



Peninsula Historian

Newsletter of the Manly, Warringah &
Pittwater Historical Society Inc.

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FROM THIS MONTH'S EDITOR

This month's Peninsula Historian has been assembled by Officers of the Society as Richard, our previous Editor, had to relinquish the post rather suddenly.

We hope that this will not spoil your enjoyment of the publication.

This edition perhaps though, will point the way to future editions with articles from many members month by month.

We hope you have remembered the 90th Anniversary Celebration on Tuesday 18th November. There are more details on the back page.

Bill Slessor

PRESIDENT'S REPORT - NOVEMBER 2014

In my last Presidents Report, I concluded with some remarks about the Statement of historic Themes that is being considered for Pittwater Council. It should be said that this will be the first Statement of Historical Themes that has been undertaken by Pittwater Council. Over the last month, we have also been involved in assisting the Manly Council update some of its Heritage Item Sheets, in this case it was the houses on the southern end of Quinton Road. In April 1986, Manly Council approved a Heritage Review that included three historical summaries that more or less are the equivalent document to the Statement of Historical Themes.

These summaries focused on :

- Aboriginal Sites
- Natural and Cultural Environment
- Thematic History (Built structures)

Despite 28 years having passed, this document has not been updated and most individual Heritage Item sheets relate back to it.

The NSW Government has now detailed 38 Historical Themes (4 October 2001) and the Pittwater Council document endeavours to address these. For those that are interested, these themes are detailed on the website of the Heritage Council of NSW.

The NSW Heritage Council has issued a detailed document itemising the 20 steps required in preparing a community-based heritage study. Step 6 of the Summary of Process refers to the preparation of a draft Thematic Local History. This step precedes steps 7 and 8 which describe how the individual heritage items are chosen as expressions of the draft Thematic History that has already been prepared.

It is important that members understand how history is incorporated into the heritage process. Unfortunately , the Statement of Historical Themes does not require a Preamble, that gives an explanation of the context of this linkage between history and heritage. As I have detailed before, heritage has one meaning for government and a very much broader meaning used in the media. The governmental meaning only relates to physical objects but the broader meaning of heritage is synonymous with culture and is expressed in the Macquarie Dictionary as "The culture, traditions, and natural assets preserved from one generation to another."

I would submit that the following definitions should be included in a Preamble to avoid misunderstandings and give a clearer focus to the way heritage should be considered.

"Local history is the story of the past, of the people, places and activities within a locality."

"Heritage is the collection of physical items of historical significance to the locality that have survived from the past."

There is another definition of heritage provided by Australia ICOMOS (International Council of Monuments and sites):

"Heritage is defined as places, objects, customs and cultures that have aesthetic, natural, historic or social significance or other special values for present and future generations."

This definition seems to defy any principle of ready comprehension but was offered as the ruling definition by one council.

Then there is the Dictionary supplied by the Office of Heritage:

"Heritage significance means historical, scientific, cultural, social, archaeological, architectural, natural and aesthetic value."

No wonder the public throws up its hands in trying to understand a heritage issue and its relationship to history when history is detailed in this way. The interesting thing about this Dictionary issued by the NSW Government is that a definition of heritage is not included.

I will share with you a gallery of some of my favourite misuses of the word:

"Our heritage of hatred." (Manly Daily 27/3/2012)
Describing the coming NRL game between Manly and Parramatta

"Gucci Icons of Heritage Stakes." (SMH 8/11/2012)

The 4th race on the card at Flemington.

"Wal-Mart -The Heritage range of merchandise." (The Australian 29/4/2011)

The listing of rifles, shotguns and ammunition to expand this range.

"Hunger for Heritage." (Manly Daily 19/2/2013)
The heading for a strudel recipe article .

Unfortunately alliteration is too tempting for many sub-editors and it does not enhance the general respect for the discipline.

However in considering the Local History and how its significance can be brought before the public, heritage is only one aspect of the history.

There are the aspects of history where physical evidence no longer exists. These can be celebrated through the use of plaques or other on-sight signage. This is an area which is rapidly changing due to improvements in technology. Materials used for plaques are improving in durability. Then there is the increasing availability of electronic information to supplement physical signage both on-site and through the council website.

When we speak of governmental action, we are not only talking of initial recognition but also the maintenance into the future. As any politician will tell you there is a financial dimension that has to be considered. This is not only expenditure of a capital nature but also operating expenditure. This is where the relationship of history to heritage has to be more readily understandable. It cannot be a field just for the experts We have enough pseudo-intellectuals spouting obscure verbiage to hide the fact they have nothing to say. The Statement of Historical Themes should be able to be discussed in schools and in the community generally.

While we as a Society are involved in the development of the history of the Peninsula, we have a strong interest in how history is recorded by local government. As a Society, we would like to see these Statements of Historical Themes prepared on a much more consistent basis, both in time and format. While the NSW Government has determined 38 themes which should be included in the Statement of Historical Themes, they do not describe the appropriate narrative style to address these themes for the greater edification of the public. It would appear that a chronological framework setting out progressive time periods, is the appropriate way to go. This would also require the NSW Government to be a lot more specific about the appropriate time for history to start and for heritage to be determined. There seems general agreement that a 25 year cooling off period should be adopted and that 1989 would be the present benchmark. I would be interested in the view of members as the manner in which local government approaches history as it is a matter of deep interest to us all.

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CAPTAIN CLIVE WILLIAM THORNTON HENDERSON (1901-1975)

Clive was the son of William Albert Henderson and Violet Augusta. He was born in 1901 at North Sydney.

The family moved to Manly about 1908 and Clive had an association with the area for his whole life.

He was educated at Manly Public School and Cleveland Street High School.

It was during the Presidency of the long serving Percy Gledhill that he joined the Manly, Warringah and Pittwater Historical Society. He was Secretary from 1953 to 1958.

Upon the death of Percy in March 1962, Clive was elected President of the Society and he continued in this position until 1964.

Clive had a quiet retiring personality and was one of nature's gentlemen.

He was a Sea Captain and many years of his life were spent at sea as a pilot, harbour master and navigation officer. He served in distant places such as Bermuda and the Solomon Islands. He was navigator when the South Steyne ferry came out from Scotland in 1938.

From about 1949 to 1967 he was the senior pilot for Port Jackson.

It was whilst in Bermuda in the West Indies, that he married Isabel Clacher in 1935. They had two children, Alastair and Morna. The family residence was at 101 Woodland Street Balgowlah.

In 1971, at the age of 70 years, he was married for a second time to Sybil Harrington, at Balgowlah.

While President of the Society he made regular contributions to newspapers and journals relating particularly to his field of expertise namely the sea, ships and ferries. He was the co-author with Charles McDonald of a comprehensive book in 1975 titled *The Manly-Warringah Story*. Clive wrote the whole of the section of the book called "The Sea".

His literary skills were commendable and his work was well known for its accuracy. For instance, the detailed description in his book of the voyage of the South Steyne from Scotland to Port Jackson in 1938 gives a splendid first-hand accurate account of the journey.

In 1962 when Clive was president of the Society he kindly accepted my invitation to speak to a class of boys I was teaching at North Sydney Demonstration School. At the time we were studying the geographical and historical features of Port Jackson. He was an experienced lecturer and the boys enjoyed his talk immensely. Clive was also able to provide detailed information about the different points of interest as he had already published an article on the subject in the Maritime Services Magazine.

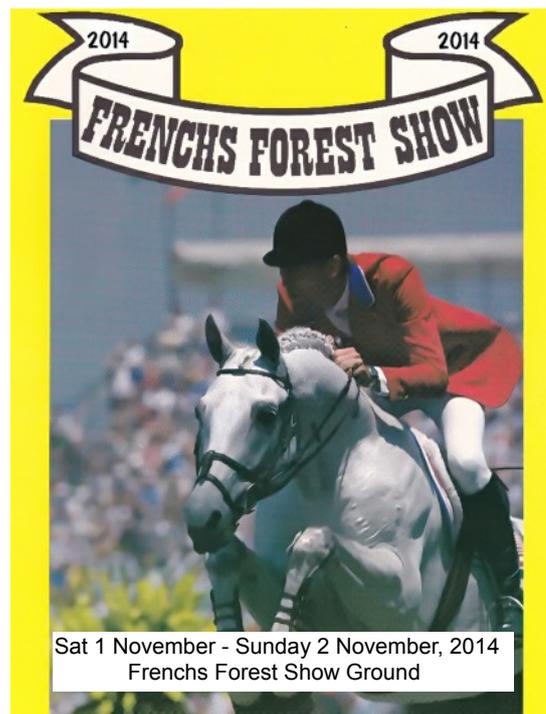
On his retirement from the Presidency in 1964 he was made a Fellow of the Society and later in December 1970 he was awarded Life Membership of the Society.

Clive died at Balgowlah on 8 September 1975 aged 74 years. He was cremated at the Northern Suburbs Crematorium.

Our Society was indeed fortunate to be led by such a competent and intelligent President.

George Champion May 2014

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On Sunday, 11 October, Gordon and I had the pleasure of visiting the Open House and Garden at **Mahratta**, on the corner of Fox Valley Road and Pacific Highway, Wahroonga.

This large Art Deco house was built for the Field family in 1941 and the architect, Douglas Agnew, was given free rein to incorporate his own ideas. Features include a beautiful staircase, a lift, spectacular sliding doors with circular glass circular inserts, a ballroom and two very elaborate bathrooms.

The house is probably the finest Art Deco mansion in Sydney, even though it was finished long after the Art Deco period. It has been used for many film, television and photographic shoots including *A Place to Call Home*, *Underbelly*, *Power Games*, *Devil's Playground* and others.

The 1.6 hectare Paul Sorensen garden features

magnificent trees, a beautiful sunken rose garden and avenues of azaleas and cliveas – a perfect spring display.

The gardens are probably more beautiful today than when they were first laid out and we met the one full time gardener, who is assisted once a week by about six volunteers to maintain the immaculate area – an amazing feat.

After Mr Field's death, the property was sold to Westpac Bank which used it for training purposes. It is now owned and maintained by the School of Philosophy.

Anyone who loves old houses and gardens should try and visit this special property when it is open for inspection next spring. See the **Friends of Mahratta** web site at <http://mahratta.org.au> for more information.

Barbara Davies

THE WORKER'S STORIES

I have recently had cause to read the histories of 3 institutions, all of which are heritage listed. It surprises me how little is revealed of the workers and how they were organised. The 3 institutions were the Quarantine Station, the School of Artillery and St Patrick's Seminary. Each of these institutions had to respond to a crisis or an increase in their function, the Q Station with various epidemics, the School of Artillery with the Vietnam war, and the Seminary with the increase in enrolments in the inter-war years. An Organisation Chart would have been appreciated and that would have probably changed over time to accommodate changes in function. Stories for some of the workers would have given us a greater appreciation of their endeavours and the stresses that placed on families and friends.

It has been in my mind before but the SMH article regarding the Cockatoo Island Dockyards has only emphasised that point. The Sydney Harbour Federation Trust has an exhibition at Cockatoo Island, "Shipyard Stories", running till 31 December 2014. Hopefully, they will see fit to do the same thing at North Head, with the School of Artillery. - Jim Boyce

GIRONA

I recently returned to the UK for a holiday and to visit past friends. During the five weeks we decided to have a few days in Barcelona, Spain.

Barcelona is a wonderful city where the architecture of the past has been well preserved and yet modern structures are encouraged.

Unfortunately on the day we were to return to the UK the French Air Controllers began one of their frequent strikes and our flight was cancelled. It's a long story to tell but we had to take the coach north to Girona, spend four days there and then fly back to the UK to a different Airport from that by which we had left. What should have been a three hour journey turned out to be a full day of flights, taxis and train journeys. We naturally were not very pleased.

However there was a silver-lining.

As we each dragged a suitcase and a flight bag from the coach station to the Information Office, ("It's that way." "No you need to go down that road." "It's over the bridge and down ..." (in Spanish of course))

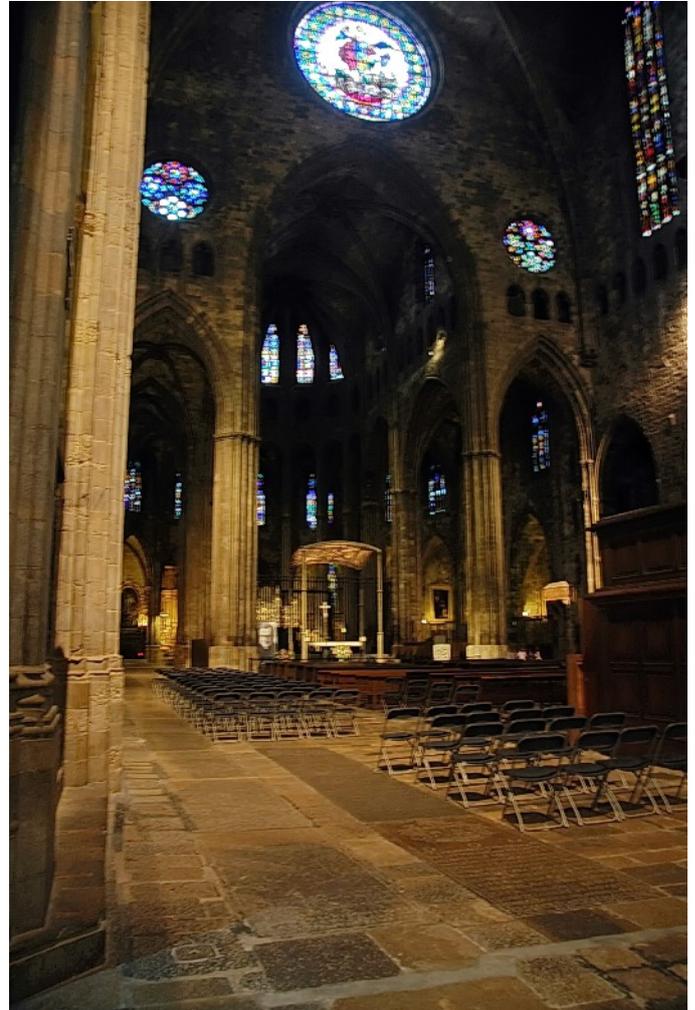
we left the newer half of the town, over the river, onto cobbled streets and into the older town.

Staff at the Information Office managed to find what must have been the only available accommodation for us - in the old town only a few metres from the Cathedral (with its clock that chimed every quarter hour and, for some reason, twice at every hour day and night).

Being warned that the hotel was up a steep hill, we took a taxi which twisted and threaded its way through the very narrow streets. Later we noticed that most cars had wing mirrors badly damaged and scratches down the length of the bodywork and it was obvious why.

Girona began life as a Roman fort (Gerunda) commanding the via Augusta, the route of which can still be traced through the town. The Forum was a levelled area on the hillside and had a temple area higher still and reached by an imposing stairway.

An earlier Christian place of worship was on the site of the present Basilica of St. Feliu until the Roman Temple most likely became the Christian Church during the 5th century. A new church eventually replaced the Roman temple and there



have been several rebuilds and changes since.

From about 717 AD Spain was dominated by the Muslim culture but this only lasted for about 70 years around Girona.

A new front for the Roman Temple was begun in 1312 and a new building was planned in 1386. This would have had a triple Nave but in 1417 a new design was adopted with a single Nave. It was completed in 1602. With its span of 23 metres and height of 35 metres it is the widest in the world in Gothic architecture and only three metres less in height than the central nave of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome.

In 1680 a new facade was started but not completed until 1960. These plans included the remodelling of the stairway. In 1701 most of the Romanesque building was demolished.

With its numerous side chapels and extremely interesting cloisters the Cathedral is a fantastic example of the builders skills over the centuries and with exhibitions of clerical robes and ancient tapestries the Cathedral and its cloisters is well worth a visit.

The Cathedral dominates the old town which is a maze of buildings going back into mediaeval times. Narrow streets are a challenge to motorists and stairways cut among the old houses and shops that stretch down the hillside to the river Ongar. Arched walkways give shelter from the sun and rain and provide areas for a range of restaurants. The old Roman walls have been largely restored and provide a pleasant walk with views across the old town and the old Roman gateway stands proud as an entrance to the oldest part of the town.

There are good museums including one devoted to the Cinema.

There are more photographs on our web site <http://www.mwphs.com>

Bill Slessor



A brief Comment on Political History



RESPECT FOR THE LOCAL POSTIE

In North Balgowlah, there is a plaque commemorating the contribution to the community of the local postman. For 30 years, Charles Thomas Ferguson trod the streets of North Balgowlah, delivering letters and parcels to the local residents. On the 13th of June 1976, the local residents saw fit to establish a Memorial Garden at the shopping centre corner to honour him. Thanks are due to Kevin Martin, for bringing this to our attention.



The memorial in July 2011

“UNDERCLIFF” - MANLY

Congratulations should go to Terry Metherell and Alan Yuille for their efforts in first recognising the history of this house, going back to the 1860s, and then obtaining an interim heritage order on what remains of the house. The property is at the southern end of Pittwater Road, not far from the old three storey Peoples Home. Manly Council has been active in seeking a temporary listing so that more research can be undertaken as to its heritage significance. The Environment Minister, Rob Stokes, and his department has seen to it that the heritage order was granted. The house was once the home of one of Sydney’s first mayors, George Smith.

HISTORY TOLD THROUGH OBJECTS

I have recently been exposed to a different way of arousing people's interest in history.

I was reading a book "The Smithsonian's History of America in 101 Objects", written for the Smithsonian by Richard Kurin. In the book the 101 objects were addressed in periods of history:

Before Columbus (525 million years ago to 1492)

New World (1492 to Mid-Eighteenth Century)

Let Freedom Ring (1780s to 1820s)

Young Nation (Late Eighteenth Century to 1850s)

Sea to Shining Sea (1800 to 1850s)

A House Divided (1850 to 1865)

Manifest Destiny (1845 to Early Twentieth Century)

Industrial Revolution (1865 to Early Twentieth Century)

Modern Nation (1870s to 1929)

Great Depression (1929 to 1940)

Greatest Generation (1941 to 1945)

Cold War (1946 to 1991)

New Frontiers (1950s to 1980s)

Civil Rights (1947 to Now)

Pop Culture (Mid-Twentieth Century to Now)

Digital Age (1945 to Now)

New Millennium (2000 to The Future)

For those of you who read my Presidents Report, you will understand my interest in how the author gave a historic framework to consider these objects. I am interested in the overlaps that he has used. The book is available at the Manly Library and I would like to hear members opinions as to the objects chosen. Maybe we could encourage the Manly Art Gallery and Museum to have a similar exhibition focusing on the Peninsula.

Our Next Meeting.

Date/time; 2pm, Saturday 8 November

Venue: Narrabeen Tramshed

Speaker: Margaret Millar

Topic: 'World War I and the Australian Experience'



Manly, Warringah and Pittwater

Historical Society Inc.

Established 1924

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You might be interested in

Shopkeepers of Newtown: Photographic Exhibition
State Library of NSW
1 November to 16 January 2015

" Shipyard Stories "
Cockatoo Island
To 31 December

Research Trip to NSW State Records at Kingswood

Wednesday, November 12, 2014,
8:00am to 5:00pm. Cost \$30

New South Wales State Records at Kingswood has a wealth of information for genealogists and historians. Join Warringah Council Library's research trip to State Records on Wednesday 12 November.

Bring your lunch as there are no shops. Tea and coffee and kitchen facilities available.

Bookings by payment at any Warringah Council Library branch.

Places are limited Enquiries: 9942 2610

Brookvale Show

Brookvale Park, 26 October 2014

Remembrance Day

Manly War Memorial, The Corso
11 November

The Society is looking for new officers.

At present Di Farina is fulfilling two roles, as Secretary and Membership Secretary, Di would like to pass on one of these roles.

You will have seen that this edition and the next is edited on a temporary basis by Bill Slessor. He would like to hand over the role to another member after the next edition in December.

Any member interested and willing to serve in either of these roles should contact our President, Jim Boyce.

Did you know that this, and previous editions of Peninsula Historian, are available to view or print on our web site www.mwphs.com

90th Anniversary Celebration MW&PHS

The Second Oldest Regional Historical Society in NSW

We are celebrating our 90th Anniversary with a Christmas Cocktail Party at Long Reef Golf Club on Tuesday 18 November from 6.00 pm to 9.00 pm - \$35 per person. We hope that you can join us on this special occasion.

RSVP by 4 November 2014

To: The Treasurer, MW&PHS Inc., Box 695, PO Manly 1655

I/we

Address

.....
will be attending the MW&PHS Cocktail Party on Tuesday 18 November 2014.

Cheque/Money Order for \$.....enclosed