

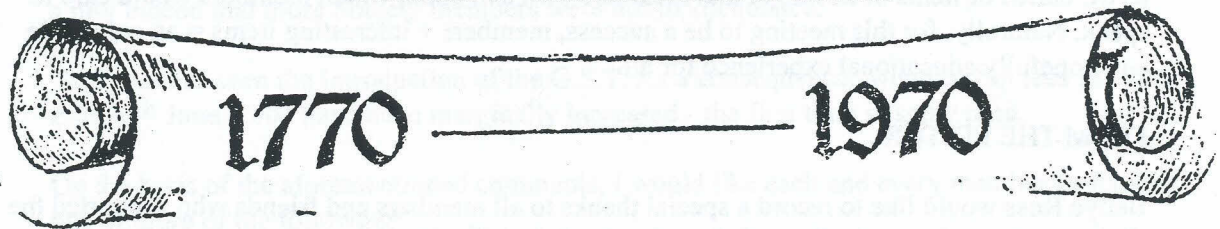
# *St George Historical Society Inc. Bulletin*

SPONSORED BY ROCKDALE CITY COUNCIL  
JULY - AUGUST 2000 EDITION

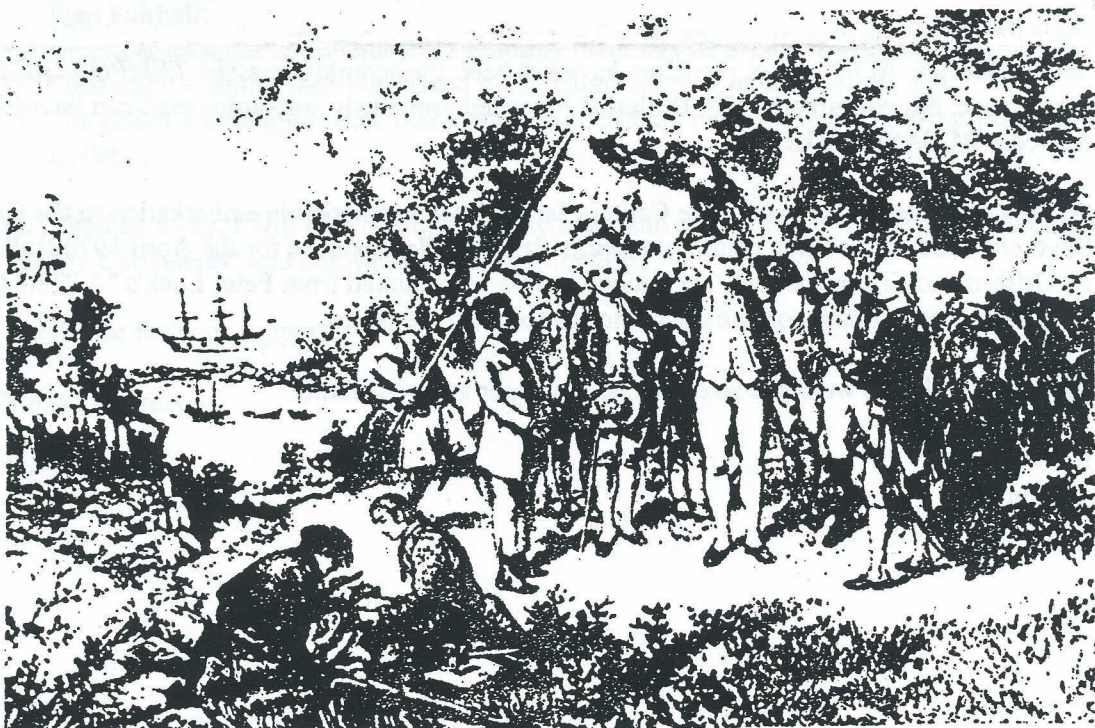


ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SPONSORED BY ROCKDALE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL



CAPTAIN JAMES COOK R.N.



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Meetings are held 8 PM every second Tuesday of the month (except January) in the Meeting Room 1st Floor, Rockdale Town Hall, Princes Highway, Rockdale. Members, please bring a plate. Visitors are welcome.

**NEXT MEETING** August 8th – "Show & Tell"

Positive feedback from members has resulted in the August meeting being devoted to Objects d'Art, curios or items of nostalgia that members own and about which members would care to speak. Naturally, for this meeting to be a success, members + interesting items = an enjoyable and hopefully educational experience for all.

FROM THE EDITOR...

Bettye Ross would like to record a special thanks to all members and friends who supported the *Christina Stead Day* at Lydham Hall on Sunday July 16<sup>th</sup>, 2000. Once again the Society is indebted to the talents and enthusiasm of Bettye Ross for orchestrating the programme from the hire of the video to the design of the invitations. Well done!

Your Editor will be departing soon for a 7+ month overseas sojourn in the wilds of Africa and South America. At this stage, members have not been forthcoming to assist *TEMPORARILLY* in his absence. **No volunteers = No Bulletin!** As stated previously, any volunteers can be readily trained – **PLEASE HELP!**

As it has now been 230 years since Captain James Cook's remarkable embarkation to the Great Southern Land, this edition contains a reprint of an article produced for the April 1970 Bulletin by Gifford and Eileen Eardley. The second article was sourced from Peter Luck's "A Time to Remember" and should conjure up memories for most members.

Articles are always welcome so do put pen to paper and contribute!

Kind regards,  
The Editor

### **President's Report**

I have enjoyed a very full year within and without the Society. At last month's Annual General Meeting I declined re-election as President due to my upcoming trip overseas. It was with much delight that the Society and I welcomed Bettye Ross back to the Chair. Bettye will bring her extensive organisational and creative skills to the position.

Owing to studies and work commitments, I have unfortunately been unable to attend recent activities at Lydham Hall such as the Heritage Week Open Day and the Christina Stead Day - my loss no doubt!

A number of the Society's members are ill or recovering from illnesses. Our thoughts and prayers are with Mrs. Margaret Persen, Mrs. Joan Fairhall and Mr. Arthur Ellis and Mr. Alan Stahl. These members wish to be remembered to the Society and to state their appreciation for the kind thoughts and calls received from fellow members. On a personal note, I am heartily pleased to advise of my mother's strong recovery following her recent operation.

Congratulations are extended to a fellow member Councillor Anne Field, who made history recently by becoming the first female president of the Bexley Probis Club - well done! Anne, the ten million-dollar question on all of lips would be "Is the Bexley Probis Club ready for you?"

I spoke with a number of members who attended the Christina Stead Day and all noted that Lydham Hall was somewhat chilly, the video "For Love Alone" was well worth the viewing. It is a pity indeed that more Society members were not in attendance.

This year has seen the introduction of the G.S.T. As a consequence, Membership fees for Year End 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2001 have been marginally increased - the first time in some time.

On the basis of the aforementioned comments, I would like each and every member to achieve one or more of the following:

- 1) Attend at least one event at Lydham Hall;
- 2) Participate in at least one excursion organised on behalf of the Society by Dora Lenane or Joan Fairhall;
- 3) Attend at least one of the Society's monthly meetings on a Tuesday night;
- 4) Encourage a family member, friend or acquaintance to join the Society; and
- 5) The Editor would appreciate that members contribute even one article for reproduction on the Bulletin.

As I shall be away, I will take this opportunity to extend my very best wishes to all members for a "Happy Christmas" and enjoyable New Year for 2001.

Thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely,

Wesley

## 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 us 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

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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

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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

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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 beauteous 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,

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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 committed 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.

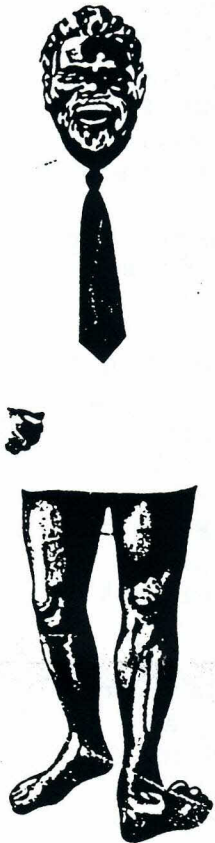
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### Mulga Fred

In 1948, an old Aboriginal man was walking across a railway line in the Victorian town of Horsham, when he was struck by a train, and killed. His name was Mulga Fred, which may not mean much today, but for the best part of this century his was one of the most familiar faces in Australia.

The Pelaco shirt company used him in all their advertising with the words, 'Mine tink it they fit' . . . pidgin English for 'I think they fit'. Fred had in fact never uttered that line, yet it became our best-known advertising slogan. These days the ad would no doubt be considered racist and probably be banned. Even in those days, the psychology of using an Aborigine with no pants on to sell a product to white middle-class Australia is a mystery—maybe it looked cool and comfortable, and it was certainly eye-catching. Whatever, it sold hundreds of thousands of shirts for Pelaco, a company formed by J.K. Pearson and J.L.G. Law in the early 1900s—they merged the first two letters of their names.

After many years of using the 'Mine tink it' slogan, which is still well remembered, the company started a totally different but equally well remembered campaign. The beautiful model, Bambi Smith, got a lot of Aussie blokes hot under the collar when she told us all, 'It is, indeed, a lovely shirt, Sir.' But many Australians still preferred old Mulga Fred, particularly the residents of Horsham. He was a well-known character in the district and, as a champion whip cracker and horse breaker, had toured surrounding districts with agricultural shows. Some years after Fred's death, the townspeople of Horsham decided to commemorate his small part in our history and passed the hat around to restore his grave and erect a new headstone.



*"Mine tink it  
they fit"*

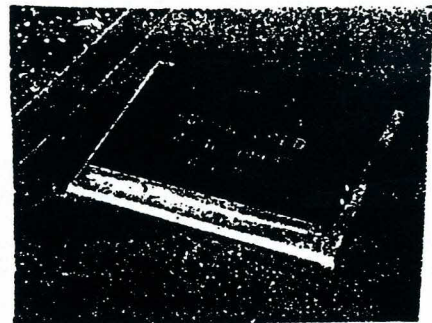


**Pelaco**

**SHIRTS · COLLARS  
PYJAMAS**



The real Mulga Fred was one of the last full-blood Aborigines of the Horsham area in northwest



The boomerang and horse whip on Fred's lonely grave, restored by the residents of Horsham, are a reminder to visitors that Fred was a champion bushman, whipcracker and horsebreaker.

Mulga Fred's successor, model Bambi Shmith, wife of the renowned photographer Athol Shmith, and later married to the Earl of Harewood. This classic example of poster art replaced the familiar 'Mine tink it they fit' advertisements for Pelaco shirts—but even today the Aborigine with no pants on is better remembered by middle-aged Australia.



*Pelaco*

*"It is indeed a lovely shirt sir!"*

**WHAT' S ON.....**

**Christ in Kiama**

**DATE: Monday 18/09/00.**

**DEPARTURE POINT: Central Station**

**TIME: Departure from Central at 7.58 a.m. arriving at Kiama at 10.32 a.m.**

The Anglican Historical Society (Inc), welcome the Society's members on their outings. The next outing is to visit Christchurch Anglican Church at Kiama. This historic church was designed by the famous architect John Horbury-Hunt. The lime-washed stone church features a superb red cedar ceiling akin to an inverted ship's bow and much more. A talk will be given by a local historian on the Church and Kiama in general.

Morning tea will be supplied (please bring own coffee mug/tea cup). Luncheon can be brought or obtained in the local shopping centre. Free time will be available for members to relax or visit other historically interesting buildings such as the delightful sandstone Presbyterian church, local museum housed in the former Light Keeper's residence and much more.

Departure from Kiama will be via the 3.50 p.m. train arriving in Central Station at 6.10 p.m.

**COST:** Donation of \$5.00 inclusive of morning tea.

**CONTACT:** Joan Fairhall on 9546 5555

**Some Proverbs to Ponder**

**" A friend's faults should be known but not abhorred';**

**" Drink in the morning staring, and in the evening sparing";**

**" A fool pulled down the house for the sake of the mortar";**

**" Health and cheerfulness mutually beget each other"; and**

**" He is sufficiently learned that knows how to do well, and has power enough to refrain from evil ".**

**PLEASE TURN OVER....**