

NUMBER: 219 — MAY 2021



Grand opening of Jannali Railway Station, 7 February 1931. Shire President Cnr Seymour Shaw, who cut the ribbon is in front of the lady in the hat and white dress and to the left of the ribbon. [Source: SLLS]

See story, page 13

MINDFUL OF THE PAST – FOCUSED ON THE FUTURE

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

FACEBOOK: Sutherland Shire Historical Society

MEETING OF TWO CULTURES

Kamay/Botany Bay National Park, 29 April 2021

ELIZABETH CRAIG

Thursday, 29th April was a perfect cloudless day for this annual ceremony at Kurnell - this year commemorating the 251st year since Lt Cook and the *Endeavour* crew arrived at Botany Bay. The 250-odd guests looked down the gentle grassy slope under the beautiful trees to the water beyond, many picturing that first encounter between the local Gweagal Aboriginal people and the British sailors.

It seemed especially fitting that Bruce Howell, from the Council's Aboriginal Advisory Committee, was MC at this event. As a knowledgeable student of this first meeting, Bruce contributed a forensic analysis of that eight-day encounter and the significance it had to both cultures in SSHS's publication (*East Coast Encounters 1770*) published last year.



Bruce Howell, MC at the event [Photo: Stephanie Bailey]



Gamay Dancers in the smoking ceremony
[Photo: Stephanie Bailey]

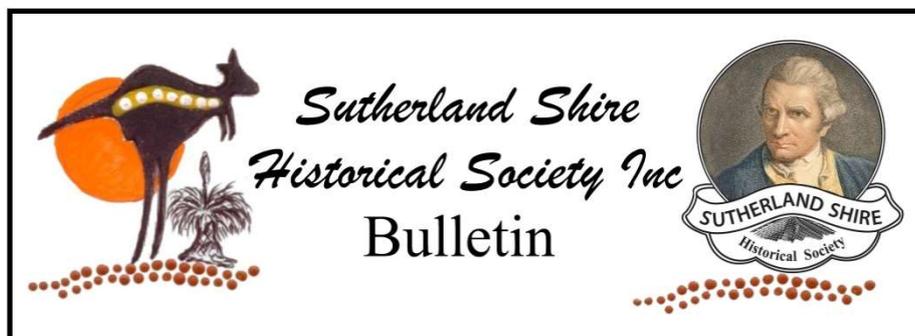
A Welcome to Country and smoking ceremony set the tone. An address was given by Noelene Timbery, Chair of the La Perouse Local Aboriginal Land Council, who announced that the spears souvenired by *Endeavour* crew men, and kept in a museum in Cambridge, UK ever since, are to be returned to country. Other speakers included: Cllr Steve Simpson, Mayor of Sutherland Shire Council and the Hon. Mark Speakman, State member for Cronulla and NSW Attorney General.

We were entertained by the Gamay Aboriginal dancers and by Uncle Col Hardy, country music singer and golden guitar winner. Accompanied by Luke O'Shea on the guitar, Col sang, 'We are Australian'. After the ceremony, guests could attend one of several cultural workshops – dancing, weaving, shell work, singing and guided walks. Food and coffee were also provided.



Col Hardy, singing 'We are Australian' [Photo: Stephanie Bailey]

The ceremony and activities embraced the notion of reconciliation and a meeting of two cultures.



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Extra printed copies of the *Bulletin* will be available at meetings for \$5.

***East Coast Encounters 1770* will also be available for sale at meetings for \$30 (members) and \$35 (non-members)**

SUTHERLAND SHIRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

THE SOCIETY

The SSHS has a proud tradition stretching back more than half a century 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 and on our website: www.shirehistory.org. 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 0491 096 642.

Digital copies of the *Sutherland Shire Historical Society Inc Bulletin* are emailed to all Society members with online access. Print copies can be purchased at \$5.00 each. Digital copies are also emailed 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, Shire high school libraries and some local businesses. Issues from September 1966 are also posted on the SSHS website: www.shirehistory.org

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REGISTRATION

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Society publications are registered with the National Library of Australia in accordance with International Standard Serial Numbering and have an ISSN or 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. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, we ask that you register your attendance ahead by email to: shirehistory@gmail.com or phone Creo Moore on 0425 226 405

SUTHERLAND SHIRE MUSEUM

Our museum is currently closed. We have been relocated from the Sutherland Memorial School of Arts in East Parade Sutherland to a venue in Venetia Street, Sylvania, which, after COVID-19 crisis is over, will be renovated to accommodate our Museum. More information on access, opening times etc will be released in due course.

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. Donations will be stored safely while we wait for renovations of our new venue to be finished.

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: 2020-2021

ELECTED MEMBERS

PATRON:	Shire Mayor, Steve Simpson		
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WELFARE OFFICER	Gloria Hans	9589 0251	
AFTERNOON TEA	Anne Steward Beryl Davis Mary Small		
HONORARY SOLICITOR	Michael Solari		

SSHS CALENDAR: JUNE - AUGUST 2021
(See website: www.shirehistory.org for updates)

SSHS MEETING - normally held at 1.30pm, 3rd Saturday in the month
at the **Stapleton Centre, Sutherland**

THE MUSEUM IS CLOSED

DATE		
MAY 2021	Thurs 27th	EXCURSION: (SSHS members only due to insurance.) To Glen Robin, home of Ed and Susan Duyker, 35 Murralin Lane, Sylvania, on which is a registered archaeological burial site. Bruce Howell will discuss the Aboriginal markings on a rock shelter at the rear. SSHS members only due to insurance. Tea and coffee provided. Bring own lunch. Meet at 10 am outside Fitness First Gym on Princes Highway, cnr Port Hacking Road near pedestrian crossing. It's a 10-minute walk to 'Glen Robin'. Park at Southgate Shopping Centre. Contact Joe Hales on 0418 270 744
JUNE 2021	Sat. 19th	SPEAKER: Stephen Gapps will talk on the Sydney Wars. Stephen also contributed a chapter to <i>East Coast Encounters 1770</i> .
JULY 2021	Thurs 8th	EXCURSION: SSHS members and friends will visit Vaucluse House, explore the house and have a tour of the extensive gardens. Train from Sutherland at 9.30. At Edgecliff change to 325 bus which stops outside Vaucluse House. Bring sensible shoes, BYO lunch or buy lunch at café on the premises.
JULY 2021	Sat. 17th	SPEAKER: To be announced
AUGUST 2021	Sat. 21st	SPEAKER: Helen Zerefos, a Sylvania resident and well-known soprano singer who has performed extensively on television and on stage. Helen will speak on her life growing up in Sylvania and on her career.

**Don't forget to register your attendance at meetings
(PHONE OR EMAIL CREO MOORE)**

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS FOR 2021-2022 ARE NOW DUE

MEMBERSHIP FORM IS ENCLOSED

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

PAULINE CURBY



Sutherland Shire Historical Society has now completely vacated Sutherland Memorial School of Arts, keys have been handed back to the Council and we're working on turning our

leased building in Venetia Street, Sylvania Heights into a modern community museum. Undertaken on a number of days in March, the move was fairly straight forward due to the professionalism of the removalists supplied by Sutherland Shire Council and the hard work of a few committee members.

While the office at the Venetia Street venue is organised and operating efficiently there is much that still needs to be done. As museum manager Peter Moore has almost exhausted the space in the storage shed the Council installed for us, we are planning to buy an additional shed so more of our collection can be housed. This is necessary as we have only a small exhibition space where we intend to install attention-grabbing displays that either tell a coherent story or relate to a central theme. These will be changed at intervals so visitors have a new experience each time they call into the museum. If you think you can help in any capacity at the museum, please ring Peter (0427 213 575) or email shirehistory@gmail.com. Any assistance is welcome.

Due to the fact our move took longer than expected, we were unable to host the launch of the Heritage Festival. ANSTO stepped in at short notice and hosted this event in grand style on the evening of 16 April. A number of the executive attended and ensured they made the most of this opportunity for networking.

Another important event at which the Society was represented was the annual Meeting of Two Cultures held at Kurnell on 29 April. I was unable to be there but past president Bruce Watt and *Bulletin* editor Elizabeth Craig attended. As Elizabeth comments, 'The Meeting of Two Cultures was actually quite lovely, helped enormously by the beautiful scenery and the perfect weather.'

Meanwhile other Society activities continue. At our March and April meetings two members were guest speakers: Liz Adams delivered her well researched talk on 'The Cook Controversy' in March and Carol McDonald provided us with an insight into early Sylvania in April. At this – the first of our interactive talks – there was enthusiastic input from the audience as they discussed Carol's photos and related their memories of Sylvania. These events are important as visitors who come for the first time sometimes become new members. A dynamic meeting is not only a social event but can also be an incentive to join SSHS.

Excursions are valued by both visitors and members. On 18 March Bruce Howell led a large group on an enthralling walk following the stream that flows into 'Cook's watering place' at Kurnell. After the tour the excursionists enjoyed lunch at Café 1770 on Captain Cook Drive. The proprietor of this lively Kurnell café and bakery is a keen SSHS supporter and sells many of our publications. (See Excursion Report by Joe Hales on page 7.)

It is obvious from this report that there is a vast amount of work to do to ensure SSHS operates efficiently. We have a small band of volunteers but joyfully welcome more.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

ELIZABETH CRAIG

We all know Mitchell Avenue in Jannali – it runs along the western side of the railway line, curving around to Soldiers Road. Surprisingly, there is little known about William Henry Mitchell, the man after whom the street is named. Although he was the first President of the Jannali Progress Association (from 1924) he never even lived in Jannali.

Then out of the blue we received an email from a UK based distant cousin of Mitchell's who was researching her family history. Liz Summerson had seen a *Bulletin* article on our website featuring Mitchell. ('Shire Mystery Solved: Jannali School of Arts', by Pauline Curby, *SSHS Bulletin*, May 2014). Her interest was piqued.

Liz had discovered quite a lot about her cousin's life in Sydney, none of which was known to us, or as far as we can ascertain, anyone else in Australia. She wrote the story of William Henry Mitchell's life for publication in the *Bulletin* to fill a gap in our knowledge of our local history and to put his life and work on public record (see page 8).

An extract from Liz's original email to SSHS is reprinted below.

Thank you to all contributors to the *Bulletin* and to *Reaching Out*. Please keep your stories rolling in. Thank you also to Dawn Emerson for putting your proofreading skills to very good use with the *Bulletin*.

Extract from an email to SSHS from Liz Summerson in May 2020

Hello

I have just found, on the internet, your Bulletin dated May 2014 which includes mentions of my family member William Henry MITCHELL. I was very interested to see the illustration of a silver trowel that had been presented to him in 1928 on the laying of the foundation school of the Jannali School of Arts. You also mention his bequest to that School in 1934, yet I understand from the article that the school was never actually built.

My interest in W H Mitchell began some years ago, with a photo of an elderly man signed "Yours affectionately, Cousin Will". I had no idea who he was, but when I found an address in Haberfield in a 1930s address book that had belonged to a late aunt, I started on my trail of discovery [Liz's discoveries are detailed in her article on page 8.]

.... The Jannali School project fits into this context of [Mitchell's] busy public life. Clearly, Will cared deeply for the development of children and the improvement of the community. I have collected my information from many articles found on Trove and have been so surprised to find him involved in so many different things.

I thought I would write to you about Will as he was clearly unknown to the author of the piece in your 2014 Bulletin. I am a bit clueless about the precise geography of NSW and imagine that not all of Will's activities are specifically relevant to Sutherland, but maybe you would be kind enough to [pass on this information] to any contacts that would be more appropriate.

I am very proud of being related to W H Mitchell, and keen to bring his story back to life.

*Liz Summerson
Wiltshire, England*

EXCURSION REPORT – KURNELL/KAMAY

JOE HALES



At the Meeting Place as Bruce Howell tells us of a very different landscape 250 years earlier. [Photo: E. Craig]

On Thursday 18th March, 14 SSSH members and a couple of visitors were taken on a guided tour of important places of interest at Kurnell. The main focus was the fresh water stream where Lt Cook (later Captain) landed in 1770 and made contact with the residing Aboriginal people who were going about their daily lives, as they had done for thousands of years.

Bruce Howell was directing and narrating this excursion, the main focus being 'The Watering Place' from which, over a period of four days, Cook's men collected 80 tons of fresh water to fill the Endeavour's storage casks with water ready to start their journey home to England.

The water source and the surrounding vegetation has changed completely since Cook first visited with Banks and his crew. It is believed that the fresh water stream is fed by a spring further up the stream. There are still signs of a gully carved out of the land where the stream flowed for thousands of years before Cook's landing.

On the day of our visit the stream was dry, despite all the rain we had for a few days prior to our visit. Possibly, this is due to the spring not functioning at the moment. Another possibility is that all the changes to the surrounding land over the past 250 years have resulted in the spring not receiving the right conditions to continue to supply regular fresh water.

In describing the area in May 1770, Cook says:

... surrounding country are trees tall, straight and without underwood, standing at such a distance from each other that the whole country may be cultivated without cutting down one of them.

This reinforces the Aboriginal practice of regular burning of the landscape. A much more open landscape would have prevailed, compared to what we have today.

The weather was very kind to us on the day: no rain during our tour, but by the time we adjourned to Café 1770 for lunch it started raining again - for the rest of the day.

Our warm thanks to Bruce Howell for such an informative, well researched and most entertaining day.

WILLIAM HENRY MITCHELL - 1858 to 1934

LIZ SUMMERSON



Who was the bespectacled mature man in the photograph I had inherited from an aunt? It was signed Cousin Will and stamped by a Sydney studio. There was also a Haberfield address for W H Mitchell in an old notebook. With none of the older generations still living, and no Mitchells that I knew of in our family, it took several years of research to reveal that this person was my paternal grandmother's first cousin, William Henry Mitchell (or WHM as I shall call him), then to gradually construct a picture of a fascinating community-minded man, a high achiever in a number of fields.

As I live in England, my research was done entirely over the internet, with Trove (National Library of Australia) proving invaluable. Recently, I found on-line a mention of WHM in a Bulletin of the Sutherland Shire Historical Association: he had been presented with an inscribed silver-plated trowel on laying the foundation stone of the Jannali School of Arts in 1928. Also, as I already knew, he had left the School a legacy of £100 in his will. The only thing was, the School of Arts was never built and no-one knew much about WHM.

The Sutherland Shire Historical Society was interested to hear that I knew more and so here, from my research, is a brief biography.

WHM's parents were Thomas Mitchell, a gardener, and his wife Mary Ann, née Nutt. They were born in the 1830s in Herefordshire, England and arrived in Sydney, aboard the *John and Lucy* on 6 May 1857, with their baby son Thomas. WHM was born at Kissing Point, Ryde on 25 January 1858. Thomas and Mary eventually had a total of 11 children, of whom four died very young, including Thomas junior at six years of age. This made WHM the *de facto* eldest in the family.

Of WHM's childhood I know nothing further, except that, according to the baptisms of WHM's siblings, the family were living in Braidwood for much of it. At Plattsburg, Wallsend (in Newcastle, NSW) in 1877, at the age of 19, WHM married Catherine Nottle Owen, who was three years older, and the following year, their son Owen was born. This child sadly died at only two months old, making WHM a bereaved father at only 20.

Whether before or after his son's short life, but also in 1878, WHM joined the temperance movement. This proved to be a very significant decision and, for the rest of his life, he remained tee-total. In his youth and early manhood, he worked in gold digging and tin mining, mechanical and civil engineering:¹ heavy drinking was a male cultural norm, but precisely why WHM signed the pledge, at this very difficult time in his personal life, is unknown.

In 1882, WHM took another big decision, enrolling at the NSW Teachers' College so as to enter the teaching profession and hence the civil service. A male teacher at that period would either be given temporary posts or the headship of a small school; later, he would be appointed as an assistant in a larger school. WHM initially changed schools rapidly, teaching at Camperdown, Cedar Party Creek, Parramatta and Raymond Terrace. In 1883 he got his first permanent post as First Assistant at Mortdale School: good timing, as early in 1884 Catherine gave birth to their second and last child, a daughter, Elma Marie.

WHM remained at Mortdale for ten years until spring 1893, when he transferred to Kellyville School, Parramatta.² In 1895 the local press described him a 'popular teacher' when reporting his forming a school choir. A year later, on the occasion of a visit to the school at WHM's request by the Hon Jacob Garrard, Minister for Public Instruction, he was described as 'popular and painstaking' and his 12-year-old daughter Elma took a starring role in the visit, singing and accompanying the other children on the organ, and winning the prize for the best exercise book. The following year, WHM was teaching at Williamstown and organising a concert in the December, in which his daughter again featured.

Then came what must have been the most devastating moment of WHM and Catherine's lives. Their lively, bright daughter Elma caught measles and developed complications. On 24 February 1899 she died, aged just 15. In an account of her death, WHM is referred to as a prominent member of the Good Templar Lodge, and Elma as being 'for some time past honorary pianist of the same lodge and a great favourite in the community'.³ What an unimaginably grim time this must have been. WHM sought a transfer from Williamstown School, inevitably unbearably full of memories of Elma. He opted for the *Sobraon* Training Ship, an educational facility for destitute and neglected boys and others thought to be at risk of turning to crime, and was appointed First Assistant.⁴ On leaving Williamstown, his lodge of the Independent Order of Good Templars presented him with a 'beautiful inscribed gold medal' and they 'eulogised him as a great worker in the temperance cause'. He declared that he 'intended as a teacher on the training ship to use every opportunity to instil the temperance sentiment in the boys.'⁵ In the event, he spent only one year on the *Sabraon*, which would not have been an easy post, although the approach to the pupils at that time was positive and progressive, based on wholesome discipline and rational recreation. In fact it produced many outstanding sportsmen – another of WHM's areas of interest.⁶

His next school was at Balmain, where he spent 15½ years, taking us to about 1916. This was a period in which his many other interests came to fruition, particularly temperance, cricket, adult education, and political and local affairs. These interests were more interwoven in WHM's life than might at first be supposed.

The temperance movement had captured WHM's devotion ever since 1878 and he had subsequently joined groups such as the Good Templars' Lodge at Williamstown in the 1890s. In 1905 there is evidence of his interests becoming more political, with a report of the first Annual Meeting of the Prohibition Party, at which he was elected as a council member.⁷ This was at a time when teachers' involvement in political movements was becoming acceptable; as civil servants, overt political activity had been forbidden until teachers combined to work for their rights. WHM belonged to a number of different temperance groups.

In 1911, he became Grand Secretary of the Independent Order of Good Templars; by 1914 he was a vice-president of the Prohibition Party⁸ and in 1923, National President of the Band of Hope⁹, which particularly promoted temperance amongst young people. Newspaper reports record him travelling to Melbourne and Adelaide to make speeches. The following year, at the unveiling of a drinking fountain in Greenwich,¹⁰ presented to the municipality by the temperance movement, it is noted that he was Director of the Young People's section of the NSW Alliance of Temperance organisations. 1925 saw the first examinations in temperance for young people¹¹ which promoted study of the many adverse effects of alcohol at the personal and societal level. WHM had long been involved in preparing this scheme, and the fact that 1841 young people took the exams in their inaugural year must have been a source of pleasure. The WH Mitchell gold medal was awarded for the first time to the best candidate in the State. These exams became an annual event and were reported in the papers throughout the 1930s and quite possibly later.

Another of WHM's enduring passions was cricket – not so far removed from temperance as it may seem, since engagement in sports was one means of promoting healthy living and a distraction from the temptations of alcohol. However, cricket was often accompanied by drinking and few in the cricketing were tee-totalers, making WHM very much the exception to the rule.¹² It seems that although his interest in cricket must go back further, 1906 saw the start of a serious career in cricket umpiring.¹³ He was umpiring at the Sydney ground week after week, and in 1914 was appointed as the first President of the newly-formed NSW Cricket Umpires Association. Umpires had, it seemed, come in for a fair amount of criticism from players and it was felt that greater clarification and consistent application of the rules was needed.

It was to that end that WHM set off for a six-month trip to England that year, taking a list of issues to discuss with the MCC at Lord's. He had a fine send-off, with gifts,¹⁴ and was made a welcome guest on arrival at Lord's. After his safe return over seas that were quite risky, following the start of the Great War, he was able to report back usefully to colleagues in Sydney.¹⁵ At this time, his teaching career took him to Grafton School, where he put much effort into reviving interest in playing cricket amongst the boys, again with wholesome living in mind. A period at Mortdale School followed, and from there he retired from teaching. In September 1921, he retired from cricket umpiring too, but remained a spectator, rarely missing a game at Sydney, 'with many chatty stories to tell of games at Lord's and elsewhere'.¹⁶ I have also discovered that there is a W H Mitchell Cup in the cricket world.¹⁷

WHM and Catherine lived for many years at 183 Alt Street, Haberfield, a garden city development. He named his house Coo-ee, an Aboriginal phrase meaning 'Come in', which I take to mean 'Welcome'. This was the address in my late aunt's notebook and this was the community in which WHM was to become very involved. It was in Haberfield that I first found him working on a School of Arts project – a facility which would provide the community with educational and recreational facilities, in the spirit of self-improvement and as an alternative social centre to places that sold alcohol.

In 1910, WHM was appointed to the Building Committee of the future Haberfield School of Arts, and in July 1912 was elected as one of the vice-presidents of the facility¹⁸ which was opened in December 1912 with a lecture hall, library, reading room, billiards and other recreation rooms.¹⁹ In 1912, he was elected President of the Haberfield Progress Association and in March 1914, a presentation was made to him at the Haberfield School of Arts because he had been 'actively identified with the progress of the district'.²⁰

Once WHM had retired from teaching, he had even more time and freedom for local affairs. At 64-years-old, he was not letting up. 1922 saw him become an Alderman and Justice of the Peace in Ashfield²¹. It was as an Alderman that he presented the fountain in Greenwich mentioned above.

WHM's interest in Jannali

In 1924, the Jannali Progress Association was formed, with WHM as President, using his Haberfield experience in this developing community. Why did WHM have an interest in Jannali, which was 25km from his Haberfield home, and not apparently in a direction that he would have taken for work? The area had begun to be developed in the 1880s. WHM had bought land in Jannali in 1889, for reasons unknown. It is, however, clear that he had an interest. Could he have intended to retire there? One of the main aims of the Progress Association was to lobby for a railway station to be built at Jannali: the line passed through and was important to Jannali's future development; but, as it stood, passengers had to make their way three miles to the nearest station.

The Progress Association, under WHM's leadership, was instrumental in achieving the station. Having been promised there would be a platform at Jannali in 1889 when he had purchased his home,²² this had at last been achieved after a great deal of community action (see story page 13, and photo on front cover.). The same year, he was listed in the National Party nominations for the Western Suburbs and in 1926 was elected as a National Party council member.



Inscription reads:

PRESENTED TO
WH MITCHELL ESQ JP
on the Laying of
Foundation Stone,
Jannali School of Arts,
1.10.28

Silver-plated trowel presented to WH Mitchell in 1928 [Photo: Tess Dowell, SSHS]

In 1928 WHM was presented with a silver trowel with which he laid the foundation stone of a future School of Arts on land in Alice Street donated by WHM for this purpose. Why the project never came to fruition, I could not discover (See 'Shire Mystery Solved: Jannali School of Arts', by Pauline Curby, *SSHS Bulletin*, May 2014, p.26:). However, in 1937, after WHM's death, the name of a road in Jannali was altered to Mitchell Avenue, commemorating his work for the community.²³

In 1930, WHM made a second six-month trip westward to England (where he planned to watch the first and fifth cricket test matches) but also beyond, to Ireland, Europe, Canada and the USA. The passenger list shows him travelling alone. I don't know if he visited family on that occasion but hope that he did, especially as, by then, the cousin to whom he had given his photograph had a son who was a very good cricketer. It is however, known that his itinerary included a huge international temperance convention in Stockholm, Sweden.²⁴

1932 saw his continued interest in politics on the wider scale: he called a meeting in Haberfield to form a branch of the United Australia Party, and his enthusiasm for temperance remained undiminished.

One of the last acts of his life was to donate a substantial drinking fountain to the Haberfield Public School, so that the children had better access to drinking water. The fountain is still there, though reduced to its core and not in working order. However, it still bears the quotation that WHM chose: *Youth perpetual dwells in fountains, not in flasks and casks and cellars.*²⁵ The fountain was unveiled on his behalf, only a week before he died on 21 October 1934, of chronic myocarditis, aged 76.²⁶

Invited to his funeral, along with family and friends, were representatives of the organisations to which he belonged: Independent Order of Good Templars, NSW Temperance Alliance, Band of Hope Society, Independent Order Rechabites (who campaign against alcohol and drug abuse), Protestant Alliance Friendly Society, Jannali Progress Association and United Australia Party.

As the funeral passed the Haberfield Public School the pupils lined the street and stood to attention as a last tribute to one who previously was a schoolmaster and entertained the liveliest interest in the welfare and education of children. In the grounds of the school the handsome drinking fountain which Mr Mitchell had presented for the use of the scholars was surmounted by a wreath of flowers.²⁷

He was buried at the Congregational Cemetery, Rockwood, the service being conducted by a Methodist minister.

Finally, WHM's interests were reflected in a will that he had drawn up with care and consideration:²⁸

Mr. William Henry Mitchell, retired schoolmaster, late of Haberfield, made, by his will, the following gifts:—£300 to Hammondville Homes, £100 each to the Protestant Children's Home at Hurlstone Park, the Dill-Macky Homes, Western Suburbs Hospital, Haberfield Public School, Haberfield School of Arts, Jannali School of Arts; £50 each to the New South Wales Cricket Association, Amateur Athletic Association, Harmony Lodge of Good Templars, Grand Lodge of International Good Templars, and the Band of Hope Union. Mr. Mitchell's estate was sworn for probate at £1318.

William Henry Mitchell – 'Cousin Will' - is someone I am proud to have as a family member. He was, himself, interested in history: 1926 saw him offering to donate the not-inconsiderable sum of £50 to the Royal Australian Historical Association, of which he himself was a member, providing 99 other people did likewise.²⁹ I hope this little biography will make a small contribution to history and will help keep his memory alive in the community to which he was so devoted.

¹Arrival of Mr WH Mitchell, The Journal (Adelaide) 25 May 1923

²WHM's career history comes from the NSW Teachers' Rolls. Although he seems to have been a good teacher generally, a repeated failure to pass an examination in Blackboard and Freehand Drawing held him back in terms of his classification.

³Newcastle Morning Herald, 28 Feb 1899

⁴NSW Teachers' Rolls;

⁵Newcastle Morning Herald, 7 Jul 1899

⁶Barney Kieran, the legendary 'Sobraon Boy', J Ramsland, *Sport in History Vol 27 No 2*, Jun 2007. By coincidence, another W H Mitchell (William Hilton Mitchell) was working as thirdschoollmaster on the Sobraon at the same time as WHM. Nearly 20 years younger, this Mitchell was particularly involved in the sporting education of the boys.

⁷Maitland Weekly Mercury, 1 Apr 1905

⁸Sydney Morning Herald, 12 Oct 1914

⁹Daily Telegraph (Sydney), 2 Apr 1923

¹⁰Drinking fountains are, of course, symbolic of temperance, providing a ready source of water.

¹¹Daily Telegraph (Sydney), 22 Apr 1925

¹²A Sporting Teetotaller, The Sun (Sydney), 20 Apr 1930

¹³Mentioned in WHM's letter to the editor of *The Daily Telegraph* (Sydney) 8 Aug 1908

¹⁴'The Mayor of Ashfield .. on behalf of the various political bodies of the district presented Mr Mitchell with a large leather travelling trunk, a suitcase and a travelling rug. Mrs Mitchell received a silver tea and coffee service.' *Sunday Times* (Sydney) 22 Mar 1914.

¹⁵Sydney Sportsman, 14 Oct 1914

¹⁶Sporting Globe, Oct 1934

¹⁷Mentioned in Annual Report, *Sydney University Cricket Club*, 1994-5

¹⁸The Sun (Sydney), 16 July 1912

¹⁹Evening News (Sydney) 9 Dec 1912

²⁰Sydney Morning Herald, 23 Mar 1914

²¹NSW Government Gazette, 16 Aug 1922

²²Sydney Morning Herald, 9 Feb 1931

²³Announcement from David R Kirkby, Shire Clerk, Sutherland Shire Council, 16 Sep 1937: '... altering the name of that section of George's River Road between Soldier's-road and Jannali-avenue to Mitchell-avenue.'

²⁴The Sun (Sydney), 20 Apr 1930

²⁵ From a poem by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow entitled 'Drinking Song – Inscription for an antique pitcher'.

²⁶Transcription of certificate of death, NSW Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages.

²⁷Sydney Morning Herald, 22 Oct 1934

²⁸ Reported in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 Feb 1935

²⁹Sydney Morning Herald, 9 Nov 1926

JANNALI RAILWAY STATION

ELIZABETH CRAIG

One of the first priorities of the Jannali Progress Association when it was inaugurated in 1924 – with W.H. Mitchell as its President – was to lobby for a greatly needed railway station. Residents in Jannali had to walk a mile and a half to either Como or Sutherland to catch the train. Steam trains travelling south to Sutherland could not stop at Jannali because of the steep grade (one of the steepest in NSW). However, Betty Tierney, whose family lived in Jannali Avenue near Louise Street, remembered the train would slow down as it came out of the cutting at Jubilee, allowing her father, Thomas returning home from work, to jump off before it laboured up the hill to Sutherland. If he had heavy items to bring home, Betty's brothers would wait for the train, armed with torches so that their father could see where to throw out the items to be picked up.¹

For years the Progress Association agitated for a railway station. They petitioned Council, the Commissioner for Railways and the Ministry of Works. They installed a sign nearby, 'WE WANT A STATION HERE'. Eventually both the Council and the Railways contributed to the cost of building the station, as well as lowering the cutting and installing an overhead bridge.²

The grand opening of Jannali Railway Station was held on Saturday, 7 February 1931 to great fanfare, with large crowds and a 'fine display of bunting.'³ (See image on front cover.) Six-year-old at the time, Betty Tierney recalled it was a big event and a happy occasion, with women dressed up and wearing hats.

Mr E. Kinsella, MLA, officially opened the railway station, after which Mr Mitchell presented Shire President, Councillor Seymour Shaw with a pair of silver scissors to cut the ribbon strung across the bridge. Mr David Kirkby, the Shire Clerk, was the first to drive over the new bridge.¹ The ladies of the Progress Association had 'tastefully laid out afternoon tea under a spreading gum tree' presided over by President Mitchell,³ and to which Betty noted the kids were not invited!



Jannali Railway Station, 1930s [SLLS]

The *Propeller* commented on the historic significance of this spreading gum tree as it was the very one the Progress Association had sat under for their first meeting when the agitation for a railway station had begun seven years earlier.

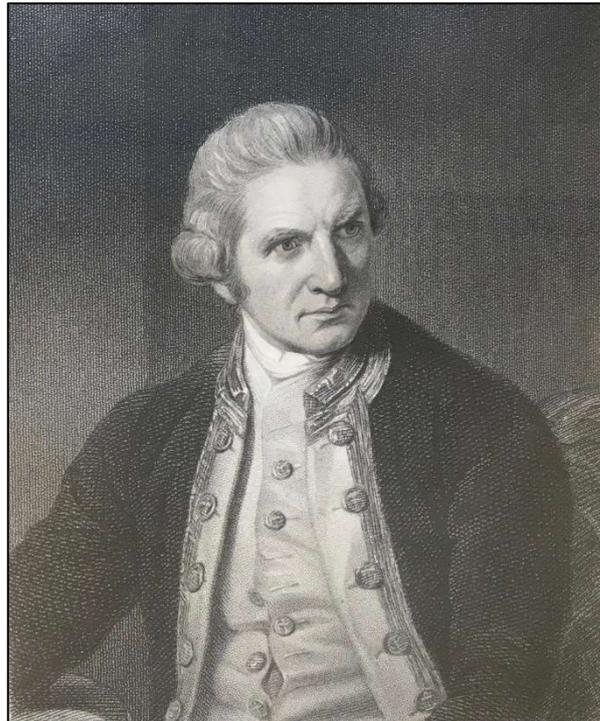
¹Oral history with Betty Tierney. Interviewed on 28 August 2014 by Elizabeth Craig for *Telling it as it Was*, a Sutherland Shire Library oral history program. [SLLS]

²'Hessian, Hope, Holdups and a Murder,' by Beryl Tope, *SSHS Bulletin*, May 2001

³'Jannali Railway Station – official opening last Saturday,' *Hurstville Propeller*, 13 February 1931

ON A PORTRAIT OF JAMES COOK (and other cultural reflections)

EDWARD DUYKER
School of Languages and Cultures, University of Sydney



Captain James Cook, engraving from Nathaniel Dance's 1776 portrait

In October 2018, I purchased a framed engraving of James Cook in a Melbourne opportunity shop for just \$20. The image is a very familiar one.¹ It is based on the upper two-thirds of Nathaniel Dance's portrait (originally commissioned by Joseph Banks), now held by the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich. Cook, who was forty-seven years of age at the time, informed Banks on 24 May 1776, that the following day he thought he could 'spare a few hours before dinner to sit for Mr Dance'.² It is not known if he gave the artist any more of his time before he began his final voyage, never to return.

There are a number of engravings based on Dance's portrait. The Art Gallery of New South Wales, for example, holds a copy of John Keyse Sherwin's 1784 engraving (acquisition number DB8.1968). Surgeon David Samwell, who made two voyages with Cook, wrote in praise of this version:

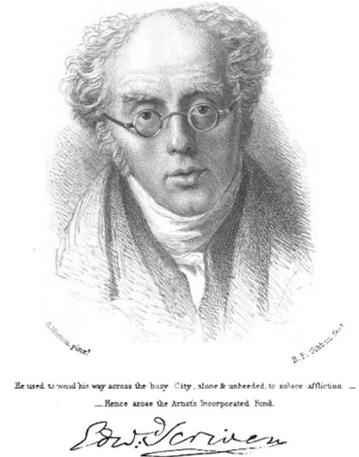
It may not be amiss to observe, that the plate engraved by Sherwin, after a painting by Dance, is a most excellent likeness of Captain Cook; and more to be valued, as it is the only one I have seen that bears any resemblance to him.³

Some readers might recognize it as the frontispiece of the single-volume Thomas Nelson and Sons edition of *Captain Cook's Voyages* published in London, in 1900.

Edward Scriven

[Source: <https://www.alamy.com/stock-photo/edward-scriven.html>]

My engraving was completed by Edward Scriven, born the year before Cook sat for Nathaniel Dance. Scriven came from Alcester, Warwickshire, and learnt his craft under the engraver Robert Thew.⁴ He rose to eminence in his profession and, according to the *Dictionary of National Biography*, 'worked mainly for the publishers of expensively illustrated books and serials, such as the *British Gallery of Portraits*'.⁵ The engraving I own appears to have had a more modest, or at least an altruistic, provenance, as the title informs us:



Engraved by E. Scriven

CAPTAIN COOK

From an original Picture by Dance

in the Gallery of Greenwich Hospital.

Under the Superintendance of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge.

Published by William S. Orr & Co., London

The Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge was a progressive educational organization, founded in 1826. It sought to assist working people and aspirational autodidacts to obtain affordable almanacs, maps, cyclopaedia and texts explaining scientific and other subjects.⁶ The engraving of James Cook, produced under its 'superintendance' does not bear a date. Although, the engraver Edward Scriven died in London in August 1841, the publisher William Somerville Orr⁷ was active from the 1830s until the 1850s. The Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge was wound up in 1848, so even if the engraving continued to be issued after Scriven's death, it must be at least 173 years old. I can understand why the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge chose James Cook as a subject for engraving. He was the model autodidact, a man who rose from the lower ranks to command three great voyages of exploration. Although elected a Fellow of the Royal Society, he was never knighted for his achievements. Ironically, the artist Nathaniel Dance (later Dance-Holland), who painted his portrait, was created baronet in 1800.⁸

Today, there are neo-iconoclasts who want James Cook's statues toppled and who cannot be satisfied with revised plaques, or balanced additional interpretation. I have an artist friend who is aghast that I hang Cook's portrait on a wall in my home.⁹ While I don't approve of all of Cook's actions during his landfalls or his territorial claims on behalf of George III, I recognize that he was an eighteenth-century British naval officer acting under orders. His cultural misunderstandings sometimes had fatal consequences during his voyages, including his own tragic death in Hawaii; yet he helped usher numerous lands into the European imagination. The pantomime of raising the Union Jack did not make him the architect of the penal settlement or of subsequent colonial enterprise in Australia. Ultimately, we are all a product of random meetings by individuals affected by upheavals and movements of people. The shadow of dispossession (and slavery) is cast over all our ancestors, as both victims and perpetrators back to ancient times.¹⁰ Nevertheless, we still bear a collective moral responsibility to mitigate the legacy of such injustices, particularly ongoing discrimination and disadvantage.

My Wiradjuri friend and fellow Sutherland Shire Historical Society member, Bruce Howell, once poignantly observed that the journals from Cook's expeditions are precious gifts of historical information for indigenous people about their ancestors. Bruce certainly used these journals with impressive forensic skill in his contribution to the anthology *East Coast Encounters 1770: Reflections on a Cultural Clash* edited by Pauline Curby and published by the society in 2020.

When I look at satellite photos which outline the east coasts of Australia and New Zealand, I cannot help but reflect that Cook used science and eighteenth-century navigational instruments to complete almost identical lines on paper two-and-a-half centuries earlier. Voyaging under sail in unknown labyrinths of coral and even ice-bound Arctic and Antarctic waters – without water-tight compartments, auxiliary engines or electronic communications – was an extraordinary challenge.

¹ Sir Joseph Carruthers (Premier of New South Wales, between 1904 and 1908), used it as the frontispiece for his book: *Captain James Cook, R.N. One Hundred and Fifty Years After*, John Murray, London, 1930.

² Letter received by Joseph Banks from James Cook, 24 May 1776, State Library of New South Wales, SAFE/Banks Papers/Series 10.01(Safe 1/457).

³ Samwell, D., *A Narrative of the Death of Captain James Cook*, G. C. J. and J. Robinson, Pater-Noster-Row, London, MDCCLXXXVI (1786), p. 27.

⁴ *Bénézit, E. Dictionnaire critique et documentaire des peintres, sculpteurs, dessinateurs et graveurs de tous les temps et de tous les pays / par un groupe d'écrivains spécialistes français et étrangers*, Ernest Gründ, Paris, 1976, vol. 9, p. 487.

⁵ F. M. O'D[onoghue], 'Scriven, Edward (1775–1841)', in Stephen, L., & Lee, S., (eds.), *The Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, London, 1973, vol. xvii, p. 1063.

⁶ See Smith, H., *The Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, 1826–1846: A Social and Bibliographical Evaluation*, Dalhousie University Press, Halifax (Nova Scotia), 1974.

⁷ According to the catalogue of the British Museum (1939,0410.47), the same engraving was also published by Charles Knight, Pall Mall East, and without a date.

⁸ C. J. R[obinson], 'Holland, Sir Nathaniel Dance- (1735–1811)', in Stephen, L., & Lee, S., (eds.), *The Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, London, 1973, vol. ix, p. 1045.

⁹ Yet another friend disapproves of my copy of Oscar Nemon's (1906–1985) bust of Churchill the 'imperialist' in our lounge room. But all men and women are works in progress and multifaceted until they die. I don't admire Churchill the imperialist, the young advocate of poison gas against the tribesmen of the North-West Frontier of India, the opponent of women's suffrage and social-democratic reform, but I do admire the man who changed his mind on votes for women, the stalwart leader in the war against fascism, the historian who won the Nobel Prize for Literature and even the amateur painter and bricklayer.

¹⁰ In my article 'Charlemagne and the Shire', *Sutherland Shire Historical Society Bulletin*, no. 209, November 2018, pp. 15–17, I discussed the mathematics of ancestry including how 'The genetic vat is churned by emigration, revolution, invasion, social mobility, illegitimacy, sexual violence and the multiplier effect of the generations'.

THE LAST ROAD GANG: PART 2

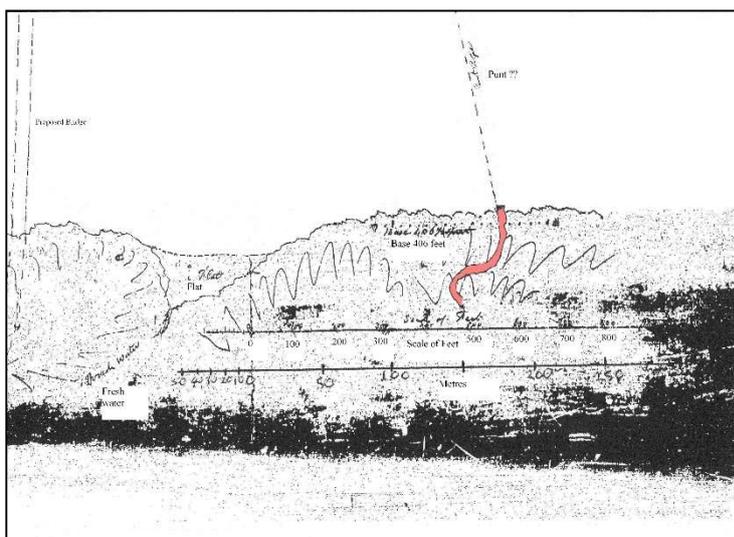
GREG JACKSON and PAM FORBES

In 'The Last Road Gang: Part 1' information in the letters from the two assistant surveyors to the Surveyor General Sir Thomas Mitchell were used to examine the building of the Illawarra Road and the indiscretions of the gang's convicts. In Part 2 the same letters are used to examine various aspects of the convicts' life on the road. Part 3 looks at the profile of the gang's convicts and how they compare with other convicts in NSW.

From Part 1, the Illawarra Road Gang had a nominal strength of 25 men, although this was seldom achieved, and at least 45 convicts are mentioned in the correspondence of Assistant Surveyors Roderick Mitchell (son of Thomas Mitchell) and William Webb Darke with Surveyor General Thomas Mitchell. The records of 42 of these convicts have been - at least partially reconstructed¹.

The makeup of the gang

The gang was in the charge of an Assistant Surveyor, Roderick Mitchell from the road start at the Cooks River Dam, but around the Georges River crossing (Lugarno) the young inexperienced Roderick Mitchell* was replaced by the more experienced William Darke who saw the job to its completion at Wollongong.² Supervising the road gang was not the only duty of the Assistant Surveyors. They also had to survey urban land at nearby towns such as Appin so they were absent from the gang for considerable periods.³



Sketch by Sir Thomas Mitchell c1843 of a proposed bridge crossing the Georges River. The road cleared by the convict gang is highlighted in red. [Survey No., SR 5282, T.L.Mitchell, undated – 'Trigonometrical sketch of site for bridge etc. across Georges River'] NSW State Archives

The gang's overseer who supervised the day to day operation and for almost all of the gang's existence, was ex-convict John O'Hara. There was also an assistant overseer about whom the letters are largely silent. Other members of the gang are a tent keeper and bullock driver. Getting suitable replacements for the men dismissed from the gang was a perennial problem for Darke. He complains to Thomas Mitchell on the 27 May 1844 that:

...a sufficient number of eligible men could not be supplied to me from Hyde Park Barracks on my attending to receive them.⁴

On the 29 November 1843 Darke states that, '...a blacksmith is most particular wanted.'⁵

As the gang approached the end point, near Wollongong, Darke requested a new overseer for the gang. The requirements were, ‘... a practical man, a quarry man and a good rough carpenter.’⁶

The convicts’ reconstructed records suggest that a blacksmith, a mason and a carpenter did join the gang at some later time.

What equipment did they have?

Two of the letters from Darke to Mitchell give a rare insight into the gang’s equipment. In the first letter written at the Woronora River crossing Darke gives a complete list of the equipment left in his charge by the outgoing Assistant Surveyor Mitchell.

This list is reproduced below along with the equipment’s reported physical condition:

Item	Description
1 officers’ tent	Good and serviceable
1 men’s tent	
1 large tarpaulin	
4 pack saddles	
2 tether ropes	
6 axes	
1 tomahawk	
1 camp table	
1 camp stool	
1 stretcher	
3 tin dishes	
1 iron pot	
1 compass and stand	
1 chain (<i>surveyor’s chain, 22 yards long</i>)	Broken and unserviceable
1 camp oven	
7 tin pots	
1 iron pot	

Table 1: *Items handed over to Darke by R. Mitchell, 20 October 1843*⁷

This list is interesting mainly because of what is not on it. For a road clearing gang of 25 men there is a distinct lack of tools, only six axes, no saws for felling large trees, no adzes, no picks, crowbars or hammers and chisels. It is difficult to see how 25 men could share six axes although as we have seen some of the men had other duties. The requested blacksmith⁵ would also not be kept busy sharpening six axes. The tools mentioned in this list are not compatible with the personnel that Darke requests for the gang. There is no blacksmith, quarrying or specialist carpentry tools. So what was the gang’s function?

As the name suggests, a clearing party removed trees from the proposed road route that had been blazed by Thomas Mitchell. They may also have used the trees felled to make bridges across the many creeks along the way.⁸ The actual road-making was to come after the clearing party. This would explain the requirement for rough carpentry and mason (for the bridge abutments) and the blacksmith who would sharpen and repair their tools. The tools may not be mentioned on the list above because they may be the private property of the convict mechanics.

There is also a lack of domestic equipment for 25 men to camp in the bush. Each convict would have had personal utensils such as a spoon and knife. The four saddles and tether ropes show the presence of horses, presumably for communications with Sydney and surveying ahead of the gang.

Five months later another letter from Darke is sent from Appin to the Surveyor General requesting additional equipment which addressed, to some extent, the lack of domestic equipment for the gang.

(Items in italics are the best guess of illegible writing).

8 suits of slops (clothing) with boots and blankets (due on the 1st of May 1844) also the following equipment and articles for repair of their tent, clothes and boots.

Item	Comment
1 tea kettle	Eating and cooking utensils (1 quart = 1.14 litres) (1 pint = 0.57 litres)
1 iron pot	
8 quart pots	
8 pint pots	
2 tin dishes	
1 camp kettle	
6 ration bags	
Comb, razor and scissors	
6 pairs hobbles	Used to restrict the movement of horses
1 dray tarpaulin	
½ lb of strong thread	For the repair of tents, clothes and boots a sailmakers palm is used to push a sewing needle through tough fabric like leather. An awl is a small hand tool used to make a hole for a needle in thick leather
Needles and sailmakers <i>palm</i>	
1lb of hemp and awl	
Skin of sole leather	
Skin of upper leather	

Table 2: *Equipment requested for the convict gang, 27 April 1844⁹*

Where did they camp?

The location of each convict's camp along the road had been chosen by Sir Thomas Mitchell. Unfortunately, the exact location of the camps is not recorded and all attempts to locate them have proved fruitless¹⁰. This is not surprising as a temporary camp occupied by less than 25 convicts for a short period would leave almost no archaeological remains. Camps near Sydney would now almost certainly be overlaid by modern developments.

Each of the Assistant Surveyors letters have a send address. In many cases this is just 'Illawarra Road' but the following is a list of specific camps mentioned.

Camps Address from Assistant Surveyor's letters	Date	Comment
Camp near Cooks River	Oct 1841	The start of the road at the modern Sydney suburb of Tempe
Woronora	Sept 1843	The crossing of the Woronora River
Encampment above Coalcliff	May 1844	Located: 'with the cliff on one side and the head of an open swampy valley on the other' ⁸
Encampment near Bulli	May 1845	Near the end of the road

List 3: *The known convict camps*

Given that the length of the road is approximately 75 km, if these were the only camps on the road the average distance between camps would be an unacceptable 25km. More camps must have existed along the road to keep the distance walked by the convicts each day reasonable.

What did they live in?

Much of the living in the convict camps would be outdoors with cooking done on an open fire. Table 1 mentions a 'men's tent' which must have been quite large to accommodate up to 25 convicts. However, the use of temporary huts, made by the convicts, is also described in the letters.

I immediately set them about erecting temporary huts⁸
and
Their first occupation was to erect huts.

These huts would be very temporary bark huts that would leave little remains. Possibly huts would be erected at the more permanent camps, with the tent being used where the convicts would be stationed for only a short period.

What did they eat?

Food was the fuel for a labour force, and in order to get the best from his convicts the Assistant Surveyors knew they must be well fed. Convicts were given two meals a day: breakfast at daybreak before they went out to work, and they would return for dinner at around noon. There were regular complaints by convicts in NSW about the quality and quantity of the food¹¹. Tenders for the supply of convict rations were advertised in *The Australian* on the 13 Feb 1844. The rations for male convicts are shown in Table 4.

Daily Rations for Convicts, 1844
12 oz. (340 gm) of wheaten bread
14 oz. (400 gm) maize or barley bread
8 oz. (227 gm) maize meal
1 lb (454 gm) fresh beef
1 oz (28 gm) brown sugar
1/8 oz. (3.5 gm) salt
1/4 oz. (7 gm) yellow soap

List 4: Convict Rations 1844

As the gang approached Wollongong the time taken to move unrefrigerated fresh meat would make the delivery of this ration impractical. When eight convicts were accused of cattle duffing at the Woronora camp, Darke stated:

...as during the last month there were three weeks without a pound of meat within the encampment¹²

Salted meat would be an option but delivering the rations proved difficult. Darke wrote to Mitchell from the Woronora camp:

...I have at present no adequate means of supplying my party with rations.¹³

He requested a bullock and dray or a horse and cart. A bullock and dray were provided.

An obvious omission from the rations list is vegetables (although female convicts had vegetables in their rations). An assigned convict with a permanent workplace would be generally allowed the time and space to grow his own vegetables. Convicts on a road gang would have no such opportunity but would require vegetables and a source of vitamin C to prevent scurvy. The letters give no clue as to how this problem was overcome but there is no mention of any diet-related disease. Generally, convicts had little or no knowledge of Australian native foods so the use of bush tucker would seem unlikely.

How were the convicts disciplined?

In addition to their rations well behaved convicts were provided with 'indulgences', tea, sugar and tobacco, by Darke.¹⁴ This was done to maintain discipline as the indulgences could then be withdrawn for bad behaviour. Darke also received the power of punishing the men on the spot otherwise:

...a slight offence and pretended illness are still to be followed by a visit to Sydney ... a cessation of labour of near a week with the advantage of all they can pilfer and beg on the road.¹⁵

These measures appeared to have the right effect with Darke regaining control of the gang, stating:

The men are now behaving better, none having ventured into town on the plea of illness...¹⁵

Darke maintained control of the gang with their behaviour steady, if not perfect, for the duration of their labours.

Conclusion:

These letters to the Surveyor give us an insight into the workings of this, the last convict gang to operate in NSW. There are however many questions they do not answer.

- The convict Richard Davis' death above Coalcliff (described in Part 1) is a mystery that will never be solved.
- The tools available to the convicts appear inadequate for the tasks at hand and it is not clear if additional tools were ever provided.
- The location of the convict camps remains unknown.
- How the gang was supplied with adequate rations, especially the supply of fresh vegetables and fruit necessary to prevent scurvy.

The convicts in the gang were far from perfect and considerable credit must go to William Darke for keeping the gang at their tasks.

In Part 3 of this article the reconstructed convict records will be examined to determine if the makeup of this gang was typical of NSW convicts.

*Roderick Mitchell: 1822 - 1852. Died at sea, age 29, falling overboard from the schooner *Beaver* during a gale while on passage from Moreton Bay to Sydney.¹⁶



Part of the original Illawarra Road cleared by convicts in 1843 heading towards Wollongong. This road was abandoned in 1860. [Photo: G. Jackson]

Notes on the referencing of the Assistant Surveyors letters:

All official letters to and from the Surveyor General are marked with a unique number containing the year and a sequential number e.g. letter 43/72 from William Darke to The Surveyor General was written in 1843 and is Darke's 72nd letter of that year.

The letters from Assistant Surveyors Roderick Mitchell and William Darke to the NSW Surveyor General, Sir Thomas Mitchell (father of Roderick) are available from the NSW State Archives, Kingswood.

The letters from Roderick Mitchell are contained in Reel 3079, 2/1559, 2/15560.1-.3. The letter from William Webb Darke are contained in Reel 3060, 2/1526.1-2, 2/1527. These letters are not available on-line.

The footnotes below will use this number system to reference letters

¹ Jackson G. n.d. *Convict Data*. This document contains the reconstructed records of three groups of convicts including the convicts of the Illawarra Road Gang (1843 – 1845)

https://www.academia.edu/40269528/Convict_Data

² Undated letter dated 30 October 1843, from Darke to T. Mitchell outlining his plans after taking over the road gang from Assistant Surveyor Roderick Mitchell.

³ Letter 44/82 dated 30 March 1844, from Darke to T. Mitchell requesting a sketch of the township of Appin.

⁴ Letter 44/13, 27 May 1844, from Darke to T. Mitchell.

⁵ Letter 43/76 dated 29 November 1843, from Darke to T. Mitchell requesting more men for the gang, especially a blacksmith.

⁶ Letter 45/37 dated 11 August 1845 from Darke to T. Mitchell suggesting convict Dennis Kelly (per *Patriot*) as a replacement overseer.

⁷ Letter 43/72 dated 20 October 1843, from Darke to T. Mitchell of the articles left in Darke's charge by R. Mitchell

⁸ Letter 44/13 dated 27 May 1844, from Darke to T. Mitchell. One of several letters to mention the marking of trees by blazing

⁹ Un-numbered letter dated 27 April 1844 from Darke to T. Mitchell containing a request for slops and additional domestic equipment

¹⁰ The remains of two huts were found beside the road at the Woronora River crossing. These huts may be part of Lucas's 1828 Woronora Mill and/or used by the Illawarra Road convicts. The article describing these huts is available from: https://www.academia.edu/8676795/Woronora_Mill_Settlement

¹¹ Sydney Living Museum n.d. *The Convict Diet*, <https://blogs.sydneylivingmuseums.com.au/cook/the-convict-diet/>

¹² Letter 43/75 dated 19 November 1843 from Darke to T. Mitchell reporting the theft and consumption of six bullocks

¹³ Letter 44/13 dated 27 May 1844, from Darke to T. Mitchell requesting a bullock and dray or a horse and cart

¹⁴ Un-numbered letter dated 24 August 1843, from O'Hara to Darke naming 14 of the men deserving of 'indulgences'.

¹⁵ Letter 43/59 dated 30 August 1843, from Darke to T. Mitchell requesting permission to punish the men on the spot

¹⁶ Obituaries Australia National Centre of Biography, Obituary for Roderick Mitchell ANU, <https://oa.anu.edu.au/obituary/mitchell-roderick-28050/text35773>

Vale Jo Massaar - 9 March 1933 - 22 February 2021

ELIZABETH CRAIG



Dick and Jo Massaar, Gymea, May, 2012
[Photo: E. Craig]

Johanna Massaar, a quiet, but well-liked and respected member of SSHS for about eight years, has sadly lost her battle with lung cancer. With several of our meetings cancelled last year because of Covid-19, many of us hadn't even realised she was sick.

Jo and her husband Dick left war-ravaged Holland for Australia as a newly married couple in 1955 - part of the post-war migration boom. With little English and no money, they had flown on KLM with assisted passage under the Netherlands Australia Migration Agreement. The following year they settled in Sutherland Shire where Dick's widowed sister lived. Jo was a seamstress and Dick a pastrycook and breadmaker. They built a house on the Kingsway in Gymea, where they raised their two sons, Ronald and Peter. The boys attended Miranda Public School and Gymea High School. Jo and Dick sold their house in 2004 to move to Jowyn Place, Gymea.

The Massaars joined the Netherlands Society of Sutherland Shire which met at the Highway Café in Sutherland. They became very active members of the Society, an important social refuge in the 1950s for Dutch migrants beginning a new life in a foreign land. Social functions were held, including a ball every year and St Nicholas Night for children. The Massaars served on the Committee and often held parties in their large backyard. The Society disbanded in 2009 as new Dutch migrants tended to be young business people who spoke English and had jobs, and no longer depended on the Society as a social outlet.

Through the Netherlands Society, the Massaars were active in fundraising activities for the building of the Juliana Retirement Village, the brainchild of Shire builder, Johan Logeman. They held cake and handicraft stalls, soup nights, Indonesian meal nights and auctions, and in 1975, with help from the Whitlam Government, they were able to buy the site on Miranda Road for the Village. Jo was 'bullied' by Johan Logeman into becoming a board member of the Juliana Retirement Village, saying her social skills were needed. She took typing and computer courses to help her cope with the responsible and busy job. Jo served 21 years on the board, 14 of those as Secretary. In 2011, Jo Massaar was awarded the KLM Dutch Spirit Award for her services to the Dutch Community.

After suffering from Parkinson's Disease for some time, Dick passed away in 2016. Jo had been looking after him at home for years and she was at a loss. It was then that her good friend, Ineke Nieuwland suggested she join the Sutherland Shire Historical Society. Jo did. She enjoyed the speakers and the excursions, and also helped out at the Museum. Members appreciated her involvement and enjoyed her company.

Jo cared about the local community, and the contributions she made to its development will be her lasting legacy. *Vale Jo Massaar.*

Jo's oral history was recorded by the author for Sutherland Library in May 2012. It covers her life from her childhood in Rotterdam, through her experience as an immigrant, and finally as a Sutherland Shire resident. It can be accessed online by searching the library's website:

<https://www.sutherlandshire.nsw.gov.au/Community/Library>. Then go to the catalogue and search for Jo Massaar'.

EXPLAINING THE APPIN MASSACRE OF 1816

BRUCE WATT

This year marks the 205th anniversary of a massacre of Dharawal and Gandangarra Aboriginal people in the south-west of the Cumberland Plain. It is known as the Appin Massacre. At least 14 people are known to have been killed in a military attack at dawn by a detachment of soldiers of the 73rd Regiment under orders from Governor Lachlan Macquarie. This marked the end, at least in the Sydney region, of what is known as the Frontier Wars, though atrocities continued as settlers spread over the Blue Mountains following the discovery of a successful crossing in 1815.

In the nearly 30 years since the settlement at Sydney Cove was established in 1788, the colony had spread to the west and south west, and large land grants were awarded to pastoralists. A severe drought extending from 1809 to 1816 caused severe hardship. Conflict between white settlers and Aborigines inevitably resulted, as Aboriginal land was alienated and hostilities grew as settlers' crops and livestock were targeted. John MacArthur had received large land grants at the Cowpastures near Camden and was expanding his sheep and wool interests.

While in England for several years, defending his role in the 1809 overthrow of Governor Bligh, his wife Elizabeth conducted his rural affairs. Fearing tensions and possible reprisals from the increasingly dispossessed Aborigines, she wrote to Governor Macquarie in early 1816 demanding protection. Macquarie concluded that there was a threat to the agricultural and economic foundations of the colony and took action.

On 10 April 1816 he despatched three detachments of the 46th Regiment. His orders were:

... 'to march into the interior and remote parts of the colony for the purpose of punishing the hostile natives, by clearing the country of them entirely, and driving them across the mountains. In the event of the natives making the smallest show of resistance – or refusing to surrender when called upon to do so - the officers... have been authorised to fire on them to compel them to surrender; hanging up on trees the bodies of such natives as may be killed, in order to strike the greater terror into the survivors'.¹

Accompanying the regiment were six white guides and seven Aboriginal guides: Tyson, Bidgee Bidgee, Harry, Bundell, Creek Jemmy, Colebee and Tindal.

The detachment led by Captain James Wallis was the one that made the infamous encounter near the banks of the Cataract River. The following forms a part of his report.

17th April

A little after one o'clock AM we marched. Noble joined us, and led us where he had seen the natives encamped, the fires were burning but deserted, we feared they had heard us and were fled, a few of my men who wandered now heard a child cry. I formed line ranks, enter(ed) and pushed on through a thick brush towards the precipitous banks of a deep, rocky creek, the dogs gave the alarm and the natives fled over the cliffs. Firing now ensued; - it was moonlight, the grey dawn of morn appearing, so dark as to be able only to discover their figures bounding from rock, to rock. Before marching from quarters, I had ordered my men to make as many prisoners as possible, and to be careful in sparing, and saving the women and children my principal efforts were now directed to this purpose, I regret to say some had been shot, and others met their fate by rushing in despair over the precipice. I was

however partly successful, I led up two women and three children they were all that remained to whom death would not be a blessing, t'was a melancholy but necessary duty I was employed upon, fourteen dead bodies were counted in different directions, the bodies of Durelle and Kinnahygal I had considerable difficulty in getting up the precipice, I regretted the death of an old native Balyin and the unfortunate women and children from the rocky place they fell in, I found it would be almost impossible to bury them, I detached Lieut. Parker with the bodies of Durelle and Kinnahygal, to be hanged on a conspicuous part of a range of hills near Mr Broughton's and after to lay in ambush, at a ford where it was expected Boodbury [sic] was with the other natives to pass. In the camp we found abundance of plundered potatoes and corn and numbers of spears clubs...²

The following account is from Governor Lachlan Macquarie's diary for May 1816. Having achieved the desired outcome, he detailed the remuneration for all parties involved. It is noted that the Aboriginal guides recompense was considerably less than the white soldiers and guides.

L. M.

Saturday 4th. May 1816 !

The three Separate Military Detachments belonging to the 46th. Regt., Commanded severally by Captains Schaw, Wallis, and Lieutenant Dawe, sent out on the 10th. of last month to scour the interior of the Country and drive the Natives from the Settlements of the White Inhabitants, returned this Day to Head Quarters, after having executed the several parts of their Instructions entirely to my satisfaction; having inflicted exemplary Punishments on the hostile Natives, and brought in a few of them as Prisoners to Sydney.³

L. M.

Tuesday 7. May 1816 !

I this day paid the following Sums of money – or granted Orders on the King's Stores for Liquor, Provisions, and Slops, to the undermentioned European and Native Guides, Constables, Carters &c. who accompanied the Military Detachments recently employed against the Natives: Vizt. —*

Remunerations in Cash —

To John Warbey – Guide £12. –. – Cur^{cy}.

To John Jackson – Guide £12. –. – do.

To John Pawson – Guide £12. –. – do.

To Thomas Simpson – Guide £12. –. – do.

To Joseph Mc.Loughlin – Guide £12. –. – do.

To Christopher Anderson – Carter £5. –. – do.

To Henry Mc.Kudding – Cart Hire &c. £9.5. – do.

To Thomas Nobles – Guide £3. –. – do.

To Corpl. Partridge 46th. Repairing Carts £3. –. – do.

To Private Lidstone 46th. Repairing Carts £3. –. – do.

Total Cash Remunerations £80. 5. –

The 5 first mentioned Guides received also from the Store each a Complete Suit of Slops including Shoes and Blankets – and also four Days Provisions. —

To each Non comd. Officer & Soldier employed on the late Service, there were issued from the King's Store one Pair of Shoes and Half a Pint of Spirits.

Remunerations to Native Guides: —

To Bidjee Bidjee

To Harry

To Bundell

To Tindall

To Colebee

To Creek-Jemmy – or Nurragingy

Each a Complete Suit of Slops including Blanket – 4 Days Provisions, Half Pint of Spirits – and Half Pound of Tobacco.

I also gave Orders on the Store to the undermentioned Commissioned Officers employed on the late Service against the Natives for the quantities of Spirits specified against their respective Names – as Donations from Government to defray in part their Extra Expences whilst Employed on the said Service: Vizt.

To Captain Schaw 15 Gallons

To Captain Wallis 15 Gallons

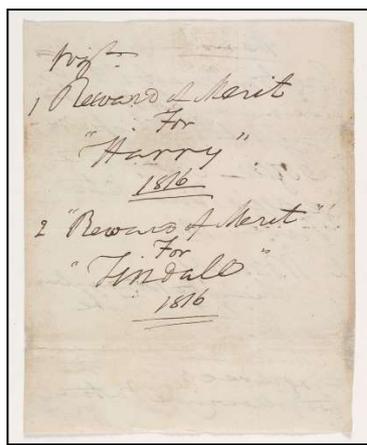
To Lieut. Dawe 10 Gallons

To Lieut. Grant 10 Gallons

To Lieut. Parker 10 Gallons

To Asst. Surgeon Bush 10 Gallons

N.B. To each of the Noncomd. Officers & Soldiers of the 46th. Regt. left out on Duty in the Bush, the same indulgences are intended to be given on their return to Head Quarters as have been granted to their Brother Soldiers already come in.⁴



Prizes

1. Reward of Merit
For
"Harry"
1816
2. Reward of Merit
For
"Tindall"
1816

Rewards of Merit to the Aboriginal guides, Harry and Tindall

Since 2000 the Appin massacre has been commemorated annually at a memorial service at Cataract Dam.

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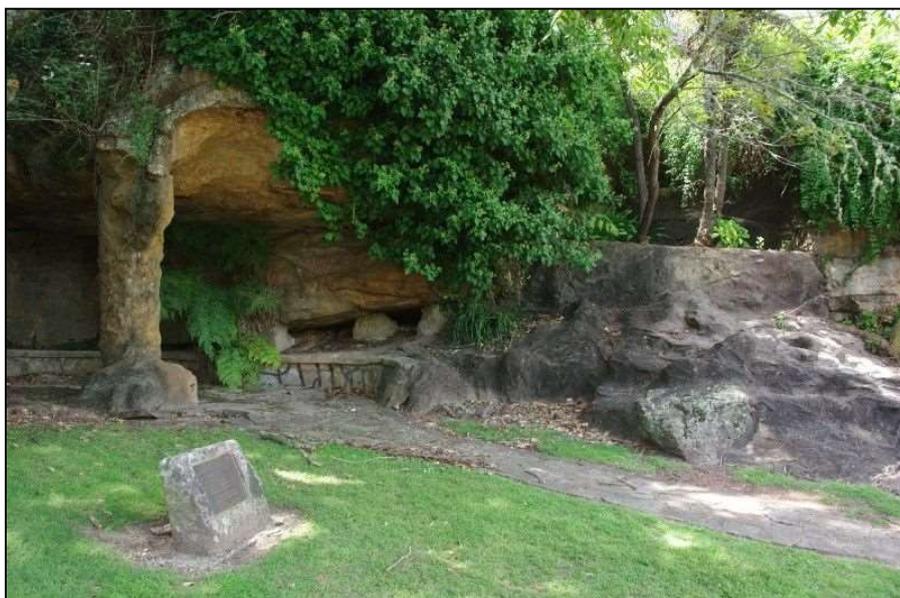
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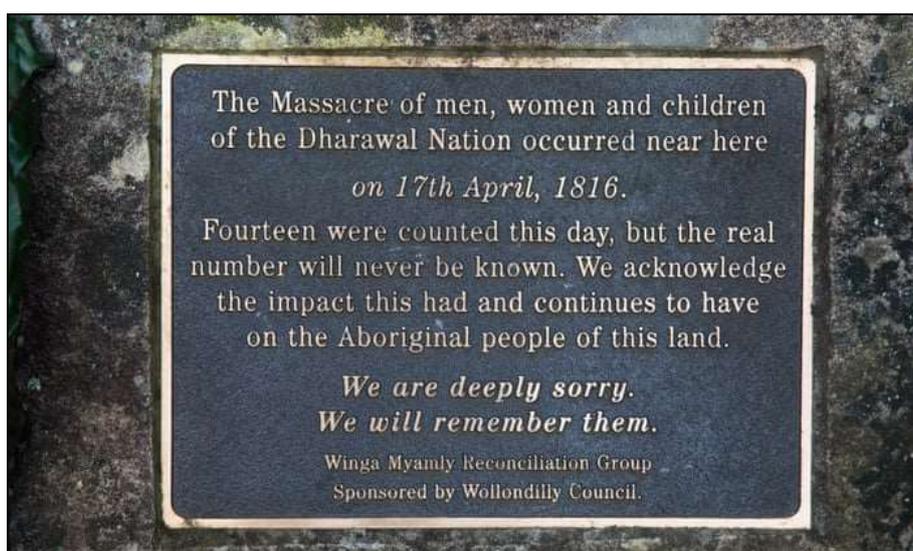
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The Memorial plaque to the Appin Massacre at Cataract Dam, Appin [source: Monumentaustralia.org.au]



SCIENCE ON COOK'S *ENDEAVOUR*

PAM FORBES AND GREG JACKSON

Introduction:

Although best remembered for his explorations Cook's first voyage to the Pacific left an enormous scientific legacy. In the 1700s educated Europeans were living in the Age of Enlightenment. Where religion had once explained the world, now reason and science were seen as the key to understanding nature and human society. Scientific enquiry in the 1700s focused on the close observation of things and finding ways to organise them into systems. Philosophers and scientists of the period widely circulated their ideas through meetings at scientific academies, Masonic lodges, literary salons, coffeehouses and in printed books, journals, and pamphlets. Cook wholeheartedly embraced this movement. He was a man of science and an ideal leader for the expedition to the Pacific starting in 1768.



Image 1: *HMS Endeavour off the coast of New Holland by Samuel Atkins c.1794*¹

The Scientists on *Endeavour*:

The *Endeavour* voyage of 1768 – 1771 was the best equipped scientific voyage of its time. As well as Cook there were six scientists on *Endeavour*; three botanists, one astronomer and two artists together with their servants.

Joseph Banks (1743 - 1820)²

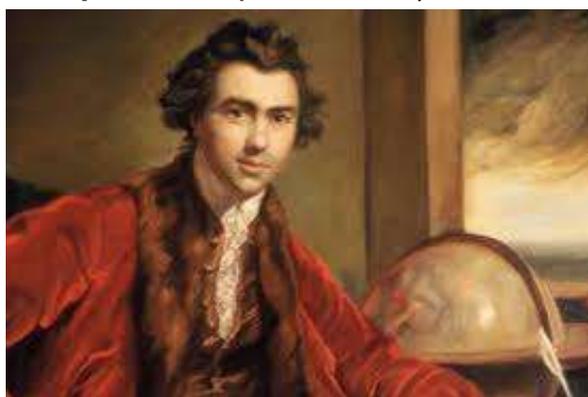


Image 2: *Joseph Banks 1773 by Sir Joshua Reynolds*²

When the Royal Society persuaded the Admiralty to send James Cook in command of an expedition to observe the transit of Venus, it urged that 'Joseph Banks ... a Gentleman of large fortune ... well versed in natural history' should be permitted to join the expedition 'with his Suite'. Banks joined the ship with a staff of eight: Daniel Solander and Herman Spöring, naturalists; Alexander Buchan and Sydney Parkinson, landscape and natural history artists and four servants¹. Banks was very wealthy and the major benefactor of the expedition. He was a

devotee of Carl Linnaeus who established the modern system of botanical classification. The vast collection of plant specimens Banks and his colleague Daniel Solander brought back became the basis for one of the best herbariums in the world (now in the Natural History Museum in London). Banks was knighted in 1781 and went on to become the President of the Royal Society until his death in 1820.

Daniel Solander (1733 -1782)

A Swedish naturalist and a former student of Carl Linnaeus. Solander was the first university-educated scientist to set foot on Australian soil. Solander assisted Banks to make a large collection of natural history specimens during the *Endeavour's* voyage. This included many from the east coast of Australia. After his return to England in July 1771 Solander became Banks's secretary and librarian³.

Hermann Spöring: (1733 - 1771) A Finnish explorer, draughtsman, botanist and a naturalist. Employed by Banks as his private secretary³. Spöring died of dysentery complications related to food poisoning at sea between Batavia and Cape of Good Hope.

Sydney Parkinson: (1745? - 1771)

Parkinson was the first artist to set foot on Australian soil, to draw an authentic Australian landscape, and to portray Aborigines from direct observation. Around 1767 he went to London and was employed by Joseph Banks. When Banks formed his suite of 'scientific gentlemen' to accompany James Cook to the South Seas in the *Endeavour* in 1768 Parkinson went as botanical draughtsman. The death at Tahiti of Alexander Buchan, the topographical draughtsman, threw a heavy extra burden on Parkinson. During the voyage he made at least 1300 drawings or sketches, and compiled vocabularies of the natives of Tahiti and New Holland. On the way home, when the *Endeavour* called at Batavia for repairs, Parkinson was one of many who contracted dysentery, and he died at sea on 26 January 1771⁴.

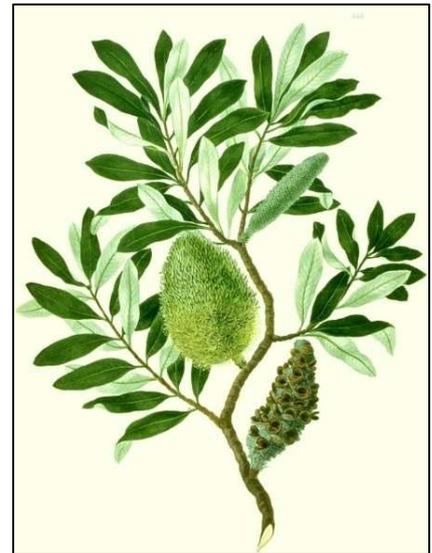


Image 3: *Banksia integrifolia* watercolour by Sydney Parkinson⁵

Alexander Buchan: (? - 1779)

Buchan was employed by Joseph Banks as landscape artist aboard *Endeavour* on Cook's first Pacific Voyage. He suffered from epilepsy and died in Tahiti in 1779.



Image 4: *Tierra del Fuego, with natives,* by Alexander Buchan 1769⁶

Charles Green: (1734 - 1771)

Green was not one of Bank's party but was nominated by the Royal Society as the official astronomer on the *Endeavour* for which he was to receive 200 guineas (while Cook got 100 guineas for astronomical observations). His main responsibility was to observe the Transit of Venus and he proved to be a most competent astronomer. He died at sea between Batavia and Cape of Good Hope⁷.

James Cook: (1728 – 1779)

Cook, the undisputed leader of this expedition was a formidable man: powerful, meticulous, painstakingly accurate, and patient. He was the supreme navigator of the eighteenth century, and his observations have been as valuable as they were diverse: from the crew's health onboard to determining the solar parallax, calculating lunar distances, and disproving the theory of a vast southern continent. He was responsible for the considerable legacy of scientific accomplishments the *Endeavour* voyage produced.⁸

Some of the scientific legacy of *Endeavour*

The Transit of Venus:

Observing the Transit of Venus was the main reason for Cook's voyage. The Transit of Venus is the journey of Venus across the face of the sun as visible from Earth. By observing this transit from various locations on the earth's surface the absolute distances in our solar system could be calculated using trigonometry. This had been attempted on transits prior to 1769 without success. It was

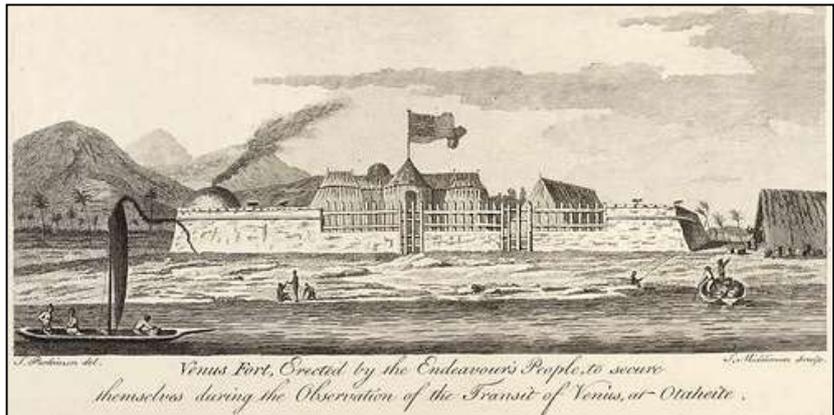


Image 5: Fort Venus on Tahiti 1771¹⁰

crucial for the observation points to be as widely spaced as possible and Tahiti was chosen as an ideal location. With money from Joseph Banks and the King as well as support from the Admiralty, *Endeavour* was purchased and outfitted for the voyage. The Royal Society also sent astronomer, Charles Green with the latest optical instruments on the voyage. James Cook was named as assistant. The observations were successfully taken and although the results seemed initially disappointing, when combined with other observations gave reasonably accurate distances from the sun to all the planets⁹.

Cook and Scurvy:

Scurvy was the 18th century seaman's scourge, with as many as 80% of a ship's crew dying from it. In 1753 James Lind published *A Treatise of the Scurvy*, describing the experimental proof that citrus had a rapid beneficial effect on the disease. Cook, however, placed his faith in malt and sauerkraut and was supplied with 40 bushels of malt, 1000lb of portable soup, vinegar, mustard, wheat, together with 'proper Quantities of sauer Kraut'¹¹. Cook's success, in not losing any men to scurvy, may be seen as a result of his insistence of the crew having as broad a diet as possible, the relatively short distance between anchorages on his voyages and collecting such greens as could be had when making landfall. Cook's endorsement of sauerkraut and malt as a cure set back the cause of eliminating scurvy by twenty years.

Botanical investigations:

Australia has unique and diverse flora and fauna and as *Endeavour* was the first botanical investigation of Australia, there were many discoveries to be made. Banks and his fellow botanists took full advantage of landings on the eastern coast of Australia, especially at Botany Bay (29 April–6 May 1770) and at Endeavour River (17 June–3 August). Banks recorded his general impressions of the Australian east coast, noting plants, insects, molluscs, reptiles, birds, fish, quadrupeds, etc. as well as Indigenous customs. His collection of plants grew immensely large. Further observations were made on the New Guinea coast and the island of Savu on the way to

Batavia, where many members of the expedition, including Banks and Solander, fell victims to fever. Yet studies in natural history and ethnology were continued, vocabularies were compiled, and the journal was kept up to date. Further collections were made at the Cape of Good Hope and St Helena on the voyage home.

From the time he landed in England on 12 July 1771, Banks found himself the centre of scientific inquiry. The huge collections of seeds, plants, shells, insects, bottled specimens, native implements and reams of notes and drawings were taken to Banks' London house, where Solander was soon installed as secretary and librarian with classification and publication following. A measure of the success of Banks' botanical investigation is the large number of plants that bear his name, including the iconic notable plant genus, *Banksia* Linn.f.

Conclusion:

As well as the scientific achievements outlined above, the *Endeavour* expedition returned with a wealth of other scientific information. Observations on astronomy, navigation, natural history, weather, the crew's health and indigenous language, many of these by Cook. This was the most successful scientific expedition of its time and set the standard for all future expeditions.

¹ *HMS Endeavour off the coast of New Holland* by Samuel Atkins c. 1794

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FOUNDATION STONE FOR NEW SPECTACULAR WALKWAY AT HUNGRY POINT UNVEILED

ELIZABETH CRAIG



Hon. Mark Speakman, and Pauline Curby unveil the foundation stone with a blanket from the Migrant Hostel at Hungry Point.

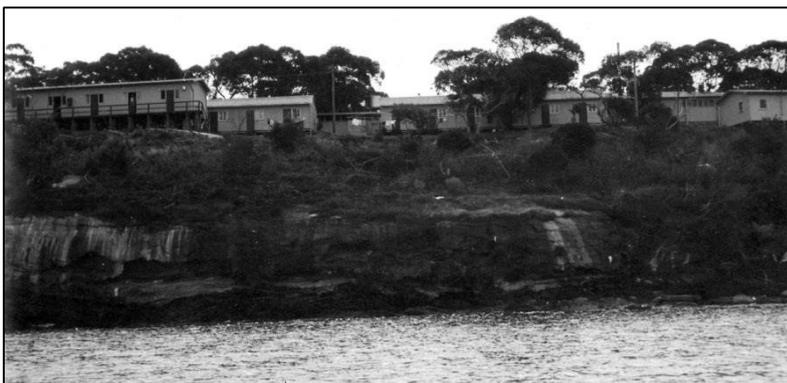
[Source: Mark Speakman, Facebook]



Hungry Point Reserve, South Cronulla around which the walkway will be built. [Source: SSC]

The NSW government has contributed \$2 million for the construction of a spectacular new walkway around the Hungry Point Reserve clifftop, extending the Esplanade walk from Bass and Flinders Point, and linking Salmon Hall Bay with Darook Park. NSW Attorney General and Member for Cronulla, Hon. Mark Speakman unveiled the foundation stone with Pauline Curby, President SSHS on 17 April 2021. The blanket they are using to unveil the stone has a very significant history. It once belonged to the Migrant Hostel opened in Cronulla in 1949, and is now in the possession of SSHS.

The hostel was located on the eastern half of Hungry Point and was used to accommodate post-war migrants, mostly from Eastern Europe – thus leading to its nickname: ‘the Balt Camp’. It was closed permanently in 1967, and the site was returned to the Fisheries Research Centre which had been operating there since 1904.



Migrant Hostel, Hungry Point, c. 1949 [Source: SSLs]

The hostel comprised 18 weatherboard buildings built on brick piers. Their gabled roofs were made of corrugated sheet metal, also used to clad the narrow verandahs. Construction was halted in 1950 while the carpenters held a strike because the communist-controlled Building Workers’ Industrial Union opposed the immigration of refugees from communist-occupied Baltic countries.

The hostel was closed permanently in 1967 and most of the buildings demolished. The two remaining weatherboard buildings have heritage significance because they are ‘rare examples of post-war migrant hostel accommodation.’ The blanket will be used at SSHS Venetia Street museum for displays telling the story of our migrant history.

SSHS EXCURSION TO KURNELL

18 March 2021

See the Excursion Report on Page 7



Excursionists led by Bruce Howell (2nd from right) in front of the Caretaker's Cottage, at Kamay/Botany Bay National Park [Photo: E. Craig]



Bruce Howell explaining the story of the watering place in front of the bronze whale sculptures constructed at 'Cook's Landing Place', for the 250th anniversary of the arrival of the Endeavour [Photo E. Craig]