

NUMBER: 209 — NOVEMBER 2018



The Bowies' 1913 home at the confluence of Princes Highway, Hotham Road and the Boulevarde, Kirrawee, [From Building: the magazine for the architect, builder, property owner and merchant, 12 April 1913] [See story page 8.]

MINDFUL OF THE PAST – FOCUSED ON THE FUTURE

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

FACEBOOK: Sutherland Shire Historical Society

2019 Calendar

Painting the Shire

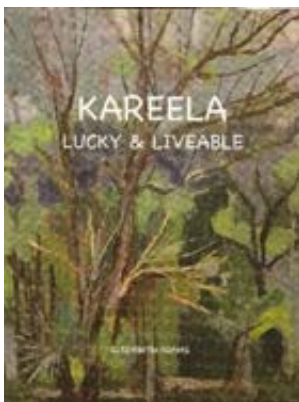
The history of the Shire through the eyes of artists

... from a 1905 painting of the Bonnet on the Woronora River and one of Cronulla in 1908, to a depiction of the construction of Captain Cook Bridge in the 1960's to modern times, including our bays, beaches, bushland and the ever-present bushfires.



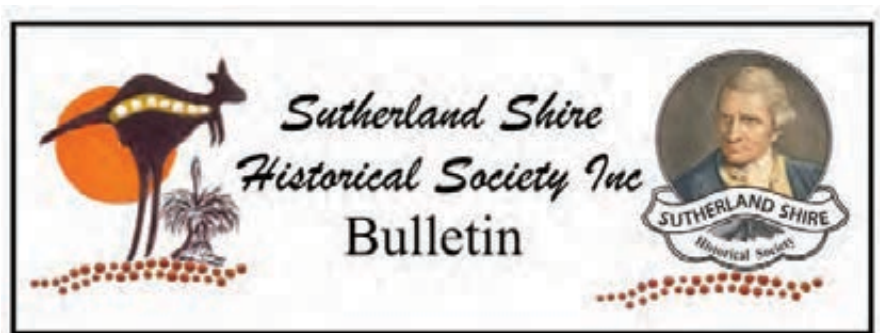
This unique calendar
would make an ideal Christmas present for anyone with a connection to the Shire

It is now available for **\$10.00** from SSHS
at meetings ... at the Museum on Saturday mornings
or ... email us at: shirehistory@gmail.com
or phone Elizabeth Craig 0416 234 272



Elizabeth Adams' history of Kareela is still available for \$35.00 from meetings,
or from the Museum on Saturday mornings.

See Barry Collier's review on page 35.



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SUTHERLAND SHIRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

THE SOCIETY

The SSHS has a proud tradition stretching back more than 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. Any enquiries contact the Editor: Elizabeth Craig at elizabeth.craig@y7mail.com or phone 0416 234 272.

SSHs BULLETIN - ISSN: 1444-2930 (from February 2000)

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

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 Sutherland Memorial School of Arts, 23 East Parade Sutherland (on the western side of Sutherland Railway Station).

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 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: 2018-2019

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HONORARY SOLICITOR	Michael Solari		
HONORARY AUDITOR			

SSHS CALENDAR: DECEMBER 2018-FEBRUARY 2019

(See website: www.shirehistory.org for updates)


DATE		
	MEETING 1.30pm, 3 rd Saturday in month Stapleton Centre	MUSEUM 9.00am-1.00pm Saturdays <u>Note dates closed</u>
DEC..2018	1	SSHS XMAS PARTY – Bundeena RSL, 12.00. See details below
		MUSEUM IS CLOSED
	15	NO SSHS MEETING IN DECEMBER
	22	MUSEUM IS CLOSED
	29	MUSEUM IS CLOSED
JAN. 2019	5	MUSEUM IS CLOSED
	12	
	19	SSHS MEETING: Author Patrick Kennedy will talk about his book on the history of Long Bay Gaol
	25	MUSEUM IS CLOSED FOR AUSTRALIA DAY
FEB. 2019	2	
	9	
	16	SSHS MEETING: George Cotis, member of Port Hacking Management Panel will talk on 'Fish, fishing and fisheries in Port Hacking'.
	23	

MUSEUM

Sutherland Memorial School of Arts, 23 East Pde, Sutherland
OPEN EACH SATURDAY (except those listed above), **9.00 am to 1.00 pm**

Please refer to the roster located at the Museum and at meetings.


If you are unable to attend at your allocated time, please make private arrangements
to swap your roster time



SSHS XMAS PARTY
 Bundeena RSL, 12.00 pm Saturday, 1 December
 Set Xmas Menu - \$40.00

Catch 10.30am ferry from Cronulla (\$3.30 each way. Can't use Opal Card)
 Bus transfer from ferry to RSL

CONFIRM ATTENDANCE WITH FULL PAYMENT AT NOVEMBER MEETING



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

BRUCE WATT



As the year begins to wind down it's appropriate to review our activities and to thank the many people and groups that assist in running a volunteer organisation. Pat

Hannan and Carol McDonald have dedicated a huge amount of effort in cataloguing and we now have an extensive archive of photographs and other material appropriately sorted for research. We thank Anna Estephan for her many years as Treasurer. Creo Hines has stepped up to take on this important role. We also thank Noel Elliot who has stepped down as Excursions Officer. As Grants Officer, Don Rothnie has sourced additional funding for needed equipment. Our refreshments ladies who provide afternoon tea make our meetings more casual and enjoyable. I acknowledge that there are many others who keep the wheels turning, including museum volunteers and our active members who attend our monthly meetings, contribute articles for publication and attend our regular outings. We also thank our sponsors; Olsen's Funerals and our supporters; IMB Bank.

We have maintained our connections with Hazelhurst Regional Gallery, Sutherland Shire Council, Botany Bay Family History and the many sister Historical Societies that we are affiliated with through a Forum. We have been invited to contribute to the centenary of Armistice Day through the office of Craig Kelly, our local member for Hughes and were invited to attend a Grandparents day seminar in which short films were

produced. We continue our close involvement with the annual Heritage Festival and held a most successful art show in May, highlighting many Shire artists and works from across more than a hundred years.

Many of these activities are designed to highlight and publicise our role as local history guardians and recorders and to draw attention to our museum. It has been a particular focus to finesse the museum collection to present a display that surprises and delights our visitors, tells a coherent narrative and is an educational tool, especially for young people. The most recent addition was an Aboriginal bark canoe. This is well described in the Museum report. All are welcome to view the canoe at our normal opening hours of 9-1pm on Saturdays. We are also in the process of securing a very significant addition to our Aboriginal collection.

Following Council's decision to refurbish the Entertainment Centre, the Sutherland Memorial School of Arts, (where our museum is located) is to be refurbished also. Inevitably this will require the museum to close down for some time, possibly from around November next year. Our annual Planning Day provides an opportunity for some strategic thinking. Our speakers and excursions are plotted well in advance and are listed on our website. We continue to be focused on activities to celebrate the Captain Cook, 250th celebrations in 2020.

Overall, 2018 has been a most successful year. Hoping to see many members and friends at our Christmas function at Bundeena RSL on Saturday December 1.

MUSEUM REPORT

PETER MOORE

(With additions by Elizabeth Craig)

I am writing this report as our Curator Ian Kolln has been unwell and is still recovering from a series of health issues. We all wish Ian a speedy and full recovery from these road bumps and look forward to him resuming his roles in the SSHS.

The ongoing upgrade of the Museum's display has continued with the arrival of two more display cabinets, again partially funded through the office of Craig Kelly MP. These have been installed in the War Time section of the Museum and the two old display cabinets have been sent to a new home. With more space in these new cabinets we will be able to increase the size of our War Time display, relevant due to the anniversary of the ending of the Great War. On this theme we will be exhibiting some of our memorabilia at Parc Menai on Remembrance Day. One of the items is an Anzac Commemorative Medal loaned to us by Mrs Ivy Flynn whose Grandfather-in-Law was an original Anzac. This medal was awarded in 1967 to surviving members of the Australian forces who served on the Gallipoli Peninsula and will become part of our Remembrance Day display.

Our major project this month was the acquisition of an Aboriginal bark canoe made by Dean Kelly, an Aboriginal Community leader from La Perouse. The canoe will become an important part of our Aboriginal History display. The canoe was dedicated at our *Night at the Museum* last month in a smoking ceremony. Dean, who conducted the ceremony, had made the canoe using traditional methods as handed down to him through his family from ancient times. He explained the cultural significance of the smoking ceremony - to cleanse and heal and to bring people together. Bruce Howell, SSHS Aboriginal liaison officer, emphasised the historic significance of this canoe in that it represents the 17 canoes described so powerfully by one of Cook's crew during their visit to Botany Bay. (See

Bruce's address on page 36.) Lachlan Ting gave a haunting performance on his didgeridoo. All present – Shire Councillors, including Mayor Carmelo Pesce, Aboriginal representatives, SSHS members and visitors, agreed that the dedication was a moving experience and that the canoe is a very significant addition to our collection.

The next major task at hand is loading the Touch Screen Kiosk (funded by the IMB Community Grant) with information and bringing it into operation. As a further step Carol McDonald is preparing a series of photos from our archives to be uploaded into the Kiosk. These will be accompanied by explanatory text.

As many will have heard, the SSC is upgrading the Sutherland Memorial School of Arts building in which our museum is situated. Bruce Watt and I had an informal meeting with Belinda Hanrahan, and the present position is that the SSC has now let out the contract for the architects to develop a plan for the upgrade. No definite decision has yet been made as to the effect these works will have on our museum, although we may have to shut down for some time during the construction phase. This disruption is unlikely to occur for at least 12 months from now and relocation costs will be to the SSC account.

As usually occurs in this report we say a very grateful thanks to Pat Hannan and Carol McDonald who are continuing to catalogue and store the enormous amount of information and photographs in our archive. Hopefully in the near future we will have new photo copiers and printers for their use. Where we put them becomes another problem. Also, I must thank all those who have come along and acted as museum guides during our open times. If anyone else is interested please let me know and we will place your name on the list. We will also offer training to new guides.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

ELIZABETH CRAIG

This *Bulletin* is a very full one with a great variety of topics, so a big thank you once again to all our contributors. If your story does not appear here, it was simply a room issue and will certainly appear in the February edition.

While researching our cover story about the Bowies, a family of Shire pioneers who settled in what is now Kirrawee (page 8), Laurie Burgess came across another great piece of history about the Bowie families' connection with Cronulla's first picture show. See next *Bulletin*! This month also features the life story of former Shire President, Kevin Skinner, who died in June this year. It is taken from his oral history interviews at Sutherland Library (page 27). Why did our early colonists bring in rabbits? Bruce Watt tells us why on page 33.

To mark Armistice Day this month we have included Stephanie Bailey's thoughtful article, *Soldiers Graves* – stories of the graves and headstones of WWI soldiers at Woronora Cemetery (page 19). And did you know that Charlemagne, the 9th century King of the Franks has a connection with Sutherland Shire? Ed Duyker has found one! (See page 15). On the last page we have Bruce Howell's moving address given at the *Night at the Museum* last month when he spoke of the significance of our newly acquired traditional bark canoe. Photos by Ted Craig from the ceremony celebrating the arrival of the canoe are also published on the cover pages.

Thank you once again to all, and a happy Christmas to everyone.

SOCIETY NEWS

Congratulations to Ann O'Connor, who is not only a talented writer, but also a prize-winning poet! Read on page 18, her poem, *The Last Wave* which won her the Shire Residents' Prize in the category of Traditional Verse in the 2018 Sutherland Shire Literary Competition. Great news, Ann. We are proud of you!

EXCURSION TO CANBERRA

The National Library is holding an exhibition, *Cook and the Pacific* until 10 February 2019 (visit <https://www.nla.gov.au/exhibitions/cook-and-the-pacific>). SSHS Executive is planning a two-day excursion to Canberra on 4th and 5th February (returning on 6th). Accommodation is currently available for \$328 for two nights twin share at the Canberra Rex on Northbourne Avenue (free cancellation). (Prices could change and accommodation needs to be booked soon.) There are buses from the city to the National Library. The exhibition itself is free. We would probably car pool to get to Canberra, depending on numbers.

More information at today's meeting. Please let us know very soon if you are interested in going on this excursion to Canberra.

Contact us at shirehistory@gmail.com or phone Elizabeth Craig on 0416 234 272 for more information.

BOWIE PARK – A LEGACY OF SOME PROUD HOME OWNERS

LAURIE BURGESS

Some years ago I had the task of compiling a list of sites maintained by Sutherland Shire Council. A site at Kirrawee did not appear to be listed. I asked the supervisor for that area.

- ‘Do you maintain the reserve amongst the housing in Hotham Road, The Boulevarde and Princes Highway?’
- ‘Yeah! That’s the one we call [I thought he said Two Cans] reserve?’
- ‘Two cans – what sort of cans?’
- ‘No, not two cans — it’s Toucans reserve, because that’s the name of the restaurant next door.’
- ‘But that’s a Chinese restaurant — it’s not called Toucans.’
- ‘It used to be when we started maintaining that reserve!’

Checking Council records, I found that it was actually ‘Bowie Park,’ and had been owned by Ethel May Bowie at the time the reserve was created . . . and there is always more to the story if you look further.

The Bowies

Ethel May Jackson, born in 1877 in New Zealand, and Thomas Guthrie Bowie (born 1874) married in New Zealand on 24 November 1898.¹ They settled in the rural town of Timaru, about 100 miles south of Christchurch. Much of the housing development around them was comprised of ‘wooden colonial style bungalows set in individual sections of land’.² The environment obviously influenced where they were to live and the type of family home they built after they moved to Australia. The Bowies had joined a local singing group soon after their marriage, with Ethel as a ‘thoroughly skilful executant’ on the pianoforte and Thomas as a tenor in the choir³. And prior to their move to Australia they had been actively pursuing the formation of a philharmonic society.⁴

The couple had two children in New Zealand, Keith Guthrie (b.1899)⁵ and Kenneth (b.1902, Christchurch)⁶. Ian Grafton was born about 1909-1910 in New South Wales.⁷ In August 1905 Thomas Bowie resigned from his job as manager of the Christchurch Meat Company’s Timaru office, and he and his family moved to Australia to take up a position as manager of a freezing works near Sydney.⁸ An auction in August 1905 disposed of his household contents of furniture and works of art.⁹

Mr Bowie was later dismissed from his position in Sydney as manager at John Cooke and Co, but was successful in an action for ‘alleged breach of agreement’ before the courts in December 1909, where he received an ‘agreed sum’ and the company directors were required to ‘withdraw all reflections on the honesty and competency of the plaintiff.’¹⁰ He stayed in the industry and is later mentioned as a manager of the frozen meat department of another Sydney firm, Balchin & Co. in August 1914.¹¹

Firmly settled in New South Wales with his family, Thomas Bowie looked for a country estate as their permanent residence. He found land on the main road to the Illawarra south of Georges River which could be reached by crossing that river on the Government punt.

He leased land in the Holt-Sutherland Estate (Lots 1 & 2 Section 16 deposited plan 801 of 4 acres 3 roods 32 perches)¹² and built a family home on that property, which was on a triangular parcel of land bounded by Illawarra or National Park Road (later Princes Highway), Hotham Road and The Boulevarde. How he first travelled between work in Sydney and home in Sutherland is not known, but he did own a family car a few years later. The home was finished by early 1911, but Thomas Bowie may have not been completely satisfied as Mr Blackwood, a local building contractor, had to take him to court in February 1911 to claim the balance of the construction costs (£7/2/6) and was successful in being awarded £6/18/6 'with witnesses expenses'.¹³

At the time, the bungalow built for Bowies must have been newsworthy in architectural circles. In the April 1913 issue of *Building: the magazine for the architect, builder, property owner and merchant*, several pages have photographs of the exterior and interior and a floor plan of the bungalow built for Mr Bowie. One of those photographs and the plan of the house are reproduced below from a copy of that magazine held in the National Library Trove collection (see Images 1 & 2). Why the floor plan indicates that it is for a house at Cronulla appears to be an error of location by the architect. An aerial photograph in 1930 confirms that there was an addition to the house not shown on the original plan, but mentioned that article.¹⁴

What may also be confusing is that the location is given as Sutherland, which it was at that time. Most of the area which is now Kirrawee was part of Sutherland up to 1939, when the new suburb name was assigned in conjunction with the railway station of that name - the (then) newly constructed Sutherland-Cronulla railway line.

The description provided in that magazine was:

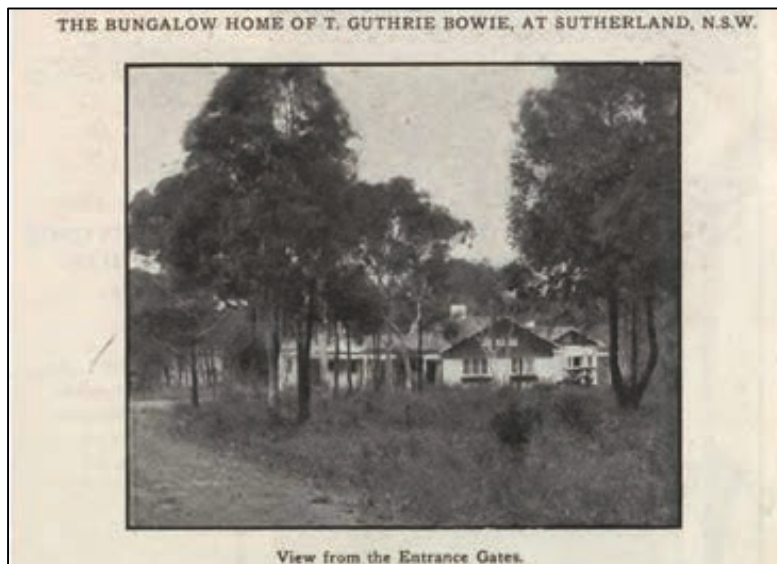


Image 1: *The Bowie home looking from Hotham Road. The photo was taken near the intersection with Illawarra or National Park Road (later Princes Highway)*

'The home is situated at Sutherland, and may be described as an Australian Bungalow. It was designed by Architect E. R. Orchard, and built by W. Cole & Son, of Sutherland.

'It is of white rough-cast outside, and is picturesquely set in a triangular block of nine acres [*actually a little less than 5 acres*], which is entirely surrounded by roads from which the pretty bungalow may be seen, practically nestling away among native trees and foliage.

'There is a driveway leading past the home to a garage and a man's room, designed in keeping with the house.'

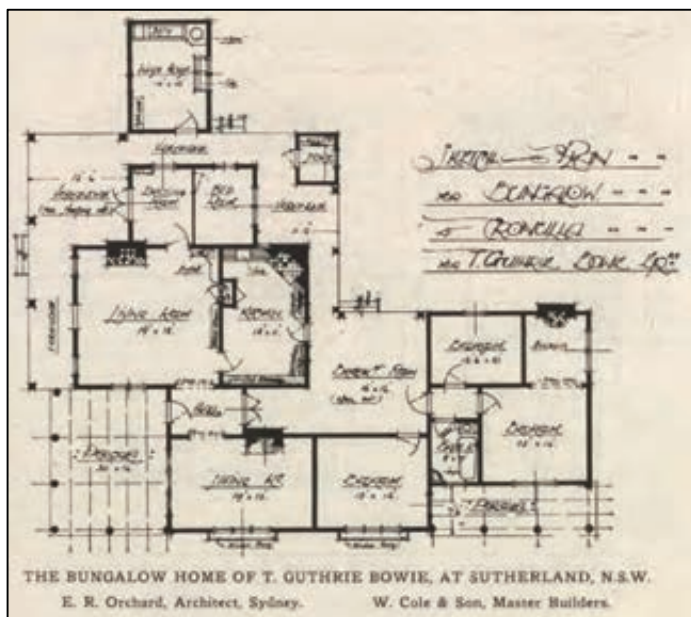


Image 2: The architect's floor plan – the reference to 'at Cronulla' was incorrect

To locate the home, the building described above has been scaled to fit on and is overlayed with the property boundaries on an aerial photograph taken in 1930, provided courtesy of Sutherland Shire Council. An additional cross-hatched area shown over an addition to the building on its north-east corner is likely the 'garage and a mans room' mentioned above (see Image 3).

Image 3: Bowie residence overlayed on 1930 aerial photo [photo image courtesy of SSC]



The Bowie home apparently had extensive picturesque views towards Sutherland township in early 1912 until 'the new brick works on Cronulla Road were in full view from every window in his house'. Mr Bowie complained to Sutherland Shire Council that the brick works were:

....injuring his property, and contradicting an assurance of the Council that when he intended to come to Sutherland Shire he would get every facility to establish a superior home. Mr Bowie added some remarks invoking the use of the word 'scandalous.' The Council found itself unable to meet Mr. Bowies request, the erection of the brickworks so far being quite within the law.¹⁵



Image 4: *Line of sight from Bowie residence to Brickworks —even in 1930 there was little in between*
[1930 aerial photo image courtesy of SSC]

[Note: 'Cronulla Road' being Illawarra or National Park Road (later Kingsway in 1916, and later still Princes Highway in 1921) — the brickworks were on the corner of Oak Road over half a mile (almost a kilometre) away].



Image 5: *Rear view of Brickworks on Illawarra or National Park Road.*
[Sutherland Library historical photo collection]

Mrs Bowie was also not backward in referring matters to the Council. In April 1915:

... a complaint regarding drainage at Hotham-road, made by Mrs Bowie, are [sic] to receive Councils attention . . . ¹⁶.

She was also responsible for placing advertisements for paid servants for their home at Sutherland¹⁷ and for another servant to accompany the family while on holidays at Medlow Bath. She gave her address as 'Toku Whare,' cnr. Illawarra & Hotham Roads, Sutherland.¹⁸ The house name came from the Maori language of New Zealand where Mr and Mrs Bowie spent their early years. It translates as 'my house'.

Mr Bowie was a member of a deputation to the Minister for Works in July 1918,

... asking that the Bill introduced in Parliament at the end of the last session dealing with the question of a Water Supply for Sutherland and surrounding districts be again brought forward.¹⁹

In mid-1920, the Bowies obtained ownership of two adjoining blocks of land at Cronulla, the story of which will be described in another article entitled *The First Picture Show in Cronulla*. In that article, Thomas Bowie is referred to as 'Thomas Guthrie Bowie of Sydney

Gentleman', so it is likely he had retained a residence near his place of employment. Mrs Bowie assisted by servants would have been in charge of the house at Sutherland (Kirrawee) while her husband worked during the week.

In August 1922, Mrs Bowie and her youngest son were involved in a motor vehicle accident on the Princes Highway almost outside her home ...

... through the car overturning and pinning both occupants underneath. Fortunately, the husband and another son heard the noise of the accident and rushed from their home and assisted in lifting the car, only to find that both were unconscious when picked up. They were removed to their home and are now under medical attention of Dr Sproule of Cronulla.²⁰

Apparently they made a full recovery.

The Bowies had not completely severed their connection with New Zealand and they visited there in 1924. Mr & Mrs T G Bowie and child [Ian Paul Grafton Bowie] arrived on the *Niagara* in Auckland, New Zealand on 13 October 1924 from Vancouver, via Honolulu and Suva.²¹ They were there joined by another son Kenneth at the Hotel Cargen in Wellington²² and in early December that year they were guests at Waiwera House, Rotorua.²³ It is not known when the Bowies returned to Australia.

The next few years were apparently unremarkable with no reports about the Bowies. The Bowies property was still in a sparsely settled area of the Shire in spite of being on the main road.



Image 6: *Intersection of Princes Highway and Kingsway at Gymea, circa 1937. The Princes Highway towards Sylvania where it disappears from view at rear of photo is around where Waratah Street entered it from the left. Hotham Road is just a little further beyond (behind trees).* [Sutherland Library historical photo collection]

The roads had not improved much by around 1937 when a photograph (Image 6) was taken looking along Princes Highway from the intersection of Princes Highway and Kingsway. The Bowies home is just out of view at the rear of the photo

Toku Whare survived until disastrous bushfires raged right through the Shire, as graphically portrayed in lengthy articles in *The Propeller* of 19 January 1939. Described are losses of houses and property in much of Sylvania and Port Hacking area reaching as far as Trickett Street in Cronulla. Amongst the houses lost were:

Eight-roomed brick and weatherboard cottage, owned and occupied by Mrs Ethel May Bowie, in Princes Highway, also garage; five-roomed brick and weatherboard cottage in Hotham Road, Sutherland, owned by Mrs Bowie and occupied by Mrs Thomas Stevens [*the second house mentioned is likely the building to the north of the Bowie residence in Image 3*]. . . laundry and outbuildings severely damaged at home of [*the son*] Mr Keith Guthrie Bowie, Princes Highway.²⁴

It is not known whether the son's home was on his parents' land.

The Bowies then moved to a new home further north fronting Princes Highway, which is the only significant building on the land in an aerial photo from 1943 (see Image 7). Whether this was the son's house or a completely new home has not been established, however a few years later Keith Guthrie Bowie is recorded as having moved to Lindfield.

Image 7: *The Bowies second home on 1943*
aerial photo
[photo image courtesy of SSC]



During the next few years, the Bowies determined to buy out their Holt-Sutherland Estate lease to gain ownership of the land. That procedure had become commonplace throughout the Shire as land development by subdivision became a popular pastime for private citizens, real estate agents and land developers. Prior to completing the purchase, Mrs Bowie had the land surveyed for subdivision in August 1946, with approval from Sutherland Shire Council on 17 September 1946. The process was apparently put on hold by the death of 'Mr T. G. Bowie, of Princes Highway, Sutherland' on 14 September 1946.²⁵

On 21 January 1948, Ethel May Bowie purchased the land from the Holt-Sutherland Estate and proceeded to sell off the various lots in her plan of subdivision which was registered in the Land Titles Office as deposited plan 20858 on 4 February 1958 of 24 lots with a central 'Public Garden and Recreation Space' reserved under section 340A of the Local Government Act 1919 and noted on Mrs Bowies title when issued.²⁶

Mrs Bowie died on 22 March 1952,²⁷ having sold about half the subdivision. Her sons Keith Guthrie Bowie of Lindfield, a Company Executive and Ian Paul Grafton Bowie of Sutherland, an Aviation Engineer, inherited the remainder and became owners on 8 April 1953. They continued the sale of the remaining lots by September 1954, retaining only the vacant half of one lot which had contained the second Bowie residence — that land also eventually sold on 17 May 1960 — leaving only the 'Public Garden and Recreation Space' as a residue of the title.²⁸

The North GyMEA Progress Association forwarded a submission to Sutherland Shire Council, considered at a Council committee meeting on 15 September 1958, requesting

the name 'Bowie Reserve' be given to the unnamed reserve in Hotham Road, formerly part of the Bowie Estate.²⁹

Sutherland Shire Council confirmed the transfer of the 'Public Garden and Recreation Space' to the Council in *NSW Government Gazette* No 86 of 10 July 1970 folio 2769 and recorded the name as 'Bowie Park.'³⁰



Image 8:
Bowie Park in 2015 [photo image courtesy SSC]

¹ *Star* (NZ), 30.11.1898

² <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timaru>

³ *Timaru Herald* [NZ], 19.8.1903 and 7.12.1904

⁴ *Timaru Herald* [NZ], 6 March 1905

⁵ https://www.myheritage.com/names/keith_bowie

⁶ https://www.myheritage.com/names/ken_bowie

⁷ He was about 12 or 13 years of age in August 1922 (*St George Call*, 11.8.1922, p.8, *Evening News*, 9.8.1922 p.1)

⁸ *The Cyclopedia of New Zealand – Canterbury Provincial District – Meat Trade* and *Timaru Herald*, 10 July 1899; *Timaru Herald* (NZ), 29.8.1905

⁹ *Timura Leader* (NZ), 22.8.1905

¹⁰ *The Daily Telegraph*, 18.12.1909, p.10 and *The Star*, 16.12.1909, p.6

¹¹ *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 14.8.1914, p.5

¹² Date of issue of lease not determined but must have been prior to early 1911

¹³ *St George Call*, 25.2.1911, p.8

¹⁴ *Building: the magazine for the architect, builder, property owner and merchant* Vol 6 No.68, 12.4.1913

¹⁵ *St George Call*, 27.4.1912, p.7

¹⁶ *St George Call*, 17.4.1915, p.4

¹⁷ *St George Call*, 12.2.1916, p.5

¹⁸ *St George Call*, 23.11.1917, p.3

¹⁹ *St George Call*, 27.7.1918, p.7

²⁰ *The St George Call*, 11.8.1922, p.8 and *Evening News*, 9.8.1922. p.1

²¹ *Otago Daily Times* [NZ], 17.10.1924

²² *Auckland Star* [NZ], 27.10.1924

²³ *Auckland Star* [NZ], 3.12.1924

²⁴ *Auckland Star* [NZ], 3.12.1924

²⁵ *The Propeller*, 19.9.46, p.3

²⁶ Land & Property Information historical plans and titles

²⁷ *The Propeller*, 27.3.1952, p.3

²⁸ Land & Property Information historic land titles

²⁹ Sutherland Shire Council, Committee Minute 15.9.1958

³⁰ Sutherland Shire Council file records

CHARLEMAGNE AND THE SHIRE

EDWARD DUYKER

How, you might ask, could Charlemagne – who became King of the Franks in 768, King of the Lombards in 774, united and ruled much of western and central Europe, and became the first Holy Roman Emperor in 800 – have any connection with the Sutherland Shire? Let me draw my bow and you can decide how long it is. In 1996, ANSTO (Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation), at Lucas Heights, was approached by Italian researchers seeking to confirm the age of the 'Corona Ferrea di Monza', otherwise known as the Iron Crown of the Lombards. It is held in Monza Cathedral, Lombardy, and is believed to have been used to crown Charlemagne, as King of the Lombards, more than twelve hundred years ago.



Iron Crown of the Lombards, photographed by James Steakley in the Chapel of the Monza Cathedral [Wikipedia]

Many stories and traditions surround the crown and its origins. One even suggests that it was made on the orders of Saint Helena, mother of the Emperor Constantine the Great. There is no doubt that it was used for the coronation of the Emperor Charles V, in 1530, and Napoleon, as King of Italy, in 1805. Although the crown is made of gold alloy, precious stones and enamel, it is known as the 'Iron Crown' because it is said to contain a nail from the 'True Cross', purportedly on which Jesus was crucified.

In 1993, scientists from the University of Milan, Mario Milazzo and C. Cicardi, began non-destructive scientific analysis of the crown using X-ray fluorescence. They found that the foils were 85 percent gold and the rosettes and bezels 84 percent, alloyed with silver and copper. The fillets were 91 percent gold and 9 percent silver. No iron was found! ¹ The white enamels were found to contain large amounts of antimony and calcium, probably in the form of calcium antimonite. The blue enamels contained less antimony. Both blue and white enamels also contained lead, probably as lead oxide. None of the metals, jewels or enamels could be carbon-14 dated, because they had no biological origins. However, when it was realized that bee's wax had been mixed with clay 'to fix stones and ornamental external plates', other avenues for dating the crown became possible. ²

Through ANSTO's Accelerator Mass Spectrometer facility,³ the Sutherland Shire has become 'a centre for the high precision and high throughput analysis' of Carbon-14. In the years immediately before the request by the scientists from the University of Milan, ANSTO had dated Tasmanian Huon pine tree rings, human-megafauna associations,

Aboriginal midden remains, corals, log coffins from North-Eastern Thailand and even an egg (from a large, extinct, flightless bird) that had floated across the Indian Ocean to Western Australia from Madagascar. To ensure reliability and accuracy, ANSTO also dated wheat seeds known to have been carbonized by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius on 27 August 79 AD.⁴ The ANTARES AMS team at ANSTO, led by Dr Claudio Tuniz, himself born in Italy, established a radiocarbon age for the wax from the Iron Crown, of 1278 years \pm 31 years.⁵ This suggests that it could indeed have been used in the coronation of Charlemagne in 774 and by even earlier Lombard kings in the seventh century.

Franks be to you all!

Charlemagne died in 814 and lies buried in the German city of Aachen. He left more than a political inheritance. Research over the past two decades, would suggest that most Europeans (and therefore most Shire residents of European origin), are likely to be descended from one or more of Charlemagne's eighteen known children from his numerous wives and concubines, regardless of whether they have a known Carolingian royal pedigree or not. We each have two parents, four grandparents, eight great-grandparents, sixteen great-great grandparents, thirty-two great-great-great grandparents etc. Going back some forty generations (average 30 years a generation), to the time of Charlemagne (mid-eighth century), the number grows exponentially and we would have 1,099,511,627,776 (over a trillion!) ancestors if we were entirely outbred. But we are not. This figure is larger than all the individuals who have ever lived in all the history of the planet. By the opening years of the ninth century, Europe's population was a mere 30 million⁶ and there were about 220 million globally.⁷ Genealogies, therefore, must converge and fold in on themselves. A Yale statistician, Joseph Chang, has used mathematical modelling and probability theory (Poisson distributions and Markov chains) to reconcile the potentially enormous number of individuals we should have as ancestors, with what we know to have been the much smaller human population in the past.⁸ And in 2013, two population geneticists in California, Peter Ralph and Graham Coop, published results of a genomic survey of 2,257 people from 40 populations, which confirmed that most Europeans are likely to have many common ancestors who lived around a thousand years ago.⁹ The genetic vat is churned by emigration, revolution, invasion, social mobility, illegitimacy, sexual violence and the multiplier effect of the generations.



Charlemagne. Detail of 19th c. engraving from sketch of by Janet-Lange (1815-1872), [author's collection]

The Prophet Muhammed lived in the century before Charlemagne and had four surviving daughters by his first wife and a son by his maid-servant Maria. The Umayyad branch

of his descendants conquered Spain in the eighth century (at a time when it had only about 3.5 million people).¹⁰ They also invaded France, but were defeated by Charlemagne's grandfather Charles Martel. Yet the descendants of both men would intermarry. Queen Elizabeth II is one of many Europeans to claim descent from both Charlemagne and the Prophet Muhammed (via the daughter of the Emir of Seville and the Catholic Kings of Spain). If you have any European ancestry, you probably can too, even if you don't have the paperwork.¹¹

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¹ Cicardi, C., & Milazzo, M., 'Analisi dei materiali', in Buccellati, G., (ed.), *La Corona Ferrea nell'Europa degli Imperi* vol. II, Editore G. Mondadori, Milano 1995; see also Milazzo, M., & Sardella, P., 'Analisi XRF Quantitativa nelle applicazioni archeometriche', *Fisica E*, Numero 1/2, 2002, pp. 52–8.

<https://web.archive.org/web/20171016181054/http://prometeo.sif.it/papers/online/sag/018/01-02/pdf/07.pdf>

² Milazzo, M., Cicardi, C., Mannoni, T., & Tuniz, C., 'Nondestructive measurements for characterisation of materials and datation of Corona Ferrea of Monza', in *Sixth Australasian Archaeometry Conference*, 'Australasian Archeometry: Retrospectives for the New Millennium', Australian Museum, Sydney, 10–13 February 1997 (abstract, paper no. 38, pp. 74–5).

<https://www.osti.gov/etdeweb/servlets/purl/591946>

³ More correctly the ANTARES (Australian National Tandem for Applied Research) AMS (Accelerator Mass Spectrometer) Centre at Lucas Heights.

⁴ Tuniz, C., Fink, D., Hotchkiss, M. A. C., Jacobsen, G. E., Lawson, E. M., Smith, A. M., Bird, J.R., & Boldeman, J. W., 'The ANTARES AMS Centre at the Lucas Heights Research Laboratories', *Nuclear Instrument and Methods in Physics Research*, Section B. Beam Interactions with Materials & Atoms, 92, 1994, pp. 22–26.

⁵ Milazzo, Cicardi, Mannoni & Tuniz, op. cit.

⁶ McEvedy, C., & Jones, R., *Atlas of World Population History*, Facts on File/Penguin, New York, 1979, p. 22.

⁷ Ibid., p. 347.

⁸ Chang, J. T., 'Recent Common Ancestors of all Present-day Individuals', *Advances in Applied Probability*, vol. 31, 1999, pp. 1002–1026.

http://www.stat.yale.edu/%7Ejtc5/papers/CommonAncestors/AAP_99_CommonAncestors_paper.pdf

⁹ Ralph, P., & Coop, G., 'The geography of recent genetic ancestry across Europe', *PLOS [Public Library of Science] Biology*, vol. 11, no. 5, 2013: e1001555:

<https://journals.plos.org/plosbiology/article?id=10.1371/journal.pbio.1001555>

¹⁰ McEvedy & Jones, op. cit., p. 101.

¹¹ For an excellent article on this subject, see Olson, S., 'The Royal We', *The Atlantic*, May 2002:

<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2002/05/the-royal-we/302497/>

see also, Rutherford, A., 'So you're related to Charlemagne? You and every other living European . . .', *The Guardian*, Sunday, 24 May 2015:

<https://www.theguardian.com/science/commentisfree/2015/may/24/business-genetic-ancestry-charlemagne-adam-rutherford>

2018 SUTHERLAND SHIRE LITERARY COMPETITION

Last August, at the Hazelhurst Arts Centre, the winners of the inaugural Sutherland Shire Literary Competition were announced. We are very pleased and proud that SSHS member, Ann O'Connor was awarded the Shire Residents' Prize for her poem, *The Last Wave* in the category of Traditional Verse.

Judge's comments: *'... a contemplation of suicide. The poet, deftly using the sea as both setting and metaphor, takes us into the mind of a woman who, wracked by a combination of anger, guilt and doubt, faces her demons.'*

Ann's comment: *... it expresses my feelings about the Shire and its seashore when I arrived in the area a few years ago. I live in GyMEA and as an ex-Londoner I love the feeling of being surrounded by beaches and bays but am aware of the dangers and sadness they can bring as well as the joys.*

THE LAST WAVE - by Ann O'Connor

The sea rolled in with force and power
Along the rugged shore.
The day was mixed with sun and shower
As time relentless bore.

Alone and lonely on the sand
A stick-like figure stood
With clammy skin and shaking hand
Expression stiff as wood.

Horizon-seeking eyes were dark
And questioning the sky.
The options clear, the future stark.
"Why should I not just die?"

And slowly taking off her shirt
She neatly stacked the pile.
And layer by layer peeled off the hurt
And forced a twisted smile.

"Now let them know what I've been through
And in my agony share
And feel the pain and suffering, too
When friends no longer care."

The beach was scrubbed and scoured till clean,
Churned by the outgoing tide.
The turmoil raging there unseen
Was fierce as mates who lied.

And step by step, she made her way
Towards the hidden rocks
Whose presence, shown by spit and spray,
The safety flag it mocks.

And slowly, as she felt the cold
Sea-water on her feet,
The thrill of fear as sand unrolled
And set her heart abeat.

She knew that she could not go on
And slide into the sea.
A coward's mantle she must don
And never would be free.

But back and forth she would be drawn
Like tides along the beach.
By friends and foe she would be torn
As shore she tried to reach.

And as the sea is never still
She too would ebb and flow.
Despite her strong and steadfast will
Her journey would be slow.

But now she knew that she was strong,
Relentless as the sea.
The final wave to doubt was long.
A fighter she would be.

CONGRATULATIONS, ANN!

SOLDIERS' GRAVES

STEPHANIE BAILEY

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

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Every year, thousands of Australians travel overseas to explore the First World War battlefields where Anzac soldiers fought and died, and to visit the graves of the young men who will forever lie in distant military cemeteries. Our war dead, who rest in foreign soil, ought never to be forgotten. And nor should those servicemen and women who survived hostilities and returned to Australia, hundreds of whom now lie peacefully right here in the Sutherland Shire.



The first time I visited Woronora Cemetery in early 2015 and unexpectedly came across the grave of a First World War soldier I was taken aback. The white headstone looked so remarkably familiar, indeed so similar to those which appear in countless books and television documentaries about Australian war casualties. The grave at Woronora belonged to Private E.S. Grace of the 4th Battalion and from his low service number – 534 - I guessed that he may well have been with the second or third wave of Anzacs who fought their way ashore at Gallipoli on 25th April 1915. Grace's headstone is also engraved with a cross and below it is the inscription: *Dearly loved & sadly missed by loving wife, May, and son, John*. It is impossible to comprehend the depth of sorrow behind these words, but this is not what stopped me in my tracks. Rather it was the surprised realisation that a soldier's grave was here at all in the Sutherland Shire.

Private Ernest Sylvester Grace, 4th Australian Infantry Battalion. Woronora Memorial Park.

Apart from the date of death (1950), Private Grace's headstone is in many ways akin to those erected in military cemeteries in France and Belgium. But unlike those Anzacs interred in foreign fields, Grace is not buried beside his fellow soldiers, but lies quietly amongst civilian graves in the Anglican section of the Shire's community cemetery. Nonetheless, Private Ernest Sylvester Grace is by no means the only former soldier buried at Woronora Memorial Park. As one strolls throughout the rows and rows of graves, one

soon discovers that this cemetery is the final resting place for many men – and indeed women – who have served this country throughout the past century.

From a population of fewer than 5 million, some 416,000 men enlisted in the Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force (AN&MEF) or volunteered for the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) between 1914 and 1918. Of these, more than 330,000 embarked for overseas service. 60,000 never returned. In fact of all the Anzacs who died abroad during the First World War, only one soldier, Major General Sir William Bridges - who was killed at Gallipoli on 18th May 1915 - was sent back to Australia. All others were buried near to where they perished.

In June 1916, the Federal Cabinet decided that a simple, yet permanent, headstone should be erected over the graves of all Australian soldiers who had died at the Front. Almost a year later, however, the British Director of Graves Registration announced that construction work would not commence 'during the progress of hostilities' and that grieving families were forbidden from sending crosses to France as all transport was 'required for materials of war.' The Director also pointed out, rather tersely, that 'much unnecessary correspondence will be saved if relatives note these facts.' For those back in Australia, the anxious wait for a permanent headstone to be erected over the broken body of their loved one must have been unbearable.

Finally, in December 1918, just over a month after the war ended, it was revealed that the Imperial (now Commonwealth) War Graves Commission had approved of a design for a headstone to be placed over the graves of all members of the AIF buried in foreign countries. The chosen pattern, like that selected for other Allied nations, was uniform, thereby ensuring that all ranks that 'fell in defence of the Empire' were treated with equal honour. Even Prince Maurice of Battenberg, the youngest grandchild of Queen Victoria and cousin to King George V, was buried under such a headstone alongside his fellow-soldiers in the Tyne Cot Cemetery in Flanders.

It took some months for a sketch of the proposed AIF memorial to finally reach Australia, but on 15th April 1919, the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported:

Beneath the rising sun badge of the Australian Imperial Force will appear the name, rank, and regiment of the deceased soldier, together with the date of his death. A plain cross will also be inscribed on the headstone, and a space reserved for the addition of a text or prayer to be selected by relatives. Where the soldier was a member of the Jewish faith, the cross will be replaced by the Star of David. Inscriptions should not be sent to the Department until further notice is given. They will be provided by relatives at their own expense, and should not exceed three lines.

Temporary Corporal Stanley Perry of the 2nd Australian Infantry Battalion is not, however, buried under a headstone bearing his name. Perry was killed at Bullecourt on 4th May 1917 and he, like too many other First World War soldiers, has no known grave. In the years following his death, Stanley's parents, Margaret and William Perry of Rockdale, wrote numerous distraught letters to the army begging for information on the whereabouts of the remains of their son. Regrettably, all they could elicit was that he was buried in the vicinity of Noreuil in northern France. In truth, even had it been identifiable, it is unlikely

that Perry's family would ever have had the opportunity to travel overseas to visit his grave. And so, in want of a headstone to lay flowers upon, Stanley Perry's parents erected a monument to their lost son in the family plot at Woronora Memorial Park. This act, in itself, was not unique for there are literally hundreds of these memorials scattered throughout the cemetery. Some are very simple with just a modest inscription, and others, like those erected to Private John Derwent, Private Samuel Ellis (decorated with his death plaque), and Victoria Cross recipient, Gunner Walter Brown, are ornate and beautiful. Furthermore, for Mrs Margaret Perry it was important to not only remember the sacrifice of her own son, but to honour all Anzacs, including those who had died after they returned home to Australia.



Memorial to Corporal Stanley John Perry, 2nd Australian Infantry Battalion, Woronora Memorial Park

On 27th November 1937, more than twenty years after Stanley Perry was killed in action on the Western Front, the *Smith's Weekly* Newspaper published an article on his mother. Every year in late April for the previous two decades, Mrs Margaret Perry of Rockdale – along with fellow members of assorted community organisations - had dutifully collected donations of flowers, bay leaves and rosemary. And each Anzac Day these dedicated individuals would journey to Woronora and other Sydney cemeteries to lay wreaths

and bouquets on the graves of those soldiers who had died before embarkation or after they had returned from war.

In the years before the war memorials which dot the Sutherland Shire were completed, the cemetery at Woronora was a focal point on Anzac Day. Each year on the 25th April, a religious minister - often one who had himself served in the First World War - would conduct a short service; local dignities would give patriotic addresses; and the Last Post would be sounded. Following the day's official formalities, guests (who had been encouraged to 'bring any small gardening implements') would tend to unkempt soldiers' graves and lay floral tributes. These ceremonies at Woronora were always well attended – even in 1919 when the Department of Public Health was forced to cancel the city's Anzac Day parade due to the virulent influenza pandemic which was then sweeping the country. In fact, that year all persons who attended the Anzac service in the Domain - except for officiating clergy – were required to wear masks and stand at least three feet apart.

By 1922, 100 Anzacs were already interred at Woronora Memorial Park. Just three years later this number had doubled. On 1st May 1925, the *Propeller* newspaper reported that during the annual pilgrimage to the cemetery 'nearly 200 wreaths were placed on soldiers' graves.' Of the 272,000 servicemen who survived the First World War, around 170,000

suffered from wounds or disease – some so physically broken that they would clearly never recover. Moreover, countless Anzacs came home mentally and emotionally traumatised. Sadly, it is all too easy to find newspaper reports from the 1920s and 1930s which detail the grisly circumstances of a former soldier's suicide. On 11 November 1921 the *Sydney Morning Herald* printed a poem called 'Where Poppies Grow,' written by someone who gave their name simply as 'Mother.' This short verse gives some insight into the pain and hardship returned soldiers – and their families – faced day after day.

The soldier's flower! It is an emblem good.
It forms a cross, its colour speaks of blood.
The life-blood of the young, the strong, the
brave,
Who fought like men, and, surely, "died to
save."
Now, these sleep well, for them is no more
pain;
But others from that hell came home again.
Let us salute them from our hearts to-day.
The debt we owe them, how can we repay?

The men who fought for us are heroes all;
Whether 'twas theirs to live, or fighting fall.
But courage fails men who must work to live,
Who beg for work; but none have work to
give.
Ah, how those Diggers "somewhere" over
there
Worked through those awful years. Now, can
we bear
To think that some wish they were lying low
There, where their comrades sleep, and the
red poppies blow?

MOTHER.

In many ways these returned soldiers were just as much casualties of the war as those who were killed or died overseas. When he spoke at the 1921 Anzac Day service at Woronora cemetery, the Member for Illawarra, Mr Hector Lamond, said that although the soldiers buried close by were 'cradled in the land of peace, they had shown themselves worthy of the tradition of the people from whence they sprung... We must not forget their deeds, but cherish those who had suffered for us.' These words were not mere platitudes for Mr Lamond. In fact he had been working for some time to ensure that Australia's post-war dead were not ignored, but acknowledged appropriately and respectfully.

On 20th May 1920, Mr Hector Lamond addressed the House of Representatives:

Those who are acquainted with the work that is being done in connection with soldiers' graves abroad will be grateful to the Government for the thorough manner in which they are interpreting the wishes of the nation... However, in some of the larger cemeteries in our own country, there are a number of soldiers' graves which are not only unmarked, but, in some cases, are falling into a state of neglect such as no one would like to see.

Mr Lamond then urged the Minister for Defence to immediately conduct an inquiry into establishing the location of all 'unmarked graves of Australian soldiers in our own country,' and recommended that similar monuments to those being erected in foreign cemeteries 'be placed above the remains of those who lie in their own land.' It took some months and repeated questions to parliament, but at last Mr Lamond received an answer that went

some way to achieving the result he sought. On 7th October 1920, the Assistant Minister for Defence, Sir Granville Ryrie, announced to the House of Representatives that circulars had been sent to the next-of-kin of members of the Australian Imperial Force buried in Australia. In cases where a soldier's grave was incomplete, parents and spouses could submit an application to the authorities 'to erect a headstone of the same character as those placed over graves in the various theatres of war.' But there was a catch. Approval would only be given to those members of the AIF who died in Australia from causes directly attributable to war service. Yet not all entitled relatives applied.

In her fascinating book, *Shattered Anzacs: living with the scars of war*, Dr Marina Larsson examines the reasons why particular families chose to bury their deceased ex-serviceman in a soldier's grave whilst others preferred not to. Some relatives, wrote Larsson, 'were perhaps reluctant to inter their loved one under a 'standard issue' headstone that forever identified him with his war service and diminished the significance of his civilian and family life.' Indeed, the headstones and plaques for an incalculable number of Anzacs - like those situated on the graves of Private Robert Bakewell of Cronulla, Gunner Samuel Smith of Drummoyne, and Second Lieutenant George Sprague of Sutherland - offer no clue whatsoever to their participation in any military service.

Other families did not submit an application for a headstone because they were estranged from their ex-soldier. In February 1933, then Minister for Defence, Sir George Pearce, stated that as there were still 'hundreds of unmarked graves of ex-members of the AIF' he had decided that in cases where the next-of-kin had failed to apply for a free headstone, the Returned Soldiers League was 'permitted to make an application'. An official from the RSL was quick to point out, however, that 'free headstones could not be entertained unless the soldier had died as a result of wounds or illness sustained during war service.' For those relatives who *did* apply and 'the death was officially rejected,' writes Dr Marina Larsson, 'the family was obliged to bear the full cost of a civilian grave and headstone. This was a cost that some families simply could not afford.' Mercifully, local RSL branches often helped out by 'raising money for dignified graves for ex-servicemen.'

The Anzacs buried in Australia in military graves were not just soldiers. They were sons, husbands, friends and fathers. Whilst many died distressingly young, others survived to middle and even old age. These men had careers, hobbies, interests and responsibilities. They enjoyed life's successes and endured its challenges. While each individual experience of war was undoubtedly impactful on the lives of ex-soldiers – in ways that we today can only imagine - it was not the sum of who these men were. So, this begs the question: why would families – and perhaps the men themselves – desire a headstone which would forever identify these ex-servicemen with their time in khaki?

Of course there is no single answer.

For many families, eligibility for a military grave would have been greatly appreciated for financial reasons – especially during the difficult years of the Depression. But there were much deeper motivations too. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s when newspapers reported on the annual Anzac Day services and wreath-laying proceedings at Woronora Cemetery, deceased ex-soldiers were often described as having 'valiantly laid down their lives for Empire and Country.' Therefore, explains Dr Larsson, 'a military grave was

important because it recognised ex-servicemen's sacrifices and validated the military origins of death... Veterans' gravesides became a parallel world of intimate commemoration in which the bereaved remembered their loved one's return from war, his suffering and passing, without explicitly being reminded that he was not one of the 60,000 'noble dead.'

Just as the relatives of Anzacs buried in military cemeteries overseas were 'invited to submit a short epitaph' for their loved one's headstone, so too were the next-of-kin of eligible returned soldiers. Many inscriptions, such as those on the graves of Sapper Hugh Hughes, Private Jack Yeadon and Sergeant Rupert Broadbridge, provide a little insight into an ex-serviceman's family life and connections. Some dedications, like those found on the headstones of Private John Mitchell, Staff Sergeant William Jackman, and Private Alfred Pickering, embraced the 'heroic language associated with battlefield death'. While others, including those found on the graves of Private Eric Ridgeway and Private William Ewart, hint at the pain and suffering endured by these men (and their families) before they finally succumbed to their injuries and ailments. And then there are the headstones, like those belonging to Sapper Henry Smith and Gunner Arthur Rickards, where no words are offered at all. Nevertheless, these men have a headstone and are therefore recognised, at least in death, for their contribution to the Australia's First World War effort. But what of the more than 2,000 women who served overseas with the Australian Army Nursing Service (AANS) from 1914 to 1919?

At Woronora Memorial Park, when one stops at the burial plots of those who served in the First World War, the names inscribed on the military headstones are invariably those of men. This does not mean, however, that there are no ex-servicewomen interred at the cemetery. They are just a little harder to find. On 13th September 1936, Major General Sir Charles Rosenthal, in the presence of a large gathering, unveiled a new AIF memorial wall near the entrance to Woronora Crematorium and which he dedicated to 'the memory of ex-soldiers who had died of war causes.' Today, reposing in the recesses of the memorial panels are the remains of not only hundreds of ex-servicemen, but also many ex-servicewomen, including First World War nurses, Matron Ellen Gould, Sister Penelope Frater and Sister Julia Johnston. Sadly though, when fellow nurse Matron Alice Cashin of the Queen Alexandra Imperial Military Nursing Service Reserve, died in 1939, she was buried at Woronora Memorial Park in an unmarked grave. It was not until 2016 that a memorial to this brave and distinguished woman was finally realised. [See story *SSHS Bulletin*, November 2016, p.30.] Indeed, it makes one wonder, how many more men and women who have served this country might be interred in graves unknown, lost or destroyed?

On 1st October 1931, complaints were aired at the state executive meeting of the Returned Soldiers' League against the quality of the headstones erected in Australia by the War Graves Commission over the graves of soldiers who had died from the effects of war service. The acting State president, Colonel A.W. Hyman, had recently inspected soldiers' burial plots at Rookwood cemetery and found that 'it was most difficult, even now, to decipher the lettering on the headstones.' At Woronora Memorial Park too, one finds the inscriptions on many of the early headstones – like those belonging to Private Henry Stowell, Private Douglas Greenbank and Lance Corporal George Peake – almost impossible to read. From the late 1930s however, and into the 1950s, the prevalent style

mirrored the well-defined white Portland limestone tombs erected in the military cemeteries of France and Belgium. (Shire examples can be found at the graves of Private Gilbert Scott and Gunner Albert Roach.) But perhaps the most widespread military headstone for a burial plot at Woronora Memorial Park is a plaque affixed to a stone slab. This design, which came into use during the 1950s, is not only found on the graves of First War Soldiers, like Private Alfred Costello, Trooper Graham Crozier and Victoria Cross recipient, Captain John Hamilton, but erected over the remains of hundreds of servicemen from the Second World War and later conflicts who are buried right here in the Sutherland Shire.

In the end, it is not the style of headstone - be it an elaborate family monument; an official military tomb; an ordinary civilian grave; or a simple engraved plaque on the Wall of Memories - that is most important, but rather the very real person each dedication represents and the life they lived. Therefore each Anzac Day since 2015, I have visited Woronora Memorial Park to walk throughout the cemetery, visit the graves of those men and women who have served Australia in times of war, and photograph their headstones as I find them. I invite you to view the images of a growing collection of the Shire's military graves. Or better yet, go visit them yourself.

During the First World War, 60,000 Anzacs were killed or died overseas and will forever lie in foreign fields. Since then, so many more have fought and perished in conflicts far away from home. We will remember them. But there have also been thousands of servicemen and women who have returned – and who continue to return – to Australia from distant battlefields. Many shall grow old. Age does indeed weary them, and the years condemn. We will remember them too.



Trooper Graham Crozier, 7th Australian Light Horse Regiment, Woronora Memorial Park.

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KEVIN MACKAY SKINNER, OAM

1924 – 2018

A Shire pioneer and inspiration to many

ELIZABETH CRAIG

Two phrases often used to describe this popular long-serving former Councillor and Shire President are 'passionate about Sutherland Shire', and 'one of Sutherland Shire's greatest leaders'.

Kevin Skinner was elected to Sutherland Shire Council in 1962, retiring in 1987. His 25-year service included six terms as President (1973-1974 and 1981-1986).

We can count amongst his achievements the establishment of more than 60 sporting and recreation areas in the Shire, his support of community projects, such as volunteer bushfire brigades (he was a life member of Menai Bushfire Brigade), the Camellia Gardens, the Sutherland to Surf race (see *SSHS Bulletin*, August 2018) and a new museum for Sutherland Shire Historical Society in 1986. He was also passionate about preserving the Shire's natural environment, and fought to end sand mining in Kurnell.



*Kevin Skinner, Sutherland Shire
President, 1974 [courtesy, SSC]*

Tellingly, Kevin Skinner, a Labor politician, had the respect and the friendship of all sides of politics. Former Sutherland Shire Clerk, John Rayner explained: 'His political opponents respected him because of his love of the Shire and because he desired to get things right in the community.'¹

We are fortunate to have in Sutherland Library's Local Studies archive two oral history interviews with Kevin Skinner. One conducted by former Sutherland Chief Librarian, Bernard Sargent in 1993. And in 2006, Kevin and his wife, Gwen were interviewed by Elizabeth Craig.² These interviews provide insights into the making of the man and what drove him.

Early years

Born in Mackay, in Queensland in 1924, Kevin, the youngest of nine children, was three months old when he lost his father after a motorbike accident. The local community rallied, holding fundraising functions for the family, raising enough money for Kevin's mother to buy a house. A religious woman, she bought Evandale, a farmhouse on acreage attached to a Seventh Day Adventist estate in Cooranbong near Newcastle. Here the family were self-sufficient with an orchard, vegetable garden and cows, as well as the support of the church. 'We all had jobs to do,' recalled Kevin, 'Mine was to pick up morning wood or kindling from under trees to light the fires.' When the jobs were done the children could run wild – and did. 'We explored all the bush for miles around, up the hills and in the creeks. We couldn't have had a better life.'

The children went to the primary school at Cooranbong, but because of hernias which needed treating, Kevin didn't start school until he was eight. At about this time Kevin's mother became restless and for the next few years the family had several moves around the Central coast area. The children were enterprising. At Brisbane Waters their landlord sold them a boat for £2 which they paid off at 2/- a week by selling cow manure to asparagus farmers and digging worms to sell to fishermen. By sixth class, Kevin had attended six schools. The family then moved to Hamilton so that the children still at home could go to a church high school.

Independence

At 16, Kevin and his mother moved to Wahroonga in Sydney (the others had left home). When she was widowed for the second time, Kevin left school to help support his mother. He first worked on a pig farm at West Pennant Hills, getting up at 3.00am to feed the pigs, and later on a flower farm and market garden. Then a friend was leaving for New Zealand. He had a window cleaning business and offered Kevin his Indian motorbike and step ladders to take over the business, working around Haberfield. 'I earned about ten times as much as I had on the pig farm,' said Kevin.

Although still only 17, Kevin enlisted for war service in 1941 using his brother's birth certificate. His mother, a pacifist was very upset. 'She told me she'd rather I be killed than to kill someone,' recalled Kevin. She reported his age to the army which discharged him. Undeterred Kevin enlisted again, getting someone else to sign his application form. His mother gave him a small bible, with hundreds of passages underlined for his attention. He still had that bible when interviewed by Bernard Sargent in 1993. Kevin served in New Guinea with the 17th infantry Brigade, 6th battalion. He allocated five of his six shillings a day pay to his mother to make sure she was all right.



Kevin and Gwen on their wedding day, 1945 [courtesy Skinner family]

In 1945, while on home leave, Kevin attended a recreational picnic at Clifton Gardens. Here he met his future wife, Gwen Bulmer who was from Bexley. They married four months later, and Kevin was discharged from the army in August 1946.

Gwen's father, a carpenter, was a great support to the young couple, and when Kevin spoke to him about his job prospects, he commented, 'I don't think you'd make a carpenter, but plumbers do a bit of everything. Why don't you try that.' He did. He applied to do a Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme (CRTS) set up by the government trade union movement. Kevin had to wait for four years to do the CRTS, but meanwhile he studied at St George Tech at night and got his drainers' licence, working on weekends. After finishing the CRTS and working for a licenced plumber, he eventually got his licence and went into business for himself. Meanwhile, to expand his skills he did courses in carpentry, bricklaying and pressure welding.

When he saw an advertisement for a plumbing inspector at the Water Board, Kevin applied for and got the job. He continued with extra studies, doing a management course. Plumbing systems were in the throes of change and he enjoyed testing new programs and teaching them to other inspectors. Kevin was on the Water Board for 29 years and 9 months, finishing as Chief Inspector of Water Conservation.

Settling in Jannali

Kevin and Gwen visited a friend, Bob Sims, in Soldiers Road, Jannali. They loved the rural area. 'It was Spring and very pretty with the wildflowers out,' he recalled. When a block became available in Mitchell Avenue, right beside the railway station they bought it for £68, paying it off at £3 per week. It was a lot of money, as nothing was saved after paying living expenses. Like everyone else in the army, Kevin smoked in those days and Gwen kept the budget for everything, including tobacco for Kevin's smoking.

Mitchell Avenue had no footpath and no sewer, but they had water and there was a huge drain alongside the road containing yabbis. 'We had to put planks across it to get to our house.' There were about four houses in the street – including the Ackermans and the Parsons. A lot of returned soldiers from the St George area were moving to Sutherland Shire because land was available and cheap. They built alongside the railway line because it was convenient for commuting to work.

Gwen's father built their house for them. He built a garage first, then cut the timber for the cottage – hardwood because you couldn't get Oregon. There was a shortage of materials. You had to get a permit for bricks and for tiles. When the permits were granted and the materials eventually arrived, Gwen's father put it all together piece by piece. 'He was one of the best tradesmen you could ever meet,' says Kevin. They moved in in 1947.

Building was going on all around them. Some built a garage to live in while they built the house, others built the back half of a house and lived in it while they waited for the materials to build the front half.

Pioneering spirit

Jannali had a small shopping centre in that early post-war period. Joe Cary's Butcher Shop was on the western side of the line, and a small mixed business on the corner. Across the line was Fishers' general store, post office and banking agency. Mail was delivered on horseback by Mrs Larkin. The Fisher family had been there for a long time, and their son Rod became a local doctor.

The Fishers were very good, supportive people, as were the MacPhersons, who took over from them. Gwen recalled that when she and Kevin were having a hard time financially, Mrs MacPherson arranged to give her credit for anything she needed but could not pay for. This community spirit was right through Jannali. People helped each other out without being asked. The Skinners attribute this spirit of cooperation to a pioneering mentality and a regimented life in the army. 'If people didn't work together as a unit, you didn't succeed,' explained Gwen.

It was this pioneering spirit which led Jannali residents to chip in and build an RSL hall on land leased from the Council. 'That became the focal point of all the good times,' recalled Kevin. 'We had dances there. It was a happy group of people.' On Friday nights it was men's night while the women stayed home to mind the kids. 'Men needed to get together, to talk, to reminisce,' says Gwen. They played cards, or darts. 'It was really good.'

During the devastating 1954 floods in the Hunter Valley, Kevin and Gwen organized a food collection to take up to flood victims. Kevin borrowed some loudspeakers and loaded them on to his truck, and, with the help of other RSL members, drove around the Shire calling for tinned food and good clothing. 'We had a tremendous response,' he recalled. 'We got more food and clothing than we could carry on the truck.' Tom Russell, who later became the Jannali newsagent, drove up to the flood area with him. Keith Bates, local Liberal Councillor and a Jannali resident organized trucks from Sutherland Council to carry supplies up to Maitland.

Bushfires were an ever-present danger in the Shire and the RSL had organized for knapsacks and a hose post – a big box with fire hoses and pipes to go to the waterboard mains – to be put in a nearby house. Kevin met with the hose post crew to practise. 'We'd run the hoses out and play being firefighters,' he said. It got Kevin interested in bushfire fighting, and it was partly because of his wish to improve facilities for the volunteer firemen that he decided to run for Council. He won a seat in 1962, on his second try.

Politics

Kevin first became interested in politics in the early 1950s. He was a delegate to the RSL's Southern Metropolitan District Council which held meetings in Mortdale. Here he met and became good friends with people on both sides of the political fence. They included Labor men like Gough Whitlam (later

Australian Prime Minister) and Arthur Gietzelt (who became Sutherland Shire President and then Federal Minister for Veterans Affairs), and Liberal followers, including Ray Watson (later a Shire Councillor) and a Sutherland solicitor. 'That taught me that even if you were on opposing sides in political parties you gained far more by discussion and dialogue than if you tried to belt your ideas into their heads,' remarked Kevin.

In conversation Gough suggested that Kevin join a political party. Kevin became a foundation member of the Jannali Labor Party, and eventually a life member.



Mates: Kevin Skinner, Gough Whitlam and Ray Thorburn, c early 1950s [courtesy: Skinner family]

Work with Sutherland Shire Council

Kevin Skinner did make vast improvements in conditions for volunteer bushfire fighters, but his first role on election to Council, was as member of the Parks and Playgrounds Committee. With two children of his own, Ross and Robyn, he was very aware of the lack of sporting facilities for kids in the Shire. Women's sports were totally neglected, and there was no tenure of grounds for sporting clubs. He set about to change that situation, and when he was appointed Chairman of the Parks and Playgrounds and the Sports Advisory committees, he convinced Council to approve the secure allocation of grounds for sporting clubs in return for the Clubs helping to manage and maintain the grounds.

More than 60 new sports grounds were allocated between 1964 and 1971. One Kevin found most satisfying was Bellingarra, allocated to women's netball. Lack of available funds to put facilities on the grounds did not deter him. Using his plumbing skills, and with the voluntary help of former plumbers and others, he put in toilets and sewers, thus saving hundreds of dollars.



Kevin and volunteers dig trenches for sewer pipes at Bellingarra, c.1960s [courtesy: Skinner family]

Waratah Park complex was another project Kevin was proud of. It catered for several codes – athletics, soccer, Rugby League, Aussie Rules and tennis as well as the swimming pool. A closed bike circuit was built around the park. Kevin organized through Council that a bee garden be established there so that bee keepers had somewhere to raise Queen bees. A small museum was eventually built and people from school kids to retirees come through in buses to learn how bees are raised and honey is formed. 'That is a real success story,' remarked Kevin.

The catalyst to improving conditions for bushfire fighters

In 1968 Kevin was involved in the worst fire in the Shire's then recorded history, causing a state of emergency to be declared. 'Most of the Shire was in flames,' recalled Kevin. He told of his nightmare journey, driving with other volunteers through Bundeena with flames all around them, and having to kick fallen burning trees off the road to get the vehicle through. 'It was a scene of absolute devastation,' he said. They eventually got to Audley and were called to Engadine where the fire had jumped the railway line, the railway station was burning and attempts were being made to save nearby houses.

There was a Council meeting on that night and Kevin went straight to the meeting from the fire. He was hot and sweaty and his hair was a mess when he addressed the meeting. He told them about the conditions and said that what upset him most was that all the bushfire fighters had to supply their own overalls, boots, and a lot of the equipment they used. His proposal that Council supply clothing and safety equipment in future was adopted unanimously. Fire fighters also wanted a full-time fire

officer, and this was a harder battle to win. After a good deal of debate in which fire fighters dumped their gear in front of Council Chambers, declaring that they would fight no more fires without one, a fire officer was appointed. And later, with the help of a supportive media, a purpose-built tanker was designed and approved, as was the fabric, design and the orange colour of protective suits shown by research to be the most suitable in fire-fighting situations.

Kevin's many battles to protect our natural environment from destruction is evidence of his passion for conservation. He wasn't always successful. He failed to stop sandmining in Kurnell, but he and Arthur Gietzelt were successful in their determination to prevent an airport being built at Towra Point, thus saving the wetlands which attract migratory birds. He learned an appreciation of nature from his mother. 'She taught us as kids that we didn't own the bush, but we were guardians of it,' he said.

Other achievements Kevin was proud of include his naming of the suburb of Kareela in 1968. It was planned to be 'Salisbury', but Kevin wanted an Aboriginal name. 'Kareela' means south wind, and although it's from a South Australian language, the Geographical Names Board eventually accepted it. The Joseph Banks Native Garden, a 1970 project for the Cook Bicentennial was also Kevin's idea.



Kevin and Gwen Skinner with Sir Roden Cutler at Government House where Kevin was awarded an OAM in 1987 [courtesy: Skinner family]

Kevin Skinner retired from service on Sutherland Shire Council in 1987. That year he was awarded an OAM for his service to local government. He was chosen as one of the 100 'Faces of the Shire in the Council's centenary celebration in 2006.

Councillor Peter Scaysbrook probably summed it up for everyone when he said earlier this year that Kevin, '... was of an era that has probably gone forever, but he will remain an inspiration to us all.'³

Gwen Skinner, Kevin's beloved wife and support for 69 years, passed away on 26 May 2014.

To hear the interviews with Kevin Skinner in full, contact the Local Studies Librarian at Sutherland Library and arrange a time to listen to them.

¹ *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader*, 28 June, 2018

² Oral History Interviews with Bernard Sargent (December 1993) and Elizabeth Craig (June 2006), Sutherland Shire Library, Local Studies

³ *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader*, 18 July, 2018

RABBITS!

PART OF THE 19TH CENTURY NOSTALGIA FOR THE 'HOME COUNTRY'

BRUCE WATT

Thomas Holt is a name synonymous with the Sutherland Shire. Holt began acquiring land in 1861 and named it the Holt-Sutherland Estate after Forby Sutherland, a crew member of James Cook's expedition who was buried at Kurnell in 1770. The Holt name is still recognised nearly 160 years on through extensive land ownership and sand extraction at Kurnell.



The Warren, c.1880 [SSHS]

Holt arrived in Australia in 1842 and built a huge property portfolio in New South Wales and Queensland, as well as being the Treasurer in the First Colonial Parliament in 1856. He developed many business interests and was represented on many boards and select committees. Between 1857 and 1859 he acquired land at Tempe on which he subsequently built a grand hunting lodge on the lines of an ancestral castle in Germany where his wife

was born. The 142-acre property was surrounded by a six foot high sandstone fence and the name of the estate was 'The Warren'. He was representative of a particular breed of nineteenth century men who helped shape Australia, and his legacy is largely intact and unblemished. However, it might have been different.

Holt shares a distinction with another mid-century wealthy entrepreneur from Victoria. Thomas Barwon was also an Englishman who made his fortune from rural property, horse breeding and other pursuits. His horse won the third running of the Melbourne Cup. He owned a 'run' of 29000 acres at Winchelsea, 70 miles west from Melbourne known as Barwon Park. He ran sheep and horses.



Barwon Park, 1871 [courtesy: National Trust]

Unfortunately though, Barwon is best remembered as the person who imported rabbits into Australia. On Christmas Day 1859 Barwon released twelve pairs of rabbits on his property for sport shooting. Within a very short time they had spread to adjoining properties and then they spread rapidly throughout Australia. Within six years 20000 had been killed in the area. They were responsible for widespread destruction of flora and fauna and the ecosystem. In the 1920s the rabbit population was estimated to be 10 billion and rabbit proof fences were erected across the country in a vain attempt to stop their expansion. Rabbit infestation is estimated to cost Australia \$200 million a year.

Barwon was a member of the Acclimatisation Society of Victoria whose aim was the importation of numerous species of foreign plants and animals. When a New South Wales branch was formed in 1861 Thomas Holt was proposed as one of the council members, and offered his estate at the disposal of the Society for seven years. To promote the Society Holt invited the Governor and other prominent citizens to a banquet that featured animals, fruits and vegetables that had been introduced to the colony. Among the animals consumed were



Rabbits around a waterhole, Wardang Island, 1938 [Nat. Archives of Australia]

'delicately flavoured rabbits ...'. Holt introduced a veritable menagerie of domestic and imported animals including alpacas and rabbits. The *Illustrated Sydney News* of May 16 1865 reported that 'the English breed of wild rabbit has found a suitable home (at the Warren) and from the original stock of sixty they have increased to several thousands'. The Holts often entertained lavishly and conducted shooting parties at The Warren.

It's no coincidence that when the National Park was established in 1879 alongside Holt's estate the Acclimatisation Society was granted a section of 60 acres fronting the Hacking River. It was fenced off for the purpose of acclimatising *Rusa* and other varieties of deer which subsequently escaped and have remained a somewhat destructive exotic species. Other exotic flora and fauna was incorporated into the newly sculptured landscape at Audley.

Both Holt and Barwon were socially well connected. Another parallel with Barwon was with the royal visit of Queen Victoria's second son, Albert in 1867. The Duke of Edinburgh visited Barwon Park and was entertained with rabbit shooting. Of the 1000 shot, it was said that the Duke shot 500. While in Sydney, the Duke was entertained by Thomas Holt who took him to Kurnell.

Embarrassed by his relatively modest home, Barwon had a new one built in the hope of attracting further royal visits. However Barwon died shortly after the house was completed in 1871. The grand house however inspired other wealthy landowners to build similar mansions such as Werribee Park.

It is fortunate that Thomas Holt's legacy was not associated with the catastrophic introduction and dissemination of the rabbit pest that continues to impact the Australian ecology.

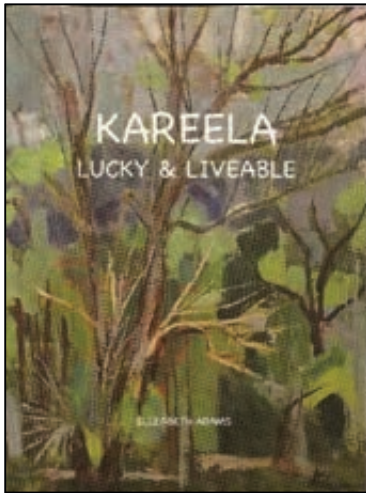
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BOOK REVIEW

BARRY COLLIER OAM



***KAREELA Lucky & Liveable*, by Elizabeth Adams** is far more than a well-researched reference guide to a long-forgotten past, destined to languish on a library shelf. This well-written and beautifully-presented book is true 'living history' in every sense.

Published on the 50th anniversary of Kareela, this easy-to-read chronicle documents the growth and development of the area, from indigenous occupation and bushland to the vibrant suburb it is today. It's a book about the residents— real people with real dreams and aspirations, building their homes, facing real challenges and making their own contribution to the local community.

One outstanding feature of this book is the individual stories of the families and of the characters who have earned Kareela the 2016 title of the 'most liveable suburb in the Sutherland Shire.' These stories are accompanied by photographs which could only have come from precious family albums and could only have been collected by a well-respected resident who knows and loves the suburb like Elizabeth.

I was impressed with the many hours of careful and painstaking historical research Elizabeth Adams obviously put into this book— beginning with the evidence of ancient Aboriginal occupation in rock shelters and kitchen middens, long before the early agricultural use of the land and later settlement. Indeed, Elizabeth has brought to light much which local residents never knew about Kareela.

It is also pleasing to see Elizabeth Adams refer to the political setting and the political activism of Kareela residents — something which, in my view, is all too often overlooked by authors of local histories.

Kareela Lucky & Liveable has to be one of the finest examples of any book about any suburb in Sydney. I congratulate Elizabeth Adams on her 5-Star, literary contribution to our Shire's history.

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KAREELA Lucky & Liveable by Elizabeth Adams was published by Sutherland Shire Historical Society, August 2018 (with much appreciated financial assistance from Sutherland Shire Council through their Heritage Publications Grant Program, and Olsens Funerals)

Description: 206 pages, including colour photos throughout, detailed references, source list and index. Has soft laminated cover

Cost: \$35 (plus \$10 postage)

Available from Sutherland Shire Museum on Saturday mornings (23 East Pde, western side of Sutherland Railway Station), or enquire by email: shirehistory@gmail.com

CELEBRATION OF A CANOE

An Acknowledgement of our Aboriginal Heritage

BRUCE HOWELL

Following is the address Bruce gave at the Sutherland Shire Museum on 26 October 2018

Good evening to you all, it is a privilege to be here with you on such a special occasion.

It is now a normal part of any occasion such as this, to acknowledge the traditional owners. Indeed, I'll start by acknowledging the Dharawal speaking people as traditional owners of the land upon which we are gathered, and I wish to pay my respects to those people, their families, their elders past and present.

But acknowledgement can come in various forms – to have a replica canoe, on permanent display here at the Sutherland Shire Historical Society Museum – this is also a form of acknowledgement, and it's a very strong one.

But in what way?

Perhaps we don't give it much thought that canoes were once inextricably linked with the daily lives of many of the local people – in particular the Gweagal on the southern shore of Kamay Botany Bay. It is via the journals, logs and diaries of those aboard the *Endeavour* that we have absolute confirmation of that link. Canoes seem to have dominated the scene over those eight days in 1770 when the *Endeavour* was anchored in the bay. James Cook's journal has eight separate references, involving an overall total of around 50 canoes, and in Joseph Banks' journal, six separate references involving up to 40 canoes or perhaps more.

Although some canoes were very likely observed more than once, Cook described an instance when 20 canoes were encountered at the one time, and on Day 6, after Banks had spent time on shore drying out his quires of paper, he wrote:

During the time this was doing, 11 Canoes came towards us. We soon saw that the people in them were employed in striking fish; they came within about half a mile of us intent on their own employments and not at all regarding us;

and then on the next day:

Seventeen Canoes came fishing near our people in the same manner as yesterday.¹

Almost all of the references are linked to fishing activities. It's as if every single man had his own canoe and might be using it anytime of the day for fishing.

One of Banks' most evocative entries, at the end of Day 1, describes:

At night many moving lights were seen in different parts of the bay.... the fires (fishing fires as we supposed) were seen during the greatest part of the night.²

Canoes, out on the bay, day and night – getting on with business.

This canoe now represents **all** of those canoes, and others elsewhere on Dharawal country.

In closing, I want to congratulate the Society for coming up with this initiative and then carrying it through. It will now become part of an enduring acknowledgement of the Gweagal and other Dharawal speaking people, traditional owners of this land.

¹ Endeavour Journal of Sir Joseph Banks, 3 and 4 May 1770 [en.wikisource.org/wiki/]

² The Endeavour Journal of Joseph Banks 1768-1771 (Vol.2), pp.55-56 [nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/]

A Night at the Museum

Welcoming a traditional bark canoe – a symbol of our acknowledgement of the first people of this land

[Photos: SSHS]



Graham Avery, Deanna Schreider, Frank Zumbo, Bruce Howell, Bruce Watt, Dean Kelly, Dolly Brown

Lachlan Ting plays the didgeridoo



Listening to Bruce Howell's address



A Night at the Museum – Friday, 26th October

A smoking ceremony to welcome the traditional bark canoe was conducted by Dean Kelly, Aboriginal Community leader from La Perouse



Bark canoe made from a sheet of stringybark by Dean Kelly using the methods taught to him by his grandfather [SSHS]



Dean burns leaves in the traditional way as part of the ceremony to cleanse, to heal and to bring people together [SSHS]

