



Peninsula Historian

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

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FROM THE EDITOR

The article late last year on the coastal defences installed on the peninsula during WW2 triggered off some memories for one of our members, Sybil Holst Small. She sent me a wonderful letter outlining her experiences as a very young girl. It forms the historical article in this issue. Thank you Sybil.

Sybil is also a talented artist. She donated a series of oil paintings to the Society a few years ago, many of which are based on her wartime experiences. One of them is reproduced with the article.

Any other civilian war time reminiscences, local or otherwise, would be very welcome.

Richard Michell

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The Special Resolution to change the necessary Quorum for an Executive Meeting from five to three was carried unanimously at the General Meeting held on Saturday 10 March at North Curl Curl. Thank you to everyone who was at the meeting and also to those who took the effort to vote via proxy. This change will make the management of the Society much easier.

However hopefully it will not be interpreted as meaning we now need only three people willing to be Committee members. We would much prefer to have more. We would particularly like a volunteer for the position of Treasurer. I am currently filling that role and would be pleased to explain exactly what it entails to anyone with an interest. My phone and email details are on Page 5.

Richard Michell

NEWS AND VIEWS

NEXT MEETING, Saturday 10 March, 2018

Nadine Phipps *Cemetery Supervisor,
Northern Beaches Council*

Nadine will talk about the *Heritage Near Me* grant that NB Council obtained from NSW Office of Environment and Heritage to develop a digital "self guided historical walk" of the Mona Vale Cemetery – which can be downloaded to a phone or tablet. She will show a prototype of the tour on Powerpoint and discuss the information she plans to include (from MWPHS Journal of Local History) and the possibilities to expand the tour in the future.

She will also discuss another grant she is planning to apply for to develop a detailed map, searchable database and improved signage on site for Manly Cemetery.

MEETING REPORT, Saturday 10 February, 2018

Another great roll up was enthralled to learn from Dr. Paul Irish how the admittedly very small number of Aboriginal people who survived the early years of European settlement in Sydney went on to co-exist with that settlement quite successfully. It was not until the 1880s that moves for segregation began in earnest.

The Aborigines' main activity was fishing and they often

DIARY

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

14 April, 2018 2.00 pm

Nadine Phipps *Cemetery Supervisor,
Northern Beaches Council*

Nadine will talk on the development of a self-guided tour for Mona Vale Cemetery and display a prototype. She will also discuss her plans to develop a detailed map, searchable database and improve signage for Manly Cemetery.

12 May, 2018 2.00 pm

Nicola Pullan *Temporary dwellings*

For her PhD thesis, Nicola has researched the phenomenon that was common on the Northern Beaches in the 1950s where people bought a block of land, built a garage or other temporary dwelling and lived in that dwelling while they built their house. Her talk will be based on her research and interviews with several families.

developed commercial arrangements with Europeans. Perhaps the most prominent was a Botany Bay man called Mahroot. Born in the 1790s, just a few years after the arrival of the First Fleet, he grew up interacting with Europeans although living in an Aboriginal group. He went on to develop and run a successful commercial enterprise based on the supply of seafood and the conducting of guided fishing expeditions.

One reason for this generally peaceful co-existence was that, by the early 1800s, emancipated convicts were having families and their children sometimes interacted and played with Aboriginal children, learning to respect each other. Another reason was that the land around Sydney was rocky and generally barren, not suited for agriculture. Aboriginal people were not under immediate displacement pressure. This arose later in the 19th Century as the European population grew and the demand for housing land grew with it.

For those who would like to know more you can buy Paul's book *Hidden in Plain View* on-line or at bookstores.

RENEWAL OF MEMBERSHIP

We are very gratified that most Members have now renewed for 2018. If you haven't as yet, a renewal (or joining) form is on Page 6.

POT POURRI

The Pavilion

Hopefully you will recall the article by George Champion in the February issue on the Pavilion that was built on the Queenscliff/Freshwater headland in 1884. To assist your memory, a small sketch of the structure is reproduced here.



Mona Vale Cemetery



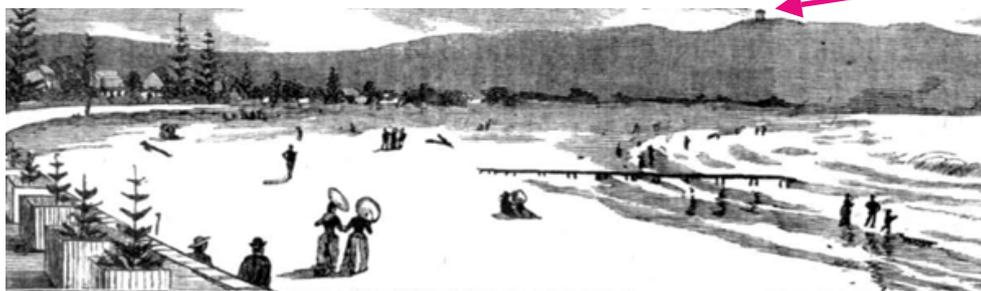
The Pavilion

Examining the present Pavilion Reserve, I concluded that the Pavilion may have been built atop a large sandstone rock. If so, it would have given wonderful views, south over Manly Ocean Beach and north over Freshwater Beach. It also would have been very prominent.

Confirmation of this prominence is given in a sketch that was published on Page 165 of the Sydney Mail on the 26th of July, 1884. This sketch was referred to in George's article. To save you Googling to find it - and with thanks to George for discovering it - I have reproduced it below.



The Pavilion



Detail from full sketch above

Help needed! (please email archivist@mwphs.com or contact requester direct if they have given details)

Angela Foley: Hello could you please help. I am trying to find any info on Brands Lane Warriewood - the man who it is named after, what the area was used for when it was owned by him and anything in relation to the timeline. Can you suggest where I should start as I have never researched anything like this before.

Thank you
Angela

ARTICLE

WAR TIME IN PITTWATER

Dear Richard,

Your article on the tank traps and barbed wire on the Northern Beaches made me think of the war years and my life as a child on Pittwater.

Firstly, I must talk about my father. A Norwegian sea captain on a merchant ship working in the Indo-Pacific area, he decided to stay in Sydney with his wife and child. This was 1928. My father was employed by the Strelitz family to skipper their new acquisition, a yacht called the *Pollyanna* which they had shipped out from Hamburg (Germany). She was a new sight for Sydney, a luxury yacht-cabin cruiser.

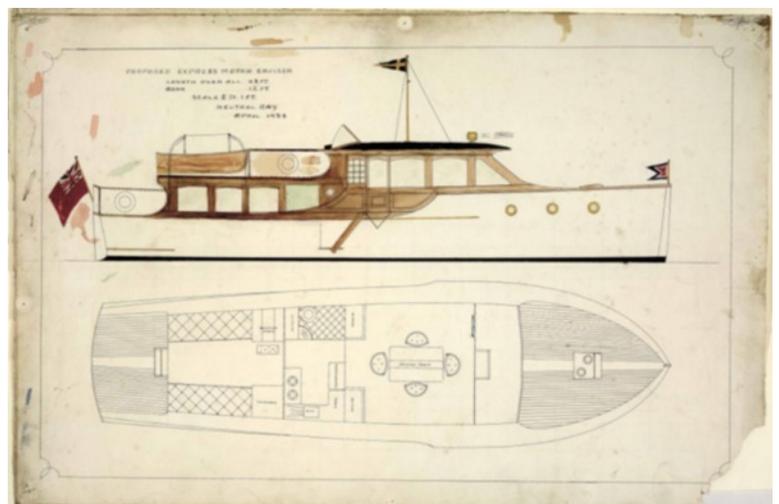
She was kept at the Newport Yacht Club for a while and my father skippered and maintained her. We lived in a rented cottage in Bayview, just near William's boatshed. I don't remember this as I was barely one year old.

In 1931 the *Pollyanna* was sold to a Perth business man, Rowland Smith and we went with her. Meanwhile, my father, being part of the small Norwegian community in Sydney, was great friends with Lars Halvorsen and before we went to Perth, he gave Lars a copy of the blueprints of the *Pollyanna*. Lars adapted these plans and built his own version of a luxury yacht which he also called *Pollyanna*.

We stayed in Perth for four years, my father skippering the original *Pollyanna* on the Swan River for Rowland Smith. In 1934, Harold Percy Christmas, the founder of Woolworths in Australia (not connected with any Woolworths overseas), head hunted my father to come back east and take over two of his luxury yachts, the *Winbah* and the *Toomarie*, also built by Halvorsen on the lines of the original *Pollyanna*. So we left Perth and our first home in Sydney was a cottage on the banks of McCarr's Creek, Church Point. This was 1935. By this time I was five years old and ready for school, the nearest being Mona Vale. How to get there? No bus service and no car.

At Church Point, the Cousins family ran the Post Office Store. Every day, Mr Cousins drove to Mona Vale in the morning to pick up the mail and newspapers and the same in the afternoon. This solved the problem except on Wednesday. Shops, etc. closed midday Wednesday so he didn't do the afternoon run. I had to walk home on Wednesday afternoon.

Late in 1936, HP Christmas decided that McCarr's Creek was not the best place to keep his yachts so my father bought an old brick house on two acres of land in Waterview Street, Mona Vale. The block had a water frontage, a wharf and a small slipway. The house had three rooms and a verandah on all sides. I stayed at Mona Vale School for another year then moved to Newport Central School in 1938. I had my own dinghy and walked up the road to school. In the afternoon, I rowed back home.



General arrangement plan of the bridge-deck motor cruiser POLLYANNA (courtesy of Harvey Halvorsen)

This I did until 1941 when a Japanese invasion seemed to be imminent. By 1942, I was still at school at Newport and my father had enlisted with the US Marines. He was not an Australian citizen so the Australian Navy wouldn't take him. Our small "fleet of dinghies, which we hired out, were confiscated (including mine) by the authorities, to be taken up the Hawkesbury until the threat of invasion was over. However, the towing vessel, which had several dozen small craft in tow, breached when reaching the open sea of Broken Bay and all the dinghies ended up broken on the rocks. They were wood, not plastic or aluminium, so there was little to save.

Then came the tank trap and the barbed wire. I had lost my dinghy so I had to walk around the bay to Newport, along Waterview Street, then The Crescent, which came out near the school. One morning on a spare block on Waterview Street, trucks and tents appeared. There was a small company of militia in charge of some "interned" Italian migrants. They were part of a gang that dug and placed the cement blocks and put in the star pickets that held the barbed wire.

A trench was dug from Bungan Beach, across Pittwater Road and into the mangrove swamp at the head of Winji-Jimini Bay. This cut me off from "The Crescent", my short cut to school. I had to now walk the length of Waterview Street, along Pittwater Road, past the 11 mile store, over a wooden bridge where the tank trap cut the main road in two, to the school. This added another kilometre to my walk. So I can say that the tank trap affected my primary school years. The barbed wire and star pickets also went across our water frontage and were not removed until 1945.

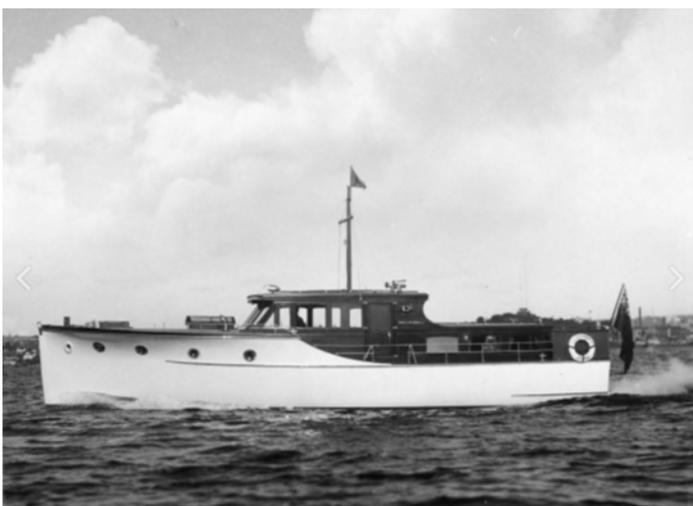
This finishes the memories. Hope this is of some interest. I've lots more stories.

Regards
Sybil Holst Small (nee Fredricksen)

(Plan on previous page and photos below are of the "second" *Pollyanna*, the one built by Lars Halvorsen - *Editor*)



Tank trap Pittwater 1942 (Sybil Holst Small 2009)



POLLYANNA on Sydney Harbour about 1934. Photographer unknown ANMM Collection Halvorsen Boats photograph album (00038528)



Helm of POLLYANNA about 1934. Photographer unknown ANMM Collection Halvorsen Boats photograph album

WHAT'S ON?

Seniors Festival - Historic Brookvale

6 April 2018

Walking tour led by Northern Beaches Council Library Service. Join Library Local Studies Historian Michelle Richmond on a walking tour into Brookvale's history and discover its pioneers, people and pop culture.

Bookings essential.

Wear comfortable walking shoes. Meet in front of 8 William Street Brookvale (Berkelo Cafe).

Enquiries: 9942 2449

Manly Art Gallery and Museum

Express Yourself 2018

Friday 23 February to Sunday 1 April

Represents diverse bodies of work including multi-media, digital, sculpture and drawing, and celebrates the creativity of emerging artists in this region. Curated by Ross Heathcote and Katrina Savage.

In conjunction with Express Yourself, three awards are granted annually to students featured in the exhibition; the Theo Batten Bequest Youth Art Award, the Manly Art Gallery & Museum Society Youth Art Award and the People's Choice Award.

Shimmer

Friday 23 February to Sunday 1 April

Painter Martine Emdur uses water as both her subject and her challenge.



1940s - Freshwater Beach Tank Obstacles (Max Dupain)



Manly, Warringah and Pittwater
Historical Society Inc.
Established 1924

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Currently vacant

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Manly Warringah & Pittwater Historical Society Inc.

Membership Renewal/Application Form - 2018

Title: Dr/Mr/Mrs/Ms (please circle)

Name:

Age group (please tick): 10 – 18 19 – 50 51 – 70 71 – 85 86 – 95

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

Address:

State

Postcode

Phone: (Home)

(Bus.)

(Mobile)

E-mail:

Signature:

Date:

MEMBERSHIP FEES

\$20 Single

\$25 Household (2 persons) or Organisation

FEE: \$..... including emailed copy of the Peninsula Historian

\$12.00..... if you require Peninsula Historian by post

DONATION: \$.....

TOTAL: \$..... Do you require a receipt? Yes/No

PAYMENT METHODS

- **By cheque or money order**

Please make payable to 'MWP Historical Society Inc' and mail with the completed Renewal Form to:

**The Treasurer
Manly Warringah & Pittwater Historical Society Inc
PO Box 695
MANLY, NSW 1655**

[DO NOT MAIL CASH. If paying in person place cash, cheque or money order in an envelope together with the completed Renewal Form)

- **By Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT)**

Account Details: Commonwealth Bank, Manly
Account Name: MWP Historical Society
BSB Number: 062-197
Account Number: 00907384

[If paying by EFT please ensure that you enter your name in the 'to account description' box and confirm your payment by sending an email to the Treasurer at treasurer@mwphs.com. This is essential for your correct identification and is particularly important if your payment is made through a Credit Union)