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<https://mosmanhistoricalsociety.org.au/>

Patron: Gavin Souter AO
Affiliate Member: Royal Australian Historical Society

Mosman Historical Society—Committee Members 2022-2023

President:	Debbie Higginson	Speakers:	Prof. David Carment AM	Other Committee members:
Vice-President:	Dr. Perry McIntyre AM	Newsletter:	Margaret Szalay	John Dansie
Acting Secretary:	Dr. Perry McIntyre AM	Membership:	Kay Halstead	Noela Gill
Acting Secretary:	Dr. Pam Lofthouse	Library Rep.:	Donna Braye (Ex officio)	Webmaster: Amanda Gosse
Treasurer:	Stephen Palmer		(Mosman Library Local Studies Librarian)	(Ex officio)

MOSMAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER- August 2023

The Society's meetings are held on the second Wednesday in March, May, July, September & November

We look forward to seeing you at our next Speaker evening on **Wednesday, 13th September** and afterwards join us for tea/coffee, biscuits & a chat.

Welcome to new MHS members....

Matthew Kenny & Yolande Stone

Members are encouraged to invite a friend or neighbour to join MHS each year to grow our membership and help preserve our heritage

DATES FOR THE DIARY

Wednesday, 13th September, 7.00pm

Speaker: Professor Paul Ashton will talk about *Sydney's Planning History: From Go to Woe?*
(Details in the attached flyer)

Wednesday, 8th November, 7.00pm

Speaker: Matthew Brownlie will talk about *Scouting in Mosman 1908-2023*
(Details in the next newsletter)

Meetings are held at Mosman Library
605 Military Road, Mosman NSW

If you wish to attend, please contact David by the Monday prior at davidcarment@mac.com
Or 0418 857 182 (email preferred)

Previous Activities

Our speaker at the July meeting was Dr Perry McIntyre discussing the book, "**Caroline's Diary: A woman's world in colonial Australia**", written by Mosman woman, Anne Philips, telling the story of a well-educated English girl who immigrated with her parents to colonial NSW in the mid-1800s. The diary tells of her happy marriage in NSW, her eleven children (five of whom died young), and the difficulties with moves with a young family to rural properties in NSW, until the family finally settled in Camden. Copies of this book were available for purchase at the meeting.

**COPIES OF OUR BOOK
"MOSMAN: TIMES GONE BY"
ARE STILL AVAILABLE.**

**A great Christmas present.
Mail order form is on our website (above)**

**OR Telephone or Email Margaret for pickup at
the next meeting – 02-9904 1829 /
cremorne1@gmail.com**

Annual General Meeting of the Society

The Society's AGM will be held at our next meeting on **13 September, starting PROMPTLY at 6.30pm.**

Agenda papers are enclosed.

LOCAL STUDIES AT BARRY O'KEEFE LIBRARY

(See <https://events.mosman.nsw.gov.au/>)

Mosman Library Service is hosting three special events for History Week including a talk on the location of **Bungaree's Farm** on **4 September** as well as a portrait exhibition of Bungaree in the library from **1-17 September**, and a talk about the great essayist, **Charmian Cliff** on **6 September**.

FULL DETAILS OVERLEAF

FEATURE ARTICLE ... overleaf

This month's feature article on "The Barn", built in 1831 by Archibald Mosman, as part of his whaling establishment, was written by MHS member and Barn custodian, Colleen Godsell, AM. It is the North Shore's oldest remaining colonial building and is now the home of Australia's oldest Scouting troupe. Colleen continues to dedicate her time to its protection and preservation.

FUTURE ARTICLES – An Invitation

As many of our members have long family connections to Mosman, our President invites you to write a short article with photos, for a future newsletter, on a topic or place of local or family interest to you. Please contact Margaret – cremorne1@gmail.com or 02-9904 1829

MOSMAN LOCAL STUDIES EVENTS For History Week – September 2023

Faces of Bungaree: Contemporary Portraits 1819–1836: exhibition

1 – 17 September 2023

Bungaree was the first person to be called an "Australian" in print. His exploits in colonial Sydney achieved mythical status and were recorded by English, French and Russian residents and visitors. He was a popular subject for artists resulting in wonderful visual record.

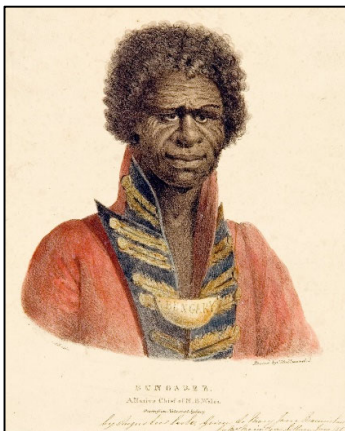
FREE EXHIBITION IN MOSMAN LIBRARY

Middle Head or Georges Heights: Where was Bungaree's Farm?

4 September 2023 7pm

A single inaccurate historic fact can be repeated over the decades, often clouding our understanding of past events. Linda Bergin OAM, will present the results of her amazing research on unravelling the clues to the real location of Bungaree's Farm.

Free. **BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL** <https://www.trybooking.com/CWGC>



Bungaree



Charmian Clift in the 1960s

Making Sneaky Little Revolutions: Charmian Clift in Mosman

6 September 2023. 7pm

In 1964 Charmian Clift returned to Australia, settling in Raglan Street and writing a popular weekly newspaper column.

2023 marks the hundredth anniversary of the birth of Clift and her biographer, Nadia Wheatley, will reveal the role this column played in the lives of its readers during the transformative decade of the 1960s. A bonus feature is a PowerPoint presentation of never before seen family photographs in Mosman in the 1960s.

Free - **BOOKINGS:** <https://www.trybooking.com/CHUWF>

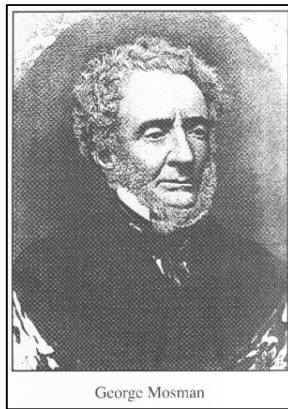
THE BARN WHALING STATION AT MOSMAN BAY

Colleen Godsell, AM

The story of The Barn Whaling Station at Mosman Bay begins with the arrival of the brothers, Archibald Mosman and his twin George, onboard the 'Civilian' in 1828. Born in Scotland in 1799 Archibald and George set their sights on finding their fame and fortunes in the emerging continent of Australia. Quickly they established themselves as Merchants and Exporters, with a warehouse in Lower George Street Sydney as the base for their operations.



Archibald Mosman



George Mosman



'The Nest'

(From the family collection of Debbie Higginson)

(Mosman Local Studies collection)

The timing of their arrival could not have been more fortuitous as it coincided at the same time as Governor Darling was involved in the relocation of the whaling industry out of Sydney Cove to other parts of the harbour. Grants were gazetted and Archibald Mosman was successful in his application to acquire the lower allotment at the bottom of the area known as Great Sirius Cove. At the time of the grant approval in Great Sirius Cove, Archibald Mosman already operated two whalers, the brig 'Tigress' and the barque 'Jane'.



*Mosman Bay, c.1890
(Mosman Local Studies
collection)*

Construction of a wharf and buildings began soon after the receiving the grant in January 1831 and were completed sufficiently in December 1831 to commence operations. This would have been the stone wharf (700 foot) and The Barn for the storage of oil and equipment. Built with convict labour and sandstone quarried from the grant site. The completed Whaling Station consisted of five stone buildings and the stone wharf. The other structures consisted of a cottage and two stone dwellings, which were quarters for the ships' officers and their crew. Mosman also built a large stone residence for himself on the hill overlooking the whaling station, positioned to catch the winds from all sides. This was to be known as 'The Nest'.



The whaling station was built primarily to service deep sea whalers, with provision made for the boiling down of the ships' cargo and storage of the oil, as well as accommodation for the ships' officers, crew and basic ship repair

and fitting out facilities. The bay was also used for careening ships with the Sydney Morning Herald reporting on 6 June 1833 about the careening of the ship the SARAH at the whaling station.

By 1838 Archibald Mosman owned six allotments in the local area, altogether totalling 108 acres.

While the whaling business had grown rapidly during the early 1830's, it peaked in 1840 when the annual value of whale oil exports from New South Wales was 205,224 pounds. However, by 1844 this had dropped to 52,531 pounds, close to what it had been in 1830. Archibald Mosman could clearly see the writing on the wall and 1839 he disposed of the whaling interests, plus other estates outside Sydney and two whalers including their stock of oil.

No doubt one of the factors in the decision making in regard to the sale of the whaling station was the ongoing dispute with Governor Burke over wharfing dues. Despite having spent 5,000 pounds to comply with the purpose of the original grant, Mosman believed the ongoing charge of the dues would render the scheme almost valueless.

Eventually the charges were reduced to two-thirds those charged at the Government Wharf, they remained in place nonetheless.

Unfortunately for Mosman, his sale and transfer to Hughes and Hosking was not executed until August 1843. This was problematic, for by that time the NSW economy had started into a depression with more than 600 individuals going bankrupt in the previous year (1842). Hughes and Hosking and their firm became insolvent on 25 September 1843 and Archibald Mosman followed suit twelve days later.

The trustees of the insolvent estate submitted the land and buildings at Mosman Bay for sale in October 1844.

The estate was advertised as follows:

"An elegant and commodious stone residence with eight acres in a high state of cultivation, an orchard stocked with choice fruit trees and a vineyard, heaving down wharf seven hundred feet in length with deep water alongside sufficient to float the largest vessel and a complete whaling and refitting establishment, a store build of stone and about one hundred and fifty feet long, a commodious shed with extensive loft, three stone cottages capable of accommodating a ships company whilst refitting-- and an office."

That ad saw the buyers, Andrew Roxburgh and Henry Smyth purchase the site in February 1845 for princely sum 1,190 pounds.

After Mosman left the whaling station, it appeared he moved away from Sydney. He married Harriet in 1847 and purchased a cattle station in the New England District. He later persuaded the government to gazette a township there which he named Glen Innes. Mosman eventually returned to Sydney living in Randwick with his family where he died in 1863.

The whaling station site was eventually purchased by Richard Hayes Harnett (senior) in 1859 for the amount of 3,500 pounds.

The Picnic 1874,
by Antonio Garcia
Mencia (1852-1918)



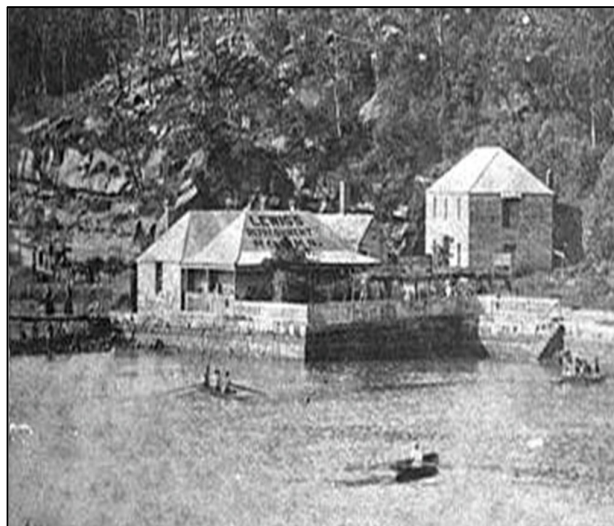
The Barn played a valuable role in the development of Mosman. A useful building and space for public meetings and gala balls to entice visitors from across the harbour.

Harnett would go on to take a significant role in the development of the suburb of Mosman.

Mosman Bay was advertised as a picnic spot and resort with a grand ball and fete organised in April 1860. A brave

attempt to woo the people of Sydney to the former industrial site.

The stone cottage opposite The Barn on the waterfront was the first licensed premises in Mosman. Known as the Bull and Mouth Hotel. The cottage served as a refreshment room and residence until destroyed by fire in January 1914.



(MAAS)

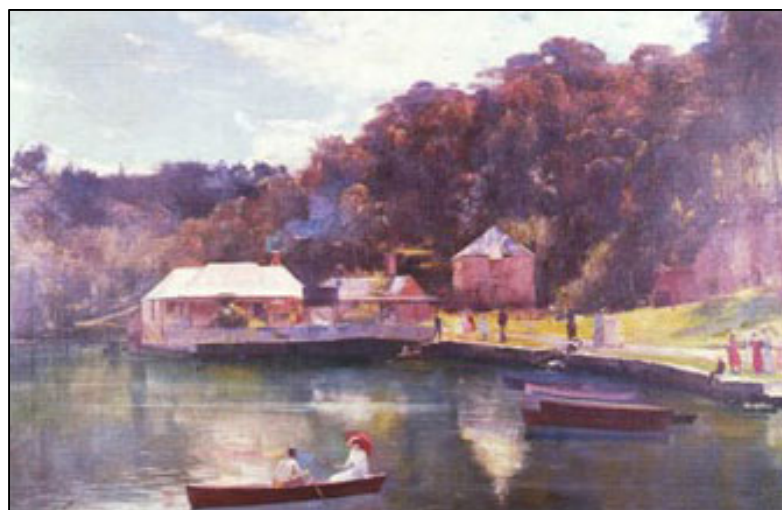
It was during the period 1860 to 1879 that The Barn was used for a number of industrial and noxious trades. The gala balls and picnic days proved to be unsuccessful and the site started to fall into disrepair.

A tallow candle factory operated from The Barn from the early 1860's.

In 1869 a Frenchman, M Chatain established a wool washing fellmongering business in Mosman Bay, as well as a leather preparation business. Chatain manufactured chamois kid, morocco and other leather pelts for sale. The Barn was used for the manufacture of imitation kid gloves.

The Barn also has an interesting history as an artistic setting as Mosman Bay attracted a number of prominent artists from the 1840's through to the 1890's.

Conrad Martens produced two works showing the whaling station at Mosman Bay. Tom Robert's 'Mosman Bay' 1894 is internationally recognised.



(NGA)

In the 1890's, bush camps were common on Sydney's North Shore. Set up by young men and bohemians at Edwards Beach, Balmoral and Little Sirius Cove as temporary retreats from the city. Artists included Tom Roberts, Arthur Streeton, Frederick McCubbin and Charles Conder, all of whom went on to form the famous Heidelberg Movement.

It is also important to mention the significant female artists of the day as well. Margaret Preston, Grace Cossington Smith, Thea Proctor and so many more.

It is vital that the First Nations connection and history to The Barn site and Mosman Bay is not overlooked. Mosman Bay was known to the original inhabitants as Goram Bullagong, the meaning of which is unknown. The traditional inhabitants were members of the Borogegal, an Aboriginal group concentrated around the headland and shores of Bradleys Head and Mosman Bay. The Borogegal tribe coexisted alongside the local Cammeragal people.



(Source: Aboriginal Metropolitan Land Council)

It has been reported that the last known member of the local Cammeragal Tribe, a fellow known only by his European nickname 'Tarpot' lived behind The Barn in a Cave on the cliff. There is no archaeological evidence to support the claims that the cave was used as a shelter or midden. A full Aboriginal Archaeological Study was commissioned in 2002 and the findings supported by the Aboriginal Metropolitan Land Council.

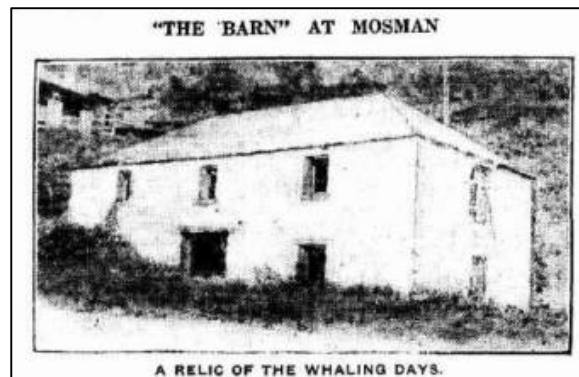
The last known sighting of Tarpot was in 1888 and it is generally believed that he did in fact shelter in this area of Mosman Bay as there are stories of him swapping fresh fish, wood and doing chores for the locals in exchange for other foods like flour and sugar. Dressed most often in the castoff uniform of a naval or merchant officer.

By early 1860 the original Whaling Station site was in serious decline with two significant buildings already demolished. This left The Barn, the Waterfront Cottage and the long single story accommodation block. The accommodation block was removed to make way for the new subdivision in 1897 and the waterfront cottage was destroyed by fire in 1914. While Mosman's old home 'The Nest' was demolished in 1921 to make way for a new subdivision.

Mosman as a destination was forging ahead. In 1891 a public meeting was held at The Barn to decide if we should break away from the Borough of North Sydney to formerly become the suburb of Mosman. It was on the 6th June 1893, only two years later, that The Barn was used as the first polling booth for Mosman.

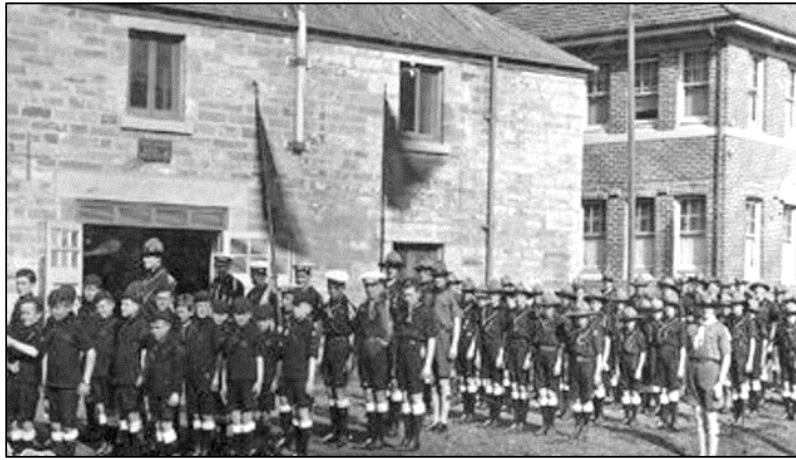
By 1916 The Barn was derelict. During this year, Mosman Council reported that the building was in such a state as to be unfit for human habitation. There were stories at this time surrounding an elderly gentleman squatting in The Barn mending shoes by replacing the soles. A large pile of cast offs was found at the back of the building and The Barn became known as the place of 'lost souls'.

In March 1925 Mosman Council brought The Barn from John Lockley, an emerging horticultural journalist, who went onto become the editor and publisher of the magazine, 'Amateur Gardener'. In June 1925 Mosman Council was recommending its demolition. Due to its historical significance a last photograph was commissioned and published in the local papers.



(1925 newspaper article)

A huge public outcry ensued and the 1st Mosman Scout Group moved forward....



(Daily Telegraph)

With The Barn in a derelict state the Council sold the building to the 1st Mosman Scout Group in October 1925 following a request by Scouts to do so. The sum paid was 443 pounds. The 1st Mosman 1908 Scout Group was originally known as The Kangaroo Patrol and met in stables in Muston Street before occupying a barrack in Georges Heights.



THE FIRST PATROL OF BOY SCOUTS FORMED IN NEW SOUTH WALES (1908).
 From Left to Right—Back Row: Charles O. Hope, R. Shearer, C. Cox, A. Jacob, H. Titchen. Front Row: N. Hope, R. Middlecoat, F. Rolls.

(Source: 1st Mosman Scouts)

The campaign to raise funds to secure The Barn stated ... "Save the oldest building for the oldest troop".



(Source: 1st Mosman Scouts)

An article in the local *Mosman Daily* on Wednesday 21 March 1928 reported:

True to Mosman spirit a wonderfully virile Troop committee has made it possible and it is fitting that the historic barn built so long ago by Mosman instead of being lost to posterity should Phoenix like rise from the ruins and enter a new era of usefulness as the scouts club room.

After meeting the purchase price of 443 pounds the scouts spent another 1,700 on the restoration.

The Barn operated as a functioning scout hall from this time on. As well as being used by the Scouts, The Barn was used by the wider community throughout the 1930's, 1940's and 1950's with regular dances on a Saturday and live jazz Dixieland Music. Very popular with visiting US Service personnel, it was known as Sydney's number one Dixieland venue. It is widely reported that it was also known as a musician if you hadn't played The Barn, you hadn't played. Folks would come across from Circular Quay on the ferry and from all reports the 'place was jumping'.

The scouts used these events as regular fundraising and in preparation of an event I have heard reports of the floors being polished by soaking a hessian sack in oil and sitting a little cub scout on it and dragging them by the legs around the floor to polish it. The funds raised from these events funded the building of the Pindari Ski Lodge in the Village of Thredbo.

All good things come to an end (a bit like the Clifton Gardens Hotel) where gangs would come along and start brawls and cause major disruptions. Not to mention our own locals who reportedly hide sly grog in Reid Park. Many a marriage proposal was made during those Saturday nights, not to mention the odd baby.

Further in 1948, local playwright, Eleanor Witcombe, wrote the children's play "Pirates at The Barn, Smugglers Beware". The Prime Minister of the day, Joseph Benedict (Ben) Chifley had had enough of the fairies of England and wanted to commission stories that reflected the Colonial beginnings of Australia.

Summer storms in 1975 and again in 1977 caused severe damage to the rear of The Barn with boulders slipping from the slope above during stormwater runoff. In 1975 the damage, although extensive, was able to be fixed with the volunteer labour force and assistance from Mosman Council.

However, a second landslide was so significant in 1977 that the building was closed for four years while the funds were raised for the remediation works. Council determined that the stormwater runoff as a result of the construction of the flats behind The Barn at the top of the slope contributed to the erosion. An imposing stormwater easement was installed and the local scout group returned to the building in 1981.

In the year 2000 the restoration project to end all restoration projects began as a result of illegal dumping of overburden from the excavation of a nearby dwelling. An SOS was launched by the 1st Mosman Scout Group in the *Mosman Daily*, September 2001. In doing so, the site became more vulnerable as developers swarmed to take advantage of the situation. The geotechnical investigative works identified boulders in the slope behind the building as 'bouncers' perfectly positioned to come away, hit the rock shelf and enter the building via the roof.

The next five years were spent fundraising, lobbying for support, meetings with the Prime Minister and standing defiant against the developers. Godden Mackay Logan were our Heritage Consultants, Coffey Geosciences our geo techs and Macdonald Contractors for the earthworks and stabilization of the slope behind the building.

The slope works were performed at cost less 44% and even then, three quarters of the way through the works we ran out of money. A crisis meeting was held with the Directors of Coffey Geosciences and Macdonald Contractors to form a rescue partnership. Without that support the 1st Mosman Scouts would never have brought this project home.

Mosman Council never failed to provide technical advice and support, despite donor fatigue having set in. The General Manager Viv May, the staff and Councillors of the day were amazing.

It has been almost twenty years since we reopened The Barn at a gala event on 16 April 2006 and it remains a community venue at low cost to the public and home to the 1st Mosman 1908 Scout Group.

--ooOoo--



*Mosman Bay Whaling station buildings, c.1890 (Source: National Trust)
(showing the accommodation building later demolished, and the hotel building destroyed by fire)*



The Barn today (Source: 1st Mosman Scouts)