



ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SPONSORED BY ROCKDALE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

53 Bruce Street,
BEXLEY.
9th December, 1966.

Dear Friend and Member,

The Final Meeting for 1966 of the above Society will be held as follows:-

DATE:- FRIDAY EVENING NEXT, 16th DECEMBER, 1966, at 8 p.m.

PLACE:- COUNCIL CHAMBER, Rockdale Town Hall.

The Meeting will take the following form:-

1. Short General Business Meeting.
2. Drawing of the Raffle for the Painting of H.M.S. "Endeavour."
(Please return tickets immediately if you haven't already done so.)
3. Recitation - "Scrooge's Christmas Day."
4. Competition - Personal photographs of Society Members in their juvenile years for identification. Prize for the person who can guess the most correctly.
(Society members are particularly requested to co-operate by supplying a photograph of themselves well backed to avoid damage).
5. Display of Antiques. (Please co-operate in this - great care will be taken of all objects).

Lady members are again asked to supply a plate.

Gentlemen to provide drinks (soft preferred).

Gifford Eardley,
PRESIDENT.

R.W. Rathbone,
HON. SECRETARY.
58 4813.

INTERESTING BROADCASTS.

The attention of members is drawn to the following Broadcasts -

"Panel on the Past" - a series of twelve historical quiz programmes to commence Thursday, 5th January, 1967, on 2FC. and regionals from 10.15 to 10.30 p.m. - arranged by the Royal Australian Historical Society.

A talk on topical anniversaries by Mr. Philip Geeves on 2FC. Thursday, 22nd December, 1966, at 10.15 p.m.

THE ANNALS OF THE S.S. ERINA.

GIFFORD EARDLEY.

As the rat said to the mole "there is nothing like messing about with boats", so this particular essay follows rat's advice, dealing as it does with the fascinating story of the small steam boats which came, mostly at week-ends and holidays, into Botany Bay to cater for picnic traffic between Sans Souci and Kurnell. The most important steamer of this select group was undoubtedly the S.S. ERINA. This vessel, launched on 1st April, 1903, was built by Charles Dunn at the ship-yards on Erina Creek, a few miles east of Gosford and adjacent to the northern shores of the beautiful Brisbane Water.

For the construction of the hull of the ERINA, its builder utilised oregon planks 120 feet in length, with a width of 8 inches and a thickness of 3 inches, this particular timber was said, at the time, to be the longest ever imported into New South Wales. Both the keel and the keelson were formed from single pieces of blackbutt, each measuring 75 feet in length and 12 inches by 12 inches in section, which were cut from the local forests. The overall length of the hull was 82-ft., whilst the greatest beam width was 18-ft., and the hold had a depth of 8-ft.

The two cylinder marine type engine was built by Messrs. Ross and Duncan, of Glasgow, and developed 14 horse-power. Morts Dock and Engineering Company of Balmain, Sydney, supplied the boiler, built from Lowmoor iron, which gave a working pressure of 120 pounds per square inch. The machinery, condenser, boiler, etc. had a total weight of about 35 tons. This vessel was regarded as being the best sea-going boat ever built on the Brisbane Water, and Charles Dunn had good cause to be proud of his skilled handiwork. He claimed it was the biggest boat that he had built, and also that it was the smallest trading boat on the New South Wales coast. Mr. Dunn normally built local fishing craft and 16 and 18 "footers", for the sailing fraternity, together with a specialised design of surf-boat for Messrs. Burns, Phillip and Company, for use in the South Sea Island trade.

As built, the S.S. ERINA carried one life-boat, but about 1910 it was required to carry two in order to conform with requirements set down by the official "Sea-going Certificate". Initially a hand-operated winch was provided for cargo handling, a back-breaking procedure at the best of times, consequently most of the cargo was "man-handled" as far as possible. About 1916 a second-hand steam driven winch was installed to expedite cargo handling, an amenity greatly appreciated by the crew. A Jib and a main-sail could be rigged to the fore-mast for use with favourable winds, but the aft-mast was not adapted to take sails.

The launching of the S.S. ERINA was a great event in the usually placid existence of the inhabitants of Erina Creek village. A great "Do", which was held in the local hall, was catered for by the womenfolk, who cooked immense quantities of food, whilst the men drove, or footed, along the bush road leading into Gosford to obtain the necessary supplies of beer and other liquors, which disappeared as fast as it was procured. The festivities lasted for a week and a good time was had by all.

Captain Thomas Childs took charge of the S.S. ERINA, and proudly remained in command until such time as it was sold to Messrs. R.W. Miller for use as a tug-boat shepherding grimy coal punts around Sydney Harbour. Captain Childs, a true mariner in every sense of the word, was born in England and at an early age ran

away to sea. It is said that he celebrated his eleventh birthday aboard a vessel moored off Dawes Point at Sydney. In the course of his career as a sailor he made two trips to Australia, one such being with the famous "CUTTY SARK". He was shipwrecked off the coast of China and spent some eleven days on a small island before being rescued by a French gun-boat. The latter then met a pirate junk, sailed in close, and without quarter, blew the junk to smithereens, such pirates who survived the broad-side being left to drown. Continuing his nautical life, Thomas Childs saw service on the cable ship the "GREAT EASTERN", and later was concerned with the laying of the telegraph cable between La Perouse and New Zealand.

At length Thomas Childs decided to settle down in Sydney, where, at St. Barnabas Church of England, Broadway, he married Miss Emma Pearse. As the years rolled by he duly registered seven children, in the following order:- May, Robert, Annie, Thomas, Cecil, Emma and Leslie, the latter three still being hale and hearty. The family first lived at Pyrmont, but later moved to Bradford Street, Balmain, with subsequent removals to Palmer Street, and then to Ann Street. At this period he worked on the "S.S. IRRESISTIBLE", a tug-boat which often ran on the Manly passenger service, and later came into the possession of John Brown, the "Coal Baron" of Newcastle.

There was a time when a Master's Certificate was not required for persons taking a ship to sea, but, with the tightening up of marine regulations it became necessary for all masters to be in possession of the said certificate. However, three special "PILOT'S EXEMPTION CERTIFICATES" were issued in Australia, one going to Captain Childs, for services rendered and also for his detailed knowledge of the coast, which enabled him to range the seas fifty miles north, east and south of the port of Sydney. Thomas Childs, Herbert Mitchell and Archibald Jurd, were called in to the head office for oral examination, but Thomas Childs did not appear, consequently he was fined £30 for taking a ship to sea without a master being aboard. The clever James Gannon, K.C., a Solicitor residing at Russell Avenue, Dolls Point, successfully fought his case through the Courts, and, in addition to having the fine refunded, Captain Childs was permitted to take vessels to a distance of fifty miles out from the port of Sydney.

When Thomas Childs decided to engage in the Sydney - Hawkesbury local shipping trade, he entered into partnership with Mr. Harry Brown and ran a small steam boat named "FEDERAL". This vessel remained in their service for some nine months. It was an old boat, and was formerly known as the "SWANSEA" before it was fitted with an engine, contrived from odd bits and pieces salvaged from various water-front ship and scrap yards, by Mr. Harry Brown. This gentleman also built a similar engine for the "S.S. NARARA", another small steam boat engaged in the Hawkesbury trade. Eventually the partnership was dissolved and Thomas Childs joined forces with Mr. Charles Stephenson in the ownership of the "S.S. WOY WOY."

His next command was that of the newly launched "S.S. ERINA", and on its maiden voyage he was accompanied by his second youngest son, Cecil Childs, then aged eight, who, standing upon an up-turned fruit case, steered the vessel along the coast from South Head to Cape Banks. Entering Botany Bay, the vessel steamed to Sans Souci, and from the Government wharf at that place commenced its regular week-end and holiday passenger service to Kurnell, calling at Brighton-le-Sands, and Botany enroute. In the early days of this run a call was made to La Perouse, but this call was eventually eliminated, partly on account of the extra distance involved and partly on the lack of custom. The first trip was made on November 7th, 1903, and the regular Kurnell service terminated on Easter Monday, 1927. When the "S.S. ERINA" found it necessary to fill her water tanks, she was taken to a hydrant placed at the outer end of Delaney's Boatshed wharf at Rocky Point

On the Sans Souci - Kurnell run tickets were issued at one shilling return and ninepence single. The single fares were usually sold to night-fishermen, who returned to civilisation as best as they may. The last trip of the day was at 5 p.m. Kurnell Reserve at this time was under the care of Jack Hespe and, later, by Robert Grant. The area, made famous as being the first landing place in Australia of Lieutenant James Cook, was also famous amongst the trippers as being a bad place for snakes and mosquitoes.

Early on Tuesdays and Thursdays the "S.S. ERINA" left its Darling Harbour wharf, located near the foot of Erskine Street, just north of the now defunct Balmain Ferry jetty, with its cargo of all descriptions, destined for Woy Woy and Gosford, and intermediate jetties, both private and public. The list of regular stops make lengthy reading, but those who know the delights of Brisbane Water will follow them with interest. First call was at Wagstaff Point, then in the following order came, Pretty Beach, Hardy's Bay, Killcare, Booker Bay, Orange Grove, Blackwall, Brick Wharf (used before the channel to Woy Woy was dredged), Woy Woy, Murph's (Broadwater), Fred Couche's (Glenrock), Point Clare, Gosford, Green Point, New Brighton, Saratoga, Veteran Hall, Yow-Yow, Davis Town, Empire Bay (on occasion) Merritts Wharf, Daley's Point, and at odd private jetties, dubbed as "Claw-hammer" wharves by the hard worked crew, owing to their crazy construction, and habit of sinking deeper into the mud beneath any undue weight. The circumnavigation of Brisbane Water was always a pleasure as the worthy boat and its pleasant and kindly crew were most welcome at each and every port of call.

Cargo is always interesting and large quantities of beer, both in casks and in bottles, were regularly shipped for Gosford wharf, from here the brew was delivered by horse drawn vehicles to all hotels northwards to Wyong and eastwards to The Entrance. In fact the "S.S. ERINA" became known locally as "The Beer Boat". This lucrative traffic ceased when the Railway Department decided to lower its truckage rates and advance other concessions favourable to the brewing interests. The conveyance of "Hudson's Ready Cut Homes", destined for erection as "week-enders" was another lucrative cargo, likewise considerable quantities of second-hand timber (complete with rusty nails ready to tear the skin of the unwary), sundry doors and windows, discarded roofing iron, and odd and old mortar covered bricks, were taken to the various ports under instructions from those who preferred to build their Brisbane Water shanties from such recovered material. Mrs. Hydes, of Paddington, a house demolition specialist (who worked like a man) was in great demand for such supplies. She was generally accompanied on her delivery run to the Erskine Street Wharf by a full-blooded aboriginal named Teuro Downs. According to report this gentleman had been educated to become a lawyer but gave away this profession to help with the loading and unloading of Mrs. Hydes' cart and stacking the contents aboard the "S.S. ERINA."

Teuro Downs eventually settled at Hardy's Bay where he was greatly respected and, to a certain extent, maintained by the local residents. His "nose" for the presence of a bottle of beer was uncanny and no doubt this particular degree of skill was developed by his early years of training as a black-tracker. In his peregrinations around Hardy's Bay, he was always accompanied by a cat, and a small black and tan terrier of nondescript parentage.

The "S.S. ERINA" was in great demand for Botany Bay sailing races, picking up most of its enthusiastic passengers from the wharf at Sandringham, close handy to the Prince of Wales Hotel, a hostelry then known to its patrons as "THE BLOOD AND GUTS". Canvas awnings were spread over both the top and bottom decks to

protect the crowd from the effects of the sun. At times the sailing boats participated in races and regattas held on Sydney Harbour and on these occasions it was necessary to sail the boats out through Botany Heads, along the coast and into Port Jackson. The "S.S. ERINA" chugged along behind the flotilla, like a hen watching over her chickens, ready to proceed at a second's notice to the rescue of any boat that capsized or needed assistance. Captain Childs earned the wholehearted gratitude of members of the various sailing clubs established around the shores of Botany Bay and its charming backwaters.

Another of the "S.S. ERINA'S" duties was taking fishing parties from the city firms of Eastways, Lassetters, and Mick Simmons, amongst others, and also fishing clubs of a private nature. These parties were limited to about twenty persons at a charge of seven shillings and sixpence per head. From 12 p.m. of a Saturday night to 6 p.m. on Sunday night was the usual duration of the special fishing trip. The fishing enthusiasts, their beer, and their bait, were generally picked up at the Dawes Point wharf and taken as far north as North Head, and as far south as Bellambi Point. On holidays a week-end trip was often made to Jervis Bay, the ship being anchored within these semi-enclosed waters for the night. The fishermen slept in comfort in the cabin bunks usually occupied by the crew, who were now bedless, and seven or eight others dosed in temporary beds ranged round the cabin walls and the flooring thereof. The other bedless unfortunates were relegated to the hold, where they slept on a mattress contrived from canvas sails and cargo covering tarpaulin sheets. The hold was illuminated by a hurricane lamp, the dim lustre of which permitted the cork-screw to be located when it was most needed. At times the consumption of liquid refreshment was such that all interest in fishing was eliminated from the minds of the now befuddled deep-sea fishermen. Still a good time was had by all, particularly in calm weather.

A most unusual and difficult towage feat was carried out by the "S.S. ERINA" when it brought the stern-wheeler named "GENERAL GORDON" from Brooklyn to Ford's Shipbuilding Yard at Berry's Bay in Sydney Harbour. The latter slow old tub once conveyed train passengers from Brooklyn along the shallow waters of Mullet Creek to a temporary wharf placed near the southern end of the Woy Woy tunnel. This transference was necessary until such time as the Hawkesbury Bridge and its railway approaches had been completed. Incidentally it is understood that the hull of the "S.S. GENERAL GORDON" was sawn asunder and used to form the basis on which two or three houseboats were built.

Three regular Annual Sunday School picnics were catered for and great numbers of children were ferried across to Kurnell from the Government wharf at Sans Souci at a hiring of £8 per day. The Sunday Schools represented were the Kogarah Congregational, the Kogarah Methodist, and St. Andrew's Church of England, at Loop Junction. At this time the four members of the crew of the "S.S. ERINA" quite often laboured together for 140 hours per week, snatching sleep when and where they could.

Messrs. Huddart Parker's annual picnic to Correy's Gardens (now known as Cabarita) was another regular turn of Captain Childs, and when the American Fleet arrived in Sydney Harbour in 1908 the little vessel under his command was chartered by Joe Gardiner, and became plastered all over with signs advertising the merits of 'Joe Gardiner's Famous Boots and Shoes.' It has been related that one of the leading American Officers commented that "the 'S.S. ERINA' was the best boat to be seen in the harbour." Together with the "S.S. COBAR", and the

and the "S.S. KEIRA", the "S.S. ERINA" ferried thousands of people from the Man-of-War steps (at Benelong Point) to inspect the visiting warships.

One of the first cremations carried out in Sydney concerned the disposal of the remains of Mr. Bacon, a well known process-engraver. His ashes, in a suitable casket, were taken outside South Head for a distance of three miles and, in the presence of a large gathering of sea-sick mourners, committed to the deep. An elaborate "Wake" had been prepared for this solemn occasion but under the circumstances it was necessary for the skipper of the "S.S. ERINA" to steam his vessel into the tranquil waters of Middle Harbour before the mourners were in a fit condition to eat and drink to the memory of the late lamented Mr. Bacon.

The sea-worthiness of the "S.S. ERINA" was often demonstrated in times of rough weather and, on at least one occasion, she was the only vessel to leave Port Jackson for the open sea. During another storm she shared the honour with the P. and O. ship "MOOLTAN", this was during the raging of the "Mongolia" gale. Under storm conditions a race developed between the "S.S. ORARA", a crack vessel belonging to the North Coast Steam Navigation Company, and the "S.S. ERINA", over a distance of 19 miles from Sydney Heads to Barrenjoey, the latter vessel beating its rival by one hour. After steaming through one particularly severe gale, inwards bound from Broken Bay, the victor was enthusiastically welcomed by cock-a-doodle-does from the whistles of all the ferry and tug-boats as she steamed nonchalantly up the harbour. It was even too rough for the Manly ferry-boats to run across the heads.

On one occasion, about 1910, the "S.S. ERINA" was chartered to take a load of building material for the erection of a residence of Neverfail Bay, on the Georges River near Oatley. As the Bay is completely silted up the only place for the vessel to berth was in the deep water immediately against the northern abutment of the Como Railway Bridge. Here the unloading took place and, as the cargo was landed so the ship rose higher out of the water. The tide was also rising, a natural phenomena of little import to the crew busily engaged with the cargo shifting operations. The "S.S. ERINA" was fitted with an extremely long funnel of narrow proportions, and this appendage managed to find its way through the open space between the railway sleepers of the bridge, finally projecting well above the level of the rails, smoking merrily withal. Its presence was detected by an observant railway ganger who thought the bridge was on fire and raced to see just what was happening. His amazement knew no bounds, and after arranging to have all trains stopped from crossing the bridge, he had a lot to say to the Captain and the crew toiling below. However, nothing could be achieved until the tide receded, and the funnel descended below sleeper level, thus permitting trains to pass to and fro once more. The good Captain, with his masts arranged on either side of the bridge structure, had to wait patiently until the tide ebbed sufficiently to enable him to clear his mast heads. This episode marked the one and only occasion when the vessel reached Como Bridge.

One rainy night in March, 1910, the "S.S. ERINA" caught fire. A flare attached by a short length of cord to the life-saving equipment, had rusted through its tin container, thus bringing the chemical contents in contact with water. The resulting fire badly burnt the wheel-house, the top deck, and the aft mast, before it was extinguished. Incidentally, when repairs were being made it was decided to dispense with the aft mast, as it proved to be of little use to the ship's complement.

During the 1914 war period all manner of precautions were taken against ships entering the port of Sydney under cover of darkness. The Officer-in-Charge of these security measures, with headquarters at Rushcutters Bay, approached Captain Childs with a view of taking the "S.S. ERINA" through the heads at night without being observed by shore listeners or probing searchlights. Captain Childs' movements were to be of his own choosing and of a very secret nature. Two attempts were made and instantly detected by the shore installations, but at the third attempt the wily Captain brought his vessel close in under the cliffs at South Head, and succeeded in making an unobserved entry. This was just the test that the military authorities wanted and Captain Childs was highly complimented on the success of his exploit, whilst the searchlights and other protective measures were adjusted to prevent any repetition of the manoeuvre.

As before mentioned, the use of the "S.S. ERINA" on the weekend ferry service between Sans Souci and Kurnell was discontinued as from Easter Monday 1927, after which the vessel made trips on a Friday to Jervis Bay, calling at Shellharbour, Kiama, Nowra, Huskisson, Greenwell Point, and the Naval Depot at Jervis Bay. On one such journey, when off the coast near Port Kembla, the tail shaft of the propeller broke, leaving the ship at the mercy of the waves. Fortunately, the Union Steamship Company's "KAKA-RIKI" was near by and towed the stricken ship back to Sydney, more or less as a friendly gesture between friends. This was the only time the stalwart little ship had broken down through mechanical troubles in all its busy years of service. The necessary repairs were effected and the ship once again went on its way.

In the course of its lawful occasions it again entered Botany Bay, bringing to the wharf near La Perouse Cable Station, a large quantity of underwater telegraph cable. This unusual cargo was coiled loosely around the deck and covered with wet bags, topped with canvas sheets, as it was necessary to keep the cable covering from drying out. When taken ashore the cable was wound into a huge circular shaped tank where it was submerged in water and kept thus in case an emergency arose and the line across to New Zealand had to be repaired.

About 1934 the "S.S. ERINA" was sold to Messrs. R.W. Miller for towing coal punts around Sydney Harbour. It is believed that the little vessel has been broken up but precise information has proved difficult to obtain. However inquiries are being made through unofficial channels which may shed some light on its ultimate disposal. Captain Childs arranged to have a second vessel built, which for nostalgic reasons was also named "ERINA 2." The launching of this new ship took place towards the end of 1933. The length overall was 92 feet and the keel length amounted to 79 feet, the beam width was 20 feet. The keel and kelson were of blackbutt chosen from a living tree by the Davis Brothers at Empire Bay. A heavy-duty reversible oil engine was fitted. This unit had five cylinders and a most efficient exhaust muffler which eliminated practically all engine noise. This motor vessel made several trips to Botany Bay, bringing loads of oysters to Dolls Point wharf, to the order of James Smith. This special cargo was picked up from Greenwell Point, in the vicinity of Nowra. Timber destined for the reconstruction of the Government wharf at Sans Souci formed another cargo, and a chartered trip took the furniture and household effects of Mr. Frater, when he relinquished his long association with the Sans Souci Hotel at Rocky Point, to his new home at Berowra Waters.

Captain Thomas Childs passed away at Balmain during July, 1939, at the ripe old age of 82. The firm of Childs and Sons continued to function for a short while afterwards, but the inroads of the Second World War and the adverse competition of the motor trade forced the company out of business. Consequently, the "ERINA 2" was sold, in November, 1941, to the Clyde Sawmilling Company of Glebe Island and, so it has been said, saw much service in the New Guinea area in connection with the War effort.

In the compilation of this article dealing with the adventures of the little "S.S. ERINA" and its worthy Captain and crew, I sincerely thank Mr. Cecil Childs and his brother, Leslie, who were both members of the firm, and also of the crew, for their valuable assistance in supplying most of the information on which the "ERINA" story is based.

My gratitude is also expressed to Mr. George Hughes and Mr. F. Brett, both residents of Sans Souci, for their help in adding to the text.

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THE FIRST TAVERN IN THE ST. GEORGE DISTRICT.

WAS IT THE "HIGHBURY BARN" ?

Engaged in research at the Mitchell Library a few months ago, I came across an old Subdivision Plan (1861) which covered much of the area now known as Turrella and Arncliffe and which had apparently been lying in obscurity for some 90 odd years.

This plan gave me the first clue that several aspects of the story which has come down to us concerning the "Highbury Barn" tavern at Arncliffe are incorrect. It would now appear that the chief culprit in disseminating certain inaccurate information regarding the first tavern in the St. George district and being known as the "Highbury Barn" can be traced to the article which appeared in the Echo (1890) under the title "The Suburbs of Sydney-Rockdale" and published in the October issue of our Bulletin.

This article has been the source of much information on which later writers have relied, including myself, when writing about the first tavern in the district and the events of its period.

Following the line suggested by the first clue, I made further research of Publicans' License Returns, the N.S.W. Government Gazette, "Sands" Directory and several old maps concerning the pioneer period of our district and the following story about the first tavern, and the related events of its times, emerge from this investigation.

The first registered inn or tavern in the St. George district was known by the sign - "YORKSHIREMAN'S COAT OF ARMS", the license to sell ale and spiritous liquor being granted to a Mr. Thomas Kelsey, Cook's River, from the month of May 1842, to be renewed annually.

The license was renewed as required until the 30th June, 1846, when it was endorsed "transferred to William Johnstone - license removed to corner of Kent and Druitt Streets."

Kelsey himself transferred to the "Canterbury Arms" tavern and was granted a liquor license there commencing as at 28th June, 1847.

And so in these few sentences we find that Kelsey's tavern at Cook's River was known as the "YORKSHIREMAN'S COAT OF ARMS" and not the "Highbury Barn" as has been generally supposed for the last 80 odd years.

The tavern once stood on the site today occupied by a cottage (built about 1890) which stands on the north-eastern corner of Kelsey Street and the present old Wollongong Road, Arncliffe, and covering cellars still extant.

The site of the early tavern is in accordance with our traditional knowledge of its location and the chances are that the story told in the Echo that the tavern was built for Kelsey by paid convict labour is correct.

The name of the tavern may have referred to the famous Yorkshireman, Captain James Cook who, as history records, sailed into Botany Bay in 1788 and introduced this area, of which Kelsey's tavern at Cook's River formed a part, to the outside world. It also could have referred to Reuben Hannam, another Yorkshireman, whose grant of 100 acres was but a matter of some 20 yards from the spot where Kelsey had his tavern built.

YORKSHIREMAN'S COAT OF ARMS.

I am indebted to my good friend, Mr. Arthur Ellis, who incidentally had a stay in Yorkshire and Lancashire in his earlier years, for the information that a Yorkshireman's Coat of Arms represents a fragment of English folk lore and was often used by a Yorkshireman's county neighbours in a more or less derogatory sense about his characteristics.

A Yorkshireman's Coat of Arms is understood to be - a FLY, a FLEA, and a FLITCH OF BACON - meaning "A FLY will drink with anyone, a FLEA will bit anyone, and a FLITCH OF BACON is only good when it is hung."

And so what appears at first sight to be an elaborate name for the first tavern in the St. George district turns out to be a whimsical application by its proprietor of a piece of English folk lore about the alleged characteristics of a Yorkshireman.

The dating of Kelsey's license would suggest that his tavern was probably built in the early part of 1842, but the period of the commencement date of his license (May, 1842) is sometime prior to the time when Surveyor-General Mitchell, is recorded as having commenced his survey (May, 1843), and shortly after caused to be constructed by convict labour, the Wollongong Road or as it was often called "Mitchell's line of road to the Illawarra."

This is in contradistinction to the story told in the Echo, and even independent of this it has been understood by most interested in the subject, that the tavern was built after Mitchell's road came into being.

The prior dating of the tavern to the survey and construction of the road opens up a spate of interesting questions.

TAVERN BUILT BEFORE MAIN ROAD.

Why would a tavern be built in the wilderness of the then St. George district before the first main thoroughfare (Wollongong Road) was put through and on the particular site on which we know it was built? Did Kelsey have prior knowledge of the route on which Mitchell's road would take or did the road which went through immediately in front of his tavern merely confirm a traffic pattern already established or was it both of these considerations.

Four relevant points would come to bear in gaining a clear picture of the scene just south of the dam causeway about this time:-

- (a) The shortage of WATER for man and beast (as may be gleaned also from certain passages in the Echo.)
- (b) The existence of a creek immediately adjacent to the spot at which Kelsey had his tavern built.
- (c) The opening up of the area per medium of the dam causeway from about 1840 to timber getters, axemen, sawyers, etc.
- (d) An economic depression in the State from 1841.

It is impossible in this article to analyse all the ramifications of the points raised. Some of these points need further investigation and will be discussed in more detail in articles at present being written by Mr. Giff Eardley and myself concerning the early taverns, and their times, of the St. George district which we hope to issue later in the form of a booklet for the Society.

We can now pass on to what happened to Kelsey's tavern after he transferred to the "Canterbury Arms" towards the end of 1846.

"THE BOLD FORESTER."

Available records do not cover the 1849-1852 period but Levi Barden is shown as being the Licensee of the tavern in Wollongong Road from 1853 up to and including the year 1860 under the sign of the "BOLD FORESTER" although it could have been, as stated in the Echo, that William Trimby kept the tavern for a time and if so would probably have been in the period before mentioned.

The title "BOLD FORESTER" obviously referred to the axemen, sawyers and charcoal burners engaged in hacking away at the great forest lands about the Wollongong Road (mainly the original Bexley Estate and Gannon's Forest) and many of these no doubt were the main customers of the tavern built for Kelsey for about a quarter of a century. It was indeed a most appropriate name for the period.

The next group of available records indicates that Mr. Frewin Sleath obtained the license for the "Bold Forester" inn at the beginning of 1866 whilst later in that year Mr. Samuel Gates is shown as the licensee.

In the first half of 1869, the licensee of the "Bold Forester" was Mr. Peter Belz but in this year the tavern bearing this name is shown as being located on Forest Road, Arncliffe, and in the second half of that year the name of this tavern was changed to "THE BARN" under the name of the same licensee. The name had apparently been changed to avoid confusion with the old tavern which stood but half a mile away.

Frewin Sleath, we learn from other evidence, after being the owner and licensee of the "Bold Forester" in 1866 at its original address, retained its ownership and was instrumental in having facilities for the sale of liquor set up in a home, probably built for Sleath in 1868, in readiness for business commencing January, 1869, with Mr. Belz as the licensee of the new "Bold Forester" inn and shortly after, as we have seen, "The Barn". This home, incidentally, seems to have been the only one on Forest Road, Arncliffe, until the late 1870's.

It will be seen from the foregoing that the tavern built for Thomas Kelsey had been known by the signs "Yorkshireman's Coat of Arms" and later the "Bold Forester" but never the "Highbury Barn".

SIGNIFICANCE OF TRANSFER OF LICENSE.

Meanwhile we might reflect on the local historical significance of the transfer of the "Bold Forester" license from the Wollongong to Forest Road.

When the ridge extension of Forest Road was opened in 1864 it naturally provided drier and better conditions for the wagon teams than applied on the old Wollongong Road which, it is known, frequently became a quagmire, particularly after rain, at least during the first 30 odd years of its existence. A map of 1861 marks the road as 'Impassable'.

In addition the traffic making its way along Rocky Point Road towards Sydney Town (after the new alignment on Arncliffe Hill had been put through in 1864) no doubt found the tavern on Forest Road as a much more convenient situation than the out of the way tavern down on Wollongong Road.

Thus the challenge of water which had played a major part in the reason for the original tavern being built where it was, had by the late 1860's diminished in severity, due no doubt to the settlers having by this time settled along the water-courses in the St. George district such as Wolli Creek, Muddy Creek etc., and having constructed their own dams and wells.

But there appears also to have been an additional reason why the "Bold Forester" license was removed from the Wollongong to Forest Road.

In 1869, the same year that the "Bold Forester" (shortly after "The Barn") was opened on Forest Road, John McInnes built the "Tempe Family Hotel" (opened early in 1870) on Rocky Point Road, slightly south of "Tempe House", and thus only about a mile away from Sleath's tavern which was very close indeed in those days of limited customers.

There appears to have been great rivalry between Sleath and his new publican competitor (both were elected as Aldermen to the newly formed West Botany Council (now Rockdale) in the 1870's) and it is also recorded in the History of Rockdale that the publican (Mr. Barden) of the "Highbury Barn" inn on Forest Road was consistently needling the Aldermen of the newly formed Council for meeting regularly at the opposition tavern ("Tempe Hotel.")

The publican concerned must have been Mr. Sleath as Frederick Barden does not come on to the local scene as a publican until somewhat later. However, the sequence of events at this period seems to explain how "The Barn" became the famous "Highbury Barn" on Forest Road.

In this regard it is recorded that the election of the first Mayor of the West Botany Council took place at the "Tempe Hotel" on Monday, 13th February, 1871, and the Aldermen, including Mr. McInnes, met frequently at that hotel until the first Council building was erected in Rocky Point Road in 1872. This naturally was the cause of Sleath's complaint and the Council accordingly, to show that no partisanship existed, also met in Sleath's tavern-home on Forest Road.

NEW PRESTIGE NAME.

Meanwhile the lease by Mr. Belz of "The Barn" had concluded and the Return of Publicans' Licenses shows that Mr. Sleath himself had again taken over control of his inn early in 1872 with the much more sophisticated sign, the "Highbury Barn", over the front porch.

Whether more comforts for customers came with the new name on Sleath's tavern is not known but it would appear that the popularity of the "Tempe Hotel" among citizens and Aldermen had something to do with its new prestige name. And so the "Highbury Barn" alias "The Barn"/"Bold Forester" came into existence in 1872. In the late 1870's the "Highbury Barn" was purchased by Mr. Frederick Barden and is shown in 1880 with Alfred Goodin as licensee and lessee.

In 1884, the license of the Forest Road house-tavern passed to Edwin Barden and later still it came into the hands of the Logan family. In 1911, a referendum was passed limiting the number of liquor licenses in most districts and as a result both the "Highbury Barn" and the "Tempe Hotel" went to the wall as far as licensed premises were concerned.

The "Highbury Barn", later renovated into shops, stood on a site (now the corner of Forest Road and Barden Street) and was pulled down, along with the Arncliffe Theatre, some six years ago, to make way for the present service station.

Regarding the old tavern on Wollongong Road, an old resident of Arncliffe claims he saw relics of it in the late 1880's before the land was cleared for the present cottage on the site.

It will be observed from the foregoing that the history of the two earliest taverns of Arncliffe are extremely important in gaining an understanding of the pioneer period of the St. George district not only from the human aspect but also in regard to their intimate relationship with the trends and events of their period.

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