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MOSMAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER - February 2016

2016 Greetings.....

It was on 11th November 2015 that Pam Lofthouse (recently awarded a PhD) enlightened members about toll houses and toll gates with her talk **Toll Houses in 19th Century Sydney** and unleashed a fascination in seeking out identifying their remaining traces. The talk was followed by the society's annual wine and Christmas cake celebration of the season.

On 18th November, **History and Snags at Mosman Bay** took place. It was our last 2015 summer evening history walk, exploring and learning about some of Mosman's oldest historic sites. It was followed by another excellent sausage sizzle with chef John Dansie and his assistant, Peter Alderson.

NEXT SPEAKER MEETING
Wednesday 9th March 2016 at 7pm
Downstairs at Mosman Library

There will be 2 talks:-

Local Studies Collections – Why?

Donna Braye will reveal the aims, stories and outcomes of creating and caring for the historical valuables at Mosman Library.

William Paterson

Gavin Souter, our Patron and author of the definitive history of Mosman, will be talking about his latest work – a biography of the Commanding Officer of 'the Rum Corps', a man who was also involved in exploration, botany and duelling (a pistol duel against John Macarthur). See attached flyers.

WILLOUGHBY DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Museum at Boronia, 58 Johnson St Chatswood

The enthusiastic members of this sister society run a museum which is open on Sundays 1-4pm. A recent addition is a series of seven A1 size panels on the history of Willoughby tanneries. They are currently preparing a special exhibition about the rural heritage of the area especially the many Chinese market gardens there from 1870s.

The museum will also be the venue for a weekly **Poetry Circle** hosted by Terry Fogarty, where about 10 poets read their poems to the group. This follows in the tradition of Les Murray, when he and his wife lived in Edgar Street Chatswood in the late 1970s early 1980s and before him, Kenneth Slessor. If you would like to share some of your poetry, contact can be made at nascentpoets@gmail.com.

MANLY, WARRINGAH & PITTWATER **HISTORICAL SOCIETY – Laperouse discovery**

We are welcome to attend the meetings of this sister society as their members are ours. They publish a superb journal and I would like to mention one of the articles in the latest edition as you might have similar stories to share with our members.

Richard Michell recently holidayed in France and stayed for a few nights at a town called Albi on the River Tarn. His hotel was built on the site of an old mill and in front of it was a small grassy area above the riverbank where he was surprised to find discreetly placed plaques showing the words **SQUARE BOTANY BAY**. He then noticed the sign **LAPEROUSE MUSEUM** on the door of an adjacent stone building. It appears that Jean Francois de Galaup, later Comte de Laperouse, was a favourite son of Albi, (as was Toulouse Lautrec). In 1785 he spent 6 weeks at Botany Bay where he was well treated and assisted to send journals, charts and letters back to France via a British naval ship. His work would otherwise have been lost because sadly he disappeared and his wrecked ships were discovered 40 years later at Vanikora near the Santa Cruz Islands.

Michell, R., Peninsula Historian, Vol.9, No.1, Feb.2016, p.4

Archibald Mosman's signalling mast on Badham Avenue

John Dansie has developed an eye for flagpoles in the Mosman district, which appear to be abandoned and in need of repair. He and a group of craftsmen in The Lions Club and Georges Heights Mens' Shed restored the pole for the Scots Kirk last May with great success and went on to restore 2 more.

The latest Lions Club pole project is the signalling mast near the site of Archibald Mosman's home in Badham Avenue, used to signal his whaling ships in the bay. On 15th March they will lower it, restore it in situ, including 2 coats of paint, re-erect it and raise a flag.

MOSMAN LIBRARY - 19 April to 22 May

Heritage Week – **Faces in the Crowd: Mosman's Famous Forgotten**. Many Mosman residents and businesses were household names in their day and this exhibition takes a look at their achievements – with names such as "the Opal King" Percy Marks, "Esky" man Francis Malley, artist Dora Toovey and the mysterious Jean Bianconi plus many more.

MUSTON'S MODEL TOWNSHIP

In a campaign which began in Victorian England, attempts were made to improve the living conditions of workers by building model townships, comprised of dwellings of a standard to allow for the health and wellbeing of the inhabitants. The concept spread to the colonies where, in Sydney, the first houses in an estate were often built by a developer, as an example to potential buyers of what sort of housing was appropriate. Richard Harnett, Mosman's original real estate entrepreneur, built his home *Buena Vista* at Mosman Junction as just such a model dwelling as he envisaged for his new village.

In 1882, Arthur Muston, a bank manager and merchant who had been born in North Sydney and spent all his life in the area, bought several portions of Harnett's sub-divided Mosman Bay land, as well as parts of the Silex Estate. Muston's approach to the further sub-division and sale of his land was to build a Model Township, initially consisting of eleven examples of the type of dwelling he wanted on his estate, suitable for the skilled workers and middle class residents he hoped to attract to the area.

The Mossman's Bay Model Township sub-division (later known as Muston's Model Township) consisted of 96 building sites, and Muston chose for his initial eleven houses an area behind the public school (now Mosman High School), in Keston Avenue (4 semis at nos 23-29), Gladstone Avenue, and two adjacent blocks in Avenue Road (see sub-division plan). Muston's architect was his brother-in-law Thomas Wilson Hodgson, a young Englishman who had arrived in Sydney c1887. In March 1889 T.W. Hodgson, Architect, of Mount Street St Leonards, advertised in the Sydney Morning Herald to builders and contractors:

"Tenders are invited for four detached and two pairs of semi-detached cottage residences, the first portion of the Mossman's Bay Model Township". These appear to have been completed by December that year when Arthur Muston began advertising them for let or sale:

"Cottages of 4 and 6 rooms, bathroom, kitchen, pantry, laundry (with copper, tubs &c), marble mantels and fenders, tiled hearths and tiled grates, gas, good views and near ferry; terms to suit purchasers; rents £1 and £1/5s per week."

By 1891 the detached villas were being advertised, descriptions similar to the previous cottages but on large allotments, having 7 and 8 rooms and all modern requisites. They were built in the popular Victorian Italianate style. Sales were slow, however, as the development coincided with the start of an economic depression in the eastern states. Instead of building more himself, from 1893, when Mosman became a municipality and the electric tram arrived, Muston began auctioning unsold lots in the Model Township estate. Despite the size and quality of the dwellings built by Muston, they were not duplicated, as he had hoped, by the investors and speculators who later purchased lots in the sub-division. When development commenced in earnest in Mosman the early twentieth century, the two-bedroom Federation

style semi was the dwelling of choice for the speculative builder targeting lower middle class renters in the area, and the later detached houses are also in the Federation style. Some of the property remained unsold and in Muston family ownership until 1950, when Arthur's estate was finalised following his death, aged 97, in 1948.

When Arthur Muston stood for election to Mosman Council c1900, he highlighted his contribution, over sixteen years, to the development of the suburb, "having spent more money, built more houses and paid more taxes than any other man in the Borough". Every new house and new resident made the community stronger, he said, resulting in improved transport and amenities. He had built for himself a large home named *Blakesley*, next to the now Warringah Bowling Club in Bradley's Head Road, and another large family home, *Teratta*, nearby in Prince Albert Street. Unlike Muston's Model Township, neither of these survive.

Despite some attempts at demolition, most of Muston's eleven model dwellings remain and have been restored as attractive homes.

P. Lofthouse and P. Morris

MOSSMAN'S BAY MODEL TOWNSHIP

FOR POSITIVE SALE BY AUCTION ON THE GROUND ON SATURDAY 21ST OCTOBER 1893 AT 3·P·M· by **RICHARDSON & WRENCH LTD** AUCTIONEERS, PITT ST

TERMS
10 per cent deposit. Balance by quarterly Pro-Notes extending over a period of five years, with interest at 6% per annum added with right to pay off at any time.

LOCAL STRATH
Sydney

TORRENS TITLE

STREETS: BELMONT ST, KESTON AVENUE, CLADSTONE AVENUE, ARCHER ST, SHADFORTH ST, RAGLAN ST, MILITARY ROAD, MUSTON STREET

Public School, **Church**, **Butcher's Shop**, **General Store and Wine Office**

STEAMER FARES
10/- per month for gentlemen
6/- per month for ladies
3/- per month for children

From Mossman Bay Ferry about 1/2 mile
From Mosman Ferry about 1/2 mile
From North Sydney

Within 3 minutes walk of the Military Road
From Terminus and within 1/2 mile of the
Mosman Bay Ferry at North Avenue Road
From the Mossman Bay Model Township Office
The Office may be reached within 10 minutes
Free Bus on day of Sale. See advertisement.

F. Cunningham & Co., Litho., 148 Pitt Street, Sydney.