



Peninsula Historian

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

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FROM THE EDITOR

A shorter issue as we keep to the schedule of a newsletter each month. Thanks again to Phil Colman, for his report on the talk at our most recent monthly meeting, but particularly for his contribution recalling an exciting day on Narrabeen Beach. While we were in that part of the Peninsula I thought it appropriate to give some history of its earliest European settler and of its first European visitors, and then to go back somewhat earlier.

Richard Michell

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

There is a routine and there are rules to being President, and I am only at the Learner stage at the moment. Hopefully soon I can get to be a **P Plate** driver, but the rule book has been mislaid so I am sticking to quiet, country roads until I get more confident.

I've started on a list of speakers for future meetings, but can't say more now. I've reported elsewhere on last month's speaker and I'm sure that this month Nan Bosler will not only keep us amused but we'll all be a bit wiser when we casually mention computers.

And soon it will be Christmas Party time again, back to the old haunt at Manly Art Gallery, tentatively on November 15th. Put it in your diary.

Phil Colman

NEWS AND VIEWS

MONTHLY MEETING REPORT - 10th September 2016

The Bradley sisters and the Mosman Parks and Bushland Association 1964-2014

The Bradley Bush Regeneration method is generally thought to have started in the 1960s. But Anne Cook's talk traced it back a wee bit earlier, to 1066!

It didn't take sisters Joan and Eileen Bradley all that time to experiment, but it was William de Bourton, the Burton Bradley family's distant ancestor, who started the ball

Christmas Function

Early warning

This year we are reverting to our traditional Christmas drinks and nibbles at

Manly Art Gallery and Museum

Tuesday 15. November, 6 - 8 pm

Date to be confirmed but please keep free

rolling. He was made Keeper of the Needwood Forest. Early Australian ancestors helped to draft laws around land use, and included a specialist in spiders, a plant horticulturalist and a plant geneticist/hybridiser. It was perhaps inevitable that this heritage would produce the two sisters.

From early life in Rushcutters Bay they moved with their parents to Iluka Road, Mosman and quickly became involved in Ashton Park. The Ashton Park Trust was then synonymous with Taronga Park Zoo and Sir Edward Hallstrom (or his son John) was Chairman of both boards. The Ashton Park Association was formed to combat the plans of the Trust which were contrary to those of local residents. Leading lights were the Bradley sisters.

DIARY

Monthly meeting at the Curl Curl Community Centre, cnr. Griffin and Abbott Roads

8 October, 2016

Nan Bosler

'Using technology for research or for personal enjoyment'

Nan, who is behind Computer Pals and so many other activities, will turn a complex subject into something we all should know, using plain English and probably a little humour.

From the 1960s, Joan and Eileen had been observing the relationships of weeds, native flora and fire, and the effects of mechanical weeding, replanting of native species, etc. They noted that the most-disturbed or cleared areas seemed to encourage weeds while least-disturbed areas could successfully compete with encroaching weeds. And there's the crux of the Bradley Method today. Restore from the centre or the good bush out, not from the perimeter in. They also noted that after a fire "good bush begins to help itself". Weed eradication was most effective if it began not where the weeds were worst but where the natives were strongest.

A copy of the talk is in the Society archives for those who wish to study the Bradley Bush Regeneration method more.

Phil Colman

GET WELL SOON

Best wishes for a full and speedy recovery to one of our stalwart Members, Gloria Carroll, who is recovering from a recent fall.

PUBLICATIONS

George and Shelagh Champion have just contributed another in-depth article to the collection of their historical studies that is available via the Manly Library web site at:

<http://www.manly.nsw.gov.au/library/local-studies-collection/history-of-manly/>

The latest article is on the development of the roads on the Peninsula, from the earliest days of European settlement.

POT POURRI

Narrabeen Beach plane landing

21st of November 1944, a Tuesday, saw the kids at Narrabeen Primary School, kids who'd endured five years of war-time lolly deprivation, enjoying an unexpected bounty, literally from the sky.

About 6 a.m., after a mechanical problem delayed a programmed early departure, Ansett Airways Lockheed Electra 10.8 VH-UZP Ansalanta, skippered by Harry Frank Broadbent, "Jimmy", took off from Mascot on a flight via Archerfeld, then Rockhampton, enroute to Townsville. On board were 8 passengers, 1 RAAF officer, a Miss Corbett from Brisbane, and 6 allied service personnel, i.e. U.S. officers, members of General Douglas MacArthur's staff.

At 5000 feet, over Broken Bay, the starboard Wasp engine lost thrust. Broadbent applied full power to the port engine and turned back to Mascot. Then the port Wasp engine failed, and with no close airport, Jimmy made a forced landing on the hard-packed sand of Narrabeen beach; approximately between the Sands Hotel and Narrabeen Surf Club. It was later



First Officer "Chic" Eather on Narrabeen Beach with some of the boys Phil mentions

surmised that sabotage was the probable cause for engine failure; sugar and sand was found in the engines.

Across the (Pittwater) road, there was a mass exodus of kids from the school who went to see the excitement. As well as a school-free morning they returned with pockets full of the "new" long, flat sticks of chewing gum, plentifully supplied by the U.S. officers.

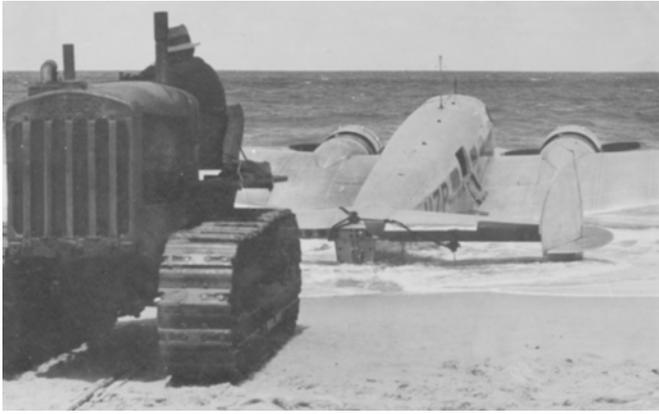
The plane was piloted by Capt. Broadbent, very well-known then, whose exploits included the 1931 solo Brisbane-Sydney-Melbourne-Adelaide flight, linking those cities by air for the first time. Then he flew, in 1935, a then record 3 days, 9 hours, 45 minutes round-Australia trip. In November of that year he bettered Kingsford-Smith's (Smithies) Croydon (England) to Darwin flight of 1928.

He was lost at sea west of Portugal in 1958.

Phil Colman

Further to Phil's piece, the following is an account by Captain Broadbent's co-pilot, First Officer Charles "Chic" Eather, in his own ebullient style.

'The altimeter had ticked past 5,000 feet when, without warning, the starboard engine spluttered and lost thrust. We were over Broken Bay at the mouth of the Hawkesbury River just north of Sydney. Jimmy applied full power to the other Wasp and turned back for Mascot. Other than a gradual loss of altitude to preserve control speed against the dead engine's drag, he had everything under control. My job was to monitor the radio and the port engine. Suddenly, it began to lose revs and the plane assumed the gliding angle of a rock! We could not stay in the air much longer. A slamming turn to port lined us up with Narrabeen Beach. A slight bump and Jimmy had put her down on the hard packed sand. As she lost way the slope of the beach caused her to slew gently to the left, stopping with the docile surf softly caressing her nose. Jimmy instructed me to get the passengers out, and in my excitement I nearly cut myself in two, slamming against my still firmly locked seat belt. I overcame this obstruction and then tried to strangle myself



The tractor inadvertently removes the tailplane

with the radio headset cord. Jimmy was in hysterics and told me I'd make a fortune on the boards in vaudeville. I left the flight deck with a troubled mind. Would I make a better comedian than a pilot! Yet, this gracious man never mentioned my embarrassing antics again - naturally, neither did I!

With no further impediments I had the rear door open in a flash and, standing in the surf, helped the dazed Americans disembark. When I removed the Royal Mail canvas bags I had finished my duty. In a spirit of accomplishment I shrieked "All Clear". With a solemn, Thank you mate, Jimmy came towards me, saw my grinning soggy condition and smiled sympathetically. Then I learned a lesson in savoir faire that remained with me throughout my flying career. He turned, opened the wing exit window, sauntered the length of the wing and with regal splendour stepped onto the dry sand. The rising tide gradually had VH-UZP awash.

In a frenzy of activity a tractor driver passed a heavy rope around the tail wheel and cone, and in his great enthusiasm tore off the tail. His good intentions caused the only structural damage to our graceful plane. Some days later we learned that a mixture of sugar and sand was found in the engines. Most likely sabotage, as aboard were several of General Douglas MacArthur's staff.'

Good timing

The crew and passengers on board VH-UZP were fortunate in their timing. The tide was fairly low and the beach sand firm.



Collaroy/Narrabeen Beach, June 1945
(Sydney Morning Auditor)

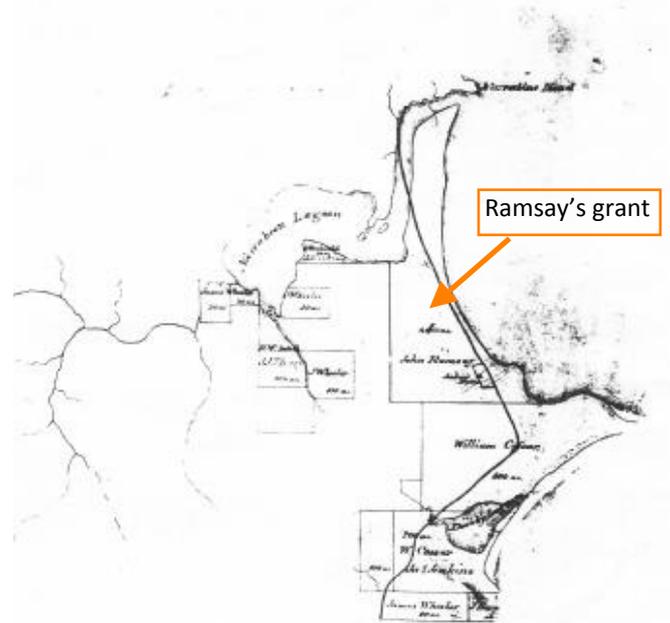
They may not have fared so well if they had been making the attempt seven months later. In June 1945 much of the beach was washed away in one of the semi-regular east-coast-low storms.

Narrabeen's first European resident

Narrabeen's first settler was John Ramsay, hence today's Ramsay Street. Ramsay, was a sailor who was convicted of highway assault and theft and arrived in Port Jackson in the First Fleet, on the *Scarborough*. He married Mary Leary at Parramatta in December 1790 and settled at The Ponds, where Watkin Tench observed the couple's great industry and likelihood of success.

Whilst living at The Ponds, Ramsay took part in a 1795 attempt to cross the Blue Mountains. It was organised by his neighbour Matthew Everingham. Another neighbour, William Reid, also an ex-sailor, made up the party of three. They progressed very well and reached to about today's Mt Tomah. It was not the terrain that stopped them but a lack of provisions and functional footwear. This attempt was 18 years before Blaxland, Lawson and Wentworth and, if the trio had been just a little better equipped, John Ramsay may have become a household name.

By 1800 the Ramsays had moved to the Field of Mars where they purchased 60 acres and again farmed successfully. Presumably because of this success, Ramsay was granted 410 acres in the District of North Harbour by Governor Macquarie on 21 August 1818. It was to be known as "Mount Ramsay". As was the norm, the paperwork lagged a little behind reality and Ramsay was already established, just south of Narrabeen Lagoon, by at least September 1815, when James Meehan the surveyor mentions his house in his field book.



With his location described as Long Reef, Ramsay contracted to supply fresh meat for the use of His Majesty's Stores in March 1817 and January 1818. On 23 September 1818 Ramsay mortgaged his land to the Bank of New South Wales and

by 1822 there were signs that he was in trouble. In August his neighbour to the south, Matthew Bacon, took action against him, the Provost Marshall giving notice that 27 head of horned cattle belonging to Ramsay would be sold by public auction. The Land and Stock Muster held in September 1822 showed that he had 10 acres in wheat, 20 in maize, ½ acre in pease/beans, and three in potatoes. He had six horses, 20 horned cattle (presumably following the forced sale of 27) and 16 hogs.

On 14 February 1823, to recover the sum of £300, the President and Company of the Bank of New South Wales sold up the "Mount Ramsay" grant of approximately four hundred acres, the purchaser being D'Arcy Wentworth,. In March 1823 a crop of corn and potatoes growing on the farm, and Ramsay's other effects, were sold. This seems to have been the end of Ramsay's independence and, in 1828, he was working as a gardener at Kissing Point.

John Ramsay died in 1836 at the Sydney Benevolent Asylum. His burial was registered on 21 January 1836 at St Philip's Church, Sydney.

(This account is based almost entirely on George and She-lagh Champion's *Profies of the Pioneers in Manly, Warrin-gah and Pittwater*, 1996)

The real estate connection

Mount Ramsay was the name given to the high ridge that lies just a few hundred metres inland from today's Collaroy and South Narrabeen beaches. Edgecliffe Boulevard runs along most of its length. When developers began selling land in those parts they considered that it being located on a mountain would be a major impediment. Hence the coining of Collaroy Plateau.

How their real estate colleagues of today must lament that decision. I imagine that an address of Mount Ramsay would add significantly to the sale price compared with the somewhat prosaic Collaroy Plateau.

The first European to visit Narrabeen

On 2nd March, 1788, only some six weeks after the arrival of the First Fleet, Governor Phillip went to Broken Bay by sea. He intended to return by land but bad weather made him use the sea route again. He therefore decided to take another party there and back by land, setting out on the 22nd August, 1788. Surgeon John White was one of the party and the following is based on his diary.

The party was rowed to Manly Cove where they saw, just a short distance from the shore, 16 canoes, most with two persons in them and some with three. The locals were fishing and took little notice of the party of Europeans as it passed them. On its landing the group saw about 60 more natives, about two hundred yards away. Some of them immediately came over and they were very friendly.

Phillip sent the boats back to Sydney Cove and the party proceeded northward along the coast for about six miles until they hit the mouth of an open lagoon. Here they were forced to halt until the tide had run out sufficiently and they could wade across. While they were waiting an old native came up and, in a very friendly manner, pointed out the shallowest part of the water. However they did not risk it. Then several natives appeared on the opposite side. They also pointed out the shallowest part and, by signs and gestures, encouraged the Europeans to cross. Still they waited and the natives on the northern bank lost patience and went away. It was noted that one of them wore a skin of a reddish colour round his shoulders, one of the very few times that the wearing of a skin by a coastal aborigine was observed.

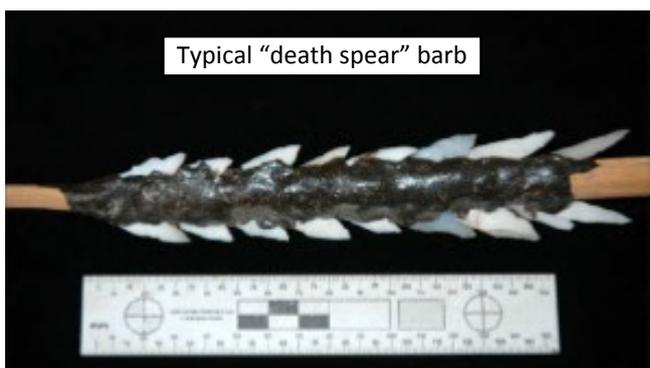
Eventually the water level and its flow rate were considered sufficiently and safely low and the party waded across. One of them shot a duck and they then set up overnight camp on a small rise, by the side of a cabbage tree swamp, about half a mile north of the lagoon entrance. They picked a goodly quantity of native cabbage and ate it with the duck and some of the salted provisions they had brought with them.

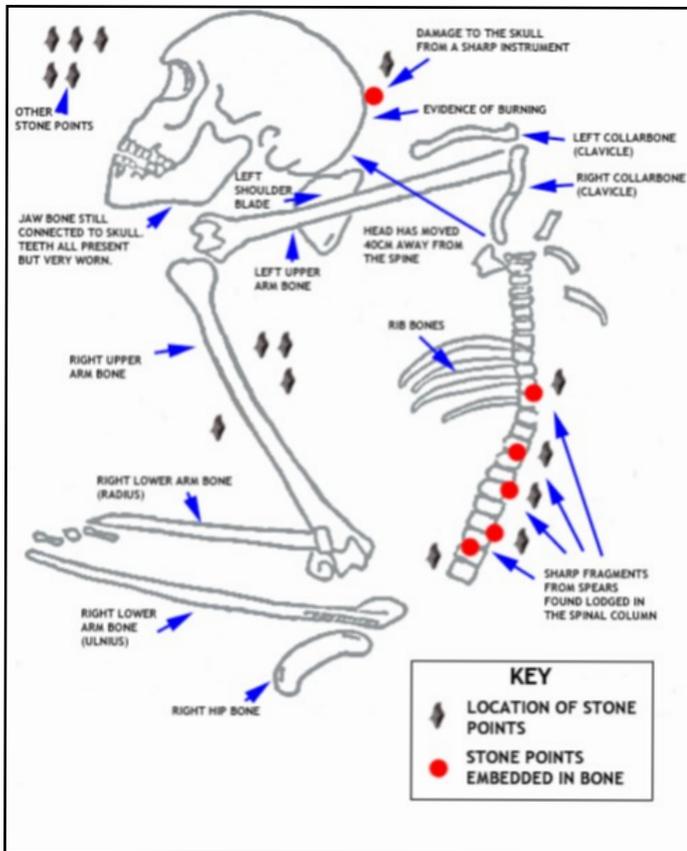
4,000 years earlier

In 2005 a partly disturbed human skeleton was discovered during excavation to install electricity cables to a bus shelter in Narrabeen, near the corner of Octavia and Ocean Streets. The remains were dated to around 4,000 years ago and identified as those of an Aboriginal man, 30-40 years of age and around 183 centimetres (6 feet) tall. Narrabeen Man, as he has been christened, is the oldest skeletal remains discovered in the Sydney region and is in fact the third oldest found in Australia, after Mungo Man and Mungo Lady.

An archaeological dig at the site revealed that Narrabeen Man was in a posture unlike a tribal ceremonial burial. Rather than lying on his front with hands by the side or across the chest, he was on his side with one arm across his head. Spear ends were found embedded into his vertebrae and near other parts of his body, and there had been a blow to the head. This apparently indicated death by spearing and suggested a ritual or punishment killing.

The spear barbs found in the skeleton were from what post-settlement Europeans sometimes called "death spears". These spears have sharp flakes of stone, such as silcrete and quartz, embedded side by side into resin along the head of the spear, creating a serrated edge behind the point. The





How the remains were laid out when found (ex History Teachers' Association of Australia)

pieces of rock tend to break free from the resin and remain in the flesh of the victim. Spear barbs like these date to the Holocene period.

Analyses of Narrabeen Man's bones indicate that his diet consisted mainly of marine foods, such as fish, shellfish, seaweed and sea birds. A number of small fish bones found in the vicinity of his stomach were probably the remains of his last meal. He probably lived near the sea throughout his whole life.

The skeleton was found at 9.0 metres above the present sea level, in sand containing some shell. At the time of death 4,000 years ago the body would have lain on the crest of a sand dune and vegetation would have been limited to coast spinifex and grasses. There is other evidence that, at that time, the sea level was about 1.5 metres higher than today. This means that the sand spit on which the body was found would have been narrower and, as water levels in Narrabeen Lagoon would also have been higher, the area of the lagoon would have been greater. It perhaps functioned more as an open salt water estuary with regular tidal flushing. However, vegetation on the dune and on the hills around the estuary was probably very similar to that seen in similar areas today.

Narrabeen Man's remains are currently lying under care at Sydney University's J.J. Shellshear Museum. Research in the Museum focuses on human osteology, burial practices, forensic osteology and identification of non-human bone.

A Centenary

One of our members, Jenny Rosen, has asked me to publicise the upcoming celebration to mark 100 years since the construction of **Bayview Baths and Wharf**.

It is being planned by the Bayview Church Point Residents Association, to be held on Sunday 20 November at 11.00 am. Local State Member Rob Stokes will be there, as will the Pittwater High School Band. Jenny has provided the following details.

The Bayview Wharf was officially opened 1 December 1900. It comprises an earthen groyne/wharf construction which was common at the time but of which very few remain. The adjoining Bayview Baths were added circa 1915. The available history indicates that, apart from Maybanke Anderson's nearby house, the Bayview Baths and adjoining groyne and wharf are the earliest intact items in Bayview. They significantly pre-date both the nearby 1920 Aquatic Club/Ambulance Station/Scout Hall, and Pittwater's ocean beach rock pools.

Historical detail presently to hand:

1900: 'The new pier at Bayview, Pittwater, officially opened 1 December 1900' (newspaper item)

1915-1916: Baths appear to have been built during this period.

1921: Real Estate Sale notice of 27.3.21 advertises '6 residential blocks near Professor Anderson's home and within one minute's walk to Bayview wharf and swimming pool with a refreshment store'.

Members of the local Williams family, who ran the adjacent boat builders for three generations and as children lived nearby, remember the Baths and groyne in the early 1940's as much bigger than at present and reaching right up to the road. The present parking lot and lawn area has obviously been in-fill along the way. The Williams family remember the Baths as a great and constant meeting place for all the local children, after school and in weekends and holidays. They also recall that their grandmother was reported to have frequented the pool when she was young, which would have been in the very early days.



Bayview Baths (on the left) c.1950

Indeed, many long-time Pittwater residents fondly remember the Bayview Baths over the years as an irreplaceable opportunity for people of all ages and abilities to safely access Pittwater's salt water for bathing, swimming and paddling, and for children to learn water safety. They strongly support this facility being maintained to benefit today's children and into the future, and see it as a total contrast to the ocean beaches and pools. The long row of steps provides seating for parents supervising children and allows safe entry to the water. The adjacent grassland is a great spot for family picnics.

The area continues to be a popular community hub. Although concerns have been raised about water quality, Sydney Water has acknowledged responsibility for any water quality issues relating to its nearby pipe. A detailed Sydney Water review is scheduled for 2016 and Sydney Water has committed to work with Council on any remediation required. The historical record shows repeated requests by Bayview Church Point Residents Association when repairs have been indicated, and these requests continue.

Bayview Church Point Residents Association is currently planning an on-site Centenary Event on Sunday 20 November between 11.00 am and 2.00pm to celebrate the continuing importance of this historic community hub. All welcome but keep in mind limited parking and walk if you can. Any historic photos to add to a planned display would be much appreciated.

If any reader can help with photographs or any other relevant material, please contact Jenny on 9997 5920.

WHAT'S ON

Manly Art Gallery and Museum

NORTHERN LIGHT - 9 September - 23 October 2016

The 'Northern Light' exhibition will be a highlight of the 2016 Manly Arts Festival program, featuring works from seven leading or emerging artists from Sydney's Northern Beaches

MANLY: ART FROM THE VAULT - 9 September - 23 October 2016

'Manly: Art from the Vault', will draw from Manly Art Gallery & Museum's extensive collection of paintings, photographs, works on paper and museum objects

Warringah Library

HISTORICAL EXCURSION TO WINDSOR

Friday, October 14, 2016 - 8:00am to 5:00pm \$50

Join historian Judith Dunn and explore some of Windsor's most interesting sites. Hear informative commentary as we tour the Hawksbury Museum, St Matthews Church, Thompson Square, Ebenezer and Wilberforce.

Tour departs from Dee Why Library.
Enquiries: 9942 2449



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[Note: this information is required for insurance purposes; if two persons included in this application fall into different age bands please tick both boxes]

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