

**Ratepayers Scarborough Ward
Municipality of Rockdale**

I beg to announce that in answer to numerous requests, I am a Candidate for the Election of Alderman for the Extraordinary Vacancy caused by the death of Late respected Alderman James Cameron Crawford, and trust my previous municipal experience and local knowledge may be of benefit to you.

JAMES TOYER

Sans Souci.

POLLING DAY—Saturday, February 9,
from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.



The Terrific Toyers

*a remarkable
Sans Souci
family*

Dr Garry Darby

Introduction:

The Sydney suburb of Sans Souci has a long and fascinating history. In the scheme of things it was seemingly better known and more important in the past than it is now.

How could this be the case? Even before 1840 when the advent of Rocky Point Road and the dam at Cook's River opened up the peninsula, the area was noted for its rustic and country charm. Visitors were attracted in their thousands to the beaches, bay and river - initially they came on horseback or in wagons. They came for the swimming, boating and for the unspoiled landscape which offered a "country" experience.

Entrepreneurs like William Rust, Thomas Holt, Robert Cooper Jnr., John Frater and others opened up the territory by recognising the attraction that sunshine, fresh air and bushland had for the residents of Sydney, which, in those times was, in many parts, a smoky, dank and polluted place to be.

The sparkling waters of Botany Bay, George's River and Kogarah Bay with fresh fish, oysters and sea breezes was an engaging alternative and escape. But how to access these delights?

That question was partially solved in 1884 when the railway came south and Kogarah station was established. Horse buses conveyed passengers from the train station to the playgrounds in the nearby south. Jim Selmon, son of one of the original shell-gathering pioneers, Amos Selmon, was one such transport operator. A huge regatta was staged at Doll's Point to celebrate the arrival of the 'iron horse'.

Then, in 1887, came the steam trams - a wonderful innovation which further opened up the peninsula to both tourists and permanent residents. Large tracts of the area were subdivided for housing. The depression of the early 1890s slowed progress for a time but resilient folks progressed nevertheless.

The subject of the essay presented here is the Toyer family. Headed by James Toyer. they pursued a wide range of activities

and business ventures which helped mould the developing character and history of the area after the 1890s.

The Toyer family was extensive and James Toyer was clearly one of the family's shining lights. Just read about his accomplishments. He was an entrepreneurial and energetic man with a wide range of ideas about business, sport, education and civic affairs. His accomplishments in the Rockdale Municipality are traced here.

This essay is not meant to be a complete 'family history'. Rather it is designed to highlight some of the accomplishments of the Toyers who came to the area with and after James. Family members, George, Ned and Gladys Toyer were all, like James, pre-eminent in Sans Souci life.

George was to become the mainstay of a large plant nursery at Sans Souci which was operated in Evans St between 1908 and 1959. He was also a respected nurseryman on the wider Sydney scene. Ned Toyer was a young and enthusiastic motor mechanic who helped considerably in James' business ventures, particularly with early motor vehicles on the peninsula and in the nearby Royal National Park. Gladys Toyer was a talented soprano who sang at many concerts in Sydney and the local Sans Souci area. She was renowned, not just for her voice, but for her generosity in performing for war-time and hospital fund-raising events.

Frederick and Arthur Toyer are remembered for their shop which stood on the corner of Russell Avenue and Rocky Point Road. Initially a greengrocers and later a barber shop, this building is fondly remembered by older Sans Souci residents.

Currently, in 2017, David Toyer is Commodore of the St George Motor Boat Club at Kogarah Bay. David has had a long and successful career as a speedboat driver and is carrying forward the Toyer connection which began there in 1920 when his Great Uncle, James Toyer, was the club's first President.

Sans Souci would be a different place had not the Toyers chosen it as the location for their respective lives and work.

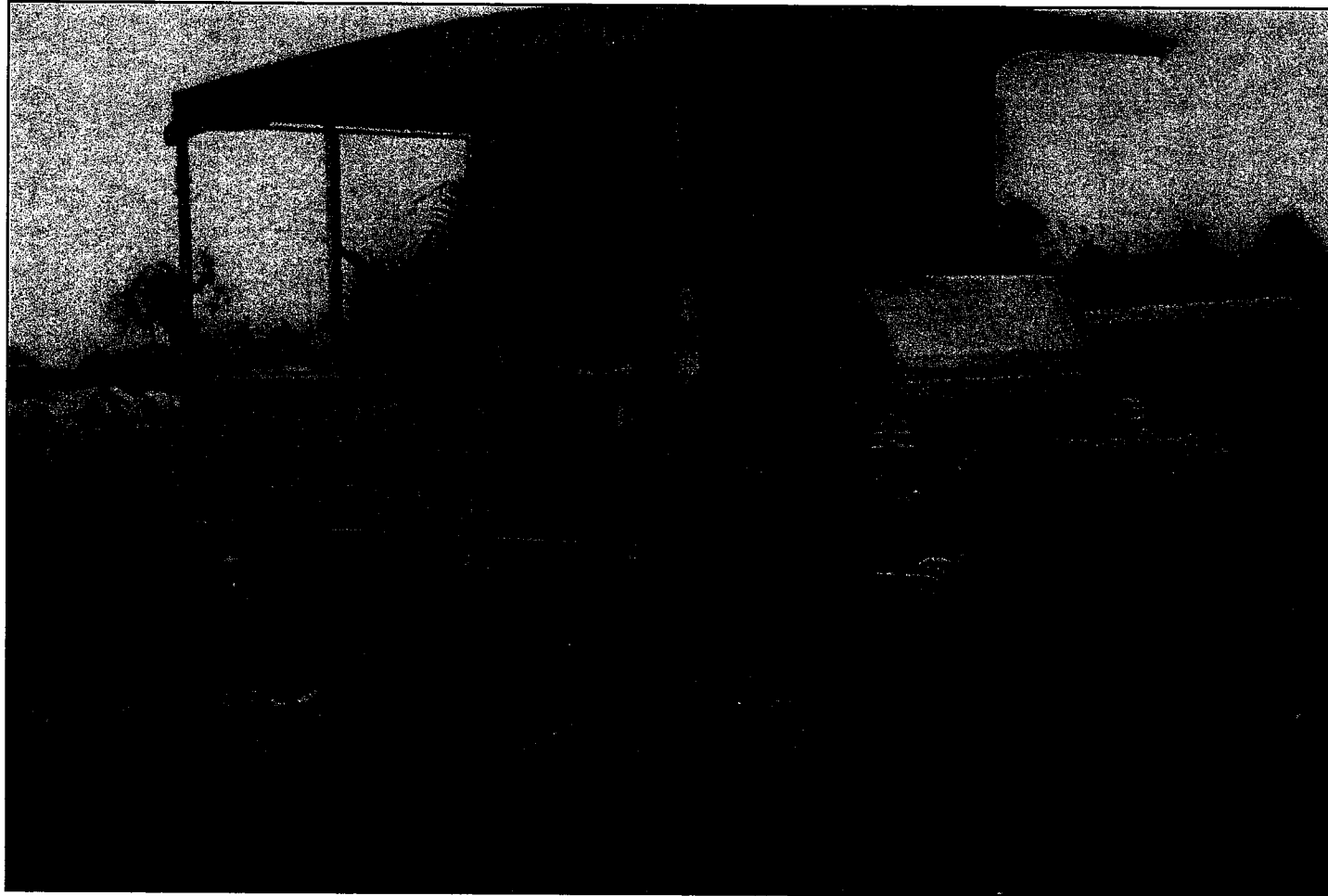
The Terrific Toyers

The Terrific Toyers

No history of the Illawarra is complete without a tribute to the pioneering efforts of the Toyer family. Brickmakers, nurserymen, busmen, engineers and civic leaders were the roles of the Toyer men in the early days of this area.

Charles Grant, 'St George and Sutherland Shire Leader' July 1971

Below: George Toyer is at the wheel of the family nursery delivery truck - Photo: Bayside Library, Rockdale



James Toyer (1866-1946) who will be the major focus of this essay established a nursery at Marrickville, NSW, in 1890. He was just 24 years old. The nursery and florist business prospered and he took premises in the Queen Victoria Market and also established a market stall at Newtown. At Marrickville and St Peters James also became a landscape gardener and developed a growing clientele in Sydney's eastern suburbs.

Much earlier in his life James had learned that hard work was the way to get ahead. Indeed at the tender age of 10 years he laboured in his father's brickpit at Marrickville.

This same James Toyer became a very prominent citizen in Sans Souci and amongst his many endeavours he is best remembered for his Palm Nursery which he established in Griffith Street, Sans Souci, in 1909.

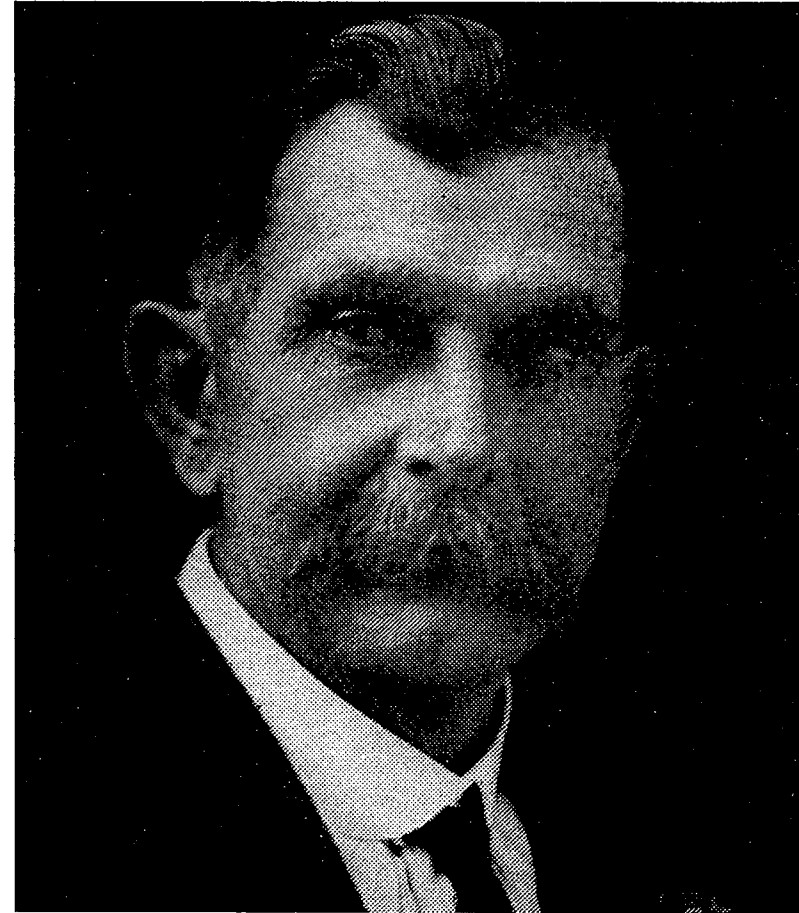
This essay will describe the lives and accomplishments of some of the Toyer family that grew up around James and his wife, Agnes (nee Ireland) as their lives unfolded on the Sans Souci peninsula.

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James' father, George Toyer (1834-1907) had migrated from Luton in England, arriving here in July 1855 on the "Blenhiem".

He travelled with his wife Emma (nee Bland) and two daughters Elizabeth (Bland) b1847 and Fanny b.1854. They were to have 10 more children in Australia. Of these James Toyer was number 7 and he was their 5th son.

James' mother, Emma, had relatives in Dungog NSW and the Toyer family settled there soon after their arrival in NSW. By August 1859 George had purchased land and established a brickworks in a part of Dungog known as Happy Valley. His son, Joseph (b1868) remembered that his father



James Toyer (1866-1946) was the patriarch of the Sans Souci family which is known best for their palm nursery in Evans Street and the nearby Toyer Avenue named in their honour. No history of the district would be complete without the examination of James' life and at least four or five members of this family for whom he was the guiding light.

made the bricks for the Church of England at Dungog and also at Stroud. ¹

George Toyer and his growing family moved from Dungog to settle at Marrickville and by 1875 had established a brickworks in Cowper Street. James was just 9 years old. However, by the time he was 10 he was working for his father, 'pugging' at the Marrickville brickworks.

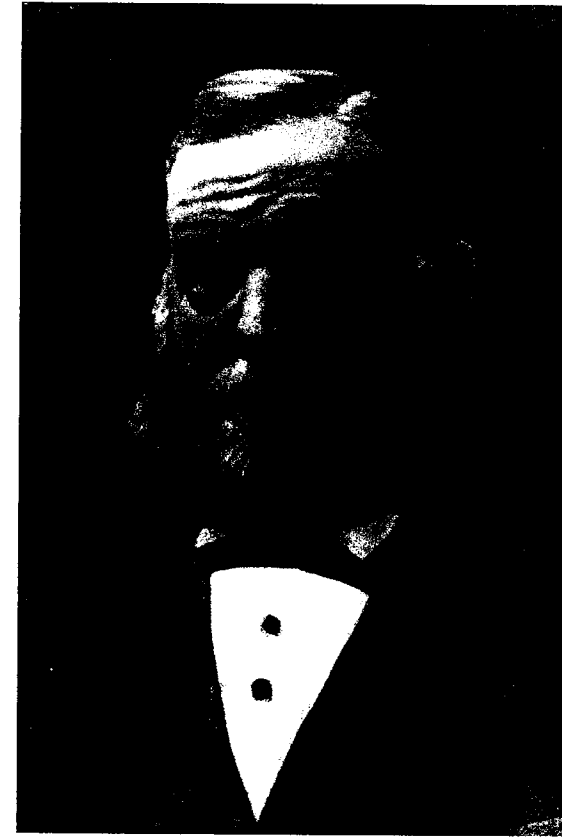
During an enquiry into employment of children in 1876, Mr. George Toyer's evidence was made public. Speaking of his sons, including James, he was reported as having said:

His pit at which the boys are now working is about 10 feet deep. The boys at work are his sons. The boy bringing up the clay is 10; he fetches clay for about five bricks at a time; the weight of a wet brick is about 10 lbs; he does not think it hurts boys to do the work, for where will you find a stronger class of men than brickmakers. The youngest boy there (the ten year old) at pugging has been at work for about three years. Is it healthy? Well he believed it was; some time ago he had a little fellow, an orphan, with him and he seemed dwindling away, he had almost to carry him to his work at first, but after a little time he got quite strong, and would go dancing up and down the plank. ²

Consequently, it may be seen that James Toyer had no soft upbringing, but according to his father, at least, it was a healthy one.

George's sons, George, John, Arthur, James, Joe, Fred and Albert worked in the brickworks and from about 1885 there was a transition period which saw them take over the business.

By 1887, at least, the family brickworks was known as "Toyer Brothers". George Snr. lived on for another 20 years



George Toyer (1834-1907) - migrated from Luton in England to Sydney in 1855 - he became a brickmaker at Dungog NSW

but his sons, including James, were in charge. During this time James met Scottish girl, Agnes Alexander Ireland (1871-1952) who had been born in St Andrews, Scotland.³ They were married at Wickham, near Newcastle on 27th April, 1891. She was the daughter of Thomas Ireland and his wife Agnes.

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Very fortunately for them both, Agnes had been left £2000 in her father's will when she was just 3 years old. This sum was invested for her until she was 21 or married. ⁴ As it transpired Agnes was 20 when she was married and received her inheritance.

The 1890s in Australia was a difficult economic period and many businesses and speculators became insolvent. Toyer's brickworks had flourished until this time but they did not survive the depression.

Indeed John Robert Toyer (b 1861) James' elder brother, had taken the responsibility for operating the 'Toyer Brothers' business at Crescent Road Marrickville. He had a sequestration order placed against him and the business in July 1894. John simply was one of many thousands who suffered a similar fate in the early 1890s. His brothers had either moved on or were now obliged to seek a living elsewhere. ⁵

For example James' younger brother Joseph (1869-1945) became a professional gardener and for years was head gardener at several well known homes around Sydney. ⁶ Gardening, landscaping and nurseries, it seems, ran in the blood of the Toyer family.

By 1893 James had left the 'Toyer Brothers' brick business and set up as a florist and landscape gardener at George Street, St Peters. This business flourished and developed over time into a nursery which James named 'Rosedale'. He was talented and diligent and what he lacked in education (he could neither read nor write) he made up for with application, dedication and plain hard work.

James and Agnes were to have seven children between 1891 and 1911. All were dedicated to their parents but three of the children were to become particularly important in James' life as it later unfolded at Sans Souci. George Thomas, b 1891, Gladys Emma, b 1893, and James Frederick (Ned) b 1901 were, like their father, talented and hard working.

During the mid to late 1890s when his children were young, James became a prolific exhibitor in horticultural and flower shows. For



Back row: Gladys, Agnes, George, James, Edith Front row: Victoria, James
Frederick (Ned) Ethel

Photograph courtesy of Heather Fitzgerald

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example, in November 1899 he exhibited at the NSW Horticultural Society Exhibition at the Sydney Town Hall. The Spring Rose Show was opened by his Excellency the Governor Earl Beauchamp. Here James was commended by the judges for his contribution. They commented on, 'a respectable collection [of roses] from the garden of Mr J. Toyer of St Peters.'⁷

This was just one of hundreds of shows to which he contributed and all went to strengthen his reputation as a leader in his profession.

Apart from business and family James had a strong interest in pigeon racing. This developed from former times when he had raced pigeons with his father.

However, his successes in this sport seem to have been few and far between. A family keepsake is a bronze medal inscribed: "won by 'Jas. Toyer's bird: 126 mile -1056 yds per minute". This was in an event staged by the NSW Poultry, Pigeon, Canary and Dog Society in 1893 when James was living at St Peters, was 27 years old and had been married for two years.

His next recorded placing came many years later when he was 71 years old. James had a prestigious win at an Illawarra Homing Club event which must have pleased him greatly:

A win in a breadalbane flight, staged by the Illawarra Homing Club, has given Mr. J. Toyer, of Sans Souci, a retired business man, whose hobby is pigeon racing, his first victory in the past 54 years. To win the event, his pigeon had to average 1822 yards a minute for the 112 miles, and beat some of the speediest homers in metropolitan lofts. When he was 15 (1881) years of age, Mr. Toyer, who is now 71, won several races with the old Sydney Homing Club.⁸

Live pigeon shooting flourished at nearby Sandringham during the time the Toyer Nursery was being established.



Medal for an event staged by the NSW Poultry, Pigeon, Canary and Dog Society in 1893 when James was living at St Peters

Walter H Watson and C W Linke had developed the shooting range opposite Watson's "Prince of Wales Hotel" from 1909. (C/f Watson essay) There is no record of what James Toyer thought of this barbaric enterprise but it is difficult to imagine that he could ignore the repeated whump of shotguns from Sandringham on a Saturday afternoon as he worked at his nearby nursery.

Live pigeon shooting on the peninsula was nothing new. William Rust, proprietor of the Sans Souci Hotel on Rocky Point, had staged live pigeon shooting events there in 1869, and John Frater at the same hotel continued the tradition from 1895. However the crowning moment for pigeon shooting at Sans Souci came in 1870. It was reported that:

The PRINCE'S DAY.

*Wednesday was a great day at Sans Souci, when H. R. H. the Duke of Edinburgh went thither to shoot pigeons. His Royal Highness drove his four greys, and the Sydney aristocracy followed him in ten ten tandem carts. Many plebeians followed suit, and looked on at a distance, while the royal party did the shooting, the Prince performing in capital style, and astonishing the pigeons with which his worship the mayor supplied the party.*⁹

This royal sanction of the sport carried through to Toyer's time. However, by then, he and many others, had a more humane approach to the pigeons of Sydney's south.

Through the years 1895-1905 James continued at George St., St Peters as a florist, gardener and nurseryman. He established, and maintained, a fine reputation, particularly in Sydney's wealthy eastern suburbs where his services as a landscape gardener were very much in demand.

Prior to that time James also had an interest in the St George area. The St George Horticultural Society held its first show in Saywell's pavilion at Lady Robinson's Beach in November 1892. Speaking at the show, Chairman John Sproule said that, *'the district was second to none in the colony ... for they had the climate and soil admirably suited to all kinds of flowers and plants'*. James Toyer would have taken note. Joseph Carruthers MLA opened the show.

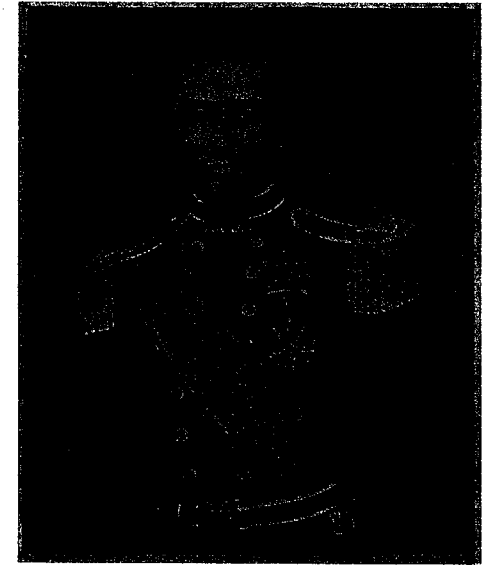
James Toyer won several prizes there and continued to exhibit with the Society in succeeding years. In 1895, for example, he exhibited and won prizes for pot plants, palms and hanging baskets in the Society's November show. Accordingly, he was well-known in Sans Souci and

surrounding areas for some time before he settled there in 1911.¹⁰

Well established in business and happily married with a young family, James stood for the position of Alderman on St Peter's Council. He was elected unopposed to represent the Brompton Ward in January 1904 and remained in that position for eight years.

James Toyer immersed himself in the workings of the Council. Reports reveal that he showed a particular interest in transport in the area. For example, there were a number of occasions when he debated tram timetables and the efficient running of that service. The state of the roads was often in question and related street lighting was also debated. In 1907 the lighting committee presented a report in favour of placing street lamps down the centre of carriageways. Alderman Toyer, however, claimed they would be a danger to vehicular traffic. His concerns foreshadowed his lifelong interest in the new motor vehicles which were, at that time, beginning to make their presence felt.

James also gave a lot of thought to schools and their facilities. Discussing Tempe Public School and the lack of shelter sheds, James told a Council meeting that, *'his children had returned home wet through owing to their having to*



His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh shot pigeons at Sans Souci in 1870

stand in the rain. There was no shelter at all'.¹¹ Land rates and communications also attracted his attention, the latter involving, in 1909, a combined councils protest against new telephone rates. As a businessman James employed new technology when he could. He informed the Council meeting in May that the rates were too high, saying, 'under the old toll system he had to pay £ 6 10s per year and was allowed only about 5 calls per day'. The new system was to be £ 4 for registration and one half-penny for every call.¹²

There seems no doubt that James had been a popular, active and effective member of St Peters Council. However, his term of service there, came to an end in January 1912.

Three years earlier he had bought land at Sans Souci and by early 1912 James was eager to move his business activities there and to occupy, with his family, the new house he had built in Griffith Street.

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After his resignation from the Council at Tempe, in 1912, he had received a letter of 'eulogistic reference' from his colleagues there.

Six years later, in 1918, he was to stand successfully for Rockdale Council and to boost his prospects, with the help of the St George Call newspaper, he published this letter:

At the last meeting of the Council of the Municipality of St. Peters, regret was expressed that you have found it necessary to resign from your position as Alderman, and eulogistic reference was made to the valuable and loyal services you have rendered to this Municipality during your eight years' term of office as Alderman, and also to the high esteem in which you are held by this

*Council and the residents generally, for your integrity, ability and general personality, and I have now the honor to convey to you the following resolution which was carried unanimously, viz.' That a letter bearing the corporate seal of the Council be forwarded to ex Alderman James Toyer, of Sans Souci, conveying this Council's regret in losing the valuable services rendered to the Municipality at large during his tenure of office as Alderman of the Brompton Ward of the Municipality of St. Peters. With best wishes and continued health and prosperity.*¹³

Much happened in the Toyer family at Sans Souci between 1909 and 1918. James had a well established nursery and two other businesses involving transport at Sans Souci and The Royal National Park at Loftus.

His entire family was around him and they all became deeply involved with their new lives in the unfamiliar but captivating surroundings that comprised Sans Souci.

Rocky Point Road led to Rocky Point - there was to be no punt until 1916. Griffiths and Evans streets, running at right angles to Rocky Point Road, led down a slope to marshy, flood prone land that was the bane of local residents for many years to come.

From 1914, like everybody around them, they experienced the disturbing and tragic events of World War One.

*

While remaining settled at St Peters, in 1909, he purchased a little more than 5 acres, opposite the Sandringham School (later Sans Souci School) and quickly established a supply nursery to feed his St Peters business. It is not clear whether or not James planned a major move to the

The Terrific Toyers

district at that time. However, pre-planned or not, a little under two years later James was building a house on the Sans Souci nursery land in Griffiths Street. (See Map)

The family embraced the move to the Sans Souci peninsula.

George, James' eldest son, was, by then, 20 years old, and had become the mainstay of the Nursery at Sans Souci. Gladys, then 18, was to develop into a gifted soprano who sang in many concerts in and around Sydney. Ned, just 10 years old in 1911, was to become a skilled motor engineer who contributed to the Toyer business at Sans Souci and Loftus. More will be said of their respective careers in the next section of this essay.

However, at this point it will pay to consider some of Ned's memories of Sans Souci in those bygone days. Interviewed in 1991 when he was 90 years old, Ned recalled:

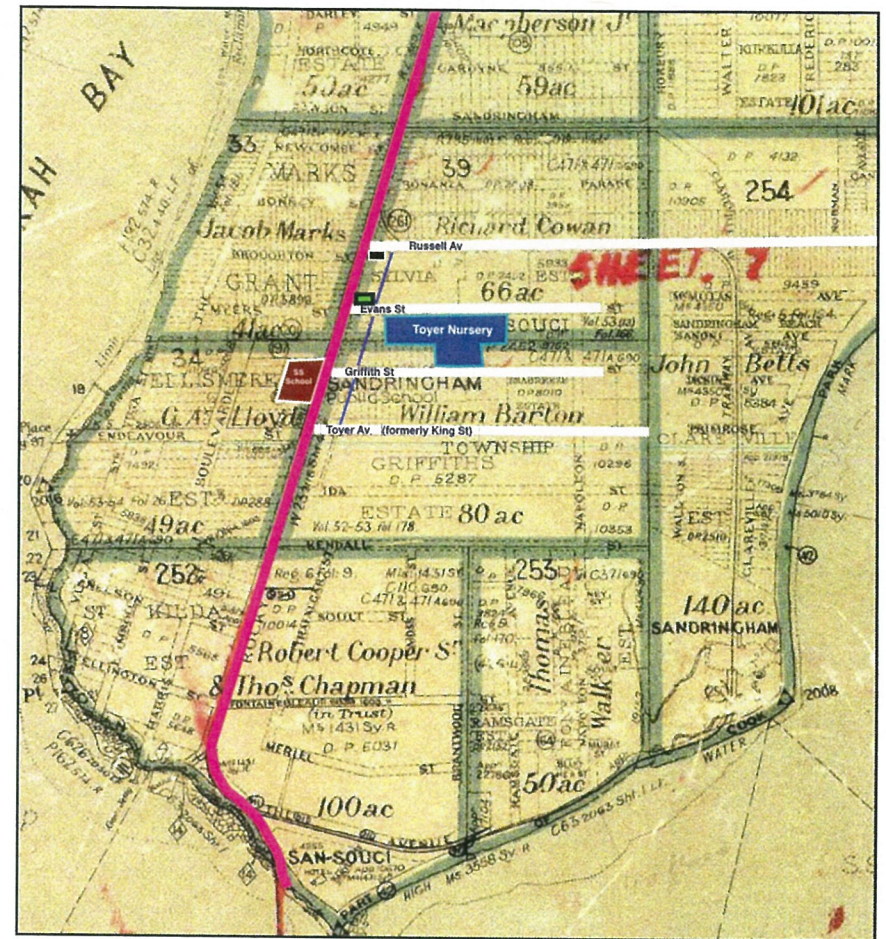
Growing up in those days was an 'uncomplicated' business. We didn't have any worries. Everybody had plenty of work before the depression and we had lots of empty space to play in.

There were probably only about 12 families in this region then and everybody knew everybody else.

Goats used to roam around, a tram used to run down Rocky Point Road from Kogarah and the local policeman's beat took in all of Kogarah and Sans Souci.

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Importantly, Ned also recalled, in the same interview, the great community spirit during World War One when the locals pitched in and organised carnivals to raise money for the war effort.



This map indicates the approximate position of the J Toyer & Sons Nursery which ran between Evans and Griffiths Streets Sans Souci. Most of the property was in a low-lying, flood prone area. The Toyers put this free supply of water to good use in the plant nursery. The proximity to Sandringham School on Rocky Point Road should be noted.

The purchase of the land at Sans Souci seemed to pay dividends fairly quickly while James' business at George Street St Peters continued to flourish in the early years of the new century. He advertised strongly in city newspapers and cemented his reputation a landscape gardener.

By May 1911 James was building a house on his land at Sans Souci. Some difficulties arose because of the low laying nature of that area and the distinct possibility that it would flood.

No photographs from that time have been located but the nature of the land did not change too much. In March 1975 the section of Sans Souci that had been in question 50 year prior was inundated.

Much earlier a report, from May 1907, had said that a deputation from Kogarah and Rockdale Councils had talked with the NSW Minister for Works, asking him to undertake drainage of the Sans Souci swamp. They pointed out that if not attended to it would represent 'a grave menace to health'. The government was, at that time, reluctant to undertake such work when, *'the private owners of the land would derive the sole benefit'*.¹⁵

Subsequently the area had been designated 'swamp land' by Rockdale Council who had then decreed that any building erected there needed to be situated on piers or otherwise over six inches of good concrete.

Toyer had laid only three inches of concrete but because his land was on the higher side of the swamp land his construction was approved. Some members of Rockdale Council were not impressed.¹⁶

The "Toyer Estate" included Lot 290 in Griffith St., which had a 400ft frontage, and lots 236 and 237 (with a combined 450ft frontage) on Evans Street. Each of these parcels of land sat right in the 'swamp' zone according to a 1923 Government Gazette listing.¹⁷



Floodwaters in Ida Street, 10th March, 1975, indicate the problems that existed in the vicinity of the Toyer Nursery.

Photograph Courtesy, Rockdale City Library

Nevertheless his future was well and truly focussed on Sans Souci, the nursery and the new house. A few Council regulations were not going to halt the progress of the Toyers.

James' resignation from St Peters Council was inevitable. In 1910 he had transferred all his activities to Sans Souci and focussed enthusiastically on business, family, and sporting and social concerns in his new community.

His community spirit showed up early in his Sans Souci life. For example when the 'Annual Hospital Dance' was held at Rockdale Town Hall in June 1912 James helped in having the stage look like a 'model conservatory'. He loaned large palms from his nursery to decorate the stage. David Jones and

Beard Watson & Co., both famous Sydney retail names, also contributed to the overall appearance of the hall.

The Matron of the St George Cottage Hospital and a number of the nurses were present at the ball.

*

George Thomas Toyer (b1891) arrives at Sans Souci

James, was fortunate in having the financial backing that Agnes could provide and, although progressive, he was in no particular hurry. In that period prior to World War One, Australia's economy was strong. Agricultural and manufacturing capacities were strengthened and a bright future for the new nation seemed assured.

In these endeavours James was ably supported by his eldest son, George Thomas Toyer (1891-1967). In his early teens George worked at Beard's Bedding factory in Camperdown but by 1909, when he was 18, had joined his father and was responsible for developing the virgin soil in Griffith St into the perfect horticultural nursery that, by then, his father envisioned.

George and other workers fenced the area and laid out the nascent nursery. They erected bush houses and storage sheds as well as beginning work on managing the water streams which flowed through the property. Parts of the nursery area were flood prone but from the beginning the problems caused were minimised and turned to the advantage of the nurserymen who needed a regular supply of water for the plants.

During the earliest period of the developing nursery George stayed with his Aunty, Mrs Ann Napier (nee Warner) (1862-1939). Her mother was Ann Toyer (c1830-1911), sister

of George Toyer with whom she arrived in Australia on the "Blenheim" in July 1855.

Ann Napier lived nearby on the corner of Toyer Avenue and 1322 Rocky Point Road. Her house "Holmwood" was built 1900-1901.

Indeed, James Toyer was a man of very high standards and was not one to cut corners. Accordingly the progress and building of the nursery was slow but George ensured that all of his father's ideas were realised.

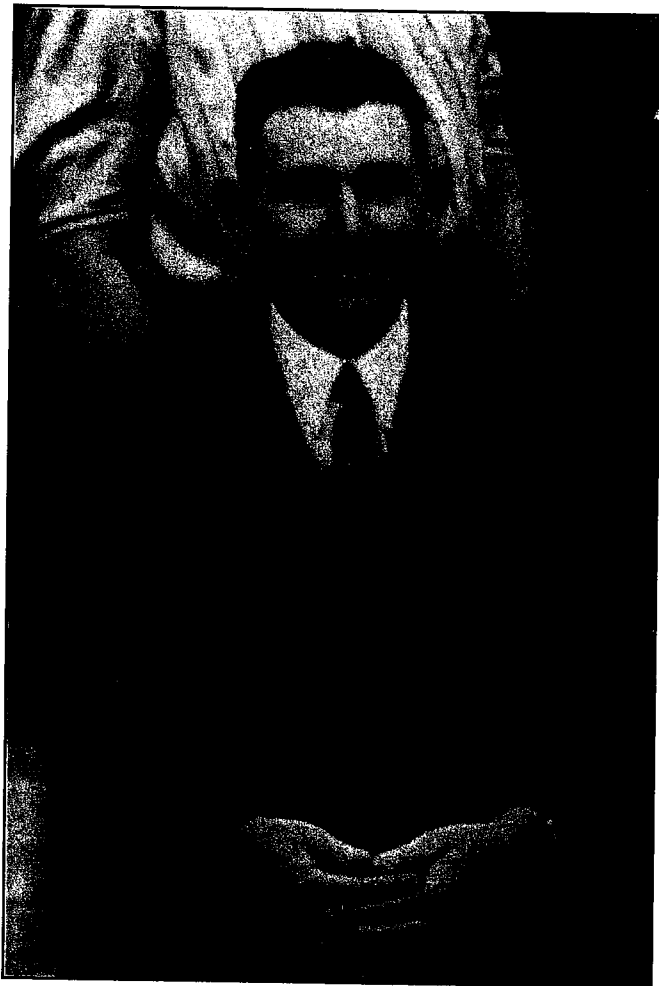
George was to spend the rest of his entire working life of 50 years at the nursery. Known as "J. Toyer & Sons", this enterprise became a landmark in the area and was the largest employer of labour on the Sans Souci peninsula for most of its existence.

The roads throughout the peninsula in the early days of the nursery were rough and ready, many merely tracks. However, this did not deter the Toyers from introducing motor transport to expand their already thriving business.

Most of the early promotional ideas for the nursery came from James who drew on his earlier experience at St Peters. From 1914 George divided his time between the National Park bus run and the nursery came next. The National Park involvement for George, had stretched over 6 years and is discussed below.

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However, around 1921 George and Dorothy returned to the nursery full time. They went to live in a home owned by his father at 2 Rawson Street, Sans Souci and worked at the nursery which covered an expansive area between Evans Street and Griffiths Street. Later, when James moved into his new house in Rocky Point Road, George and Dorothy moved into James' timber house (built c 1918) at the nursery in



George Thomas Toyer (1891-1967) James' eldest son was the mainstay at the Sans Souci Nursery for 50 years from 1909. He ensured that his father's business became a landmark, physically and historically.

Photograph Courtesy Heather Fitzgerald

Griffiths Street.¹⁸

By the early 1920s James, given his wide range of community interests, was struggling with the business which, the family has said, was not doing well. Consequently in the following year James arranged for son George to buy the business on 'extended terms'.

From that time forward the nursery again became a prosperous business and George remained at the helm for the next 40 years until he retired. There are many examples of the successes that followed, and with them, George, although quiet and unassuming, became a respected citizen in the district.

He broadened the scope of the nursery and diversified the stock of plants and trees. For example in advertisements from 1930 we can see that he retailed, fruit trees, Rose, Gladioli bulbs (all named) Daphnes, Rhododendrons and '*all kinds of advanced plants*'. Indeed the FLORIST, GARDEN and FARM columns of the Sydney Morning Herald in the 1930s were littered with announcements from "J. Toyer & Sons".

The City Markets had attracted George's attention and he held two stalls there in the late 1920s and early 1930s. From there he sold Climbers, Bougainvillea, Antignon and Hibiscus.¹⁹

This was not George Toyer's only retail venture in the city.

One of the finest buildings in Sydney at this time was the Civil Services Co-Operative store in George Street near the corner of Market Street. It ran through to York Street and had been designed and built for this expanding company in 1926. However just four years later, and in the grip of the Great Depression (1929-1932) a time of great hardship in Australia, the company closed. It had been established in 1871 and was a significant part of Sydney's retail industry. All of its assets, including the building were sold off, to repay debts. In turn the

extravagant, six storeyed building was occupied by the firm of Nock & Kirby's which later became BBC Hardware.

After the Civil Service Stores building was sold and before Nock and Kirby's were established there, it housed, for a short time, something like a high-class market known as the Community Shopping Centre. This market-type retail venture opened on 3 July 1931. J. Toyer & Sons, under George's management, was quick off the mark and by 24 July had stalls in the building and were able to advertise:

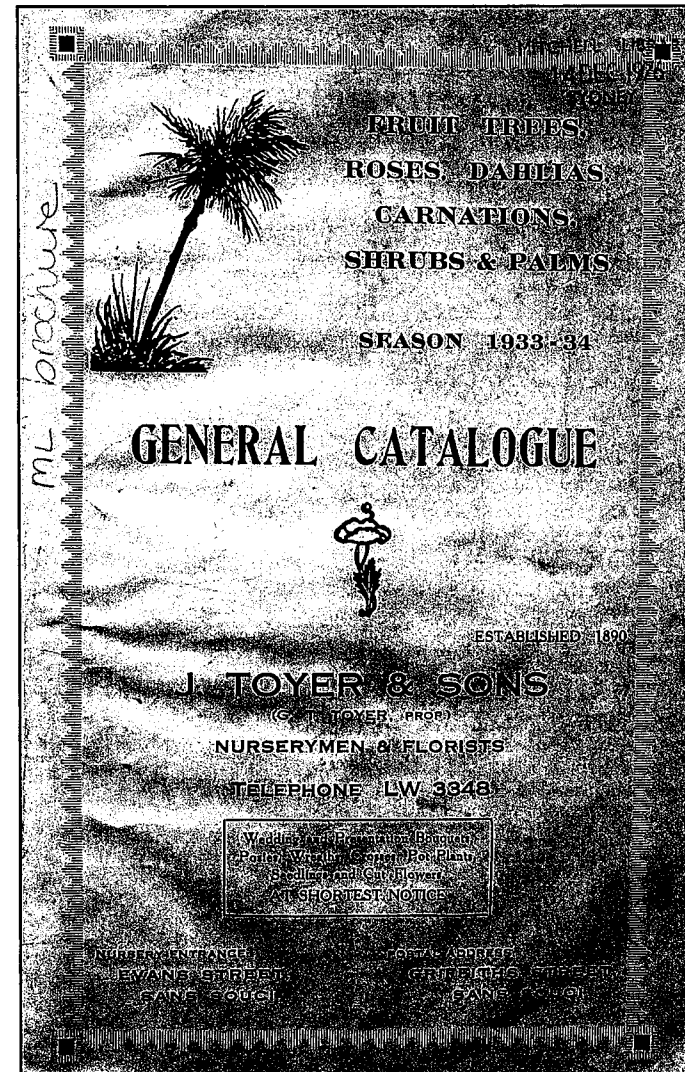


The Civil Services Co-operative store in George St Sydney was built in 1926. George Toyer had 'market tables' there for the nursery produce in 1931

A NURSERY IN GEORGE-STREET,

Direct from Grower to Consumer.

J, TOYER and SON, Sans Souci, have established a Plant and Seed Depot in the late Civil Service Stores, now the Community Shopping Centre. All varieties of Roses, Shrubs, Trees etc for Sale at very low prices. Don't miss this opportunity. Call at Stands 41-42. See R. C. Cookson, Manager, who will be pleased to give you all information and advice free of charge. ²⁰



George Toyer produced this 1933-34 catalogue for the nursery. It is extensive and comprehensive and gives a sound idea of just what was available.

Courtesy of the SLNSW

The Sans Souci nursery catalogue from 1933-4 shows just how industrious George was. Like his father, George always had an eye for promotion and opportunity and, as was his practice, he exhibited in shows and exhibitions on a regular basis.

When a very large annual Flower Show was staged at Newcastle Town Hall in September 1934, George took advantage of the fact that trade displays would be included for the first time. J Toyer & Sons produced the display pictured opposite which was described as, 'a little piece of bushland transplanted into the heart of the city'. This was outstanding amongst exhibits that were brought from three states, arriving by air, mail and train.²¹

The reputation of the enterprise grew under George's control and when an important conference for tree preservation and re-forestation organised by the Forestry



A LITTLE PIECE OF BUSHLAND was transported into the heart of the city by the ingeniously arranged nursery display which was staged by J. Toyer and Sons, of Sans Souci, at today's flower show at the Town Hall. This is the first occasion on which trade displays have been introduced as a feature of a Northern flower show. The exhibit shown here with others of a similar nature attracted a great deal of interest.

The Toyer contribution to displays at the Newcastle Town Hall, September 1934. George Toyer maintained a strong presence for the Sans Souci Nursery. The palms which were a feature of the nursery are well represented here.



CONFERENCE DELEGATES. - From left: Mr. I. S. James (Hazelbrook), Mr. G. T. Toyer (J. Toyer and Sons, Sans Souci), Mrs. and Mr. A. E. Watson, president, Naturalists' Society and Wattle League.

George Toyer (second from left) is pictured here at the Forestry League Conference in 1944.

League was held in November 1944, George was selected as a delegate representing "J. Toyer & Sons, Sans Souci". The conference was wide-ranging but from George's point of view he would have been interested in the motion that plant nurseries be asked to offer for sale a larger range of native plants. Native plants were also to be encouraged for garden use. Interestingly the conference also passed a motion saying that: "in future all electric light and telephone cables in cities and towns of this state should be placed underground". The aim was to protect trees.

The Terrific Toyers

J Toyer & Sons took part in Royal Easter Shows in 1931, 1936-1938, 1940-1941. When George built a large display for the Show in 1948 he carried forward the idea of promoting native trees. His display was enthusiastically received and it was reported in glowing terms:

*Possibly the most, artistically arranged exhibit was that of J. Toyer & Son of Griffith Street, Sans Souci designed to form a rock garden. In this were planted some of the most exquisite of the smaller flora. But this firm did not lose sight of the demand likely to come to them from the land. So one found too, many species of wattles including the attractive Cedar Wattle (*Acacia elata*) and many eucalypts, including the handsome Tasmanian Gum (*E.globulus*)²²*

The reviewer concluded that a 'tide of afforestation' was under way across the state. J. Toyer & Sons of Sans Souci were playing their part. Hopes were high:

*In this collection the Weeping Fig (*Ficus benjamina*) had its place. The shining foliage, the indescribable grace of this Australian, would transform the drabest of streets into an area of beauty. To date, we have, in the main, used it sparingly in parks. Summing it up it may be said, all nurserymen are aware that the tide of afforestation has set in and are making ready to meet the State-wide demand.²³*

The nursery was going strongly at that point. Ned Toyer also continued to exhibit flowers regularly but ran into some bad luck in September 1948. His display was somewhat disrupted when he entered the hugely popular Red Cross flower show. Indeed the Sydney Morning Herald reported on the incident:

J. Toyer & Sons

General Nursery Stock.

Showing over 500 Exhibits at Horticultural Pavilion and Opp. Agricultural Hall, Royal Show.

COUNTRY ORDERS PROMPTLY ATTENDED TO.

Nursery:

6 Griffiths St., Sans Souci.

LW 3958.

For the 1941 Royal Easter Show, George placed this advertisement in the Settler and Farmer, 10 April, p15. He was seeking to cultivate his already established country clients

ORCHIDS TAKEN AT SHOW

A spike of orchid blooms was stolen at the Red Cross Flower Show Yesterday. Somebody snipped off eight blooms while the plant was set aside in the orchid tent for inclusion in the competitive display. The plant belonged to Mr. J. Toyer Jnr., of Toyer and Sons' nurseries, Sans Souci. Attendance at the show yesterday was 7,000, despite the rain. (Wednesday's figure was 10,000) The show will be continued to day, and to-morrow.²⁴

Sans Souci Cricket Club

James Toyer was a self confessed 'cricket tragic' and prior to 1913 he became Captain and Patron of the Sans Souci Cricket Club. This club met at James' house in Griffith Street. Toyer's importance to the club was highlighted by historian Ron Rathbone when he wrote:

*The Sans Souci Cricket Club had been formed in the 1880s and was a regular participant in the annual competition promoted by the St George Cricket Association. Noted more for its gentlemanly conduct than for its skill, it reached the peak of its success under the captaincy of James Toyer in the years before the First World War.*²⁵

One Victor Thomas Trumper had dominated Australian cricket in the years before 1915 in what has been described as a 'golden age' of the game. He was inspirational to cricketers at all levels and, no doubt, James' Sans Souci team discussed the deeds of Trumper on a regular basis.

In 1913 he scored a scintillating 201 against South Australia and was then a member of a strong Australian side which toured New Zealand in February-March 1914. In an amazing feat after coming in at number 9 at Christchurch on 28 February, he smashed 293 runs in 178 minutes.

There were no Trumpers in the Sans Souci team but they did have an aeonian love for the game that was played each Saturday in summer on the cricket fields of the surrounding district.

In the season 1911-12, when he was 46 years old, James Toyer's batting figures for Sans Souci "B" Grade read quite



The great Victor Trumper - an Australian cricket hero in the early 20th century. 'Park' cricketers everywhere tried to emulate his amazing feats.

well. He had 14 innings, was not out 5 times, his highest score was 40 and he compiled 124 runs for an average of 13.7.

James' skill were not only in demand as a cricketer. At this time he acted as a consultant to the New South Wales Cricket Association in his capacity as an accomplished gardener. In August 1911 his advice was sought about the turf wicket that had just been laid at Hurstville Oval. The wicket was laid in preparation for the season which was to begin in October of that year. His report discussed the foundations for the wicket as well as its orientation, drainage, watering and centrality on the oval. He also suggested two or three 'good dressings' of Bulli or Toongabbie soil. James even suggested that a Green's Manchester mowing machine be used. It is clear

The Terrific Toyers

that his combination of knowledge of cricket and gardening was of great benefit to the NSW Association. ²⁶

As a cricketer James was to play many games at Hurstville during the following years. By 1923 he was 57 years of age and one report emphasised this very fact, reporting:

Veteran Jim Toyer covered himself with glory last Saturday. With George Thomas, he helped Sans Souci to put on 43 for the last wicket, and received congratulations all round! ²⁷

James' brother, George living at Tempe and later Portland, NSW, was also a dedicated cricketer. Indeed in 1892 the Toyer brothers were together in the Tempe "A" team. George, eight years older than James, seems to have begun his Sydney cricket around 1887 with the Marrickville seconds. Forty years later George, by then a long term resident of Portland NSW, was coaching the young residents of that town and was said to be, 'invariably present at the Park ground on Saturday afternoons'. ²⁸

George and his wife, Sarah, had moved from Marrickville to take up residence and work at Ben Bullen. After just two years they moved to Portland and George made bricks for the Portland cement company from 1898.

The Toyers were still in the cricket 'news' in 1931 when a group from St Bede's, Pyrmont, made their way, in the back of a lorry, to the Toyer nursery for a sporting afternoon:

Having selected Toyer's Nursery Grounds as the scene of conflict upon taking up the challenge to a return cricket match issued by Marrickville, members of the St Bede's Branch of the Union journeyed by lorry, together with their team friends and colleagues of St Brigid's, in the direction of Kogarah on Sunday, February 22nd.

Marrickville, who finished very strongly, won by an innings. ²⁹

The journalist noted that, 'during the afternoon the ladies visited Sans Souci Baths.' As for the cricket itself visitors finished 'very strongly' to win by an innings.

*

Toyer's Hire Cars 1914-1917

James and the family ran a car hire service from Griffith Street Sans Souci between 1914 and 1917. He was not afraid to

3 MOTORS FOR HIRE

— Day or Night —

Wedding parties a Specialty

JAMES TOYER

Griffith Street, Sans Souci

Telephone Kogarah 348 Moderate
Charges

James Toyer had the first motor vehicles on the Sans Souci peninsula. He made them part of his business in a number of ways. This advertisement from 1914 indicates his level of interest and investment.

The Terrific Toyers

experiment in the fledgling motor transport industry. The idea of wedding parties responding may have tied in nicely with wedding flowers, bouquets and even palm hire for which his nursery became famous.

This came at a time when motor vehicles were beginning to be more and more acceptable to the general public. The advantages of the motor over the horse were all too obvious in the modern world at that time.

The Toyers were not alone in developing a motor hire business. Mr Jude from Rockdale was prominent in the local area as was Mr Adams at Kogarah and a firm named "Wartaka" at Hurstville. They all advertised similar services - but the Toyers had the business on the Sans Souci peninsula, and with James' 'connections' this enterprise, with the help of sons George and Ned, flourished.

Ned was a motor car 'enthusiast' and he would have encouraged his father to become involved with the wonderful new machines at every opportunity. Indeed, the Toyers had at least one vehicle before 1914. This was a 5 seater Belsize which, for unknown reasons, they offered for sale at Christmas time 1913:

For Sale a Belzise (sic), 14-16 hp, 5-seater Motor Car, in good condition lamps generator everything complete, 2 spare tyres, 2 spare inner tubes, tools, cheap, trial given.

J TOYER and SON, Griffiths Street Sans Souci. 30

Belsize motor vehicles were built in Clayton, Manchester, England and enjoyed a stellar reputation amongst motorists. That notion of status would have applied in Australia, particularly in rural Sans Souci in 1913.

James Toyer was always prepared to lend help to a good cause and during World War One there were plenty of those.



This model, fitted with two-seated torpedo body, but identical in other respects . . . £315.

Belsize

Belsize Motors, Ltd.,
Clayton, - - - Manchester.

BIRMINGHAM—28, Corporation Street. LONDON—
J. HEBBLE, 110, 77 New Bond Street. W. BELSIZERS
LONDON AGENCY, Ltd., Dean's Yard, Cavendish Square.
W. EXPORT—A. W. ROSKINGTON, Lloyd's Avenue
House, London, E.C.

15.9 h.p. Four-cylinder car, complete with roomy four-seater torpedo body, or, if preferred, 5-seater semi-torpedo body, hood, screen, spare wheel and tyre, side and tail lamps, horn and tool kit, ready for the road, £350. Same chassis with roomy landaulette body £430.

We will gladly arrange to give you a trial run, but WRITE NOW. Summer will soon be here.

A Belsize 16 hp - 5 seat 1913, motor vehicle similar to one owned by the Toyer family who were pioneers in the use and ownership of motor vehicles on the Sans Souci peninsula.

His cars were sometimes loaned for fund raising events in the district.

During June, 1915, Middle Ward Kogarah staged a fete and 'cafe chantant' at the Masonic Hall, Hurstville, in aid of the Belgian and Polish Funds. A 'café chantant' was originally an outdoor café where small groups of performers performed popular music for the public.

James Toyer sent along a 'decorated motor car' and this allowed the boys from the Kogarah School Fife and Drum band to travel the edges of the procession and collect donations along the way.

The procession departed from Kogarah Station, moved to Carlton Station, and on to Hurstville led by the St George

District band. The band from HMAS Encounter played at Hurstville Station. The 'cafe chantant' which commenced at 8pm was well attended. ³¹

A PLEASANT OUTING.

The lady Voluntary Workers Committee, headed by Mesdames Shambler and Thomas, had a most enjoyable picnic to Cronulla on Saturday afternoon, March 17. They assembled at the Loop, Sans Souci, at 2.30 p.m., where two of Mr. Toyer's large motor cars were waiting to convey them to Cronulla. Several of the ladies went in surfing, while others went for a blow on the beach.

At 5.30 p.m., they adjourned to the large shelter shed for tea which they had brought with them. The tables were loaded with all kinds of dainty cakes, sandwiches and fruit. After tea they all walked round by the rocks and Mrs. Shambler took a fine group photo of all the company. The charge of 2/- was collected from each lady to pay for the hire of the cars, and should there be any money above that charge, it will be given to the Voluntary Workers Fund.

A start was made for home at 7 p.m.. all arriving there by 8 p.m., after a most enjoyable outing. Amongst the company was Mesdames Shambler, Thomas, Graham, Powell, Anderson, Nance, Bown, Horton, Kelly (2), Naylor, Blythe, Smith, Selmon, Wyatt, Congdon, Brokenshire and mother, Misses Wyatt, Hooper, Gear, Lomas, Hespe (2), Brokenshire, Congdon Holyoake, Robinson, Messrs. Horton, Wyatt, and Selmon. ³²

1918 proved to be an eventful year for the Toyer family. In April, James had a weatherboard cottage constructed at 6 Griffith Street. ³³

The Buses and Cottage at Loftus

During the 1914-18 War, Australian military forces established a training camp between Audley and the coast at Artillery Hill.

James Toyer supplied buses to transport soldiers and equipment from Sutherland and Loftus to the military camp. His son George drove the buses and no doubt he long remembered the spectacle of the camp and the many gunners they transported.

The drive itself would have been hazardous - down the steep winding hill from Loftus to Audley and then up Artillery Hill to the camp.

Some of the colour of those times can be gained from published reports and, as usual, The Sydney Morning Herald was at the forefront. In April 1914 it reported on a fascinating aspect of local history:

UNDER FIRE: ARTILLERY IN ACTION. THE HOWITZERS. BATTLE AT NATIONAL PARK.

Howitzers and eighteen pounders were in action all yesterday at National Park, and the hills echoed and re-echoed to the roar of artillery. It was the show day of the Field Artillery, and no less than seven batteries performed their training manoeuvres under the critical eye of Sir Ian Hamilton, Inspector-General of the Oversea Forces. A curious contrast was presented at National Park. On the heights the khaki-clad artillerymen were dashing through the scrub, wheeling the guns into action and filling the air with shrapnel and thunder. Down in the valley thousands of peaceful citizens rowed along the banks of the river, scarcely

sparing a thought for the strenuous scenes being enacted above them. ³⁴

Equally fascinating and important to local history was this report from November 1915, involving members of the 5th Brigade marching into Sydney via Moorefields and Cook's River:

The (5th) brigade left its training quarters at National Park on Sunday and marched into Moorefield Racecourse that night. They bivouacked there and spent Monday there but broke camp at 6.30 yesterday morning and had dinner at Cook's River....

Later when the brigade reached Sydney people crowded footpaths and windows to catch a glimpse.

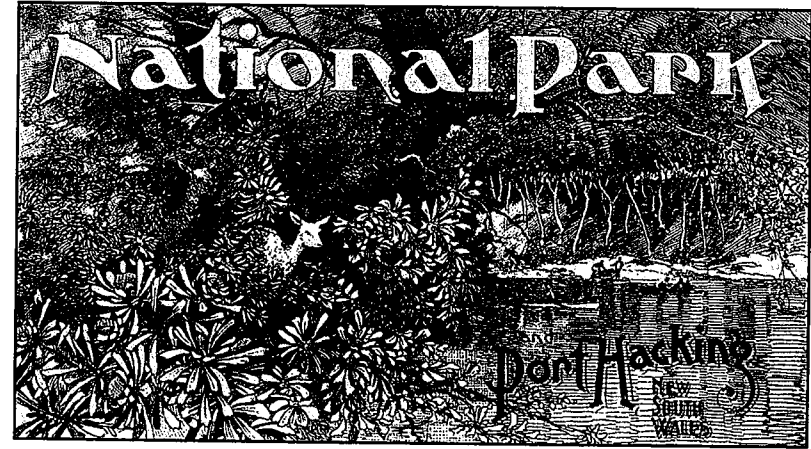
It was a unique spectacle and one that Sydney will long remember. ³⁵

With the military transport contract James' business interests were extended across the George's River into the Sutherland Shire.

The Royal National Park Motor Bus Passenger Services

Around 1914 also the astute James Toyer had noticed an increase in the 'thousands of peaceful visitors' and motor traffic that came to the nearby National Park every week.

The Trustees of the Park, recognising the same trend, negotiated to have the rail line extended down to Audley but the logistics of this proved too difficult and, in an official view, unwarranted.



The Royal National Park, south of Sydney, attracted James' attention as a business opportunity. His sons George and Ned were involved in a range of transport services there.

Indeed, in April 1914, the Minister for Works refused to approve the works or even see a deputation which sought to interview him. The Minister said that the, '*urgency of this work depended only upon the patronage this line would receive from holiday seekers and visitors to the park.*' ³⁶

Rather, the Trustees, enjoying a relatively quiet period at the beginning of World War One, decided to establish a motor service from the rail station at National Park Station to Audley. This, they reasoned, would be more flexible and a great deal less expensive. It would become popular because it was a 'user pays' system and in some way would atone for the lack of the rail extension.

James Toyer, motor proprietor, sat up and took notice; he heard the knock of opportunity at his door. Ned, his young motor mechanic son, Ned, was also excited by the prospects.

After all they were already running motor buses down that same steep road and up to Artillery Hill. Accordingly, the Toyers believed, justifiably, that they would be at the forefront of any applicants who applied to run the proposed new service.

After lodging a compelling and well-considered application, James Toyer was granted permission by Sutherland Council to run a motor bus passenger service between Sutherland and Loftus Station and National Park in September 1915.³⁷

Visitor numbers did not, as expected, decrease, and the Park Trustees therefore pursued more government funding to rebuild the Public Pavilion accommodation facility. In the following year a motor garage, laundry, new stables, Trustee's boatshed and cow shed were constructed and the road in the vicinity of the dam was widened.

The attention to roads in the park was important to the Toyer enterprise. With his winning of the bus transport contract came permission to build a house, garage and workshop which would smooth the way for the new undertaking by the men from Sans Souci.

James would have been delighted to have these applications approved. His business interests in the Shire were growing strongly and later in 1915 he proceeded with the building of the brick cottage, garage and workshop at Loftus.

Just prior to this time his son, George, was firmly entrenched with his work managing the nursery at Griffith Street, Sans Souci. However, a great deal was happening in George's life around that time. There had been on-going discussions with his father about the great new opportunity at Loftus. Furthermore, George had met and fallen in love with Dorothy Robinson (1895-1970) 'one of a trio of well-known promising girl swimmers'.³⁸

Dorothy was a local girl who had honed her swimming skills when her parents Albert and Gertrude had been lessees

at the Brighton Baths between 1903 and 1906. The Robinsons also ran a boatshed at Taren Point and from there Dorothy was known to ferry passengers in a rowing boat for 6d each.

She and George were married 2nd October 1915 at Kogarah and exactly one month later George commenced operating the fledgling bus run from Loftus to Audley. The newly married couple lived in the brick cottage at Loftus which was 'headquarters' for the nascent bus run. In February, 1916 the Sutherland Telephone Exchange was opened and the Toyers made some sort of a minor historical achievement when they became the first local subscribers.³⁹

A series of family memories and press reports shed light on what those pioneering days were like. Motor transport was taking over from the horse and the world would never be the same again. Beryl Monk, George and Dorothy's daughter recalled:

*When my father, George married, he and my mother went to live in the brick home which James had had built at Loftus as a base for his motor buses. It was whilst George and Dorothy were living at Loftus that I was born. My father, George, drove the buses to Audley and the military camp. At that time there was no licensing.*⁴⁰

The site for the cottage was determined by previous usage of the land which was within the boundary of the National Park near Loftus and the Highway to the south. Through the 1880s and 1890s horse-drawn transports operated from this area which constituted their depot.

George and Ned Toyer, in their daily work, were witnesses to the end of an era. Horse buses had been operating between Loftus and Audley since before the turn of the century



Bedford or Gardener's Cottage built by James Toyer c 1915 and demolished 2013. This served as the centre of the Toyer transport operations in the Royal national Park and was situated near the Prince's Highway at Loftus.

Sutherland historians A&F Midgley reported on that time and eventuality:

About this time (1915) Daniel Lobb, a carrier of Otford, ran coaches from Loftus Junction to Audley Pleasure Grounds in The National Park. The fare each way was ninepence (8¢). Lobb's coaches were kept busy as The National Park was a very popular pleasure resort. An October 1906 newspaper report said that a thousand people had journeyed to The National Park one Sunday 'taking advantage of the new timetable'. A week earlier, a four-wheel Lobb coach drawn by two horses and plying from The National Park bolted out of control. It sustained much damage as it careered into Sutherland. Lobb's coachline suffered the fate of others when the advent of motor omnibus competition forced it out of business. ⁴¹

Daniel Lobb had been operating horse-drawn coaches for quite some time and an 1894 report said that one, 'could secure the use of a vehicle from Sutherland or Loftus Junction ... by sending a notice by post to Mr D Lobb, Loftus Junction'. ⁴²

When James won his contract to operate motor vehicles within the park a natural progression to a cottage, workshops and garage took place in that area.

George was married on October 2nd., 1915, and it was agreed within the family that the bus service should commence almost exactly one month later on the 1st of

through the Park which had been officially proclaimed in April 1879.

The Toyers make no mention of it but in 1915 horse-drawn vehicles continued to operate between the same destinations as theirs. Motors overlapped with horses in what was an historic moment for transport in Australia. The

The Terrific Toyers

November. The newly married couple occupied the recently completed "Gardener's Cottage".

From time to time James had described himself as a 'contractor' and was, of course, familiar with bricks and buildings. The cottage was built in the then popular Federation style and a deal of attention was paid to the way the bricks were laid in an intricate herringbone design. It is

regarded as one of the earliest brick houses built in the Shire and was comprised of seven rooms.

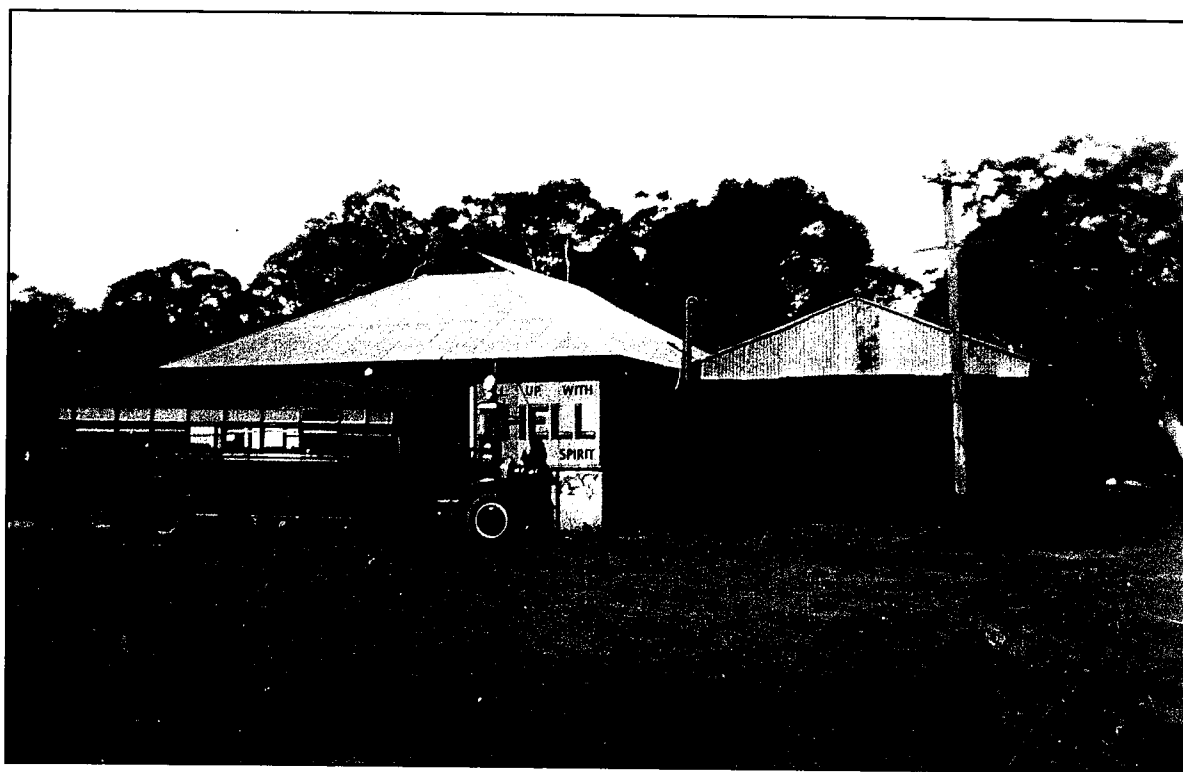
To facilitate the bus service James also constructed large galvanised iron sheds and buildings for a garage and workshop.

The local press in the St George area has always had a fascination with the Toyer family and from time to time published detailed interviews which reflected their character, enterprise and importance to the area. The Toyer & Sons Nursery preceded the National Park bus run and the experience gained there was to stand them in good stead later. About the Sans Souci days it was reported:

A significant feature of the business of J. Toyer & Sons is the fact that they were amongst the very first to adopt motor transport in the conduct of their business. With George (b 1891) at the helm an old 2 cylinder "Albion" chain drive on solid tyres was a familiar sight chugging along the sandstone roads of that early era.

In the same interview the Toyer's involvement with early motoring in the Sutherland Shire and indeed in New South Wales was noted and emphasised. George's move from Sans Souci to Loftus after his marriage and to launch the bus service was described thus:

Thereupon George packed up his 'traps' and took up his abode at Loftus and with brother Ned successfully ran the service with the old



The garage and workshop at Loftus were a significant part of the transport operations into the park. Young Ned Toyer worked here to service the range of vehicles they had.

Photograph courtesy of Sutherland Shire Council Library

solid tyred "warriors" many of whose names are now only to be found in the halls of fame of museums specialising in vehicles of the pioneering era or books of that period. 43

Then in the early period of World War One motoring history continued to be made from the Loftus base and Sydney's National Park. Some interesting and vital details of the service were revealed in this short par:

When James and George began operations from Loftus it was noted that he would have one car with eleven passengers and the driver while the other would carry sixteen passengers and the driver. The fare was set at 1/- each way with the service planned to commence on 1st November. 44

These vehicles were two Albions, the body of which was of the charabanc type. The engines were of two cylinders with a chain drive. These were the same vehicles which had been used these to transport soldiers to and from the top of Artillery Hill. It defies the imagination as to just how these early machines performed as they strained up the enormously steep, and to this day, infamous, hill from Audley. From the beginning one of these ancient carriages was in the hands of Ned Toyer who learned the motor trade as an apprentice at T.D Chapman's Darlinghurst motor garage. In 1907 this was described as, 'one of the finest motor garages in Australia'. 45

At that time, Ned, George's younger brother, was just 14, and had recently joined the family team as a driver. In one sense, being an apprentice in the motor trade, fitted him for the job. He revelled, not only in the driving duties, but also in having the 'run' of the large motor workshop which was at his at his disposal. Neither Ned's father nor brother were trained



James Frederick (Ned) Toyer was a young man when he drove and serviced the family's fleet of buses and cars from c 1914. He served an apprenticeship in the motor trade at T.D Chapman's Darlinghurst motor garage

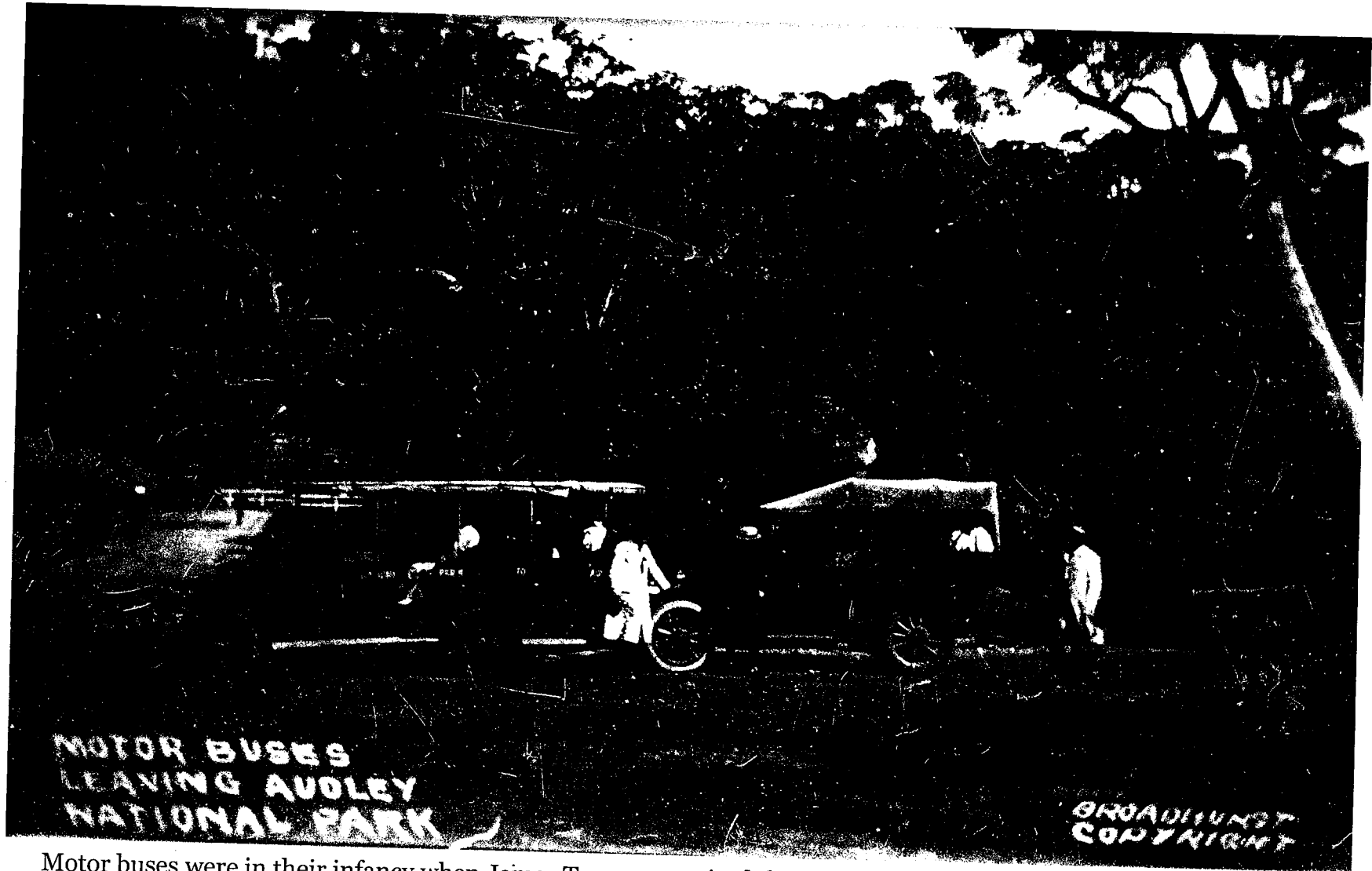
The Terrific Toyers



Ned and George Toyer drove buses of this type from their Loftus Garage headquarters and the railway station to the causeway at Audley. They operated in the era when the motor vehicle was gradually taking over from the horse drawn vehicles that had previously run this route.

Photograph Courtesy of Sutherland Shire Library

The Terrific Toyers



Motor buses were in their infancy when James Toyer recognised their potential. His fleet of charabanc type vehicles were a real attraction for visitors to the park. His drivers, including Ned and George needed no licence and they carried between eleven and sixteen passengers up and down the steep hill between Audley and Loftus.

Photograph Courtesy of Sutherland Shire Library

The Terrific Toyers

mechanics. In an interview some 75 years later Ned Toyer recalled:

We used to ferry passengers from the train station at Loftus to popular spots in the National Park".⁴⁶

Then, soon after the Toyer licence was established, and acknowledging the growing presence and importance of motor transport, a Motor Station was built at Causeway Flat (sometimes Dock Flat)⁴⁷

Ned Toyer passed away in 30 October 1998 but 20 months prior (14.2.1997) he had made an audio tape of his memories. This tape is available at the Sutherland Library and it sheds a great deal of light on the times. Consequently I have quoted several sections of it in this essay.

Referring to the family bus service, Ned, in a transcribed version of the tape, had this to say:

The Toyer's National Park bus service was operated until 1921. On week-ends and holidays there would be 12 buses meeting the trains coming into National Park Station. Each train would be met and the bus would be loaded for its trip down the hill. They would be brought back at nighttime. It was very busy.

On Sundays there were eight trains in the morning into National Park and in

holiday time before lunch there would be about 14/15 trains, most of them crowded. There were very few cars then and public transport was well used. Picnic parties



Dock or Causeway Flat was built to accommodate the growing motor transport services to the Royal National Park.

would have their big picnic baskets and there might be 15, 20 or 30 people in a group.

No accidents and they got used to the hill though the vehicles were a pretty rough lot compared to day. They had a mixed fleet - Albions mainly. James drove a Sunbeam, there were two Wolseleys, a Russell, names unknown today but they were vehicles converted into buses. The biggest bus they had, a Napier, carried 30. Most carried about 14 or 15. ⁴⁸

During the early days of the National Park, Edward Small was a prominent employee. Edward Samuel Small was born at Ryde in 1859 and married Susan Isabella Lockard in 1885. Edward found employment as a labourer and gardener and later became a Park Ranger and eventually Overseer of the Royal National Park. At that time Edward and his wife lived in a ranger's cottage at the park. Their daughter, Nellie Louisa Small (1896-1966), fell in love with the dashing young motor bus driver, Ned Toyer and they were married on 25 February, 1921 right when the Toyer involvement with transport in the park was coming to an end

Ned was also able to put social aspects into the context of his work and surroundings. The solidarity of the whole Toyer family was evident in the work and times they enjoyed at National Park. In the same transcription he recalled:

In the morning people would come out to get the boats and there would be a limited number of boats available. There were about 180 boats, but you had to get there early to get a boat. They would crowd onto the bus to be early for the boats, and would be jumping on the bus as it moved off. The buses would finish up with about three times the number they were supposed to carry.

As bus drivers, they spent the morning going backwards and forwards bringing people down, until lunch time. There was a big recreation room down the bottom of the hill with dining tables and all the Toyer family would come out, the girls preparing lunch for the drivers and those collecting the fares.

There were about three or four conductors and they would jump off one bus and jump on the next one collecting fares. Everyone had lunch together. By the time lunch was over, there would be a couple of hours to spare and they would go for a swim or something else. Then the people would be starting to head home and they would be occupied for the next 4, 5 or 6 hours carting people back again. The last train used to leave somewhere about 8.30 p.m. ⁴⁹

With George away living at Loftus and running the bus operation and Ned often being occupied there as well, James revised his thoughts about the Sans Souci Nursery. In fact, at the end of December, 1917, he offered for sale "12 Ideal homesites on Toyer's Estate" at Sans Souci. The local firm J.F.Hegerty & Co Auctioneers from Rockdale handled the sale. ⁵⁰

The results of this sale are not recorded but it may be presumed that the original estate was diminished at that time.

Indeed, over the next two years James, by then 55 years old, gave a deal of thought to his retirement. With the nursery contacted through the war years he finally made the decision to sell the bus operation at Loftus and June 1920 announced in the city press that he was selling up. He advertised a 7-room Brick House (Gardener's Cottage) & large galvanised iron sheds and buildings used as a garage and workshops. Furthermore he announced:

As Mr Toyer has decided to retire from business he has instructed us to sell his valuable and well-known plant and RIGHT OF ROAD TO NATIONAL PARK, which is considered to be the best-paying road in or around Sydney, and is a good proposition for anyone requiring an easy run and sound business.⁵¹

The end of the National Park Motor Bus

Toyer's Estate Sans Souci

Few Min. Tram, Beach, and Baths.
12 IDEAL HOMESITES, 44x132.
City Water and Gas alongside.
Easiest of Terms.
£2 per Lot Deposit. Balance, 36 month-
ly payments. Interest 5 per cent.
AUCTION SALE ON THE GROUND
To-day (Saturday,) Dec. 15, at 3 p.m.
Plans available.

J. F. HEGERTY & Co., Auctioneers,
Rockdale. Tel., 40 Kog.

Part of the Toyer Sans Souci Estate was placed on the market in 1917. This foreshadowed a move towards retirement for James Toyer.

Ned Toyer recounts that, 'my father sold the bus company to Mr Ted Newlands (sic)[Ted Newlyn] in 1921.

Edward "Ted" Newlyn remained a director of the Sutherland Motor Bus Company in April 1924 but by February 1925, as Managing Director, he listed the company, based at Loftus, for sale.⁵² Newlyn was a fellow director, with James, at the St George Motor Boat Club and a prominent cricketer for the St George Cricket Club in the 1920s.

Sutherland Shire Motor Bus Company discontinued trading in 1925 and the Park Trustees purchased the buildings. That following year they leased the buildings, cottage, garage and workshops, to Mr Reginald T Hammill, proprietor of "The Rest" at Audley, who also ran the motor service from that

GENUINE Cash Buyers are cordially invited to examine and try any of the following Cars, which I have for sale, and no further use:—Reg. DIATTO TAXI CAR, ready for the road, at £175; 6-Cyl. STUDEBAKER, 1918 model, any examination, £200; Reg. 4-Cyl. 1916 Model STUDEBAKER, in good order throughout, £300. 30-h.p. AUSTIN, in good order, and condition, £400.

J. TOYER and SON,
MOTOR GARAGE,
LOFTUS, NATIONAL PARK,
Right at Station.

During 1920 the Toyers advertised a range of motor vehicles for sale from their Loftus Motor Garage.

time.⁵³

There is no record of who occupied the cottage in later years but the licence to occupy expired in 1991.

Historian Judith Carrick has noted the cottage's importance to the history of transport in the area and the

significant role played by the Toyer family. Accordingly, she writes:

*there have been several attempts to have the complex preserved; firstly some 20 years ago by some concerned citizens, and secondly, in 2003 under the guidelines of the Audley Draft Masterplan. However, the garage has been demolished (between 2001-2006) and only the house remains and it is in bad repair.*⁵⁴

Ned and Army Enrolment

In May 1918 Ned tried to join the Australian army. To do this he changed his name to James 'Edward' Toyer. He also increased his age saying he was 18 years and 4 months old (he was born 2.8.1901 and so was 16 9/12 in May 1918)

His service records show that when the army, having passed him medically fit, asked for the consent of parents, James and Agnes replied, in July 1918, "Re your notice re the Parents of the above cannot give consent as he is a long way off the age". - signed James and Agnes Toyer.

We have seen above that Ned was married in 1921 and after that time his father, James, set him up in a fitting and turning business.

From about 1920 James Toyer was moving towards retirement and in 1921-22 he built a brick home near the corner of Evans St and Rocky Point Road. James and Agnes made their main home there but later had a week-end cottage at "The Mall" Leura, and another at Como named "Sunnyside".⁵⁵

Right on the corner of Evans St and Rocky Point Road he established a service station adjacent to his new home. While Ned's brother George continued with the nursery business, Ned worked the service station for his father. Ned was, of course, admirably suited to that business which historian Ron Rathbone has called, 'one of the area's first service stations'.⁵⁶ Ned's skill, training and experience was

put to good use in yet another of his father's pioneering ventures on the peninsula.

Four years later, displaying some of his father's entrepreneurial flair, Ned sought to expand his activities when he began his own bus company, the H & H Bus Co., in partnership with his friend Ray Harrigan.

Harrigan, like Ned, was a motor mechanic and lived at Brighton-le-Sands. They rented premises at 146 Prince's Hwy., Arncliffe and ran their bus between Brighton-le-Sands and Central Railway in the city. From the very beginning the route did not pay and the partners applied, in April 1926, to Marrickville Council to alter the original route so that they travelled along Cook's River Road, Lymerson Street, Unwin's Bridge Road, over Sydenham railway bridge then Marrickville, Victoria, Edinburgh and Edgeware Roads to Central Railway. The hope was that demand for their service would increase because of the route change. Unfortunately for the two mechanics the bus company failed and in May 1926 they applied to the courts for voluntary sequestration and later entered bankruptcy.⁵⁷

Gladys Emma Toyer (1893-1950)

Gladys Emma Toyer, was born to James and Agnes at St Peters in 1893.



James Toyer's home and service station on the corner of Rocky Point Rd and Evans St., Sans Souci.

The Terrific Toyers

She was to become a prominent figure in Sans Souci 'society' through her many appearances as a soprano of considerable talent. Gladys performed regularly at fund raising events and concerts in the district.

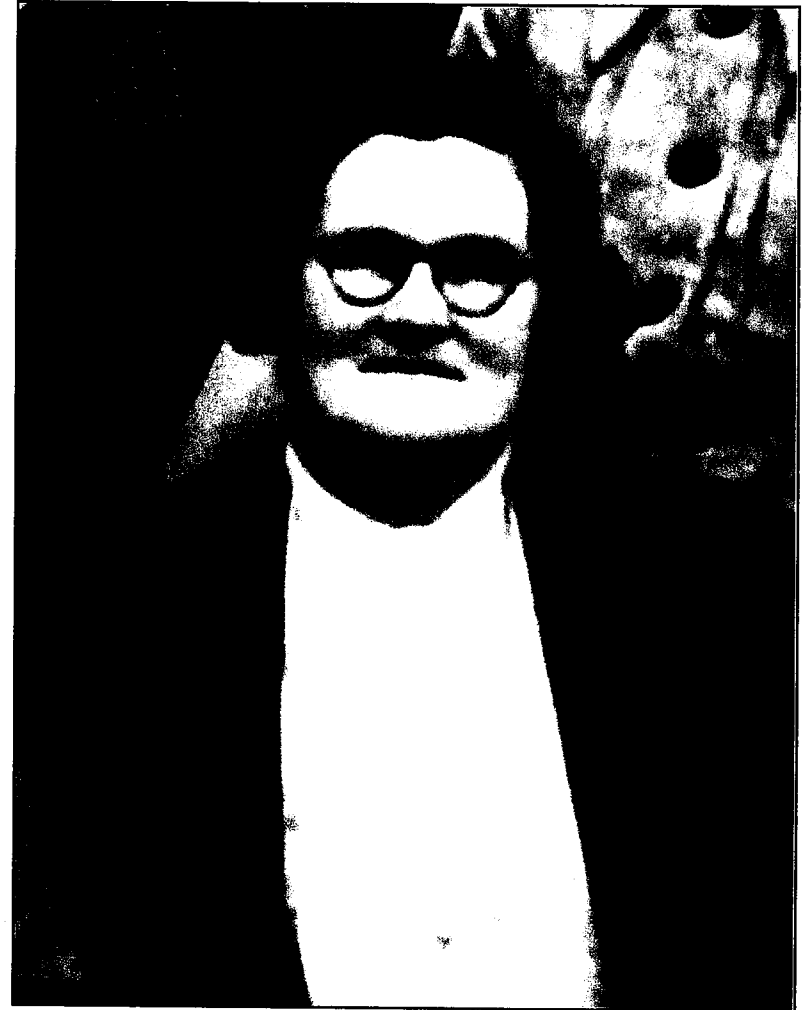
This was particularly the case during the time of World War One when many local people banded together to raise funds in support of the war effort. At the very beginning of that war a 'Patriotic Concert' was staged at Rockdale Town Hall. The evening took place on Wednesday 21st October. Gladys arranged the concert program in consultation with Miss Ada Gee, the prominent music teacher. At that time Gladys was a very confident 21 year old.

Ada Gee was to travel to London in 1917 to take up studies at the Royal College of Music.⁵⁸ She returned to Sydney at the end of 1919 and was described as 'one of Sydney's leading accompanists and teachers. One of her major interests was voice production and it was reported that she 'assiduously attended the star concerts and grand operas to study that discipline.' Gladys Toyer's musical career could not have been in better hands.

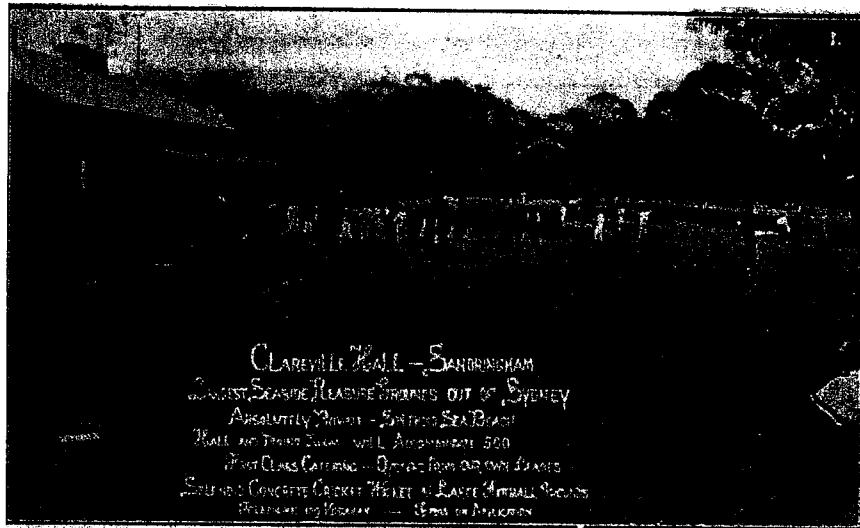
The concert from start to finish was a real Toyer family affair. James Toyer ensured that the hall was:

*tastefully decorated with flags, palms and floral designs and it is doubtful if it ever presented so gay an experience.*⁵⁹

Gladys' brother George acted as Hon. Secretary for the concert and her sister Ethel took part in a piano duet. During the concert itself Gladys received 'hearty applause' when she sang 'April Morn' followed by an encore of the ever popular 'Ave Maria'. A reviewer of the concert described both of these as 'happy selections'.⁶⁰



James' Toyer's daughter Gladys (1893-1950) was a talented soprano and sang in many concerts, social events and celebrations in the Sans Souci area. She also gave a number of important concerts in the city of Sydney. Photograph courtesy of Heather Fitzgerald



Clareville Hall, Sandringham: Gladys Toyer sang here many times in fundraising concerts for local Sans Soucians.

Taking part in this concert was Malcolm McEachern (1883-1945) who went on to be an internationally recognised bass singer. Very appropriately at the Rockdale concert he sang his version of a stirring patriotic song "A Song of Empire".

The Australian Dictionary of Biography tells us that during World War One, McEachern:

toured with the Melba Concert Company; he performed often later with Melba as well as with other leading artists, including Ella Caspers, Ada Crossley, and Marie Narelle. In 1918-20 the McEacherns toured Asia and North America. From Chicago they went to England in 1921 where McEachern was hailed as one of the finest bass singers of his day and as an outstanding oratorio singer. He appeared with orchestras under Sir Henry

Wood and (Sir) John Barbirolli, in Shakespearian productions and in Gilbert and Sullivan operas. ⁶¹

The St George District band played in a 'spirited fashion' outside the hall before proceedings commenced. During the interval Miss Kate Chappelow sang "Please Give Me a Penny" - this resulted in her being showered with coins amounting to 16/4d.

Accordingly it may be seen that the Toyers were in esteemed cultural company at Rockdale Town Hall on that October evening and that the 'Sans Souci Soprano' Gladys Toyer, was not phased by taking to the stage in front of her prominent peers.

This was not the first time that Gladys had appeared in such company. Indeed earlier in 1914 she had been part of an important event at St James Hall, Sydney.

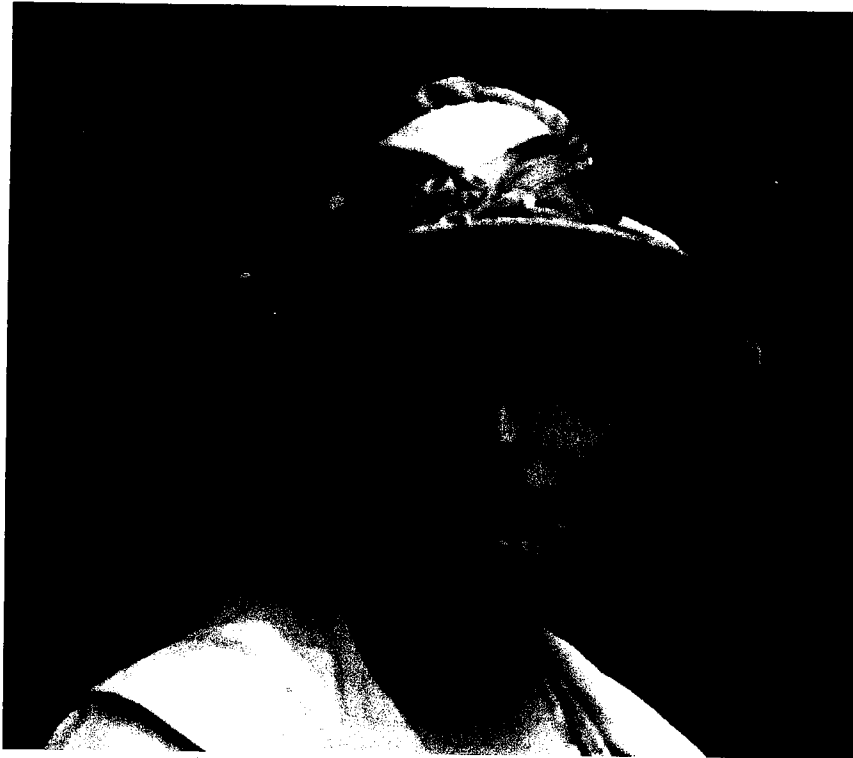
Miss Elizabeth Smith and Miss Gladys Toyer (from the studio of Miss Ada Gee) will join in a song-recital at St. James's Hall - on Saturday, June 20. Miss Vera Cree, Messrs Frank Hutchens, Carl Gotsch, and Malcolm M'Eachern will assist. The plan will open at Paling's tomorrow. ⁶²

Six months later her career received a welcome boost when she was awarded the Hallewell Memorial Gold Medal at the Sydney College of Music for Advanced Singing. ⁶³

Quite apart from the war concerts and music studies, Gladys remained prominent in a range of fund raising activities in the area. One of the largest of these, by far, was the concerted effort to help finance the St George Hospital.

The Clareville Hall, at Sandringham was the venue for one such affair in February 1920. This was supported by no less than 300 local residents. The Sans Souci Orchestra and the St George Banjo Club supplied music for dancing and singing.

The Terrific Toyers



Ada Brokenshire (nee Benney) - she was involved closely with the Toyer family in almost every fundraising and social event that took place in Sans Souci for three decades.

Gladys Toyer, Miss T Hespe and Mrs W Hayward sang during the evening.

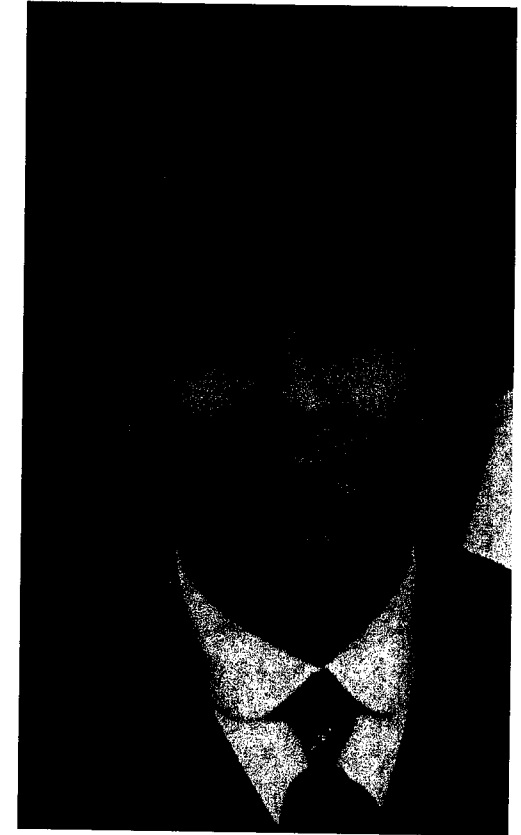
Throughout the 1920s Gladys' career continued strongly and she was often reported in both the Sydney and local Press. Gladys always supported her father in his endeavours, first as an Alderman, and then, as in this case, as a fundraiser for the growing St George Hospital.

The Brokenshires and the Toyers

Interestingly one of the great 'social lions' of the Sans Souci area, Mrs Ada Brokenshire, wife of the pharmacist and photographer, Joseph Brokenshire was MC for the event at Clareville Hall.

She was indefatigable and seemed to be involved in every charitable event imaginable. In 1920 she was also captain of the Sans Souci women's cricket team and president between 1929 and 1932. Her daughter Edith, was a contemporary of Gladys Toyer and although 11 years younger, they regularly appeared at concerts and events with during the 1920s. The Brokenshire/Toyer relationship is clear when we read of the fundraiser at the Motor Boat Club.

James Toyer supported his family in a very consistent way and when his second daughter, Edith, married in December 1920 he decorated the Congregational Church at Gray Street Kogarah with:

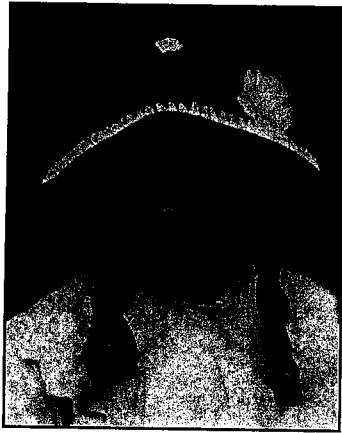


Joseph Brokenshire the Sans Souci pharmacist and photographer. His photographs of the local area have become an historical treasure. His pharmacy was near the corner of Bonanza Parade and Rocky Point Road

The Terrific Toyers



Sans Souci Ladies Cricket team A & B Grade - Ada Brokenshire (centre of front row) was the President and Organiser between 1929 and 1932



Edith Brokenshire often performed at the same concerts with Gladys Toyer. The families were close friends

huge palms and white Agapanthus, while a pretty wedding bell was suspended amid asparagus fern, over the bridal party. ⁶⁴

Then Gladys married William Wentworth Hawdon at Kogarah in 1926 when she was 33 years old. The Hawdons had two children, Jean and Geoffery William. Her marriage and subsequent family curtailed Gladys' singing career but through and after the years of World War One Gladys was a significant part of the Toyer family at Sans Souci.

*

James Toyer announced his candidacy for Alderman at Rockdale Council in February 1918 :

I beg to announce that in answer to numerous requests, I am a Candidate for the Election of Alderman for the Extraordinary Vacancy caused by the death of the late, respected Alderman James Cameron Crawford, and trust my previous municipal experience and local knowledge may be of benefit to you. ⁶⁵

When that election was held, James proved his already established popularity in the local area. He polled 241 votes which was almost twice as many as the next candidate, Alfred E. Chuter. Toyer was to serve on the Council for six years between 1918 and 1924. During that period James was very

**Ratepayers Scarborough Ward
Municipality of Rockdale**

I beg to announce that in answer to numerous requests, I am a Candidate for the Election of Alderman for the Extraordinary Vacancy caused by the death of Late respected Alderman James Cameron Crawford, and trust my previous municipal experience and local knowledge may be of benefit to you.

JAMES TOYER

Sans Souci.

POLLING DAY—Saturday, February 9,
from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.

active with Council matters. In 1923 he was Chairman of a committee that looked in to land resumption for public parks - something that had frequently occupied his thoughts. He was also a Trustee for the St George Hospital. One of his associates at that time was H.B. Primrose of "Primrose House" fame.

Other concerns as a Scarborough Ward Councillor saw James working hard for Sandringham School and paying a deal of attention to the state of the roads in the area. Napoleon Street, Russell Avenue and the approaches to the Taren Point ferry were of special interest to him.

Through his time as Alderman he was vitally concerned with the establishment of the St George Motor Boat Club.

James & St George Motor Boat Club

One of the great 'treasures' of the Sans Souci peninsula is the St George Motor Boat Club which stands on St Kilda Point



Saturday 23rd April, 1921 - The St George Motor Boat Clubhouse on St Kilda Point is officially opened - James Toyer was President.

in Wellington Street. For almost 100 years now the club has prospered and grown and while boat racing is no longer at the level of years past, it remains one of the outstanding social

venues of the district. Its history will, no doubt, be extensively celebrated in 2020 when its centenary year arrives.

The Toyer family, embracing several generations, has extensive connections with this club. They began with the indefatigable James Toyer. Quite apart from the impressive range of other activities that James undertook, he was also the President of the St George Motor Boat Club between 1921 and 1928. It has been recorded of James that:

His foresight and diligence over these formative years established the standard our club enjoys today.
66

The opening of the club house took place, in a blaze of sunshine, on Saturday 23 April, 1921. The Kogarah Municipal Band opened the proceedings that day with 'alluring strains'. This was followed by President James Toyer's invitation to Mrs T.J.Ley to open the club doors, an act which was performed 'amidst cheers' from the large assembled crowd.⁶⁷

T.J.Ley was, at that time, the MLA for St George, and when invited to respond he remarked,

*To-day's gathering of residents on this spot will prove to be of historical value, the grandeur of the surroundings are worthy of being more widely known.*⁶⁸

After this the day was comprised of a series of events which included a tour of the clubhouse, afternoon tea on the lawn, a series of novelty water races and, eventually, dinner. This was a grand affair, set in illuminated grounds. served in a marquee, Dinner, in which some 180 people took part, was served in a huge marquee. An oriental theme prevailed which was fostered by, 'a profusion of fruits and flowers', and, 'many Japanese lanterns'.⁶⁹



T.J.Ley, MLA for St George in 1921 when the St George Motor Boat Club was opened

After dinner there were, of course, more speeches and toasts. James Toyer led these with a toast to 'The King'. This was followed by a toast to 'The Day we Celebrate', and in reply to this toast, Colonel Lamb, observed,

*that the day was a red letter one in the history of Sans Souci. He had travelled the world, and had seen nothing better than he had that day. He predicted that the Club would develop into a big social organisation. The position was an ideal one the great expanse of river in front of the Club House being absolutely incomparable for racing purposes. The water was calm at all times. He congratulated the officials as these gentlemen must have worked very hard to place them in the wonderful position they were that day. He would use his best endeavours and try and assist to make it grow in the future, and the Kogarah district should feel very proud of it.*⁷⁰

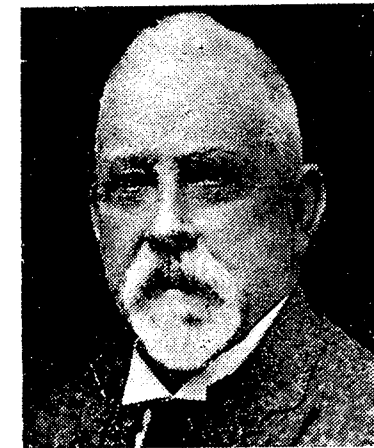
In recognising the founding officials of the club, Colonel Lamb, was paying tribute not only to Toyer but those who surrounded him. These included some of the outstanding citizens and characters of the district.

The first Provisional Directors in February 1921 included James Toyer as Chairman, E.J.Flaherty, E. Newlyn, G.J.Hughes, F.W.Lundberg, S.D.Anderson, A.S.Davis, R.N.Steenbohm, J.C.Walker, and W.Makin.⁷¹

Of these J.G.Hughes was an outstanding contributor to the Sans Souci community.

He was a builder, and in that role built "Ellesmere" at Kogarah Bay and "Blanche Cottage" on the corner of Rocky Point Road and Wellington Street. He operated a boatshed and tea rooms on the waterfront, and was deeply involved with the establishment and construction of the tidal baths there in 1897. Two of his sons Cecil and George Jnr served with the A.I.F. during World War One. They enrolled from their Plimsoll Street home.

During the seven years of James Toyer's presidency many social and fund raising events were staged at the club. These necessarily brought him into further, and continued contact with Sans Souci identities. Of these the ubiquitous Mrs Ada Brokenshire was a close



G.J.Hughes was prominent at the St George Motor Boat Club and was an outstanding Sans Souci identity



St George Motor Boat Club Ball, Brett's Hall, Kogarah, Wednesday 31 August, 1921, James Toyer (tall man 4th from left in front row) and Ada Brokenshire (in elaborate costume 7th from left in front row) are both prominent in this wonderful photograph.

associate and she was never more prominent than at the Motor Boat Club. During the early period she arranged a monthly 'Ladies Evening'. Gladys Toyer, then at the peak of her singing career, performed.

ST. GEORGE -MOTOR BOAT CLUB.

The monthly ladies' evening took place on Wednesday, July 27th. at the Club House, when the attendance was larger than on any previous evening, and an enjoyable time spent. Musical items, games, and competitions were indulged in. The followed supplied items, which were well received and appreciated. Misses G. Toyer, A. West, B. Cummings, E. Coops, Mesdames Shambler, Maskey, and Hordern, and Mr. Delaney, whilst Mesdames Childs, Maskep, Miss Toyer and Mr. Lundberg supplied the music.

During the evening Mrs. Brokenshire, M.C., thanked all present for their attendance, also all those who had assisted in making the evening such a success.

Judging by the large crowd and the popularity of the ladies' evening, the Club will soon have to enlarge their premises, as each evening seems to surpass the previous one.

Mrs. J. Brokenshire is once again on the warpath for charitable work, and on this occasion has organised a ladies' cricket match (Married v. Single) and dance social, to be held in Clareville grounds and Hall. Sandringham, on Saturday. August 6 (afternoon and evening). The cricket match to start at 2.30 sharp.

The function is in aid of St. George District Hospital and St. George Ambulance. Afternoon tea may be obtained on the grounds also tea will be catered for. The cricket match is free.

The social at night will consist of musical items, dancing, presentation of prizes, etc., Jazz Orchestra supplying music. Admission, Ladies 1/6; gent's 2/-. Mrs. Brokenshire. would like all donations, etc., in by Friday evening, or early Saturday morning, and left at the Pharmacy. Be present and support your local hospital and ambulance. 72

*

'Scarborough House' in Russell Avenue became a Red Cross repatriation hospital from August-September 1919. Sans Souci residents led by James Toyer and hotelier Billy Longton from the 'Prince of Wales Hotel' at Sandringham arranged a "Peace Celebration Picnic". This took place on Saturday 27th September, just 3 weeks after Lady Davidson had officially opened the home.

Longton and James Toyer were well known to one another and just eight months later they were to be amongst the founders of the St George Motor Boat Club.

The 'Peace Celebration Picnic' was a welcome to the servicemen who were the new local 'residents' and a celebration of the ending of World War One.

School children marched from the school to the extensive grounds of the 'Prince of Wales'. That evening the grounds were lit with electric light and Ladies Committee made sure that each child was given 'a real good dinner and tea.' The one condition was that each child must bring its own cup.

A Brass band played and there were merry-go-rounds, slippery slides and razzle dazzles. Dancing was held in Longton's pavilion adjacent to the main hotel building. A major focus remained on the returned soldiers and the nursing staff from Scarborough House. All the men were especially invited to wear their uniforms.



Convalescing soldiers were invited to the "Peace Celebration Picnic in September 1919. Pictured here is "Scarborough House" (Later Primrose House)

Social life was very different in Sans Souci during the early 1920s - the war was over and fund-raising was now directed at the St George Hospital. Just up Rocky Point Road, the hospital was an enormous boon to residents of the peninsula and most did their very best to support this great community establishment. James Toyer, his family and those like the Brokenshires led the charge.

However the period was not without its problems. The virulent worldwide influenza pandemic of 1918-19 led to the deaths of more than 6,000 people in NSW alone. Locally this tragedy caused great problems, not only with those infected, but with the finances of the St George Hospital. The NSW

Health Department only contributed a minimal amount of money and the burden fell upon local citizens. ⁷³

1920-1922 - Village Fair - J Toyer President

James Toyer's involvement in civic affairs was legendary. In 1922, for example, he was President of the 'Sans Souci Hospital Carnival Committee', the group formed to organise the "Sans Souci-Ramsgate Village Fair" to raise funds for the Hospital. This was run over three days at "The Pines Grounds" Rocky Point Road, Sans Souci. The duration of the Fair was described as 'red letter days in the history of Sans Souci and Ramsgate'. ⁷⁴

This was the first carnival held in the district to aid the local hospital. The whole district was said to be in, 'a state of hushed excitement'. ⁷⁵

Amongst the dignitaries present at the opening were W.R. Bagnall MLA and Alderman Matthews (Mayor of Kogarah) little Jean Toyer, who was 9 years old at that time, presented Mrs Bagnall with a bouquet of choice and rare blooms - no doubt from her father's nursery. ⁷⁶

It should be noted that Montague Wyatt, was the Hon. Treasurer for this group.

What a great success this Village Fair must have been. The Friday evening presented an experience described as a 'veritable fairy ground'.

A local journalist who witnessed the event wrote a delightful description:

What with the merry laugh and shouts of the young folk on the merry-go-round and razzle dazzle, and the numerous showmen with their bells and whistles, and the delight of the electric wheels, caused all to forget that money is hard to earn, but easy to spend. ⁷⁷

Sans Souci and Ramsgate Carnival

In aid of our local Hospital
The Pines, Rocky Point Rd.
FRIDAY and SATURDAY,
March 5 and 6 Officially Opened,
Friday afternoon
3 p.m.

Boxing Contests (in 4 rounds)
WALLY WEEKES v. TOM STANNARD
PETER DEPENA v. WILL WATKINS
and other Artists.

The Popular Comedian, **Geo-gie Marsh.**
Parto's Comedy Company (Stiffy & Mo)
Gipsy Narrelle (Futurist)
Ventriloquist.

Merry-go-round, Razzle Dazzle, Side Shows of all kinds
Battle of Confetti, 10 o'clock each night
Open Air Dancing

Magnificent Spectacular Parade, TO-DAY (SATURDAY)
Procession forms up at Sans Souci 2.45 p.m.

Come and see our Hayseeds and youngsters turn out
Plenty of Music. Plenty of Fun and stacks of prizes

Prizes will be drawn at our Social and Dance at Clareville
Wednesday, March 17.

Ald. J. TOYER, President. Mrs. E. F. OSBORNE, Hon. Sec.
M. R. WYATT, Hon. Treas.

The Carnival of 1920 - Toyer and Wyatt, so prominent at the school were President and Hon. Sec. respectively for this outstanding event held at Lovett's Estate, bounded by Rocky Point Road, Alice Street and Hillview St.

The following day the much anticipated parade took place. This was described as, 'the most remarkable procession held in the St George district, being one mile in length.' 78

The children were up bright and early decorating and touching up long un-used go-cart, prams, and billy carts for the procession, which was to start at 2.45pm.

79

This colourful word picture will resonate with later Sans Souci residents who attended Sans Souci Primary school and took part in the wonderful processions from Ramsgate, down Rocky Point Road to the school. We can see that the procession idea had long been in use and was here beautifully utilised by James Toyer and his committee to draw undivided attention to the Village Fair.

Apart from James and Jean Toyer, George was singled out for his contribution to the success of the Fair. All in all a Toyer triumph.

James Toyer was still President of this organisation two years later when, in November 1922, the Village Fair was again held at "The Pines" grounds, courtesy of E.W.R. McMillan. Planning had begun back in July when a meeting was held to appoint a range of officers.

Despite poor weather this Fair belatedly went ahead. It was, from all reports, an outstanding success.

This was typical:

..... the committee should feel well pleased with the result — everything went off splendidly. The Fair was opened by T. J. Ley accompanied by Mrs. Ley (who was presented with a beautiful bouquet), on Friday afternoon, and a representative gathering assembled. The procession on Saturday afternoon was the largest and finest ever seen in the suburbs, and was a great credit to the organisers. It was led by the chief marshall,

Mr. Osborne as the 'Sheik' and Miss Doreen Blake as 'Joan of Arc'. The Mayor and Mayoress of Kogarah and Rockdale, with another visiting lady, Mrs. Ferguson, acted as judges. ⁸⁰

One very interesting prize, in 1922, was won by Mrs Clarke of Alice Street Sans Souci for 'six scones made with Aunt Mary's self raising flour'. ⁸¹

LOOK OUT FOR SANS SOUCI-RAMSGATE VILLAGE FAIR
in aid of
ST. GEORGE DISTRICT HOSPITAL.
to be held on
Pines Grounds, Sans Souci, Oct. 26, 27, and 28, 3 to 11 each day.

Fair will be opened on Friday afternoon, at 3 p.m., by T. J. Ley, Esq., Minister for Justice.

Show of all sorts—Merry-go-round, Hazzle Dazzle, Hoop La. Wheels, Cookery Competition, Ice Cream, Refreshments. Fun for one and all.

A Grand Procession will take place on Saturday afternoon, from Point, Sans Souci, starting at 2.30 sharp. Prizes for best decorated cars, Sulkies, Lorries, Displays.

Tabloux, Worst Turnouts. Prizes for Juveniles, etc.; also for best Fancy Dress, Most Original, Comical and Worst Costumes.

Come along and support your local Hospital.

Mr. J. TOYER, President. Mr. LYDON, Hon. Treasurer.
Mrs. J. BROKENSHERE, Hon. Secretary.

After the Village Fair was all over there was quite a 'spat' related to the bands that were to play in the procession. The Kogarah Municipal Band was advertised to take part. However, on the day they did not appear. Their concern was over whether or not they should lead the march. The matter was actually raised in a Kogarah Council meeting. It was said that the procession chief marshal, Alderman James Toyer (Rockdale), told the Kogarah band to 'get out' if they did not like the decision after the usual draw for positions had taken place. As it transpired James Toyer was not the chief marshal at all. This position was filled by a Mr Osborne. So there was a

mess. The above account was raised in the "Evening News", a city newspaper. ⁸²

At Sans Souci Mrs Ada Brokenshire was taking instructions on the matter from her committee. In defence of their marshall and overall organisation she wrote to the "Evening News" which published her letter:

Sir.— I wish to contradict a paragraph In your paper of November 14 in reference to Kogarah and Rockdale Bands playing in the procession held on October 28 in connection with a village fair at Sans Souci in aid of St. George District Hospital. It has caused a great deal of unpleasantness, and I would like to settle same. The contradiction is that Kogarah Band did not draw first place, Rockdale did: and that the marshals did not muck up the procession, as one of Kogarah's aldermen had stated In the council. The committee has endorsed the marshals' action in this matter. We have received congratulations from far and wide on having the finest procession yet held in any of the suburbs, and the committee is to be congratulated on the splendid success attained. The sum of £ 450 was the result of the fair in the cause of charity. I have been instructed by my committee to write you.—MRS. J. BROKENSHERE For and on behalf Sans Souci Hospital Village Fair Committee. November 27 [1922] ⁸³

So, Ada Brokenshire, it must be agreed, was not just a fundraiser supreme but also a defender of the organisations in which she participated so wholeheartedly. In this case she defended, amongst others, James Toyer who had given so much to the local community. Net proceeds from the Fair totaled £ 451. ⁸⁴

**Parents and Citizens' Assn.
Sandringham (Sans Souci) Public School.**

Opening of the New School Buildings

By Mr. P. BOARD, M.A.

(Director of Education)

Saturday, November 8th

At 3.30 p.m.

All residents are cordially invited to attend.

M. Wyatt, Principal.

Ald. J. Toyer, President.

T. J. Abier, Hon. Sec.

Celebrating the opening of the new school buildings in 1919 at Sans Souci. Toyer and Wyatt were again prominent in proceedings.

Sans Souci School & James Toyer

The Toyer family always lived in close proximity to the Sans Souci Primary school on Rocky Point Road. This school was known as "Sandringham School" for almost 40 years, until in September 1923 the name was changed to Sans Souci. The first teacher, William Ross, opened the school for enrolments on Monday 20th April 1885 but by the end of that year only 21 pupils had enrolled.

Lessons were conducted in an unlined wooden schoolhouse which measured 6.4 metres by 4.9 metres. The Education Department at that time adhered to a policy of building with wood because they could not build schools

affordably or quickly enough to meet demand. In March 1889, local resident, Joseph Carruthers, became Minister for Education and he was directly opposed to the effectiveness of building with timber. Indeed, writing to the Department of Education's architect Carruthers said:

*I again reiterate my strong disapproval of the blind and foolish policy of erecting wooden buildings where brick can be utilised at a reasonable cost.*⁸⁵

This stated preference for brick buildings would, no doubt, have been pleasing to James Toyer, given his former occupation as a brick-maker during his youth.

Further additions of both land and buildings were made during the years between 1899 and 1919. By that time James Toyer was the newly-elected President of the Parents & Citizens Association which had been formed three years earlier to address the crying need for further accommodation at the school.

Just as a sidelight it must be noted that James' brother George who lived at Portland NSW, was in 1931, elected as president of the P&C for the twenty-sixth year in succession. Community service was Toyer family trait.

The existing buildings at Sandringham School were designed for 260 pupils yet by the end of 1917 there were 480 pupils enrolled. Mr. Ley, M.L.A. had said, in March 1918, that he recognised that accommodation was not nearly sufficient. The P&C Association, pursuing their announced cause, campaigned strongly throughout the period.

Tenders for the new school building were due by 21 November 1918. The two-storey building with six classrooms and extensive office and a large staffroom was completed in less than 12 months and opened on Saturday 8th November 1919.⁸⁶

By 1921 enrolments had grown to over 650 and by 1928 there were 22 classes with 1,100 pupils enrolled.⁸⁷

In his opening speech, in 1919, Mr. Peter Board, M.A. C.M.G. Director of Education, pointed out that all credit for the large new building was due to Toyer's P&C Association.⁸⁸ Refreshments were provided by the Ladies Committee and Gladys Toyer was among those who provided a musical program.

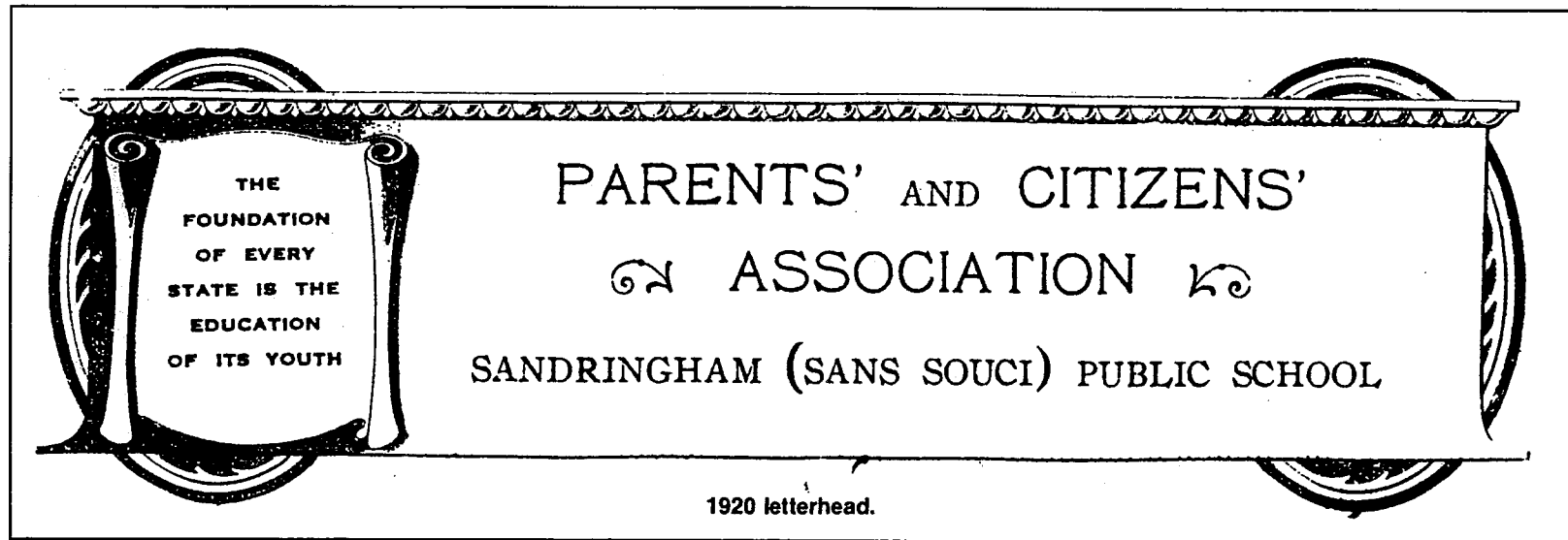
If further proof of the Toyer's intimate association with the school is necessary the following report should suffice:

The most pleasing ceremony took place at Sandringham Public School on Friday last, in the presence of the Principal, the staff, all the children, and Alderman Toyer. A flagpole erected on Empire Day had been moved into a more prominent position, and a new Australian Flag, generously donated by Alderman Toyer, was broken by Miss J. Toyer, his little daughter, amidst the cheers of the whole school. The Principal (Mr Wyatt) in a few appropriate words told the children, who had presented the flag, and why he had given it to them. "Because", he said, "Alderman Toyer saw and understood the value of education and wanted every boy and girl in Sandringham School particularly, to understand its value too".



Sans Souci P&C c1922 - Rear, A.E.Laurence, E Osborne, J.J.Ahier, M.Wyatt. Front, J Toyer (President) Mrs A Brokenshire (Secretary) J.Lydon (Treasurer)

The flag was then hoisted amid cheers and the strains of the National Anthem. The function was brought to a close with cheers for the King, Our boys at the front, and returned soldiers, and a rousing one for Alderman Toyer. The Principal was presented with a bouquet of red, white and blue flowers, for Mrs Wyatt.⁸⁹



As might be expected James Toyer had built a 'grand garden' around the flagpole which was situated west of the old school bell. 90

One of the young pupils who witnessed the unfurling of the flag that day was David Toyer (1912-1975). He was the Great Nephew of Alderman James Toyer and one can only imagine how proud he would have felt at that time. David was the son of Frederick James Toyer (1888-1971) and Amy (nee Grenfell)(1891-1985) and began at the school in 1917.

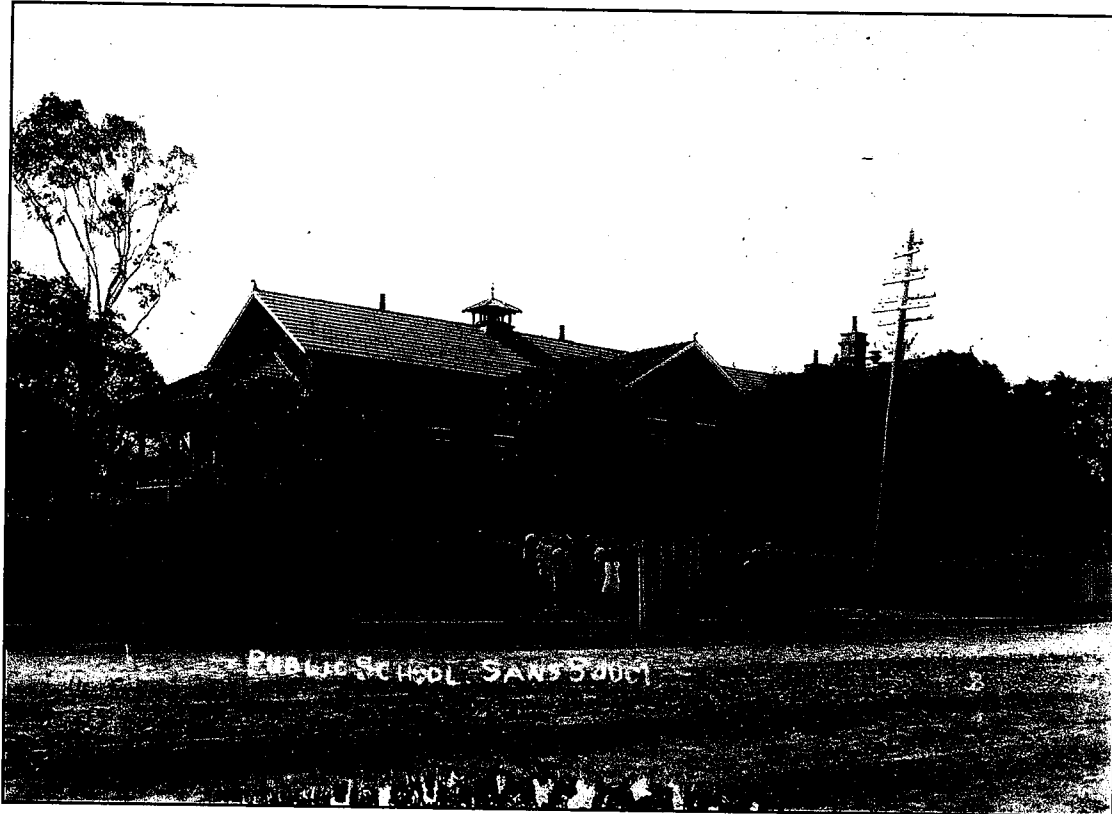
Very fortunately Robyn (b1949) David's daughter, had the foresight to interview her father and record his memories; particularly those of Sans Souci school. This institution holds such an important place in the history of the peninsula that, with her permission, I intend to quote at some length from Robyn Ravelje's extensive hand-written notes. These shine a wonderful light on the school, the times and the Toyer experience there. Robyn recorded:

My father, David Toyer came with his family to the Sans Souci district in 1916 and attended Sans Souci Public School, then known as 'Sandringham Public School, from 1917.

David's brothers Arthur (1910-1995) and later Eric (b 1922) also attended the school as did Robyn and her sister Shirlie (Canham). Robyn's sons also attended the school. She recalls that her Uncle, George Toyer, often donated trees and shrubs to the school and some of those plants are still in the school grounds today (i.e. 1985)

Another former pupil, Vic Colvin, remembered that, in the 1930s, 'all running and football events were conducted at "Toyer's Paddock" '. One can easily recognise the Toyer/Sans Souci School involvement.

Robyn, continuing with her father's memories wrote:



A Joseph Brokenshire photograph of Sandringham (Sans Souci) School c 1920. Just one of many great images of the area from that time.

The school in my father's time consisted of the main block running along Rocky Point Road and a shed which housed the toilets. A long corridor ran the length of the school block and at either end were two verandas. Mr Wyatt was the headmaster and at one time was the only teacher so all pupils were in one long room with a different blackboard for each grade.

Montague Rowe Wyatt (1863-1938) had been born in Pembrokeshire, Wales, in 1863 and migrated to Australia with his parents William and Georgina aboard the "British Peer" in July 1865. He married Sophie Burrows (1876-1936) at Marrickville in 1893. Montague Wyatt came from Petersham school, began teaching at Sans Souci in June 1894, and remained there until 1922.

Quite apart from his work at the school, Montague Wyatt was a prominent member of the Sans Souci Progress Association. At the July meeting in 1906 Wyatt raised a motion that: *The meeting resolve itself into a public one, for the purpose of considering the best means of connecting Rocky Point with Comyn's Point (Taren Point) either by punt, ferry or bridge.*⁹¹

History shows that the wait for the punt was ten years and for the bridge, 59 years ! One might say that Wyatt was ahead of his time.

He taught generations of Sans Soucians and, of course, had close contact with the Toyer family, many of whom resided directly opposite the school in Griffith and Evans Streets.

Wyatt, like his close community associate, James Toyer, was a keen cricketer, and they were team mates in many sides representing Sans Souci.

When James' daughter, Ellen, was married in 1921 it was Wyatt who proposed the toast to the parents of the bride and bridegroom. Montague Wyatt died at his residence "Wyrowba", 647 Rocky Point Road, Sans Souci.

David Toyer recalled that most children walked to school, often barefooted, but those who lived at Sandringham or Doll's Point enjoyed a ride on the steam tram. Truant officers were

prominent and visited the homes of children that had not turned up at school.

Quite apart from attendance scrutiny, the pupils were visited once a week by the Reverend H.R. Wilson from St Paul's at Kogarah. He was known to the pupils as 'Hatless Harry' because he never conformed to the style or fashion of the days when almost all men wore a hat. Harry Wilson was rector at Kogarah between 1905 and 1921. He was a stickler for church traditions and was much loved by his congregation.

Part of David Toyer's stay at the school coincided with the last two years of World War One and his memories included an interesting sidelight on that war. He told his daughter that:

The girls were taught sewing and during the war years knitted socks for the soldiers. Messages were put in the toes of the socks by the girls and sent to the Red Cross for distribution overseas.

This was a regular effort by schoolchildren and others and was



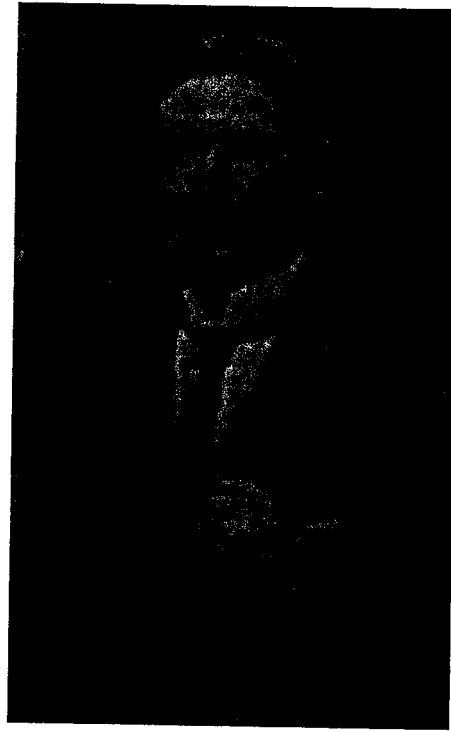
Sandringham School 1895 - The then head teacher, Montague Wyatt, is at the extreme right.

Peter Depena is in the centre of the front row. He went on to be one of Sans Souci's most prominent citizens. He was of African/British descent and in the late 1920s and early 1930s he was an Alderman on Rockdale Council. Peter was also an accomplished boxer and sailor and was Commodore and Life Member of the St George Sailing Club. The park opposite Primrose House at Doll's Point was named in his honour in 1961.

highly praised in the community. It was noticed that the senior girls at Sandringham School had knitted and despatched 120 pairs of socks by mid July 1917 and their aim was to continue with a target of 30 pairs each month. ⁹²

School picnics were the highlight of the year and at the end of December 1917 the Sandringham school held theirs at Woniora Pleasure Grounds. The children marched from the school to nearby Trinder's Wharf in Endeavour Street to board the waiting launches. This event was given by the P&C together with headmaster Mr Wyatt and his staff. They were all congratulated on the financial and social success of their first picnic. ⁹³

When the school held its annual Christmas Tree celebration and prizegiving in December 1920, Alderman James Toyer provided 5 real trees for the occasion.



Montague Rowe Wyatt (1863-1938) in later years. He was a great friend and colleague of James Toyer and they participated together in a host of local events and celebrations. He came to Sandringham School in 1894 and remained until 1922.



Gold mining in the Portland district. On the right is George Toyer (1858-1936), the brother of James Toyer. In Sans Souci, James caught 'gold fever' and invested money and time in his brother's endeavours

James Toyer & Gold

The early Sans Souci years were amongst the busiest and most productive of James Toyer's life. However, despite his long term life as a 'city' person, James Toyer was, from time to time, still attracted to the 'bush' life. Furthermore his instinct for business remained strong and he rarely passed up an opportunity. Accordingly when his brother George at Portland near Lithgow became involved in a promising mining lease James took more than a passing interest.

His brother was George Toyer (b 1858) and like James, was born at Dungog. George had been a miner near Portland and from around 1919 became involved with gold fossicking at Williewa Creek. He moved a little westward to establish the "Wee Jean" goldmine 8 miles from Portland.

After having worked this mine for some five years, the uncovering of a substantial lode excited local and wider interest. Following some really positive reports in the local press during mid 1924, George made an announcement calling for investor shares.

In Sydney James and his wife Agnes became taken up by the Toyer 'gold fever'. Despite everything else that was going on in their lives, James and Agnes became intrigued. They not only invested in the mine but James became involved in its operations.

These days were recalled by James Frederick (Ned) Toyer who was taken to the site of the mine by his father. Interviewed by Rob Nash in 1996, Ned said that he was taken to Portland to see the "Wee Jean" mine and had the best meal of his life there - barbecued steak and billy tea boiled over an open fire. ⁹⁴

*

The Greengrocer & The Barber

James' nephew, Frederick James Toyer (1888-1971) was born at Marrickville but while quiet young moved with his family to Portland. Then in 1909, at Sunny Corner, he married Amy Grenfell and they lived in Portland in a house that Fred built in Ilford Street. They were to have three sons Arthur (1910) David George (1912) and following their move to Sans Souci in 1916, Eric Gordon (1922). All three boys attended Sandringham School and were the first generation of the family to do so. Arthur was to become a well-known Sans Souci barber, David a motor mechanic and Eric a panel beater.

Indeed Eric's involvement with motor cars led to an ongoing interest in speedboat racing at the St George Motor Boat Club. Just two years before Eric was born his great uncle, James had helped establish this outstanding local club. Eric's sons David (b1947) and John (b1950) both became closely involved with the club. More will be said about their careers later in this essay.

*

By 1920 Frederick Toyer and family had initially established a greengrocery shop on the corner of Myers St and Rocky Point Road.

Soon after, Frederick, described as a 'kind quietly spoken gentle man', moved home and business just across the way to the corner of Russell Avenue and Rocky Point Road. This shop was to become a 'landmark' in Sans Souci and Fred became noteworthy as a the friendly food supplier who made home deliveries by motor vehicle. Indeed he, and the little building there, became part of the Toyer legend in the area.

His wife, however, was the mainstay of this family enterprise as Fred left the business during World War Two and worked at Elliotts Drug Company until his retirement.

He was also absent from the shop for another reason; he was said to have 'gold fever' all his life and was known to, 'go 'bush', from time to time, 'fossicking without a care'. No doubt his longing for gold was fostered during the time he had spent in Portland when his father George had been so involved with speculative mines.

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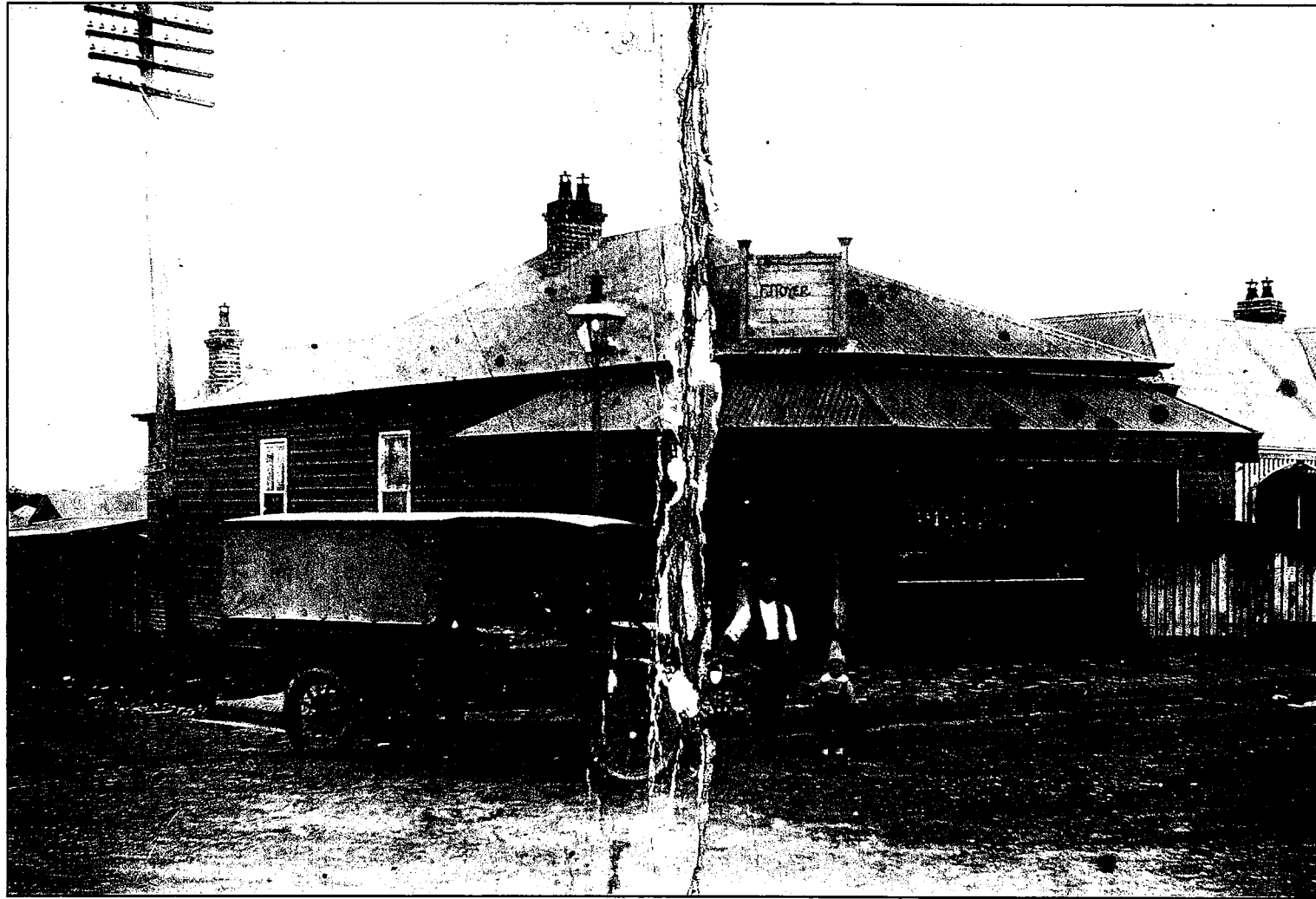
The Toyer corner at Sans Souci is now part of the larger site occupied by the Jameson Building which includes Supabarn. Collectively the complex is titled "Sans Souci Central". It is interesting that they should choose that name because that site was always 'central' to Sans Souci's being. Fred and Amy were to live the rest of their lives behind their greengrocery shop on that corner. They were both very keen gardeners and established a well in the backyard.

Recently I was enjoying a coffee at Bonni & Co., in the Supabarn complex, when Robyn Ravelje (nee Toyer) came along. She pointed out to me that we could indeed be standing right above where Fred and Amy's well had been situated.

About the cottage gardeners, Fred and Amy, it has been recorded that;

they produced their own vegetables and fruit all their lives. Following Fred's death in 1971 Amy continued her vegetable garden [behind the shop ed.] until she was ninety. 95

The Terrific Toyers



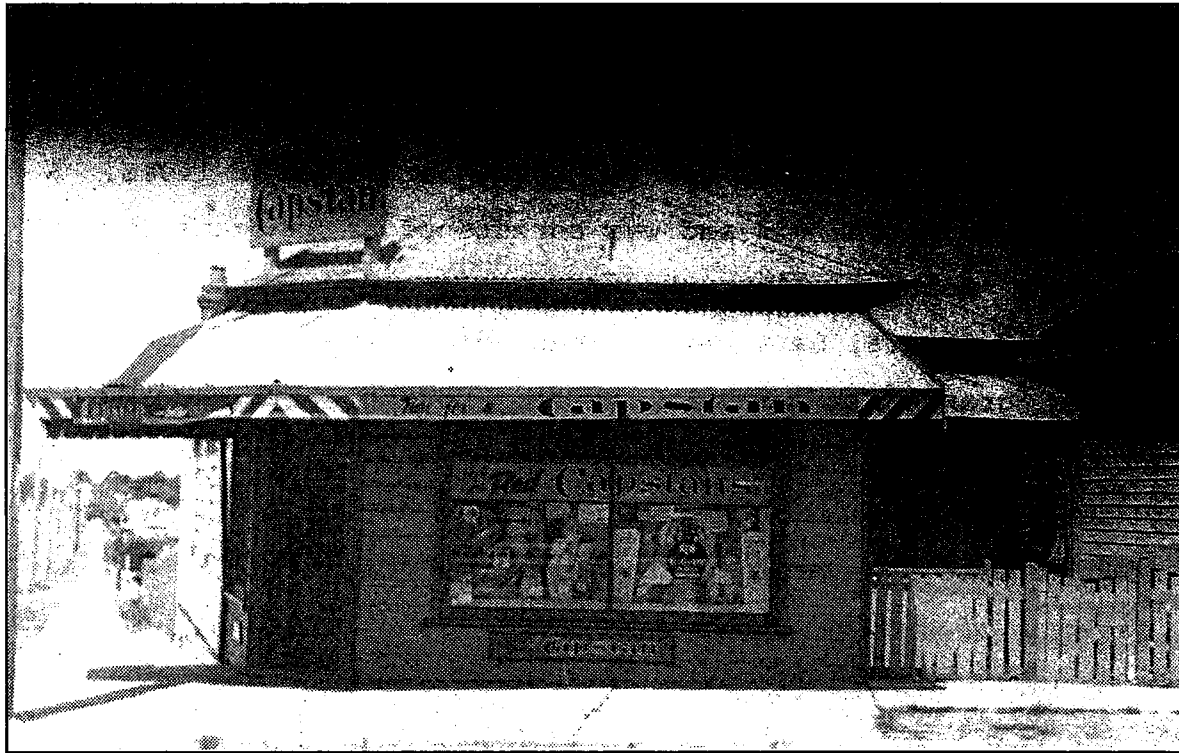
This much damaged photograph c1924, shows Frederick Toyer (1888-1971) with his delivery truck outside his greengrocery shop on the corner of Russell Avenue and Rocky Point Road, at Sans Souci. This is where the Supabarn and Jameson residential complex now stands. The child is Frederick's youngest son, Eric Gordon Toyer (1922-1991)

The Terrific Toyers



Another photograph from 1924 again shows the Toyer greengrocery delivery truck. The Toyer family had always been noted as pioneers in motor transport on the Sans Souci peninsular. They used delivery trucks at the Evans Street Nursery when the horse and cart were still in general use throughout Sydney. Their vehicles were seen regularly on Sans Souci's roads after 1910. Young Eric Toyer is seen here in the back of the truck Here David is at the wheel, Arthur is in the middle and baby Eric is at the right. Cars, trucks and motors were very much a part of their lives.

The Terrific Toyers



Fred Toyer's son, Arthur, occupied the former greengrocery shop, converting it to suit his trade as a barber.

Like James and Ned and George Toyer, Fred made good use of motor vehicles in his day to day business. The photograph on page #50 shows quite graphically just how important they were to the Sans Souci greengrocer. He offered daily deliveries to his customers who mostly lived along unmade roads and rough tracks that were few and far between on the peninsula.

Following Fred's retirement he and Amy continued to live behind the corner shop which was in turn was occupied by his

son, Arthur Frederick Toyer (1910-1995) who converted it to a barber's shop. Arthur married Linda Hill 1932.

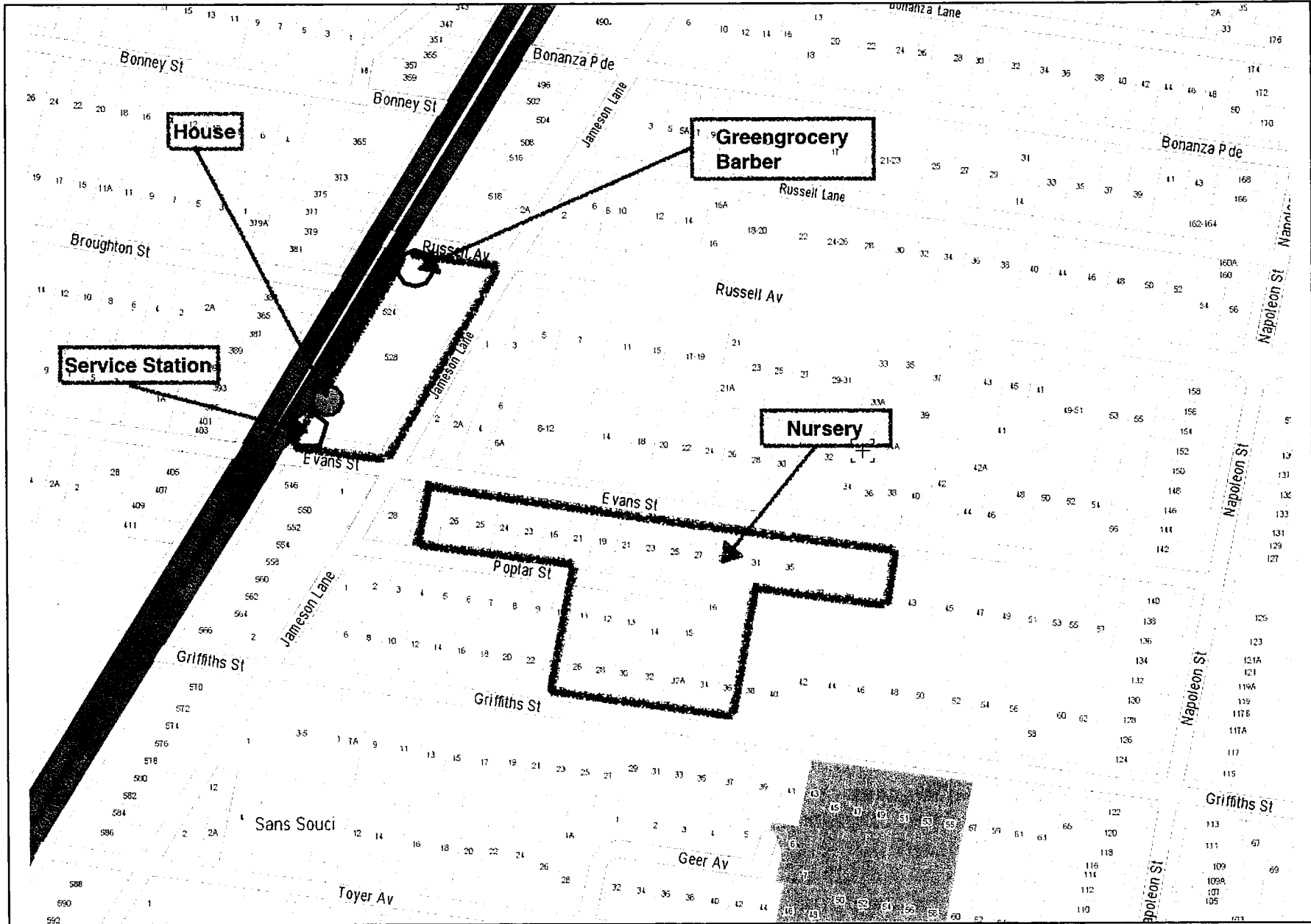
He was a barber for most of his life and many male Sans Souci residents recall having their hair cut in his shop. Like a number of members of his family Arthur was an enthusiastic member of the nearby St George Motor Boat Club which his Grand Uncle James had helped establish in 1920. The Toyer shop stayed in the family until 1974 when an accountancy firm, B. J. Whitelock & Associates took over the premises. Members of the Kamper family were involved with that firm which eventually became known by that name.

The Kamper family in association with the Kaoundouris family eventually developed the entire block between Russell Avenue and Evans St commencing their planning operations in 2007. In the process, the corner shop and a service station and house that James had built on the corner of Evans St and Rocky Point Road, were all demolished.

With the nursery long gone, the Jameson residential and retail complex obliterated an important part of Sans Souci covering ground that, in terms of this essay, is an 'historical site'.

David Toyer (b1947) and his cousin Robyn Ravelje (nee Toyer) (b1949) both recall visiting their grandparents at their home behind the corner shop. In our 2016 interview, David's architectural leanings came to the fore as he sketched out a plan view of their home.

The Terrific Toyers



So, it might be said that the block called “Toyer Territory” lives on, at least in the minds of family, descendants and locals who had the pleasure of a haircut by Arthur Toyer.

*

The following generations: David Toyer: Sans Souci, and the St George Motor Boat Club.

In July, 2016, David Toyer (b 1947) became Commodore of the St George Motor Boat Club.

David is the son of Eric and Noela Toyer, the grandson of Frederick James Toyer, the Great Grandson of George Toyer (1858-1936) and the Grand Nephew of the stouthearted James Toyer (1866-1946) of nursery fame.

Consequently I could not think of a better way to conclude this essay than to write about David. Quite apart from any other aspect of his life, he prolongs the family association with St George Motor Boat Club on St Kilda Point in a conscious and unhesitating manner.

*

In another section of this essay we have seen that David's Grand Uncle, James, played a leading role in the movement that led to the establishment of the club in 1920. Subsequent to his term as the club's first Chairman he was made a Life Member in June 1929.

There followed a number of members of the Toyer family whose lives were intimately connected with the club. They extend down to the present day.



David Toyer is proud to be able to keep the Toyer name 'alive' in Sans Souci. More or less unaware of his Grand Uncle James' part in the founding of the St George Motor Boat Club, he continues to play a significant role there. He began as a fledgling speedboat driver in 1964 and went on to win 15 Australian and Australasian championships.

James' son Ned Toyer, so very much involved with all things mechanical, raced speedboats from the Kogarah Bay Club in the seasons between 1927 and 1929. He had some 'monster' craft including in 1927, "Miss Atlanta" a 16 ft (4.9 metres) long hydroplane with an 8 cylinder Cadillac engine.⁹⁶

His involvement came at a time when power boat racing was thriving and reaching new heights of popularity. Indeed prior to this time Sydney's waterways had been dominated by sailing craft but the rise of power boating for leisure could be witnessed in the advent of organisations such as the Royal Motor Yacht Club, Pittwater (1926) and, of course, The St George Motor Boat Club (1920) itself.

Ned raced with success, and in December 1928 won the club's Edney Trophy for Class A hydroplanes, piloting "Auburn" over a 6 miles course.⁹⁷ He found himself racing against club legends and Sans Souci locals like H.A. "Scotty" Callan and the Shevill brothers from Kogarah Bay.

Of the following generation, Eric Toyer (1922-1991) son of the greengrocer, Frederick J Toyer, had, like a number of the Toyer family, a strong interest in motor cars. Being a born and bred Sans Soucian he was naturally aware of the St George Motor Boat Club and the sport of boat racing which was so popular in his time. It seemed inevitable that he would join the club and race boats there. Eric did join the club and then, later, after 1977, raced in handicap events each weekend for the next decade.

Prior to that time however, his sons, David (b1947) and John (b1950) raced boats at St George and at a wide range of state and interstate courses.

*

David, recalling his teenage years in Meriel Street, Sans Souci, remembered that:

*I first got interested in power boats by watching the Saturday racing at St George Motor Boat Club every weekend in summer.*⁹⁸



"Little Hunter" was raced successfully in the 1960s & 70s. David Toyer had a number of championship wins in this boat.

He is shown here at the Victorian Championships at Melton Reservoir in March 1970 where he scored 3 wins and a second. The boat was an 11'6" long Haines Hunter powered by an 80hp Mercury.

Like many other young men at Sans Souci he frequented the baths in summer. They formed one point of the 'St Kilda triangle', bounded by Wellington Street, the baths themselves and Rocky Point Road. It was from there that the roar of motors and the astonishing speed of the racing craft on the river and bay caught his attention.

The Terrific Toyers

Later he watched the races from the club itself and before long, *'usually managed a ride in the back of a speedboat or two each weekend in handicap races'*.⁹⁹ He came to know drivers and their support crews. The young man's enthusiasm for the sport was obvious and infectious.

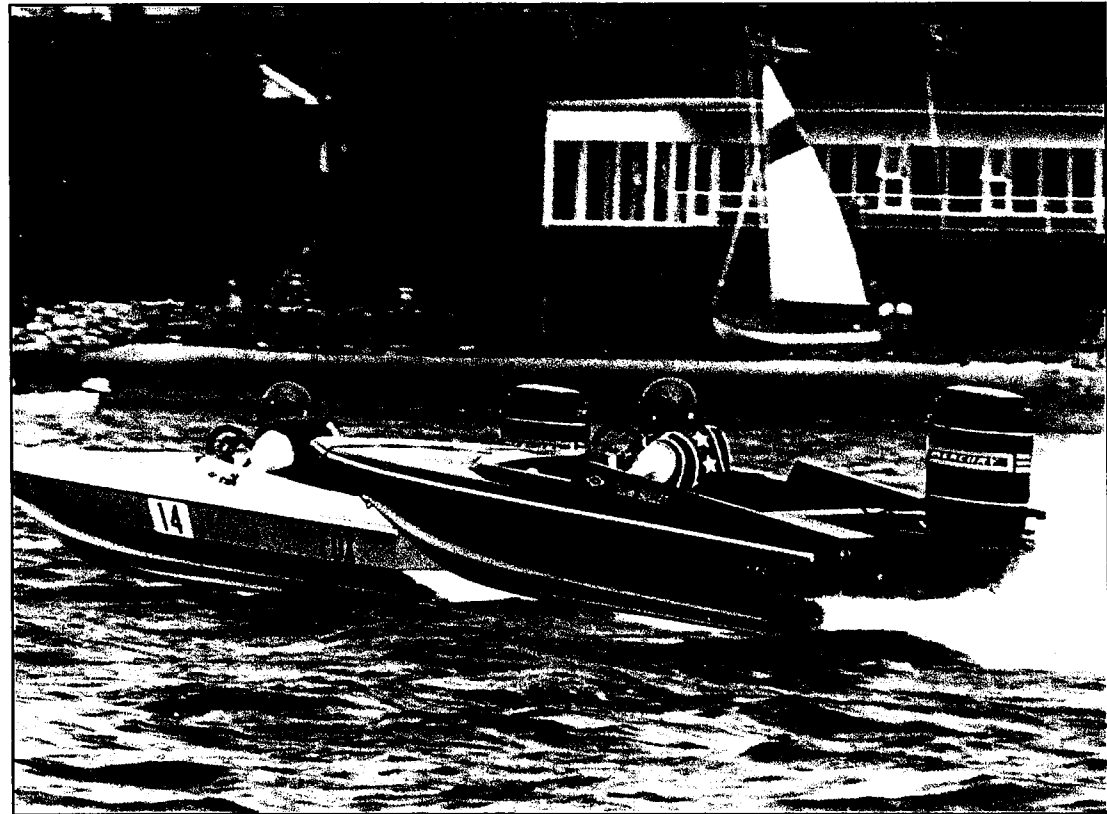
By 1964, when he was 17, he had his racing licence and managed to talk his father into buying their first race boat - an 85HP Mercury powered, fiberglass runabout.

At that time David was not overly conscious of his Grand Uncle James' part in founding the club, for James had died the year before David was born. Nor was he aware that Ned Toyer had raced boats there 35 years before. Indeed he recalls that racing was *'just something I did for myself'* and was not following in (famous) family footsteps. Later David studied architecture at university and was not, in his own words, *'mechanical or anything like that'*.

David's father, Eric, did take part in some races with David in 1964/65, as a passenger in handicap races, but soon realised that he could not *'keep up'* with his son's racing ambitions and left him to his own devices.

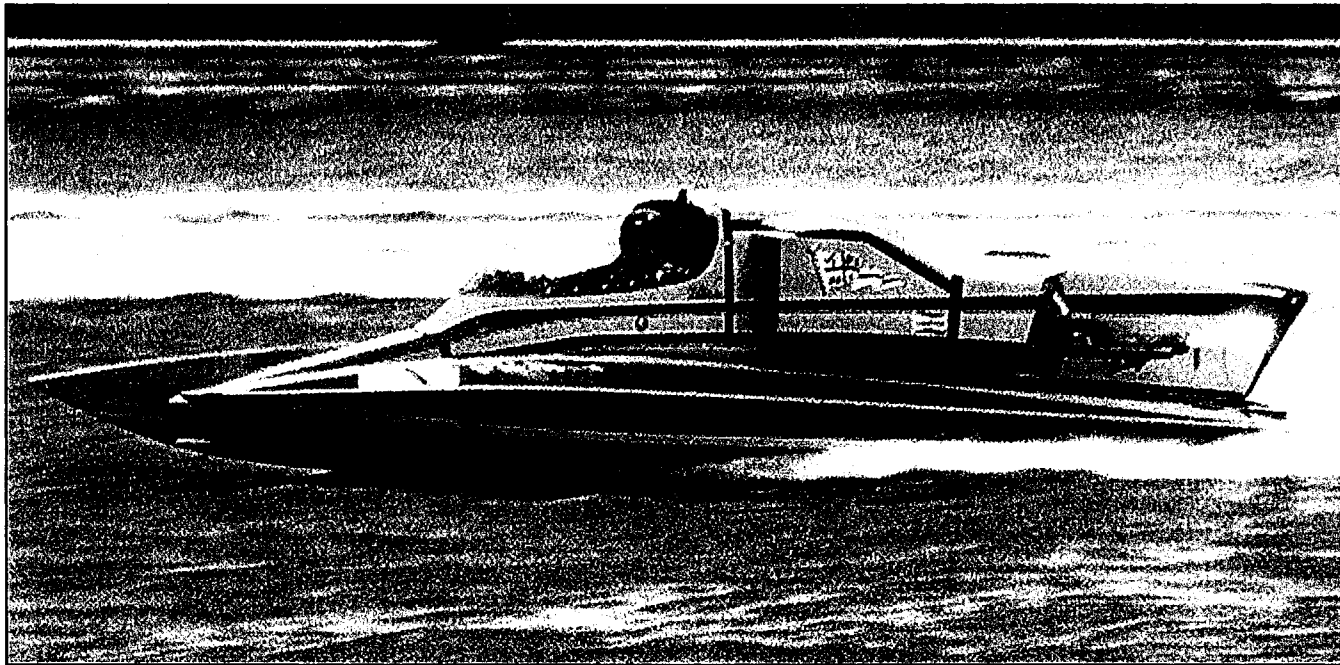
Travelling extensively and racing at various country venues along the east coast of Australia, David quickly built a reputation. By 1967 he had the first of his sponsored boats - a Bertram hull.

His rapid rise continued the following year when he won or was placed in major State, National and club championships as well as marathons and offshore races. Then in April, 1968, he broke his first Australian and State speed record.



"Team Bullet" is pictured here at St George Motor Boat Club in November 1976. The boat is a 15' Bullet hull, built locally at Taren Point, powered by a 150hp Mercury.

Around this time David's brother, John (b1950) took up racing in outboards. He was very successful in the 25HP class, winning State and Australian championships before retiring in 1980. John broke the world record for the SB class (25HP) in 1973, on Kogarah Bay, with a speed of 45.6MPH. He made a



“Plus One” on Kogarah Bay in 1986. This hydroplane was dominant during the period and provided David Toyer with one of his most successful seasons. The name ‘Toyer’ once more brought prestige to the St George Motor Boat Club and more widely, to the area.

strong contribution to the Toyer family involvement in sporting life in and around Sans Souci.

For David Toyer more was to follow a decade later when he drove the fastest outboard powered V hull in the world at a speed of 107.74 mph (173.4 kmph). Over the next few years this was increased to 117.86 mph (189.7 kmph)

Come 1986 and David stepped up to the unlimited class of hydroplanes, racing a boat named “Plus One”. During this season, in this boat, David reached the pinnacle of his racing career, winning seven championship races at St George Motor Boat Club during February and May.

Throughout the 1986 season “Plus One”, driven by David, was amongst the dominant hydroplanes racing in Australia. This was confirmed in March when he qualified second fastest at Lake Eppalock in Victoria for the E C Griffith Cup, the ‘holy grail’ of power boat racing. The Australasian Championship went with the Cup and boats from both sides of the Tasman competed annually and enthusiastically for the title and ancient trophy.

In 1910 when Ernest Charles Griffith Honorary Secretary of the Motor Yacht Club of New South Wales, donated ‘The Griffith Australian Championship Cup’ he declared it was to ‘encourage the sport of Motor Boat racing in Australian waters. The Cup was to be preserved as a ‘perpetual challenge trophy for

friendly motor boat, motor yacht, or sailing yacht clubs of the States of the Commonwealth of Australia and Dominion of New Zealand’. The race was suspended between 1917-1921 due to World War One.¹⁰⁰

The great history and tradition behind this race meant that excitement was at maximum level as the boats charged across the starting line for the deciding race. David driving “Plus One” was unfortunate indeed when during the first lap was excluded from the race after spearing a turn bouy. This was a lowlight in a year of highlights.

Two years later the Griffith Cup was staged at St George Motor Boat Club and once more David was out of luck. This

time in a big way. Again he was second fastest qualifier in "Plus One" but in the final was sitting in fourth place when he rolled his boat in a very spectacular fashion. He had been caught up in the wash created by "Shamrock" when trying to make ground on the leaders. David was unharmed by this alarming accident and was fished out of Kogarah Bay. This, now infamous, occurrence was caught for posterity on film and has become part of club folklore.

Power boat racing in Australia at that time was enjoying something of a boom and David has pointed out that for the 1988 Griffith Cup at Kogarah Bay there was present the largest crowd of spectators ever assembled at the StGMBC. *'They were packed in with many clambering on to the roof of the club'* he recalls.

The St George Club has been the venue for this, Australia's most important power boat race, on a number of occasions and as a consequence Sans Souci, and more specifically, Kogarah Bay, has enjoyed the spotlight as regional host for significant international sporting events.

After 1920 a local 'industry' developed in the area and on this situation, David has remarked,

Everybody that raced boats seemed to have a boatshed along Kogarah Bay - some of them like those of the Shevills and Andersons are still standing'.¹⁰¹

Another was the Endeavour boatshed at the foot of Endeavour Street, Kogarah Bay. In the 1920s and 30s This was the home and business of Harold A "Scotty" Callan, prominent StGMBC official, hydroplane driver and mechanical engineer. His wife, Lydia (nee Walker) won the Women's Australian Hydroplane Championship in December 1929 on the Lilli Pilli course at Port Hacking.

*

The hydroplane "Wasp" followed for David Toyer in 1991; then he drove the GP class hydroplane "Shamrock" from 1992 until 2004 when he retired from racing.

In a career spanning 40 years David won some 27 club and State championships, 15 Australian and Australasian championships; 17 marathon, endurance and offshore races, and established 1 world, 16 Australian and 19 state speed records. He was awarded 'Australian Boatman of the Year' in 1978; admitted to the International Evinrude 100MPH Club and awarded Australian Power Boat Association 100MPH badge in 1978.

Throughout these years he managed to build a successful architectural practice. After working for some medium sized practices David started his own business in 1972. For the next 20 years he operated from home and managed to attract big name clients and projects such as Pacific Films, Rabbit Photo, Tooths Hotels, various licenced clubs, and numerous houses, villas & townhouses and small commercial and industrial buildings.

From 1992 he worked for KFC as National Design & Construction Manager until "retiring" in 2009. Then he was consultant to KFC for a further 7 years.

Quite apart from his racing and architectural career David established an outstanding record as an administrator in his chosen sport.

At St George Motor Boat Club he was Race Secretary 1968-1970 while still in his 20s. Other important roles followed and between 1984-1990 he was State President of the Australian Powerboat Association and then became National President of that organisation from 1988-1998.

Apart from racing and administrative duties, David has written about powerboat racing for journals such as "Sea Spray Weekly",

“Modern Boating”, and in 1981 wrote a column in the “Daily Mirror” newspaper.

In 2016, David is looking forward to continuing his administrative work as Commodore of the St George Motor Boat Club. He is very conscious now of the approaching centenary and, with a committee, is making preparations to celebrate that milestone.

These days he is much more cognisant of the Toyer legacy both on the peninsula in general and at the club in particular. This, he says, has been heightened through research he is undertaking in preparation for centenary celebrations. The Toyer name is writ large in the area and at Kogarah Bay particularly, and David is quite proud to be following in the footsteps of his Toyer antecedents.

Conclusion

It has been my aim in this essay to discuss several members of the Toyer family who lived and worked on the Sans Souci peninsula from 1909 to the present day. It has not been meant to be a full family genealogical examination and report. Nor is it meant to be a full biography of any one person.

Rather I have set out to carefully select people who had remarkable talents, careers and achievements and who contributed to the ‘warp & weft’ in the tapestry of local history here. Hence ‘The Terrific Toyers’.

We have discovered Aldermen, gardeners, motor mechanics, nurserymen, gold miners, cricketers, sopranos, mothers & fathers, architects and boat racers. In the process their lives have not only influenced Sans Souci but have fleetingly brushed with The Royal National Park, Loftus, St Peter’s, Marrickville, Hurstville, Dungog, Sunny Corner, Portland and many more places and suburbs.

Toyer Avenue, Sans Souci, opposite the school used to be called King Street. However, it was renamed ‘Toyer’ as tribute to the staunch, hardworking family who lived nearby and achieved so much. I am sure that James Toyer figured prominently in the dedication of the street name. He was, after all, a model citizen who was a Council Alderman, an innovative and successful businessman, transport pioneer, President of the Sans Souci School P&C, first President of the St George Motor Boat Club, Captain and Patron of Sans Souci Cricket Club, and a dedicated fund raiser for a range of local causes.

James, as a ten year old, had humble beginnings digging clay at his father’s brickworks. When King Street was renamed I am sure that it was not for James alone but for the whole family who were encouraged and nourished by the same qualities that saw him succeed in the wider world.

Endnotes

- 1 Dungog Chronicle: Durham and Gloucester Advertiser, Friday 24 November 1933, p 5
- 2 Minutes of the evidence taken before the N.S.W. Government Select Committee of 1876 on the employment of children in the brickyards of St. Peters.
- 3 Sydney Morning Herald, Friday 19 August 1887, p 1
- 4 Canham, S., The Toyer Family in Australia, 1990, p120
- 5 Maitland Daily Mercury Saturday 28 July 1894, p2
- 6 The Northern Champion, Saturday 13 January, 1945, p2
- 7 Sydney Mail and NSW Advertiser Saturday 4 November, 1899, p1090
- 8 Lithgow Mercury Monday 12 July 1937 p3
- 9 Australian Town and Country Journal Saturday 8 October 1870 p26
- 10 Sydney Mail Sat 26 November 1892 p1190 & Australian Town and Country Journal Saturday 16 Nov 1895 p19
- 11 Evening News, Wednesday 5 May 1909, p5
- 12 Evening News, Wednesday 5 May 1909, p5
- 13 St.George Call Sat 26 January 1918 p 3
- 14 St George Leader, 5 November 1991
- 15 St.George Call, Saturday 4 May 1907, p3
- 16 St George Call Saturday 8 July, 1911, p4
- 17 Government Gazette of the State of New South Wales (Sydney, NSW : 1901 - 2001) Friday 15 Jun 1923 [Issue No.69] Page 2686 PUBLIC HEALTH ACT, 1902, SECTION 55.)
- 18 Monk, Beryl, i in Canham S., The Toyer Family in Australia, 1990 p128)
- 19 Sydney Morning Herald, Friday 1 February, 1929, p11
- 20 Sydney Morning Herald, Friday 24 July, 1931, p7
- 21 The Newcastle Sun, Friday 14 September, 1934, p12.)
- 22 The Land, NSW, Friday 26 March, 1948, p19
- 23 The Land NSW, Friday 26 March, 1948, p19
- 24 Sydney Morning Herald Friday 24 September 1948, p5
- 25 Rathbone, R., The Sans Souci Peninsula, 2002, p88
- 26 St.George Call, Saturday 19 August, 1911, p2
- 27 St.George Call Friday 19 January 1923 p6
- 28 Lithgow Mercury, Friday 1 April, 1927, p3
- 29 Freeman's Journal Thursday 5 March 1931, p5
- 30 Sydney Morning Herald Wednesday 24 Dec 1913 p1
- 31 St.George Call, Saturday 19 June, 1915, p3
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