year. Garden beds were dug in the lawn and other gardens replaced by grass. I remember at one stage there were four garden beds in the shapes of hearts, diamonds, clubs and spades.

The house was painted often, new wallpaper hung, furniture re-arranged and rooms changed from bedrooms to sitting rooms, to sewing rooms, to writing rooms, and back to bedrooms, all in a few short months. The house was kept spotlessly clean and yet it all seemed to take place with little effort so that Mum always had plenty of time to talk to visitors.

When I was little, the whole length of the back of the house was a wonderful fernery, full of stag-horns and bird's-nest ferns, maidenhair fern, orchids, moss-covered rocks, a fishpond and tall begonias with red-green leaves and blood-red flowers hanging pendulously from far above me. It was a magical place, a cool retreat in summer, and a fairyland when it rained and the frogs croaked out their celebration songs.

Then we moved. Mum leased out the house for two years and we went to help one of the boys in a business venture, a café-cabaret at Hunter's Hill. I was miserable and homesick for most of that time and felt sure that Mum was too, although she never showed it as I did.

Then we returned to the house - but what a shock! It was neglected and dirty. There were broken windows. The garden was full of weeds and the grass was window high. The plants in the fernery were dead. The gravel drive was overgrown with weeds and grass. There were fruit on the trees but we soon found they were riddled with fruit-fly. I cried but Mum quickly organised the family into working bees and before long the house and grounds returned to their former beauty. It was then that the fernery was pulled down, the ground cemented and turned into an outdoor entertainment area with a swinging hammock seat, table and chairs, bright umbrellas, and pots of marigolds and petunias. Many of the fruit trees were taken out about the same time. They were old and very big so that the birds got most of the fruit and the rest fell to the ground rotten before it could be picked. The enclosed verandah became a games room where we played table tennis, darts and quoits, or sat quietly at the other end playing crib or Chinese Checkers. There was a tall cedarwood gramophone, which played 78 rpm records. It had to be wound up after each record and a new needle put in but it was in constant use. My nearest 'brother' and I often squatted on the floor choosing Mum's favourite songs while she sat quietly listening or singing along.

The beginning of World War 11 saw several of the boys in uniform. Mum aged dramatically, her hair going from chestnut brown to silver in a few weeks. By now I knew that she was really my grandmother and I was frightened that I would soon lose her. But she survived, and so did the boys. During the war, our home was Open House for servicemen. Soldiers, sailors and airmen, Australian, British, American and Fighting French, all had good cause to remember the house and for years afterwards we received letters from men who had stayed with us.

During my teens and early adulthood I lived a very active life. I still had a horse, and a pushbike now, too. I went ice-skating three nights a week and had many friends who were always welcome at home. I loved taking friends to such a lovely home and felt very proud as I showed them around the house and told them how my family had built it. At twenty-one I married and began producing a family of my own.

Mum was left in the house alone now and although we all visited her she was feeling lonely and not able to care for it the way she wanted. She sold the house to help my 'sister's' business in return for a home for the rest of her life. They moved around from one place to another but she always had a beautiful home until she finally died at the age of eighty-five. I was kept busy with my family but I often had fantasies of one day buying the house back and living in it again.



Tamaso Lonsdale at 90
[Courtesy: T. Lonsdale]

Of course, this never happened. Recently, I was in the district so I decided to go and look once again at the house. I was very excited and full of trembling anticipation and nostalgia as I drove down the street, looking askance at the tarred roadway and the row of suburban houses and remembering the old red gravel road and the surrounding bushland.

I should have been prepared for the sight that met my eyes, but I wasn't! The shock hit me like a blow to my midriff. The house had been demolished and there was a row of town houses in its place. Only the fountain and the ornate front wall had survived.

¹ Tamaso Lonsdale, who wrote this story in 2013, is the author of many publications including 18 books. She now lives in Nimbin, NSW

² The original Bill the Oyster King was an oyster shop, opened by Tamaso's great uncle Bill Waller. Bill and Dora Skelsey adopted the name for their nightclub after the oyster shop closed. Dora later opened a business across the highway, called Dora Skelsey's Ace of Clubs. Tamaso recalls it was frequented by notorious Sydney underworld figures such as Tillie Divine and Phil the Jew. [Source: email from Tamaso Lonsdale, 20.1.2018]

PUTTING A DENT INTO THE SHIRE'S HISTORY

LAURIE BURGESS



Dents Creek, GyMEA Bay, featuring the Natural Stone Bridge

[Photo: M. Boyce, [www.tripmondo.com]]

In my wandering through books and articles on the history of the Shire, I have often come across a rather authoritative statement that Dents Creek was named after a Mr Fred Dent.

In an article in the *SSHS Bulletin* of November 1977 (p.103), Mick Derry contributed his suggestion of the naming of Dents Creek:

Several attempts were made by James Murphy, a keen mining speculator in the 1880s, to drill for coal seams, the most successful one being in the bed of a creek which was known as Dent's Creek after Fred Dent who was in charge of the drilling.

Mick Derry, who was born near Dents Creek, recounts in the *SSHS Bulletin* of May 1982 (pp.28-9) how he became acquainted with Fred Dent:

I will briefly tell the story of how I came in contact with Fred Dent. In 1926 I was approached by a Mr. S Pepper, who at the time was boring for coal at Helensburgh half a mile west of the Helensburgh turnoff on the Princes Highway. He asked if I was interested in a job on the Diamond Drill. I was given a letter of introduction to the Chief Inspector of Mines, Mr. Farrier. In the interview he said he wanted me to go to Berrima as the foreman was sick and unable to go. In the meantime, I was to go to Yarra Bay. He gave me a letter of introduction to the foreman, who was Fred Dent. I alighted from the tram at what is now Bunnerong Creek, and walked a long way through the scrub to a rocky hill where I contacted the gang boring for coal, on what was to become the site of the Bunnerong Power Station. I was there only a week. While talking to the foreman, Fred Dent, then a man of sixty-seven, he asked me where I came from; and I said 'Sutherland'. He then told me that as a young man how he bored for coal in Sutherland. Pointing to the drill then in operation he said, 'This is the drill I used'.

Whether or not it was from that source, or some other stories, that the naming of Dents Creek after Fred Dent became entrenched as an 'established fact' does not really matter, other than it cannot stand up to research of historical documents.

Tenders for boring for coal on behalf of the Holt-Sutherland Land Company Limited on 'their estate' was advertised by the company manager M Maloney in early 1882 (*SMH*, 30.1.1882, p.2) and a report in December of that year advised:

On Saturday last work was commenced with the diamond drill on the Holt-Sutherland estate, three or four miles to the southward of George's River, on the banks of a creek running into the north-west arm of Port Hacking. The boring is for coal (SMH, 20.12.1882, p.7)

A search for the name Fred Dent in the later newspaper reports of the progress of the drilling was in vain, although this is not to say that he did not have some involvement. Calculated from the Mick Derry account above, where in 1926 Fred Dent was 67 years old, in 1882 Fred Dent would have been about 23 years of age when the drilling commenced.

Let's look a bit further back in the history of the Shire: in a report dated 24 July 1877 on the survey of a trial railway line from Balmain to Wollongong the route in part heads towards Port Hacking River 'after passing Ewey Bay Creek, Gynea Bay Creek, Dent's Creek, and Saville's Creek' (as quoted in an article in the *Illawarra Mercury*, 30.8.1882, p.2). So, it does appear that the name of Dent's Creek was known some years before the drilling for coal took place.

Old versions of the Parish of Sutherland show the route of both Dents Creek and Savilles Creek flowing into it, with both being named on the map issued in June 1882. Earlier maps which show Savilles Creek but not Dent's Creek can only be approximately dated as being from around the 1850s onwards (Land and Property Information historical parish maps collection).

Those maps show the surveys carried out by the Government surveyors which from 1954 onwards subdivided the Parish of Sutherland into a large number of portions and added a number of feature names. In a notice of a Crown auction of several of those portions in March 1856, Dents Creek was not named — being described as 'a creek flowing into Port Hacking' (*Govt Gazette* 3.3.1856 pp775-9). Savilles Creek gets a mention in April 1864 (*Govt Gazette* 30.4.1864 pp 1089-94) and the first documented mention of Dents Creek, together with Savilles Creek is on page 831 of the *Govt Gazette* of 28.3.1867:

831						
SALE AT THE POLICE OFFICE, PARRAMATTA,						
On Wednesday, the 1st day of May, 1867.						
COUNTRY LOTS.						
LOT.	No. of Portion.	AREA.	PRICE PER ACRE.	COUNTY.	PARISH.	SITUATION.
		a. r. p.	£ s. d.			REMARKS.
A	..	47 0 0	1 0 0	Cumberland ..	South Colah ..	On the right bank of Berowra Creek, and the left bank of Calna Creek, at their junction, adjacent to Murphy's (now Charlton's) 50 acres
B	..	40 0 0	1 0 0	do	Southerland ..	On the right bank of Dent's Creek, and on Saville's Creek, near the north-west arm of Port Hacking, adjacent to Holt's portions
C	..	170 0 0	1 0 0	do	do ..	On the left bank of Port Hacking River, and on the north-west arm of Port Hacking, adjacent to Holt's portions
D	..	40 0 0	1 0 0	do	do	On the left bank of Port Hacking River, and on the north-west arm of Port Hacking, adjacent to Holt's portions
E	..	80 0 0	1 0 0	do	do	On the left bank of Port Hacking River, and on the north-west arm of Port Hacking, adjacent to Holt's portions

'Southerland' is of course 'Sutherland', the Parish name gazetted and confirmed in 1835. The use of 'Southerland' did nonetheless persist in Government publications and newspapers for many

years (together with many articles in the *SSHS Bulletin* and elsewhere discussing which version was the originally intended name of the parish!).

The James Holt mentioned in the above notice was a Sydney merchant (several mentions in newspapers and *Govt Gazette*). A biography of Thomas Holt indicates James Holt's 'relationship if any to Thomas Holt untraced' (Holt H.E., *An Energetic Colonist*, p.59). James Garrett, also mentioned, has not been identified. Neither James Holt nor James Garrett proceeded with their intended purchases, the four parcels being purchased by Thomas Holt on 25 March 1875 as an extension his Holt-Sutherland Estate (Land and Property information historical title records).

Further searches for the identities of the persons after whom Dents Creek and Savilles Creek were named have proved fruitless. One thing is for sure, nonetheless, which is that Dents Creek was not named after Fred Dent — if Fred Dent had been anywhere near Dent's Creek in 1867, he would have been about 8 years of age.

References:

SSHS Bulletin: Quarterly Bulletin of the Sutherland Shire Historical Society.

National Library Trove collection is the source of the newspaper and gazette references. *SMH* is the *Sydney Morning*, and *Govt Gazette* is the *New South Wales Government Gazette*.

Information from 'Land and Property Information' refers to scanned copies of historical plans and titles available through its *Historical Land Records Viewer (HLRV)*.

Holt, H.E., 1972, *An Energetic Colonist: A Biographical Account of the Activities of the late Hon. Thomas Holt, MLC*, The Hawthorn Press, Melbourne



Plaque marking the location of 1887 drilling for coal [Photo: Elizabeth Craig]

VALE

GEORGE ASHLEY MILLER

26TH June 1944 – 9th December 2017

HELEN ROSNER



George Miller was a member of the Sutherland Historical Society for nearly five years - a short time compared with a lot of other members, but he will be missed by many as he had a big impact on the lives of people he has come across throughout his life.

George was born in 1944 to Dr George and Mary Miller and he came to live in the Shire in 1946. His father was one of the early doctors who was very well respected and loved. Many older people still remember Dr Miller as their family doctor.

George went to school locally and his early recollections of his life in Sutherland are detailed in the *SSHS Bulletin* of November 2014 – a wonderful glimpse of the Shire in the 50s and 60s.

George married in 1967 and moved from one side of the railway to the western side where he brought up his three children and remained until his death. His wife, Patricia, died after a long illness in 1998.

Whilst always claiming he was not a good student – evidently he couldn't read and write until he was nine – George studied law at Sydney University and rose through the Public Service to the top of his profession as Chief Industrial Magistrate of NSW in 1987.

Executive director of SafeWork NSW, Peter Dunphy said in an email to staff:

Mr Miller's contribution towards better work health and safety outcomes for NSW workplaces cannot be overstated.... Mr Miller's legacy in formulating judicial comment has provided a strong foundation for many important protections for workers in contemporary NSW.

Mr Dunphy added that George had also made a significant contribution to supporting the core work of safety inspectors through awareness sessions he delivered to them during their training. (Obituary in *the Leader* by Murray Trembath, Dec 18 2017)

George remained in this role until 2005, then worked as an acting magistrate in the local courts for another 5 years.

He had a strong belief in giving back his knowledge and expertise, so lectured casually at UTS on Employment Law for a number of years as well as writing for a legal publisher up until his death.

George always had a strong interest in both family and local history, so in February 2013, he and I joined the Sutherland Shire Historical Society and he quickly became involved in the organisation and activities – joining the executive that same year and filling in as acting Treasurer, then as Secretary over the last few years until bad health forced him to retire in September 2017.

As well as his essay on his early life in the Shire, George researched and gave a presentation on the history of Sutherland Township at a SSHS meeting. An extract appeared in the *SSHS Bulletin* of February 2017. His plan was to continue exploring the local history with writing and talks but unfortunately it was not to be.

George was an accomplished sprinter in his youth and continued running for many years. He also loved trekking, bush walking and travel. I was fortunate to share the last two with him and we had many wonderful trips overseas, often to more unusual places. A favourite walk was on Lady Carrington Drive in Royal National Park. He complained he could only walk it whereas in the early days he would run the length of it and return!!!!

Such was George's character that in spite of his high level professional life he maintained valued friendships that went back to his childhood. He was always ready to give advice or lend a hand to anyone who asked and was generous with his time. He also had a wicked sense of humour which was always close to the surface – even in hospital towards the end. You knew when he was having a good day as the staff appreciated his quick wit and sense of fun as well as his patience.

He will be remembered as a good bloke who accomplished a quality life instead of a long life. I am proud and grateful to have been able to share a small part of it and maintain, 'You did good Sutherland Boy!'



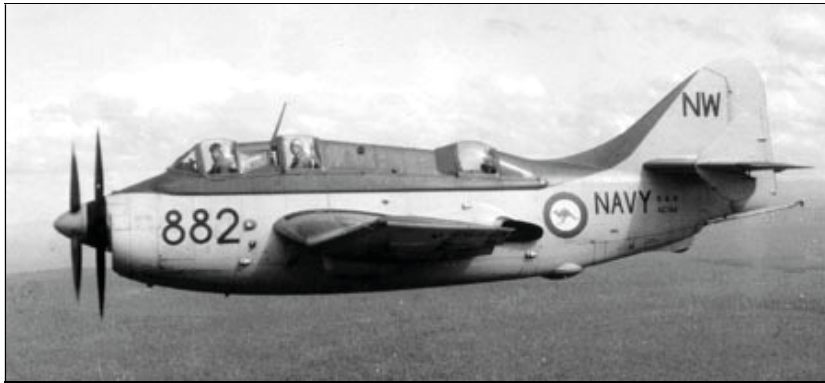
George with Helen Rosner and Bob Osborne - on duty for SSHS at the Tradies Club in 2015
for a Botany Bay Family History Society function [Courtesy: Bruce Watt]

BELLINGARRA ROAD PLANE CRASH

COLIN BURGESS

Just before eleven o'clock on the morning of 30 January 1959, Lieutenant Peter J. Arnold strapped himself into Fairey Gannet XA332, prior to taking off from Bankstown Airport. A Royal Navy test pilot with 816 Squadron, the 27-year-old married father of one child was taking delivery of the aircraft following routine servicing by Fairey Aviation at Bankstown.

At that time, Gannet AS.1 aircraft were flown extensively by the Fleet Air Arm of the Royal Australian Navy. They had been purchased in 1955 as replacements for the RAN's ageing fleet of Fairey Firefly reconnaissance fighters, and were mainly based at HMAS *Albatross*, outside of Nowra, while others operated from the carrier HMAS *Melbourne*. This particular aircraft had been delivered to 816 Squadron in May 1956.



An RAN Fleet Air Arm Fairey Gannet, similar to the one lost in 1959. This particular aircraft was extensively damaged during a non-fatal crash at Nowra in 1961.

The Gannet was designed and first built in England in 1949 as a robust (but ungainly-looking) carrier-borne anti-submarine aircraft capable of carrying up to three crew members. The pilot sat atop the fuselage, right over the gas turbine Armstrong-Siddeley Twin Mamba engine and behind two contra-rotating propellers. This innovative design - having two propellers, one behind the other and rotating in opposite directions - created terrific power for take-offs and landings, while once in the air the ability to shut down one of the engines gave the aircraft added endurance.

A second crew member sat in an additional cockpit behind the pilot, while a third – if carried – would be positioned in a separate fuselage 'bubble' facing the tail. The Gannet's wings could be folded in two places to form a distinctive Z shape on either side of the fuselage, allowing the aircraft to be stored and operated from aircraft carriers.



The RAN fleet of Fairey Gannets on display with folded wings while in service at HMAS Albatross, Nowra

As the sole pilot and occupant of the aircraft that day, and having been given clearance for take off, Lt. Arnold gunned the engine, taxied onto the runway and sped down the tarmac. He then lifted the nose of the Gannet into the sky, quickly reaching his initial flight level of 1,500 feet.

Around four minutes into his flight, having gained additional altitude and setting a south-easterly heading for Nowra, tragedy would unexpectedly strike the young pilot.



In the foreground is the actual aircraft (RAN Code 421) flown that fateful day in January 1959 by Lt. Arnold.

The take-off had been observed by a test pilot from the De Havilland Aviation Company, Flight Lieutenant E. Shaw. He later testified seeing a very bumpy take-off over the rough ground of the airfield, and noted the excessive bumping up and down of the nose oleo during the take-off run. The aircraft climbed to about 800 feet during which the undercarriage was retracted, although Shaw said this happened very slowly. When the Gannet was around half a mile from the airfield, Lt. Shaw saw the aircraft yaw fairly violently to port at the same time as both wings seemed to waffle as if hitting a bump. The Gannet then appeared to proceed as normal, heading in a south-easterly direction at around 800 feet.

The later accident report contained a number of reliable witness reports, and they agreed that some four to five miles from the airfield, the pilot lowered the undercarriage and retracted it again almost immediately. At the same time, the Gannet was seen to be yawing and dipping and lifting its wings. Approximately eight miles from Bankstown Airport and one-and-a-half miles short of the crash site, the aircraft was flying at a much lower altitude, around 350-400 feet, still yawing and dipping and lifting its wings. Shortly after, while approaching the Princes Highway, the tail unit of the aircraft began to break up.

A total of five pieces were seen to fall from the aircraft, covering a distance of around 700 yards. After the first three parts were seen to tumble down, the Gannet seemed to remain on a fairly even keel, but when the elevators were lost it climbed steeply, the engine note rose sharply. The Gannet then seemed to level out, banked to the right and then the left, and rapidly lost altitude. The highly unstable aircraft now began to wobble and plummet uncontrollably towards the ground, flying low over Sylvania Heights Public School and narrowly missing 150 campers at the Jubilee Caravan Park, in addition to three nearby houses. It rolled over to the left nearing the ground and struck the ground in a nearly inverted position, just by Bellingarra Road to the west of Gawley Creek and north of Box Road, Sylvania. It exploded on impact and a raging fire ensued.

Eighteen-year-old Anthony Farrow was mowing his lawn that day in the Esplanade, Sylvania Heights, when he heard the Gannet flying overhead. Gazing up into the sky and idly following the path of the craft, he suddenly saw two small pieces fall away from the tail section. 'As I watched it, the whole of the tail snapped off and fell about a quarter of a mile from me,' he later related. 'So much of the tail had gone that I was able to see a large round hole in the end of the fuselage.'

All Navy pilots were bound by regulations to carry parachutes when flying in service aircraft, however by the time Lt. Arnold realised his aircraft was breaking up it was far too late to bail out and parachute to safety. As the crippled Gannet screamed through the air it flipped on its back, and witnesses said they saw the pilot trying desperately to open the sliding canopy over his cockpit. But it was all too late.

Daphne Salt (then McCarthy) was a pupil at Port Hacking High School that fateful day and witnessed the unfolding drama. 'Still undergoing construction work in many areas, Port Hacking High School had only just opened for its first-ever intake of pupils, many coming from the old Sutherland High School.

'In January 1959, my Intermediate Certificate year, the entire Sutherland High School packed up and moved lock, stock and barrel to this brand-new school at Miranda. Miranda Fair didn't exist then – it was the brickyards – and we took a short-cut through the clay pits to the station.

'I was sitting in a geography class on the top floor of the block nearest the Kingsway. The windows in our room faced north. While the teacher was extolling the virtues of topographical maps, a few of us were gazing out of the window (*as you do to enhance your concentration*). We heard the spluttering of a failing prop airplane engine followed by an explosion. Everyone rushed to the windows and we watched in silence as a Fairey Gannet plane fell apart in the sky. The tail dropped off and the engine exploded.

'We had a grandstand view. No one spoke – it was the quietest that the class had ever been. We saw no parachute ... we were gobsmacked. It looked like it was all happening in slow motion. We heard another explosion and saw a column of black smoke and flames across the park just down the road from us.'

Meanwhile, people in the caravan park had fled in terror as the stricken aircraft appeared to be diving straight at them. 'Pieces of it were falling off and fell in the trees nearby,' recalled one caravan resident. 'The pieces looked just like bits of paper.'

Local fireman George Heavens later recalled one near tragedy on the ground. 'A young mother who lived in Tedman Avenue, Sylvania, always put her baby out in the pram for sun-kicks; she had just brought him in when she heard a terrible crash. She looked out and, exactly where the baby had spent the hour in his pram was a mangled aircraft wing off the Gannet.'

It was all over in seconds as the stricken aircraft nosedived, spinning, into the ground. Eyewitnesses later reported that when the Gannet crashed, a sheet of flame and black smoke exploded more than seventy metres into the air.

Pieces of wreckage were scattered on the eastern side of Bellingarra Road, while part of the engine was still glowing hot in a hole in the middle of the road when firemen arrived on the scene. The fiercely-burning fuselage of the aircraft was upside-down in a clearing at the western edge of the roadway. Police later recovered the tail section less than a kilometre from where the Gannet crashed.

As firemen including George Heavens began to extinguish the blaze, police cordoned off roads, diverted traffic and set up road barriers around the wreckage. They would also clear an area large enough for a helicopter to land, carrying several senior naval officers. Navy guards would then be posted around the wreckage as the officers began an immediate investigation into the crash.



Curious onlookers joined emergency personnel at the scene of the fatal crash [SSL collection]

Gary Sykes was also attending Port Hacking High School that day. 'I was in the Music Room on the third day of First Year when I heard the misfiring engine, quite loud, and looked up to the north to see the explosion, a fuel-based mushroom cloud which resembled a small hydrogen bomb. I then heard the sound of the plane stop and after that came a quite loud explosion.

'Back then I was riding my bicycle to school, leaving it round back of the Music block. Not asking permission, and to satisfy my curiosity, I rode over to Bellingarra Road at lunch time. I got to about 100 metres past the Box Road intersection and there I was stopped, but I could see the size of the massive hole in the middle of the road. There were emergency vehicles and a tarp partition where I assumed there were critical components. I was not permitted any closer and was shooed off, pretty quickly, back to school.'

When he arrived home that afternoon, Gary's mother was in a state of nervous excitement. A keen spotter of aircraft types in her youth, Lorna Sykes gave her son a colourful account of just how low the aircraft was when it passed over their house in Henry Street, just five doors down from Sylvania Heights Primary School. 'I was incredulous about her description of bits flying off the plane,' Gary recalled. 'That was until I went into our front yard and found an alloy and copper tubing component, which looked like it came from the engine. Over the following weekend, my Dad and I found five or six other small parts, proving she was right.'

Crash investigators later concluded that the most probable cause attributable to the Gannet breaking up in the air was vibration from the engine resulting in fatigue cracking of the tail, to the extent that it separated from the fuselage.



A sorry sight. The gutted remnants of the Gannet fleet after the aircraft had been replaced in 1967.

Lt. Arnold would be buried at Woronora Cemetery, Sutherland, with full military honours.

Fairey Gannets remained in service in Australia until 1967, when they were retired and replaced by Grumman Trackers. Most of the Gannets were then destroyed as fire-fighting dummies, or as targets for live weapons training.



A restored Fairey Gannet AS.1 on display at HMAS Albatross
[Courtesy: Nick Sayer, Queensland Air Museum]

During a 2006 visit to HMAS *Albatross* outside of Nowra, Gary Sykes called into the RAN museum to view a beautifully-restored Gannet the navy has on display. 'I met some of the dead pilot's mates who are volunteers at the museum and they were impressed with my recollections,' he reflected. 'They said the plane had maintenance issues not isolated to just that plane.'

Today, there are only five Fairey Gannet aircraft remaining in Australia – all of them on display in museums.

References:

Daphne Salt, 'Bellingarra Plane Crash,' *SSHS Bulletin*, May 2006, p.18

Australian Department of the Navy Accident Report, Fairey Gannet XA332, <http://www.faaaa.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/GannetXA332BOIcomplete.pdf>

Interview with Gary Sykes, October 2014

Local newspaper files, January/February 1959, Sutherland Shire Library Historical Archives

Photos (unless otherwise stated): ADF-Serials, Australia and New Zealand, www.adf-gallery.com.au/gallery/Gannet

WAS THIS THE HOME OF OUR LAST TRADITIONAL ABORIGINAL?

GREG JACKSON and PAM FORBES

From 1788 onwards the indigenous population of the Sydney basin was in decline through a combination of their lack of immunity to newly introduced diseases and their forced displacement from their traditional lands. By the 1840's few Aboriginal people near Sydney were living in a traditional way and Sutherland Shire's indigenous population, although on the outskirts of Sydney, was no exception. This article looks at what might be the home of one of Sutherland Shire's last traditional Aboriginal people.

On page 6 of his book, *An Outline History of Woronora to 1940*, David Robinson describes an account of an indigenous person living on the Woronora by Ken Humbley (2012).

The description, from Humbley's book, is reproduced below:

Opposite The Bonnet on the Illawong side of the Woronora is a cave known as The Half-penny Gunyah and that's where the last Aboriginal person of the Woronora Group of the Dharawal Tribe was in residence, and it was a lubra. Whether her name was Half-penny or not, I'm not too sure. But it was always known as the Halt-penny Gunyah. That cave and the middens are still there. Dad got the information from Andrew Derwent, an early oyster farmer from Wyong Street Oatley, who started oyster farming in the Woronora in the 1870s and 80s so I think it would be pretty authentic.

Recently a small indigenous occupation site was located in Illawong opposite the cave known as the Bonnet in West Como. The Illawong site faces a small creek, known locally as Rope Creek which flows into Audrey Bay on the Woronora River.



1. Pam Forbes on site at Illawong Rock Shelter
[Photo: Greg Jackson]



2. One of several white hand stencils in the rock shelter [Photo: Pam Forbes]

The site consists of a small rock shelter (Image 1), with several white hand stencils visible on the roof and walls (Image 2), and a midden of at least 3m diameter below the site (image 3). Several surface finds of stone tools were located on the floor of the overhang (Image 4).

Although close to houses the site is undisturbed with a single glass bottle (of early 20th century date) the only visible sign of European visitation. There are other signs of indigenous activity nearby with several nearby middens, including one in Thompson Bay, and an enormous midden about 800m upstream (SW) of this site. The site was reported to the NSW Department of

Environment and Heritage, who are registering the site with the name 'Hedges Cave', after the local botanist, Lloyd Hedges, who first brought this cave to our attention.



3. *Graham Avery (SSC Aboriginal Trainee) photographing the large midden below the rock shelter* [Photo: Greg Jackson]



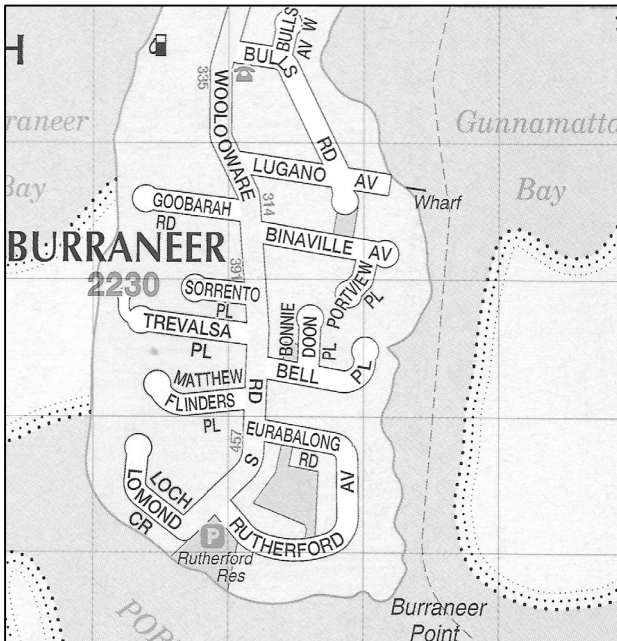
4. *Some of the stone tools found on the floor of the shelter* [Photo: Greg Jackson]

The site was also reported to Brendon Graham, Natural Areas Manager from Sutherland Shire Council (SSC) who visited the site with Graham Avery (SSC Aboriginal Trainee). Brendon also reported nearby axe grinding grooves (not seen by the authors). Humbley's book gives a map of the caves location which places the Half-penny Gunyah nearby, but in a large mangrove swamp, clearly not the location of a habitable cave. This shelter is the only occupation site that could be located in this area. It is highly likely that this rock shelter is 'the Half-Penny Gunyah' described by oyster farmer Andrew Derwent and, if so, may have been, the home of one of the southern Sydney's last traditional Aboriginal people.

The authors would like to thank Bruce Howell for his invaluable help in preparing this article.

THE BULLS OF LUGANO STREET, BURRANEER

PETER MOORE



Last year a young lady came to the Museum and announced that her ancestor was Nat Bull. Bulls Road bears his name and when I was a child living in the neighbourhood, some of his descendents still lived on the corner of Woollooware Road and Bulls Road. Here they ran a mixed business and sub post office. The bus service to Cronulla and Woollooware also terminated at this point as Eurabalong Road had not yet been constructed; therefore the buses had no other place to turn around. C Bull (I can't remember his name), his sister Ammie and Richard (known as Dick) lived there in a number of old buildings. I remember that Dick used to deliver the mail for the Burraneer peninsular by foot and carried the large leather bag almost as large as himself. It will be interesting to collate the information on the Bulls that his descendant has promised us.

Nat Bull was one of the pioneers of the area although his business activities revolved around the Liverpool area. He was an early supporter of the Surf Club and was a family friend of the Swanton family whose son drowned on Cronulla Beach on the 23rd December 1907. Roy William Swanton's death was the final catalyst in the formation of the Club. William Swanton Roy's father was the headmaster at the Liverpool school from 1889 to 1893 when he left for Armidale.¹

He also provided land for the purpose of building a C of E Church, but the local parish deemed the site to be unsuitable and sold it, purchasing the existing site on the Kingsway.²

Nat Bull's sister, Mrs. Hannah Maria Neale died on March 21st 1911 aged 86 years old at her residence called 'Lugano', 2 Macleay Street Potts Point.³ As widely noted at the time she left an estate valued at 800,000 pounds.⁴ This house, 'Lugano' is still in existence but is now known as Jennings' House. A photograph and a brief history of the property can be found on Google.

Nat Bull was also at 'Lugano' when he passed away in 1911 on the 7th of November.⁵ The Bulls owned a considerable estate called 'Burraneer' in this area, and it was subsequently subdivided with Lugano St. being the southern street of the subdivision. The house name could be a clue to the naming of the street.

¹ *The Daily Telegraph*, Tue 30 Sept 1890, Page 4. 'Dr Beattie'; *Evening News*, Thurs. 27 Feb. 1890, p. 2, 'Liverpool Public School'; *The Sydney Mail and NSW Advertiser* Sat.5 Oct.1889, p.743, 'Agricultural Societies'; *The Sydney Mail and NSW Advertiser*, Sat. 22 Jul.1893, p.200 'Liverpool Swanton Leaving for Armidale'.

² *Evening News*, Sat. 20 Jan 1912, page7, 'The Late Mr N G Bull'

³ *The Daily Telegraph*, Wed 22 March1911, 'Death Notice'

⁴ *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Thur. 30 March 1911, 'The will of the Late Mrs Neale'

⁵ *Evening News* Thur. 9 November 1911, 'Death of N G Bull'

HOW TO BATHE WITH DECORUM - SHIRE LAWS

STEPHANIE BAILEY

Written for Sutherland Shire Library Series: Local History, Local Stories

published on Saturday, November 19, 2016 and republished here with permission of the author

Every morning hundreds of Sydneysiders rise well before daybreak to enjoy a pre-work surf or swim at one of our many beaches. But in the early 1900s, as surf-bathing (as it was then called) increased in popularity, so too did the number of restrictions imposed on beach-goers by lawmakers determined to maintain a strict level of moral decorum. This included a ban on 'daylight bathing' which required swimmers to leave the water by 7am, as well as restrictions on 'mixed bathing' which forbade men and women swimming together, although for safety reasons this stipulation was soon abandoned. The Sutherland Shire's authorities were, however, particularly enthusiastic about policing additional beach regulations, in some cases many years after other local Council's had bowed to public opinion through a distinct lack enforcement.



In January 1912 the Surf Bathing Association, which had been formed the previous year by the NSW Government, forwarded three questions to Sutherland Shire Council with a view to ascertaining their feelings on the question of sunbaking (sunbathing). These were:

- If they were in favour of allowing sunbaking, clad in costume, on the beach.
 - If so, whether the sexes should be permitted to sunbake indiscriminately together?
 - Whether sunbaking should be confined to sheds or special enclosures provided for the purpose?
- 'In the sheds,' said Sutherland.

Not only was sunbaking on beaches banned, but it was necessary for bathers to proceed to - and from - the water by the most direct route after changing in the specially erected dressing sheds. 'Loitering' was forbidden and offenders could face harsh fines. In 1920 Sutherland Shire Council took Herbert George Erickson to court for lying on the sand at Cronulla Beach wearing only his swimmers. The *Propeller* newspaper reported that Erickson had been

.... lying on the beach clad in his costume speaking to a young lady. They had an umbrella over them. He had surfed a good deal at times and at no other beach that he frequented were bathers prevented from lying on the beach while in a costume.

For this heinous crime Erickson was fined 20/- and £1/1 professional costs in addition to 6/- costs in default of 14 days imprisonment.

In further efforts to thwart public displays of indecency on the Shire's beaches, Council enforced the use of suitable covering garments. Beachgoers could hire official 'shorts' for men and 'kimonos' (kims) for women at a cost. On 4 March 1926 the *Sun* newspaper, reporting on a meeting of the Sutherland Shire Council the previous evening, stated:

The health inspector said that shorts cost 3s, and that amount has to be deposited, and was refunded on return of the garment. 'We now charge sixpence for a half-day and 1s for a full day for their hire,' he added. 'Kimonos cost us 8s, and at a hire fee of sixpence each they have to be used 16 times to pay for themselves.'

When asked whether the garments were washed and disinfected after being used, the health inspector replied indignantly, 'Certainly not. They are done once a week.' Shire President, Councillor Monro was, however, quick to correct this claim and assured the public that every bather hiring shorts was given a clean pair which had been treated in the most hygienic way. Nevertheless, many Sydney newspapers clearly took great joy in circulating articles and commentary on the scrupulous policing of Shire beaches. As far back as 1911 the *St George Call* published a letter from a 'constant reader' outlining his (rather tongue in cheek) recommendations for beach bathing rules.

1. You shall not bathe.
2. If any person insists, then he shall bathe in a costume approved by:
 - the Chief Commissioner of Police
 - the Methodist Conference
 - the Town Clerk
 - the Bo Leong Society
 - the Austral Salon, and
 - the Governor in Council
3. Notwithstanding anything contained in clause 2, any person bathing may be fined.
4. The hours of bathing shall be between 12 (midnight) and 1am, provided that, in the opinion of the police, the water is
 - not too cold
 - not too hot
 - not too wetand provided also that
 - no elderly lady of conservative views on propriety,
 - no junior member of the police force,
 - no child under the age of 14 years,
 - no wowser,be within 250 yards of the place where bathing is contemplated.
5. Each bather shall cause a man to walk, ringing a bell and carrying a red flag, not less than 20 yards in front of him.

How the times have changed!

WAR TIME IN THE SHIRE

ELVA CARMICHAEL



Elva Carmichael
March 2006 (SSHS)

Elva Carmichael was a founding member of SSHS, and daughter of Councillor Reg Dallimore, who was instrumental in the formation of the Society, but died before it was established in April 1966. Elva was still a member when she died in June 2006.

When Elva came across a document typed up by her father during the war, she found it interesting and wanted to share it with Society members. She retyped it and presumably submitted it to the Bulletin (although the Editor was unable to find it). Her original contribution was found by Bruce Watt recently and submitted for publication.

Elva writes:

Dad was a Councillor for nine years during and after the war and in those war years I can remember each Saturday morning he would go around the Shire in a Council truck with a Council driver collecting clothes, furniture and tinned food in case we were invaded. All this was stored in a large hall in various places around the Shire. I remember some being stored in a hall in Caringbah near where the hotel is now. I have often thought if a bomb landed on the hall all would be lost.

A circular Dad sent out to rate payers was as follows:

One Bomb Could Devastate A Whole Village

In Case You Are Bombed or have to give help to others who are rendered homeless, we are Establishing Rest Centres Throughout The Shire. It is our duty to ourselves as well as to others to stock the Rest Centres with all the foods and utensils necessary for that purpose.

You are asked to search your home and see if you are able to provide any of the following articles for use in the rest centres. In addition, we will accept money, gifts and foodstuffs that will keep.

If you will kindly enter the articles on this form, that you can let us have and return the form quickly by schoolchild to the headmaster, we will arrange for a lorry to call on you as early as possible and collect the articles accordingly.

We are not collecting rubbish- if you cannot help with donations of useful articles in reasonably fair condition kindly do not offer articles that are beyond their usefulness.

Beds	Tables	Chairs	Socks
Bedding	Blankets	Rugs	Forks
Pillows	Pillow cases	Cushions	Palliasses
Towels	Tea-towels	Teapots	Jugs
Basins	Cups	Saucers	Plates
Tablecloths	Sillies	Knives	Bottles
Spoons	Primuses	Buckets	Tins
Babies feeding	Foodstuff s	Cupboards	Old Clothes of all kinds
Hurricane Lamps	Kerosene	Sheets	

Any other useful articles suitable for Pest Centre Emergency Conditions

Name: _____

Street: _____

Phone No.: _____ Nearest Cross Street : _____

Please endeavour to have all articles promised ready for the collector when he arrives with lorry.

This work is for the safety of you and yours

Authorised by Clr Reg N Dallimore,
Honorary Civilian Aid Officer,
Phone: Cronulla 62

SSHS 2017 XMAS CRUISE

Report and photos by CREO MOORE

Our Xmas party this year was held on Saturday, 25th November on board the *MV Gunnamatta*, and the weather was perfect for a luncheon cruise around Port Hacking. Most people caught the train to Cronulla and walked to the wharf to board our boat. SSHS member George Cotis was our onboard tour guide giving us lots of information about local history and geology, and Brian serenaded us with Xmas carols while playing his guitar. What a talent!

The three- course meal was delicious with wine available from the bar at very reasonable prices.

Just to add to the excitement of the day we also had a birthday cake for Elizabeth Craig, our *Bulletin* editor and a very good friend to most people in the society.

Overall it was a wonderful day. Thank you to Bruce Watt and Noel Elliott for organising it. If anyone wants to see more photos please look on our website: www.shirehistory.org



MV Gunnamatta, ready to take SSHS passengers on their Xmas cruise



*George Cotis,
our onboard tour guide*



*Brian Saunders, Ineke Nieuwland and Jo Massaar
sing carols to Brian's guitar*



SSHS Members and friends enjoy the entertainment

SYLVANIA – early 20th century



Photo taken from a punt crossing Georges River towards Horse Rock Point, Sylvania, c.1920, [pintinterest.com]



Arthur Allen's family coach about to board the 6-vehicle steam powered punt to cross the Georges River from Horse Rock Pt, Sylvania 1904 [George's River Libraries]



*Man walking on Sylvania waterfront, early 20th century
[Mitchell Library, PXB590]*



Samways Dairy, Princes Highway, Sylvania, opposite Roman Catholic Church, 1956 [SSHS, D. Salt coll.]