



NUMBER: 225 — NOVEMBER 2022



*A piece of iron ballast weighing 85kgs from Lt James Cook's HMB Endeavour. It was jettisoned on the Barrier Reef in June 1770, after the ship became grounded and was in danger of sinking. The ballast was recovered in 1969 and is now in the SSHS Museum. [On loan from the ANMM]*

See Greg Jackson and Pam Forbes article: 'From the Museum: The *Endeavour* Ballast' on page 10.

**MINDFUL OF THE PAST – FOCUSED ON THE FUTURE**

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**FACEBOOK:** Sutherland Shire Historical Society



Sutherland Shire Historical Society  
and Museum cordially invites you to our

## *2022 Christmas Party*

Date: Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> November.

12 noon to 3:00 pm.

Cost: \$10.00 members; non-members \$15.00.

Enjoy a delicious catered luncheon with SSHS members and museum volunteers.

Entertainment will be provided by the Orana Ukulele Group.

We will be providing tea, coffee and water.

Please bring any other type of drinks you might want on the day, as well as your own glass.



Address: Shire Museum  
88 Venetia Street,  
Sylvania

Parking is available.

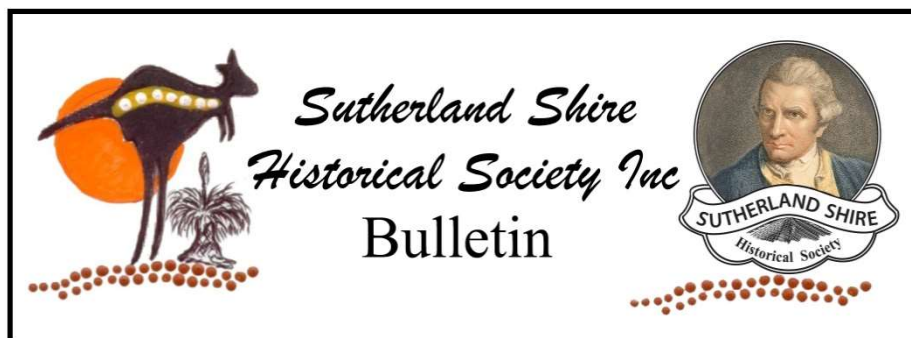
**RSVP: by 19 November 2022**

Email: [shirehistory@gmail.com](mailto:shirehistory@gmail.com)

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MERRY  
*Christmas*





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

***East Coast Encounters 1770*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., will also be available for sale at meetings for \$30**

**THOSE WHO HAVE NOT RENEWED MEMBERSHIP FOR 2022-2023 WILL BE DEEMED UNFINANCIAL**

## 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 on our website: [www.shirehistory.org](http://www.shirehistory.org) or at Sutherland Library - Local Studies. 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](mailto: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, local politicians, the Royal Australian Historical Society, National Trust of NSW, NSW State Library, National Library of Australia, University of Sydney, University of NSW, Shire high school libraries and some local businesses. Issues from September 1966 are also posted on the SSHS website: [www.shirehistory.org](http://www.shirehistory.org)

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### REGISTRATION

**SSHS BULLETIN – ISSN 1444-2930 (from February 2000); ISSN 2652-4000 (ONLINE) (from May 2019)**

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. Although Covid-19 restrictions have been lifted, Covid is still a concern. Please do not attend a meeting if you are unwell, and wear a mask if unsure.

## SUTHERLAND SHIRE MUSEUM

Our new Museum at 88 Venetia Street, Sylvania is now open for visitors. Opening hours are: Tuesdays, 12.00 – 4.00pm, Thursdays 9.30am – 1.30pm, Saturdays 9.00 – 1.00pm. Entry is \$5. To organise a group visit, please contact Museum Manager, Peter Moore: 0427 213 575 or email us at [shirehistory@gmail.com](mailto:shirehistory@gmail.com).

**DONATING MATERIAL:** If you have items of historical significance to Sutherland Shire such as artefacts, documents or photographs, that you wish to donate or lend to the Museum, please contact us at [shirehistory@gmail.com](mailto:shirehistory@gmail.com). While we welcome such items, we have very limited space and have to adhere to our acquisitions policy which dictates what sort of items we can accept. If you do not wish to part with original items, we would welcome copies of documents and photographs. Temporary loans for specific periods for suitable items 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](mailto:shirehistory@gmail.com); or phone us on 0424 600 150



## SOCIETY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: 2020-2021

### ELECTED MEMBERS

<b>PATRON:</b>	Shire Mayor, Clr Carmelo Pesce		
<b>PRESIDENT</b>	Pauline Curby	0427 527 721	pcurby@iprimus.com.au
<b>VICE PRESIDENT</b>	Elizabeth Craig	0491 096 642	elizabeth.craig@y7mail.com
<b>SECRETARY/PUBLIC OFFICER</b>	Graham Burton	0423 234 127	grahamburton@live.com.au
<b>TREASURER</b>	John Doherty	0402 848 344	johndoherty55@gmail.com
<b>COMMITTEE MEMBERS:</b>	Creo Moore	0425 226 405	creoaus@gmail.com
	Deb Burton	0403 625 889	burton.deb@gmail.com
	POSITION VACANT		

### APPOINTED POSITIONS

<b>MUSEUM MANAGER</b>	Peter Moore	0427 213 575	peter_mo@ihug.com.au
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<b>ARCHIVIST</b>	Carol McDonald	0403 877 397	jmcDonald@optusnet.com.au
<b>GRANTS OFFICER</b>	Graham Burton	0423 234 127	grahamburton@live.com.au
<b>EXCURSIONS OFFICERS</b>	Greg Jackson Christine Edney (Assistant)	0450 615 104 0410 141 439	greg.jackson100@gmail.com cmedney@gmail.com
<b>WELFARE OFFICER</b>	Mary Small	9522 9917	marysmall@optusnet.com.au
<b>AFTERNOON TEA COORDINATOR</b>	Deborah Burton	0403 625 889	burton.deb@gmail.com
<b>HONORARY SOLICITOR</b>	Michael Solari		

**SSHS CALENDAR: DECEMBER 2022 – MARCH 2023**  
(See website: [www.shirehistory.org](http://www.shirehistory.org) for updates)

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

**Sutherland Shire Museum at 88 Venetia St., Sylvania is open:**  
**Tuesdays** 12.00 – 4.00pm  
**Thursdays**, 9.30am-1.30pm and **Saturdays**, 9.00am – 1.00pm  
**Closed from Sat. 24<sup>th</sup> December, reopening Saturday, 7<sup>th</sup> January 2023**

**DATE**

<b>DECEMBER 2022</b>		<b>NO MEETING IN DECEMBER</b>
<b>JANUARY 2023</b>	<b>Sat 21st</b>	<p align="center"><b>GENERAL MEETING</b></p> <p><b>SPEAKER:</b> Christine Edney's presentation is on 'Occupations of the Past', a look at jobs that are no longer done – like 'knockerupper' and 'burler' and 'night soil collector'</p>
<b>FEBRUARY 2023</b>	<b>Thurs. 16th</b>	<b>EXCURSION</b> – led by Greg Jackson & Pam Forbes to Parkesvale Pleasure Grounds, Georges River National Park, weather permitting (has been cancelled twice). One km walk involved. To be confirmed.
	<b>Sat. 18th</b>	<p align="center"><b>GENERAL MEETING</b></p> <p><b>SPEAKER:</b> To be announced*</p>
<b>MARCH 2023</b>	<b>Fri. 17<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>EXCURSION</b> – led by Greg Jackson & Pam Forbes to the Quarantine Station at North Head by train, ferry and bus (all for \$2.50!). To be confirmed.
	<b>Sat. 18th</b>	<p align="center"><b>GENERAL MEETING</b></p> <p><b>SPEAKER:</b> To be announced*</p>

\* Watch the website, your emails or letter box for more information on meetings and excursions

 *Merry Christmas everyone!* 

**EXCURSIONS:** Please note that for insurance reasons only SSHS members can attend excursions.

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

PAULINE CURBY



After months of rain we were pleased, and mightily relieved to have a gloriously fine day on 15 October for the official opening of Sutherland Shire Museum. Councillor

Laura Cowell presided, and Councillor Marcelle Elzerman also attended. As another local historical event was happening at the same time, there were a number of apologies, including from the mayor Councillor Carmelo Pesce, who dropped in unexpectedly for a museum tour as we were finishing up.

Despite the dearth of celebrities, the day was a great success with lively entertainment, delicious catering and short informative speeches. Approximately 70 people attended and all were impressed with what we have achieved so far in a limited space.

Our anxiety concerning the weather leading up to the big day highlights our desperate need for a weather-proof extension. At present we have nowhere to gather and induct visiting groups if the weather is inclement. Currently we are looking at the feasibility of extending the existing building. Funding such work is of course a major hurdle. Meanwhile we are looking forward to our next big event in February for the launch of the Matson Collection of local Aboriginal artefacts. We're hoping for a fine day.

As I have mentioned before when SSHS campaigned to save Hotham House, there are occasions when we decide to take a stand on a controversial issue. Hence when a Section 60 application to Heritage NSW was advertised in August for extensive building at

Hungry Point – the former Fisheries Research Centre – the executive authorised me to write a submission objecting to elements of the application. Members were also invited to respond to the draft submission in addition to writing their own, if they chose to.

The most contentious item is the replacement of Building 16 with a four-storey training academy (with accommodation). Our submission also objected to the demolition of building 10, the former fisheries school/laboratory built in 1946, and to the scale of the replacement training pool facility (building 23) with a 2-storey building which would be a dominating feature, especially when viewed from the water. We supported the refurbishment of buildings 13 and 15 (former migrant hostel accommodation), but noted that the principles of the Burra Charter needed to be adhered to.<sup>1</sup>

I concluded my submission with these words:

This state-heritage listed site is ... a significant element in the history of NSW because of its Aboriginal heritage, history of fisheries research and migrant accommodation history. It is a site of great natural beauty that has remained in public ownership since its reservation in the 1860s for defence purposes ... We do not want to see what is essentially a hotel erected there.

Members will be kept informed as to the future of this important site. We are hopeful, especially as Heritage NSW has apparently been deluged with objections to the application.

<sup>1</sup> The Burra Charter on the conservation of places of cultural significance was adopted in 1979 in Burra, a historic mining town in South Australia.

# MUSEUM REPORT

PETER MOORE

The big event for the last period has been the official opening of the Museum, which finally happened on a fortuitous day in amongst a spell of inclement weather. Much credit must be given to all of the members of the museum committee for the effort in organising the day and the work put in finishing off the displays.

I would like to draw to the attention of members and others that to get the museum to this stage has cost the SSHS in excess of \$10 000 of the society's own funds. To expand our museum from this small beginning we will have to ask for more financial support, as well as trying to obtain more grants for specific projects.

We had fine food organised by Deb Burton and her kitchen helpers, music supplied by Long John Doherty's band, *Ukelele Obsession*, and an opening address by Councillor Cowell. Unfortunately, the Mayor was not able to attend, but was able to pay a visit later in the afternoon. As with all visitors to our museum he was most impressed with the displays in the museum - 'Surprisingly so', he said.

Once again, thanks to all those who have participated in the rebirth of our museum - well done all of you.

The opening highlighted the lack of space we have in the museum building. If it had rained the opening would have been a disaster. The museum committee is now formulating some plans for extensions to both the front and back of the building. Of course we will have to obtain SSC approval and arrange for more grant

money for these projects to come into being.

Meanwhile inside the museum minor changes are taking place to some displays. As has always been said that the museum is a continuous work in progress.

Work also continues with the accessioning of objects on the system developed by Bruce Edney. This has been a great help to the museum - as well as a money saver - since we did not need to purchase a proprietary system.

Now that there is a little more time available, work is being carried out in the sheds sorting out some of our unaccessioned items. A small amount of shelving has been purchased and set up in the second shed, freeing up room in the first shed. Gradually we will have the sheds all sorted out and unwanted material disposed of.

We will be working towards having another event in the new year when restoration of the Holt organ is finished, and the Matson collection put on display.

There will be a Xmas party for all members on Saturday, 26th November and most of our museum committee's energies will be devoted to having another great function in the museum. More information at the November meeting.

Finally, I would like to thank all those who have helped throughout the year. You should be justly proud of the work you have done.

Have a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

**Minutes of**  
**56<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**  
**SUTHERLAND SHIRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.**  
**held on**  
**SATURDAY 17<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2022**  
Stapleton Centre, 21 Stapleton Street, Sutherland

Meeting commenced at 1.30pm

Chair: Pauline Curby, President;

Minutes: Elizabeth Craig

1. Welcome

Acknowledgement of country

Apologies: Graham Burton, Deb Burton, Peter Moore, Creo Moore, Kate Doherty, Gail Foren, Cliff Foren, Bruce Watt, Stephanie Bailey

2. Presentation of Minutes of 55<sup>th</sup> AGM – published in February 2022 *Bulletin*

Motion to accept Minutes of the 55<sup>th</sup> AGM

**Moved:** Andrew Platfoot;      **Seconded:** Bruce Edney

3. Reports of office bearers (President, Secretary, Treasurer) as published in the August 2022 *Bulletin*

Motion to accept reports:

**Moved:** George Cotis;      **Seconded:** Elizabeth Craig

4. Adoption of financial report and balance sheet for 2021/2022 as published in the August 2022 *Bulletin*

Motion to accept report:

**Moved:** John Doherty;      **Seconded:** Elizabeth Craig

5. **Election of officer bearers**

Returning Officer, Andrew Platfoot takes the chair to conduct the elections:

**President:** Pauline Curby (elected unopposed)

**Vice President:** Elizabeth Craig (elected unopposed)

**Secretary/Public Officer:** Graham Burton (elected unopposed)

**Treasurer:** John Doherty (elected unopposed)

**Committee members:** Creo Moore (elected unopposed)

Deborah Burton (elected unopposed)

3<sup>rd</sup> position vacant



## **New President, Pauline Curby takes the Chair**

### **Appointed roles:**

Museum Manager:	Peter Moore
<i>Bulletin</i> Editor:	Elizabeth Craig
Publications Editor:	Elizabeth Craig
Excursions Officers:	Greg Jackson
	Christine Edney (Assistant)
Online Administrator:	Creo Moore
Archivist:	Carol McDonald
Database Manager:	Bruce Edney
Afternoon tea coordinator:	Deb Burton
Grants Officer:	Graham Burton
Welfare Officer:	Mary Small

The new president, Pauline Curby thanked all office bearers for the contributions in the past year, and especially outgoing Committee member, Carol McDonald.

### **6. Presentation by President Pauline Curby**

The president spoke of progress at the Museum, and of the Opening on 15<sup>th</sup> October to be officiated by Sutherland Shire Mayor, Cllr Carmelo Pesce. She also informed us that Noel Watkins, the new Chair of the Sutherland Shire Citizens Heritage Festival Committee has been advised that SSHS will not be taking part in next year's Heritage Festival because of other commitments.

She also reported on a SSHS delegation to our local State member, Mark Speakman to object to Marine Rescue's proposed development at Hungry Point, Cronulla. It is not in keeping with the heritage and history of the site, nor the recommendations of the CMP Heritage Report 2019.

7. At 2.10pm Carol McDonald ran a video of historical footage of surfing in the Sutherland Shire.

### **8. General Business**

- a) SSHS member, George Cotis, presented to the Society handwritten notes by Fred Matson, a third generation boat builder from the Shire, apparently written just before his death in 1993. Fred's family had built the Matson Pleasure Grounds, the site of the current Camellia Gardens on the Hacking River. George explained that the notes, together with a transcription had been passed to him for SSHS by Fred's grandchild, Mrs Levy. The transcription will also be handed over to the Society in due course. President Pauline Curby was delighted to receive this donation, and thanked George on behalf of the Society.
- b) Christine Edney announced that she had some Cooks Raffle tickets to sell on behalf of the Second Caringbah Scouts Group.
- c) Pauline announced that Activus Transport representative, Pam Collacott, would be speaking briefly to the Society at our November meeting, just before our main speaker, Bruce Howell talks about Aboriginal place names in the Shire.

At 3.00pm, the meeting was declared closed, and members gathered for afternoon tea.

## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

ELIZABETH CRAIG

The cover story for this month's *Bulletin* is about a unique artefact held by Sutherland Shire Museum – ballast jettisoned by the crew of *HMB Endeavour* when they ran aground on the Great Barrier Reef in June 1770 on their way to Batavia (now Djakarta) after departing Botany Bay. There it stayed on the sea floor for nearly 200 years, before a team of researchers from Philadelphia, recovered it in 1969. Read the story of these two pieces of ballast written by marine archaeologists Greg Jackson and Pam Forbes on page 10.

The ballast is on loan from the Australian National Maritime Museum, and to me it's one of our Museum's most intriguing artefacts. There it was on that fateful sea journey with Lt James Cook 252 years ago, and here it is now in our Museum for us to inspect and touch, a relic from pre-European settlement in this country.

The Museum has many other unique relics telling the story of our past, from Aboriginal

occupation to early explorers and landholders, and why the Shire was so late to develop.

We have an exciting new display coming up early next year which we will launch with pomp and ceremony. The Matson collection - a collection of stone, bone and shell Aboriginal tools found in the Shire last century by Fred Matson, a third generation Shire boat builder. As a collection these are quite unique. More will be revealed shortly.

If you haven't yet been to the Museum, then come to our Xmas Party at 88 Venetia St, Sylvania on Saturday, 26 November (see inside front cover for details). I can absolutely recommend Deb Burton's catering, and the entertainment provided by the Orana Ukelele group. You'll also be able to wander around the Museum, admiring the artefacts and learning about the Shire's history.

See you there.



*Sun, Sea and Surf, Cronulla 1950s*



*Surf life savers, Cronulla Beach (undated)*

Photos from SSHS Photo collection

# FROM THE MUSEUM: *ENDEAVOUR* BALLAST

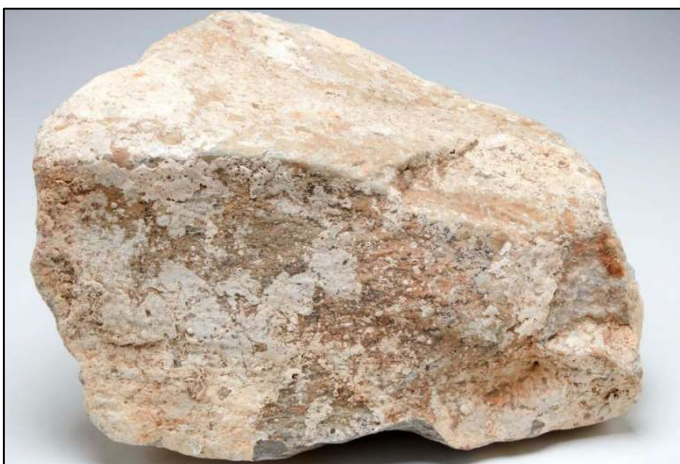
GREG JACKSON and PAM FORBES

## Introduction

Our new museum (at 88 Venetia Street, Sylvania) has on loan from the Australian National Maritime Museum a piece of iron and a piece of stone ballast from James Cook's HMB *Endeavour*<sup>1</sup> (Images 1 and 2). Ship's ballast is necessary for the stability of sailing ships, but can sometimes also tell an interesting story. As a sailing ship moves along trade routes picking up and dropping off cargo, the ships ballast is continually trimmed being offloaded or collected to balance the ship. For this reason, ballast on trading ships is usually just rocks of a size that can easily be moved by one man. Irregular rocks are cheap but not ideal ballast having a poor packing density and the undesirable possibility that they may move as the ship heels. Sailing naval ships and vessels engaged in exploration, like the *Endeavour*, would not usually be required to discard ballast, so would sometimes use denser and more stable permanent iron ballast, also called kentledge (Image 1). As ships' stores are used up an equivalent weight of stone ballast would be collected (Image 2). In the case of the *Endeavour* this would most likely have been in 1769 in either Tahiti or New Zealand.



**Image 1:** A piece of *Endeavour's* iron ballast (or kentledge) from HMB *Endeavour* recovered in 1969 from the Barrier Reef and now in SSHS Museum. Note the broad arrow denoting government ownership. [Image from the ANMM website<sup>2</sup>: object number 00029143, weight 85 kg]



**Image 2:** A piece of *Endeavour's* stone ballast probably picked up in New Zealand or Tahiti and added to the ships iron ballast to replace the ship's stores as they were used up, now in the SSHS Museum. [Image from the ANMM website<sup>2</sup>: object number: 00029172, weight 22.5 kg]

## ***Endeavour* aground**

On 10 June 1770, HMB *Endeavour* under the command of Captain James Cook, was sailing north through the Barrier Reef. At 11 pm it struck a reef and started taking on water. Desperate to lighten the ship, the crew heaved nearly 48 tons of material over the side, including iron and stone ballast and cannons.

Six of our guns ... our iron and stone ballast, casts, hoop staves, oil jars, decayed stores, and many other things that lay in the way of heavier materials ... are thrown overboard with the utmost expedition.

James Cook, journal, 11 June 1770

At the next high tide *Endeavour* was pulled free. The crew spent the next six weeks repairing the ship at what became known as Endeavour River in north Queensland. The ballast lay for 199 years on the reef, becoming encased in concretions and coral.

In 1969 an expedition for the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia arrived on the Great Barrier Reef with the dual purpose of finding the material jettisoned by Captain Cook on Endeavour Reef, and collecting fish for study at that Academy and the American Museum of Natural History in New York City.

All six cannon, along with several tons of iron and stone ballast were recovered and turned over to the Australian government for conservation and curation by the appropriate institutions. The conservation was carried out by Dr. Colin Pearson at the Defence Standards Laboratory in Melbourne. Dr. Pearson pioneered the treatment of iron objects recovered from the marine environment and went on to teach a generation of maritime archaeological conservators. After completion of the conservation treatment, then Prime Minister John Gorton decided to distribute the cannons to the countries and states related to Captain Cook's voyage. One cannon was given to the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia; the Maritime Museum at Greenwich, England; the New Zealand government; the Queensland and New South Wales state governments and one was retained for the Commonwealth. After being on display in the Australian National Maritime Museum for over two decades, it can now be seen at the National Museum of Australia, Canberra.<sup>3</sup>

## ***Endeavour's* ballast**

The ballast is mostly held in store in the ANMM Darling Harbour. Their museum inventory lists 56 pieces of stone ballast and 31 pieces of iron ballast. The ballast in our museum is on loan from this collection.

The iron ballast is poor quality cast (pig) iron, and originally came in three lengths: 300, 600 and 900mm (1, 2 and 3 feet), all with a square cross-section of around 150mm (6 inches). These three sizes made for optimal packing into the bilge of ships. When manufactured they weighed approximately 50, 100 and 150kg (1, 2 and 3 hundred weight).<sup>4</sup> Almost 200 years immersed in warm salt water on the Barrier Reef has reduced their weight considerably with the largest one now weighing in at only 137kg. The iron ballast shows considerable evidence of past corrosion, but is now stable after conservation.

## Stories from the ballast

Mounds of ballast are often all that remain of wrecks of old wooden sailing ships. And the ballast can often tell us a lot about the ships size, where it was from and where it had been. English trading ships often used beach shingle (large, rounded pebbles) as ballast. Dutch ships are typically ballasted with bricks, as Holland is a country very short of stone. Ballast, such as brick and roof slates, which can be sold for a profit at journeys end are called 'paid ballast'. Worn-out cannons are often used as ballast and coats of arms and other casting marks on these cannons are often very informative. At old ports in Australia stone ballast mounds are common and the source of the stone can often be identified with many having large mounds of Sydney sandstone. The authors have reported paid ballast in the form of bricks stamped 'Camperdown' mixed with sandstone from Sydney quarries at south-coast timber ports.<sup>5</sup> The Hacking River estuary has its own well-ordered ballast mounds of sandstone left over, mostly, from the mosquito fleet<sup>6</sup> that moved shells to the lime kilns of Tempe and Port Jackson in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>7</sup>

## Conclusion

If you have not been to the museum at its new location on the corner of Holt Road and Venetia Street, Sylvania then you should visit. The *Endeavour* ballast is the oldest European object in our museum but there are many more interesting indigenous and European items to see. Do come and have a look. We are open:

Tuesdays: 1pm to 4pm

Thursdays: 9.30am to 1.30pm

Saturdays: 9.00am to 1.00pm

We are also open for groups at other times. For a group booking or more information contact us at [shirehistory@gmail.com](mailto:shirehistory@gmail.com) or phone 0424 600 150

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## References:

<sup>1</sup> HMB stands for His Majesty's Bark

<sup>2</sup> Australian National Maritime Museum (ANMM)

<https://collections.sea.museum/objects/19137/piece-of-kentledge-from-hmb-endeavour?ctx=1d244e75-1a59-452e-bda0-8e7238b10c61&idx=13>

<sup>3</sup> Hundley P. 2021, *Iron Ballast from HMB Endeavour*, Paul Hundley is a maritime archaeologists and director of Silentworld Foundation.

[https://www.nma.gov.au/explore/features/european\\_voyages/european\\_voyages\\_to\\_the\\_australian\\_continent/empire/endeavour\\_runs\\_aground](https://www.nma.gov.au/explore/features/european_voyages/european_voyages_to_the_australian_continent/empire/endeavour_runs_aground)

<sup>4</sup> 1cwt (hundred weight) = 50.8kg = 112lbs, 20cwt = 1 ton = 1.016 tonne

<sup>5</sup> See *The Ghost Port of Broulee*,

[https://www.academia.edu/44213811/The\\_Ghost\\_Port\\_of\\_Broulee](https://www.academia.edu/44213811/The_Ghost_Port_of_Broulee)

<sup>6</sup> A 'mosquito fleet' is a fleet of small vessels engaged in a particular trade

<sup>7</sup> A future article in this *Bulletin* will discuss the maritime trade from the Hacking estuary.



## A VISIT TO 'THE BIRTHPLACE OF QUEENSLAND'

PAULINE CURBY

In August my husband Kevin and I took a couple of days out of our holiday visiting family on the Sunshine Coast to head north to the Discovery Coast. We stayed between the adjoining villages of 1770 (formerly known as Round Hill) and Agnes Water. While Agnes Water takes its name from a shipwreck in 1873, 1770 is so-called because in May 1770 James Cook and the crew of the *Endeavour* visited the area. In the last 40 years this delightful district has seen dramatic changes and has become a well-known tourist destination. By the 1920s it was already a popular holiday and camping spot, but more low-key than at present.

On 24 June 1936 the name Round Hill was changed to 1770, and it became known as 'the birthplace of Queensland'. This reminded us of the term used for Kurnell in the past when it was designated as the 'birthplace of the nation' and later the 'birthplace of modern Australia'. The promotion of Round Hill as 'the birthplace of Queensland' had begun in the 1920s, culminating in June 1926 by the erection of a cairn to commemorate Cook's visit. Then in May 1970, for the Cook Bicentenary a 'doorway of destiny' monument was erected.

On 23 May 1770 the Meerooni people must have been astonished when HMB *Endeavour* sailed into a 'large open bay', now Bustard Bay. They made themselves scarce when Cook, Banks and 'the other gentlemen' landed and explored 'a little within the south point of the bay'. The British observed smoke and evidence of small fires, but made no contact with the Meerooni people. The ship's crew who remained on the *Endeavour*, however, reported seeing about 20 'natives' who 'stood upon the beach for some time looking at her, after which they went into the woods'. Cook named this Bustard Bay after the bird 'as large as a good turkey' they shot during their brief exploration and ate the following day. He declared it was the best meal they'd had since leaving England.<sup>1</sup>

While we were on the Discovery Coast we also had some good meals as well as visiting the historic landmarks, including the Agnes Water Museum operated by volunteers from the Discovery Coast Historical Society. They were interested to hear about our museum and have since bought 10 copies of our 2020 publication *East Coast Encounters*. They will no doubt be particularly interested in the last chapter by Mark McKenna, 'A bridge to reconciliation for Cooktown – and for Australia?'

The Agnes Water Museum is much larger than ours and seems to have considerable support from Gladstone Regional Council, the local government area for Central Queensland. I asked about off-site storage as there were no sheds in the grounds but was told that everything is on display. It sure is! There is a wealth of artefacts and documents to be seen in this museum which deals with local history – once you get past the copious displays and text featuring Cook and Flinders, who also visited Bustard Bay in the *Investigator* in 1802. I was particularly interested in the display featuring the Bustard Bay Light Station which opened in 1868, the first lighthouse in Queensland. If you're ever on the Discovery Coast make sure you pop into the Agnes Water Museum. You'll get a very friendly welcome.

<sup>1</sup> Information for this article was taken from: *A History of the birthplace of Queensland, town of 1770, Discovery Coast Historical Society, 2015 (pp.58-11)*



*Pauline Curby at the Lieutenant James Cook Monument Cairn, August 2022 [Photo: Kevin Curby]*



## SSHS EXCURSION TO THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM (ANMM), Wednesday, 19 October 2022.

KEVIN CURBY

With no time to waste, as we crossed the Como Bridge, our guide, Greg Jackson had us looking left along the shoreline at a house, *The Rockies*, built by Frederick Sanbrook as a weekender circa 1900. This was the era of the *Telephone* steamer taking passengers from Como Station up the Georges River to Parkesville Pleasure Grounds, all owned by Frederick and his two brothers.

Once at the ANMM, it was coffee and sorting out preferences. This museum is the only Australian National Museum located outside the Australian Capital Territory. Our first stop, after walking past other treasures, was to board the replica of the *Duyfken*, an early 17<sup>th</sup> century spice trader from (what is today) Indonesia.



On the deck of the *Duyfken* replica

The *Duyfken* was built in 1595 and disappeared in 1608, but it was an exploratory trip south in 1606 that took it to the west coast of Cape York where the Dutch crew of twenty became the first recorded Europeans to meet with Indigenous Australians. The replica was built in Western Australia in 1999 and brought to Sydney in 2020. More information in Garriock Duncan's article, *SSHS Bulletin* May 2022 (p.25).

[Photos by Creo Moore]

At a nearby mooring, the *Endeavour* was our next stop. It was interesting to see the differences in living space for the crew and officers. On display were copies of maps of the time, a couple being the same as those on display at our museum. A point to note is that all of these replica ships must comply with current safety standards and have auxiliary motors installed in case the wind drops.



*The Endeavour*



Part 2 of the excursion involved boarding the *James Craig*, a late 19<sup>th</sup> century square rigger with an iron hull. It was found in Tasmania in a very rusted condition and at a cost of many millions of dollars, is now seaworthy, sailing in and out of Sydney Harbour for day trippers seeking that awe-inspiring experience of sailing through the Heads in a square rigger under full sail.

*The James Craig*

What a different atmosphere when we boarded each piece of history.

Part 3 was a visit to the museum 'halls' displaying a range of boats regarded as significant in Australia's maritime history. Under the same roof was the magnificent display, *Wildlife photographer of the year*. As expected, the photos were phenomenal in colour and subject, with many taken of insects or birds in flight at very fast shutter speeds.

Our thanks to Greg Jackson for organising a great day and guiding our group through the displays. His extensive knowledge and lively presentation was greatly appreciated all round.

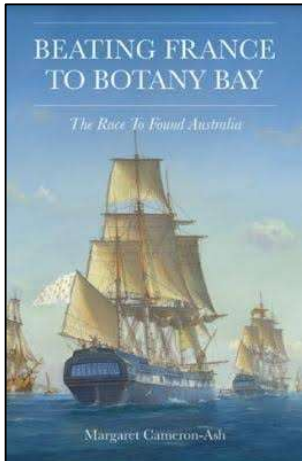


*Excursionists relax with a drink at the ANMM café* [Photos: Creo Moore]

## BOOK REVIEW

EDWARD DUYKER  
University of Sydney

A slightly edited version of the original review published in *The French Australian Review*, No. 72 (Winter 2022: pp.159-165)



Margaret Cameron-Ash  
*Beating France to Botany Bay: The Race to Found Australia*, Sydney, Quadrant Books, November 2021

ISBN 978-0-64899-612-5

465 pp

Index, bibliography, thirteen maps, eight monochrome illustrations, twenty colour illustrations

Cost: \$44.95

There is now a genre of popular non-fiction that presents historical subjects as contests or obstacle-strewn quests. A hero, a nemesis (or just someone who doesn't play cricket), impediments and hidden motives offer engaging narrative devices. In *Beating France to Botany Bay*, Margaret Cameron-Ash offers us a 'race', purportedly between Arthur Phillip and the French explorer Lapérouse, to reach the east coast of Australia and found a colony.

On page 85, Cameron-Ash offers her readers some historiographical musings: 'where the archives are silent, evidence can be found elsewhere'. Well, sometimes. Unfortunately, when she does not have this other 'evidence', she speculates with frequent qualifying words such as 'would have', 'may have', 'probably' and 'no doubt'. Alas, there is doubt. I wish she had heeded the principle that when presented with competing hypotheses, one should choose the one with the fewest assumptions.

Cameron-Ash focusses on Thomas Jefferson's request to John Paul Jones (one of the founders of the United States navy) to investigate the Lapérouse expedition before its departure from France. Jefferson was anxious about French ambitions on the north-west coast of America. On page 178, Cameron-Ash quotes Jones' letter to Jefferson of October 5, 1785, at the very end of which he speculates that the

attention of a great Prince [Louis XVI] . . . *may be* [reviewer's italics] to extend the Commerce of Factories at a future Day, for the Fur Trade on the North West Coast of America; and another to establish Colonies in New Holland, after having well explored the Coast, and made Experiments on the Soil of that vast Island, which is situated in so happy a Climate, and so contiguous to the Establishments of France in the East Indies.'

Cameron-Ash then converts John Paul Jones's *may be* into a firm statement of fact: 'This news that a French colony *was to be* [my italics] planted in New Holland would have been of particular interest to the governments of Great Britain, the Dutch Republic, and the Kingdom of Spain. However, Jones had been instructed to maintain secrecy . . . '.



Cameron-Ash then argues that this supposedly secret intelligence came to the attention of John Ledyard (veteran of Cook's third voyage) through his association with Jefferson, that it was then passed on to Joseph Banks and that it then precipitated the British government's decision to establish a penal colony on the east coast of Australia. This causal chain is presented with descriptions of imagined meals and conversations.

It should be noted that John Paul Jones merely speculated about a potential French colony on the north or west coast of New Holland, rather than the east coast, otherwise, why would he have concluded his report with the phrase 'so contiguous to the Establishments of France in the East Indies'. In any case, when Jefferson passed on Jones's report to Secretary of State John Jay on October 6, 1785, he wrote that France had an 'intention to settle factories, and not colonies, for the present'. And he used the word 'conjecture' when he referred to New Holland.

The information was unlikely to be unique. Britain had an ambassador in France. It was peacetime and French ports were accessible for British travellers, merchants or agents. Frenchmen also wrote to their friends in England. On August 4, 1785 (two months before Jones wrote to Jefferson) Labillardière informed his friend James Edward Smith of preparations for the Lapérouse expedition. Both were friends of Joseph Banks, who had something of an open house for visiting scientists and had plenty of time to make his own enquiries if he was interested.<sup>1</sup>

*Beating France to Botany Bay* does contain several engaging chapters. Cameron-Ash's discussion of the life of the American loyalist John Ledyard is one. While I enjoy biographical summaries of relevant individuals in an historical narrative, Cameron-Ash can't resist delivering them even when there is no firm proof that an individual was even present, say, in the home of Thomas Jefferson or Joseph Banks. It doesn't stop there. Bonaparte, we are told, applied to join the Lapérouse expedition, but his application was unsuccessful (page 167). To be fair, this tale has been repeated by John Dunmore, Jill, Duchess of Hamilton and others, but seriously questioned by Robert Laulan, historian of the École militaire.<sup>2</sup>

I share Margaret Cameron-Ash's belief that New South Wales was settled by the British because of broad strategic considerations and great power rivalry. But this rivalry was not just about France; it also involved Spain and Spanish colonies in the Pacific and South America. New South Wales was not simply a location to send convicts after the Americans gained their independence. Alan Frost's *Convicts and Empire: A Naval Question 1776–1811* (1980) was a seminal work in this area. But Britain's strategic considerations do not mean that there is truth in the tired old trope that Australian history might have been very different had Lapérouse arrived a few days earlier than the First Fleet. Lapérouse only received orders to sail to Botany Bay when he was at Kamchatka in September 1787. He did not receive orders to abandon the rest of his voyage of exploration and there is no evidence that he was ordered to establish a rival or pre-emptive French colony in New South Wales. Who would have peopled and governed this French colony from the all-male crews of just two French vessels of exploration, already depleted by loss of life in Alaska, Samoa and even Botany Bay? Still more Chinese sailors from Macau? How would it have been sustained until it became viable, if ever? The French government had already had its fingers burned by Maurice Benyovszky's colony in Madagascar in the previous decade, and chose to dismantle it, rather than invest more funds from its cash-strapped coffers. The French fiscal crisis had only deepened. While replacing colonies and fisheries lost in North America remained attractive, France was on the verge of Revolution.

Cameron-Ash makes much of the plants and seeds carried on Lapérouse's expedition, suggesting that they were intended for establishing a colony (page 181). However, Lapérouse's orders from Louis XVI offer more clarity on what appears to have been an altruistic Enlightenment project:

Sieur de la Pérouse will leave O-Taïti after a month's stay. He will be able to visit the islands of Huaheine, Ulietea, Otaha, Bolabola [Bora Bora], and other Society Islands, in order to procure additional provisions, to provide these islands the handiworks of Europe which are useful to their inhabitants, and sow seeds there, plant trees, vegetables, etc. which could subsequently present new resources to European navigators crossing this ocean.<sup>3</sup>

André Thouin, director of the Jardin du Roi (later the Jardin des Plantes) who purchased these seeds and seedlings for the expedition, also saw the transportation of these European plants 'likely to be useful to inhabitants of the countries that we will travel in' as a training exercise for the return voyage with other living botanical bounty. In his letter to Lapérouse, dated May 19, 1785, he wrote: 'This good work would not be a pure loss for us since it would provide the Gardener with the means to ensure the best method to use to bring back to Europe the productions that could be useful'.<sup>4</sup>

Accompanying Cameron-Ash's speculations are some surprising statements. On page 256, she declares: 'The launching of the First Fleet was tantamount to an act of war against France'. After describing all the armaments loaded aboard the First Fleet, she glibly asserts: 'Arthur Phillip hoped that he was adequately prepared for any encounter with Jean Lapérouse' (page 305). There is no documentary foundation for this assertion, but many reasons to question it. Are we to believe that the ships of the First Fleet were not armed in case of rebellion by the large body of convicts they were forcibly transporting to the antipodes, or potential resistance from the Indigenous people whose land they were about to invade, or attack by pirates or other hostile forces during the long voyage? Offering further strategic anxieties, she asks: 'Were French military reinforcements on their way from Mauritius?' (page 356). No, they were not on their way from Mauritius, 10,000 kilometres by sea from Botany Bay.

While Lapérouse did have orders to gather intelligence and explore future commercial opportunities for France, his orders embodied impressive ambitions in the natural and physical sciences, including geophysics and hydrography. Ultimately, his expedition would conduct the first systematic scientific experiments ever conducted on Australian soil. At least Cameron-Ash references Doug Morrison's and Ivan Barks's article on this subject, but in her quest for ulterior motives she sidelines the important scientific story.

In her previous book, *Lying for the Admiralty*, Cameron-Ash argued that during the *Endeavour* voyage, James Cook sensed the presence of Bass Strait and that he also made a secret excursion from the north shore of Botany Bay and discovered Port Jackson in 1770. She believes that he kept these discoveries secret, that he lied for the Admiralty. She reaffirms this in *Beating France to Botany Bay* (see page 32) and would have us believe that Arthur Phillip carried these secrets with him on the First Fleet. Even if this was so, I am not convinced that this made any difference to the course of Australian history. In *Lying for the Admiralty* (page 161), she tells us that Cook 'kept Tasmania safe from the French for three decades'. Yet, the currents Cook encountered from the east, in 1770, also made d'Entrecasteaux suspect a strait when he approached Van Diemen's Land from the opposite direction in 1793.<sup>5</sup> It would still be another decade before the island was settled by the British.

Cameron-Ash discusses the various pantomimes of colonial possession and Arthur Phillip's declaration of an 'Anglo-Dutch border' between 'New Holland' and 'New South Wales' and British territorial claims embracing all of Cape York and running south. Was this really an historical boundary based on exploration priority rights, or just a cynical land grab? Well, either way, it was contemptuous of the Indigenous inhabitants, but the mindset of the times is informative. In 1606, the Dutch explorer Willem Jansz charted the west coast of Cape York as far south as Cape Keer-Weer. James Cook only charted the east coast. The Dutch also charted the Gulf of Carpentaria in the seventeenth century, not to mention the western and much of the southern coast of Australia, including Van Diemen's Land, by 1642. When two strange ships were first sighted by the British at the entrance to Botany Bay in January 1788, is it any wonder that Watkin Tench, aboard the First Fleet transport *Charlotte*, should have recorded the initial conjecture, not that they were French, but that 'they were Dutchmen sent to dispossess us'.<sup>6</sup>

Cameron-Ash construes Arthur Phillips' relocation of the ships of the First Fleet from Botany Bay to Port Jackson, not just as a pre-emption of France, but as a 'battle'. The decisive shuffle north is described as 'a near-run thing', or, rather, John Hunter we are told '*may have* [my italics] anticipated the Duke of Wellington's remark after Waterloo' (page 368). There are more extraordinary statements on the following page:

The Battle of Port Jackson was possibly the most significant naval victory in the era of Anglo-French rivalry. The Battle of Trafalgar in 1805 has received the most glorification of any naval battle in history, but it decided little. It did not prevent the invasion of England, as Napoleon had abandoned that plan months earlier. It did not end the Napoleonic Wars, which raged for another ten years. The Battle of Port Jackson in 1788 received no glorification, but it shaped the history of the eastern hemisphere (page 369).

Few would dispute the profound significance of the establishment of the first permanent European settlement on the coast of Australia, especially for the Indigenous inhabitants, but can we really accept that Lapérouse was the antagonist in a 'battle' when he visited New South Wales, moreover, one that eclipsed the significance of Trafalgar seventeen years later? At most it could be construed as an awkward political dance. If there was a 'Battle of Port Jackson', literal or metaphorical, how is it that Watkin Tench could write the following in his *A Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay* (chapter. xii):

About the middle of the month [March] our good friends the French departed from Botany Bay, in prosecution of their voyage. During their stay in that port, the officers of the two nations had frequent opportunities of testifying their mutual regard by visits, and every interchange of friendship and esteem.

It remains to be said that had Lapérouse lived to complete his voyage, he would have fulfilled his orders to survey other parts of the northern and western coasts of New Holland. But he didn't. His expedition came to grief off Vanikoro in the Solomon Islands.

I have no doubt of specific French interest in the D'Entrecasteaux Channel (Tasmania), Western Port (Victoria), and King George Sound and Swan River (Western Australia). Dumont d'Urville, certainly had secret orders to search for potential locations for a French colony.<sup>7</sup> And I don't need convincing that the British acted to pre-empt the restored Bourbon monarchy from establishing such a colony in the 1820s, and the Orleanist monarchy from doing so in the 1830s, just as they pre-empted Napoleon two decades earlier in the wake of the Baudin expedition. However, this

book does not provide convincing evidence that Lapérouse was engaged in a race with Arthur Phillip, or that he had secret orders to establish a French colony at Botany Bay in 1788.



Capt. Arthur Phillip, W. Sherwin after Francis Wheatley, (undated) [National Portrait Gallery]



Lapérouse, etching by A. Lefevre, 1835 [Author's collection]

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<sup>1</sup> Duyker, *Citizen Labillardière*, Miegunyah, 2003, pp. 28–31

<sup>2</sup> Robert Laulan, 'Que valent les "cahiers" d'Alexandre des Mazis?', *Revue de l'Institut Napoléon*, April 1956, pp. 54–60.

<sup>3</sup> 'Mémoire du Roi' in Milet-Mureau, *Voyage de La Pérouse*, tome I, p. 11.

<sup>4</sup> Yvonne Letouzey (ed.), *Le Jardin des Plantes à la croisée des chemins avec André Thouin 1747–1824*, Éditions du Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle, Paris, 1989, p. 201.

<sup>5</sup> Duyker & Duyker (ed. & trans.) *Bruny d'Entrecasteaux, Voyage to Australia and the Pacific*, pp. 135–6 & 163.

<sup>6</sup> Tench, *A Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay*, chapt. viii.

<sup>7</sup> Duyker, *Dumont d'Urville*, Otago University Press, 2014, p. 172.



## THE BARDENS CREEK MEN – A MURDER SCENE?

GREG JACKSON and PAM FORBES

For Heritage Week in 1988 there was a photographic display of Aboriginal art, and the local newspaper, *The St George and Sutherland Shire Leader*, published this dramatic photo in **Image 1**, together with an article and comments by Les Bursill. At the time he was engaged in ‘the Living Sites Survey’, a Bicentenary Project funded by Sutherland Shire Council with the aim of documenting as many of the Shire’s Aboriginal sites as could be located.

The photo shows an interpretation of a rock engraving in the Mill Creek area not far from the Menai Waste Disposal facility. The engraving, badly eroded in 1988 is today almost invisible, but using a digital photographic technique some new information about this important Aboriginal art can be obtained.



**Image 1:** Photo from *The St George and Sutherland Shire Leader*, 7 April 1988, depicting an Aboriginal rock engraving outlined presumably using chalk.



The *Leader's* caption for this image reads:

An ABORIGINAL carving depicting what could be the murder of a British officer is a part of the display at three Shire venues during Heritage Week.

The accompanying article says in part:

... Found in the western end of the Shire, the life-size carving shows an Aboriginal spearing a man who could be holding a three-cornered hat and wearing a wig – common attire for British naval officers 200 years ago.

Not far from the 'murder' scene is a three-metre kangaroo which led Mr Bursill to theorise that giant fauna may have existed in this area 200 years ago...

He [Les Bursill] said that it was difficult to date many of the drawings and carvings. They could range in date from 200 years to several thousands.

Some historical background:

Mill Creek was once the home of a substantial Aboriginal population. In his 1803 diary botanist Robert Brown records that he travelled down the Georges River and stopped at Mill Creek where he struck a rapport with the local Aboriginal people.<sup>1</sup> Other evidence for Mill Creek's Aboriginal population is the large number of axe grinding groove sites located on the Creek and many of its tributaries, along with several rock shelters with hand stencils and charcoal and red ochre drawings.

The engraving, shown in **Image 1**, is located on flat open bedrock above Bardens Creek, which flows into Mill Creek, a tributary of the Georges River. About 15 metres east from this rock art is a 2-metre high kangaroo deeply incised into bedrock. This inscription is partially covered by sand and vegetation, but is in reasonably good condition considering that seepage water flows over it most of the time. Several axe grinding grooves are located on a small unnamed creek line 10 metres west of the engraving of the two men. A further set of these grooves is located on the same creek down towards Bardens Creek.

A relatively recently developed photograph technique call Polynomial Textural Mapping (PTM) has been used successfully by Pam Forbes and Greg Jackson for studying archaeological artefacts and features, including rock inscriptions at Sydney's Quarantine Station at North Head. (See Appendix for a brief description of this technique and references to further information about PTM's).

In order to learn more about this engraving a series of PTMs were created with snapshots from the PTMs shown in **Images 3 to 6** below. This engraving is in very poor condition due to its age, erosion of the sandstone and, recently motor bikes have been driving over the artwork leaving rubber tyre marks. Unfortunately, the artwork has been further compromised having recently been outlined using hard white rock by persons unknown. Even the use of soft chalk to outline rock art is considered detrimental to its long-term survival. This engraving is very large and the authors' PTM equipment will only cover a maximum area of 1200x1200mm. As a result, several PTM's were created each covering part of it.

**Image 2** below shows the PTM's being created at dusk. PTM's must be created in low light conditions.



**Image 2:** Pam Forbes and Greg Jackson creating a PTM of the Bardens Creek Men shown in Image 1.  
[Photo L Hedges]

Snapshots from some of the PTM's produced are contained in **Images 3 to 6**.



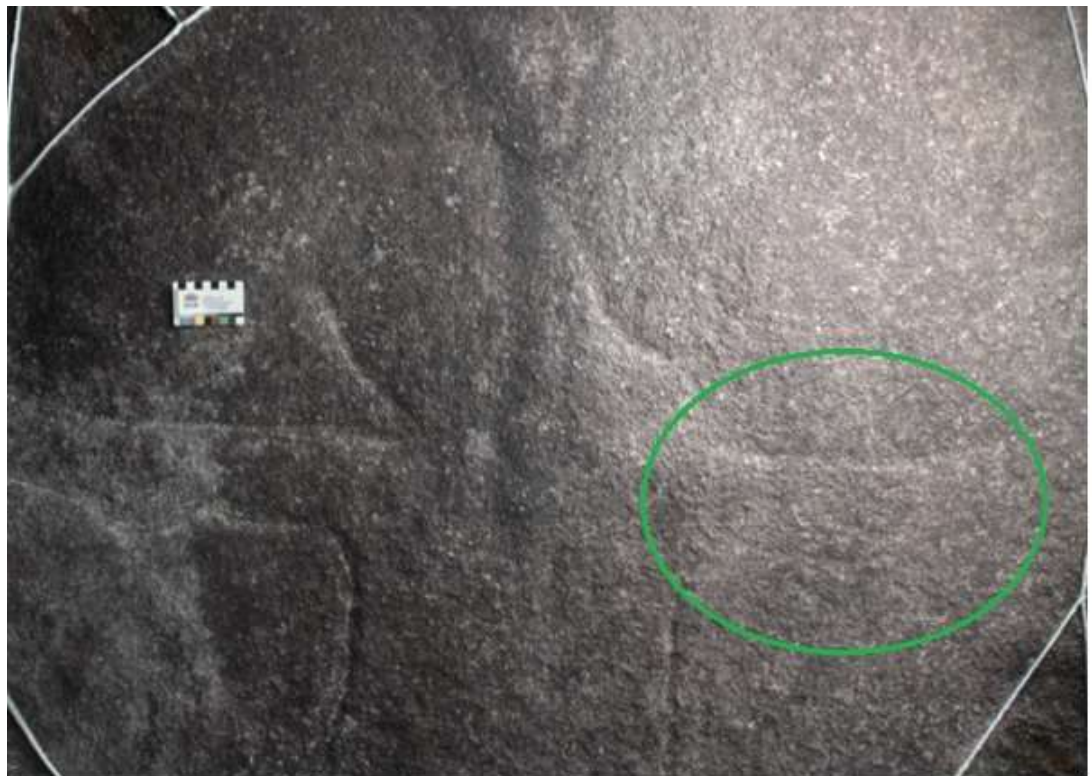
**Image 3:** Snapshot from a PTM of the hand of the man suspected of being speared (circled in orange), showing fingers but no sign of the hat shown in the Leader newspaper article.



**Image 4:** Snapshot from a PTM of the raised (left) hand of the man suspected of being speared (circled in yellow), showing fingers but not the stick shown in the Leader article.



**Image 5:** Snapshot from a PTM of the head and upper body of the man doing the suspected spearing. This shows his other arm extended (circled in green). This arm is not shown in the Leader image and the crucial spear that appears in the Leader image is not visible.





**Image 6:** Snapshot from a PTM of the head of the man suspected of being speared possibly showing an object on the right side of his head (circled in purple), but no sign of the head-shape as shown in the *Leader* article.

When comparing the four PTMs to **Image 1**, there are some discrepancies:

- **Image 3** shows no sign of the cocked hat in the right hand of the man being speared although his fingers are clearly visible. This hat is central to the identification of the speared man as a naval officer.
- **Image 4** shows fingers but not the stick shown in the *Leader* article.
- **Image 5** shows both arms of the man suspected of doing the spearing but not the spear shown in the *Leader* article.
- While **Image 6** appears to show an object on left side of the head of the man suspected of being speared, caution should be used in interpreting this image as evidence of a hat or wig. This object could have been added by the unknown person who outlined the image prior to the PTM.

### **Conclusion:**

Evidence from the PTM imaging undertaken does not support the identification of the scene as the spearing of a British officer by an Aboriginal man. No evidence was found on the engraving for a hat or a spear in the hands of the subjects and these items are central to the interpretation outlined in the *Leader* article. NSW early histories and newspapers were not slow to report atrocities committed by Aboriginals, but no reports of a British officer being speared can be found in the historic record - except of course the spearing of NSW Governor Arthur Phillip on the 7 September 1790.<sup>2</sup> In private conversations with Les Bursill (prior to the creation of the PTM images) he suggested that this image may show the spearing of Phillip, as knowledge of this event echoed around the Aboriginal communities and would have been known to the Aboriginal people in the Mill Creek area. While PTM technology has provided some insight into the subject matter of this engraving we may never know exactly what the engraving represents. It is likely that it simply shows two Aboriginal men standing side by side. The continual erosion of the sandstone, other damage and vandalism makes the image increasingly more difficult to decipher. PTM technology may have an important role in the documentation of more Aboriginal and European engravings.

The authors would like to thank Frank Purvis for providing the original *Leader* newspaper article that forms the basis of this article.



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1. Brown R. 1803, *The Diary of Robert Brown in Australia, 1801-1805* (Compiled by T. G. Vallance, D. T. Moore & E. W. Groves, 2001), Australian Biological Resources Study, Canberra, Australia.
2. Champion S, and Champion G. 1989, *The Spearing of Governor Phillip at Collins Cove (now Manly Cove), 7th September 1790*. NLA, Bib ID 1346039, ISBN 0959648429

## Appendix:

## PTM Images

**Polynomial Textural Mapping** (PTM) images, also known as **Reflectance Transformation Imaging** (RTI) are produced with a digital camera by photographing an object multiple times from the same location under varying lighting conditions. To produce image 1 below 25 photographs were taken and combined with free software into an interactive image that allows the position of the apparent light source to be varied to any angle. The free PTM viewer can apply various rendering to enhance aspects of the image and the image can be zoomed. Typical applications are in archaeology where it is used to study worn stone inscriptions, coins and stone tools. PTM images can also be used to study works of art and textiles.



**Image 1:**



**Image 2:**

Images by Pam Forbes and Greg Jackson

The **Image 1** is **not** a PTM but a snapshot from a PTM of an old survey mark. For comparison **Image 2** is an ordinary photograph of the survey mark using the same camera and flash as the PTM. This survey mark is located beside the Georges River in Delardes Reserve, Illawong. While not true 3D imaging PTM's are often called 2½ D.

Pam Forbes and Greg Jackson have used this technique extensively, including at the Sydney Quarantine Station, North Head, for a Sydney University project recording the stations many rock inscriptions. For more information about this project see: <https://www.sydney.edu.au/arts/our-research/research-areas/philosophical-and-historical/quarantine-project.html>

An article on creating a PTM image is available from:  
<http://sydney.academia.edu.au/GregJackson>

## MEET THE MEMBER - PEGGY ANNABEL

ELIZABETH CRAIG

*Editor's note: Oyster Bay residents, Peggy and Ian Annabel joined SSHS about two years ago, and have become very much involved in its various activities. Peggy is particularly known for her work creating an edible local native plant bush garden at our new Museum, and for getting some of her Shire Sketchers group involved too. Following is the story of this energetic, adventurous lady's life.*

Peggy Annabel (nee Bongers) was born in 1942, and grew up opposite the swamp in O'Connell Street, Brighton. She and her parents lived with her grandmother until the fibro house her father was building next door was finished. It was just after his return from war service and materials were in short supply. 'We finally moved in when I was nine,' recalls Peggy, 'but it still had no internal walls, only the framework for them.' Her father and uncle made cement tiles for the roof, mixing red oxide into the wet concrete and putting it into a mould, making eight tiles at a time. Peggy lived there until she married.



*Peggy Annabel, May 2021*  
[Photo: E.Craig]

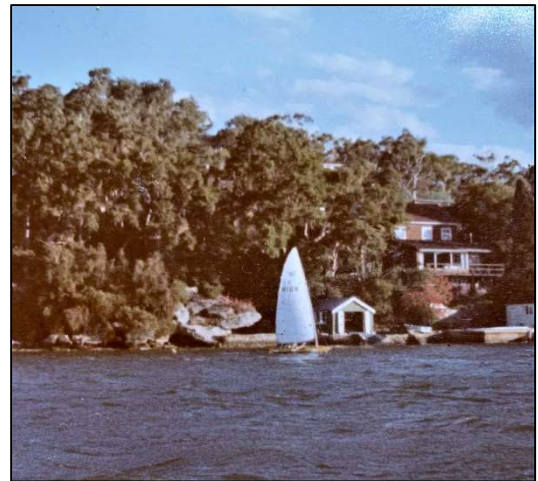
It was a one-and-a-half kilometre walk to Brighton-Le-Sands Public School, across a busy President Avenue. For safety the kids would walk across the road in a group. 'I didn't know of any accidents,' says Peggy. After primary school, Peggy attended St George Girls High School. She loved school and had great friends with whom she laughed and joked around, but she was not studious. At the end of third year, the headmistress informed Peggy that she would have to leave. 'We only want people who take their schooling seriously,' she was told. Peggy finished high school at the newly built Moorefield Girls High School, and despite being followed to the school by three teachers from St George, she did pass her Leaving Certificate!

Peggy's father was a motor mechanic and had bought a service station, so she pumped petrol for him. He also taught the local boys who visited how to fix cars. They were her friends, and Peggy would go to the beach with them on weekends. One of those boys was Ian Annabel, an apprentice electrician who lived at Ramsgate. Their relationship became serious and they married in 1962 when Peggy was 20 and Ian 21. They had a daughter in 1964, followed by two sons, one in 1967 and the other in 1971.

### **Move to the Shire**

Before their marriage, Peggy and Ian put aside every penny they could from their jobs, saving almost £11 000 to buy a house in Caravan Head from her father. He had bought the block with a right-of-way to the river years earlier to use as a fishing base, and Peggy accompanied him on weekend visits as a youngster. 'We got married and Ian carried me over the threshold of our new little house,' recalls Peggy. 'But we were broke and couldn't afford a honeymoon. That was spent in the back of an FJ Holden!' Ian's father helped make the house cosy with second hand woven matting and Peggy made curtains, and here they stayed until moving onto a glorious block in Oyster Bay, where they built the house that is still their home.

The Annabels joined the Oyster Bay Sailing Club located at Ward Crescent, Oyster Bay. Ian had a hobie catamaran which could accommodate the baby and Peggy had a laser. The kids eventually had their own boats and club races included the whole family. On Saturday nights they held Kids Club disco dances and a pantomime called, *Snow White and the seven little oyster farmers*. Promotions were held at school to get the kids interested in sailing, and one of them went on to become an Olympic sailor. Peggy wrote the Club newsletter and ran it off on the old Gestetner, distributing it to over 100 members. 'The sailing club was an enormous part of our lives,' says Peggy. The club disappeared when the local kids grew up, and windsurfing took over from small sail boats.



*Peggy in her laser at Oyster Bay 40 years ago. This bushy area is now built out. The boatshed was built by a previous owner before there was road access. [Photo: Peggy Annabel]*

### **Computer whizzes**

Ian worked for IBM (International Business Machines) fixing mainframes. When home computers appeared they bought their first Tandy colour computer in 1980. Early computers had a very limited operating system, so programs like a word processor or a simple game had to be typed in in 'basic' language before using it. Later it became possible to save your typed program on a cassette. An American friend, Greg, who was convinced the home computer would become popular, began importing and copying programmed cassette tapes. He produced the first Australian computer magazine, and Peggy convinced some newsagents to stock it. The Annabels also offered computer lessons in their home - encouraged by Tandy shop staff (who couldn't use the home computers!) - and every fortnight about 15 people arrived for lessons.

A few years later Peggy witnessed computers communicating with each other for the first time. 'I remember us all standing around the computer when one of our Tandy Club members typed some commands into his computer, and next thing a message appeared on the screen from his son in Sans Souci, 'Yes, Dad I can see it.' They were so excited. 'I think that was the first time home computers talked to each other in Australia,' she says. Peggy began teaching computing at TAFE.

### **Diversifying her career**

Meanwhile Peggy had studied osteopathy at the NSW Osteopathic College in Darlinghurst. She witnessed amazing cures at the training clinic, and did therapeutic massages at her own home to fit in with her children's school hours - until someone misunderstood what sort of massages she gave. Realising how vulnerable she was working at home, she stopped.

At 38 Peggy decided to become a nurse, in part to understand why osteopaths were so often dismissed as quacks. She became weekend charge sister at the children's ward at Sutherland Hospital, and worked with computers at the Garvan Institute of Medical Research. She found that distrust of osteopathy was rife in the medical world as well.

With her background in the medical field, TAFE gave Peggy computing spreadsheet classes for students with learning difficulties and disabilities, including blind students. 'A special program enabled the computer to describe the screen, and some were amazingly capable,' says Peggy.



## **Long Bay gaol**

While teaching at GyMEA TAFE, Peggy was offered an opportunity that was to change her life. She was invited to teach computing to Aboriginal inmates at Long Bay Gaol. TAFE had been given a grant to teach computing to these inmates in the hope that an interest like this would reduce the number of deaths in custody. Peggy accepted the challenge. She made her way to the Education Area at Long Bay, and apart from two visits from the guards over the two-hour lessons each night, she was locked in alone with the inmates. It was a grotty and dirty place, recalls Peggy, and no Ladies toilet. 'I'd have to get a guy to stand outside if I went to the toilet.'

But Peggy's classes were popular and not everyone could be accommodated. 'They'd have a punch up outside the door to get in,' she says. The Aboriginals were only interested in the graphics side of computing, and they loved listening to the radio through the internet. The disk jockey knew they were listening to the program and she always played them a special song. 'They loved it, says Peggy. 'We used to sing along and have a bit of a bop around the room.'

## **Working for the environment**

While still teaching at TAFE, Peggy was ready for a change. She began studying and acquiring horticultural certificates. The one she most valued was arboriculture. Even in her late 50s she would climb right to the top of the trees. 'You had to throw your rope and start climbing, get to the top of the tree, and then hang down to cut branches,' she explains. Through her tech classes she and her fellow students trimmed many trees in the Council area's schools and public parks. Another part of her course was in the nursery. She collected indigenous tree seeds and propagated them, selling thousands to the Department of Main Roads, especially after the Menai bridge building was complete.

Peggy's son, Simon, who worked for the Waterways Authority, spent one day a week as river keeper for Georges River.<sup>1</sup> The Authority supplied a boat and as a river keeper his job was to organise rubbish clean-up programs, often with the help of a team of weekend detention prisoners from Silverwater Gaol. He regularly put articles in the *Leader* about the work, saying how many abandoned cars and tons of rubbish they had collected along the Georges River and Botany Bay. He spoke to Rotary and Probus Clubs about their work, which included collecting plastic bags and other rubbish as well as weeds.

The prisoners were completely untrained, and occasionally got it wrong. Once they had pulled Alligator weed out of a waterway and left it on the edge ready to take away, but it escaped and got into another waterway. The Council were unimpressed and banned the use of prisoners for weed removal. Then Simon had an idea. He told the Council about his mother – a horticulturalist, adult educator of Aboriginal prisoners and people with disabilities, able to drive a boat, plus she had nursing skills. He suggested that she could train the prisoners in bushcare, and then take them out to sites that needed skilled workers. The Council agreed, and Peggy jumped at the job.

Peggy drove to Silverwater Gaol with Simon. The superintendent reassured her that these men would not hurt her, but they were there for their own protection, as a lot of people wanted to harm them. 'You could get shot by a stray bullet, if anyone knows they are here,' he told her. 'You will be safe if nobody ever knows where you are working!' Word never got out that they were doing this work. 'The bit that ate me up,' said Peggy, 'was that we did so much fabulous work and nobody knew anything about it, and it went on for years.'

Simon took charge. He attended the Georges River Council meetings and worked out which areas needed work. For instance, he would say to Peggy, 'Mum, how much would it cost you to get rid of all that *Juncus acutus* (a big invasive spiny rush plant) on that site?' Peggy estimated the number of weeks it would take 15 men to do the job, and gave them a figure for her time and any tools needed.

The first job they did was at Menai Bridge. Initially, an officer from the gaol would accompany her and the prisoners to the site, but when Peggy was made a Corrective Services Officer, they had no assistance. Peggy picked up the prisoners in a bus with the 'SMART' trailer on the back, and the prisoners weeded and collected local seeds to propagate and to plant back in the area. One day each week she would teach them how to propagate and run the new gaol nursery at Silverwater that the superintendent had agreed to. The prisoners cut up old beds and welded them together to make benches. Before long, under the management of a prisoner, Tom, they had created a huge nursery for thousands of plants destined for the shores of Georges River and Botany Bay.



*SMART Team's Bus and trailer [Peggy Annabel]*

The gaol now had a busy and interesting activity, and some prisoners got TAFE horticultural qualifications. The prisoners clamoured to join the SMART team. They loved it and worked hard, and were very much appreciated by the councils and National Parks along our waterways. 'Each visit we weeded and then planted at least 200 little local native plants,' recalls Peggy. Those who were not yet allowed out worked hard in the nursery, carefully pricked out seedlings and allocated them to their areas. If they did well in the nursery they could leave the gaol to work with Peggy. 'Some of them said to me they couldn't have got through their gaol time if they hadn't had something like this.'

They went to a different site every week, so the prisoners never knew where they were going. The superintendent told Peggy that the minute anyone knows where you are the program is over. Peggy was always confident they wouldn't attempt to escape. 'They wanted to come every week, so they weren't going to break any rules,' says Peggy. 'They had been chosen as sensible, intelligent workers and they were good guys.'

Through Simon, Peggy was given a list of waterways jobs from the Combined Councils Committee, ranging from Campbelltown to Botany Bay. One job was on one of the old pleasure grounds at Heathcote, where they saw the remains of an old wharf once used by boats bringing people to the pleasure ground. There they planted thousands of trees in the sandflats and surrounds. It was also an illegal, but favoured spot for motor cycle enthusiasts – amongst them some of Peggy's workers before their imprisonment – and the trees were often destroyed by the bikes. 'It was funny watching the guys change their attitude,' laughed Peggy. After so much effort planting the trees, the damage caused by motorbike riders made them fume.



*Towra Point Bird Watching Platform, 2008 - some years after the oyster farms had been bulldozed, the ground weeded and new plants, including those from seeds collected by the big Maori put in by the prisoners. [Peggy Annabel]*

Peggy remembers one time where her trust in these prisoners was truly tested. They were working at the Towra bird watching platform, where once there had been oyster farms. Now there were a lot of banksias and wattles, but mostly weeds. Oddly though, only one eucalyptus tree, and that was some distance away in a difficult to access situation. Peggy wanted to get seeds from that tree and plant them on the bird watching platform site. One prisoner, a big Maori, helped her get through the thick undergrowth to the eucalyptus tree. 'The bush was over our heads, and I thought, "We could get lost here",' recalls Peggy. After some time, they reached the tree and the Maori shimmied up the trunk without ropes as Islanders do. He collected seeds, dropping them for Peggy to

gather. When they were finished, Peggy looked around and knew she had no idea how to get back. 'This is a crazy situation,' she thought. 'Maybe we shouldn't have done this.' However, the Maori confidently led her back, holding bushes back for her to get past. 'When we got back, he was so excited, yelling, "We've got the seeds, guys. Look, we've got them." That was the attitude with all of them,' says Peggy. 'They were good guys.'

This work went on for four years before the program was closed down. 'Our SMART team was trained and respected, and Simon was still removing rubbish with other prisoner teams,' says Peggy. The river keeper program is now very limited and while attempts are being made to do more needed work, the present employees know nothing about how many areas of natural bush used to be lantana and privet infested rubbish heaps. 'Simon and I were so sad. We are still not over the closure.'

### **Aboriginal Park Rangers**

Knowing how good her work was at Towra Point, National Parks employed Peggy to teach Aboriginals how to become park rangers. The goal was for them to attain their TAFE certificate. They knew their plants very well and could describe to park visitors how Aboriginals used them. 'I can remember them spitting on their hands and then making a soap by rubbing wattle leaves to lather it up,' recalls Peggy. They worked hard too, and showed interest in the job. But when it came to doing an assessable presentation in the classroom to gain their certificate, they simply would not cooperate. Peggy explains that Koori students had a different outlook. 'They were keen to learn, but did not want to be judged and singled out as being better than their friends.'

National Parks are employing Aboriginal guides. Peggy remembers this as a wonderful part of her life. 'I didn't make much money. I'd always bought the boys hamburgers and the like. They deserved it after working so hard.'

Ref: Author's interview with Peggy Annabel, 26 May 2021

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<sup>1</sup> River keepers are responsible for the maintenance, management and conservation of the rivers.



## MEET THE MEMBER – PEGGY ANNABEL

(See article, page 28)

Photos supplied by Peggy Annabel



Peggy Annabel with some Aboriginal Trainee rangers, Towra Point



Prisoners at Parramatta Gaol built a nursery similar to the one at Silverwater



Trainee Aboriginal guides planting trees at Towra Point



# OPENING OF THE NEW SUTHERLAND SHIRE MUSEUM

**Saturday, 15 October 2022**

The long awaited opening of the 'Good Ship VS' at 88 Venetia Street, Sylvania, occurred - to the relief and delight of all - on a rare day of sunshine and blue skies. See story of the Museum's sometimes traumatic journey to rebirth in Pauline Curby's 'Rebirth of Sutherland Shire Museum,' *SSHS Bulletin*, May 2022, pp.15-18.

Here are some photos of the Museum Opening taken by Creo Moore



Museum manager, 'Pirate' Peter Moore



Audience enjoy the shady tree while watching proceedings



Clr Laura Cowell officially opens the Museum



SSHS President, 'Admiral' Pauline Curby, with Clrs Cowell and Elzerman, Bruce Howell and Peter Moore with the Museum behind them



The Ukelele Obsession entertain us during the opening