

Kogarah Historical Society Inc

Carss Cottage Museum, Carss Park

Postal Address PO Box 367, Kogarah 1485

www.kogarah.historicalsociety.com.au

Patron: Kevin Greene, Mayor

President: Gill Whan

Newsletter

July/August, 2020

Volume 12 No.3



Kintail, still standing in Laycock Road, Penshurst, home of Myles McRae. See Story Page 6.

Meetings and Speakers

Thursday July 9th, 2020

No meeting

Tentative meeting --

Thursday August 13th, 2020

Edith Ziegler, Author,

New Italy in Northern NSW

Our meetings start at 2 pm in the School of Arts, Bowns Road/Queens Avenue Kogarah with the speaker. This is followed by afternoon tea and a chance to mingle with other members. A short business meeting follows. Apologies for non-attendance at meetings should go to Gill Whan (9546 4623). Visitors are always welcome.

Find us on Facebook



Resumption of our regular meetings

Public restraints are gradually being lifted and we are planning for our regular meetings to resume at the School of Arts in August. We will confirm this arrangement closer to the date.

The Committee continued meeting on a telephone hook-up but now meet face to face in a large room at Pat Young's home, where we can observe social distancing. Plans are going ahead for the Society's Jubilee Celebrations next November.

As you all know, the onslaught of the Corona Virus called a halt to all social and recreational activities. Not only were all manner of crowd gatherings prohibited but the isolation rules prevented the appropriate acknowledgement of the 250th Anniversary of James Cook's arrival in Botany Bay in his ship *Endeavour*. We have tried to publish a brief article about James Cook's visit in each newsletter during 2020.

Sunday Museum Roster

Opening Hours 1 pm-4 pm (Winter), 1 pm-5 pm (Summer)

The permanent roster for the remainder of 2020 is as follows:

May, July, Sept, Nov

1st Sunday Anne Williams & Rob.McGarn
2nd Pat Young & Heather Campbell
3rd Gill Whan & Betty Goodger
4th Adele Ryan & Harvey Langford
If there is a 5th Sunday, Cath & Leo Sullivan

June, Aug, Oct, Dec

1st Sunday, 2nd August Wendy Agzarian & Elaine Filewood
2nd, 9 Aug. Adele Ryan & Joe Spinelli
3rd, 16 Aug. Gill Whan & Betty Goodger
4th, 23 Aug. Miryam & Niver Rodriguez
5th, 30 Aug. Cath & Leo Sullivan

Problems: If you need to exchange days on the regular roster, please try to do so amongst yourselves, otherwise contact Wendy Agzarian (0402 136 147).

Emergency volunteers – Barbara Davids (9389 6742), Fiona Johnstone (0401976130), Margaret James (0411252887), Cath & Leo Sullivan (9579 6149)

Committee 2020 (* denotes Executive)

| | | |
|-----------------|---------------|------------------|
| President* | Gill Whan | Ph.9546 4623 |
| Vice President* | Adele Ryan | Ph.9529 6730 |
| Secretary* | Gill Whan | Ph.9546 4623 |
| Treasurer* | Cath Sullivan | Ph. 9570 6149 |
| Public Officer* | Robert McGarn | Ph. 0425 706 579 |

Committee Members: Wendy Agzarian , Barbara Davids, Glynn Pulling, Robert McGarn, Pat Young, Beverley Earnshaw, Elaine Filewood, Anne Williams.

Committee Meeting Dates:

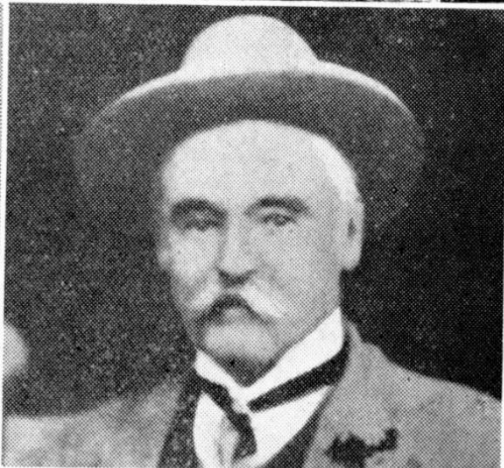
July 13th, 2 pm, Pat Young, 15 Culver Street, Monterey (9593 1898)
August 10th, Venue to be advised.

WANTED

While our local community was in lockdown with our members practicing 'social distancing', it was a good chance to write some historic items for our newsletter. Pieces long or short are always welcome. The editor now looks forward to receiving members' efforts to bring us the historic, the true-life, the biographical, the wacky. Items about things not previously known are particularly welcome.

Myles McRae (1845-1926)

(This essay was submitted in our 2019 Local History Award by Betty Goodger)



His family called him “Myles the Millionaire”. His name ‘Myles’ is derived from ‘Miles’, the Latin word for soldier. The black McRaes were the fighting men of the McKenzie Clan. They were usually dark-haired and six feet tall, as Myles was.

A description of him comes from Phil Conley, who lived at *Fernland* (long since demolished for St.Declan’s), who used to see McRae walking to the Presbyterian Church in Penshurst for the service on Sundays.

Myles’ parents migrated from Kintail, Scotland, enticed by that fiery Presbyterian clergyman, the

Reverend John Dunmore Lang. Alexander and Mary McRae arrived in Sydney in 1837 on the ship *Midlothian*, with their two sons, Malcolm aged five and William aged three and a half, and a guaranteed job on a farm in the Hunter River Valley. Alexander was a stockman and could read and write. His wife, Mary, came from the Isle of Skye. More sons were to arrive – Angus, Donald, Murdoch, Duncan, Myles and Alexander. It is said that Myles was the seventh son of a seventh son, a magical genealogy! Alexander (Snr) soon owned his own farm at Dunmore, not far from Maitland. He died on January 7th, 1879 when Myles was 33.

Myles was born at Dunmore on January 1st, 1845. When he was a young man he went to the gold rush at Lambing Flat near Young NSW and tried his luck at prospecting, without success. Instead, in the early 1870s he chose a more profitable means of livelihood for those ‘horse and buggy days’ – that of a produce merchant. He started his own company, McRae Co., on the small capital of £7.

His produce business prospered and his brothers urged him to move to Sydney at Darling Harbour. His McRae Co. warehouse was on the west side of Wharf Street and his brothers, Duncan, Murdoch and Alexander were also in the produce business close by.

Wharf Street ran off Sussex Street, down to Darling Harbour where on the eastern corner stood the wharf for the Newcastle and Hunter Steam Co and on the other corner, the Maitland and Morpeth Hotel. That was the part of the world from which Myles came. About 1912 Wharf Street became Day Street, but Myles still had his warehouse in the 1920s.

However, although Myles diversified his business and moved into land speculation, he always described himself as a produce merchant. That is stated on his death certificate dated April 13th, 1926.

On March 4th, 1871 Myles married Clara Charlotte Taylor, daughter of a wealthy Hunter River timber merchant in Scots Church Sydney. The ceremony was conducted by the Reverend John Dunmore Lang, the man responsible for the McRaes emigrating from Scotland in 1837.

Myles and Clara had five children, three sons, William Alexander, Charles Clarence and Reginald Myles, and two daughters, Kathleen Agnes and Mary Josephine. Sadly, the marriage was not a happy one, as in 1891 Clara petitioned for judicial separation and custody of the children, which she won.

As early as 1877 Myles began investing in land. Railways were being planned and should one choose wisely along the lines opening up new suburbs, there were fortunes to be made. Gambling on the route of the new Illawarra line, a group of politicians and businessmen set up a syndicate to purchase parcels of land they called Ocean View Estate Co. and Alphington Park Estate. The land covered the area that is Bexley today, adjoining Bardwell Park. When the route of the Illawarra railway was decided, McRae’s land was a little too west

of the line, so it was slow to sell. For this reason McRae did not support plans for lines to Bankstown, Marrickville or Burwood. He also had an interest in land on the North Shore.

The Ocean View Estate Co. brought him into the St. George district and soon he had interests in the Holt-Sutherland Estate Co. in 1889. Some of the other estates McRae had an interest in are – Lynton Park, Lynton Heights, Rhinelands Estate in Bexley, Como Lakes Estate in West Oatley and many more.

By 1884 he was living at 'Bonnie Doon', described by Gifford Eardley as –

A palatial residence, nestling in the lee of a grove of magnificent Moreton Bay fig trees, which unfortunately have recently been butchered.

Ron Rathbone wrote –

Myles McRae acquired 90 acres formerly owned by Hughes & Hosking and Alexander Spark off Marsh Street and built a spacious villa that rivalled Tempe House in its presentation. He called his estate Bonnie Doon.

Bonnie Doon survived until about 1928 as it had been used as a club house by the Bonnie Doon Golf Club. They finally changed the name to Kogarah Golf Club and later moved to Pagewood.



"Bonnie Doon", Home of Myles McRae, Marsh Street, Arncliffe (Mr. F. McBurn)

Meanwhile, Myles built another mansion on his property in Penshurst, calling it *Kintail*, the name of his father's birthplace in Scotland, and meaning 'Head of Salt Water'. Its building date has not been determined as there was no Kogarah Municipality until 1885. He was certainly in residence by 1887. *Kintail* stands in a commanding position on the crest of a hill. Its extensive grounds stretched downhill almost to Mortdale Station. A track down to Mortdale became Railway Parade and a street named McRae Avenue runs off it. A creek ran through the present McRae's Reserve on the northwest arm of Oatley Bay. McRae kept cattle and had a dam built on the creek where the reserve is today. Today the beautiful old house still stands at 51-53 Laycock Road, Penshurst (see picture front cover), and its stables can be seen in the rear at No.57. Both are State Heritage listed.

Kogarah was gazetted as a municipality in 1885 and held its first election in February 1886. Although Myles had only come into the district in the early 1880s, he was quick to play a role in the local community. He was among the first nine men elected and he served as Mayor of Kogarah three times, 1888-1892, 1895-1896 and 1901-1904.

During his term, he advocated that Kogarah have its own gas works to supply light for the whole of the St George District, but it was not acted upon. In 1888 he had offered to supply land in Laycock Road as a site for the Council Chambers, but Belgrave Street was chosen. When a swimming pool was proposed at Sans Souci in 1887 he suggested it be built at Oatley Bay, but Sans Souci won. (The pool was known for a time as the 'Three Peters Pool', as Peter Hermann, Peter Moore and Peter Baalman were responsible). He had taken part in an ambitious plan at a time when there was great rivalry between Rockdale and Kogarah.

An article in the St. George Historical Society Bulletin of February, 1966 states –
After the railway opened in 1884, the shopping centre (of Kogarah) began to move to the Railway Station. It was decided to outdo Rockdale by construction of a wide boulevard from the station to the beach. Mr Moore, Mr McRae and the Cumberland Building Society each gave a strip of land to enable President

Avenue to be constructed 100 feet wide, intending that the boulevard should terminate at the site of the present Kogarah Post Office, but land speculators moved in and subdivided Kensington Street with the result that President Avenue now terminates at Princes Highway.

Hurstville was proclaimed a municipality on March 28th, 1887 and held its first election on June 15th, 1887 at the Blue Post Inn. Again, Myles was among the first aldermen elected. He only served one session, 1887-1890.

Here a success for Myles can at last be recorded! A road ran from Oatley's railway platform for a distance of 39½ chains in the direction of Peakhurst across a valley. In 1888, for Hurstville Council, Myles raised by subscription almost half the cost of the double stone culvert which passes under the embankment made across the valley.

However, his troubles at this time were thick and fast and in June 1890 the other aldermen asked the Mayor if Myles' seat had become vacant by reason of his non-attendance. The answer was 'No', but at a special meeting in July 1890 a letter from Myles was read out. He resigned with regret *'as his many other callings did not allow the attention to Council matters as he would like'*.

Myles was also parliamentary member for Morpeth from 1889-1891 but did not try for another term in parliament for scandal enveloped him in 1891!

The year 1891 could be described as an Annus Horribilis for Myles. He had reached the age of 46 and in February of that year his wife petitioned for divorce on the grounds of cruelty and adultery. Later she changed her plea to a judicial separation.

In March 1891, Ilma Lottie Vaughan sued Myles for Breach of Promise, asking for £5000. The scandal was enormous. It was reported in the press all over Australia. One report in libelous language appeared in an Adelaide paper. People queued up to get into the public galleries at the court.

Ilma's mother, Petronella Vaughan brought the case to court as Ilma was a minor. She had brought her family from New Zealand in 1884, rented a house from Myles and somehow got him to employ her daughter, Nina, as governess to his children. Nina was only 19 when she died in 1885. The family returned to N.Z. but came back to Sydney in January 1888 with Ilma who was probably 17.

Typical of Petronella's sensational evidence is her account of an assault which allegedly took place at Mt Victoria, where Myles had suggested they go for a change of air. Ilma and Myles were presumably in a room. The door was locked. Petronella stated –

"Suddenly it burst open and her daughter rushed out with clothes nearly torn off her back!"

Eventually Myles placed a large diamond ring on Ilma's finger and said he would give them a house in Sutherland, but when they got there, in a rain storm, it was unfurnished and in the bush. Myles then took them to Kintail where he said she would live when he married her daughter.

When Myles put his case, he denied everything! He admitted to meeting them in 1884 but claimed Mrs Vaughan wanted to run a boarding house at Mt Victoria. He produced a receipt for £5 for 10 days' board and lodgings dated 12/1/1890. All the witnesses made some statement doubting Ilma's truthfulness. Although the jury found for her only £500 was awarded instead of £5000! She had to pay costs, so only received £179.16.0.

In May Myles was back in court again with Clara petitioning for alimony and custody of the children. He played 'poor mouth', stating he had losses in business and brought witnesses to prove that Clara was *'of intemperate habits'* i.e. a drunkard. One of his witnesses was his sister-in-law, Christina, wife of his brother Malcolm who described a scene wherein –

Mrs McRae got up and put her fist through Mr McRae's hat then stamped on it; then she took his silk umbrella and broke it; then she went inside and brought out his dress coat and split up the seams.

Clara produced witnesses to swear to her sobriety and the court decided in her favour.

The case was as sensational as the previous one! The Daily Telegraph was the newspaper which reported the case in lurid detail, and published an attack on him which would certainly be considered libelous today. A quotation of a few sentences serves as an example –

The doors of Parliament should stand firmly closed against the trickster whose career has led him to them through a course of dishonest and dubious actions to the mere empty-headed, loud tongued, self seeker and to the foul and lecherous creature whose domestic conduct is a blot and a disgrace upon the society which his presence pollutes.

It is not surprising that Myles did not try for reelection to Parliament.

Despite the nastiness of the situation, Myles and Clara must have come to some amicable arrangement as they both died at *Kintail*.

The McRae family was evidently close knit and Myles was devoted to his brother, Malcolm, a farmer who died in 1911. Malcolm's wife, Christina, died in 1919, leaving seven daughters, all of whom were educated at the Rev. John Dunmore Lang's Presbyterian Ladies College at Myles expense. Two of the daughters, Margaret and Mary McRae later lived at *Kintail* to look after Myles children when his wife, Clara, was not well.

Myles retired in 1920 and died on April 13th, 1926 aged 81. In his will he left everything to Clara. However, she died only four months later and everything was divided between their five children. Probate was given for £13,537. It is thought that Myles had deeded *Kintail* to his son, Reginald, before his death in order to mitigate death duties.

He is buried in the Presbyterian section of the Woronora cemetery with one son, Reginald, beside him and a second son, Charles Clarence, at his head. Clara lies in the Roman Catholic Section with her daughters by her side. (Their third son, William Alexander, died in 1938 at Hunters Hill and is buried at Field of Mars.) Was sectarianism one of the causes of disharmony?

At some time they must have forgiven each other for both died at the mansion, *Kintail*, and their headstones name Myles as 'beloved husband of Clara' and describe Clara as 'dearly loved wife of Myles'.

Note: The extensive references for this article are available on request from the Editor.

Mondays at the Museum is Back!

We are happy to tell you that our very popular 'Mondays at the Museum' is back and will be resuming on Monday July 27th. We look forward to seeing everyone there to hear Bruce Shying, Sailor/Historian/Author, tell us about

Flotsam and Jetsam.

The meeting starts at 10am with morning tea in the courtyard at Carss Cottage, but as this is an outdoor function, it will be cancelled if it is raining.

Did this come from someone in our Society?

*'My neighbor knocked on my door at 2.30 am -- Can you believe, 2.30 am???'
Lucky I was still up playing my bagpipes.*

A Treasure from the Museum Kogarah's Railway Clock

One of the most spectacular and valuable items in the Society's collection is the huge Railway Clock mounted in the entrance foyer of the museum. Clocks of this design were installed on NSW the railway stations at a time when there were far fewer stations than there are today. This clock used to hang on Kogarah Station's centre platform and it was donated to Kogarah Historical Society in 1974 by the NSW Railway Department.

Well before the days of smart phones and before radio, the railway clock was one of the most reliable ways to keep accurate time. It was the only means by which people could set their pocket watches. Some of the oldest railway clocks date back to the 1860s and have their origin in the earliest days of NSW railway history.

An energetic clock enthusiast has for some years been researching the story behind these huge railway clocks and has generously shared some information with us.

There were probably about 60 of these clocks made and so far 25 complete units have been found and parts of another five. The movements, dial, driving weight and pendulum were imported from England and the clock cases were made locally in the NSW Railway Workshops. This accounts for why the appearance of some clocks varies.

The oldest yet discovered is the clock that once hung on Sydenham Station, dated 1863, and is now in the Power House Museum. The Goulburn clock dated 1870 is in private hands.

When the Illawarra Railway opened in 1884, clocks were placed on Arncliffe, Rockdale, Kogarah and Hurstville Stations. The Arncliffe clock is now privately owned, the Kogarah clock is in the Carss Cottage Museum and the search continues for the Rockdale and Hurstville clocks. When the formal opening of the new Central Station took place in 1906, there was no clock and one had to be taken down and brought from Stanmore.

By 1974 these clocks were being phased out, replaced by modern technology. This was the year that Kogarah Historical Society received the clock to be mounted in its new museum which had opened in 1971. Some clocks were given to local museums and can be seen in towns such as Temora, Werris Creek and Singleton. Others are currently on public display in places such as the Zig Zag Railway and Thirlmere. The only one still in place and fully operational is on Armidale Railway Station.

The surplus clocks were disposed of. They came up for auction in conjunction with the annual railway lost property auction and many passed into private hands. One private owner believes his grandfather paid \$274.

Today's railway clocks run on a global positioning system (GPS), many with digital displays detailing movements of trains for passengers.

In recent years, the antique railway clocks have soared in value. One recently was sold at auction for \$10,000 plus auctioneer's fees and GST, which meant the buyer paid over \$12,000.

We are fortunate to have our railway clock which holds a fascination for school children and for our adult visitors, provides a nostalgic reminder of the past. It is indeed –

'A Treasure from the Museum'.



Master watchmaker, Doug Minty, with the clock on Central Railway Station, identical to the one in Carss Cottage.

Member Profile, Janene Love, Bushfire Tragedy

We were shocked to receive a note from our 'out of area' member, Janene Love, to say that she had not yet renewed her subscription because her house had been destroyed in the bushfires. Janene and her family have a property on Dunns Creek Road, Woodlands between Mogo and Malua Bay on the South Coast, not far from Batemans Bay and Tomakin.



Janene told how they had fought to save their house in the 1994 fires when a wind change had saved them. In 2019 they were not so lucky. The fires were all around the Batemans Bay area, they were on alert and had bags packed at the door. There had been an alert for a catastrophic day about a week before but it had not eventuated. A containment line had been put in at the back of Mogo and they were feeling more secure although smoke was still all around. However at 6 am on 31 December, the phone rang with a message accompanied by a siren saying "Get Out, get out, go now and go east". They had always had an evacuation plan in which they would all gather at a niece's house in Mosquito Bay which was two streets away from the water. Janene and her 95 year old mother left immediately leaving her brother and nephew to try and save the houses. Two hours after arriving in Mosquito Bay they were told to evacuate to the beach at Malua Bay, there was no access to Batemans Bay or Moruya and an Emergency Centre was set up at the Surf Life Savers Club at Malua Bay. Malua Bay was completely cut off. As the flames got closer they were told to go to the water's edge. There were up to 4000 people plus horses, dogs, cats, rabbits and even mice, all on the beach. There was no electricity, no communication except between police and fire personnel. Older people were eventually allowed back inside the SLC, they were registered as evacuees, the SLC fed them milo and sandwiches and local people who could get to their houses brought down food and blankets. The local IGA opened and gave away its food. Their only information came from a portable radio and the ABC. It was a week before they could let other friends and relatives know that they were safe. Nine of them stayed in one empty holiday house sleeping where they could and lining up at the shop to buy limited amounts of food with cash only. Still no electricity or phone services, a shortage of petrol.

Janene's brother had just got out in time and had gone to Tomakin. Janene is grateful for grants they received from the Red Cross, Salvation Army and St Vincent de Paul and most importantly the wonderful support from the local community and all the "great hugs"--and that the government is paying for the clean-up of destroyed properties. She and her mother are now renting in Catalina and waiting for approval from Council for their plans to build another house on a different part of the property. She acknowledges that there are low moments but they try and bolster each other up.

Janene's links with this area go back a long way. She was born at St George Hospital and at the time her parents were living with her mother's parents at Carlton. Her father was from Oatley – Andrew (Mick) Love and her mother, Dorothy Stephenson from Carlton. They built at Jannali and Janene went to Oyster Bay Primary and Jannali High. She trained as a teacher at Alexander Mackie College and in 1966 started teaching at age 19 years at South Hurstville Primary where she stayed for 11 years. She also had a stint at Oatley West Infants School. In 1976 she transferred to Bateman's Bay Primary after the family bought their property in 1972. This was a joint venture with her parents and brothers and there was one house on the property which was added to for all the family when they visited from Sydney. They ran cattle and were building up a Hereford stud. Janene's father died in 1977 leaving Janene and her mother (who will be 96 next month) to run the farm as a 'hobby' farm.

Janene has been a member of KHS for 10 years so keeps in touch with the area and is putting together a family history for us. We send our very best wishes to her and her family for the future and thank her most sincerely for sharing this story with us.

Gill Whan

Review of
East Coast Encounters 1770: Reflections on a Cultural Clash
Pauline Curby Co-ordinating Editor
Published by Sutherland Historical Society 2020

This collection of 10 essays was published in April 2020 to coincide with the 250th anniversary of the arrival of Captain Cook and his ship, the *Endeavour*, on the east coast of Australia. The essays cover the history of the Kurnell peninsular where Captain Cook landed, the search for the great South Land, Captain Cook's career, his crew members (particularly Banks & Solander) and the interaction with the indigenous inhabitants of eastern Australia, New Zealand & Tahiti.

There is also mention of past commemorations of his arrival, particularly the largest, the 200th in 1970, which many people remember.

The book's purpose is to cover the arrival from both the perspective of Captain Cook and the indigenous inhabitants and to suggest a way forward for reconciliation.

It was thought that there was a large Southern Continent to balance out the world. An early map of part of Australia (joined to the island of New Guinea) was made after Abel Tasman's voyage in 1642 and seems remarkably accurate.

The longest period Captain Cook spent on the east coast of Australia was seven weeks near present day Cooktown repairing the *Endeavour*. The crew also ate the large local sea turtles which resulted in a dispute with the indigenous inhabitants.

Captain Cook's eight days in Botany Bay, are covered. Joseph Banks and Daniel Solander formed a partnership and collected plant samples. The landing spot was marked in 1822 by Governor Brisbane and a statue of Captain Cook was unveiled in Hyde Park in 1879 due to Thomas Holt (both had a Yorkshire connection) who is well known locally.

Land near his landing spot at Kurnell was resumed as a public park in 1899 and there was also a commemoration in 1901 at the time of Federation and in 1951. Surprisingly, the Federal Government did not get involved with the major 200th anniversary in 1970. The commemoration was left to the State Government. Sir Asher Joel was head of the organizing Committee.

In a parallel with Captain De Groot and the opening of the Sydney Harbour Bridge in 1932, a university student pretended to be Captain Cook prior to the official ceremony.

In 1988, the area is part of the Kamay Botany Bay National Park and since 1993 is considered to be 'the birthplace of modern Australia'. Further improvements to the area are planned.

The Australian National Maritime Museum, where the replica of the *Endeavour* now resides, has items relating to Captain Cook's three voyages and contemporary indigenous artist's responses to European contact. Tribute is paid to Captain Cook's chart making and seamanship skills and his efforts to reduce deaths from scurvy, although many crew members still died.

There is a chapter on the death of crewman Forby Sutherland in 1770, the first Englishman to die in Australia. There is a plaque at Kurnell commemorating him.

In his naval career, Captain Cook saw service in many wars including the war in Quebec which eventually resulted in British control of what is now Canada. Influential mentors also assisted in his career such as Lord Colville. His voyage to the east coast was for scientific purposes and exploration. He did not propose settlement.

His encounters with the indigenous inhabitants of Tahiti, New Zealand and eastern Australia are closely examined as are the reasons for the actions of both sides when contact and clashes arose. Captain Cook tried to be understanding of the indigenous people and learn from any clashes but it was not always possible for his landings to be peaceful. Trouble could arise when both sides met. The detailed accounts of Captain Cook's encounters with indigenous inhabitants of all the places visited are based on the records from the *Endeavour*, indigenous oral history and subsequent investigation. The most violent encounters occurred in New Zealand.

The essay on what was said at Botany Bay tries to interpret the indigenous inhabitant's original words from subsequent research. Although the indigenous inhabitants did not consent to Captain Cook taking possession of the East Coast, the book suggests a reinterpretation can help reconciliation on the basis that both the indigenous inhabitants and Captain Cook helped found modern Australia. Past interpretations of Australian history are considered not frozen in time, i.e. the indigenous inhabitants were not pre-modern and Captain Cook's voyage alone did not begin Australia.

The book tries to be fair to both sides. Captain Cook tried to avoid violence and foresaw and regretted the harm that that would come to the indigenous cultures. Knowing how he eventually died

(not covered in the book) seems poignant. However, European settlement was probably inevitable after earlier European exploration.

There are extensive end notes, a bibliography and index plus short biographies of the 10 contributors who each wrote a chapter.

The book is very well illustrated in colour with maps & images and has 132 (glossy) pages. Unfortunately, the launch could not be held due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The book is available from Sutherland Historical Society for \$45.00 including postage.

Robert McGarn

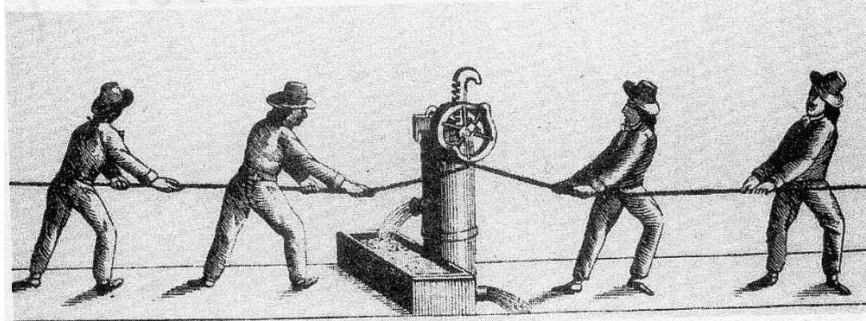
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Captain James Cook – and a near tragic mishap

The *Endeavour* sailed from Botany Bay on May 6th, 1770 and followed the coastline north, bestowing on some prominent landmarks names which are still in use today – Port Jackson after Sir George Jackson, former Secretary to the Admiralty and Member of Parliament; Broken Bay; Port Stephens after Philip Stephens, Secretary to the Admiralty; Byron Bay after Commodore Byron of the *Dolphin*; Moreton Bay after the Earl of Moreton, President of the Royal Society; Point Danger at the head of the Tweed River; Mount Warning; Keppel Islands; Northumberland Isles after the 2nd Duke of Northumberland; Cumberland Isles after the 2nd Duke of Cumberland, son of the Prince of Wales; Whitsunday Passage through which he sailed on Whitsunday; Palm Island; Rockingham Bay after the Marquis of Rockingham, Prime Minister of England and first Lord of the Treasury; Fitzroy Island after Augustus Henry Fitzroy, Secretary of State. By this time Cook's supply of names of his supporters and mentors was nearly exhausted.

On Sunday 10th June they reached Trinity Bay (so called because it was Trinity Sunday). Its northern point Cook named Cape Tribulation because 'there began all their troubles'. From there they began to creep through a maze of small islands always with two boats in front taking soundings. At 10 pm on June 11th the water depth was 21 fathoms, but suddenly '*before the man at the lead could heave another cast*' the ship struck and stuck fast.

Immediately the boats were launched to assess what damage they could in the dark and take soundings. They found she was on the edge of a bank of coral. All hands were mustered to clear the ship. By lightening the load they hoped to float her off. They took down the sails and hove overboard hoops, staves, empty casks, oil jars and a quantity of condemned stores. By 7 am they had jettisoned the stone and iron ballast and a large quantity of firewood. The ship had 3 feet 9 inches of sea water in the hold and at 8 am they started 3 pumps, with the 4th pump refusing to activate. Ship's pumps in 1770 were labour intensive because handle operated pumps did not come into use until the mid 19th century. While up above, the sailors hove overboard the 6 four-pounder canons from the main deck. Altogether, 40 or 50 tons' weight was thrown overboard and at 10 pm the next day, the ship floated off.



Ship's pumps in the 18th century were operated by 4, 6 or 8 men

It was fortunate that Midshipman John Monkhouse (younger brother of the ship's surgeon) had served in the West Indies aboard a merchant ship which had sprung a severe leak and the vessel was saved by 'fothering'. To fother a ship, a sail is impregnated with oakum and wool and passed underneath the hull. This greatly decreases the in-flow of sea water so that the leak is better controlled by the pumps.

This having been achieved, every man now thought of nothing but ranging along the shore in search of a safe haven where the ship could be repaired. Cook wrote in his journal – *‘I must say that no men ever behaved better than they have done on this occasion – everyman seemed to have a just sense of the danger we were in and exerted himself to the very utmost.’*

For 6 days they edged along the shoreline keeping a lookout for a creek or harbor to beach the ship and carry out repairs. At last, on June 18th they brought the ship alongside a steep beach, tied 2 hawsers fast to the trees and dropped anchor on the starboard side. They made a stage from ship to shore to enable unloading, pitched tents for the dry provisions and for the sick and landed empty casks, dry provisions and the carpenter’s stores. They brought 4 guns out of the main hold and mounted them on the quarterdeck, then landed provisions and the spare sails. Joseph Banks set up a marquee on shore to protect his work.

The next day they carried ashore the boatswain’s stores including the spare anchor, spare windlass and sundry other articles, and after they had unloaded the coal, the powder and gunner’s stores they were able to beach her ashore to examine the leak.

They found that a large lump of coral had wedged in the hole which to some extent had stopped the water from gushing in. But there were four planks cut through and sheafing was ripped off on the larboard side. The absence of sheafing left the hull vulnerable to sea worm which could destroy the timbers and cause irreparable damage.

Immediately the carpenters set to work. The armourer set up his forge on shore to make nails and bolts. And with the welfare of the men in mind, James Cook ordered the seamen to dig a well, coopers to make barrels and he sent out fishing parties in the ship’s boats. On most days turtles were plentiful and their meat could be served to all hands. The ship’s stock of firewood had to be replenished as it had all been thrown overboard.

On June 30th, with repairs well under way, Cook climbed a high hill and felt a great uneasiness. At low water there were shoals and sandbanks as far as the eye could see.

When repairs were almost completed, the time came to reload the ship -- a mammoth task. They brought back on board the armourer’s forge and the spare sails, took down the tents and the crew moved back on board. Meanwhile, James Cook and Joseph Banks went 6 or 8 miles to the north to a high hill from which to view the sea coast. Cook wrote that it *‘afforded us a melancholy prospect of the difficultys (sic) we are to encounter for in whatever direction we turned, shoals innumerable were to be seen’* The most likely way out seemed to be north and on July 2nd he sent the Master in the pinnace to take soundings and find a way through.

While they were still reloading the ship, for reasons not understood by the Englishmen, the local Aborigines set fire to the surrounding bush, almost destroying the precious marquee containing Joseph Banks’ specimens.

They set sail again on Sunday August 5th, with Cook naming the place of their sojourn, ‘Endeavour River’. There seemed to be no way out. A lookout was always posted at the mast head as they crawled forward with a boat ahead taking soundings. Twice Cook was able to access islands from which he could view the surrounding seascape and observe the outer reef but was confronted with a labyrinth of blind passageways. Provisions on the *Endeavour* were also running low and there was a shortage of many articles.

On August 13th Cook spotted what appeared to be a channel and the next day sent the pinnace ahead to take soundings. At 2.30pm came the signal, ‘deep water’. They proceeded with boats towing.

They were still among the reefs on August 17th when the boats discovered a narrow opening. They took down the sails and edged through with two boats ahead towing and a boat on either side. Then for several days they nudged through a maze of islets, shoals and keys on what was to be the final stretch of the east coast, always with two boats ahead sounding and a lookout at the mast head. At last they reached the northernmost point of the continent which Cook named Cape York after HRH the late Duke of York.

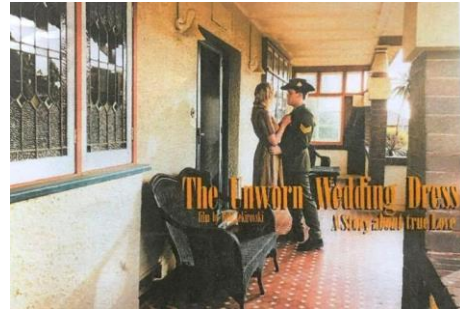
Finally on August 22nd they landed on Possession Island and hoisted the British flag.

References: All material in this article has been drawn from ‘The Journals of Captain Cook’ prepared from the original manuscript by J.C.Beaglehole and ‘The Journal of Richard Pickersgill’ HRNSW Vol.1 Part 1.

The Unworn Wedding Dress – DVD now available

In 2018 film director Bebi Zekirovski visited Carss Cottage Museum. He was fascinated by the story behind the wedding dress displayed in a glass case in the Museum. It had been made for Gwen Coxhead, who grew up in Carss Cottage, in anticipation of her marriage to John (Jack) Buckham. But Jack, her fiancé, went off to fight in WW2 and did not return. The wedding dress was never worn and Gwen died still not knowing what had happened to Jack. Bebi Zekirovski determined to make a documentary film to tell the story of ‘*The Unworn Wedding Dress*’. With the assistance of a grant from Georges River Council, the short (15 mins) film was made. Gwen Coxhead never married; she became a successful career woman and was a founding member and benefactor of Kogarah Historical Society. This valuable and touching record of local history is now available on DVD.

We are happy to send a copy of the DVD to interested persons for \$5.00 to cover the cost of postage and packing. You can order through our website using Paypal www.kogarah.historicalsociety.com.au or send your order with cheque to the Society at PO Box 367, Kogarah, NSW 1485.



Trivia quiz Famous Firsts

- (1) First prime minister of Australia
- (2) First explorer to reach the South Pole
- (3) First wife of King Henry VIII
- (4) First Governor of NSW
- (5) First man on the moon
- (6) First doctor to perform a heart transplant
- (7) First Melbourne Cup winner
- (8) First aviators to fly from England to Australia
- (9) First Mayor of Kogarah
- (10) First woman in space
- (11) First explorers to cross the Blue Mountains
- (12) First driver of the Sans Souci Steam Tram

Answers: (1) Edmund Barton (2) Raold Amundsen (3) Katherine of Aragon (4) Arthur Phillip (5) Neil Armstrong (6) Christian Barnard (7) Archer (8) Ross & Keith Smith with mechanics Wally Shiers & Jim Bennett (9) Edward Hogben (10) Valentina Tereshkova (11) Gregory Blaxland, William Lawson & William Wentworth (12) Paddy Tufty



1919 England to Australia First Flight

In 1919 the Australian Government offered a prize of £A10,000 for the first Australians to fly from Britain to Australia in a British Aircraft. The winners were Captain Ross Smith and his brother Lieutenant Keith Smith as co-pilot with mechanics Sgt. Wally Shiers and Jim Bennett. The distance was 17,911 kilometers and the time 135 hours 55 minutes.

