



HISTORY



SEP - DEC
2019



Library
opening
hours



Chatswood Library
Lower Ground, 409 Victoria Ave,
Chatswood

Based on remembrances from the community, this exhibition tells our story of Willoughby's past and present.

These are our personal landscapes, our community landscapes and the vanished landscapes of our past.

Curated by Willoughby City Library's Local Studies team as part of History Week 2019.



historycouncilnsw

**WILLOUGHBY
LANDSCAPES**
Exhibition

OPEN DURING LIBRARY
OPENING HOURS



WILLOUGHBY
CITY COUNCIL

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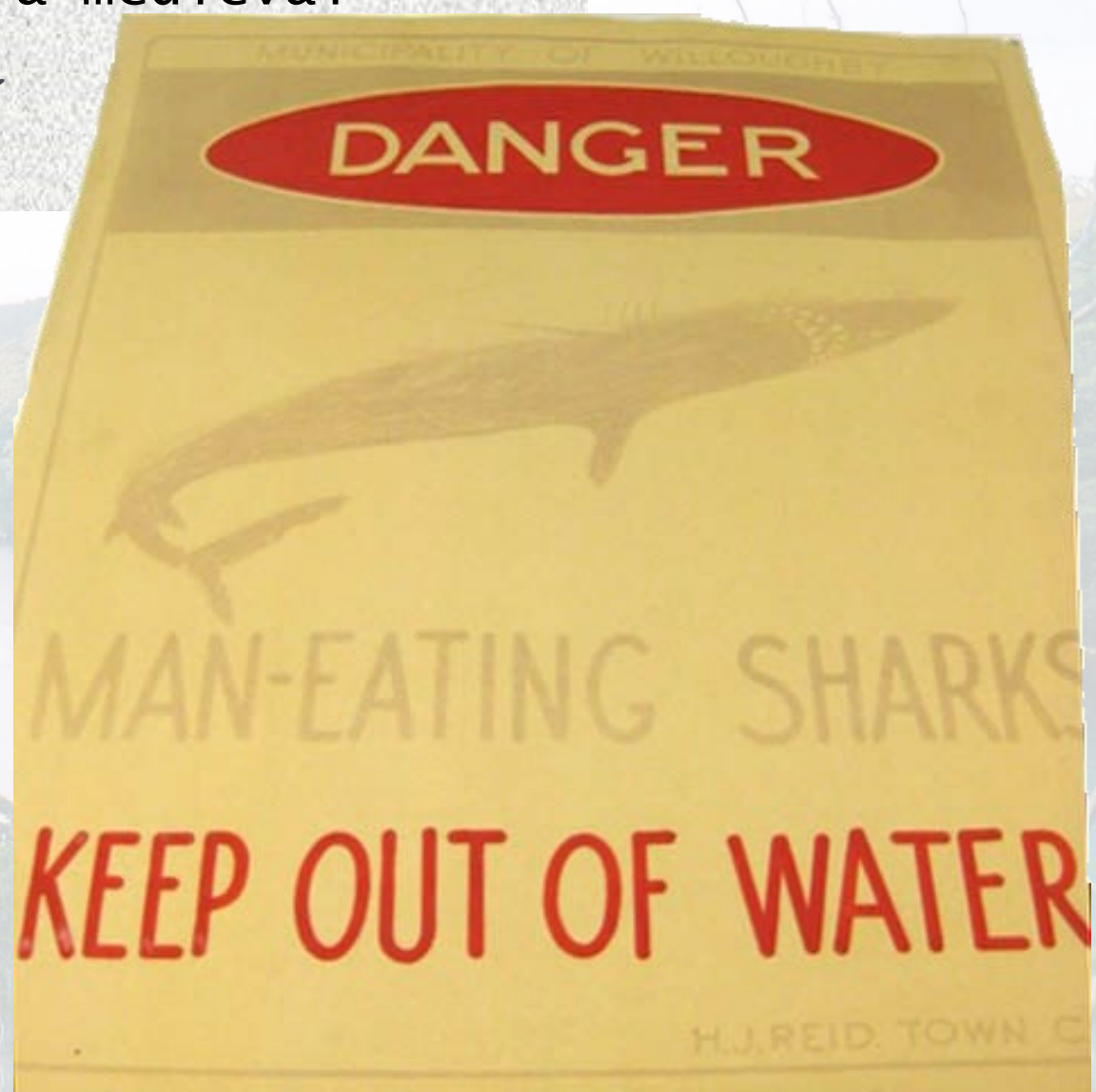
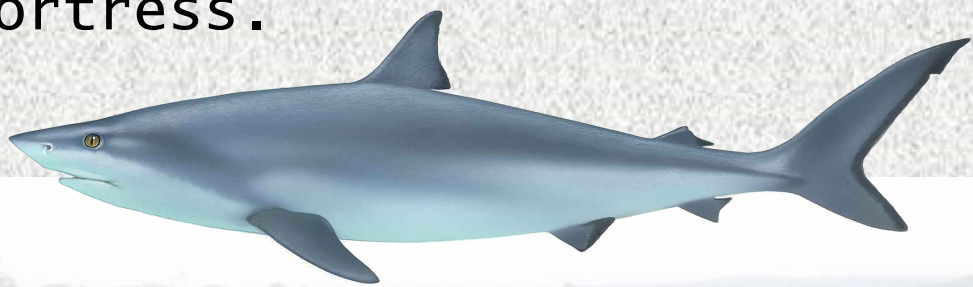
Middle Harbour



Going Down the Bush. Memory by Dr C Holt [Date Range: 1946 -1952]

When they reached the rock platforms of Middle Harbour, most boys would crack open the bounty of thousands of rock oysters and they would skim flat stones. The general belief was that the water was full of sharks, so no-one ventured to swim. Everyone talked about the dreaded 'grey nurses' but I expect they meant bull sharks. Across the bay the castle beckoned like a medieval fortress.

Middle Harbour, Castle Cove, 2002. Looking north west from Bampie Place towards Killarney Point and Killarney Heights



Middle Harbour

The last fatal shark attack in Middle Harbour occurred in 1963 when actor Marcia Hathaway (32) was fatally mauled by a shark in water only 30 inches deep. There were six fatal attacks between 1942 and 1963:

Jan 1942	Zeita Steadman, Bantry Bay
Dec 1942	Denise Burch, Bantry Bay
Jan 1955	John Willis, Wyargine Point, Balmoral
Feb 1955	Bruno Rautenberg, Sugarloaf Bay
Jan 1960	Ken William Murray, below Roseville Bridge

Built in the early 1920s, the Roseville Baths were located on the Middle Harbour foreshore near the first Roseville Bridge, just down from Echo Point. Near the border of Willoughby and Roseville.



Old Roseville Bridge and Roseville Baths, Roseville Chase, 1965.

Waterfront Cottages

Staying in the cottage at night is very atmospheric, there are powerful owls, wallabies and possums that visit it at night. During the day, in warm sunny weather, many reptiles have been photographed at it - eastern water dragons, green tree snakes, golden arrow head snakes, red belly black snakes, goannas and even a diamond python.

The Waterfront Cottage at 217b Edinburgh Road. Memory by T A Hayward [Date Range: 2012-2017]

Water dragon



Diamond python



Waterfront cottage and boatshed, Castlecrag, 1980

Waterfront Cottages



Waterfront cottage, Castlecrag, from Sugarloaf Bay, Middle Harbour, 1980

“One of the cottages is a really fine one, it’s a white cottage right on the waterfront, a really beautiful cottage.”

N Reidy (1996). Oral history transcript, p. 95

The other thing about Castlecrag was all those fairly old cottages on the waterfront along Edinburgh Road occupied by people who maintained the cottages and lived in pretty good circumstances right on the water, but no real land access to anything. They were a hangover from the old days when they were fishermen’s cottages built down there.

N Reidy (1996). Oral history transcript, p. 94



Waterfront cottage and boatshed, Castlecrag, 1980

Sailors Bay Northbridge Baths

Opened 1924 in Widgiewa Road, adjoining Forsyth Park. They were extended in 1935, 1937 and 1951, and modernised in 1968.

They were known as Sailors Bay Baths before 1940.

“Sailors Bay...was one of the greatest attractions for the new settlers in Northbridge... But there was an ominous presence lurking in the deep. Sharks. There were sightings of fins and tales of dogs being taken near the shore.”

U Woodhouse (2014). “The Baths” in *Northbridge: Building a new suburb* by Pam Clifford, p. 107



Sailors Bay, Northbridge Baths



Stormwater drains near Northbridge Baths, Sailors Bay, Middle Harbour, c. 1935 (above and right)



In the 1940s a “daring game for those who were slim enough and didn’t suffer from claustrophobia was to slide down the stormwater drain which led from Kameruka Road down to the baths”.

U Woodhouse (2014). “The Baths” in *Northbridge: Building a new suburb* by Pam Clifford, p. 109

We used to go quite often in the summer, yes. Yes, dad taught us to swim down there by jumping in with us on his back. And then he would go under and leave us to sink or swim.

M Reidy (1997). Oral history transcript, p. 4

Walter Burley Griffin Incinerator

“We had an aunt who lived in Garland Road, Naremburn. Her back fence overlooked the valley and was about opposite the Burley Griffin Incinerator. In the valley were secluded pools with dragonflies hovering over them and slippery rocks we could clamber over.”

E Hayward (1992). “A Penny on Saturday” in *The Good Old Days* (ed. V Phillips), p. 22



Backing garbage cart into Walter Burley Griffin Incinerator, Willoughby, 1934

The Incinerator
is located at 2
Small Street,
Willoughby



It was a beautiful natural bush gully. It had every type of wildlife, wild flowers, trees, you know, beautiful. And then they built the incinerator there ... And when you got a northeast wind, the poor people in Naremburn copped all the smoke... and those houses, if you know where Garland Road is.

A Beckenham (n.d.). Oral history transcript, p. 19

The Incinerator Timeline

1934-
1967

The Incinerator opened and operated. Its construction was part of an employment creation initiative undertaken by Council during the Great Depression. The sewerage plant continued until 1972.

1980-
1989

The Incinerator Restaurant, then adapted to an office.

1996

The upper level was badly damaged by fire. The two lower floors suffered extensive water damage.

1999

Listed with the NSW State Heritage Register.

2007

Council agreed to restore and adapt the building.

April
2011

The building was officially opened. There is an art space on the lowest floor run by Willoughby Council, and a café on the ground floor.



New road below Walter Burley Griffin Incinerator, Willoughby, 1934. Flat Rock Creek and Bridge in background with Park Road (?), Naremburn behind.

Naremburn got its incinerator in due course and it became known locally as

“ the stinkerator ”

E Wilksch (n.d.). Oral history transcript, p. 43

You used the *Herald* to wrap your garbage. So garbage was always in neat little parcels that went into the garbage bin. Household garbage from food scraps were wet and they would gradually make these parcels wet and soggy.

If you put them into an incinerator, they just don't burn, do they? It used to smoulder and it would stink, and if the wind was in the wrong direction...

And that's why Naremburn stayed as a dog town. They got the worst of it, if the wind carried it over into that part of Naremburn.

P Storm (2018). Oral history transcript interview 2, p. 13



Griffin Incinerator, back view, c. 2000s

Astraea College



Betty and Menie rolling the lawn,
Astraea College, Chatswood, 1913



Ida Christian on Astraea College verandah, c. 1910

Astraea College developed from a school established by Miss E R Keays in Thomas Street, in 1890.

In 1905 it moved to a house situated in Centennial Avenue, on the corner of the Pacific Highway.

In 1919 it was renamed the Church of England Girls' School, which closed in 1933. It reopened as Astraea but closed finally in 1936.

The Suspension Bridge



Suspension Bridge, Northbridge, 1890s

The columns had trap doors, big steel trap doors that weren't locked. There were no ladders but you would get a couple of kids and stand on each other's shoulders and go up the wall, the top one would go through and drag the others up. Inside, there were steps that went right up to the top. The big columns, piers or pillars that hold the bridge had ladders that went all the way up to the top. There were floors where they poured to concrete. It's all locked these days for safety.



Workmen pouring concrete during reconstruction of Northbridge Suspension Bridge, c. 1937-38

D Landers (2013). Oral history transcript, p. 15

The Northbridge Suspension Bridge (then called the Suspension Bridge) was opened to traffic in January 1892. It was considered one of the engineering wonders of Sydney and soon became a great tourist attraction. It had taken two years and nine months to complete and cost £42,000 with imported steel from Scotland and local sandstone from Castle Cove.

Chatswood Station

Here, at 8 miles 29¹/₂ chains, is a passenger station building, and a goods shed... In addition there is a gatekeeper's cottage... also a house for the station-master, containing five rooms, with verandah... A level crossing at Victoria Avenue connecting all the approaches to these buildings with the main road.

Evening News, 1 January 1890. "Great Northern Railway Extension", p. 6

The push for train access in Chatswood had begun as early as the 1870s, but work did not begin on the northward expansion of Sydney's rail network until 1887. Finally opened in 1890, the coming of the railway had an almost immediate impact on Chatswood's growth.



Chatswood Railway Station and station staff, c. 1910

M.A.B. Photo

Chatswood Rifle Range




Old Rifle Range, Chatswood West, 1979

We also had the Chatswood Rifle Range which was behind us in the lower Millwood Avenue, Chatswood West area. The rifle range obviously was used by the army through the war and after the war there were several rifle clubs which used to shoot down there every Saturday afternoon using the old army .303 Rifle.

R Fredericks (2003). Oral history transcript, p. 7

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| 1800s | Small farms, orchards and dairies. |
| 1915 | Compulsorily acquired by Commonwealth Government to train servicemen in WW1. |
| 1940s | Training purposes in WW2. |
| 1950s | As residential housing began encroaching on its boundaries the range closed. |
| 1955 | Eventually most of the land was sold to the State Government to become part of Ku-ring-gai College of Advanced Education. |
| 1986 | National Acoustics Laboratory and Ultrasonics Institute opened on part of the land accessed via Greville Street. |
| 2014 | The facility was sold to the Church of Scientology. |

Chatswood Rifle Range

LOST or strayed from Chatswood Rifle Range, Chatswood, on 12th November, 1938,—A bay mare, upstanding remount type, about 14.3½ hands, 7 to 8 years of age, black points, black mane and tail, white star, off hind coronet white, branded like  near shoulder, property of Edward Stanley Court, 283 Penshurst-street, Willoughby. This mare, or similar, was reported in vicinity of Windsor on 27th November, 1938.

E. S. COURT.

*Government Gazette of
the State of New South
Wales, 30 Dec 1938,
Issue No.191, p. 4988*

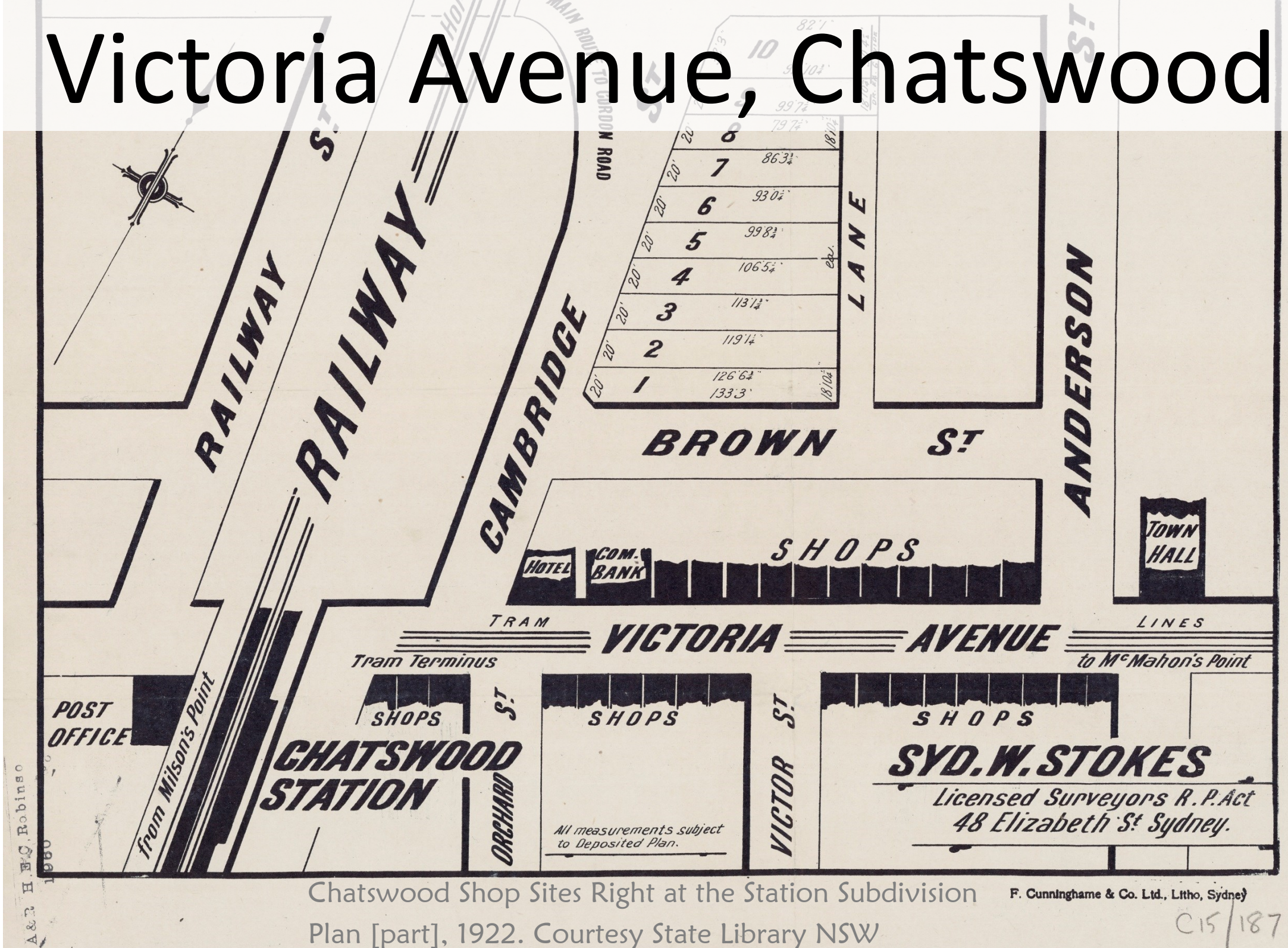
1947

8s.

THE 45 HECTARES SPANNED WEST FROM GREVILLE ST AND NORTH FROM MILLWOOD AVE



Victoria Avenue, Chatswood



The Town Hall had a house beside it where the caretaker lived, a Mr Williams, and they had a son, Ross, who went to Roseville School.

Memory by A D P Caporn



Willoughby Town Hall, Chatswood, 1940s

Willoughby Council Town Hall was opened in 1903 and demolished in 1969, replaced by the Civic Centre, which was in turn replaced by The Concourse.

Victoria Avenue, Chatswood

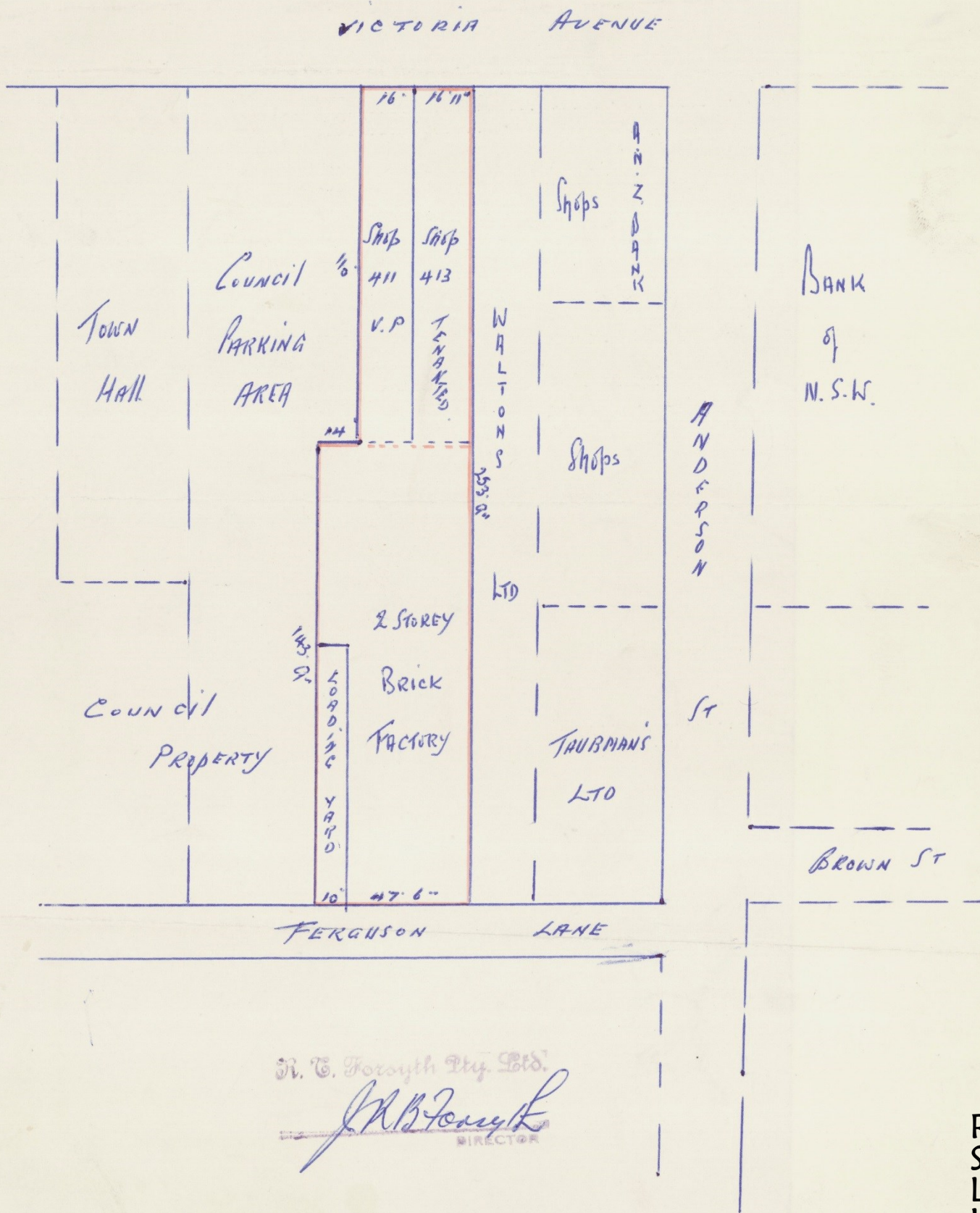
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Whilst in this period, the 1930s, we had a vegetable garden in the rear of the house and I had a couple of vegetable gardens to grow lettuce and carrots. For fertiliser, I would pull my billy cart down to Victoria Avenue to the bakery horse stable, just to the west of the Town Hall, backing onto the lane. I'd load up horse manure and pull it home for my vegetables.

Memory by A D P Caporn

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VALUATIONS MADE - INSURANCES EFFECTED

Ross Williams, a school friend at Roseville Primary and Mosman High School, lived with his family at the Chatswood Town Hall, as his father, Tom Williams, was the caretaker. They lived in a cottage on the eastern side of Town Hall. In the school holidays when we were ten years old we flew our model aeroplanes in the Chatswood Town Hall. (His father knew we were doing it). The planes were made by ourselves out of Balsa wood and tissue paper and powered by rubber bands.

What We Did for Fun in the 1930s. Memory by B Day [Date Range: 1930s]

Victoria Avenue, Chatswood



Victoria Avenue, Chatswood, looking west, 1920



Victoria Avenue, Chatswood, looking east from the station, c. 1938

The First Hamburger Shop in Chatswood. Memory by B Day [Date Range: 1936]

A hamburger shop opened in Victoria Avenue, Chatswood, in 1936. The shop was owned by Mr Lovett but the short order cook, Mr Jones, made the hamburgers. He bought the lettuce and tomatoes from my father at his green grocers shop that was two doors further east at 373 Victoria Avenue. When the shop first opened we kids would gather outside and watch the cook through the window and sniff the tantalising smells wafting through the door. A plain one cost 4 pence, and with egg it cost sixpence.

One thing that's not in Chatswood is a fish and chips shop...
The one we had in Victoria Avenue was opposite the old Town Hall...
Friday night was four-deep with people getting their fish and chips.

D Thomas (2014). Oral history transcript, p. 25



Victoria Avenue, Chatswood



A J Benjamin, Chatswood, 1915

Down Victoria Avenue past Benjamin's store and opposite the Railway Station, the "Oasis" Cafe was opened in the 1930s. Then a "Ham and Beef" where butter came in wooden boxes and had to be weighed in portions and patted into shape with two wooden bats. The assistants wore collar and tie and white cotton coats. Sawdust on wooden floors helped them to slide swiftly along behind the counter when trade was brisk.

M McDonald (1992). "Sixty Years Holds a Place in Memory" in *The Good Old Days* (ed. V Phillips), p. 18

"A happening from those days which stands out in my mind was a boiler explosion of some kind within the department store of A J Benjamin Ltd, in upper Victoria Avenue. It took place in school hours. Clouds of black smoke billowed around following a thunderous sound of the explosion. The smoke filled the air over a large area. To our eight year old minds the explosion was a major world event and a talking point around Chatswood for days."

J McLaughlin (1992). "Reflections" in *The Good Old Days* (ed. V Phillips), p. 47

Just prior to Christmas 1982, the section of Victoria Avenue between Victor and Anderson Streets was converted to a partial Pedestrian Mall. By that I mean it is not totally devoid of traffic as the full meaning implies it should be. Buses and taxis are still permitted to traverse the centre of this section, which is detrimental to the safety of pedestrians.

L C McLean (1992). "The Origin of the Chatswood District Centre" in *The Good Old Days* (ed. V Phillips), p. 29

This is now a *full* Pedestrian Mall with no access for vehicular traffic.

This display is brought to you by the Local Studies Team at Willoughby City Library Services, 2019.



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