

# The *lighter* side of Willoughby

*Water, Waves & Wanderings*



The lighter "*Nellie*" on the Lane Cove River

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Chatswood 2003

*The carers of these lands acknowledge the traditional owners – the Camaraigal Clan of the Guringai family group.*

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## Lighters

Since the earliest days of European exploitation of the valley small boats, known as Lighters, have been used for transport on the Lane Cove river.

It is likely that the early exploration of the river was undertaken in a small, shallow draft boat. During the first 50 years of settlement of the colony of NSW Lighters of 2 ½ -3 ton were used to transport grass for stock feed, the majestic Blue Gum and other native timbers and lime for Governor Macquarie's great building programs down the river to the port of Sydney.

Toward the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, lighters were used to transport corn and processed products to and from the Love Corn Mill located on the river at the bottom of Mowbray Rd and to picnic spots such as Judy's Arm further up the river. In the 1920s & 30s converted Cargo lighters were used to transport passengers and picnic groups to other popular pleasure grounds on the river such as Fairyland. From 1880 to the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century the Lighters used by the Upper Lane Cove Ferry Co. plied the river with passengers and goods using wharves located at the Corn Factory, Fairyland, Comerford's Orchard, Franston (below Willandra St) and the Chatswood Wharf at Fullers Bridge).

Today, the MV Reliance, a converted mail boat Lighter is used for cruises on the river.

## Indigenous History

Booker & Bennet (1988) suggest that Aborigines lived in caves along the Lane Cove River. The Camaraigal men were robust and muscular who held authority over surrounding groups.

The Camaraigal lived in the area until the 1820's. By 1880 no Aboriginal communities following a traditional lifestyle were left in the Sydney area. In 1981 there were 113 people of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent in Willoughby.

## Early settlement

It is likely the very early settlers in the valley (circa 1790) built rough daub and wattle houses.

The first permanent settler in the valley was William Henry who claimed he took possession in 1807 of 1,000 acres; he called "Millwood Farm", stretching from Blue Gum Creek to the government sawing establishment at Fidden's Wharf. William Henry supplied billet wood to men-of-war and planted a few vines and fruit trees and grazed cattle. His produce was transported on the river in Lighters. William Henry built a house on his farm, which he called "Waterview," from local timber. Later Thomas and Maria Jenkins and their family established their orchard on the property.

## Environmental Heritage

Today the care of the eastern side of the valley rests with Willoughby Council who through its **e.restore** programs is working to restore the natural resources of the valley – soils, vegetation, fauna, water and air quality.

## The Mangrove dilemma

During the first 100 years of European settlement the Lane Cove river was relatively deep. There were few mangroves along the edges of its foreshore. By 1880, McLoughlin reports that mudflats had built up along the edges of the river due to disturbance caused by timber getting, clearing for farms and the extension of unsealed roads and that the mangroves were thickening. Between 1912 and 1920 the mangroves expanded (particularly around the Corn Factory) and further upstream. Wherever sediment built up, the mangroves took hold. By 1985 the mangrove belt had grown considerably in height and completely taken over the shoreline, including many rocky slopes where they grow in small patches of mud caught in the crevices of even steep cliffs.

Should the river be dredged to return it to its former glory?

## Dredging

From the late 1950s to 1974 the river (with the exception of the area just upstream from the Epping Rd bridge) was extensively dredged by W.A. Davidson.

## Daub & Wattle Housing

*Early huts on the river were very primitive and built from Black Wattle.*



Early Australian houses were very primitive, and ranged from bough shelters with only a roof and no walls through to bush and bark huts, log cabins, slab, wattle-and-daub, thatched and sod huts. Since there was an abundant supply of timber, it was used for walls, roofs, floors, doors, windows and even chimneys

## MV Reliance

Historic riverboat, "Reliance" was built at Palm Beach in 1919 and was for many years the mail boat, operating daily between Brooklyn and Wiseman's Ferry.



## Birds return to the river

*Seventy-two species of birds now inhabit the park compared to just sixty species recorded in 1989.*

A combined list of sightings from Burton (2000) and White (2001) accounts for 72 species of birds in the park. This number compares favorably to earlier studies when there were just 60 species detected in 1989 (although Buchanan in 1979 recorded 108 species).

## Mammals in Mowbray Park



According to the 2001 Fauna Study Brushtail Possums are not common in the park. However, Ringtail Possums were present throughout the park. The possums were usually seen in and around the she-oak forest.

Flying-fox were observed flying over the park and roosting in trees near Ulm St. Little Forest Bats were detected at the northern end of the park, close to the Chatswood Golf Course.

An eastern Water Rat was observed diving for shellfish in the mangroves.

The last echidna in the park was recorded circa 1984.

## The Sequential Occupancy of the Middle Lane Cove River Valley

There are a number of identifiable phases in the European occupancy of the foreshore lands of the Middle Lane Cove River.

Significant events and dates	Period	Code
8 -10,000 BC	Pre-European	F
1788 – NSW Colony established 1794 – First land grant in the valley	18 <sup>th</sup> Century	E
1807 – First permanent settlement on the foreshore 1810 – establishment of Millwood Farm	First half of 19 <sup>th</sup> century	D
1880 – proclamation of the 100ft reservation	Latter 19 <sup>th</sup> century	C
1908 – commence of regular passenger ferry services on the river	Early 20 <sup>th</sup> century	B
1948 – cessation of regular ferry services on the river	Latter 20 <sup>th</sup> century	A
River cruise	Contemporary	None

## 1 - Blue Gum Creek (circa 2000)

*Streamwatch water quality monitoring by Council & local residents.*

Council has established two water quality-monitoring sites. One on the upper reaches of Blue Gum Creek and the other at the junction of Blue Gum Creek with the Lane Cove River.



A Streamwatch group established with support from Sydney Water, Cr Terry Fogarty and the Chatswood West Ward Progress Association has undertaken water quality testing on the creek for over five years.

Preliminary analysis of water samples indicates low levels of dissolved oxygen and high levels of phosphorus and ammonia in Blue Gum Creek, particularly during wet weather. There are also extremely high levels of faecal coliforms in the creek during wet weather due to overflow from the sewerage system.



*Diana Pryde, Streamwatch volunteer and Cr. Terry Fogarty analysing a water sample from Swaines Creek*

## 2D - Millwood Farm & 'Waterview' (circa 1810)

*First permanent settlement by William Henry in 1807.*

The first permanent settler in the valley was William Henry who claimed he took possession in 1807 of 1,000 acres, which he called "Millwood Farm" - stretching from Blue Gum Creek to the government sawing establishment at Fidden's Wharf. William Henry was an Irish ex-private of Marines who took his discharge in the new land and formally secured his grant of land in 1820. He supplied billet wood to men-of-war and planted a few vines and fruit trees and grazed cattle. His produce was transported on the river in lighters. Henry built a house, which he called "Waterview" on his farm from local timber.

The land was ultimately granted to Robert Ball in 1830 who settled on the land between Blue Gum Creek and land to the south of the Fullers Rd ridge in 1831.

## 2E - Jenkins Orchard (circa 1840)

*Thomas & Maria Jenkins established an orchard on Millwood Farm in the 1840s. Their produce was transported to market on the steamship Nellie.*

It is unclear whether the Jenkins family lived in the house called "Waterview" which had been built by William Henry or a later house they built themselves. Their homestead was weatherboard with a shingle roof.



It was damaged by fire in the 1920s and demolished in the 1930s. However, the stone kitchen survived and can be seen next to the Visitor Centre on Jenkins Hill in the Lane Cove Park.

The National Parks service claim that the homestead was built by an orchardist, Thomas Jenkins, whose wife was the granddaughter of William Henry, the first permanent settler in the area.

On the first Friday in December 1847 Thomas Jenkins set up a wholesale fruit business at the markets in York Street, Sydney.



The Queen Victoria Building, now affectionately known as the QVB, was designed by George McRae and completed in 1898, replacing the original Sydney markets on the site.

Fruit, timber, and other produce of the “Millwood” property were taken to the city on the steamship Nellie from the Jenkins’ wharf on the estate.

The Jenkins family developed a farm on the river about 1860, when the only other residents were timber getters living in huts along the river. Part of their original home can still be seen in the Lane Cove National Park buildings.

### **3C - Fullers Park & Rifle Range** (circa 1915)

*Rifle range established by Commonwealth in 1915 moved to Hornsby in 1955 after resident action.*

Fullers Park of approximately 6 acres lies in the small valley just below Millwood Avenue. The Blue Gum Creek runs through it. In 1915 the Commonwealth Government acquired land at the eastern end for a rifle range, which was moved to Hornsby in 1955 at the request of local residents and the West Ward Progress Association.

The rifle range land lay idle until 1979 when the Commonwealth Government decided to build the National Acoustics Laboratory.

Formerly, a small structure stood in the park, just below Millwood Avenue, at its junction with Lady Game Drive. It was a fairly elaborate structure with a tiled roof, which served chiefly as a shelter shed but contained a small shop, kept for some years by the Misses Lucas of Park Avenue. This pavilion seems to have come originally from Centennial Park and was erected in Fuller Park in 1933. It was demolished about 1971.

## 4 - Blue Gum High Forest

*Endangered ecological community being actively protected by Willoughby's e.restore programs.*

In the past, the Blue Gum Forest formed a continuous tall open forest of trees commonly 1.3 – 2.3 m in diameter along the ridge of the (now) Pacific Highway from North Sydney to Hornsby with fingers extending down towards the Lane Cove river.

The Blue Gum High Forest is listed as an endangered ecological community under the Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995.

The Blue Gum High Forest is a moist, tall open forest community. Its dominant trees are Sydney blue gum (*Eucalyptus saligna*) and blackbutt (*Eucalyptus pilularis*). Other trees include forest oak (*Allocasuarina torulosa*) and Sydney red gum (*Angophora costata*).

Under Willoughby Council's e.restore program, a team of specialist bush regeneration staff work in Blue Gum Park. Council has also encouraged and supports three new volunteer Bush Care groups working in the park.

Council staff are active in the ongoing collection of *Eucalyptus saligna* seeds for propagation and planting in reserves in West Chatswood.



Increased community education and awareness of the Blue Gum High Forest is being undertaken by Council staff who mount information displays in the nearby area.

The main stands of remnant Blue Gum High Forest are in Blue Gum Park, Ferndale Reserve and Coolaroo Reserve.

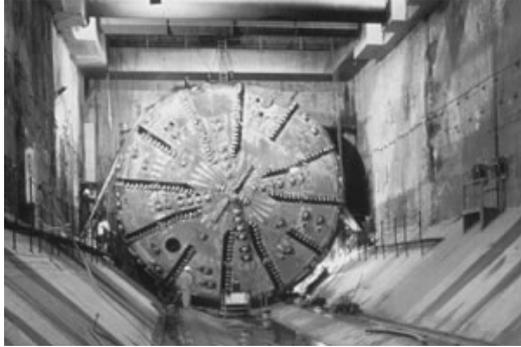
## 5 - Parramatta Rail Link

*A 'cut-and-cover' rail tunnel is being constructed in the bed of the Lane Cove River.*



The rail link will originally be constructed between Epping and Chatswood. It will mainly be in a tunnel, emerging near Boundary St to join the main northern line.

The original proposal was for a high level bridge crossing of the Lane Cove River. This was successfully opposed by local residents and by Council.



*Tunnel  
Boring  
machine*

### **6B - Fullers Bridge** (circa 1915)

*Built 1915-1918 originally to carry a tram to the 'Field of Mars.' Basically unchanged for nearly 90 years.*

This bridge crosses the Lane Cove River on the western boundary of the City. Contracts for the bridge were let in 1915. It was completed in 1918. It was originally intended to carry a tram to the "Field of Mars" cemetery, as the slope of Fullers Road was too steep for the horses to negotiate. In an article in the Sydney Morning Herald in 1932 it was referred to as the "Jenkins Bridge". The Jenkins family developed a farm on the river in about 1860, when the only other residents were timber getters living in huts along the river. Part of their original home can still be seen in the Lane Cove National Park buildings. The river was the main communication link used by large boats and private craft. The Jenkins alternative route to Sydney was to walk to Blues Point and cross the harbour in a waterman. The article mentions that it is "noted for its beautiful curve, or more technically camber".

Photographs from the twenties show that the current bridge is basically the same as the one constructed in 1918, although a pedestrian crossing has been added.

### **7C - Chatswood Wharf** (circa early 1900s)

*During the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century there was a passenger and goods ferry wharf at the bottom of Millwood Avenue.*

### **7C - Chatswood Picnic Area** (circa early 1900s)

*Formerly located next to the Chatswood Wharf.*

## 8A - Bogle/Chandler Mystery (circa 1960s)

On New Years Day 1963 the bodies of Margaret Chandler and Dr. Gilbert Bogle who worked at the CSIRO were found on the banks of the river. The cause of their deaths remains a mystery.



**Dr Gilbert Bogle**



**Margaret Chandler**

Gib Bogle, Geoffrey and Margaret Chandler had attended a New Years Eve Party at the Nash home in Chatswood. Geoffrey Chandler left the party to pick up his children. On the way he also picked up Pam Logan. They spent the night together at Granville. They were awoken by the Police knocking on the door at 1 PM on New Years Day.

Chandler had agreed for Bogle to drive his wife home from the party. Evidently on the way the couple decided to visit the banks of the river. Their covered bodies were found on the bank of the river the next morning.

There have been many theories as to who and what caused the deaths of Gib Bogle and Margaret Chandler.

In 1965, Dr Cheung, Director of Forensic Medicine for the Hong Kong Police, reported two deaths, which showed precisely the same symptoms as in the Bogle-Chandler case. The victims died after taking yohimbine, an Asian sex drug sometimes called Japanese chocolate.

*There is no greater mystery in Australian police files than the Bogle-Chandler case. The case began on 1 January 1963 with the discovery of their bodies half-hidden by rubbish on the banks of a lonely stretch of the Lane Cove river.*

*It was just past nine o'clock when we drove over Fuller's Bridge. A few lights flickered on my right. The river flowed unseen and soundless. We were across the bridge in a few seconds and climbing the hill towards Chatswood. It was New Year's Eve, 1962, and we were going to a party.*

**So you think I did it  
GEOFFREY CHANDLER**

## **9C - The 100 ft Reservation** (circa 1800s)

*A 100 ft (31m) strip of land was reserved along the river around 1880.*

This land was reserved by the State Government. Various sections of the 100 ft reservation were subsequently dedicated for public use, mainly wharfage and recreation, while some portions were sold to the owners of land behind the reservation.

Today, with the exception of the cornflour mills, this land is now public reserve for recreation. The public can still walk along the entire foreshore of the river between Fullers and Epping Rd bridges.

## **10C - Peacock Estate** (circa early 1900s)

*OH Reid Oval was acquired by Willoughby Council when the estate was subdivided around 1929*

However, there is survey evidence that suggest the land was in fact portion of the undivided area of the 'Loxton' Estate.

## **10B - O.H Reid Memorial Oval** (circa 1920s)

*Named after a foundation member of the local cricket club.*

The reserve is approximately 3 acres in size. It was part of the Peacock Estate. When the estate was subdivided the Council acquired an area on the riverfront for recreational purposes.

On some maps the reserve is named Fullers Park.

The park was named after a former overseer of the Council, who was also a foundation member of the Willoughby-Kuringai Cricket Association.

In the late 1980s, Willoughby Council responding to a request from the local hockey association determined to place a synthetic grass surface and floodlights on the oval. This decision and after an approach for support to the Willoughby Environmental Protection Association (WEPA) was rejected, led to widespread resident action culminating in the formation of the OH Reid Preservation Society led by Garry Crossley and Phil Sharratt. Council eventually rescinded its decision.

After the 1994 bushfires, the Society established the OH Reid Bush Care group, which has been undertaking bush regeneration around the perimeter of the reserve for the past nine years.

The OH Reid Preservation Society was disbanded and its remaining funds used in the successful election of Terry Fogarty to Willoughby Council in 1997.

## **11C - Fullers Farm (circa 1880)**

*In the 1880s the Fuller family had a pear and apple orchard along Swaines Creek.*

In the 1880s the Fuller family had a pear and apple orchard along Swaines Creek and the river foreshore to Fullers Rd. They used river transportation to ferry their produce to the Sydney markets.

## **12 - Swaines Creek**

*The main creek of the catchment. Ferndale Park is located along the creek.*

Under its **e.restore** program Willoughby Council has established three water quality-monitoring sites on the creek – one at the junction with the Lane Cove River, one in Ferndale Park and one in Coolaroo Park.

The volunteer resident's Streamwatch group also regularly tests the water of this creek. Analysis of water samples indicates low levels of dissolved oxygen and high levels of phosphorus and ammonia in Swaines Creek, particularly during wet weather. There are also extremely high levels of faecal coliforms in the creek during wet weather due to overflow from the sewerage system.

It is interesting to note that the recorded phosphorous levels in Swaines Creek are generally lower than in Blue Gum Creek. It was initially thought that the Golf Club use might have a greater detrimental effect on water quality.

## **13B - Bathing in the river (circa early1900s)**

*1910 – proposal that a bathing area be provide at Swaine's Creek.*

In 1910 at a Conference for the Improvement of the Upper Lane Cove River a motion was passed "that bathing areas be provided at Swaine's Creek, Chatswood and at Swan's picnic grounds."

## **14 - Sewerage Mains**

*When it rains, raw sewerage overflows into Swaines Creek and the Lane Cove River from the Sydney Water sewerage mains.*

The pipe crossing Swaines Creek on a viaduct carries the main sewerage line for the area. The sewerage mains generally have been installed in the creek beds. The system is designed so that during heavy rains pressure in the sewerage system is released by allowing the top of the sewer mains to 'pop' (blow-off). This results in diluted sewerage flowing directly into the creeks and river. The recently completed Northern Overflow Outfall System (NOOS) tunnel built by the Sydney Water Board does not address this environmental problem. Sydney Water is licensed by the NSW Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to allow this antiquated system to continue.

Due to this situation the Chatswood West Ward Progress Association decided to undertake water quality testing in Swaines and Blue Gum creeks.

## **15 - Greenweb Grant**

*A \$21,000 grant from the National Heritage Trust for an ecological fire management study for bushland reserves awarded in 2001.*

At the end of 2001 Willoughby Council was awarded a grant from the Bush Care component of the National Heritage Trust for an ecological fire management study for bushland reserves. On ground works include weed management; stormwater management; revegetation and improved access to Swaines Creek, Chatswood West.

Green Web Sydney proposes the establishment of a green web of native vegetation to protect, conserve and enhance remaining remnant bushland in the Sydney region. Central to this plan is the establishment of habitat corridors which link fragmented patches of bushland to facilitate the movement of wildlife and natural dispersal of native plants.

## **16 - Clearwater Creek Revival**

*E.restore works program to restore and rehabilitate the major creeks in the catchment.*

The Clearwater Creek Revival program involves pollution capture, erosion control, weed management and re-vegetation projects.

The catchment's storm water outlets are in poor condition. Many flow directly into bushland spreading weeds and other pollution. Rehabilitation works involving armoring stormwater gross pollutant traps, outlets, the construction of sediment basins and in-pit litter traps, trash racks and bank stabilization.

Revival works have been carried out in OH Reid Reserve, Dellwood St, Greville St and Kooba Ave.

The urban drains in the catchment are being marked to show where the water drains to e.g. to Blue Gum Creek, Swaines Creek and the Lane Cove River.

## **17C - Chattie's Woods (circa late 1800s)**

*The woods after which Chatswood was named were located on Swaines Creek near Greville St.*

It is thought that Chatswood was named after Charlotte Harnett, the wife of early developer Richard Hayes Harnett. It is reported that Charlotte used to wander to paint from the Harnett Estate near the present Chatswood Railway Station to the nearby woods.

## **18 - Chatswood Golf Club**

*A case study in the alienation of public reserve for a special use.*

The Chatswood Golf Club is operated by a private company consisting of its members. The golf course covers around 73 acres of which approximately 18 acres is public reserve leased from Willoughby Council. The public lands that are leased consist of:

- Portion of the 100 ft Crown Reserve reservation (although access along the river foreshore is guaranteed to the public (including a small portion of Burns Park)
- Portion of the OH Reid Reserve (Former Fullers Park) for recreation
- Crown land reserve for public recreation
- Other Council land. (Lot 2 Beaconsfield Rd to Swaines Creek)

It is argued by some that the lease of public land for recreation to a private Club not only constitutes 'alienation' of that land but that the practice is possibly illegal.

Willoughby Council has recently negotiated an arrangement with the Club that allows the public access to the whole of the river foreshore along the Mowbray Walking Track. It is this author's desire to see this track renamed the 100ft Reservation Walking Trail



## 19 - First land grant (circa 1790s)

*In 1794 John Fleming and William Hall granted land between Pacific Highway, Beaconsfield and Ralston Sts.*

## 20 - Gov. Macquarie visits the river (1810)

*In 1810 Gov. Macquarie visited the area to view timber getting along the Lane Cove River.*



## 20F - Aboriginal archaeological sites (circa 10,000BC)

*There are two significant aboriginal heritage sites on the Golf Course.*



One site consists of a shelter overhand and midden. The other is a shelter overhand with rock art.

## 21 - Former Garbage Dump Site (circa 1920s)

*Resident action about bad odors led to the formation of the Chatswood West Ward Progress Association in 1930.*

In 1923 there appears to have been an iron incinerator and shed on the land with a garbage dump possibly being operated by Messers Alexander Anderson and James Stephens contractors. In 1925 the Council garbage and sanitary service contract was being carried out by Messers Anderson and Stephens. The tip, the property of the Contractor, was situated at the end of Beaconsfield Rd. It was reported at the time that there were no houses in the district. The Council officers of the day recommended that Council consider the construction of an incinerator (Destructor).

In 1928 North Sydney Council approached Willoughby Council to arrange destruction of night soil from their Municipality at the Beaconsfield site. The Health Inspector recommended approval for Council to tip night soil into the depot, Beaconsfield Rd. He indicated, "*there should be no objection to this proposal.*"

The adjacent residents were greatly inconvenienced by the odors and the smoke from burning rubbish. In 1930, a number of men in the area decided something needed to be done. The outcome of their initial meeting was a proposal to call a public meeting with the view to forming a Progress Association. The meeting was held in September 1930 in the RSL Club rooms in Victoria Ave, Chatswood. The meeting was well attended and the outcome was the formation of the Chatswood West Ward Progress Association.

In 1931 a deputation of local citizens had petitioned the NSW Director General of Public Health they were “*emphatic in their protest against further deposition of garbage at the tip off Beaconsfield Road*” and “*even more seriously concerned about the pollution of the Lane Cove River by the drainage from the Garbage Tip and more especially from the effluent for the Sanitary Depot*”. The Metropolitan Medical Officer of Health wrote to Council that “*it is not creditable that in 1931 Chatswood which is a residential suburb of Sydney, still tolerates these primitive conditions and the residents are perfectly justified in their protest*”.

The Progress Association successfully petitioned both the NSW Government and Council and the tip was finally closed.

## **22 - Burns Park (circa 1920s)**

*Extends from below Beaconsfield Rd to below Willandra St.*

Burns Park of approximately 5 acres was dedicated as parkland in 1929. It was part of the Lavender Estate (owned by Mrs Bradley). It was later included in Mowbray Park.

Burns Park also extended along the southern bank of Swains Creek up to near the present day 15<sup>th</sup> tee of the Golf Club. This portion of land is currently leased to the Golf Club.

From the Council Minute Books 3rd May 1909: “*moved by Ald. Holterman seconded by Ald Mason. That the reserve on Lane Cove River recently dedicated to this Council be known as and called Burns Park*”

Council Annual Report 1909 (Mayor Ald Bailey) Burns Park. “*The Council during the year acquired a small piece of land on Lane Cove River and named the same Burns Park. I should like to see a road of approach made to this reserve and a boat shed established so that our residents could enjoy the beauties of the river. A sum of money should be set aside for necessary improvements to the park.*”

In the 1890s the local State MP was a Mr. Burns, which may explain the name.

There is a former road reservation (an extension of Willandra St, formerly known as Cullen St) that used to provide access to the Franston Wharf.

## **23 - Franston Wharf (circa early 1900s)**

*The Franston wharf was demolished by Willoughby Council in 1952 due to vandalism*

## **24 - Flat Rock Picnic Area**

*Formerly a popular picnic area next to Franston Wharf.*

## **25 - Gardens Subdivision**

## **26C - Judy’s Arm Picnic Area**

*Previously a cleared and grassy picnic area that was popular in the 1880s.*

The Judy's Arm picnic area occupied land on the northernmost bend of the river below Hinkler & Avian Crescents. It was previously a cleared and grassy picnic area that was popular in the 1880s.

## **27C - Wattle Flat Picnic Ground.**

*Popular circa 1898. Location unknown.*

## **28C - The she Oaks Picnic Area**

### **29 - Mowbray Park (early 1900s)**

*Part of the park formerly known as Burns Park was reserved for public recreation in 1908.*

In 1926 the 'Verbena' Estate was subdivided and a parcel of land was purchased by the Sydney Land and Property Company. Part of this land between the river and the high cliffs of Avro and Avian Streets (sic) was found to be unsuitable for development and was presented to Willoughby Municipal Council.

In 1950 more land was purchased by Cumberland County Council with the idea of extending the Lane Cove State Recreation Area.

Care and control of the park passed to Willoughby Council around 1970. In 1972 Council had a plan to fill the area to construct playing fields. This proposal was not supported by local residents who formed the Mowbray Park Preservation Committee.

In 1996 the local member for Ryde, John Watkins again floated the idea merging the park in with the Lane Cove National Park. Local residents again spoke out against the idea on the basis that this would preclude many of their traditional uses of the park, including the walking and exercising of dogs.

## **29F - Aboriginal archaeological sites**

*There are seven significant sites located within Mowbray Park.*



There are six shelter overhangs, two with associated midden and three, which have yielded a variety of artifacts. Another shelter contains an aboriginal art piece. There is also an axe grinding groove site. In addition there is also a large open campsite with an extensive midden near the Athletic Field.

Attenbrow (1989) reports that the shell middens consist of about 95% rock oyster with also Sydney cockle, Hercules whelk, Australian horn shell and hairy mussel. Attenbrow also discovered a number of stone artifacts (including a bipolar core of indurated mudstone 26 x 20 x 10 and a number of flake).

## 30 - Fire and the bush

*The majority of Mowbray Park was burnt in the 1994 bushfires.*



As native plants are adapted to fire, the bush regenerated quickly. Notice the thick understorey of Hop Bush (*Dodonaea triquetra*) and the blackened Eucalyptus trunks that are a result of the fire.

## 31 - 1930s Depression Housing

*During the depression temporary dwellings were built along the river by 'down and outs'.*



Remnants of the foundations of similar buildings can still be seen in the bush just off the walking track.

## 32 - Rotary Athletic Field (circa 1960s)

*1961 initiative by the Rotarians of Chatswood Club*

### **The Rotary Club of Chatswood War Memorial Athletic Field**

The project was adopted in 1961 by the Rotarians of Chatswood Club as there was no similar Athletic Field on the North Shore and it was felt that the track would be a good investment in the youth of the day.

An area of land approximately 10 acres known as the Whatmore Estate on the Lane Cove River was made available for the development by Willoughby Council after the necessary approval of the County of Cumberland and the Government.

The area was mainly swamp rising to a rocky hillside on the southern boundary and it was estimated that it would require about 15,000 cubic yards of excavation, mainly

rock, to reduce the hill and about 70,000 cubic yards of filling to raise the level of the ground to a safe height above high tide level of the Lane Cove River.

Lack of finance hampered the project. An expensive brochure was prepared and sent out to business people. Functions raising money were held by Chatswood Rotarians, local businesses and clubs raised money and people who could see the value of such a Field made donations of cash and kind. Willoughby Council supported the project with a large donation. Good publicity was given by local newspapers and articles appeared in city newspapers.

The project was completed after many years of back breaking effort and was opened by the Governor of New South Wales, Sir Roden Cutler in 1966.



Works that was required -

- Provide an estimated 70,000 cubic yards of filling to level the site.
- Excavate 15,000 cubic yards of material, mainly sandstone.
- Provide a road 400 feet in nominal length.
- Erect a track fence of 1,500 feet.
- Install 1,200 feet of 24-inch Armour Pipe.
- Prepare the oval and surrounds for grassing and cinder track.
- Provide 2,000 cubic yards of soil.
- Grass oval and surrounds, also laying of track.
- Provide a man proof fence and gates 150 feet in length to keep vehicles out of the area.
- Reticulate water to the site.
- Provide toilet facilities to both males and females.
- Provide dressing sheds for both males and females.

### 33D - Lighters and river transport

Water transport on the Middle Lane Cove River in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was run by individual timber contractors and landowners for their own produces, for example, the Hyndes and Jenkins families and the Chicago Cornflour Mills, or by watermen such as Joseph Fidden.

There were few steam launches working on the upper reaches of the river until the 1880s. Mr Jenkins ran his fruit to market in the old *Planter's Friend*, a commodious screw ship with plenty of deep room.

In 1894 the Clifford Love Corn Mills was using "*Nellie*", a steam powered boat, built in 1882 owned and operated by the Jenkins family. This boat was then purchased by the Love's and renamed "*Nellie Love*" and operated on the river from 1918-1926. The Love's also operated "*Annie Love*" a launch/lighter built by Berry's Bay shipbuilders in 1909 until 1938 she was sold to Stannards as "*Kembla*" in 1937 and "*Peggy Love*", steel lighter motor cargo lighter from 1927-1943 when it was handed over to the Department of Navy for the war effort in 1942.

A unique ferry service was pioneered by local residents. Thomas Ashcroft, C.E Lodowici and J.F Burley formed the Upper Lane Cove Ferry Company in 1908. Initially two launches, *Killara* and *Native Rose*, were used with a third added later. The service ran from a wharf near Fig Tree as far as Killara. About a dozen small wharves, some of them private, were built along the river. The small ferries gave the isolated rural dwellers the chance of weekday services to the city. On weekends the ferries served the local picnic spots.

From 1909 the Upper Lane Cove Ferry Company operated the "*Red Rose*" skippered by Harry Ovens along the river, stopping at Franston Wharf.

River transport was used on the river until 1948.

Today there are no bans on any boats on Lane Cove River except for Personal Water Craft (which includes jet skis) – there is a blanket ban on these on all of Sydney Harbour and all its rivers. There is a 4 knot speed limit on Lane Cove River, which means in practice that there is no water skiing because it is not possible at that speed (which is about reasonably fast walking speed)

### 34 - Wharves



The honor of establishing the first ferry service on the Lane Cove River goes to J.N.Joubert. The initial craft was a small boat called "*Kirribilli*" which was followed by a paddleboat called

"*The Womerah*" built and launched around 1880. (It is not clear if these vessels plied the Middle Lane Cove River).

In 1881 Whatmore's Wharf is shown on the 100ft reservation below the land of John Jones and Mrs Henry Whatmore In 1886 there is also an earth wharf shown above the low water line servicing the land of S.B. Whatmore.

There was also a wharf at the boiling down works, which later became the Corn Mills.

Franston wharf (23) was located on Cullen St (extension of current Willandra St.)

The Chatswood Wharf (7C) was located at the bottom of Millwood Avenue.

There were also wharves at Strawberry Gardens (just below Fairyland), Swans Fairyland Picnic Gardens and at Comerford's Orchard (near Fairyland).

## **35C - Bone & Tallow Works**

*Circa 1880 – established by Henry Whatmore and John Berry*

In the 1880s Henry Whatmore and John Berry had established a bone and tallow boiling down works on the river at the foot of the Mowbray Road West road reservation, on the site where the cornflour mills were later established.

## **36D - Whatmore Estate**

*The estate is now the location of the Fielders Corn Factory and the Rotary Athletic Field - occupation dating back to 1831.*

In 1831 the land was occupied by Aaron Pierce and there were two huts on it. Pierce was a timber contractor, employing 6 men at the time of the 1828 census.

The land was part of a 189-acre grant to John Jones and J.R Hatfield in 1833 when Berry's Bone Mill operated on the site.

The land later came into the possession of Sidney Brodie Whatmore. Although there is reference to the Whatmore Estate in 1881 (perhaps the original name referred to land owned by Henry Whatmore along the foreshore).

Whatmore's boiling down works and drying racks were in operation on the site in 1886.

In the late 1880s some of the land was sold to Clifford Love and more of the site was leased from Mrs S.R Whatmore (widow) in 1891.

## **37C - Chicago Starch Mills (circa late 1800s)**

*Began operations in 1894. Also known as the Clifford Love Cornflour Mills.*



It appears the site for the mill was chosen because of the proximity to the copious supply of freshwater available from the water main that crossed the

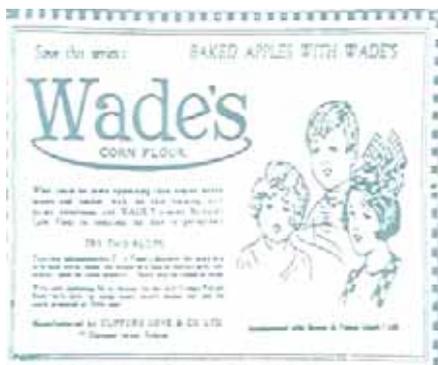
river at this location. And the availability of river transport.

The first boat used to transport bulk maize to the mill and the finished products back to the city for distribution was a lighter owned by George Jenkins of Millwood Farm. Two further lighters were built for the firm to supplement this.



The name of the factory had variously been called the Chicago Starch Mills, the Chicago Cornflour and Starch Mills, and the Chicago Milling Company was changed to Clifford Love and Company Ltd. In 1966, an American firm, CPC International brought shares in the factory. In 1977

Fielders purchased a 49% interest and the name changed to Corn Product Fielders Pty Ltd.



Products produced at the Clifford Love Corn Mill included:

Wades Cornflour  
Aspro  
Gluten Feed  
Laundrena  
Milkricha  
Brown & Polson Cornflour  
Bondcor  
Wilton Axminster Carpet Sizing  
Goodman Fielder Ingredients  
Uncle Ben's Dog Food  
Biodegradable Plastic Bags

Maize Oil  
Maize teepwater  
Clifton's Lilywhite Starch  
Fosters Clarke Custard Powder  
Glucose  
Newtown's Cornflour  
Clement's Cornflour  
O-So-Soft  
Biodegradable baby products  
Starch Australia



The Bayliss and Morcom engine drove electric generators at the **Chicago Mills** in **Lane Cove** from 1929 to 1960. It is now located in the Powerhouse Museum.

### 38 - Mowbray Boardwalk

*The boardwalk has been built by Willoughby City Council to protect environmentally sensitive sections of the walking track.*



The boardwalk was damaged in the 1994 fires and has subsequently been rebuilt.

### 39 - Mangroves

*In the early 1800s the river was deeper and there were few mangroves along the foreshore.*

### 40 - Waterfall

*A waterfall can be viewed below the top boardwalk.*

Notice the large fig tree growing in the waterfall. The trees around the boardwalk are Black Wattles (*Calicoma serratifolia*). These were used by the first settlers to build wattle and daub huts.

### 43 - River Foreshore Enhancement

*E.restore program to improve the condition of the bushland and estuarine environment. Works have been undertaken to enhance 800m of the Lane Cove River foreshore.*

### 44 - Watermain Crossing Point (circa late 1800s)

*Original water main constructed on suspension aqueduct in 1891.*



In 1891 a 24-¾ inch riveted wrought iron water pipeline was constructed as a suspension aqueduct across the river just north of the location of the present pipeline and footbridge.

The present 30 inch steel water main across the river was constructed on the arched footbridge in 1901.

## 45 – The “Missing Link” Road Tunnel

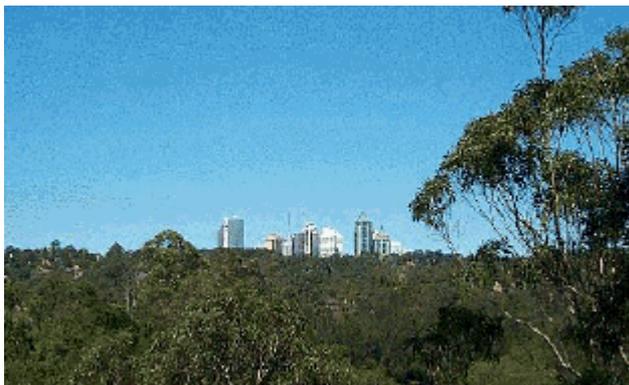


The 3.4km Lane Cove Tunnel is a key link in Sydney's orbital motorway network connecting the Gore Hill Freeway with the M2. It is claimed it will result in quicker journey times between the city and Sydney's northwest.

## BushCare in the Valley

BushCare groups active in the valley include:

- Avian Crescent – 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of month
- Blue Gum Park – 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of month
- Mooney St - 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of month
- Ferndale St – 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of month
- Ulm St – 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of month
- Park Ave – 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of month
- Ferndale Reserve – 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday
- Chatswood High School – 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday
- Chatswood Golf Course – 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday
- O.H Reid Reserve – 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday



Chatswood CBD viewed from Mowbray Park

## Northern Side of the River

### W - The Rest (Fairyland Pleasure Grounds)

Robert J.C. Swan and other members of the Swan family bought portions with substantial frontage to the Lane Cove River in 1896.

"Fairyland" comprised around 17 acres of flat land covered in ti-trees, paperbarks, swamp oaks and bracken ferns, with a small creek running across the site from the steeper land beyond.



Robert Swan had part of the land cleared and developed as a market garden, growing strawberries and watermelons. New Zealand flax was planted to provide ties for the strawberry punnets.



Picnickers and tourist boats began to stop to buy strawberries and were soon being offered afternoon teas with strawberries and cream. By 1905 the area had acquired a name, "The Rest", and between 1905 and 1910 the market gardens were phased out and the area became dedicated to recreation.

### The 'Razzle-Dazzle'

The Razzle-Dazzle at Fairyland came from the White City Pleasure Grounds at Rushcutters Bay.

Whilst exploring Fairyland some years ago, the author recovered the top of the Razzle=Dazzle from the bed of the Lane Cove River.

### Boats & Fairyland

Charter boats, carrying up to 60 or 70 people, and rowboats, brought Fairyland's first visitors.

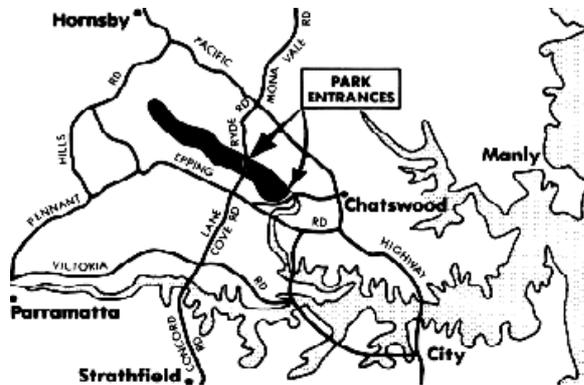
Launches were still running from Fig Tree to all wharves as far as Killara in 1923 but Fairyland had begun using its own boats and could run regular services when others were discontinued due to silting. Fairyland's boats were the *Escort* and the *Twilight*, both shallow single-deckers.



Rosman's began taking charter boats to Fairyland in 1914 and other charter

companies also went there. The Kinninmonts had a boatshed at Fig Tree from which picnic groups could hire rowboats and small launches. Around 1930 the Kinninmonts built a small jetty for their rowboats at Fairyland.

## Y- Lane Cove National Park



The Lane Cove National Park occupies a bushland valley in Northern Metropolitan Sydney, Australia, extending along the Lane Cove River from Fullers Bridge, Chatswood to Browns Waterhole, South Turramurra. The Park encompasses additional fragmented bushland, including the former Fairyland picnic area and the Sugarloaf Point area on Pittwater Road, Ryde and Pennant Hills Park and Thornleigh Park. There is a proposal to extend the park to incorporate more small areas of bush adjoining the park, to occupy the entire Lane Cove Valley from

Pennant Hills to Hunters Hill. This would create one of the longest bush corridors in an Australian city.

## Z - Great North Walk

This section of the Great North Walk starts at the junction of Mowbray Rd and Epping Rd, Lane Cove West, by the bridge over the Lane Cover River.

From Mowbray Rd, cross at the lights and head back over the bridge to the start of the walk. There is a path provided on the southern side (Goodman Fielder side) where the white posts of the Great North Walk are prominent. On the other side, where the bus drops if coming from Epping there is no path and if you don't cross at the lights then you'll be walking into on coming traffic. Down the steps and cross under the bridge to the start of the Fairyland Track.

An easy meander along from here will lead to one of Sydney's oldest playgrounds: **Fairyland**. A couple of signs here will enlighten you of the history of this area, which began in the earliest years of this century.

At 1.3km the track encounters River Road. Walk up the hill hanging a left into Quarry Rd past the crematorium. Wander through the bush a little, down the stairs to the road then under and across the bridge, left down Lady Game Drive (lights), over another bridge and then your at the gate to Lane Cove National Park (Great North Walk sign).

## 100ft Reservation Walk

Most of the items that can be seen on the river cruise can also be seen by walking along the 100ft Reservation Walk from Fullers Bridge to Epping Bridge. You can return on the other side of the river via the Great North Walk through the Lane Cove National park.

Approximate time: 1-2 hours in each direction.

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