



ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SPONSORED BY ROCKDALE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

81 Watkin Street,
BEXLEY. 2207

10th April, 1970.

Dear Friend and Member,

The April meeting of the above Society will be held as follows:

Date. Friday Evening next, 17th April, 1970 at 8 p.m.

Place. Council Chambers, Town Hall, Princes Highway, Rockdale.

Guest Speaker. For the Bi-Centenary Month we look forward to having with us on this occasion:

Sister Catherine O'Carrigan, Dip. Art Ed.,
Historical Research Worker.

This will be an Illustrated Address entitled -

"Sydney Cove - Genesis of a Nation".

We can assure members of a most enjoyable evening.

Business. General.

Would lady members please bring a plate.

D. H. Sinclair.

(Miss) J. Noble.

President.

Hon. Secretary. 59 - 6796

Supper Roster.

Mrs. Eardley (Capt.) Mrs. Bertrum, Miss Callister,
Mrs. Eastop, Mrs. Lee, Mrs. McDonald and Mrs.
Pritchard.

DATES TO REMEMBER FOR FUTURE OUTINGS

Bookings may be made by ringing Mr. Don Sinclair 587.4555.

APRIL 18 - SATURDAY. OUTING TO KURNELL. full day

Seats are still available for this outing - Remember you may not receive an invitation to attend on 29th, so be first and come on 18th and visit Historic Points of Interest.

Bus leaving Rockdale Town Hall at 10 a.m. Sharp.
Cost \$1 - includes admission to Museum.
Bring your own morning, afternoon teas and lunch.

MAY 17 - SUNDAY. COBBITTY AND SURROUNDING AREAS. full day

Visiting "St. Paul's "Church of England, Cobbity to attend the 11 a.m. service in this lovely old Historic Church.

Lunch will be partaken in the Church Hall after the Service, followed by a guided tour of surrounding countryside, with afternoon tea at Burragorang Valley Lookout.

Cost \$1.50. Bring morning, afternoon teas and lunch.
Leaving Rockdale Town Hall at 9 a.m. Sharp.

JULY 25 - SATURDAY AFTERNOON. TOUR OF FORT DENISON.

Bookings should be made as soon as possible - limited to 25 persons.

Details and cost will be published later.

OCTOBER 3, 4 and 5 - SATURDAY to MONDAY.

LONG WEEKEND OUTING TO GULGONG

Reservations have been completed, but for those who still may be interested a waiting list is being taken for any possible cancellations.

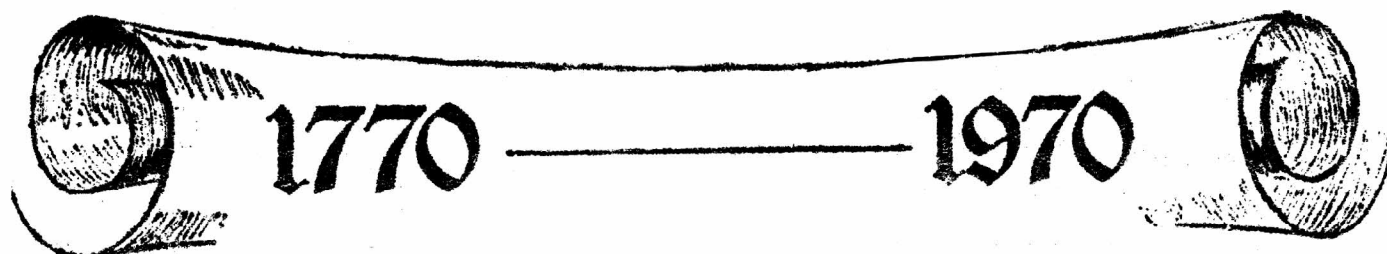
Please hand name to Secretary. Cost \$25. Limited 44.

NOTE - Would members notify the Secretary of any change of address please.



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CAPTAIN JAMES COOK R.N.



Cook's landing at Botany Bay

CAPTAIN JAMES COOK R. N.

Written by Gifford & Eileen Eardley
Illustration - taken from "A Concise
History of Australia" by Clive Turnbull

It is questionable if, after a lapse of some two hundred years, there still remains any undiscovered information relating to the multifarious activities associated with the everyday life of that distinguished Yorkshireman, Captain James Cook. Much has been published about his three historic voyages of discovery, undertaken between the years 1768 and 1779; to we Australians the most important of his achievements was the finding and charting of some five thousand miles of the eastern coast of Australia. One can only speculate as to what would have eventuated if this great sailor had not ventured into the South Pacific Ocean, circumnavigated the islands of New Zealand, and sailed westward to gain a landfall of the Australian Continent at Point Hicks.

The biography of James Cook teems with interest. He was born on October 27, 1728, at Marton-in-Cleveland, a small farming village in Yorkshire, England, the son of a Scottish labourer and his Yorkshire wife. The cottage where James Cook was born has long been demolished but the field in which it stood is called "Cook's Garth". It would appear that his early days were spent at a farm at Great Ayton where, between carrying out the usual agricultural chores, he attended the local village school to gain the rudiments of an education befitting his then status in life. At the age of seventeen he entered an apprenticeship with a shopkeeper, generally spoken of as being a huckster, or pedlar, who had his business at The Staithes, a small fishing village gathered around its dividing creek on the rock-bound coast of the North Riding of Yorkshire. This shop has also disappeared, and perhaps the only survival associated with the Cook family may be the neat little home now so well preserved in the Fitzroy Gardens in Melbourne.

James Cook was successful in transferring his apprenticeship to a Quaker coal merchant and shipper at Whitby, by the name of John Walker. Under the watchful eye of his new master young Cook served for the next three years in the various colliers plying from Newcastle-on-Tyne and Whitby to the coal depots ranged along the Thames at London. More adventurous journeys were also made across the German, or North Sea, to the Baltic ports, where the coal cargoes were replaced by pine timber cut to lengths suitable for the English market. In addition to learning the first principles of navigation Cook applied his talents to the study of mathematics, and at the age of twenty-seven he held a "Mate's Certificate", acting in this capacity on numerous ships until 1755 when war broke out between England and France. It was a time when the infamous "Press Gangs" came into active operation and no male was safe from their attentions, particularly those with any sea-going experience. In this year Mr. John Walker offered him a command. Cook thought it wiser to join his Britannic Majesty's Navy as a volunteer and, as an Ordinary Seaman, went aboard the H. M. S. Eagle, of sixty guns, which was then berthed in the Thames at Wapping Old Stairs. His next four years were spent before the mast but they also brought him some influential friendships which culminated in his being raised to the rank of a master. On the strength

of this important office he was given command of H. M. S. Grampus, but owing to one of those book-keeping mistakes, which are so common in any service, it was found that the master in command of this vessel had never left his posting. As a result of this contretemps of the "Silent Service" he was transferred to H. M. S. Garland, as far as the books were concerned, but it was quickly learned that this latter vessel was well away to sea and could not be contacted. However, the third posting which Cook obtained, and actually gained, the mastership of the good ship "Mercury", under the command of Sir Charles Saunders, was soon engaged in Canadian waters co-operating with the military forces of the intrepid General Wolfe, a gentleman who had designs on the capture of Quebec.

Owing to the lack of knowledge of the then uncharted waters of the mighty St. Laurence River, it was deemed impossible to use the guns of the fleet to the best advantage, consequently a survey of the river, made under the cloak of darkness, became imperative. Cook was chosen for this risky operation, and in a small boat, pulled with muffled oars, he silently stole, night after night, along the river taking the necessary soundings so as to be acquainted with any navigation obstacles. The French forces at length became aware of these nightly excursions and set a watch of Indians to circumvent further ventures in this direction. They closed on the boat, and in the succeeding melee the Indians boarded one end of the boat as Cook left, in a great hurry, at the other end. The survey work, carried out under such difficult conditions, ultimately resulted in the capture of Quebec, much to the mortification of the French.

After all this excitement the British fleet spent the winter at Halifax in Newfoundland, and Cook had the honour of being transferred from the H. M. S. Mercury to the Admiral's Flagship, the H. M. S. Northumberland, which was classified as a first class man-of-war. Cook now charted the surrounding Newfoundland and his excellent work, coupled with his prowess appertaining to navigational procedure, brought him to the notice of the Admiralty. The H. M. S. Northumberland returned to England in the early part of 1762, and on December 21 of that year Ships-master Cook wedded Miss Elizabeth Batts at Barking in Essex, a lass who came from Shadwell. In the course of their married life the Cook's raised a family of six children. However, as with most sailors, their married bliss consisted of many disconnected honeymoons, arranged according to the posting of the vessels by the Naval Authorities. Four months after his marriage he was surveying the islands of Miquelon and St. Pierre, and later, in April, 1764, he was placed in command of the schooner Grenville and again sent to the coasts of Newfoundland for further survey work, returning to England each autumn and leaving again in the spring, a routine arrangement which continued until 1767. The publication of his charts relating to Newfoundland, and his observational details concerning a solar eclipse created great interest and brought him favour of the Royal Society, and promotion from the rank of Master to that of a Naval Lieutenant. Just rewards for a great man.

Scientific circles at this period were all agog over the phenomenon of the Transit of Venus which, according to astronomical calculations, would pass across the disc of the sun during the year 1769. The Royal Society considered that the best place for an observation would be on some island in the mid-Pacific Ocean and made application to King George III

to make such observation a national undertaking. For once the King was gracious and gave his Royal Consent to the proposition. Now followed a hurry and scurry to get things moving. So much had to be considered in detail, particularly things appertaining to qualified personnel, in addition to that appertaining to seamanship in uncharted waters. Alexander Dalrymple was the man chosen to lead the expedition, but he could not make a decision one way or the other, consequently he was passed by in favour of Lieutenant James Cook, who, in addition to having the requisite knowledge from a scientific angle, also possessed first class qualities as a navigator. Once the leader was chosen there followed a search for a suitable ship. The East India Company's vessels were scanned. Likewise one of the three-decked West Indiamen, and also an Admiralty frigate, but all to no avail. Cook's strength was his self confidence and he had no hesitation in recommending for the contemplated mission the small barge, of 370 tons burden, named the "Earl of Pembroke", which had been specially built as a collier for the Newcastle and Whitby coal trade. No doubt Cook knew well the worth of these strongly constructed colliers, broad in beam and of shallow draught, ideal qualifications for the important job on hand. The "Earl of Pembroke" was cleaned of its coal dust, and spent some time in the docks being refitted and armed with ten carriage and twelve swivel guns, just in case. Under its new Admiralty ownership the squat vessel gained the name "Endeavour Bark", and its holds were stored with provisions and gear to last for a period of eighteen months.

The "Endeavour Bark" lay quietly at anchor in the Thames whilst the important scientific personnel were being recruited. At this period Joseph Banks, later Sir Joseph, decided to join the expedition. He was a wealthy man and the then president of the Royal Society. Banks was born on February 13, 1743 at Westminster and over the years had acquired an interest in natural history in all its numerous phases. He was responsible for selecting a staff of eight men, all of whom were well equipped for collecting, studying, and preserving natural history specimens. Dr. Daniel Carl Solander, a Swedish botanist attached to the British Museum, volunteered to accompany the expedition, and Sydney Parkinson, an able draughtsman, was also listed amongst the scientific personnel.

At long last the expedition was ready to leave the shores of England and the "Endeavour Bark" sailed from Plymouth Sound on August 26, 1768. The ship's complement included a captain, two lieutenants, three midshipmen, a master, a boatswain, a carpenter, other petty officers, forty-one able seamen, twelve marines, and nine servants. Cook was a determined administrator and drove himself as hard as his men, yet they followed him through thick and thin. It is true that some of the crew grumbled as his hygiene requirements, so necessary for their health, and his methods to overcome the malady of scurvy also came in for criticism. This foul disease was brought about by a regular forced diet of salted meat, often in a putrified condition and generally without vegetables of any kind. It is understood that Cook particularly favoured lemons as an antidote.

After a voyage of some six months the Atlantic Ocean was crossed and the perils associated with the rounding of Cape Horn accomplished. The "Endeavour Bark" now entered the oftentimes tranquil waters of the Pacific Ocean, sailing in a general northwesterly direction

to gain the Island of Otaheite, which was reached after another four months had passed. Here a small protective fort on the island was built and an observatory established. After a period for some two months had passed, without trouble from the very interested but uncomprehending native population, the Transit of Venus was witnessed in a cloudless sky. The scientists were jubilant with the success of their observations as they had a bearing on astronomy in general and also bore relationship to the science of practical navigation.

Leaving Otaheite Cook sailed southwards on the homeward journey, intending to pass round the Cape of Good Hope enroute, thus circumnavigating the world in the course of the voyage. But his commission required him to investigate the possibility of there being a great land mass in the hitherto unexplored part of the Southern Hemisphere. To this end he reached the coasts of the islands of New Zealand in August, 1769, eventually making his headquarters at Ship Cove in Queen Charlotte Sound, at the north-eastern section of the South Island. From this base he charted the coast lines and took formal possession of the islands on behalf of the British Crown, bestowing on them the name New Zealand, the ceremony taking place on January 30, 1770. After completing the survey of the area Cook left Cape Farewell on March 31, 1770, and steered a westward course for nearly three weeks when land was sighted, on April 19, 1770, by Lieutenant Hicks, and named Point Hicks in his honour. It has been related that "Cook must have been deceived in some way by the sand-hills of the Ninety-mile Beach, for on that part of the Victorian coast there is no such point to be found".

The hitherto undiscovered eastern coast of the Australian continent was thus discovered. Cook now sailed northwards, making a chart of the shoreline in detail and seeking a harbour where the "Endeavour Bark" could be beached and its bottom cleaned and scraped of its weed growth and barnacles. Many of the more imposing natural features were named as they hove into view, such placenames being in general use to-day. Then came a calm which stopped further progress for an hour or two, giving the opportunity, and also the desire, to inspect as to what lay beyond two opposing headlands more or less immediately opposite their becalmed ship. In due course the wind came up and this large enclosed bay was entered, and after the anchor had been dropped near the western shore of the southern headland, which Cook had named Cape Solander, the first landing was made in search of water to replenish the ship's tanks. This famous place is now known as Kurnell, the name, by all accounts, being an aboriginal corruption of the surname Connell, one of the much later land-holders of the immediate district.

The "Endeavour Bark" dropped its anchor opposite a group of eight mia-mias, constructed of sheets of bark held up by suitably disposed sticks of short length. In the afternoon of April 28, 1770, Cook made his initial landing on Australian soil, his pinnacle coming to rest against a low rock outcrop jutting into the shallow water near the shoreline. It was his intention to make friendly overtures to the natives, but these naked savages clearly showed that they were not amused by this, to them, unwarranted intrusion. They followed the landing party along the sandy beach, brandishing their spears and boomerang in a

most warlike manner. They were all quite naked and had adorned themselves in fanciful designs carried out in white pipeclay, an ingredient often to be found in layers beneath sandstone rocks. A couple of the men came down to the landing rock with their spears held aloft making threatening gestures and shouting words which could not, of course, be interpreted. Stones were thrown, and later, spears and for their own safety the mariners had to frighten them off with a discharge from their muskets, the weapons being loaded with small buck-shot which would cause more discomfort than injury. These measures were ultimately successful, and the boat party searched for and found a small trickling stream of fresh-water nearby which served to replenish the ship's tanks.

The scientific members of the expedition had a wonderful time exploring the local forests surrounding the bay, finding all manner of strange plants which, to them, flourished in what appeared to be a topsy-turvy world. They became acquainted with the beautiful flora of the Hawkesbury Sandstone country and also that of the sand dunes ranged along the length of the beaches. The age-old gum trees, of great girth and writhing shapes, were duly admired, likewise the fertile swamplands which lay just beyond the dunes. The creatures of the wild were there in profusion, all of distinct types and unknown to European eyes. The sight of kangaroos and wallabies, which abounded in the scrublands around the bay, filled them with awe and mystification. There were gaudy lorikeets to be appreciated and also shot for the pot. Meanwhile fishing parties found their nets to be so full of stingrays, amongst other fish, that Cook dubbed the locality as Stingray Bay, but the enthusiasm of Banks and his associates led him to record the placename as Botany Bay, and so it has remained for the past two hundred years. The Union Jack was daily hoisted after Cook had formally taken possession of this new and delectable territory.

It is evident from Cook's chart of Botany Bay that both George's River and Cook's River had been explored upstream for at least a mile or so from their respective mouths. It is to be understood that these two names were not bestowed on these streams by Cook, but appear to have been in use at the time of Governor Hunter as both are mentioned in his despatches to England.

Cape Banks at the northern entrance to Botany Bay, and Point Sutherland and Point Solander on the southern side, were recorded on Cook's chart, together with two markings where freshwater was to be found, one at Kurnell and the other at Towra Point. All in all some three and a half days were spent in a most satisfactory way amidst the delights of Botany Bay and its immediate surroundings, after which the "Endeavour Bark" once again sailed northwards along the coast, the log book mentioned another opening in the sea-cliffs which they did not explore, but on which they bestowed the name Port Jackson, as the entrance apparently gave on to a large harbour.

Pressing onwards Broken Bay was passed and noted. Not having time to explore these several, to him, minor indentations, Cook continued northwards, naming Smoky Cape and Byron Bay enroute. At Point Danger the "Endeavour Bark" nearly finished its days upon a sunken reef, hence the placename which still applies. Moreton Bay was next mentioned,

likewise the fantastic Glass House Mountains, and so the process of naming outstanding places of spectacular interest was continued until Cape Tribulation was reached. Here the vessel had the misfortune to run aground on a sunken reef and it became necessary to lighten the ship preparatory to floating her off at the next high tide.

Six heavy guns, together with a quantity of chain cable and iron and stone ballast were heaved overboard, together with anything else of a disposable and weighty nature. It was necessary to fully man all the ship's pumps until about midnight of the following day, when the tide was such that the ship gave a violent lurch and floated free once again. With the now tired men still pumping hard in relays lasting about five minutes each sails were set and two days later the muddy estuary of the stream, which Cook dubbed as the Endeavour River, was entered.

Here the next seven weeks were spent in beaching the vessel and repairing its damaged hull and careening the outer shell generally. The scientists aboard explored the adjacent bush land on their botanizing expeditions whilst the repairs were being made. When everything was shipshape Cook sailed eastwards and searched for and found a channel which led through the Great Barrier Reef and into the comparative safety of the open sea. Then a northward course was set to eventually round and name Cape York, and at the nearby Possession Island, Cook once more "hoisted English Colours" and took formal possession of the whole eastern coast and its hinterland, later adding the name New South Wales to his journal.

Satisfying himself that New Guinea and New Holland (or should we say New South Wales) were separate island, Cook set sail for Batavia, arriving at that steamy tropical port on October 11, 1770. Here the "Endeavour Bark" underwent further repair and overhaul at the local dockyard, necessary work which delayed his departure until December 26, 1770. Then rounding the Cape of Good Hope he once again entered the Atlantic Ocean and arrived in England on July 13, 1771, after a most remarkable world-wide voyage which had lasted over a period of almost three years.

It should be mentioned at this juncture that the 1969 Barrier Reef Expedition for the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia (U. S. A.) was responsible for searching for and eventually recovering the jettisoned cannons, iron, and stone ballast and other material from the "Endeavour Bark". The cannons were encrusted with coral and other growth and, after most careful cleaning and handling were taken to Melbourne for further treatment and ultimate disposal to approved museums.

Captain James Cook made three voyages to the South Seas, not being fated to return from the last. Among other places he went to Hawaii in the Sandwich Islands. The natives were notorious thieves and one night the ship's cutter was stolen. Cook went ashore to see the local king about the affair, and getting no satisfaction, decided to take the king aboard his ship as a hostage held against the return of the missing cutter. Seeing that only bloodshed could follow Cook released his prisoner and

hailed for the ship's boats. As the embarkation proceeded the natives showered the seamen with stones, little damage being done by this volley. The first boat filled with its complement and left the shore leaving Cook to wait for the second boat only a few yards away. Standing on the beach he was struck down by a native, falling into the water and was, in this prone position, stabbed many times. The second boat crew came to his rescue and in the ensuing melee a marine and three sailors were also killed and several others wounded. It is generally presumed that Cook's body together with the bodies of the other fallen men, were dragged to the tribal huts and there eaten by these cannibalistic savages. A landing party from the ship later recovered his mortal remains, and placed in a coffin, they were committed¹ to the sea with full military honours.

Thus ended the adventurous life on one of England's greatest sailors, his death taking place on February 14, 1779, at Kealakekua Bay. In this bi-centenary year, 1970, full honour must be afforded to the memory of Captain James Cook, the discoverer of New Zealand and the eastern coast of Australia. His statement, when dealing with the charms of Botany Bay in particular, "the land had a very agreeable and promising aspect" still stands today, although we may wonder if he would condone some of the modern "improvements" which have served to ruin its foreshores for all time.

Continuing from March Bulletin -

Extract from "BACK TO MORTDALE SCHOOL".

(Booklet obtained by courtesy of Mrs.
J. Wotherspoon, Mortdale Public
School.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF MORTDALE

"As told by Mr. E. Fletcher, of Frederick Street, Penshurst. Mr. Fletcher was one of the pupils who enrolled in the opening day of the first Mortdale School, built in 1888.

SETTLEMENT

James Oatley had a grant of 300 acres of land on George's River, also one of 175 acres in the Kingsgrove-Moorefields district, and another of 40 acres in the South Hurstville area. Thomas Sutcliffe Mort, some time prior to 1861, acquired the south-western portion of Dr. Robert Townson's grant. This portion embraces what is now known as Mortdale. It is from these two persons that Oatley and Mortdale derived their respective names, though originally Mortdale was known as Mort's Hill.

Like other areas in the St. George district these two were cut up and acquired by others. At Oatley, on the eastern side of the railway, the Griffiths family had a substantial estate which was subdivided and sold at various times from the mid eighties. On the western side what was known as the Oatley Township Estate was dealt with in a similar

manner during the nineties. At Mort's Hill the brickworks, established in 1884, had, and still has, a substantial area, and the Kemp family had a farm area extending from Mort's Road (now Colbourne Avenue) on the east to Boundary Road on the west. When the railway was put through in 1885 it cut this farm into two practically equal portions. Gates, adjacent to the brickworks, provided access from one portion to the other. Then in 1888, practically half of the eastern portion was acquired for school purposes, and finally about 1920, the balance of the Kemp property was acquired by the Railway Dept. for railway purposes and includes what is known as Railway Reserve. The original farmhouse stood in the paddock below the school, but later a two-storied building was erected facing the road and adjacent to the school residence. These three residences - the old farmhouse, the new residence, and the school residence - have since been demolished to make way for school extensions. Towards Penshurst, Mrs. Parkes had a farm area which had also been cut in two by the railway. Gates which were in the vicinity of where the subway is now located, gave access from one part to the other. At Penshurst, Mr. Myles McCrae had an extensive area and his old residence, "Kintail", still stands. A macadamised road, now known as Railway Parade, ran through this property from Laycock Road to Mort's Road, and was the only direct access to Mortdale as it then existed. The area bounded by McCrae's southern boundary (approximately the present Grove Avenue on the north, railway on the west, the present-day Princes Street on the east, and Mort's Road on the south, had been sub-divided into building blocks sometime during the early eighties). A few houses, mostly semi-detached places, had been erected, and most of them still exist and can be picked out quite readily, though some of them have been more or less modernised.

The most prominent building was the two-storied one, still existing at the Princes Street corner. Here was located the first Post Office, combined with a grocery store. About 1897 the Post Office was moved to the two-storied building, the front of which has been added to in more recent years, opposite the school, and was managed by Mrs. Phillips. Mort's Road was macadamised from Princes Street corner to approximately Kemp Street, whence it meandered as a bush track to Forest Road. It crossed the railway through Mort's Gates. The present business area of Mortdale, bounded by the railway, Mort's Road, Crump Street (approximately) and Kemp's northern boundary, which corresponds with the back alignment of George Street allotments, was a fenced paddock of fairly thick bush and scrub. It was known as Newman's paddock. A Mr. Newman lived in a brick cottage nearby and since demolished to make way for railway alterations, which was the only residence that side of the line.

Newman seems to have been the caretaker of this property. About 1894 it was sub-divided into building blocks and sold at auction under the name "Mort's Estate", the auctioneer being Mr. E. C. V. Broughton, and so Mortdale began to grow. Just about this time Victoria Avenue was constructed from Laycock Road (now Penshurst Street), to Mort's Road. Mortdale Station, opened in 1897, was to the southward of the gates, with the platform ramps adjacent to them.

What the population of Mortdale was when the Railway opened in 1885 is doubtful - probably not more than 30 or 40 persons, perhaps

fewer. When we took up residence at Oatley shortly after the opening of the Railway, the population increased five persons (ourselves) with one house. Almost simultaneously another family - Mr. Orange and his son, together with his housekeeper (Mrs. Baker) and her daughter - came on the scene. He was caretaker for the Griffiths Estate and lived in the brick cottage in Oatley Avenue between Frederick Street corner and the hotel, and is the oldest building in Oatley. The census of Oatley, early in 1886, was nine persons and two houses. From then on growth was fairly rapid and homes began to spring up in all directions.

Raine & Horne and Richardson and Wrench conducted the sales from time to time and special trains brought crowds of people out to attend the sales which were very successful. Oatley's first Post Office was in a cottage which stood on portion of the site now occupied by the hotel. There are two coral trees growing on the Reserve opposite the hotel. They were planted there by my father over 60 years ago - the more southerly of the two was grown from a slip brought from Tongarra, a few miles outside Albion Park - the other was a cutting off the first tree.

James Oatley's burial place does not appear to be quite definitely known other than that it took place on some part of his estate. In 1925 a Mr. W. Sivertsen, of Bexley, came across his tombstone lying on some vacant land on the Moorefields Estate. In an article in "Truth" under date 8th May, 1921, reference is made to: "an old grave near what appears to have been a farm. This farm is situated on the country lying between Penshurst and Lakemba. On the slab of stone covering the grave is the following - 'Sacred to the memory of James Oatley. Obit October 8, 1839. Aetat 70 years.' But the site of the grave was not stated in the article. James Oatley was a watch and clockmaker. Frederick Oatley, whose grave is in a paddock at Moorefields, was his son. Many years ago a grave existed on the hill overlooking Mortdale and Oatley. It was on the Oatley side of Boundary Road at approximately the Waratah Street corner, but there was nothing on it to indicate who was buried there. I last saw it about 1897, but it cannot be located now because the site has been built up completely.

On Oatley Point there was, many years ago, a large, round, flat rock, which, judging by its appearance and surroundings, seemed to have been an aborigines' feasting ground. Wind and rain storms during the past 60 years have covered it with soil and growth and it is not visible now.

RAILWAY

Beyond all doubt the district between Hurstville and river owes its rapid growth to the railway's establishment. The opening of the railway from Illawarra Junction (Eveleigh) to Hurstville took place on 15th October, 1884. The intermediate stations were Erskineville, St. Peters, Marrickville (now Sydenham), Tempe, Arncliffe, Rockdale and Kogarah. Carlton was opened in 1887, Banksia on 21st October, 1906, and Allawah on 25th October, 1925. The extension - Hurstville to Sutherland was opened for business on 26th December, 1885, with Como as the intermediate station. The Brickworks Siding came into use in 1886, Penshurst opened in 1886, Oatley in 1886 and Mortdale, 20th March, 1897. Jannali was opened on 7th February, 1931. The extensions beyond Sutherland took place in subsequent years until Nowra

was reached. The duplication between Hurstville and Waterfall was completed by 22nd March, 1891. This was a big step forward as it permitted a more frequent service which hitherto had been confined to three or four trains daily. Oatley platform, which originally was only a dump, was lengthened, and became a station with "up" and "down" platforms, and a resident stationmaster in charge. The residence was built on railway land alongside the "down" platform. The deviation, Como to Mortdale, was carried out in 1905 and resulted in Oatley Station being moved about one quarter of a mile westward to its present site and opened on 7th July, 1905. A subway took the place of the original level crossing and gates. The station-master's residence was abolished. The night officer's residence which stood near the beginning of the big rock cutting below the school, had been destroyed by fire a few years previously and had not been re-built.

Oatley was re-named Oatley's in 1889, but the original name was restored in 1890. The present island platform with a goods yard adjoining, was opened on 7th July, 1905. Automatic signals were installed south of the station on 1st November, 1918, and on the north side on 12th January, 1926. The goods yard was closed on 22nd December, 1940. Mortdale Station was moved northward beyond the original gates on 14th September, 1922. The original station has been demolished, while a subway has replaced the old level crossing and gates. Penshurst Station was extended northwards, thus cutting out the level crossing at gates which were replaced with an overhead traffic bridge. It is not possible to name the first station masters at the various stations. Mr. Hall, who lived in the railway residence which stood just about where the Post Office is now, was S. M. at Hurstville for a number of years in those early time. Mr. John Brown was the first resident S. M. at Oatley. He died there on 3rd June, 1902. Mr. Cuneo was S. M. at Como for a number of years.

Hurstville is named after the Rev. W. A. Hurst (Wesleyan) of Tempe, who took a very great interest in the district. Penshurst is named after a locality of the same name in England. Mortdale after Thomas Mort, Oatley after James Oatley, and Como after Lake Como in Italy. Sutherland is named after Forby Sutherland, one of Captain Cook's seamen and "the first white man to die in this newly discovered land."

The first electric trains in New South Wales ran from Sydney to Oatley and began to operate on 1st March, 1926, and were extended to Sutherland on 12th August, 1926, and to National Park on 24th December, 1926.

SCHOOLS

The nearest public school was Hurstville, which opened in 1876, though there had been schools held in various kinds of buildings for some years prior. Mortdale Public School was erected in 1888, and was a brick building which housed three blocks of desks and forms. My sister and I were two of the pupils enrolled on opening day. Mr. Joseph Coleman was the teacher in charge, and he occupied the school residence, a brick cottage alongside the school building. The cottage has since been demolished to make way for another building. I think I am right in saying that the actual opening day was in January, 1889, when schools resumed after the 1888 Christmas

recess. The school was not quite ready when we presented ourselves and we had to come back a week later. My stay at Mortdale was not a very long one as in 1892 I was sent back to Hurstville, where I had been before Mortdale opened. Somewhere about this time a classroom was added to Mortdale School and Miss Frize was appointed assistant teacher, and she remained at the school for a number of years. I am sorry I cannot add any more details about the school, but no doubt somebody else in the district will be able to do so. Mr. Garden succeeded Mr. Coleman and some old pupils of these two gentlemen will be able to relate some interesting details of Mr. Coleman's later days and Mr. Garden's early days at the school.

Naturally, when I returned to Hurstville, my interests centred round that school.

CHURCH ACTIVITIES

The first Sunday School was organised by an elderly widow (Mrs. Smith) and her three daughters (the Misses Bessie, Georgina, and Florence Smith), and the classes were held in her private residence at Oatley. The cottage still stands and is known as No. 27 Woonoona Parade. There is no way of establishing the exact date of the beginning of the school, but it was about 1889 or 1890. It continued for about three years, when failing health caused the dear old lady to give it up. At intervals during the currency of the school, church services, mainly for children, were held by visiting clergymen, two of whose names can be recalled, viz., Rev. W. Patterson and Rev. M. Moore. The former came from Parramatta and the latter from Sydney. After the school ceased to function there was a gap until 1894 when Mrs. Saunders and family took up residence in "Dewerara" Cottage, Woronora Parade, Oatley. This residence is still in existence. Soon after her arrival, Mrs. Saunders started a Sunday School and these activities have continued without a break ever since. The school grew so rapidly that it soon outgrew the accommodation available at the cottage. In 1898, St. Peter's Church, Mortdale, was erected and the Sunday School was moved to it. Church services were held at the cottage at regular intervals and were conducted by Rev. M. Walker (Wesleyan, and then styled) Rev. McKay (Presbyterian), and Rev. W. Killworth (C. of E). In fact, Mr. Killworth, who was Rector of the Parish of St. George (which extended from Kogarah to the River) was responsible for the building of St. Peter's Church, Mortdale. This lonely little outpost of 1898 is now the Parish Church of its own Parish. In 1889, Rev. James Clarke was appointed Rector of the Parish of St. George, as it was then known, and continued in charge until 1895. During his travels in the Holy Land, he obtained a bottle of water from the River Jordan and he used this water in connection with baptismal services during the early nineties. My youngest sister was baptised with this water and no doubt there are others living in the district who can claim the same distinction. Mr. Clarke was a fine horseman, a very fast walker, and a splendid preacher. The present St. George's Church, Hurstville, was erected in 1889, and took the place of a wooden building which was propped up on the graveyard side with several large logs.

Methodist (then known as Wesleyan) Church services were held at regular intervals at Mrs. Kemp's residence during the early nineties. This residence has long since disappeared to make way for school extensions.

The first public school at Mortdale and the first Sunday School at Oatley have an interesting feature. Mr. Coleman, whose first wife had died, married Miss Florence Smith, thus bringing about, as it were, a union of the two first schools. Miss Smith was also the first bride from Oatley. Following an old-time custom, the newly married couple were vigorously tin-kettled for several hours on their wedding night. This was the first and only tin-kettling at Oatley.

It is interesting to note that the large parish of St. George which was sparsely populated, has since been divided into six parishes - Kogarah, Hurstville, South Hurstville, Penshurst, Mortdale, and Oatley, and each one is thickly populated.

During the early nineteen hundreds, church services were also held in the School of Arts Building at Oatley.

SOCIAL LIFE AND SERVICES.

We had to make our own pleasures and succeeded very well, and taken all round, we were a happy community. Band of Hope concerts, amateur plays and concerts, with occasional tableaux, etc., afforded enjoyable entertainment. Dances in Hales' Hall and at various residences also had a good following, and surprise parties were popular. In summer time, boating picnics or gipsy teas as they were called, were a much appreciated and very enjoyable pastime. Oysters were very plentiful and easily obtained. Public holidays saw crowds of picnickers brought to Oatley by special trains, for Oatley Bay was a favourite picnic resort and a very interesting and pretty spot it was, too. Harry Linnark's Boatshed did a thriving business on such occasions. Even Chinese New Year celebrations and Salvation Army picnics were a regular feature. At one time two pleasure steamers ran from Lady Robinson's Beach (Brighton-le-Sands of to-day) up the river to Parkesvale, calling in at Como en route. It was a pleasant and interesting trip.

Early in 1902, a debating club was formed under the high-sounding title of "Mortdale Literary and Debating Society," and out of it sprang a cricket club - the first, by the way - and we played in the St. George District Competition during the 1902-03 season. We sought and obtained permission from Mr. Percy Judd to put down a concrete pitch in the brickworks paddock, and the matches played drew fair attendances and added some variety to the usual Saturday afternoon pleasures.

Among the first buildings to be erected on the newly cut up Mort's Estate was a shop by Mrs. Hales, in Pitt Street, somewhere about where the Post Office is now located and further along the street she erected a hall where many a pleasant function was held. This hall still stands, though a front has been built on to it, and is now Costello's Hardware and Grocery Store.

The nearest doctor - Dr. McLeod - lived at Hurstville, and the nearest police station was Newtown. The local limb of the law was Constable Guess, who lived in Victoria Avenue. For a long time bread, meat, and groceries were delivered from Hurstville - Fred Mumford was the baker;

Tom Hillard, the butcher; and C. A. Morgan, the grocer. Sing Hop, with his horse and van, and Ah See, with his baskets on the bamboo carrying stick, provided fruit and vegetables. Syrian hawkers, with their drapery packs, were almost a pest. Charles Barsby established a drapery and mercery business in Hurstville, and travelled the district with a light vehicle and that settled the Syrians. Milk was supplied by a local dairyman (Mr. Gorman), and the run was usually done by his children carrying cans. A very essential service was rendered by a quiet, unassuming dear old lady - Mrs. Kemp - who was the local midwife. No doubt there are quite a few persons still living hereabouts who were ushered into the world by this good lady. My second sister is one of three and she has the distinction of being the first child born at Oatley.

Mumford's residence and bakery were - and still are - at the corner of Bridge and Forest Roads. Hillard's butchery was - and still is - on the opposite corner. Before erecting the existing shops, he had the old style open-front shop with large cutting block. He made his deliveries from a cutting cart. Morgan's grocery store is now the Hurstville Bedding Store, and Barsby's drapery was two doors from it.

Originally there were only two hotels, both at Hurstville - the Blue Post Inn and the Hurstville Hotel. The former received its name from a blue hitching post which stood in front, and was opposite the Public School. Its site is now occupied by a block of flats. Hurstville Hotel still stands, though in a very modernised form. About 1900 a hotel was built in Victoria Avenue, and was the first in the immediate locality. The building now accommodates the Police Boys' Club.

The brickworks, which came into existence in 1884, was the only industry in the area for many years and is still in a thriving condition. Prior to that a small brickpit existed on the site now taken up by the Memorial Park, Mortdale. The bricks were hand-made and very soft and porous and, naturally, could not compare with the machine-made article, and so this little pit closed down.

These notes have been written mainly from memory, but where it has been possible to obtain confirmatory details, I have done so. In this regard I wish to record my grateful thanks to the Mitchell Library, the Railway Department, and the Manager of the Brickworks, and I am very appreciative of the courteous manner in which they dealt with my requests.

9th September, 1955.

E. Fletcher."

Rockdale Art Exhibition - Coronation Hall - Barden Street, Arncliffe.

From Saturday, 2nd May to Sunday, 10th May, 1970.

Afternoons 2 - 5 p. m.

Evenings 7 - 9 p. m. with the exception of

Sunday, 3rd and 10th May - 2 - 6 p. m.

ADMISSION... FREE.
