

# The Ryde Recorder

Journal & Newsletter of the Ryde District Historical Society Inc. and Family History Group



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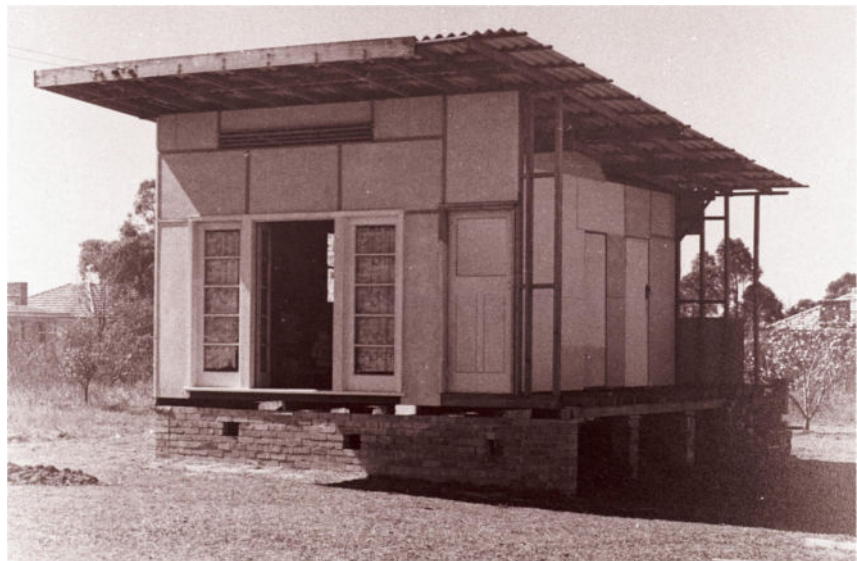
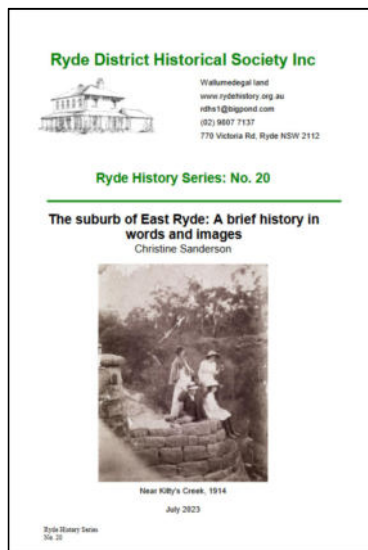
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North East Ryde Presbyterian Church, Shaw Street, East Ryde  
RDHS Collection

## New RHS Publication: #20 The Suburb of East Ryde

Our latest publication in the Ryde History Series is now available for purchase for \$15

All Ryde District Historical Society Inc's Local and General History and Family History Group meetings take place at 10 am on the second Saturday of each month (February to November) at historic "Willandra", 770 Victoria Road, cnr Devlin Street, Ryde. Enter by turning left at end of Willandra Street to street parking outside eastern gate of building. Entry door is at rear of building on Victoria Road side.

Society's **Phone Number: (02) 9807 7137** Fridays only (10-2pm) or leave a message at other times.

Editor: Kim Phillips  
President: Kim Phillips  
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Ryde District Historical Society volunteers are willing to carry out research in its archives and resources at \$20 an hour. A fee of \$20 will be charged for the initial research – if longer the applicant will be advised before the work is carried out. Please forward a cheque for this amount with your inquiry. A fee of \$5 will be charged for researchers using the Society's Archives. Photocopying is charged at 20 cents a sheet.

**PLEASE NOTE:** A \$2 donation will be accepted from visitors to the Ryde District Historical Society's meetings. Everyone welcome.

RDHS membership subscriptions are due in January each year. Membership will cease as at 31 March if unpaid. \$30 individuals, \$40 family, \$25 pensioner/student.

**RDHS Banking details:** Westpac Bank, Ryde BSB 032088, Account 801289, Ryde District Historical Society

Photographs taken by RDHS at RDHS functions (including Open Days, meetings, workshops, conferences) will be used as the Society sees fit, in brochures, advertising material, publications etc. If you do not wish your photograph to be used, please advise the Society's photographer on the day.

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*Please note that any conclusions or opinions expressed in the Ryde Recorder are those of the writer and not necessarily those of the Ryde District Historical Society Inc.*

### **WHAT'S ON?**

Saturday	September 9	Networking Meeting and morning tea
Sunday	September 17	Open House
Saturday	October 14	Peter Mitchell OAM – <i>James Squire: from First Fleet convict to the patriarch of Kissing Point.</i>  The story of James Squire (1754-1822), one of the most successful First Fleet convict entrepreneurs, is remarkably little known.
Sunday	October 15	Open House
Saturday	November 11 <b>12 noon</b>	Members Meeting: "What does Remembrance Day mean to you?"  General Meeting at Willandra, commencing with BYO lunch from 12 noon. Some RDHS members will be attending the Remembrance Day Service at Meadowbank Park. All are invited to attend.
Sunday	November 19	Open House: War and Remembrance. Special displays of RDHS collection re service people, both WW1 and WW2. Please bring along details of family members who served in WW2 and lived in the Ryde District.
Saturday	December 9	RDHS Christmas Party

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## The shop in between

Sabina Fielding-Smith

The City of Ryde has many apartments particularly along Victoria Road but sandwiched between apartment block numbers 525 and 529 is a small and obscure shop front at number 527. I pass this regularly on my walks and until recently, when a wooden hoarding appeared around it, only gave it a cursory glance. But what is the history of this little place and the businesses that used to trade from it? Whilst trying to research the shop's history I came across the name of a local butcher that served the community and to this day is still remembered.



527 Victoria Road, Ryde  
Captured from Google Maps c2017



Jack STRAUBE  
NAA, Item ID 5598246

Jack Mitchell STRAUBE was born on 5 July 1925 in Quirindi, New South Wales to parents Stephen Clive STRAUBE, a railway guard and Elizabeth Maude MITCHELL. Jack had an older brother Joseph Clive and a younger sister Clara Maude. In 1939 when World War II was declared, Jack was only 14 years old. Just before his 18th birthday, Jack signed up into the 2nd AIF on 2 July 1943 at Paddington NSW. He was assigned service number NX201681.

Jack was living at Penshurst NSW with his parents and had a trade as a butcher when he signed up for war service. He also liked to play the banjo mandolin. Basic training was conducted at Dubbo NSW. In July 1944, Jack was involved in a serious military vehicle accident at Peel NSW and was hospitalised with severe injuries including a fracture to the skull. The road to recovery was long but by 5 January 1945, Jack was on HMS *Duntroon* on his way to Papua New Guinea to fight the Japanese army. He served there until 29 May 1945 when he boarded the troop ship *Gorgan* on his return to Brisbane Queensland. He married Peggy Jean KNIGHT (parents

Sidney Walter KNIGHT, a labourer, and Annie Gena ELLIOTT) on 2 Feb 1946 at St John's Bishopthorpe Church, Glebe NSW. He was just 20 years old and Peggy just 19 years old and they had the consent of both sets of parents for the marriage.



527 and 529 Victoria Road Ryde 1943  
SIXMaps

After being discharged from military service (22 Battalion) on 24 April 1946, Jack returned to his trade as a butcher and with a wife and children to support, was looking for a good business opportunity. As a sole trader, he found this opportunity at the shop at 527 Victoria Road Ryde NSW. As fate would have it, next door at number 529 was a house just right for a growing family. Jack, Peggy and their three children (John, Patricia and Geoff) settled into family life in the expanding suburb of Ryde over the following post war years.

Local resident Les de Belin remembers (as a child) Jack and his butcher shop with fond memories:

As a kid, I lived in Cressy Road, not far from Jack's butcher shop on Victoria Road. It was only a small butcher shop with a display window onto Victoria Road decorated with green plastic ferns on show for the meat. I remember the sawdust on the floor, the centre stand-alone counter, white butcher paper, scales, and Jack's white shirt, blue butcher apron and tools of the trade. We used to buy our family meat from him. We also used to buy dog food from him too – meat scraps. Originally, he used to wrap the scraps in his butcher's paper, but said it was costing him money doing this for the small profit of the scraps. So I ended up bringing an empty hessian bag down to the shop every Friday. Jack would let me go into the meat fridge out the back which was wood panelled and had wooden shelves and there I would scavenge any scraps from the scrap meat box. Sometimes it was good meat and bones for the dog, other times it was a lot of fat offcuts – none the less the dog had plenty to eat. This bag of scraps cost Mum 2/- and this was in the early 1960s. Jack's son, John junior was also an apprentice butcher there for a short time too. A couple of decades later I caught up with Jack and he was still the larrikin bloke from the bush as I knew him.



Jack, Peggy Jean and the three children continued to live in Ryde at 529 Victoria Road until around 1972 when they then moved to 18 Massey Street Gladesville. They lived in Gladesville until late 1980 when Jack and Peggy Jean moved to Padstow to be close to Jack's extended relatives. Jack passed away on 9 February 2012 and his obituary appeared in the *Sydney Daily Telegraph* on 14 February 2012.

After Jack vacated the butcher business at 529 Victoria Road Ryde, there were a number of businesses that took up the lease on the shop. Notably, T J Andrews Funeral Directors had a long lease at the address which they vacated in 2018 when the property was sold. In August of the same year, a development application was lodged with City of Ryde Council for a three level, boarding house. The council declined the application. The building was then leased again to the company Shorelink Real Estate. In 2021 the building was sold for \$1.4 million but has lain idle since with no further application tendered to City of Ryde Council. A wooden hoarding has appeared around the front façade installed by the construction company MAS Constructions Pty Ltd.

What will become of the 'shop in between' I know not — but with a current pressing need for development by the New South Wales Government for more housing, it is probably only a matter of time before this site disappears and another apartment block will be built.



Jack STRAUBE

Les de Berlin Facebook post 3 September 2022, with permission

Sources:

Ancestry.com, digitized records for Jack Mitchell STRAUBE

Google Location Maps

National Archives of Australia, STRAUBE Jack Mitchell - NAA\_Item Number 5598246, WWII Army Personnel file

NSW and Commonwealth Electoral Rolls – 1963 to 1980

NSW Land Registry Services, SIX Maps, 1943 imagery, <https://maps.six.nsw.gov.au/>

Thanks are extended to Les de Belin for his memories of 527 Victoria Road Ryde and the photo of Jack Mitchell STRAUBE which appear in this article.

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On Sunday last, to the great surprise of the inhabitants in that quarter, the snow fell so thickly at Kissing Point, as to cover the ground and trees half an inch thick. The cold was intense, and forms a feature, the first of the sort in Kissing Point Chronology

*Hill's Life in New South Wales* (Sydney NSW: 1832) 17 August 1832, page 3

## Death Under Suspicious Circumstances

Maureen Copley

The *Sydney Morning Herald* of 15 November 1865 reported:

### *Death Under Suspicious Circumstances*

It has been reported to the City Coroner that a man named William Roper, a draper, recently residing on the North Shore, died at Tarban Creek on the 7<sup>th</sup> instant, and that his body was observed to have numerous bruises upon it. The report was submitted to the Attorney General, who instructed the Coroner to hold an inquest on the body. Under these circumstances, the Coroner has given orders for the exhumation of the body, with a view to an inquest to be held today.

William Roper died at Tarban Creek Lunatic Asylum on 7 November 1865 and was buried in the Church of England Burial ground, St Leonards, which is now known as St Thomas Rest Park, Crows Nest.



William Roper's Headstone, St Thomas'  
Maureen Copley



William Roper's Headstone, St Thomas'  
Maureen Copley

For six months William had been suffering 'lowness in spirits' and pains in the head and was sent to Darlinghurst Gaol for protection of himself and his family. Darlinghurst was the only place provided for the reception of lunatics who were placed in the cells with criminals and received no medical treatment. He kept asking to see his wife, but this was refused, and his wife Mary and his friends were not allowed to visit. After 10 days William was judged to still be insane and was sent to Tarban Creek where he died 17 days later. Friends who saw his body were alarmed at the numerous bruises and this led to an inquest, a report of which was included in the *Sydney Mail* on 25 November 1865.

The verdict, from the inquest, was that William died from a visitation of God (natural causes) and that his death was accelerated by the treatment he received at Darlinghurst – particularly the dietary scale for non-confirmed lunatics and want of medical treatment. William was typical of those released from Darlinghurst, very dirty and suffering from injuries left untreated.

There was no particular place for people showing signs of insanity, other than gaol where they were incarcerated with toughened criminals. Similar cases were reported in the newspapers for some years but William's case was much debated in parliament and after two governmental enquiries the Darlinghurst Reception House was established in 1868.



From that time people arrested showing signs of insanity were sent to the reception house at Darlinghurst for up to 14 days for observation and medical treatment, if necessary. If there was no improvement in their condition, they were sent to the asylum at Tarban Creek. This was certainly a more humane way of treating those who were suspected of suffering from insanity.



Gladesville Hospital Grounds - Building 38: Part of original Tarban Creek Quadrangle, 2004  
RDHS Collection rdhs-04861

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## **St Thomas' Rest Park, Crows Nest**

Helen Patterson

St Thomas' Rest Park is located in West Street, Crows Nest, near the suburb of Cammeray. It was originally the cemetery for the Anglican Parish of St Thomas (formerly in the borough of St Leonards), North Sydney, and was located around one kilometre from that church because the terrain there was not suitable for a burial ground.

St Thomas' was the first Christian burial ground on the north side of the harbour. The land was donated to the Anglican Parish in 1845 by the prominent landowner and merchant, Alexander Berry. Berry erected a distinctive pyramid-shaped vault to house the remains of his wife Elizabeth, his brother-in-law Edward Wollstonecraft, and later himself. Wollstonecraft had been the original land grantee in 1821; he died in 1832 and had been buried in the Devonshire Street Cemetery before his remains were moved to the tomb constructed by Berry.



The Berry family tomb  
Helen Patterson

There were around 4000 persons interred in the cemetery between 1845 and 1950 although only a small number of headstones have survived until today because of vandalism and excessive weathering. Some of the well-known persons interred at St Thomas' were artist Conrad Martens, railway engineer John Whitton, colonial judge-advocate Ellis Bent, explorer Owen Stanley, and gold miner and businessman Bernard Holtermann.



In 1967 the cemetery was handed over to North Sydney Council and proclaimed a Rest Park. The Park was officially opened in 1974 and the restored Sexton's Cottage in 1983. It includes originally sited monuments, relocated headstones, original 1883 stone and iron gates and fences, plantings, and open space landscaped for recreational use.



St Thomas' Rest Park  
Helen Patterson

Sources:

North Sydney Council, 'Sailors, Soldiers and Civil Servants: A Tour of St Thomas' Rest Park', n.d., RDHS vertical files.

Wikipedia, 'St Thomas Rest Park', [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki>St\\_Thomas\\_Rest\\_Park](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St_Thomas_Rest_Park).

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## You can't always believe what you read in the newspaper

Kim Phillips

The *Evening News* newspaper (Sydney, NSW) on 9 June 1896 announced that the world sculling champion, Jim Stanbury, had drowned in the Thames River, London. The problem was ... he hadn't!

News of his death was carried in a large number of the newspapers of the day.

### JIM STANBURY. DROWNED IN THE THAMES. The Champion Sculler's Fate.

LONDON, June 8.—James Stanbury, the Australian champion sculler, while out practising on the Thames this afternoon in his outrigger for his match with Harding for the championship of the world, met with an accident, and was drowned.

James Stanbury was a native of the Hawkesbury River district, where he first saw the light at Peat's Ferry on February 25, 1868. In 1876 his parents removed to Shoalhaven, where Jim entered into farming and fishing pursuits. His height was 5ft 11in, weight 12st 2lb, chest measurement 42½in. His first and winning race was in a light skiff at Nowra on November 9, 1885, at the Greenwell Point Regatta. Shortly afterwards he won the skiff and outrigger races. At the Nowra Regatta, in 1886, he competed successfully in four events—the Champion Outrigger Race, Handicap Outrigger Race, Light Skiff Race, and, with Alec McLean as a mate, the Double Sculls Race.



JAMES STANBURY.

Won Lake Bathurst Handicap Outrigger Race on January 14, 1887, with 40sec start, defeating Peter Kemp, Nell Matterson, Chris Neilson, and several others. Kemp, who was giving Stanbury 40sec, fouled with Matterson. At the Shoalhaven Regatta, on the 26th of the same month, he won the Handicap Outrigger Race, but suffered defeat by Chris Neilson in the Champion Race. On June 15 of the same year he was defeated by four lengths by Chris. Neilson in a match for £100 a-side on the Parramatta River in wagger boats. Stanbury then took a spell until January 26, 1888, when he won the handicap and Champion Outrigger Race at the Shoalhaven Regatta; on April 7 of the same year he defeated Bob Campbell, of Raymond Terrace, for £50 a-side, on the Hunter River; he met and easily defeated Julius Wulf on the Parramatta River on June 2 for £100 a-side. He next met the late Henry Ernest Searle on July 13 on the Parramatta River for £100 a-side, and after a great go from start to finish was beaten by two lengths, the best time on record over the Parramatta championship course, viz: 19min 53½sec. Stanbury was next defeated at Blackwattle Bay, in Reid's Light Skiff Handicap, rowed on October 6 and 22, carrying 85lb, the final being won by A. Cormack, 45lb. At the Brisbane Aquatic Carnival, the final of which was rowed on December 11, 1888, and won by H. E. Searle, with Peter Kemp second, and N. Matterson third, Stanbury was knocked out in the first round by Neil Matterson. On June 23, 1890, Stanbury defeated the American champion, William O'Connor, on the Parramatta River for £500 a-side, but owing to O'Connor being dissatisfied the race was re-rowed a week later, when Stanbury again won. On September 30 he rowed second to Kemp in the All Comers' Race at the Rockhampton Regatta, and on October 6, in a handicap sculling race, distance 3 miles, at Rockhampton, with 4sec start, he rowed third; P. Kemp (scratch), being first, and C. Neilson (12sec), second. Returning to Sydney, the race with J. McLean took place November 17. Stanbury was known to be far from well, and a very brilliant half-mile fairly cracked him up. McLean then got in front, and at 1¼ mile Stanbury gave up rowing altogether. Stanbury soon decided to try and gain the championship from McLean, who had won it from his old friend Peter Kemp. On April 28, 1891, Stanbury and McLean met, and the Richmond River man rowed a very poor race, so that the title passed to Stanbury. For some two years or more the public had regarded him as the best man in Australia, and his victory was exceedingly popular. McLean was very dissatisfied with the result, and found money enough to make a second match, which was rowed on July 7 over a course from Uhr's Point to The Brothers rocks, where the Searle monument now stands. For some distance McLean did very well, but in less than a mile from the start

the championship was clearly in the hands of the holder, who drew away and won rather easily during the latter part of the race. Stanbury now made up his mind to go to America and row O'Connor or any other sculler who cared for a race with him. Sullivan having challenged the champion, he rather reluctantly stayed to defend his claim to the title, and for the time, at least, abandoned his intention of going away on what promised to be a pleasant and profitable trip. A match was made with Sullivan for the championship and £200 a-side. Sullivan had just previously beaten Buteau (twice), C. Stephenson, and C. Dutch, and was considered to have a great chance of lowering the champion's colors. The race was rowed on the Parramatta on May 2, 1892, and was won by Stanbury by three lengths.

Stanbury afterwards paid a visit to the United States, but no match resulted, and he returned to New South Wales, and had since been occupied on the land at timber-getting, which he left to take up the challenge of C. Harding, the English sculler. A match was ultimately arranged with the latter for the Championship of the World, the "Sportsman's" Challenge Cup, and £500 a-side, and was to have been rowed on July 13 next over the Thames championship course from Putney Bridge to the ship at Mortlake. Stanbury went home in the Orient Line steamer *Austral*, leaving Sydney on March 23, and on arrival in London took up his quarters with his old opponent Tom Sullivan, at the Rutland Hotel, Hammersmith, where he had since been staying, and where the third deposit of £100 a-side was made good on May 1. A first deposit of £100 a-side was made by Tom Sullivan on December 30, 1895, with the editor of the "Sportsman," and the second made good at the White Hart Hotel, Barnes, on February 12. The final deposit of £200 a-side was to have been made good at the Half Moon Hotel, Putney, on Friday, July 10, when Stanbury was to have received £50 for expenses. The money for the third deposit was found by those sterling Australian sportsmen, Mr. S. H. Gollan and Mr. Joe Thompson, and Mr. James Beale, the popular Sydneyite, is on his way home with the balance.

It is probable that after a decent interval James Wray, the Shoalhaven sculler, who accompanied Stanbury home as his trainer, may be matched with Harding. Wray is stated to be in no way inferior to the late champion; in fact many declare that he could easily have beaten the latter.

*Evening News* newspaper (Sydney NSW) 9 June 1896, page 4



According to the *Shoalhaven Telegraph* on 10 June, here is how the story unfolded.

At 10.47am on 9 June a cable arrived in Sydney saying:

“Jim Stanbury, the Australian sculler, was drowned whilst training on the Thames.”

At 12.17pm another cable arrived in Sydney:

“There is some doubt about the correctness of Stanbury’s death. The cables are conflicting.”

Another cable at 1.20pm stated:

“Boat capsized. Stanbury unable to extricate feet from stretcher. The news has been received with deep regret everywhere.”

Another cable at 4.45pm announced that:

“We have just received a cablegram that Stanbury was capsized, but got ashore safely.”

Meanwhile, Jim’s mother, Catherine, had been informed of the tragedy. The *Shoalhaven Telegraph* also reported that:

“Cable says Jim has been drowned. Don’t despair.

The family had despaired. When the messenger reached the home at 8 o'clock a family was mourning the death of its brightest member. When the messenger left it was the happiest home in Shoalhaven.”

On 14 July 1896 Jim, defending his world title, rowed against Charles Harding, the English champion. The race was held on the Thames champion course and won by Jim.



Jim Stanbury in a skiff on the Parramatta River. The photo was taken where Ryde Bridge now stands  
RDHS collection img03003



Jim won the championship on four occasions, and lost on two.

1891 defeated John McLean - race time 22.15  
1891 defeated John McLean - race time 18.25  
1892 defeated Tom Sullivan - race time 18.27  
1896 defeated Charles R Harding - race time 21.51  
1896 lost to Jacob A Gaudaur - race time 23.1  
1905 defeated George Towns - race time 19.50  
1906 lost to George Towns - race time 19.54

In 1893 James had married Eliza Jane (Dolly) Jordan in Ryde NSW. Between 1893 and 1913 they had eight children: James (born 1893, died 1894), Beatrice (born 1895), Mabel (born 1899), Amy (born 1901), Nelly (born 1906), Dorothy (born 1909), Annie (born 1911) and James (born 1913). All births were registered in Ryde.

The family lived in Twin Road, North Ryde where they ran an orchard on 10 acres, selling nectarines, plums and peaches. Their son James took over the running of the orchard in 1940.



Dolly Stanbury c1893  
RDHS collection img06912



Jim jnr, Jim and Dolly, North Ryde, June 1929  
RDHS collection img03012

Following an operation, Jim died at Ryde Hospital on 11 December 1945 aged 77. He was buried in the Field of Mars Cemetery, Presbyterian Section (section E grave 18). His wife Dolly died on 22 August 1950 and was buried with him.



Jim and Dolly Stanbury grave  
RDHS collection pres-00024