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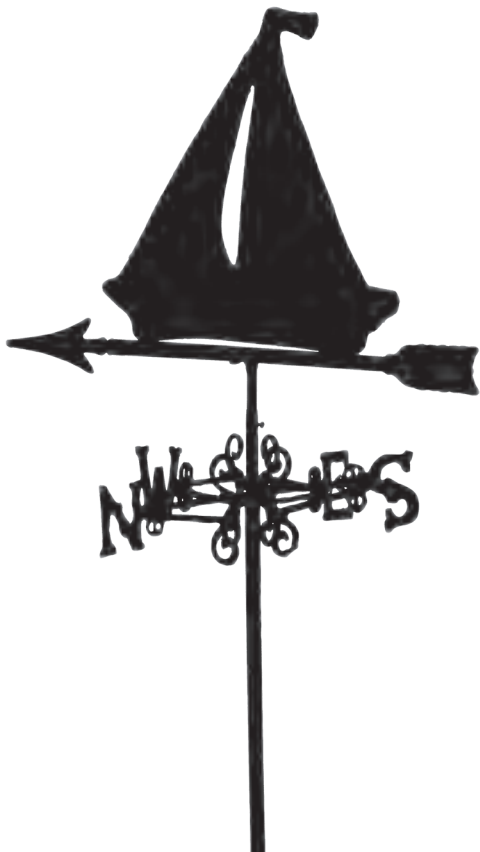


*A celebration of Sydney's far northern beaches
by John Stephen Ayliffe, with Terri Ayliffe*

icons

A Celebration of Sydney's Far Northern Beaches

John Stephen Ayliffe, with Terri Ayliffe





Published by Jonah's Restaurant and Boutique Hotel, Whale Beach
in association with Wyvern Press, Sydney

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Typeset by Pure Colours Digital Imaging Pty Ltd, Sydney
Designed and produced by John MacLulich
Printed by Toppan Printing Co, Hong Kong

National Library of Australia Cataloguing-in-Publication data

Author: Ayliffe, John Stephen, author
Title: *Icons: a celebration of Sydney's far northern beaches*

ISBN: 978-0-9923740-0-6 (hardback)
Notes: Includes bibliographical references

Subjects: Beaches—New South Wales—Sydney—History
Sydney (NSW)—Pictorial works
Sydney (NSW)—Description and travel

Other contributors: Ayliffe, Terri, photographer

Dewey Decimal number: 994.41



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Front cover: James Woodward Photography
Back cover: Terri Ayliffe

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JONAH'S





Foreword

Peter Montgomery

It is a great honour for Jonah's to be able to support the publication of this wonderful book about the beautiful area so superbly photographed in the following pages.

John and Terri Ayliffe have produced both a history and a catalogue of this globally significant waterway and beaches. They have produced a memorable work, combining the past with the present.

Jonah's will shortly be celebrating its 85th birthday, and is proud to be part of this legacy.

Peter Montgomery
Chairman—Jonah Pty Limited
January 2014


JONAH'S



...a love of this land, as they did

Dedication

Remembering the Garigal Clan,
and thanks to all those people who continue to cherish a love of this land and all it holds,
as those original inhabitants did.



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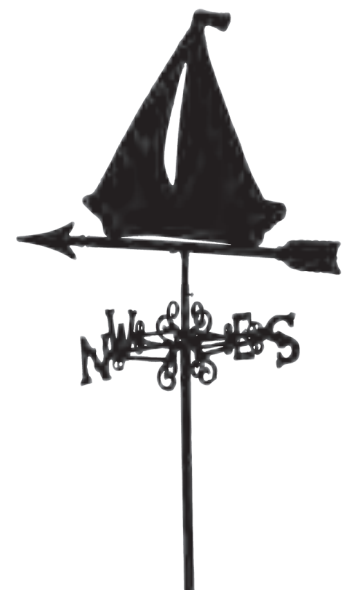
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The finest piece of water I ever saw.

Arthur Phillip



This Place

Its Beginnings – a Curious Story

*On Monday May 7 we saw broken land which appeared to form a bay.
This bay I named Broken Bay*
Captain James Cook, 1770.

An aborigine man is standing in the centre of a dug-out canoe, spear in hand, his eyes on the water, waiting for the silvery flash that will be a fish. His wife is seated in the rear of the canoe, tending the small fire upon which she will cook the fish. Expecting a catch any minute, she is preparing the green leaves that will provide the smoke that will turn the fish out just the way the pair like it.

Surveying this idyllic scene, scarce being noticed, is a small party of newcomers to this ancient part of the world. The first white colonials, they have been here, in *terra australis*, for less than two years and are no longer strangers to the ancient black people who are so much part of its unique and rugged landscape.

The fledgling colony's third expedition to Broken Bay and its lands adjacent, among the five is Reverend David Collins, who has an eye to Christianize "the savage". Another is Watkin Tench who will note this place's "desolate incultivable (*sic*) shores" as offering little of use, thus confirming Phillip's earlier observations that "(the land is) rocky and equally covered with timber, large trees growing on the summits of mountains which appear to be accessible to birds only." Tench will write of a "capacious harbour" that his Governor had earlier claimed as "the finest piece of water I ever saw." Phillip named it Pittwater, after the young Prime Minister.

But he had concluded that hereabouts this place offered no further use, the colony's immediate need being to find *arable land*.

There was a place in these parts where the land was arable, but it was even further from the Sydney settlement, and its security. Phillip had discovered that place a year earlier, when he had been rowed up here in a longboat.

Entering Broken Bay, he had headed across Pittwater and many miles up a river he named Hawkesbury, after Pitt's Minister for Plantations. It was on this trip that Phillip first set eyes on a distant mountain range, that he named Blue Mountains, being the colour of the constant eucalyptus haze that hung over them. It will be four years before any settlers brave a living on the banks of the Hawkesbury.

*The finest piece of water I ever saw... (but) the land is rocky
...its summits appear to be accessible to birds only.*

Arthur Phillip, First Governor of New South Wales

“Man can't live by fish alone,” Tench must be thinking, as the aborigine's patience is rewarded, there's a fish on the end of the black man's spear. A good size and flapping, it is laid on the fire in a cloud of smoke and the canoe is being gently propelled to shore by nothing more than a wooden paddle as primitive as its owner. Soon the fish will make a hearty meal for the aboriginal couple, and the head and bones will be consigned to the earth. Tench notes that the aborigines always deposit their refuse in the same place (known as a “midden”, the word filched from the Scandinavian, meaning the site of prehistoric human habitation), respect for the environment a given in aboriginal culture. Phillip's trusted lieutenant will go on to write two best-selling accounts of the early days of the colony, and establish the name Watkin Tench in the annals of *terra australis*.

Their job done, the party will camp for the night, where the weary men will make damper from flour and water and consume some cockatoos they have shot earlier, cockatoos being fleshier than some of the other birds, less stringy, or so they have found. Next morning they will retrace their steps and head for the settlement, some 25 miles southward. On this occasion they have come overland, hugging the coast and following the ancient tracks that had been made by the locals. According to Watkin Tench's report, they met with few of the aborigines on this occasion. Up to 90% had perished in – what was thought to be - the smallpox epidemic of 1789 (some say it is more likely to have been chicken pox, the spores of which would have been carried by the colonists, and unknown to the aborigines).

Tench's party will arrive at Port Jackson on 23rd September 1790, having been away for just three days. They will have marveled at Phillip's remarkable “piece of water” and the high places that their humane and fair Governor

thought “fit only for birds.” But they will have confirmed this place as entirely unsuitable for growing the colony’s food, and thus “useless for human habitation.”

Watkin Tench will complete a map of Pittwater, wherein its features will be described as “bad country”, “Sandy Rocky and very bad Country”, “Nothing but rocks” and “barren”. Apart from being plentiful of fish, these northern climes were found to be very wanting indeed!

And so the “finest piece of water” Phillip ever saw was to remain in splendid isolation for nigh on 60 years.

There will be no slavery in this land
Phillip’s First Proclamation



CONVICTS, COLONISTS AND THE *EMANCIPIST* CAUSE

In the year 1777 a Report on the overcrowding and appalling conditions in English prisons had increased the pressure on the government to find an alternative. John B Howard, its author, described ghoulish establishments, such as the prison at Norwich where there was little sanitation and disease was rife. Prime Minister Pitt was persuaded to seek an alternative and soon the first 975 convicts set off for the Great Southern Land. Howard was also on that First Fleet and, valuing Sydney's far north for its isolation and beauty will one day call this place "home".

Meanwhile, Pitt, the youthful Prime Minister, was heavily occupied with putting an end to what had become a blight upon the Empire – *Slavery*. It was a decision that charged Governor Phillip to proclaim upon arrival, that there would be none in this land.

Convicts, upon serving their sentences, would become free men and women; free to own property, farm and start businesses, like anyone else.

Further evidence of Phillip's fair-mindedness soon came about when a supply ship failed to arrive and Phillip declared that the available stores be shared out equally, "whether free man, convict — or Governor."





The “Little Kangaroo”

On 2 March 1788 Phillip named the area of the barrier and headland after a curious animal he saw there. Most certainly a wallaby, his party deciphered the word they heard the aborigines describe it as a “*barrenjuee*”, a name that was soon Anglicized as Barrenjoey.



