

“Harnett’s Ridge”

Richard Hayes Harnett



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Before we start I would like to acknowledge the Cameragal land upon which we stand and their elders and forefathers.

LITTLE STAYS THE SAME OVER TIME

The area within which we are located as variously been known as:

1788 – Terra Nullis or Unincorporated land (Cameragal land)

1788 – County of Cumberland

1790 - known as the North Shore (of Port Jackson or North side of the Harbour)

1794 – first land grants made at Lane Cove in the District of Hunters Hill

1794 – First Land Grants made in the District of North Willoughby

1795 – the area south of current Mowbray Rd West known as the **District of Hunters Hill** (the western portion later became Lane Cove)

1805s grants to Isaac Nichols near Chatswood Station were in District of Hunters Hill

1835 – County of Cumberland, Hundred of Pakenham, **Parish of Willoughby** (including the localities of Lane Cove, **Rural District of Willoughby**, North Sydney & Mosman)

1865 – **Municipality of North Willoughby** formed (including current day Lane Cove)

1867 – Borough of North Willoughby (legislation change)

1866 – Borough of North Willoughby – North Sydney & Lane Cove River Wards

1879 – Borough of North Willoughby – East Ward and River Ward
1885 – Borough of North Willoughby – Middle Harbour Ward
1890 – **Borough of Willoughby** (North dropped 1890/1)
1895 – Lane Cove separated from Willoughby
1895 – **Municipality of Willoughby** - Chatsworth, Naremburn and Middle Harbour Wards
??? – West, East, Naremburn & Middle Harbour Wards
When did Chatsworth become Chatswood?
1896 – proposal for West Ward to accede did not proceed
1889/90 - Chatsworth, Lane Cove, Middle Harbour Wards
1906 Municipality of Willoughby proclaimed
1988 – Municipality of Willoughby – West, East, Middle Harbour, Northbridge, Artarmon Wards
1989 The Council of the City of Willoughby
c.1990s - City of Willoughby – West Ward
1989 or 1996 – City of Willoughby - ?????
2001 – West, Middle Harbour, Northbridge & Artarmon Wards
2014 – City of Willoughby – West, Middle Harbour, Sailors Bay, Artarmon Wards
201? –where will we be?

HARNETT'S RIDGE

Today we will walk from Mowbray Road to the Chatswood Central Business District. As you probably know, the North Shore Railway line is built along a ridge. I have called this portion of the ridge 'Harnett's Ridge' as it was Harnett that seized the opportunity presented by the coming of the North Shore railway line.

EARLY SETTLEMENT

The Cameragal

The Cameragal people had lived in the area we now call Willoughby for thousands of years. There are over 150 Aboriginal Heritage site scattered about the city. Many of these sites are along the banks of the Lane Cove River and Middle Harbour. In addition, many of the early tracks and then roads in the city were established on well trodden Aboriginal tracks. In 1790, two years after the first fleet arrived at Port Jackson, Lieutenant Ralph Clark journeyed up the Lane Cove River, observing aboriginal people living along the banks. He would have considered this Cameragal land to be *terra nullius* –belonging to no one. During the 1790s, there were periods of near starvation in the fledging colony, so 'European' settlement did not spread immediately.

Whilst the main land grants in the district were between 1794 and 1810, **European settlement** was slow in developing. However, presumably given its vicinity to the original 1794/5 land grants mainly in Lane Cove, the first emergence of commercial and institutional activity occurred around the intersection of the then Lane Cove Road (Gordon Rd/Pacific Highway) and Mowbray Road.

1888. Mowbray Road - Windsor Gardens P11



Windsor Gardens

Windsor Gardens was built in 1888 by American journalist Frank Coffee. It was originally named Iroquois after an American battleship visiting Sydney at the time. During the early years Mass was held each month in the drawing room of Iroquois for the local Catholic community by a Priest from Riverview College. This was because there was no Catholic Church between North Sydney and Pymble. It was used as a private residence until 1945 when it was purchased by Mr Allan Gilbert who renamed it Windsor Gardens and converted it into a venue for wedding receptions.

WILLOUGHBY'S CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICTS

From 1867 the land around the intersection of Mowbray Rd and the then Lane Cove Road formed the nucleus of Willoughby's first Central Business District. John Bryson was eminently positioned to be seen as a luminary in the creation of commerce within the fledgling city.

However, there was another contender. Richard Hayes Harnett has purchased the land where Chatswood Railway Station now stands. Harnett lobbied the State Authorities to establish a railway station there with the coming of the North Shore Railway line. The railway by-passed the early CBD.

A new Central Business district started to emerge on the western side of the railway line from the intersection of the Gordon Road (former Lane Cove Rd) and Victoria Avenue. The coming of the railway not only resulted in the emergence of a new Central Business District, but wily Realtors such as Harnett were able to reap the benefits by sub-dividing the large allotments for residential building blocks.

It wasn't until around 1960s as customers switched to more 'modern' shops that Chatswood's commercial centre started to emerge on the eastern side of the railway. The shift of retail trade to the east side was accelerated by the opening of the four-storey Grace Brothers department store on Victoria Avenue in 1961. It was the first of the large city retail department stores to open a branch in regional Sydney and marked the start of the dramatic change that were to occur in Chatswood's retail sector. The opening of Wallace Way and Lemon Grove retail complexes east of the railway, followed by the large scale shopping malls, Chatswood Chase (1983) and the Westfield Shopping Town (1986) heralded the development of Chatswood as one of Sydney's major retail centres., together with the shopping facilities provided in the 1988 Chatswood transport interchange, albeit only briefly, has further enhanced the role of Chatswood as a regional retail centre.

The Pacific Highway

Pre 1872	a track
1872	the Lane Cove Road
1882	the Gordon Rd
Later	The Pacific Highway

JOHN BRYSON (1810-1882)

John Bryson was born in Ireland in 1810. He migrated with his family to New South Wales where he purchased land on the Lane Cove River which is said to have been sold to Thomas Jenkins. It is now part of the Lane Cove National: Park.

In the 1860s Bryson purchased more land on the north-east corner of Mowbray Road and Pacific Highway and built a house in which he lived until his death in 1882.

Bryson was elected to the first Council of the Municipality Willoughby in 1866. He seconded the motion of J. H. Fren requesting a proclamation of Public Roads, the first motion on roads recorded in Council Minutes. During this period he followed his trade as a builder. Council elections were held at his home in 1866 and 1867. In 1867 he was re-elected for three years.

John Bryson held religious services in his home prior to the building in 1872, of the Methodist Church, of which he was one of the Trustees. The bush mission society had established a small brick chapel on John Bryson's land on the south-east corner of the intersection of the Lane Cove Rd and Mowbray Rd by August 1864.

1860s North-East corner Mowbray Rd & Pacific Highway



Belrose Cottage

John Bryson's House 'Belrose Cottage'. John Bryson, a builder, purchased land. This lot would have formerly formed part of Isaac Nichols 1810 land grant. He built a house in which he lived until he died in 1882. Bryson was elected to the first council in 1866. Council elections were held in his home in 1866 and 1867. Religious services were held in the front room his home until 1872.

Later Reid's drapers and grocery.

Opposite the hotel were a few shops and cottages, the largest a mixed drapers and grocery store owned by Reids, a brother and two sisters. Lady customers wanting underwear or haberdashery were discreetly led to the drapery counter past the kitchenware clutter in the middle of the floor, the division between the long counters. The genteel sisters presided over the old fashioned stock. But, invariably after a thorough rummage, produced to one's surprise, the articles one sought and had no hope of finding elsewhere.



Reids Drapers



By 1870 Bryson had established a timber yard and '**School of Arts**' (which served as the council chambers from 1879) on his land on Mowbray Road to the east of Lane Cove Road,

Original School of Arts in Mowbray Road

By 1864 South-west corner of Mowbray Rd and Pacific Highway - Bush Mission School

The Bush Mission Society was established in a small brick chapel (a Mission Station or Sabbath School) on John Bryson's land on the south-western corner of this intersection by August 1864.



1872. the current Chatswood South Uniting Church was built (as a Methodist Church) on the site of the Mission Society Chapel in 1872

Chatswood South Uniting Church

1868. Pacific Highway & Moriarity Road - J. Hammond's Butchery

There was a raised notice on the wall of the shop – *J. Hammond. Butcher. Established 1868.* Hammond originally established in North Sydney and then at Beauchamp Park where he had a slaughterhouse. There was a stable at the back for the horse, cart and sulky. It had a sawdusted wooden floor, chopping blocks and stumps of huge trees, carcasses of beef and sheep hanging from rails. The butchers wore blue and white striped aprons and belts with cleaver, knife and steel hanging like a sword from it. Next door to the shop stood the cottage occupied by some of the family.



Hammond Butchery

1870 North-west corner of Mowbray Rd and Pacific Highway - The Great Northern Hotel P7 (Local Heritage site & plaque).



The first hotel in the Willoughby Municipality. It was built by Henry Russell, an Alderman of Willoughby Council. The hotel was used as a staging stop and was

briefly called the Artarmon Hotel

Original Great Northern Hotel

around 1915, It was renamed **The Great Northern** once again. The coal truck drivers from Newcastle slaked their thirst after their long drive. As well, many of the local characters did too — Barney, the Irishman, "Toey" — who was missing a few toes, and Old Harry, who usually fell into his cart and left his horse to find the way home — a practice which eventually got him killed

1930s The hotel was rebuilt after a fire. It is a Local Heritage Item.

by 1870. Mowbray Rd – Bryson's timber yard

1870 Mowbray Road- School of Arts & Council Chambers. Bryson had first established a timber yard and then a 'school of arts' (which served as the council chambers from 1879) on his land on Mowbray road to the east of Lane Cove Road.

Building was the **School of Arts** (1875- 1877), Council Chambers (1877-1903) and Chatswood Preparatory **School** (later Mowbray House **School**). Building moved in 1957 to 46 Beaconsfield Rd & became Mowbray House Memorial Chapel & later Holy Trinity Church.

Successive Council Chambers

- 1865 – Meetings and first election in slab hut owned by ‘German Bill’ Reynolds near intersection of Penshurst and Penkivile Sts.
- 1866 – Council elections held at John Bryson’s home
- 1879 – Bryson’s School of Arts
- 1903 – School of Arts moved to Victoria Avenue
- 1903 – Town Hall in Victoria Avenue
- 1972 - Council Administration Building next to/on School of Arts site in Victoria Avenue
- 1976 – School of Arts in Victoria Avenue? Council Chambers?
- 1980 – School of Arts demolished
- 1995? – Council Administration relocated to Victor St, Chatswood

1906 Chatswood Preparatory School P10 (Heritage Plaque). Mr Lance Bavin opened the Chatswood Preparatory School in 1906. It was designed with a view to further extensions. It contained various offices and function rooms, as well as a dormitory accommodating twenty-five boys.



Mowbray House School Main Building

1914. The name of Chatswood Preparatory School was changed to **The School** and then to **Mowbray House School**. The school closed in 1954 after the Electricity Commission acquired the land in 1953. In 1957, due to public pressure, the Chapel of the school was dismantled and relocated to Beaconsfield Road, Chatswood, where it is now Holy Trinity Anglican Church. Alumni include Kenneth Slessor and Edward Gough Whitlam.

1888. South-eastern corner of Mowbray Rd and the Pacific Highway – Chatswood

Reservoirs P8 (Local Heritage site & Plaque) - The first reservoirs erected on the north side of the harbour and are still in use. They are 370 feet above sea level. Each tank holds seven megalitres of water. When built they supplied the whole of the North Shore east of the Lane Cove River including Mosman. Water was carried from the Ryde Pumping Station through a rising main crossing the Lane Cove River via a pipe suspension bridge. A third much larger reservoir was built behind them in 1966, holding 45 megalitres.

The site includes the cylindrical riveted steel Reservoir 2 (WS0025) and associated elements from c.1891, as shown in the curtilage plan. The availability of steel from the mid-late 19th century initiated a gradual modification of the typical design to on-ground and above-ground reservoir tanks. Circular steel service reservoirs are the most common type constructed, as they are economical and have a uniform design. Between 1888 and 1910

The former Chatswood Pumping Station building, built in 1895 and closed in 1918, is a rare example of a substantial brick late 19th century steam driven pumping station in Sydney. The construction of the pumping plant is associated with the suburban development of the lower north

shore suburbs of Willoughby, North Sydney and Mosman during the era 1880 to 1910s, and was an integral element in the overall original scheme of reticulated water supply for the area north of the Parramatta River and Port Jackson

1892. North-eastern corner Pacific Highway and Mowbray Rd – First Gas Lamp P9 (Heritage Plaque). In 1892 a lighting committee recommended to Willoughby Council that the North Shore Gas Company be contracted to reticulate gas through the Municipality. The first gas street lamp was lit on 31 December 1896. However in 1914 a ten year contract was signed with the Sydney County Council for the supply of electricity throughout the Municipality, and by 1916 electricity was replacing gas as the source of lighting.

1884. Pacific Highway south of Mowbray Road - Police Station.



Chatswood's first police station was erected immediately south of the church in 1884. John Dawson was appointed police officer in charge of the Chatswood Willoughby area (date unknown). In 1871 Dawson laid the foundation stone of the Chatswood South Memorial Church

Police Station on Pacific Highway

Pacific Highway – (Jarmin's?) Farriers. Just past the hotel was a farrier's yard and we used to peer through the fence at the anvils, the fires and the farrier, to watch the horses being shod. The farrier's yard was fenced with corrugated iron. When coming home from school, it was 'rulers out', when you came to Hammond's Butcher Shop, just before the farrier's. Then it was to run along the iron with a great clacking for the entire length of the fence! I was told years later, that the farrier stopped shoeing between 3.30 p.m. and 4 p.m., until the kids had gone on home, because the noise frightened the horses and he's had some nasty kicks! Of course, we didn't think of that.

Lane Cove Road, Chatswood (now the Pacific Highway) near Mowbray Road, was a small but thriving shopping centre. Anything from a needle almost to an anchor could be purchased. This was due in part that there were fewer cars and buses and people walked considerable distances to shop in the area. There was free home delivery, but the shops also provided a social outlet for the housewives to have a chat to the shopkeepers and other customers.

There were the **Hammond Brothers, Butchers**, then **Jarman's the Blacksmith**, then **Neville's produce store**. Potatoes, pollard, wheat and chaff were stored in great metal-lined bins against the walls. Two adjoining shops were **Vanzella's Fruit Shop** and **Johnson's Grocery Store**.



Chatswood Garage c.1916

Further along was a **timber yard** and a **garage**. The garage with its handworked petrol pumps, was forced to close as the highway became busier. The timber yard was busy all day, sawing timber for the new homes being built on the fringes of the area.

Plus three single-storied shops: **Henley's**, the **Hairdresser**, **Barrow's Ham and Beef** and **Walsh's paper shop**.

THE FIRST CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

So, the initial locus of the development of a Chatswood CBD was centred on the intersection of Mowbray Road and the Lane Cove Road/Gordon Road/Pacific Highway. This intersection is adjacent to the current railway line. There was a reasonably prominent landowner, in John Bryson, pushing development in the area. The civic heart of Willoughby had also been established at this location.

So, why didn't the railway station and Chatswood CBD end up at this location?

The answer might lie in the activities of Richard Hayes Harnett.

Richard Hayes Harnett & The North Shore Railway

Harnett migrated to the colony of New South Wales on the *China*, arriving at the infant settlement of Melbourne on 4 May 1840. After a few days there, he took passage to Sydney on the *William the Fourth*, but a major economic depression had hit the colony and employment was difficult to find.

In 1870 Harnett senior entered into partnership with the Scottish land speculator, Alexander Stuart (1824-1886), who assisted him financially and in other ways.

Harnett's chief interest was real estate speculation. An early acquisition was the 900 acre Kings Plains Estate from the pioneer landowner Isaac Nicholls and in 1876 he opened up a sub-division of this land which he called Chatswood Estate. The blue gum forest over area was largely cleared for farming and grazing activities by this time.

As a prominent landowner, Richard Harnett senior was an active supporter for the [North Shore Railway](#) and he was rewarded in 1885 when Henry Parkes again became Premier on a platform to construct the line. Harnett sold portion of the estate to the government for the railway formation, together with Chatswood station and goods yard and he had commenced sub-division of his Willoughby Park Estate (near the railway route) from 1884.

Richard Harnett and Stuart became supporters of a bold scheme promoted by James Alexander Brown in 1887 to build a tramway from North Sydney to Willoughby via a high-level suspension bridge over Long Bay. They sold their Middle Harbour lands to the North Sydney Investment & Tramway Company in the late 1880s, but the company became a victim of the 1890s depression and some 650 acres land passed into the hands of the London-based debenture holders. These portions of land were purchased by [Walter Burley Griffin's](#) Greater Sydney Development Association in 1920.

Harnett retired from business about 1888 and returned to live at his daughter's modest weatherboard residence *Comeen* in Orchard Road. He died there in 15 November 1902.

From the time the government took over the Sydney Railway Company in 1853, railway construction became a major political preoccupation, but the domination of the legislature by rural interests ensured that railways were built to serve country areas over city interests.

Ferry services linking residents on the northern shore date from the 1830s and a ferry company (later Sydney Harbour Ferries Limited) was founded in 1878. City dwellers living on the north side of the harbour relied on ferries to travel to Circular Quay, but as settlement extended further inland people found it difficult to get to the ferry terminal over the rough tracks then available.

The first local government on the North Shore was the Municipality of North Willoughby. Its politics was dominated by prominent landowners. They saw a railway as an opportunity to subdivide their land for residential development and by the 1870s the municipality was lobbying for construction of a line from Hornsby facilitate 'development'. John Whitton, the Engineer for New Lines and himself a North Shore resident, opposed the proposal, claiming that a tramway would be adequate to carry the required traffic.

The matter would have ended there, but for the fact that Henry Parkes was again in financial difficulty and saw an opportunity to address his problems and regain his political ascendancy by supporting the railway campaign of North Shore landowners. Among the campaigners were former Premier Alexander Stewart and Chatswood land developer Richard Haynes Harnett. In the 1885 election Parkes successfully stood for the seat of St Leonards against the incumbent and then Premier, George Dibbs. He subsequently formed a government and arranged for his Minister for Public Works, John Sutherland, to proclaim the new railway line from Hornsby to St Leonards. Sutherland officiated at the ceremony to mark the start of construction work on 1 July 1887.

Along the Pacific Highway

1884.- Bryson Street named after John Bryson who lived on the corner of Lane Cove Road and Mowbray Road. **Nearby was a blacksmith** where small boys lingered to watch horses shod and

the bellows fanning the furnace. Years later a garage opened with the life-sized stone lion in the front

1905. Old Pacific Highway - Wilkes Paddock was a large open space located behind the Great Northern Hotel. It was used for cricket and football matches. The famous cricketer Charlie McCarthy played for the Willoughby Borough team. They later changed their name to Gordon (Cricket Team), possibly identifying with the Gordon Rd (the new name for the Lane Cove Rd).ⁱ

Pacific Highway (near Funeral Parlour) – Bartlett’s General Store/

pre 1900 Pacific Highway on part of Bowling Club site – Mrs Urquhart’s Private Schoolⁱⁱ

1900 Pacific Highway – Chatswood Bowling Club.



George On Lee, surgeon specializing in the treatment of tumours, was born in Canton, China and obtained his medical degrees there. He purchased land on the Pacific Highway between Nelson Street and Albert Avenue. He leased the land out as Chinese market gardens. The bowling club is built partly on the land he owned. The Club opened in 1900.

Chatswood Bowling Club c.1900

Pacific Highway to Bowls Club to Albert Avenue - Chinamen’s Vegetable Gardens



Pacific Highway (opposite Chinamen's gardens) – White's Dairy. Reputed to have serviced most of the city.

1910. Pacific Highway (Albert Chowne Walk) – Chatswood Croquet Club. In 1935 the Willoughby Council bought the land and built the first club house. By the 1980's the weatherboard club house was showing signs of old age and a new house was built with contributions from the NSW Government, the Willoughby Council and our members. The new Club House was officially opened by the Mayor of Willoughby in 1996.

1906 . Centennial Avenue near Pacific Highway - Astraea College. In 1906 a small school was established. The school became known as Astraea College.

Later known as the Church of England Girls School (until 1993) when it was reopened at Astraea College and functioned until 1936.

1883. Pacific Highway – Chatswood Public School (Local Heritage Site). Chatswood Public School was originally opened in 1883 in a one-room weatherboard building on two areas of bush what is now 17 Findlay Ave with an enrolment of 34 pupils. Miss Agnes Burt was the first teacher. Reports of the school were that it was drafty and dilapidated and the grounds snake infested. With the opening of the North Shore railway in 1890, the population of Chatswood grew and so did the enrolments at the school. With the overcrowding, the parents began to lobby for a new school closer to Chatswood Station. The Department subsequently acquired the current site on the Pacific Highway, previously an orchard. A one-storey, three-roomed school of brick with stone dressings and a slate roof was built in 1895, plus a teacher's residence, opening in January 1896. These rooms were on the southern end of the current building. The status of the school was raised to a Superior Public School, where the school could offer higher classes to students who had completed primary education. A separate infants department was also created. In 1945 the school status

changed to a Central School. In 1954 the Opportunity Classes (OC) were started. In 1959 Chatswood High School was opened. This saw the secondary classes transfer there and the school revert to its 1883 status as a Public School for primary aged children.

1887 Victoria Avenue and Lane Cove Road – The Royal Hotel It was acquired by Alfred William Sharland in 1889, who operated it until 1919, when the license was not renewed due to a government decision to reduce the number of hotels.

1919. The building became *Chatswood House* with a milk bar, confectionary shop and library that catered for the needs of school children for many years.

1900 767 Pacific Highway opp. Centennial Ave - Willoughby Fire Station (original name) (Local Heritage Item and Heritage Plaque **P6**). the building was designed with a fire-spotting tower on the northwest corner. The Captain of the Brigade lived in an adjoining house. Until 1912 the firemen were volunteers. A horse drawn fire pump was used until 1922, when it was replaced by a motorized fire engine.

circa 1912 known as Chatswood Fire Station. In 1945 the station closed and Willoughby Fire Station (originally East Willoughby) assumed responsibility for this area.

Pacific Highway – Blacksmith. Mr. Snell ran a blacksmith's shop on the highway.

Pacific Highway & Albert Avenue - there was a horse trough

Pacific Highway - saddler's shop.

further down was the Iceworks.

In the vicinity - a mixed grocer and confectionery, a paper shop, a bootmaker with half of the small space as a **lending library**. A greengrocer (Rudds) who sold frozen oranges (good to hide under a desk and suck during lessons) and toffee apples made from 'speck' fruit which were also sold cheaply by the bagful.

19. Pacific Highway opp. Victoria Kenneth Slessor Park

Kenneth Slessor Park is named after the renowned Australian poet and journalist, Kenneth Slessor (1901-71), who lived nearby at several houses along Pacific Highway in Chatswood for the early and later part of his life. Originally called Western Park, the park has western views to the Blue Mountains and was part of the Fuller Estate. The land was purchased by Council in 1931.

20. Cnr. Fullers Rd & Pacific Highway – Fish and Chips Shop (later First Masonic Lodge)

21. Cnr. Fullers Rd & Pacific Highway – Johnnie Norris' General Store

Campbell blacksmith western side of Pacific Highway north of Fullers Rd

Victoria Avenue" on the left hand side, I can recall **Wilson's Saddlery** with all types of leather goods including harnesses, riding crops for the horses and sulkies which were still to be seen on the roads: **Horn's Butchery**, where a cherubic Mr. Horn used to offer me a penny to speak to him. Water ran down his window holding the bracken fern in place. Drawing pictures on the floor in the sawdust was quite fun if you had to wait long. Then the wonders of **Benjamins** and almost getting lost in all the departments. Mother would buy gloves, perching her elbow on a velvet pad while the sales girl fitted the gloves, stretching the fingers with a special glove stretcher. All parcels were tied up with brown paper and string, expertly snapped without losing the forefinger!

Further towards the Station there was a building, set back, which reeked of cloves — **the Dentist!** Next to him was **Parle's Chemist Shop**. In his window two enormous glass-topped bottles filled most of the space. One was filled with green liquid, the other with red. In my youthful ignorance I imagined all his medicines were made with these liquids! A light shone from behind and the contents assumed magical elixir proportions.

Next to Parle's was a **Ham and Beef Shop** complete with fly screened partition between the customer and the owners. However, a little window was pushed up to pass out the purchase when completed. The people who owned it in those days were the Piries — they always looked as if they had been freshly starched!

A little on from there was the **Japanese Laundry** emitting steam as well as Eastern smells.

From the Pacific Highway, down on the other side of the road — "**Chatswood House**". It was an early version of a modern Milk Bar: sodas, icecreams, chocolates, plus a small library. Further down Victoria Avenue was the **Arcadia Theatre** with the 'silents' and the orchestra playing the William Tell Overture in the Pit. The floors were bare in those days with just a 'runner' down the aisles.

Further down was **John Davies, the Barber**. This you could recognise by the twirling red and white Barber's Pole outside and the smell of tobacco coming from the interior. Here, Mr. Davies used to cut my thin red hair, terrifying the daylights out of me by seating me on a box on a barber's chair, covered with an enormous white cloth and producing a taper, lighting it and singeing my hair. This reputedly thickened thin hair, but it scared me stiff! However, even as a child I knew that Mr. Davies was Rudolph Valentino in disguise — everyone said so!

There was a **toy shop** which had a great selection of dolls, marbles, train sets, cricket bats and so on. "Look, but not too much touching" was the order of the day in there.

Then there was the **Memorial Hall** and the **Post Office**.

1921/2. 446 Victoria Avenue – Chatswood War Memorial Hall a marble memorial

1981. Chatswood RSL Club

1898 495 Victoria Avenue (Opp. Katherine) - Hill Brothers

22A. later Benjamin's

A. J. Benjamin Limited: Mr Albert Julian Benjamin managed the department store of Hill Brothers, which was established in 1898. By 1908 he had become the owner, the business becoming known as A. J. Benjamin Limited. The Company went into bankruptcy

1965 Woolworth/Big W. The building was purchased by Woolworths Properties Limited and opened as Big W, a variety store. This remained until 1974 when it was also closed. After being used for a number of purposes and also changing ownership several times, the building was demolished and

Aetna Centre a large commercial development has been erected on the site. **(495 Victoria Avenue)**

1915. 476 Victoria Avenue (Cnr Pacific Highway) – P5 Arcadia Picture Theatre (Heritage Plaque). Built by Edmund Arthur Crispe, a local baker, the theatre opened in 1915. It was the grandest cinema in Willoughby. The staff dressed in formal wear. In 1921 it was remodelled in a Classical Roman style and in 1936 in the Art Deco style. Initially, entertainment before and between films was provided by a piano, then an orchestra, and in 1925 a Wurlitzer Organ. The organ was donated to Willoughby Council in 1961 when the theatre closed. The building was then used as a rehearsal and recording hall for the ABC orchestra. It was sold for commercial development in 1988.

1900. Victoria Avenue- Whitchell's Drapery Mr H. G. Whitchell opened a drapery shop in Victoria Avenue a few blocks to the west of A. J. Benjamin's department store.

22. 1879. Victoria Avenue – Chatswood Post Office. There was a small weatherboard building located there that served as exchange. Opened at James Sanday's premises. James Montgomery storekeeper and builder was the first postmaster. It closed in 1886 for lack of business it was reopened in the late 1880s during the building of the railway line.

22A.Site of current Telstra Exchange –Exchange & Office.

Richard Hayes Harnett's Chatswood

Richard Harnett was a leading landowner on the lower North Shore who played a role in local politics. He was described as 'an astute, industrious man of considerable personal charm, but a quiet man who shunned publicity.' He cared little for public life, though he became the first auditor of the North Willoughby Municipal Council and served as mayor in 1870.

His first wife, Margaret Harnett died in 1868 and the following year Richard married the much younger Charlotte Mackenzie at Hotspur, Victoria. From 1872 to 1888 the family lived at Mosman where Harnett held extensive land interests. He referred to his wife as 'Chatty' and his second marriage resulted in another six children.

In 1876 Harnett: "*opened up the area with a subdivision which he called 'Chatswood Estate'.* Harnett had: "*purchased most of the Isaac Nichols Estate. He acquired 1,200 acres of land in Willoughby which he subdivided and sold.*" The Chatswood Estate, was "*later purchased by the Department of Railways for the construction of the station, railway line and goods yard*"

But how did Chatswood get its name?

Most researcher seem to agree that Chattie's Wood was the name given to the woods that Charlotte (known as Chattie) Harnett wandered in. The question is, where were these woods located ?

It is reported that Charlotte Harnett used to “*wander in the nearby woods*”

The words used indicate that Charlotte wandered in woods not necessarily on Chatswood Estate itself but rather in the nearby woods of Isaac Nichol's “King's Plains” estate. Note, it is only Henry Lawson's poem Chatswood that claimed that these woods were actually on the Chatswood Estate. We will examine Lawson's claim in detail later.

Kylie Murphy records that Lawson's poem spoke of a young wife nicknamed “*Chattie, ...wandered and daydreamed in the local woods. Thus the wood was known as Chatties' wood*”. Note the words “the local woods”, not “her woods” or the woods on her husband's lands but “local” woods. Woods nearby.

Local residents have always believed that “Chattie's Wood” referred to the woods on that part of Nichol's “King's Plains” estate to the west of the Highway. This is supported by a recently recorded oral history:

“Enid Cambridge (deceased) of 26 James Street, Chatswood was a descendent (niece) of Charlotte Harnett. When she was alive Enid recounted to Jocelyn of 30 James Street, Chatswood that Charlotte had told her she used to take her afternoon walks through woods down the Fullers Road near James, Jenkins and Edgar Streets” .

There is further evidence that there was a very early walking track through woods near Fullers and Edgar Roads.

“we moved to our War Service home in the gully at the foot of Eddy Road, Chatswood West. Fifteen minutes uphill walk took us to Chatswood Station, past many vacant building blocks covered with native shrubs and gum trees”.

“when I first came to Chatswood I lived in Edgar Street and walked through the bush to Gordon Road, now the Pacific Highway” [xiii]

Chatswood Estate

So how did Harnett's Chatswood Estate get its name ?

It can be surmised that Harnett may have named his estate after his wife's eccentric behavior of walking in the nearby woods. Council's heritage report records that a portion of Harnett's property was:

“known as “Chattie's Wood” until the railway was about to go through”[xiv]

Harnett owned many properties on the North Shore, Chatswood Estate was the one near the woods where Chattie used to wander - Chatswood Estate near Chattie's Woods had a portion of it named "Chattie's Wood".

What were Chattie's woods ?

"The higher ridges and main plateau (of Chatswood) is covered by a Wianamatta Shale mantle that weathers to a clay-rich, relatively fertile soil and once had magnificent Blue Gum High Forest, with its tall trees of Sydney Blue Gum, Eucalyptus saligna, and Blackbutt, Eucalyptus pilularis."^[xv]

The woods where Chattie used to wander were the woods of the Blue Gum High Forest.

What is the likelihood that there were still woods on the eastern portion of the "King's Plains" Estate after 1860 ?

"Farming developed in central Willoughby in the mid-nineteenth century, after the Blue Gum High Forest had been logged"^[xvi]

In the 1860s when Harnett moved to Willoughby the district was a small community (with a population around 400) made up of farms and orchards of up to five to ten acres. Development had proceeded at such a pace and to such an extent that in 1865, sixty-seven householders petitioned the Governor of the day for the district to be declared a Municipality. In 1871, Richard Harnett became the fourth Mayor of Willoughby. It is said of Harnett *"he quietly drove visitors around to see the viewpoints - many of which he had opened out by clearing away patches of forests which obstructed the view"* ^[xvii]

In 1876 when Harnett opened up the Chatswood Estate the population had grown to over 500.

Unlike Harnett, Isaac Nichols may not have been as active on his properties such as "King's Plains". Nichols variously held positions as postmaster to the Colony and later became Overseer of Government Works, shipbuilder, trader, innkeeper and trusted friend of Governor Macquarie. He lands were grants (Harnett purchased his holdings from Nichols). Nichols then was very likely an "absentee landlord" for most of the time.

Initially most of the district was bush. In the early 1800s there were many busy sawpits active in the area. Most of the bush was cleared by the early timber-getters. By 1865 it is reported: *"most of the countryside in this part of the North Shore was still in its native state; it was covered in sections by thick bush, undergrowth, scrub, trees, stumps of trees left by the timbergetters, rocks, gullies, creeks, waterholes and other natural obstacles to make traveling difficult"*^[xviii]

In 1866 Council started the construction of roads including Victoria Avenue within the original "King's Plains". The area at the time was being used for orchards and vegetable gardens.

The likelihood is that most of the original Blue Gum High Forests along the ridge near Chatswood would have been cleared by the 1860s. Fortunately patches of the forest survived on the slope down the Fullers Road.

Henry Lawson & Chatswood

Henry Lawson's poem titled Chatswood suggest that Harnett named his estate after a little wood that was on it: *"And a little wood was on it, and the trees were tall and good, And his young wife used to dream there, so they called it "Chatties Wood"*[xix]

Lawson goes on in his poem Chatswood: *"Chattie's Wood" has long since gone, and shops are standing in a row, Where the young wife went a dreaming in the days of long ago"*

I suggest that Henry Lawson as a poet may have taken some poetic license in the poem. His poem Chatswood was written and published in a small journal called "Lone Hand" in 1919. Richard Hayes Harnett had died in 1902 (nearly twenty years earlier). There are further apparent inconsistencies in Lawson's poem. Lawson suggests that Hayes went to his small place in the country to be "carefree". All other evidence points to Harnett being exceptionably energetic and industrious.

Unfortunately Henry was right about one thing. The eucalyptus have certainly gone from the heart of Chatswood. Fortunately we have been able to preserve portions of our heritage in patches throughout Chatswood West in our "Chattie's Woods".

CHATSWOOD

So, how did Chatswood get its name

In 1879, following a request from Willoughby Municipal Council: *"A post office was established in the area and given the name Chatswood after the Chatswood Estate"*[xx]

"that (Chatswood Estate) being the name of the property on which the greatest amount of improvements are being made in the immediate vicinity"[xxi]

"It is quite possible that Richard (Harnett) named is property(Chatswood Estate) after her (his wife Charlotte known as Chattie)and later the suburb (Chatswood) was named after the property(Chatswood Estate)."[xxii]

Thus a third solution to the puzzle posed by Murphy of the derivation of the name Chatswood emerges.

Chatswood was actually named after the trees of the original Blue Gum High Forest being the "Chattie's woods" of Chatswood West Ward that Charlotte Harnett used to wander and dream in.

Chatswood or Chatsworth

There is an interesting aside about the naming of Chatswood: *"The Department of Lands in*

printing a set of Rate Books requested by Willoughby Municipal Council following the establishment of a new west ward in error used the name Chatsworth instead of Chatswood. These books were used from 1889 to 1895. The next set was given the correct title”.[xxiii]

+++++

1890. Chatswood Railway Station. The original Chatswood station was opened, along with the North Shore railway line on 1 January 1890. An island platform was built on 23 May 1900 and a third "local" platform brought into use on 12 July 1919. The first electric train ran through Chatswood on 15 August 1927, with full electric passenger service commencing 27 October 1928. There was a small goods yard, similar to the one at St Leonards, on the Western (Pacific Highway) side of the station, beyond the Northern end of the platforms. The "local" platform on the Eastern side of the station was used for electric parcel-van traffic and also for terminating some services from the city, until these were rescheduled to terminate further along the North Shore line from January 1992.^[2] Until 1958 there was a tram terminus in Victoria Avenue beside the station. The station entrance was later integrated with a shopping centre called The Interchange in the mid-1980s.

Historic markings of the former railway station have been preserved at the following locations:

- within the bus interchange is the points control box;
- there are a number of interpretive panels on the wall behind the entry/exit gates.
- There is a wall panel of windows down Telstra Lane.

The CBD moves east

1900. Cnr.Victoria Avenue and Orchard Avenue - The Railway Hotel,

later the Hotel Chatswood, Its tower and wrought iron enclosed balconies were notable landmarks.

Now the Orchard Tavern. It was rebuilt, with the ground floor becoming an arcade of small shops, while the upper floor hotel area has been renamed the Orchard Tavern. The above awning facade of the building is heritage listed.

1908 82 Albert Avenue – The Chatswood Ice Works (Heritage Plaque). The Chatswood Ice Works was next to the Chatswood railway line on the east side. The Works was established by the Jackson Brothers in 1908 on land they bought from R.C. Stephenson. The plant manufactured blocks of ice that were delivered to residences by the “ice man” for the preservation of food. The Jackson Brothers sold it to W. Lennox, J. Price and W. Edmonds in 1923. It remained operating until 1932 when Willoughby Municipal Council acquired it along with the adjacent terrace houses.

1906. Victoria Avenue near Victor Street – Whitchell and Company: In 1906 H.G. Whitvhill purchased a block of land on the southern side of Victoria Avenue, two doors west of Victor Street, and built a new shop.

Post 1906 H.G. Whitcell purchased the adjoining property on the corner of Victor Street and enlarged his own shop. For a number of years it was the largest Chatswood store east of the railway line. In

1958 the property was sold to G. J. Coles Limited, and in 1962 Coles opened a chain store.

See photo 1907 From left to right : Green's Pharmacy, Hogarths

Drapers, Cutis Fruit and Vegetables Greengrocers, Daily Telegraph Newsagents.

Henry J. Russell owned Victoria Stores on the corner of Anderson Street and Victoria Avenue, Chatswood.

1906. Victoria Avenue east of the railway – Price’s Chemist. In those days pharmacy was ‘mortar and pestle’. “There were very few pre-packaged medicines. As a small child, with other family members, I remember helping to fill capsules with quinine, much in demand against the dreaded post-war influenza epidemic. Gauze masks for covering the nose were on sale in the pharmacy and I remember my brother and sister laughing at mine. Dad used to advertise on the "Arcadia" picture theatre screen. One slide was for "Shoo-Skeet" — against mosquitoes — which caused much amusement. "Manicrem" was for hands, and another: "Price's Presto Powders Pacify Pain." Dad had a very inventive mind” .

1909. Victoria Avenue opp. Civic Centre – Brackley College. A few years ago, a nursery supplied plants for our gardens from there. Further back in time Miss Taylor remembers a cottage on the site. It was behind a fence painted cream and it had bright red hibiscus flowers in the front garden. The young Ilma entered the front doorway and admired the pretty blue glass in the doorway. But there was no time to stop and stare. Brackley College had begun its day. The school first opened its doors to pupils about 1909, and conducted by Miss Eleanor Cranston, assisted by her mother and aunt. A year later Ilma Taylor became a pupil. Schooldays were happy, and lifelong friendships made. This was the era of staging "tableaux". Ilma can remember that during the early days of the First World War being dressed as "Belgium" in a presentation depicting Britain and her Allies. The school moved several times to:

Anderson Street,

1914. Albert Avenue Brackley College moved to Albert Avenue in 1914 and was known as Brackley College.

Archer Street. When Miss Cranston married in 1916, the school closed. But, for all its short life, Brackley College remains a fond memory for those who attended.

1911. 6-12 Anderson St, - Roller Skating Rink The roller skating rink was built for Northern Suburbs Amusements Ltd at Lot 20 (6-12) Anderson St. The land was sold by H.J. Russell for 50 shares in the business. It was built of brick and iron on a concrete floor with an iron roof and included a bandstand, gallery and a special fast "Xylite" composition floor. Beside social roller skating, overseas champions were matched against local speed racers. The rink was also used for the opening of the N.S.W. Liberal Party campaign of 1913. Skating activities ended in 1914 with the building sold in 1922 and later demolished.

Anderson Street – Coopers Flat Cemetery (Heritage Plaque). On 7/9/1862 William Lithgow, a former Auditor General gave 3 acres, 1 rood and 34 perches of land as a Deed of Gift for a Catholic burial ground. He also gave a similar portion to the Anglican and Presbyterian churches occupying sites in Anderson Street, but they subsequently sold their land. The cemetery also known as the Lane Cove Burial Ground, North Willoughby Catholic Cemetery and Catholic Burial Ground, North Shore was in use until about 1907-17. A number of people were reinterred there when Devonshire Street Cemetery closed in 1901. The land has since been reused as St Pius X College, the first building of which opened in 1937.

1912. 387 Victoria Avenue – Dreadnaught Theatre (Heritage Plaque). Dreadnought Theatre was built in 1912 at 387 Victoria Ave and was the first real picture theatre in the district. It was originally open aired with wooden benches, dirt floor and galvanised iron wall. In 1926 the building was replaced on the same site by the "new" Dreadnaught designed by theatre architects Kaberry and Chard. This theatre was later named the Esquire and finally became known as Hoyts Esquire in 1961. The theatre was closed in 1977 and remodelled as a small complex of shops. The roof line of the "new" Dreadnought Theatre could still be seen in 2014.

1879-1882. Victoria Avenue. Harnett had applied to the North Willoughby Council in June 1879 to have a road, to be called Victoria Avenue, surveyed and proclaimed "from Lane Cove Road opposite Mrs. Fuller's" to the present day Warrane Road. This street, which would subsequently serve the railway station, was eventually proclaimed in 1882. As economic conditions improved, the first shop appeared in Victoria Avenue during 1894 and by 1896 there were several shops on the western side of the railway,

were

Isaac Nichols Estate

<http://www.visit chatswood.com.au/history/chatswood/>

Development of the area dates from 1876 when a residential estate was established in Chatswood. Prior to this the land was used mainly for timber and farming.

1983 Chatswood was declared a Town Centre. Retail outlets and commercial enterprise has expanded rapidly since. In 1989 Willoughby was declared a City.

It was not until 1959 that activity began to focus on the eastern side of the railway station with the opening of Waltons and Grace Bros (now Myer). The opening of Wallaceway, Lemon Grove and later Chatswood Chase (1983) and Westfield (1986) heralded a new era of shopping centres east of the railway line. In 1989 the Chatswood Mall was constructed by the closure of part of Victoria Avenue to traffic. The opening of the (bus/rail) Interchange in 1988 and the Gore Hill Freeway in 1992 increased access to Chatswood. A large new extension of the Westfield shopping complex (incorporating Myer) opened in 1999.

Victoria Avenue – East side.

<http://www.willoughbydhs.org.au/History/Suburbs/Suburbs-ChatswoodCBD.html>

The shift of retail trade to the east side was accelerated by the opening of the four-storey Grace Brothers department store on Victoria Avenue in 1961. It was the first of the large city retail department stores to open a branch in regional Sydney and marked the start of the dramatic change that were to occur in Chatswood's retail sector. Whitechurch and Company sold its store east of the line to GJ Coles Limited in 1958. A Coles chain store opened on this site in 1962, but it closed following a fire in the 1970s.[\[13\]](#)

The opening of Wallace Way and Lemon Grove retail complexes east of the railway, followed by the large scale shopping malls, Chatswood Chase (1983) and the Westfield Shopping Town (1986) heralded the development of Chatswood as one of Sydney's major retail centres., together with the shopping facilities provided in the 1988 Chatswood transport interchange, albeit only briefly, has further enhanced the role of Chatswood as a regional retail centre.

GreensPharmacy 1910

Note Victoria Ave between Anderson & Claude St (now Spring Street)

1903. 407-409 Victoria Avenue - Willoughby Town Hall, Council Depot and Pound, School of Arts and the Ku-ring-gai Masonic Lodge.

1907. Council's administration building extended in 1980.

1972 New Civic Centre replaced the Town Hall. In 1977 Council's administration was removed to a new building in Victor Street. In 2008 all Council's buildings on the site was demolished.

2011 - The Concourse, (Heritage PLque) performing arts, cultural and library complex,

6-12 Anderson Street – Chatswood Skating Rink (Heritage Plaque). The roller skating rink was built for Northern Suburbs Amusements Ltd in 1911 at Lot 20 (6-12) Anderson St. The land was sold by H.J. Russell for 50 shares in the business. It was built of brick and iron on a concrete floor with an iron roof and included a bandstand, gallery and a special fast “Xylite” composition floor. Beside social roller skating, overseas champions were matched against local speed racers. The rink was also used for the opening of the N.S.W. Liberal Party campaign of 1913. Skating activities ended in 1914 with the building sold in 1922 and later demolished.

Albert Avenue – Garden of Remembrance (Local Heritage Site). The Garden of Remembrance commemorates the Australian men and women from the Willoughby district who died during the Boer War, World War I, World War II, and in Korea, Malaya and Vietnam. In addition to the “tin hat” mound and Cross of Remembrance, features of the garden include: the Boer War Memorial (a marble fountain moved from Chatswood Oval); the Pathway Message *They Gave Their Today For Your Tomorrow*; the *Australia Remembers* Memorial; Picardy Roses which were grown from budwood obtained from Villiers-Brettonneux and Delville-Wood War Cemeteries in the Somme area of France. This connection provides a link to an area in which over 30,000 Australian soldiers were killed in action during the First World War; standard roses with plaques under each inscribed with the names of local Willoughby service personnel who lost their lives as a result of wars; Rosemary plants (botanical name *Rosmarinus officinalis* “Gallipoli”) around the “Australia Remembers” Memorial grown from a cutting brought back from Gallipoli by an injured serviceman in 1915.

Albert Avenue – Boer War Memorial. Following the sending of contingents of NSW troops to the Boer War, a memorial church service was held at Chatswood Park "for the purpose of raising funds towards the erection of a memorial fountain to those residents of the district who had fallen whilst on active service in South Africa" was held on Sunday 1 July 1900. It drew some 4000 to 5000 people, claimed to be the largest ever gathering in the municipality, and the Premier, Sir William Lynne, called on those assembled "to do their duty locally by the erection of a fitting memorial to their late comrades". Sufficient funds were forthcoming. A marble monument was erected in Chatswood Park to the three Willoughby men who did not return home. It was subsequently relocated to the Garden of Remembrance in the 1950s.

Chatswood Oval – Victor Trumper Stand (and Donald Bradman). Victor Trumper (1877-1915): Victor Trumper was one of Australia's, and perhaps even one of the world's most famous cricketers. He was a skilled and graceful batsman. Trumper was the son of English parents who settled in Paddington, where Victor was born and grew to manhood. As a youth he joined the Waverley Cricket Club. By 1908 he had married, and he and his wife, his two children and his parents settled in Chatswood in a bungalow at 10 Help Street. Following this move to the North Shore,

Victor Trumper joined the Gordon Cricket Club, remaining a member until his death in 1915. In addition to playing Club cricket, Trumper also represented New South Wales in Sheffield Shield matches and played for Australia in many Test matches between 1895 and 1914.

Trumper died at thirty-eight, after a period of ill health. A pavilion built in Chatswood Park and opened in 1924 was named in his honour. The home at Help Street has been demolished to make way for commercial development. The Guardian Royal Exchange Insurance Company which now occupies the site, has consented to a plaque in Trumper's memory being placed in the foyer of the building.

It soon became clear that the original 1903 grandstand was too small. In 1913 plans were made to replace it. This occurred in 1924 with the construction of the Trumper Pavilion, which seats 250 spectators. Don Bradman scored 201 runs at Chatswood Oval in April 1932, including 28 fours and two sixes in 171 minutes.

1909 Albert Avenue – Chatswood Oval. The first picture show in Willoughby was an open air screening on Chatswood Oval in 1909, which pre-dated the popular showings by McIntyre in North Sydney by several months.

1887. Pacific Highway & Victoria Avenue – The Royal Hotel. The Royal Hotel was built on the corner of Lane Cove Road (now Pacific Highway) and Victoria Avenue in 1887. It was acquired by Alfred William Sharland in 1889, who operated it until 1919, when the license was not renewed due to a government decision to reduce the number of hotels. The building became *Chatswood House* where Mrs M.E. Prendergast operated a milk bar, confectionary shop and library that catered for the needs of school children for many years.

1900. Victoria Avenue & Orchard Road – The Railway Hotel/Hotel Chatswood. The *Railway Hotel*, later the *Hotel Chatswood*, was built adjacent to the station on the corner of Victoria Avenue and Orchard Avenue in 1900. Its tower and wrought iron enclosed balconies were notable landmarks. It has been rebuilt, with the ground floor becoming an arcade of small shops, while the upper floor hotel area has been renamed *The Orchard Tavern*. The above awning facade of the building is heritage listed.

10 Railway Street – Kings Theatre. (<http://cinematreasures.org/theaters/37535>) The Chatswood Kings Theatre was built by and operated by the small chain of Kings Theatres around the Sydney suburbs. It opened on 24th July 1936 with Jack Oakie in “The Big Broadcast of 1936”. Seating was provided for 700 in the stalls and 300 in the circle. It was taken over by the Greater Union Theatres chain in May 1946. The Chatswood Kings Theatre was closed on 24th March 1983 with Paul Newman in “Absence of Malice” and “Das Boot”(The Boat). It was demolished within days, despite a fierce campaign waged by a local student to save it.

14 Railway Street – The Charles Hotel. The *Charles Hotel* was built on the corner of Brown Street at 14 Railway Parade in 1956. The building had a brief existence, being demolished for a new building circa 1990. The hotel has reopened in a new complex at 10 Railway Parade.

Victoria Avenue West – Benjamins/Woolworths/Big W. AJ Benjamin's Department store in Victoria Avenue West had been an important local institution until its demise in 1965 as customers switched to more 'modern' shops. The building was purchased by Woolworths and reopened as a Big W variety store, but this closed in 1974.

Pacific Highway – Kenneth Slessor Park. Named after the renowned Australian poet and journalist, Kenneth Slessor (1901-71), who lived nearby at several houses along Pacific Highway in Chatswood for the early and later part of his life. Originally called Western Park, the park has western views to the Blue Mountains and was part of the Fuller Estate. The land was purchased by Council in 1931.

Second Class Ballad of the North Shore First

Pacific Highway & Brown Street – Brown's Timber Yard. Established by John Brown (1829-1884) in 1882. The site covered part of current Brown Street (formerly known as Brown's Road).

1882. Pacific Highway – Dolan's Blacksmith. Peter and Patrick Dolan ran a blacksmith's shop around here in 1882 or earlier. The business operated until 1956 when it was resumed for road widening by the Department of Main Roads.

1909. Pacific Highway & Thomas Street – Gartrell's Bakery.



A bakery and pastrycook shop with bakehouse and stables. Our breadcarter was special. He worked for "Gartrell's". The baker's basket held quite a big variety of loaves and on some days he brought miniatures of them, which were a great treat.

Gartrell's Bakery & Cart c. 1920

Victoria Avenue Shopping – early days.

At this time the retail business was very different to what we experience today, with small family-run businesses specialising in specific products with a focus on personal service. A number of older residents have recorded their recollections of shopping in Chatswood during this era:

North, along Gordon Road, the main shops began opposite Chatswood School. The Fire Station, a mixed grocer and confectionary, a paper shop, greengrocer (Rudds), a boot-maker with half of the small space as a lending library! Rudds sold frozen organs (good to hide under a desk and suck during lessons) and toffee apples made from 'spec' fruit which were also sold cheaply by the bagful. Down Victoria Avenue past Benjamins store and opposite the railway station, the 'Oasis' Café 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 with white cotton coats. Sawdust on wooden floors helped them to slide swiftly along the counter when trade was brisk. Misses Burns had a small ladies wear shop next to the R.S.L. and former post office. (May McDonald)

[Near Gordon Road] I can recall Wilson's Saddlery with all types of leather goods including harnesses, riding crops for the horses and sulkies which were still to be seen the roads. [At] Horn's Butchery ... water ran down the window holding the bracken fern in place. Drawing pictures on the floor in the sawdust was quite fun if you had to wait long. Then the wonders of Benjamins and getting lost in its departments. Mother would buy gloves, perching her elbow on a velvet pad while the sales girl fitter the gloves, stretching the fingers with a special glove stretcher. All parcels were tied up with brown paper and string, expertly snapped without losing the forefinger!

Further towards the station there was a building, set back, which reeked of cloves -- the dentist! Next to him was Parle's Chemist Shop. In his window, two enormous glass-topped bottles: one was filled with green liquid the other red. In my youthful ignorance I imagined all his medicines were made from these liquids! A light shone from behind ad the contents assumed magical elixir proportions.

[On the other side of the road from Gordon Road] 'Chatswood House' was an early version of a modern milk bar [with] sodas. Ice-creams, chocolates, plus a small library. [Past the Acadia Theatre] ... was John Davies the barber. This you could recognise by the twirling red and while Barber's Pole outside and the smell of tobacco from the interior. ... There was a toy shop which had a great selection of dolls, marbles, train sets, cricket bats and so on. "Look but not too much touching" was the order of the day there. Then there was the memorial hall and the post office. (HR Bryant)

[In Victoria Avenue east of the railway] near Spring Street was a chemist, then a soft-goods shop run my Mrs Finlayson and her daughter Ailsa; then Mr Hogarth had a drapery and the Watson family ran a shoe repair business, with the father and son working together. There was a grocer's shop on one corner of Anderson Street and a wine bar on the other. Next to this was Hughes' Music Store and Mr Ernie Hill, a hairdresser, followed by Mr Meek's 'deli' with the slogan, 'Meeks for Mild Bacon'. Mr Favoloro had a fruit shop and then came my father's shop with the sign: "Bray, Seedsman and Florist".

Next to our shop was Mr Jimmy Burrell, a watchmaker and jeweller. He used to work in the window with a glass held to his eye, which fascinate the kids going back and forth to school. ... Mr Maudson had a shoe shop next door, then came the ABC Bank on the corner of Victor Street. ... Mr Waldron had a produce store around the corner in Victor Street where we used to buy chaff and feed for our horse and the chooks. Back in Victoria Avenue, Witchells had a big shop full of drapery and Manchester, and then came Moran and Cato's grocery shop with a big long counter.

On the other [north] side of Victoria Avenue was the hotel, a bank and then Dr McLean's house on a double-fronted block of land with a croquet lawn fronting Victoria Avenue. ... Then there was a chemist shop, Miss Rainbird's newsagency, and over Anderson Street, Fischer's bakery near the Town Hall, which had a delicious cake shop in the front. The School of Arts was always a mystery to me! I knew it had a library and a hall to let, but whatever other activities went on was unknown to me. (Cyril Bray)[\[4\]](#)

There is evidence that the Camaraigal people had been living on the land along the Lane Cove River for thousands of years.

Timber-getters eventually followed the explorers, living in rough huts along the Lane Cove River.

The first land grants in the vicinity were grants of 30 acres each in October 1794 to Henry Hacking, Robert Watson, Obadiah Ikin and Thomas Whittle. These grants covered the area of what is today the Lane Cove Shopping Centre.ⁱⁱⁱ At the time, the area was part of the Hunter's Hill district (along with what is now Artarmon)^{iv}.





The story of 'Harnett's Ridge', the land along the Pacific Highway between Fuller's Rd and Mowbray Rd, is the story of the earliest formation of the City of Willoughby.

In 1805 a grant of 230 acres was made to a one Isaac Nichols in the vicinity of what is now Chatswood Railway Station. The land was referred to as the 'King's Plains'. The land extended as far as Mowbray Rd. It appears that some portions of 'King's Plains' in the vicinity of the intersection of the then Lane Cove Rd (Pacific Highway) and Mowbray Rd was sold to landowners before 1860. In 1876, a large portion of 'King's Plains' was sold to a prominent developer, Mr. Richard Hayes Harnett. Harnett named this land the Chaswood Estate. This land was later sold to the NSW Railways in conjunction with the North Shore Railway. Chatswood Station today stand near the centre of the Chatswood Estate.

It is reported ^v that subdivision and sale of land in the area was commenced by the Willoughby Park Land Company in the 1870s. One of the more progressive estates, called "Chatswood Estate", was owned by Richard Hayes Harnett. It is assumed that Hayes Harnett named the estate after his second wife Charlotte, who was called Chat or Chatty for short. When the Post Office was established in 1879, Chatswood was adopted as the official name at the suggestion of the Willoughby Municipal Council.

In December 1794 further grants of 25 acres were made to John Fleming and William Hall.^{vi} John Fleming's grant was located to the north-west of what is now the intersection of the Pacific Highway and Mowbray Rd West. William Hall's grant was to the west of Flemings.

About the same time (1794) ten grants of 25 acres each were made to Thomas Baker, Daniel Curr(e)y, John Dark, John Roberts, Charles Robinson, John Sawyer, John Taylor (or Tyler), George Tilley, George Whitfield (and one other). These grants were all in the area bounded by present day Pacific Highway, Mowbray Rd, Hampden Road and Herbert St in West Artarmon.

Other significant grants in the area is the 1805 grant of 230 acres to Isaac Nichols in the vicinity of what is now Chatswood Railway Station; the 1810 grant to Nicols of 380 acres extending from Lane Cove and across the Pacific Highway and William Gore's 150 acre grant in 1810 in West Artarmon (below present day Mowbray Rd).

To the east of Nichol's 1805 grant there was an 1805 grant of 600 acres to Richard Archbold (below Boundary Rd). A later grant of 160 acres was made in 1840 in trust for Maria Brown (nee Hitchcock) to meet a pre 1831 promise by the Governor.^{vii}

The initial settlement in the City of Willoughby occurred along the Lane Cove River. William Henry established Millwood Farm c.1807. However, it wasn't long before settlers started to populate the land between the ridges and headwaters of the two catchments.

In 1810, William Gore was granted land to the southeast of this intersection. It appears that he settled on this land soon thereafter (although he was absent from some years in England). In 1825, James Stirling was granted land east of the Nichols Estate extending from Boundary St across to High Street and Mowbray Rd. This land subsequently sold to Archbold before being purchased by William Lithgow who subdivided and sold it at auction in 1854 Then 'King's Plains' was sold to Richard Hayes Harnett c.1876.

Sometime before 1854 William Lithgow purchased Archbold's 600 acres which he subdivided. This was then marketed as the Township of North Sydney.^{viii}

Development of Willoughby

Three potential locii of development emerged pre 1900.:

- Near the intersection of Mowbray Rd and The Gordon Rd
- Lithgows' Township of North Sydney along Boundary Rd
- The King's Plains area near current Chatswood Railway Station

However the initial commercial development started around the intersection of The Lane Cove/Gordon Rd and Mowbray Rd.

In 1860, John Bryson purchased land on the north-east corner of Mowbray Rd and Lane Cove Road. This lot would have formerly formed part of Isaac Nichols 1810 land grant. Bryson built a house at this location. He held religious services in the front section of his house. The Bush Mission Society had established a small brick chapel (a Mission Station or Sabbath School) on John Bryson's land on the south-western corner of this intersection by August 1864. The Methodist Church was built on the site of the Mission Society Chapel in 1872. By 1870 Bryson had established a timber yard and 'school of arts' (which served as the council chambers from 1879) on his land on Mowbray road to the east of Lane Cove Road.

Henry Russell opened his [Great Northern Hotel](#) on the north-western corner of the intersection in 1870 (It was briefly named the Artarmon Hotel at time of the picture below). A handful of general stores commenced trading in the vicinity and Chatswood's (?) first police station was erected immediately south of the church in 1884. [\[1\]](#)The road junction was also the location of the first gas lamp in Chatswood, lit on 31 December, 1896. In addition, Hammond's Butchery was located nearby at the junction on the Pacific Highway and Moriarity Road.

The first School of Arts was built near him in Mowbray Rd (in _____). This building was later used as the Municipal Council Chambers.

When the railway came to Chatswood in 1890 the Council Chambers, Station and main shopping centre moved to Chatswood.

In 1872 Henry Russell (one of signatories to the petition calling for establishment of a municipality) built the original Great Northern Hotel on the northwest corner Lane Cove Rd and Mowbray Rd.

1835 – Parish of Willoughby
including Lane Cove,
Willoughby, North Sydney &
Mosman

1865/6 – Borough of North
Willoughby (including current
day Lane Cove)

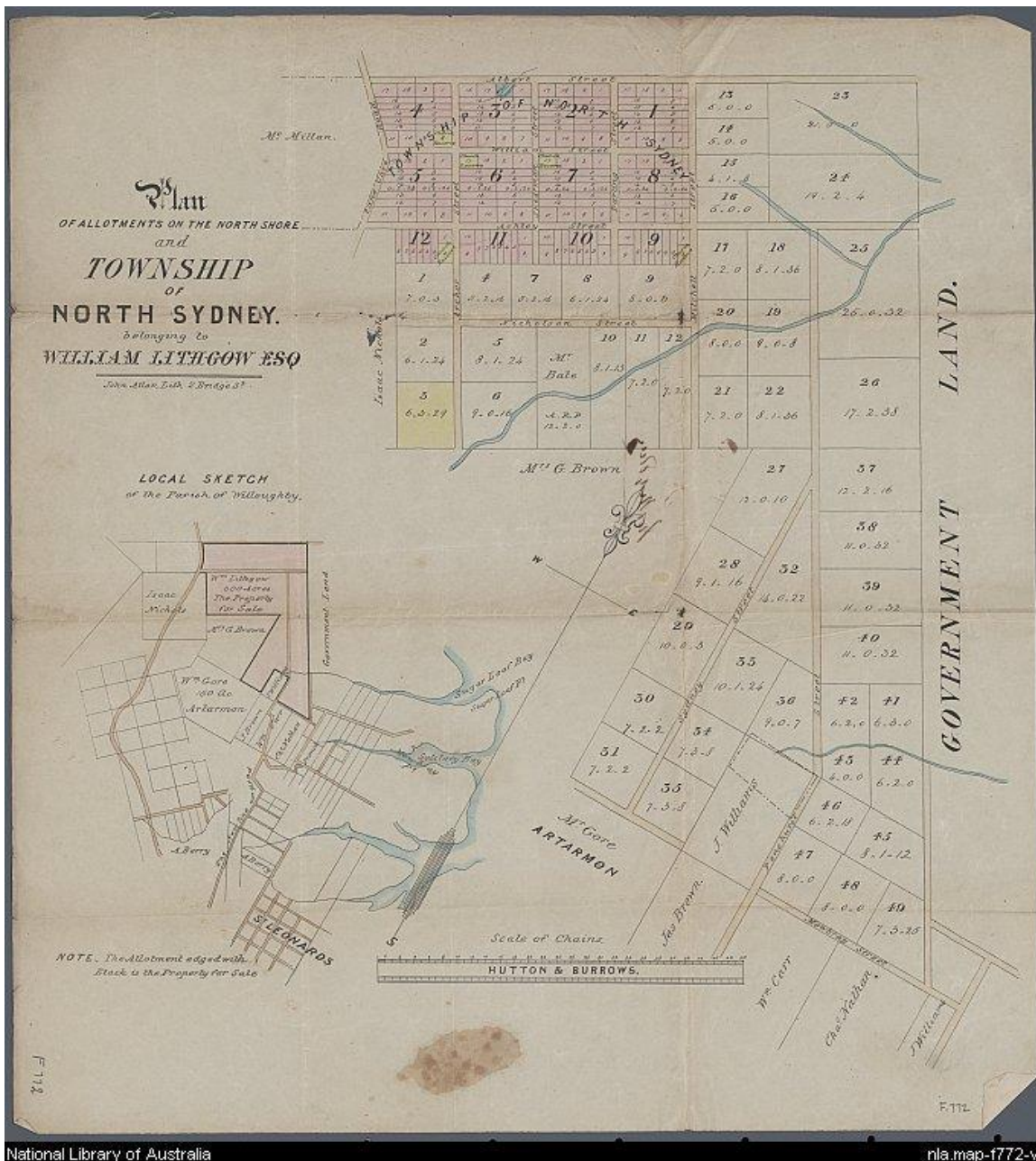
1890 - Municipality of (North)
Willoughby

1895 – River Ward becomes
Lane Cove Municipality

The two Water Tanks (Service Tanks known

William Lithgow Estate

- Covers area from Albert Street to Mowbray Street, from Lane Cove Road and Isaac Nichols Estate to [High Street] and adjacent Government land.
- Shows numbered allotments with dimensions, names of adjoining landowners, named streets.
- William Lithgow subdivided his 600 acre property and sold it at auction in 1854. The subdivision was called "The Township of North Sydney" until 1890. The Municipality of North Willoughby was incorporated in 1865. The word "North" was dropped from the name in 1890.



1932 - Pacific Highway

1890/93 North Shore Railway line

1882/91 - Gordon Road

1872 – Lane Cove Road

c. 1835 a track formed from Blue's Point, passing through the forests on its way to Pearce's Corner possibly called Hunter's Hill Rd.

WARDS

(1865 Borough of North Willoughby)

1866 Lane Cove River Ward (west of Lane Cove Road) & North Sydney Ward

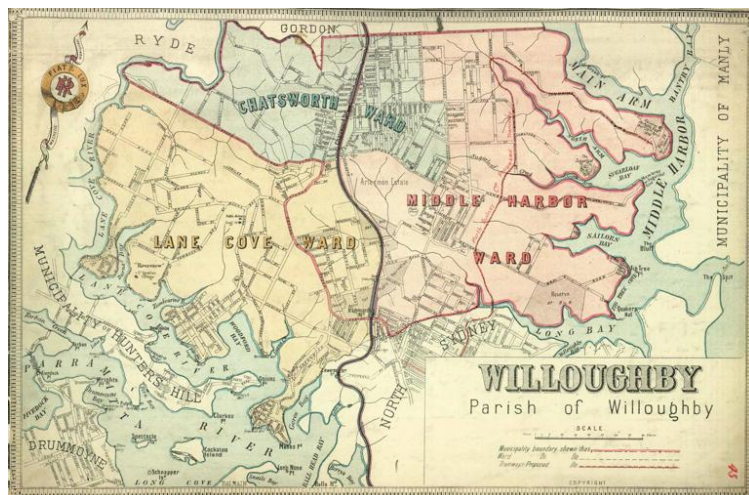
1879 River Ward & East Ward

1885 Chatsworth Ward, Lane Cove Ward & Middle Harbour Ward

1895 Chatswood, East Ward and Naremburn Ward

1988 West Ward, East Ward, Middle Harbour Ward, Naremburn Ward & Northbridge Ward

c.1990s West Ward, Middle Harbour Ward, Naremburn Ward & Sailors Bay Ward



<http://www2.photosau.com/CosMaps/scripts/displayIndex.asp?Index=AS>

WDHS

This view of the inhospitable North Shore remained for much of the 19th century. While a number of land grants were made on the lower North Shore in 1794, those who received them did not take up residence. Early European settlement on the North Shore was mainly peopled by timber getters and rural settlers, with the Lane Cove River for bringing timber logged on the North Shore to the settlement at Sydney Cove. In 1835 the colony was divided into counties, hundreds and 57 parishes. The Parish of Willoughby in the County of Cumberland was defined as the area north from Port Jackson between Middle Harbour in the east and the Lane Cove River to the west as far as a line from Middle Harbour that was to define the present Willoughby City boundary along today's Boundary Street.

In May 1865 67 residents of the rural district of Willoughby sent a petition to Sir John Young, Governor of NSW, praying for the incorporation of the Municipality of Willoughby. This resulted in the Municipality of North Willoughby being formally proclaimed on 23 October 1865. It was the first local government to be incorporated on the North Shore. Its boundaries were those of the present Willoughby local government area (LGA) together with the River Ward, which became the separate Municipality of Lane Cove in 1895. The first council meetings were held in a 'barely furnished slab hut' located behind a cottage on the corner of Penshurst and Penkivil Streets.²

The Municipality of North Willoughby continued to be dominated by rural pursuits over the next 25 years due to lack of reliable transport to employment centres, although several tanneries and brickworks were established during the 1880s. The opening of the North Shore Railway on 1 January 1880 and the Willoughby Tramway (1886) were expected to bring rapid urban development to the area, but the severe economic depression of the 1890s meant a delayed response to these investments. In 1900 the population of Willoughby Municipality was 5100 and this increased to 13,280 by 1910 and 24,845 by 1915-16. Most of this increase was in the suburb of Chatswood, which outstripped the initial settlement area of Willoughby.

1794 John Fleming and William Hall

However, on 30th October 1794 , Lieutenant Governor Francis Grose made grants of 30 acres each at '**Lane Cove**' to: Henry Hacking; Robert Watson; Obadiah Ikin, and Thomas Whittle

Then on the 19th November, 1794 Grose made grants of 25 acres in 'Lane Cove' to: William Walker; George Lo(a)der; Daniel Carr; Charles Robinson; John Roberts; Daniel Currey; George Tilley; Gilbert Goodlet; Thomas Baker; Henry Lamb; John Sawyer; John Darks; George Whitfield, and John Taylor

These grants were generally covered an area roughly north of present-day Mowbray Rd, south to Westbourne St, St Leonards; west to Austin St, Lane Cove and east to Elizabeth St, Artarmon.

There was also two other early grants in 1795:

- 30 acres to Henry Asher at Lane Cove in the District of Hunters Hill
- 44 acres to James Williamson, one mile from Lane Cove

So as early as the early 1890s there is already the emergence of some named localities as well as districts.

The settlement on the northern side of Port Jackson was known as the North Shore.

The area east of the Lane Cove River came to be known as the District of Hunters Hill (Note: the current suburb of Hunter's Hill is remote from this locality).

The name Lane Cove was given to the western part of that District.



In 1805, Issac Nichols granted 200 acres at 'King's Plains'

In 1835 Gov. Bourke created the County of Cumberland covering a large portion of the Sydney hinterland. The county was divided into Hundreds and Parishes. The Hundred that included current day Willoughby was known as the Hundred of Peckingham extending from Barrenjuey (sic), Wollstonecraft, Lane Cove. There were five parishes within the Hundred:

- Broken Bay

- Gordon
- Narrabeen
- Manly Cove, and
- Willoughby

Willoughby was described as the land bounded by Middle Harbour in the east, the current day Boundary Rd and Blue Gum Creek to the north, Lane Cove River to the west and Port Jackson to the south.

So the Parish of Willoughby in 1835 included the current Local Government areas of Willoughby, Lane Cove, North Sydney and Mosman.

In 1841, the Parish of Willoughby had a population of 586 persons (113 males, 256 females).

- William Lithgow subdivided his 600 acre property and sold it at auction in 1854. The subdivision was called "The Township of North Sydney" until 1890. The Municipality of North Willoughby was incorporated in 1865. The word "North" was dropped from the name in 1890.

In 1865, sixty-seven citizens of the District of Willoughby (not defined) petitioned Gov. Young to Incorporate the Municipality of **North** Willoughby.

North Willoughby was the first Municipality incorporated on the North Shore. It was followed by:

- East St Leonards (1886)
- St Leonards (1869)
- Victoria (1871), and
- North Sydney (1890)

FIRST COUNCIL MEETING ROOMS were at the intersection of Penshurst and Pennville Streets

EARLY ROADS

- 1872 – Lane Cove Rd
- 1874 Ashley St (first mentioned 1875 in Council Minutes, named by Will. Lithgow in 1850s)
- 1882 Darling St
- 1882 High Street
- 1882 Nicholson St
- 1882 Penhurst St
- 1882 Sydney St
- 1884 Edmund Street
- 1882 Victoria Ave: From Lane Cove Rd to a Government Rd south of Archbold's 640 acres through Mitchell's land

- 1882 Mowbray Road deviating from same to join a Government Rd to Middle Harbour
- 1882 Neridah St
- 1882 Archer St
- 1882 Victor Ave
- 1882 part of Fullers Rd (formerly Blue Gum Creek Rd)
- 1882 William St
- 1883 Albert Avenue
- 1883 Nea St
- 1884 Bryson St

In the 1870s, the Pacific Highway was originally a toll road known as the Lane Cove Road. The name was later changed to the Gordon Rd. The toll House and Gate was located at the northern end of 'Harnett's Ridge' at the intersection of Boundary Rd.

In the early 1850s newcomers took up blocks of land in Chatswood and Willoughby and tried their hands at orange-growing (orchards), market gardening or farming.

Council Minutes of 21st June 1879 record a letter from Mr. Harnett and others to have the road called "Victoria Avenue" surveyed and proclaimed "from Lane Cove Road opposite Mrs. Fuller's" to present day Warrane Road. The move was approved and Victoria Avenue was eventually proclaimed in 1881.

<http://www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au/downloaddocument.ashx?DocumentID=1963>

Early residents of Willoughby who wished to reach the township at Port Jackson had to walk along the ridge and down to Blue's Point where they could catch a ferry across the Harbour. With the completion of the Lane Cove Road, the journey could be undertaken by coach or cart. But it was still a rough travel.

Walk from Museum to corner Pacific Highway and Mowbray Rds

Refer Lapastier pp.65-66 re School of Arts

Willoughby Park Estate - Harnett

SOURCES:

Forsyth L.C. 1987, Willoughby and Lane Cove 1865-1895

Lepastier C. 1915, Willoughby's Fifty Years, The Council of the Municipality of Willoughby, Chatswood

Russell E. 1965, Willoughby – A Centenary History, The Council of the Municipality of Willoughby, Chatswood

Booker N. & Bennett I. 1988, The West Ward, Willoughby Municipal Council, Chatswood

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1835 – Parish of Willoughby including Lane Cove, Willoughby, North Sydney & Mosman

1865/6 – Borough of North Willoughby (including current day Lane Cove)

1890 - Municipality of (North) Willoughby

1895 – River Ward becomes Lane Cove Municipality

- City of Willoughby

ⁱ W.Lark letter & Gordon District Cricket Club

ⁱⁱ W Lark letter

ⁱⁱⁱ Forsyth 1987 p.3

^{iv} WARNER 1988???

^v Willoughby Council Fact Sheet

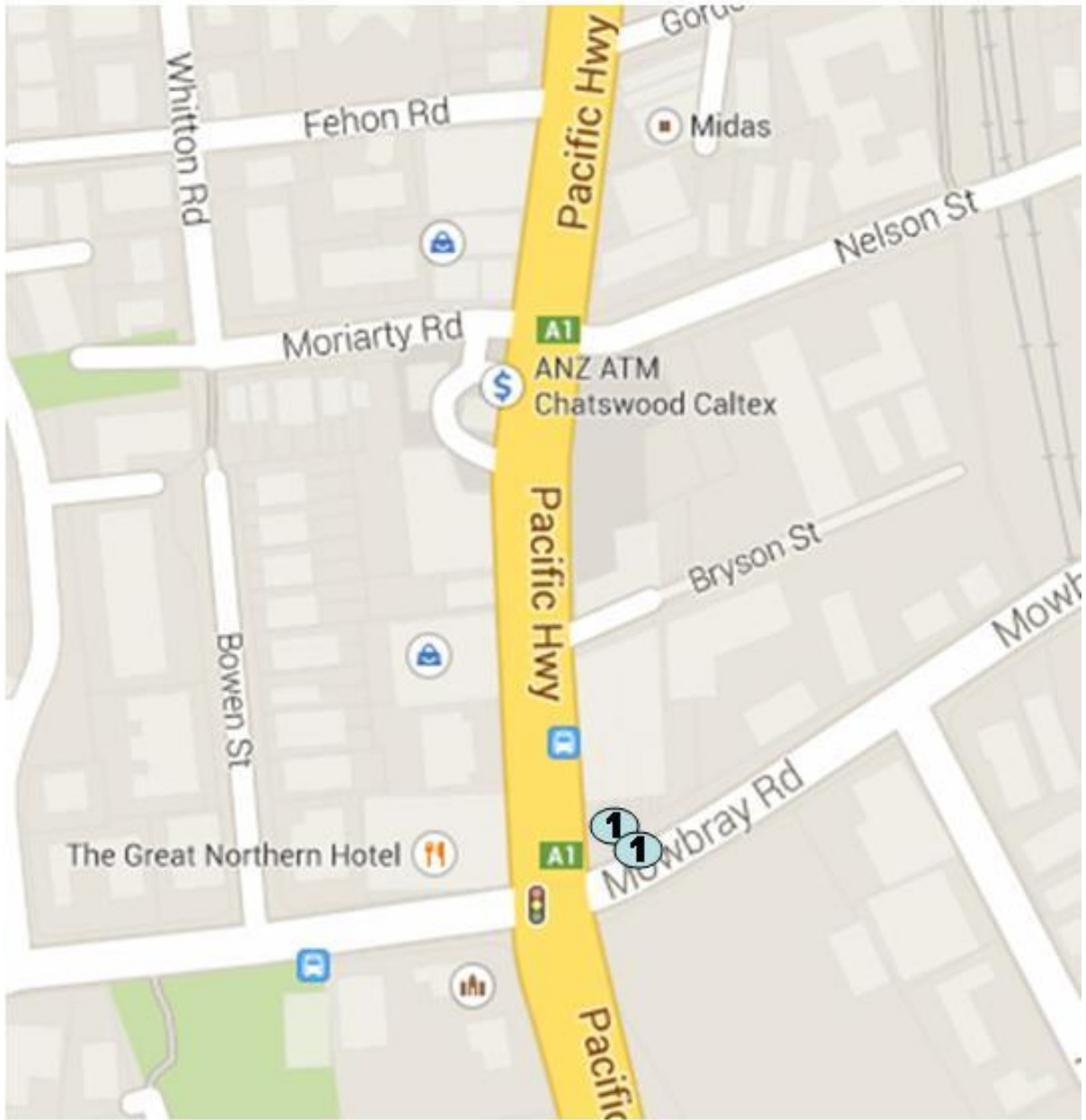
^{vi} Booker & Bennett 1988 p.6

^{vii} Egan, 1988p.???

^{viii} Egan, 1988 p.121

FOR TANNERIES

1867 Hammond marries Emily Northropp – they raise 12 children on the property. At that time only ten other families in the area. Hammond begins to sell meat in the Chatswood district from a ‘cutting cart’ and sets up a slaughter yard for cattle



Author

[Davis, Donald G. \(Donald George\)](#)

Description

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Notes

Bibliography: p. 240.

Subjects

[Freemasons - New South Wales - Sydney - History.](#) | [Freemasons.](#)
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