



Peninsula Historian

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

VOLUME 12 No. 7

August 2019

ISSN 1835-7628 (print) 2207-8401 (electronic)

FROM THE EDITOR

Some readers may see my monthly articles in the *Peninsula Living* magazine. A recent one was on Scotland Island. In it I repeated the common statement that the island was originally called Pitt Island and was changed to Scotland Island when it was granted to Andrew Thompson, a Scottish transportee. George Champion has pointed out that this is a myth - the name Pitt Island appearing only briefly and well after Andrew Thomson's association. He sent me an article that he and Shelagh had written in 2014 and an extract is reproduced in this issue.

Keith Amos has also been active and has done some marvellous research on the history of *The Kiosk* at Freshwater Beach, today's Pulu Restaurant. He has agreed that I can publish it in a future issue so thank you Keith.

Pleased as I most certainly am to receive these deeply-researched articles, please do not feel that you cannot make your own contribution. Any snippet is of potential interest. Local history is being made every day!

Richard Michell

DIARY

Meetings held at the NB Council Community Centre on the corner of Abbott and Griffin Roads, North Curl Curl

10 August, 2019 2.00 pm

East Coast Lows *Richard Whitaker*

Richard is a meteorologist who used to appear on the now-defunct Weather Channel. He will talk about east coast lows, explain their origins and relate some stories of large surfs and coastal damage, including on the Northern Beaches.

14 September, 2019 2.00 pm

Early Sydney Trams *Peter Kahn*

Peter will talk and show a film on the early Sydney trams, including the Manly and Northern beaches lines. Topical again as the new Light Rail system finally nears completion.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I have been informed that past President Bob Pauling is unfortunately in hospital and may have to move into care on discharge. On behalf of us all I wish Bob the very best.

On much more mundane matters, both the Blinking Light Working Group and the Thematic History Advisory Group - the former run by the RMS and the latter by NB Council - have come out of hibernation and I will shortly be attending meetings of both. Hopefully there will be some news to report next issue.

I have been approached by ex Mayor and State Member for Manly, Peter McDonald, who is organising a celebration for next year to mark the hundredth anniversary of the initial establishment of the street that he lives in, in Balgowlah. I referred most of his questions to George Champion who was able to help. Thanks George.

After waiting for almost two months, it took a follow-up email to elicit an update from the RMS on the hoped-for saving of the remnant section of bullock track at Mona Vale which was featured in the June issue. Unfortunately the response may have contained bad news and I am seeking clarification. More in the news section, and also on remnants of water troughs for the bullocks who trudged the road.

Finally, the trial of holding meetings at Narrabeen has now ended. Our next meeting will be back at Curl Curl where we will discuss the future but the parking situation at Narrabeen proved to be pretty diabolical. We had the embarrassment that our guest speaker could not get a spot last meeting.

Richard Michell

NEWS AND VIEWS

NEXT MEETING, Saturday 10 August, 2019

Richard Whitaker will talk on the weather phenomenon known as an East Coast Low, the cause of the severe on shore winds, rain and seas that hit the Northern Beaches intermittently. The damage that they have done over the years to the shoreline at Collaroy is well known.

Richard is a meteorologist who used to appear on the now-defunct Weather Channel. He also has an interest in history and he will cover both aspects in what should be a very in-

teresting and informative talk. Please note that the venue is North Curl Curl, not Narrabeen.

LAST MEETING REPORT, Saturday 13 July, 2019

Another good attendance was thoroughly entertained by Jo Harris, the Historian of the NSW Division of the Wireless Institute of Australia and a very active member of the Kuringai Historical Society. Her talk on *"The three wireless men"* - Prime Minister Billy Hughes, Guglielmo Marconi the developer and entrepreneur of early radio, and Ernest Fiske the head of the then-recently-formed AWA - recounted the first international radio broadcast to Australia on 22 September 1918 from Wales in the United Kingdom to Wahroonga in NSW. Wahroonga was where Ernest Fiske lived and the receiving antennae and equipment were set up in the grounds and attic of his home.

Jo also covered the celebrations that were held in 2018 - and which she played a major part in organising, both in Sydney and Wales - to mark the centenary of the event, plus the memorial that is on the property at Wahroonga.

This brief summary does not do justice to what was a very enjoyable and lively talk.

HOUSE OF MANLY'S FIRST MAYOR

In response to a Development Application, Northern Beaches Council, with our support, has placed a temporary heritage order on a property at 21 Whistler Street, Manly. It is apparently the remnant of the home of Thomas Rowe, the first Mayor of Manly. More details next issue.

BULLOCK TRACK REMNANT AT FOLEY'S HILL, MONA VALE

Hopefully readers will remember the article in the June issue on the identification of a remnant of the original bullock track that eventually became today's Mona Vale Road. Concerned that it could be lost in the current road widening works we contacted the RMS who were sympathetic. They advised that they would identify it themselves and advise whether it was in any danger. It is on land that is apparently intended to be transferred to the Katandra Bushland Sanctuary when the current road works are completed. However, to my concern, the RMS would not allow me to accompany me on their inspection as there is some asbestos contamination in the adjacent area.

After almost two months with no advice received, I emailed the relevant PR person and received the following response.

"Hi Richard,

Our team has confirmed that we have identified the rock in the photograph from the draft newsletter you kindly forwarded earlier (see adjacent).

Some coal tar has been identified around this area. Since coal tar is considered carcinogenic and was mixed along with asbestos contaminant material it was removed as part of the clean-up work.

The contractor has been made aware of this area and at this stage there is no requirement for us to disturb the rock in the photo.

Please feel free to get in touch if you would like to discuss further, Ayesha"

My heart sank when I read this and I responded as follows:

"Thanks Ayesha for getting back to me. However I fear that you may be describing a mini disaster.



Ernest Fiske at home (ABC Radio National archives)



What we are/were trying to save is/was the remnant of the actual bullock track – the “horizontal” track surface. The cliff that you refer to is just an indication of work done to run the track up the side of the hill – a cut and fill operation as described in my original article. An interesting and important remnant but a side issue.

The track remnant is/was immediately below this cliff and extending a short distance up the hill. As my article stated “*Although not yet studied in detail, the road surface itself appears to have been constructed of small stone boulders packed onto the compressed fill (see Figure). There may have been **some tar used** at some point in its history.*”

From what you state, namely “*Some coal tar has been identified around this area. Since coal tar is considered carcinogenic and was mixed along with asbestos contaminant material it was removed as part of the clean-up work*” I fear that you have dug up the remnant track and disposed of it – the exact opposite of the outcome we were trying to achieve!

Can I please have a site visit as originally requested. The area can be inspected from the road, with no need to enter the contaminated portion.”

This exchange only happened on 25 July and so the outcome will not be known for a while. (See also the Pot Pourri Section for more on remnants).

Richard Michell

POT POURRI

A dedicated follower of fashion

Our Archivist, Jan Tinkler, writes:

Many years ago the Society received a bequest of a collection of ladies’ & children’s clothing, dating from the early 1900’s, from Mrs. Sheila White on behalf of Mrs. E. Morrison, both of Dee Why.

As we are unable to provide suitable conservation storage for the collection, we asked “*Cavalcade of Fashion*” if they would accept the the items, as the donor requested. We are pleased to report they were very happy to receive the collection and we are grateful the bequest will have a good home.

“*Cavalcade of Fashion*” holds a vast collection of historical clothing and accessories for men, women & children from the late 1700’s. It is a voluntary, not for profit group which was formed 55 years ago to share Australian social & fashion history. They present shows every month around Sydney and further afield in N.S.W. Their amazing collection includes everything from bonnets to boots and buttons to bags. Their website is www.thecavalcade.org. Jan

More buffaloes on Mona Vale Road

Lloyd Pearce, a resident of Terrey Hills and now of Warriewood, has contacted me to draw my attention to some old water troughs located to the south of the present-day alignment of Mona Vale Road as it traverses Tumbledown Dick Hill near Kimbriki Tip. In a very clever design, the troughs are carved directly into the sandstone cliffs and are kept full of fresh water by seepage from the soil above.

The troughs presumably date back to the bullock wagon days. The copy of an article from the *Albury Banner and Wodonga Press* of 3 June 1938 which is reproduced on p.6 appears to indicate that the road alignment was changed just prior to WW2, to give a gentler climb. Motor cars and trucks were apparently not as adept as buffaloes at climbing hills, although some people believe that it was a clumsy bullock that gave the hill its name.

I plan a small expedition to find the troughs. If interested in joining me please email president@mwphs.com.



ARTICLE

SCOTLAND ISLAND

(An extract from a brief examination of its early European history by George and Shelagh Champion)

From 2nd to 9th March 1788 Governor Phillip explored the waters of Broken Bay. After exploring branches to the north and west, he entered the south arm of Broken Bay on 5th March, and spent the whole of 6th March exploring it, naming it Pitt Water after William Pitt the younger. However, there is no mention of Phillip naming present Scotland Island as Pitt Island in any of the First Fleet Records.

Captain Hunter's Admiralty chart of his surveys of Broken Bay in 1788 and 1789 do not ascribe any name to present Scotland Island. Lieutenant William Bradley's chart does not name the island either.

Andrew Thompson was baptised on 7 February 1773 at Kirk Yetholm, Scotland. With a friend, he was involved in the theft of cloth from a local merchant. At his trial at Jedburgh Court of Judiciary he pleaded guilty and was sentenced to fourteen years' transportation. He arrived in Sydney on the transport ship *Pitt* in on 14 February 1792, when he was 19 years old. (1)



The Pitt

He joined the police force and in 1796 he was posted to Green Hills (now Windsor), where he received a pardon in 1798. Besides his police duties he had other important responsibilities such as grain assessor and trustee of common lands. Under Governor Macquarie he was appointed a magistrate. Over time he acquired many properties in the Hawkesbury district by both purchase and grant.

Several vessels were constructed by Thompson to carry grain, fruit and vegetables from the Hawkesbury district to Sydney. Two such vessels built on Scotland Island were the *Geordy* and the *Whale*.

The island at the southern extremity of Pittwater was officially granted to Andrew Thompson on 1st January 1810 by Governor Lachlan Macquarie. However it appears that he may have had permission to establish his salt boiling works there some years before this, perhaps as early as 1806. His Land Grant deed states that the island is "to be known by the name of Scotland Island". (2)

Governor Macquarie and his wife admired Andrew Thompson greatly. Andrew reciprocated by leaving a quarter of his estate to the Governor in his will.

Andrew, who was never physically robust, worked very hard to help the Hawkesbury settlers during the floods of 1806 and 1809, and these efforts may have accelerated his death. He died at his Windsor residence on 22 October 1810 at the early age of 37 years.

His valuable house and premises at Windsor comprised "a good Dwelling House, Stores, Granaries, Cellars, Stabling, and other convenient and spacious Warehouses." This and several farms near Windsor, a brewery and the toll bridge over South Creek were advertised to be let by auction. (3)

His "extensive Salt Works at Scotland Isle, Pitt Water, with good buildings and every requisite convenience" were also advertised. (4)

William Mason became the tenant of Scotland Island for two years. In 1812 a man named Dennis, who was employed at Mason's salt works, was killed when a tree fell on him. (5)

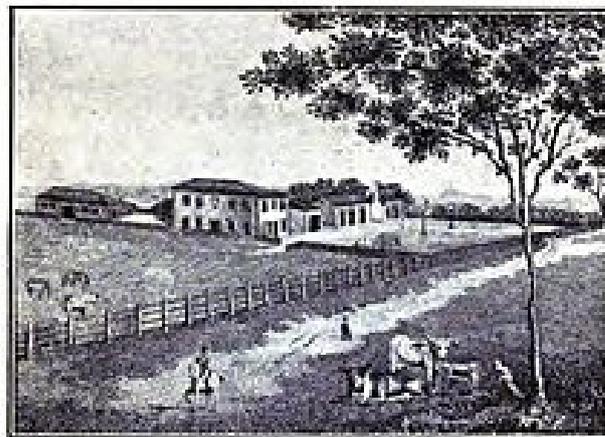
It was advertised that the good schooner, entirely new, called the *Geordy*, burthen 20 tons, with all her masts, yards, sails, rigging, and stores, the purchaser of which will receive a register in his own name, and also the sloop *Whale*, were for sale (6).

Thompson's estate was advertised for auction in 1812 and included the following reference to Scotland Island: "Lot 10 - Scotland Isle, an island situate in Pitt Water, Broken Bay, comprising 120 acres of good land fit for grazing and cultivation, with extensive salt works, a good dwelling house and stores' labourers' rooms etc., and replete with every convenience for carrying on the

business of salt burning, well situated for the establishment of a fishery, and ship building. Also, a vessel of about 96[?] tons (partly built) on the stocks, at the Island." Similar advertisements, continued for some years. (7)

In March 1815 "a very strong and fine New Vessel, of 75 tons, lately launched by James Webb from Scotland Island" was advertised for sale by Private Contract. The vessel was lying in Cockle Bay, near the house of her owner, James Webb. (8)

James Meehan surveyed Scotland Island in 1814. It remained part of Andrew Thompson's unsold estate until 1818, when the Executors H.C. Antill and T. Moore advertised: "To be sold at auction "Lot 4 - Scotland Isle, an island situate in Pitt Water, Broken Bay, comprising One hundred and Twenty Acres of good land, fit for grazing and cultivation, with Salt Works, Dwelling House and Stores, Labourers' Rooms, and well situated for the Establishment of a Fishery and Ship Building," (9)



Andrew Thompson's Red House Farm at today's McGraths Hill

George and Shelagh Champion July 2014

References

1. Andrew Thompson, ADB
2. NSW Land and Property Maintenance Authority SN5/2
3. *Sydney Gazette* 15 Dec. 1810
4. *Syd. Gaz.* 8 Dec. 1812
5. *Syd. Gaz.* 8 Aug. 1812
6. *Syd. Gaz.* 13 Jan. 1811
7. *Syd. Gaz.* 17 & 24 Oct. 1812
8. *Syd. Gaz.* 25 March 1815
9. *Syd. Gaz.* 22 Aug. 1818
10. George and Shelagh Champion 2014



Subdivision plan from 1906/1924

As George and Shelagh show, and which is not in dispute, this island in Pittwater was known as Scotland Island from the time that Andrew Thompson was granted it. There is

no apparent evidence of it having any other official name prior to then. So where did the quite commonly quoted view, which I repeated, that prior to Thompson's ownership it was called Pitt Island, come from? Again George and Shelagh probably have the answer. They state later in their full article on the history of Scotland Island that:

"In 1868, as part of a larger project surveying the east coast of NSW, Captain Frederick W. Sidney, RN carried out a survey of Pittwater. Apparently ignorant of the fact that there were already many well established place names in the area, Captain Sidney, on his Admiralty chart which was published in 1869, placed the name Pitt Island on what for decades had already been known as Scotland Island. Captain Sidney's action unfortunately led to the unfounded myth that Governor Phillip named this island in 1788."

So it appears certain that the first European name for the island was Scotland Island. The story of its ownership after Thompson's death is complex and convoluted. It apparently was never successfully sold by his executors. However this did not stop various people claiming ownership over the next 60 years. It was finally legally granted to Charles Jenkins and Joseph Benns as Tenants in Common in 1892 (10). This was based on their continuous possession and occupation of the island in good faith since 1859. They almost immediately sold it.

In 1906 it was subdivided into 121 lots and advertised for sale. It was offered again in 1911, again with very little if any success. Presumably to reduce their prices, it was further subdivided into an incredible 361 lots in 1924. I cannot imagine who the proponents imagined would buy them. The lots were tiny. Who were the 300 families or people who would potentially live on a remote island in Pittwater with no local employment of any note and access to the mainland only by boat? Again the sale was a failure. A few weekenders and holiday homes were built, but there were few permanent residents until the 1960s. An unfortunate legacy of the 1924 subdivision is that there are now too many people, with their modern day demands for facilities and resources, for the location. *Ed.*



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A slow news day in Albury/Wodonga

The article reproduced to the right appeared in the *Albury Banner and Wodonga Express* of 3 June, 1938. Perhaps the Editor could not resist the opportunity to include the name Tumbledown Dick in a headline. I presume that the "association" referred to is the National Roads and Motorists Association, the NRMA.

Wakehurst Parkway is not listed as a shorter alternative route from The Spit, rather than Condamine Street, because it did not exist in 1938. It was under construction but, with the intervention of WW2, was not completed until 1946.

ROAD WORK ON TUMBLEDOWN DICK HILL

The construction of a new road over Tumbledown Dick Hill, between St. Ives and Mona Vale, is now in progress, and when completed will afford an easier grade, with less severe turns than those on the old road. For the time being, motorists have to negotiate narrow side tracks, which become very slippery after rain. To avoid this section, motorists travelling to Mona Vale and further north towards Palm Beach may follow either the Roseville Bridge-Dee Why route, or go by way of Mosman, The Spit, and Condamine-street. The association has asked the Department of Main Roads to erect notices at the French's Forest road turn-off beyond St. Ives, and at Mona Vale, warning traffic of the work in progress.

Manly Warringah & Pittwater Historical Society Inc.

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