
ERA CONSERVATION REPORT

PREPARED FOR

Era Surf Life Saving Club and Era Shackowners

PURPOSE

To secure an Interim Conservation Order.

PREPARED BY

Malcolm Garder, AAIIV, Dip TCP (Syd)

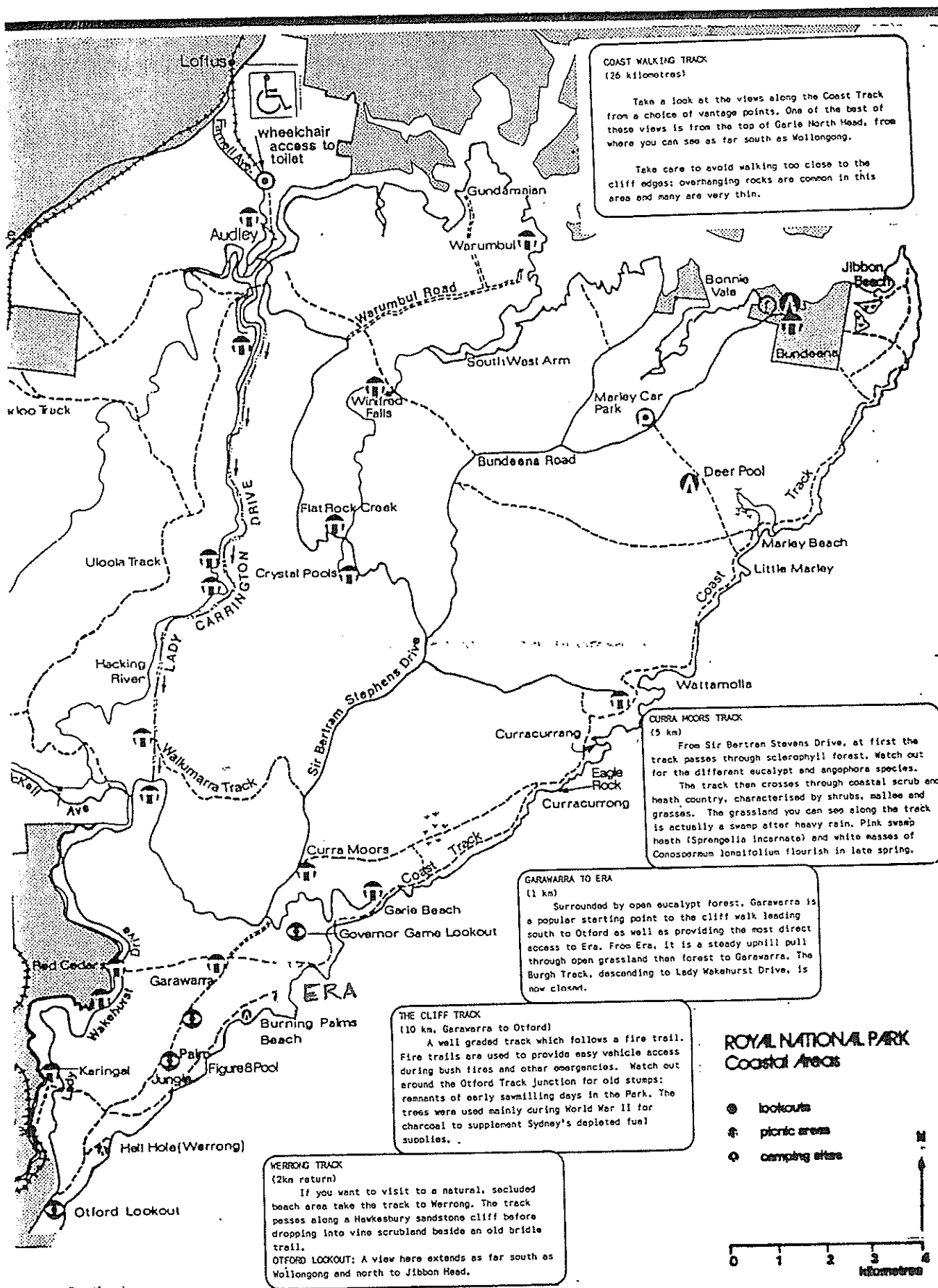
Property & Town Planning Consultant

April 1990

ERA CONSERVATION REPORT

CONTENTS

<u>1.0 INTRODUCTION</u>	<u>Page 4</u>	
1.1 General Background		3.5 Protection League
1.2 Conservation Statement		3.6 Political Support
1.3 Objectives		3.7 The Shacks
1.4 The Site		<u>4.0 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE</u>
1.5 Structure of Report and Methodology		<u>Page 10</u>
1.6 Acknowledgements		4.1 Aerial Photography
1.7 Preparation of a Conservation Plan		4.2 Historic Ground Photography
<u>2.0 BRIEF HISTORY</u>	<u>Page 5</u>	4.3 Recent Ground Photography
2.1 Development of the Area		4.4 Printed Material
2.2 The Community		<u>5.0 ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE, SUMMARY, CONCLUSION.</u>
2.3 Present Position		<u>Page 10.</u>
2.4 NP&WLS Policy		5.1 Missing Information
<u>3.0 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE</u>	<u>Page 8</u>	<u>6.0 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE</u>
3.1 General		<u>Page 11</u>
3.2 Vegetation		<u>7.0 CONSTRAINTS</u>
3.3 Similar Conservation Areas Outside NSW		<u>Page 11</u>
3.4 Surf Club		7.1 Transferring Shacks
		7.2 Enlarging and Updating
		<u>8.0 CONSERVATION POLICY</u>
		<u>Page 12</u>
		<u>APPENDICES</u>
		<u>Page 13</u>



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report puts the case for a Conservation Order to save the community and beach shacks at Era.

Era is the name of a small beach in the Royal National Park south of Sydney that can only be reached on foot. A small holiday community has built up over the years on the slopes overlooking the beach and in the adjoining valley. The land was originally cleared grazing land owned by a local farmer and the first shacks were granted leases before the First World War. The shackowners were never squatters, they have always had permission for their occupancy and have paid rent.

Many of the shacks were built during depression times when men were out of work and families relied on the fish and rabbits caught in the area. These shacks are now significant as one of the only remaining examples of depression architecture left in the state.

In the 1940's the owner of the land proposed to sell the area for development. The shackowners tried to purchase but could not raise sufficient funds to compete with the developers and so requested the government to purchase the area. The area was resumed for park in 1950 and added to the National Park.

In the 1960's the National Parks and Wild Life Service took control of the park and since this time there has been pressure to remove the shacks. The NP&WLS have no management plan for the Royal National Park however they are pursuing a policy presumably originated in the 1960's to remove all private shacks from the park. About 6 shacks have been demolished in the last 18 mths.

In the 1960's the shacks were seen as sub-standard as were the terraces of Paddington, Glebe and The Rocks. Development of high rise, freeways, and slum clearance was the answer of the 1960's. Since this time ideals of conservation and preservation of our past and culture have emerged. The Rocks is our number two tourist attraction; the terraces of Glebe and Paddington are now considered desirable; inner city freeways have been contained.

The NP&WLS policies should be updated from the 1960's.

Culturally Era shows an example of how a diverse community can live in much the same way our forefathers did without electricity, reticulated water and sewer, telephone and roads.

The community is the only manager of this area. It:

- Provides state revenue to the order of \$60,000pa without receiving any services; and attracts paying visitors.
- Provides a free Surf Life Saving and Emergency Service.
- Manages this area of the park in terms of controlling campers and their rubbish; and assists walkers.
- Protects and maintains the environment with track works, clearing and cleaning.
- Trains young people in Surf Life Saving and Bush Craft.
- The report concludes with suggestions for the future management of the area & reiterates that the NP&WLS biggest assets are people.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 General Background.

Era is the name given to a small beach community located south of Sydney in the Royal National Park. There is no road access into Era so access is via a two kilometre bush track from Garrawarra Farm. The farm is located on top of the Illawarra Escarpment just off Sir Bertram Stevens Drive the main road through the Royal National Park.

The area is now administered by the National Parks and Wildlife Service of NSW (NP&WLS).

The users of Era or shackowners occupy small cabins or shacks which are built on the hillsides around the beach.

The shackowners are legal occupiers who had permission to erect small holiday cottages in designated areas. The shackowners have always paid rent to the lessee of the land. They were never squatters.

The shacks are predominantly used on weekends and holidays by family groups who have built up a strong community over 70 years, four generations of children.

All food, drink and building materials must be carried the two kilometres down the hill (Illawarra Escarpment about 280m ASL). Occasionally in recent years some heavy materials have been carried in by boat but this is risky and dependent on flat seas. It is also possible to walk 2k from Garie however this trip is difficult in high seas or at high tide.

Era beach is used by the shackowners, their friends, bush walkers, campers, surfers, fishermen and day trippers. In summer the number of persons on the beach at any one time would not exceed 100, an average holiday attendance would be about 50 persons.

Era is a designated camping area within the park. Campers are asked to obtain a permit, however few do and this is not policed. Although there are no facilities for campers at Era, the area is popular with young surfers. Unfortunately this has led to shacks being broken into, damage to private water tanks and a great deal of rubbish wherever camps have been.

1.2 Conservation Statement.

Era is significant both in a cultural and historic context, as it is a rare example of an intact holiday community living in shacks built from depression times. The shacks and community have remained relatively unaltered despite major changes to society

and building techniques.

1.3 Objectives

This report seeks to set out a case for a preservation order to:

1.3.1 Save The Community- A diverse holiday community that has been established over 70 years is in danger of collapse as shacks are demolished.

1.3.2 Save The Shacks- The cottages or shacks were predominantly built in the depression and remain substantially unchanged. They are one of the last groups of Depression Architecture left in the State.

1.3.3 Save Lives- The Era (SLSC) provides a surf patrol on Era beach and assists the patrolling of the adjoining beach, Garie. The SLSC draws its members from shack owners and their families. Without shacks and without the SLSC lives would be endangered.

1.3.4 Encourage Use- To encourage the use of the park, beach and to promote a healthy lifestyle. The community is a very healthy sporting community and wishes to encourage others to enjoy the beach. Greater use of the park provides revenue to the Government in terms of park entrance fees.

1.3.5 Preserve Unsophisticated Way of Life.- There is no electricity, gas, water, sewerage, drainage, telephone, shops or roads provided at Era. However people can live comfortably without these services, which are normally considered essential basic services and facilities. Life is lived much as it was last century; cooking is on kerosene or fuel stoves, lighting by kerosene, refrigeration by dripsafe or kerosene refrigerators. Many city people, particularly the younger ones are unfamiliar with this old technology.

1.3.6 Protect the Park Environment- This area of the park was cleared for grazing and it is necessary to encourage the re-growth of native flora in this area. Unfortunately non-native species such as oleander, prickly pear and aloevera have been introduced. Also deer, rabbits, cats and dogs are often a problem, and contribute to track and dune erosion. Uncontrolled campers frequently pollute the area by leaving garbage behind. There are no camping facilities provided at Era and the NP&WLS turns a blind eye to the damage done to the environment by uncontrolled camping. The shackowners often clean up after campers but this is a difficult task as there is always a problem disposing of the extra garbage.

1.3.7 Maintain the beach standards- The area is away from the conventional law enforcement agencies yet a very high standard of general behaviour exists. There have been very few disturbances and these have generally been reported by shackowners and have resulted in arrests of day trippers and campers. The community through the SLSC sets a high standard and is self policing.

1.4 The Site.

Era is located in the Royal National Park about 40k south of Sydney GPO. About a one hour drive.

The beach is often referred to as South Era and the smaller beach to the north is then called Era. However locals refer to the beach where the shacks are as Era and the small beach to the north as North Era.

To the north there is another smaller holiday community called Little Garie or Tin Hut. People using this area walk in from Garie Beach about 1/2k to the north.

To the south there is also another smaller holiday community called Burning Palms. Burning Palms and Era share the same track down the hill from the car park.

See plans P1, and aerial photographs *Figs 4,5.*

The beach is a very attractive small surfing beach surrounded by headlands, valley and hills and with a small watercourse in the valley. The beach, while providing a good surf, has a number of rips which can be quite dangerous particularly to people unfamiliar with the area. *Figs 1,2,3.*

1.5 Structure of the Report and Methodology.

The methodology employed in this report has as far as possible been derived from the Australian ICOMOS "Burra Charter" and its associated guidelines and James Kerr's "The Conservation Plan".

1.6 Acknowledgements.

John Amphlett, Greg Barlow, Jill Collier, Max Dupain, Ken Holloway, Kirk Keating, Jo McDonald, David Moore, Peter Watts and Diana Garder.

1.7 Preparation of a Conservation Plan.

A conservation plan embodying the Objectives and setting out future policies will be required once the future of the area is determined.

In this regard the author of this report is prepared to

prepare a further report or work with the NP&WLS, Heritage Council or other bodies to prepare a conservation plan and management plan.

2.0 BRIEF HISTORY

2.1 Development of the Area.

The area now known as Era Beach was part of a grant of land to the Byrne family in the 1830's. The grazing rights of this area were leased to various cattle breeders.

As a camping area it was first used by early residents of Helensburgh and a few hardy hikers of those days. The first permanent structure was erected by the Lightfoot family in 1918, with others following. In 1922 there were six cabins, all erected with the permission of the lessee and no site rent was asked for. *Fig 6*

In the late 1920's the area was more widely used and with the onset of the Depression, more shacks were built. Many mining families, their men out of work, lived at Era growing vegetables and catching fish and rabbits.

At the same time young people, from Fellowships and sporting clubs, with not much money, took up bushwalking and would travel to Lilyvale by train, walk the five miles to Era and camp at the beach for the weekend. At first they took tents, then they built rough huts of hessian and bark, from the cabbage tree palms which grew there.

In the early 1930's the grazing rights of the Byrne's lease were obtained by Mr Bob Gray, who encouraged more people to build and instituted a system of site rents, charging 1/- later 2/- per week. Mr Gray allocated sites and patrolled the area regularly.

In 1938, following the drowning of a hiker, it was decided to form the Era Surf Lifesaving Club which continues with strong community support to the present. A clubhouse was built with all materials, including a piano to provide music for dances, being carried down the rough track.

When the Byrne's lease was due to expire, in 1945 it was decided by the Crown to sell the land and do away with the system of leases. At that time there were about 100 cabins in the area most of which were erected more than 20 years before.

A meeting was held on 4/10/1945 at Era Beach to form an Era Burning Palms Protection League, see minutes. *Appendix 1*

The aim of this League was to negotiate the possible lease or purchase of the property. To this end each shackowner was asked to invest 40 pounds (\$80). A



Looking South



Looking West with Clubhouse, centre

ERA BEACH

FIG 2



ERA - The Surf Clubhouse





Shacks blend into hillside amidst regenerating vegetation



Surf Club - Showing Patrol Hours 1988

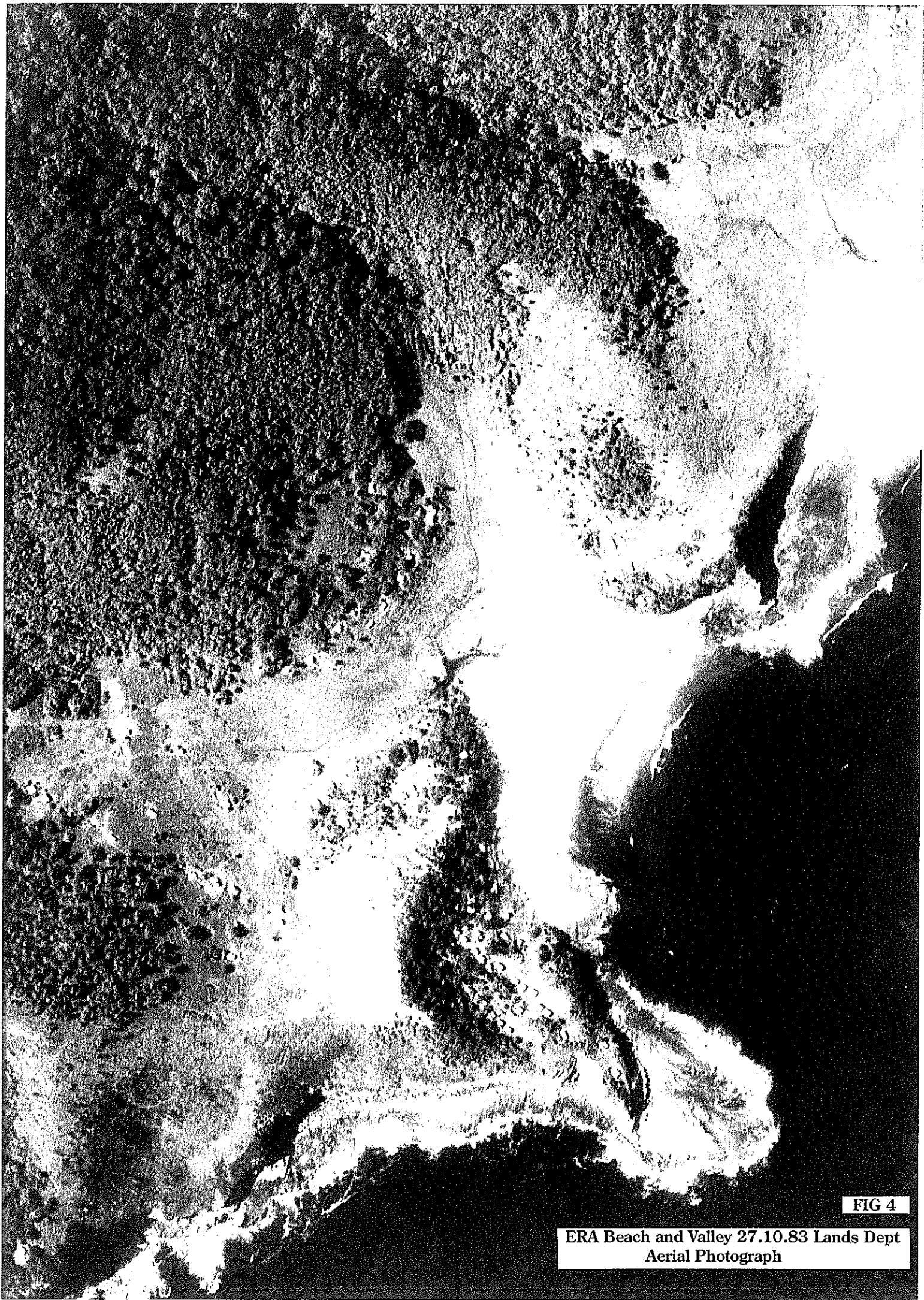
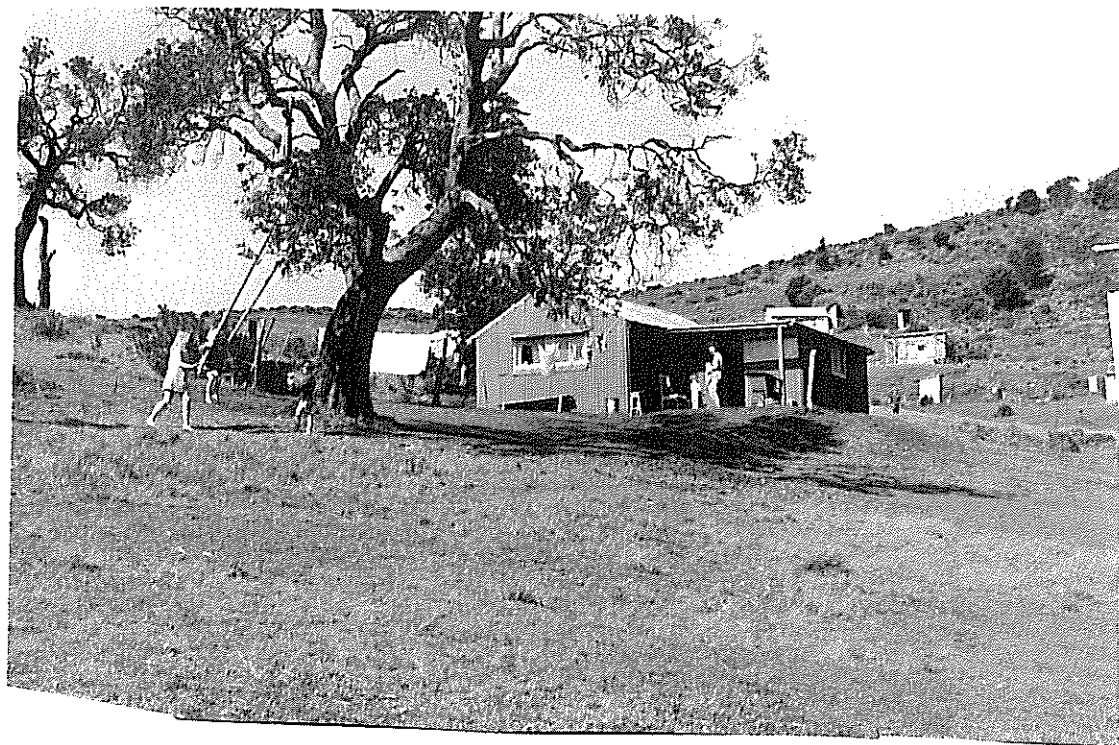


FIG 4

ERA Beach and Valley 27.10.83 Lands Dept
Aerial Photograph



ERA Beach and Valley 7.8.1961 Lands Dept
Aerial Photograph



First permanent shack built at ERA

sum of 2,600 pounds (\$5,200) was subscribed to attend the public auction sale. *Appendix 2.*

When it was learned that wealthy developers such as L J Hooker were determined to purchase land, efforts were made to interest Government bodies such as the National Fitness Council, Education Department, Fauna and Flora Panels. *Appendix 3a, 3b*

These bodies were asked to persuade the State Government to have the land dedicated and included in the adjoining National Park. In February 1950, Mr Sheehan the then Minister for Lands, announced that the area was to be resumed and added to the National Park. See report of Gazette Dated 24-2-1950. *Appendix 4*

The shackowners major concerns were allayed when the area was made part of the park. The prevailing attitude was positive and shackowners looked forward to cooperating with the new management of the National Park "in preserving and improving Era for the Public."

The National Park Trust adopted a rigid policy of "No more Cabins", although alterations and repairs were permitted. Shackowners were told to keep their cabins clean and tidy and to maintain the area in a similar manner. A site rental of 13 pounds per annum (5/- per week) was established which was accepted as a reasonable fee. *Appendix 5a,5b,5c,5d,5e*

A period of stability followed until early 1964 when without warning or discussion, the National Park Trust raised the rent to 10/- per week, an increase of 100%. This caused some hardship to many shackowners. At the same time two copies of "Conditions of Occupancy" were forwarded to all shackowners, one to be signed and returned, the other to be retained. Some of the rules of the Schedule were considered very harsh and legal advice was sought. However notices were sent to shackowners who did not sign, pending legal advice, advising that permission to occupy would be terminated forthwith.

The major change of rules was that shacks could no longer be transferred by any means and that shacks would be demolished on the death of the registered owner. *Appendix 6*

A deputation of shackowners attempted to put their case to the then Minister of Lands, Mr Tom Lewis, via the then Minister for Labour and Industry, Mr Eric Willis *Appendix 7*

By June 1966 all shackowners were expected to have signed the "Conditions of Occupancy" lease or risk losing their shack immediately. Most signed unwillingly, feeling they were being coerced. Further deputations to the Minister followed but he

maintained a hard line, see letter *Appendix 8*

The Minister for Lands was unsympathetic as he was in favour of introducing a new American philosophy for the management of National Parks. The shacks were considered an eyesore as they were seen to be of sub-standard construction. The new American philosophy was to be implemented by a 27-year-old Californian Chuck Wilder, who is quoted as saying "We'll take a bulldozer from Garie over those first two headlands and round the creek, and what isn't carried away we'll bury," see newspaper. *Appendix 9*

This attitude still persists today. *Appendix 10*

One of the major changes to shackowners by the passing of the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1967 was that they became directly under the control of the Minister, where before they had been under the control of the Trustees. From that time the shackowners have felt under continual threat as the terms of the Licence were very comprehensive and any non-compliance could mean immediate removal of the cabin. *Appendix 11*

Further large increases in the rentals for cabin sites caused some hardship and deputations were made to the NP&WLS. Following these deputations in 1975, it was agreed that future reviews would be made at two-yearly intervals and that any adjustments would be related to the Consumer Price Index. *Appendix 12*

A number of shacks were demolished during the 1970's as owners felt the rental due was too high, considering the lack of services and the feeling of uncertainty about being able to stay. More shacks have been demolished in recent years as the owners have died, although members of their families wished to continue using the shacks as they had been able to do previously.

The shackowners and their families continue to use Era, enjoying the beach, supporting the surf club and maintaining their watchdog role with the environment.

There have been a large number of people connected with Era going back over a long period. In November 1988 an Anniversary Ball was held to celebrate 50 years of the Era SLSC. Over 1000 invitations were sent to past members with more than 450 people attending. Many travelled long distances - from Western Australia, North Queensland and country New South Wales - and a number were in their 70's and 80's.

2.2 The Community.

The Era community developed in the period of the 1920's through to the Depression of the 1930s as more permanent structures were erected. Miners

who were out of work because of the closure of the pits came from the closest town, Helensburgh to catch fish and rabbits to supplement the food for their families. The miners and their families would walk on bush tracks the 8k to Era.

At this time also bush walkers and some of the avant-garde from Sydney started to build more permanent structures. The bush walkers of the thirties were a diverse group comprising church fellowships, football and cricket clubs. A tolerant, diverse community developed and this mix has stayed basically the same since those times. A small number of transfers were made between friends and family up to 1966 when the NP&WLS banned transfers.

It is not possible to give an accurate count of the community; being a holiday community there is seldom more than half the community using Era at any time. Most regular users would recognise about 200 people however there would seldom be more than 80 using the shacks on any one day.

A number of groups of disadvantaged children and young adults have been brought to the beach for holidays and SLSC instruction. However because of the NP&WLS policy regarding shack occupancy this has lessened over recent years.

There are many community activities including cooperative building work; surf club activities, eg childrens' Christmas party and Drama Days, book exchange, Euchre tournaments, track maintenance, organised sports eg Golf days, Volleyball on the beach, Cricket matches with neighbouring beaches, Tennis tournaments, Boardriding championships etc. *Figs 7,8*

On a number of occasions the community has worked together to clean up the beach and camping sites in the valley. Rubbish has been removed by boat and on one occasion the NP&WLS used a helicopter to remove rubbish collected by shackowners. At Burning Palms and North Era the NP&WLS employ labourers to collect and bag rubbish left by campers. This rubbish is then removed by helicopter. No camping fee is paid to allow for this service.

Because of the small size of the community and its isolation a caring family attitude prevails where there is a lot of interplay across normal age and sex barriers. At card or tennis tournaments players will be from young teenagers to those in their seventies and the smaller children will be watching and playing at intervals.

The centre of the community at present is the Surf Club and as the Club has to be self sufficient many fund raising activities are organised around the Club. *Figs 9,10,11,12*

2.3 Present Position.

The Era community is slowly being destroyed as shacks are being removed by the NP&WLS. As the next generation is being born the great great grand parents or the original shack owners are dying and as they die the shacks they owned are being pulled down by NP&WLS.

The NP&WLS will not allow the shack to be passed on, so as the owners die or are unable to maintain their shacks the shacks are removed. The NP&WLS stopped all transfers from June 1966 and as many owners at that time were in their fifties many shacks are coming to the end of their legal life.

There is some argument as to the legality of the NP&WLS action in regard to the prohibition of transfers. The shack holders were coerced into signing ever more restrictive leases each time the leases came up for renewal. In the 1970's the NP&WLS tried to remove all the shacks by increasing the rents to extortionate levels. However because of political pressure the rents were then pegged to the CPI See copies of leases showing increasing restrictions *. Appendices 6, 13.*

Some shacks have fallen into disrepair or are used infrequently as owners are not prepared to put time and effort into the shacks as they know that the NP&WLS will be destroying the area. This phenomenon is known as "Planners Blight". *Fig 13*

It is noticeable that the number of persons in the community is smaller each year and time spent by each person at Era is also lessening each year. At some point soon there will not be sufficient numbers to provide a viable community and run a surf club. In 1979 the surf club was in danger of closing, because of lack of qualified life savers. This was narrowly averted when the SLSC allowed female life savers to take positions in surf patrols. Since 1988 Garie SLSC, although serviced by road, cannot provide full patrols without assistance from Era and Burning Palms SLSC. *Fig 14*

In an age when the demise of the extended family is seen as a major contributor to juvenile crime and the general breakdown of society, the Era community sees itself as necessary to the moral development of it's young children and youth. Children spend time with grand parents, aunts, uncles, of whom they may see very little during the course of normal city life. Therefore, if the transfer of shacks were legal, this community interaction could be extended to a greater numbers of families.

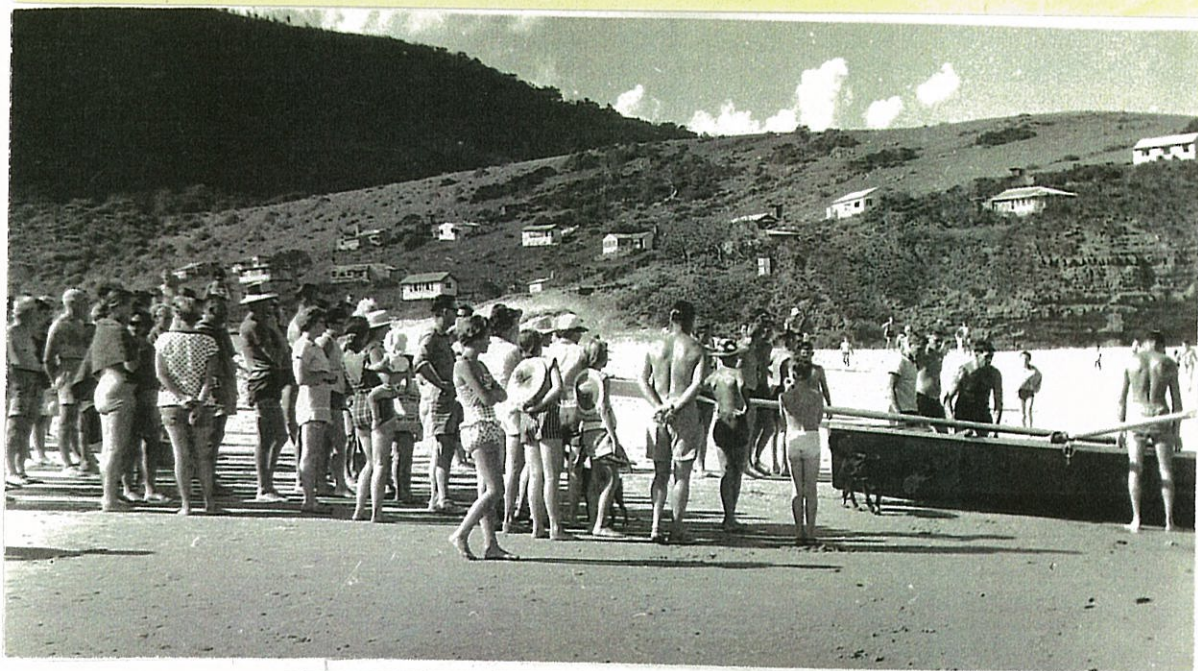
Shack owners pay a rental of \$728 pa or if a pensioner \$364 pa. There are about 91 shacks at Era and even if a quarter pay pensioner rates the NP&WL are receiving about \$60,000 pa for no outlay. No services are provided by the NP&WLS. The \$60,000 pa collected could be used to employ two



Community Shack Construction Late 1940's



ERA Activities - Tennis Day



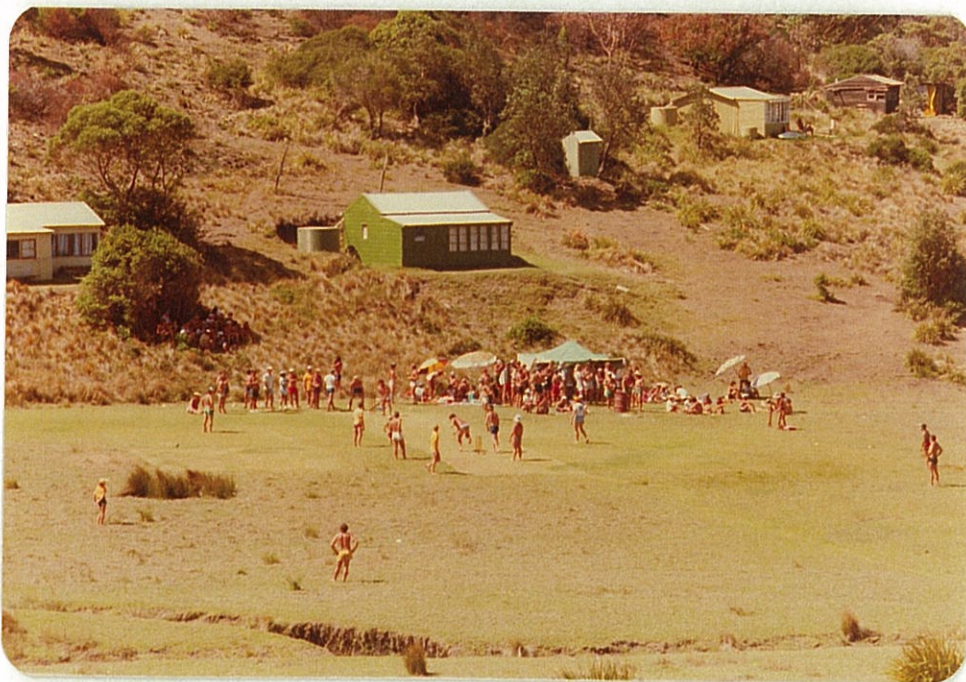
Surf Club Boat Launch - 1950, 1960, 1980







Badminton 1950's



Cricket 1980's



Volleyball 1990

SURF BOATS



Slab of Demolished Shack



Shack Deteriorating





First all-girls Bronze Squad and Instructor 1981



Era March Past Team - Australian
Championships, Wanda N.S.W 1988

additional rangers.

It should also be noted that guests of the shack owners and others attracted to the patrolled beaches pay park entrance fees \$5 per car. Additionally the Era community is providing a free surf patrol and emergency service, for which many City Councils have to pay Beach Inspectors and other staff.

The service provided by the Era community if provided by the NP&WLS would cost hundreds of thousands of dollars each year. It should also be noted that all the rescue equipment and facilities are provided by the community without any help from the NP&WLS.

The NP&WLS highlight the fact that the beaches are patrolled in all their publicity and guides to attract people into the park. The SLSC should be entitled to some contribution from all the entrance fees gained by the NP&WLS. When SLSC carnivals are held hundreds of extra cars pay their \$5 admission to the park. *Appendices 14, 15*

2.4 NP&WLS Policy

As far as can be ascertained the policy is to remove all the shacks from the park and return the park to the public. This is to be achieved by the demolition of shacks as the licensed owner dies or when rent is not paid or for other breaches of NP&WLS special rules.

The NP&WLS do not have a Management Plan for the Royal National Park, (management plans for most other national parks are available through the NP&WLS book shops). It is presumed that ad hoc decisions are made based on the policies of the 1960's.

The NP&WLS have allowed two shacks to be retained by the SLSC as bunk houses for life savers on patrol. It is however unlikely that there will be any Era SLSC if the rest of the shacks are removed.

The NP&WLS publicises surf patrols are provided on Era and Garie Beaches.

The NP&WLS spend a minimal amount of time or money in this area of the park relying on shackowners to clean up campers rubbish and clear tracks. *Figs 15a, 15b*

The largest expenditures in this area are the costs of demolishing shacks and removing the spoils by helicopter. Track maintenance stopped about five years ago when the last load of old bricks, broken asbestos sheeting and tiles was dumped on the walking track to enable a small tractor to get to Era to cull the deer from the Park. See photographs of track filling and track and dune erosion. *Fig 16 17, 18,*

No dune stabilization, tree planting, noxious weed or

pest control has been carried out in recent time. Rusa deer have been sold and contractors have removed large numbers in recent years.

The policy of removing shacks, the shackowners and the SLSC will result in less usage of the beach. The park and beach will eventually become the exclusive preserve of the NP&WLS.

3.0 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

3.1 General

The succession of lease documents from the earliest lease 1964 to the present licence are shown.

Appendices 6, 13

It should be noted that the documents degenerate from a general lease to dictatorial licence terminable at the Minister's pleasure.

3.2 Vegetation

Photographs throughout the report dated as accurately as possible show the extent of the regeneration of trees and ferns. The deer however have slowed the regrowth of indigenous banksias trees as they enjoy the young leaves and eat many seedlings. Many non native species have flourished and should be removed eg oleander, aloevera, lantana, prickley pear. *Figs 19a, 19b, 20*

Photographs also show how homogeneously the shacks blend into the regenerating environment. *Figs 3, 28b*

The Max Dupain and David Moore photographs were provided at cost by these well known photographers as their contribution to the saving of Era. *Figs 21a, 21b,*

3.3 Similar Conservation Areas outside NSW

See The Planner 1984 and Airways 1990 *Appendices 16a, 16b*

Both these reports show that other forward thinking Governments have taken planners advice and saved important reminders of the past. These were once considered sub-standard and marked for demolition.

3.4 Surf Club

Era has had an active surf club since 1938 and the record of activities has been kept by the branch and by the NSW SLSC. There are about 70 active members who carry out patrol duties and about 180 associate members who help the club in fund



CAMPERS' RUBBISH





CAMPERS' RUBBISH





Silted-up Bridge on Track





DUNE EROSION

VALLEY LOOKING EAST - 1950's and 1990



Regeneration of vegetation in 40 years

VALLEY LOOKING SOUTH EAST 1950's and
1990



Regeneration of vegetation in 40 years

NON-NATIVE VEGETATION



OLEANDER



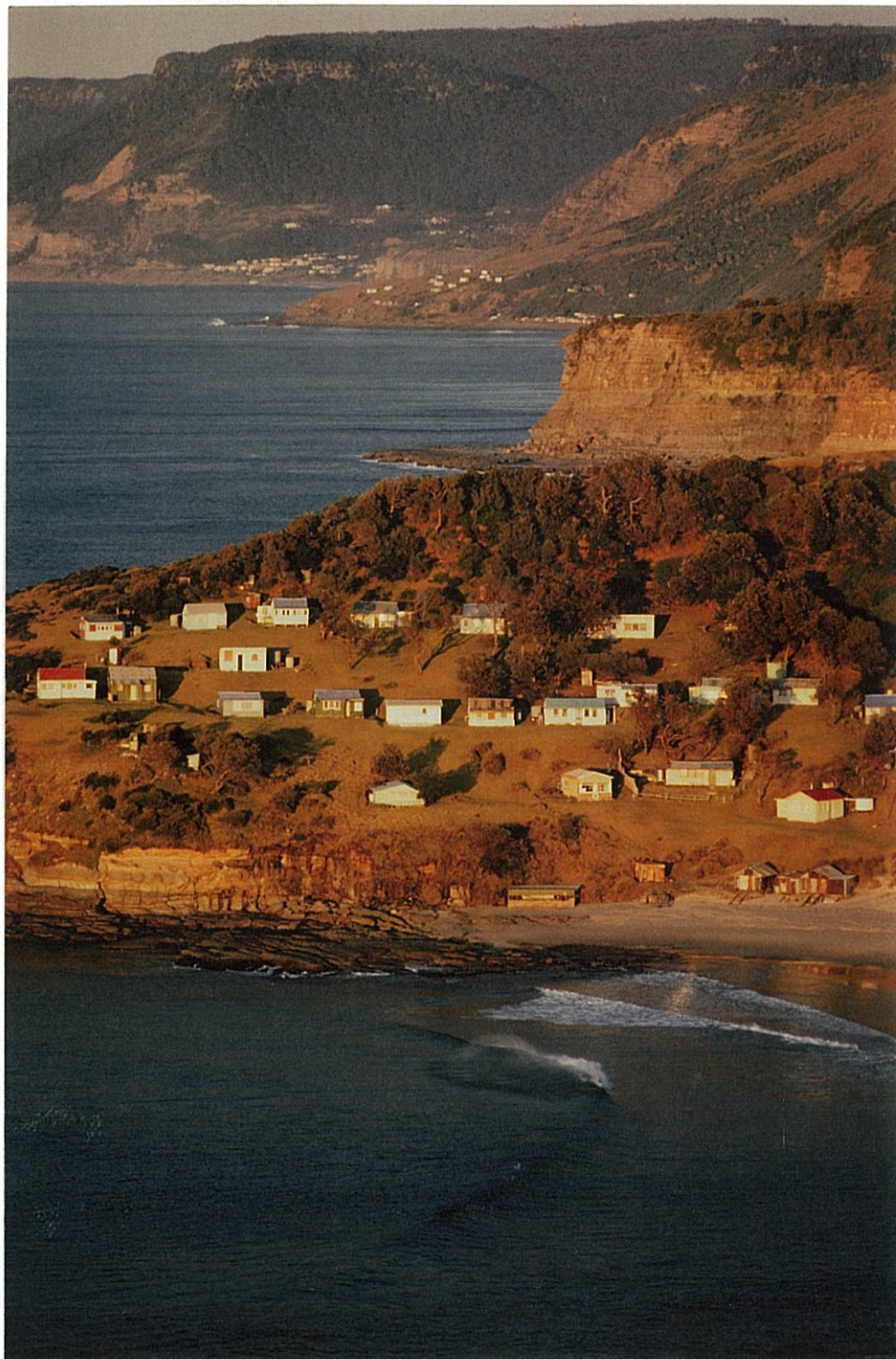
ALOE VERA

ERA BEACH - Looking South - Taken early
morning, June 1966,
by David Moore



From: The David Moore Library of Colour
Photography

ERA BEACH - Looking South - Taken early
morning, June 1966,
By David Moore



From: The David Moore Library of Colour
Photography

raising, gear maintenance, training of life savers and radio operators. The club competes at a number of carnivals predominantly in surf boat rowing. The club is well known in surf club circles for the strength of its boat rowing. Era has taken out a fair share of titles for such a small club, winning the gold medal at the State Championship in 1981 at Evans Head.

Era beach is now patrolled on Sundays and public holidays from October to April and an observation patrol is mounted at all times that life savers are in the area. As there is no telephone in the area the surf club radio is the only emergency communication available. A SLSC helicopter can be on the beach 15 minutes after a call. Patients are prepared for the flight by surf club paramedics while the helicopter is awaited. The surf club provides this service to swimmers, shackowners and campers on a 24hour basis free and without any assistance from the NP&WLS.

Surf Club records show that no swimmers lives have been lost in patrol hours. There have been three recorded drownings in non patrol hours at Era; two fishermen drowned when swept off rocks on the South point in the 1950's and one male drowned in the 1970's.

The following figures have been extracted from the most recent SLSC reports (84/85 not available).

Rescues	83/84	85/86	86/87	87/88	88/89
Without aid	21	17	23	19	22
Rescue Tube	4	2	8	6	3
Rescue Board	2	2	10	2	4
Rescue Ski	2				
Surf Boat	1		1		
IRB *	3	6	36	24	19
Preventative	190	180	228	187	124
BB Stings	16	18	26	35	42
First Aid	50	48	36	21	35
Helicopter Ev	4	2	2	2	5
Resuscitation	2				

* IRB-Inflatable Rubber Boat; one is stationed at Era. There is also one wooden surfboat. Two other wooden boats are kept in Sydney for training and competition.

The majority of people who get into difficulties are day trippers and campers who do not know the beach and where the rips are located. At times Scout Masters have allowed groups of young cubs and scouts to swim out into the rip after an exhausting long hot walk. Fortunately these events are usually witnessed by a shackowner who is a life saver or knows where to locate a life saver.

Appendix 17

The club has an unofficial policing role in assisting

persons in distress or danger and controlling unruly elements. The community of Era is a family community and moral values are quite high. Unruly behaviour or overt sexual behaviour is not tolerated.

The NSW branch of the SLSC is very supportive of Era and realise that the Era Club would close if the shacks were to go. It is also seen that the NSW branch would have considerable political influence at State and Federal Level. They realise the contribution Era makes to lifesaving.

The following Era SLSC members have held executive positions with the National, State or Sydney Branch SLSC:

Ron Howells, Ron Miller, Frank Osborne, Dave Medlin, Bob Davison, Ross Cotter, Gloria Howells, Geoff Gilvear, Michael Moran, Peter Moran. Ron Howells was awarded a 50 Year Badge for continuous service at the 50th Dinner of Era SLSC.

Meritorious Awards for Bravery from the Surf Life Saving Association of Australia have been awarded to:

F.Holloway, P.Russo, E.Hamilton, L.Walker, D.Newlands, S.Derwin.

3.5 Protection League

Some forty-five years ago a group of shackowners from the two beaches, Era and Burning Palms, met together to form a group to liaise with the NP&WLS. Many attempts were made over the years to work with the NP&WLS but this proved futile. The League still has a structure and funds to be used to promote the cause of conservation.

See History 2.1.

3.6 Political Support

The Era community has many supporters:

National, State and Sydney Branches of the SLSC and members throughout Australia.

The 450 people who attended the 50th Anniversary Ball.

Many walkers and campers assisted by shackowners.

Considerable media contacts.

3.7 The Shacks

The first shacks were built prior to World War 1 and were constructed of local materials such as saplings, bark from the palm trees and stone. These materials were supplemented by materials scrounged from the mines such as hessian and flat iron. More

recently shacks have been built of galvanised iron, weatherboard, fibro and aluminium cladding.

Fig 22

Typically the shacks were built communally and all the materials carried the 2k down the hill. Shack sizes vary however a typical shack would be 8m x 4m and would contain a small kitchen area with a cold tap and sink or bucket, an area to place the kerosene cooker, an eating and sitting area and a partitioned or curtained area for sleeping. As most of the time is spent outdoors the accommodation is quite adequate and its compactness doesn't encourage the collection of expensive furniture and ornamentation. See floor plans *Figs 23a, 23b.*

Lighting is usually by kerosene however some have porta gas and solar power. Cooking is also by kerosene, porta gas and methylated spirits. Refrigeration by kerosene refrigerators or drip safe.

Fig 24

Outside the shacks is located a pit toilet or pan and an area for personal hygiene and for washing clothes. With swimming a daily event hygiene is never a problem.

Fig 25

Some shacks have recently fallen into disrepair because the shack holders envisage that the NP&WLS will eventually demolish all the shacks.

Fig 13

Shacks are predominantly painted in bush or earth colours to blend into the environment.

The NP&WLS policy is to demolish the shacks as quickly as possible and upon the death of a shackowner the shack is demolished. The children of the shackowner who may have been sharing the shack for many years have no rights to continue their occupation.

4.0 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

4.1 Aerial Photography

Aerial photography is not available to show the early days of Era, however it is possible to see the layout of shacks as at 1940's and to see the extent of regrowth of vegetation since early land photographs

Figs 4, 5

4.2 Historic Ground Photography

Early photographs dating from the 1940's show the cleared grazing land, cattle, horses and the erection of the first shacks.

Figs 19a, 19b, 26

The series of photographs taken by Max Dupain 1957 show an artist's appreciation of the integration of low scale development and nature.

Figs 27a, 27b, 27c, 27d,

4.3 Recent Ground Photography

Architecture, shack *s Figs 28a, 28b, 28c, 28d*

Additional photographs shown in text were taken between 1987 & 1990 and show;

Era views-

North Era after campers-

Activities at Era-

Track erosion and fill-

Dune erosion-

Surf Club activities-

Non-native flora & fauna-

Old technology

4.4 Printed Material

Hideaway Appendix 18

Gay Shacks Appendix 19

Royal National Parks Appendix 20

National Park Explorer Appendix 15

(This publication appears to contain misinformation particularly regarding the purchase of the Era and Garie Beaches. The claim is made that these areas were purchased by the State in 1944-45 as a result of interest by The Sydney Bushwalkers Club.

For conformation of facts see History section 2.1 and Gazette dated 24-2-1950 Appendix 4.)

5.0 ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE, SUMMARY, CONCLUSION.

The reasons for removing the shack settlement at Era are no longer valid, if they ever where.

Chuck Wilder's expert opinion to bulldose the sub-standard shacks in 1968 is not an up to date conservation ideal. Policies based on 1966 ideals are still being rigorously pursued by the NP&WLS. It is time policies were reviewed.

In the 1960's the historic areas of The Rocks, East Sydney, Woolloomooloo, Balmain and Glebe were to be levelled and tower blocks were to replace the cottages. Expert opinion considered these areas to be slums, containing sub-standard housing.

In the 1960's the DMR was trying to build inner urban freeways through the slums of Glebe; the Housing Department was building tower home unit blocks and the MSB was filling in the harbour.

In 1990 inner urban renewal is underway; no new

inner urban freeways; no Housing Department tower blocks are being built; the harbour is being given back to the people and the Rocks is Sydney's number two tourist attraction.

It should be remembered that the Era landscape is not a natural one. The area was cleared for grazing from as early as the 1830's. It is now a diverse mix of natural and cultural landscape. Each of these factors have value, complement each other and should be conserved.

The present arrangement embarrasses the NP&WLS, who have reacted. Their answer has been to remove this conflict, by removing the shacks and the people.

It is time for a rethink by the NP&WLS.

Overseas and local experience has shown that these living reminders of our past should be preserved.

The Era community is a viable environmentally concerned community that contributes to the NP&WLS by saving lives, looking after the area, and providing considerable revenue. The NP&WLS provide the venue and nothing else.

An Interim Conservation Order is now urgently required to stop the demolition of shacks and to preserve the community.

Once the Interim Conservation Order is in place a further report will make recommendations concerning management of this area of the park.

5.1 Missing information.

There is much information on the area held by the NP&WLS. Unfortunately to obtain this information would alert the NP&WLS to this report and could encourage further demolitions.

There is no acknowledged Management Plan for the Royal National Park. Information should be gathered to formulate this plan.

6.0 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Era is significant because:

It is one of the last examples of depression architecture and shack settlements in NSW.

It provides low cost and very accessible holiday accommodation for people of Sydney, Helensburgh and Wollongong.

It shows how low tech living can be still be enjoyable and practical in today's complex society.

It has a strong but diverse community built up over

four generations who live a healthy lifestyle.

Its citizens provide assistance to campers and bushwalkers by funding and manning the SLSC and thereby assisting in the management of the park.

It is an example of a community protecting and helping to regenerate a native environment.

Its community wish to work with the NP&WLS for the mutual benefit of all users of the park.

7.0 CONSTRAINTS

7.1 Transferring Shacks.

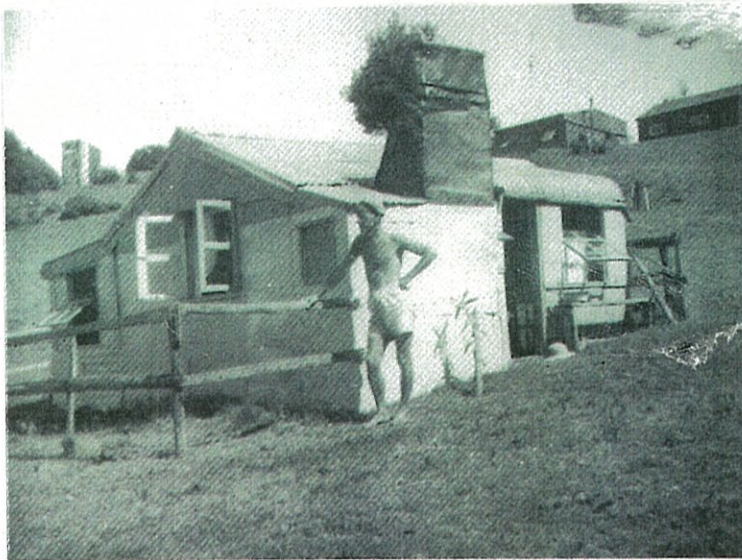
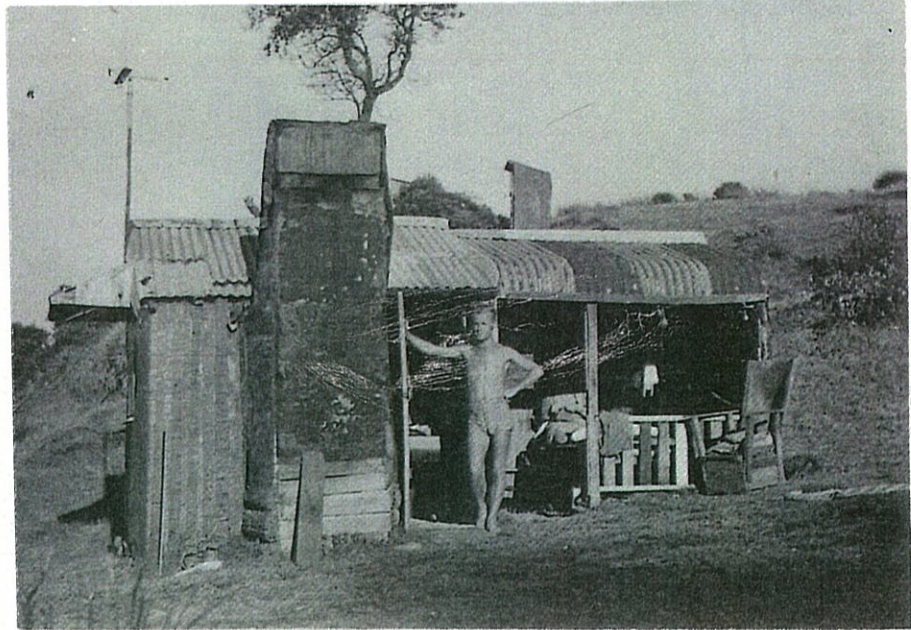
The NP&WLS have banned the transfer of shacks. On the death of the licenced owner shacks are to be demolished.

7.2 Enlarging and Updating

Shacks may not be enlarged for any reason. However internal updating appears to be tolerated.

EVOLUTION OF ONE SHACK 1928 to 1990
Note growth of vegetation

FIG 22



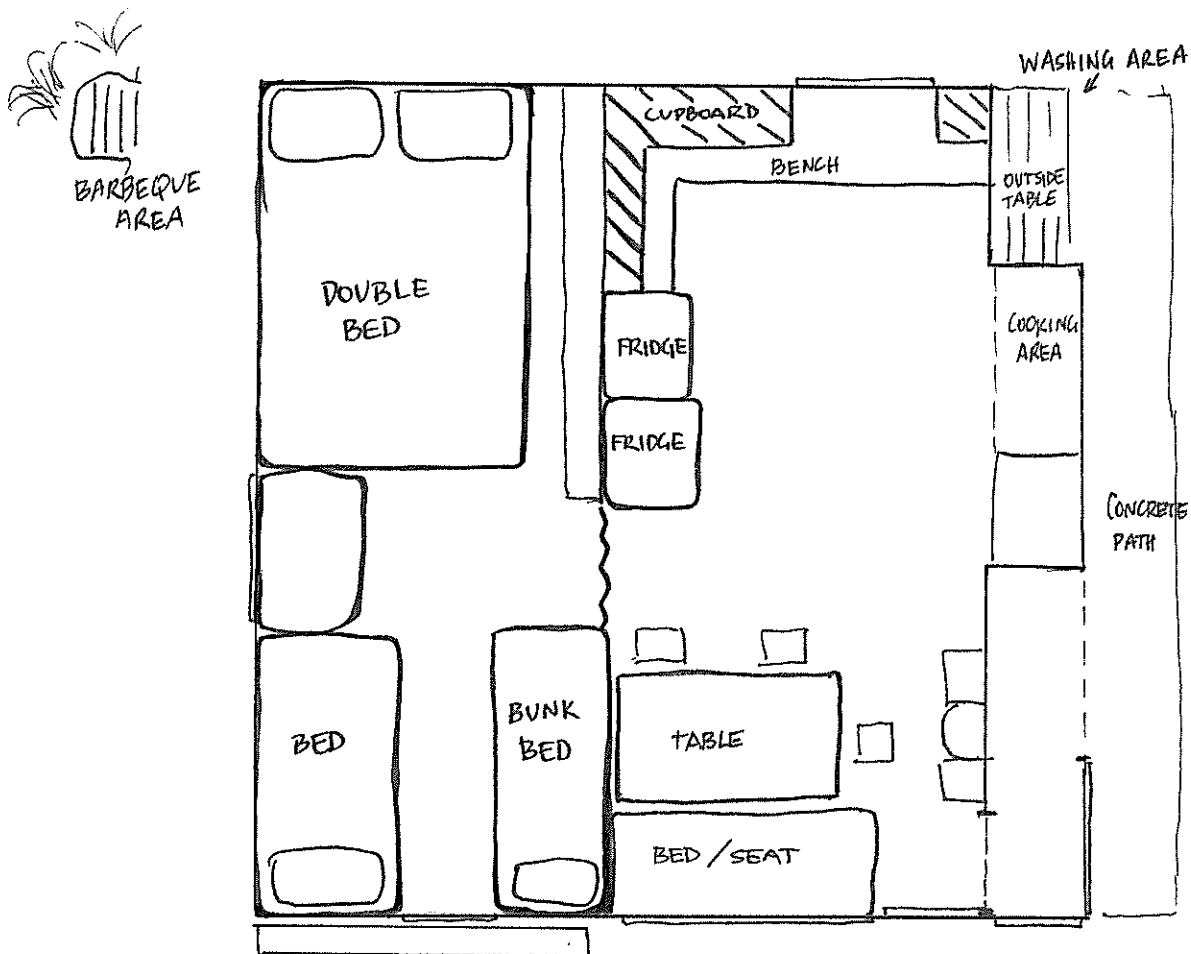
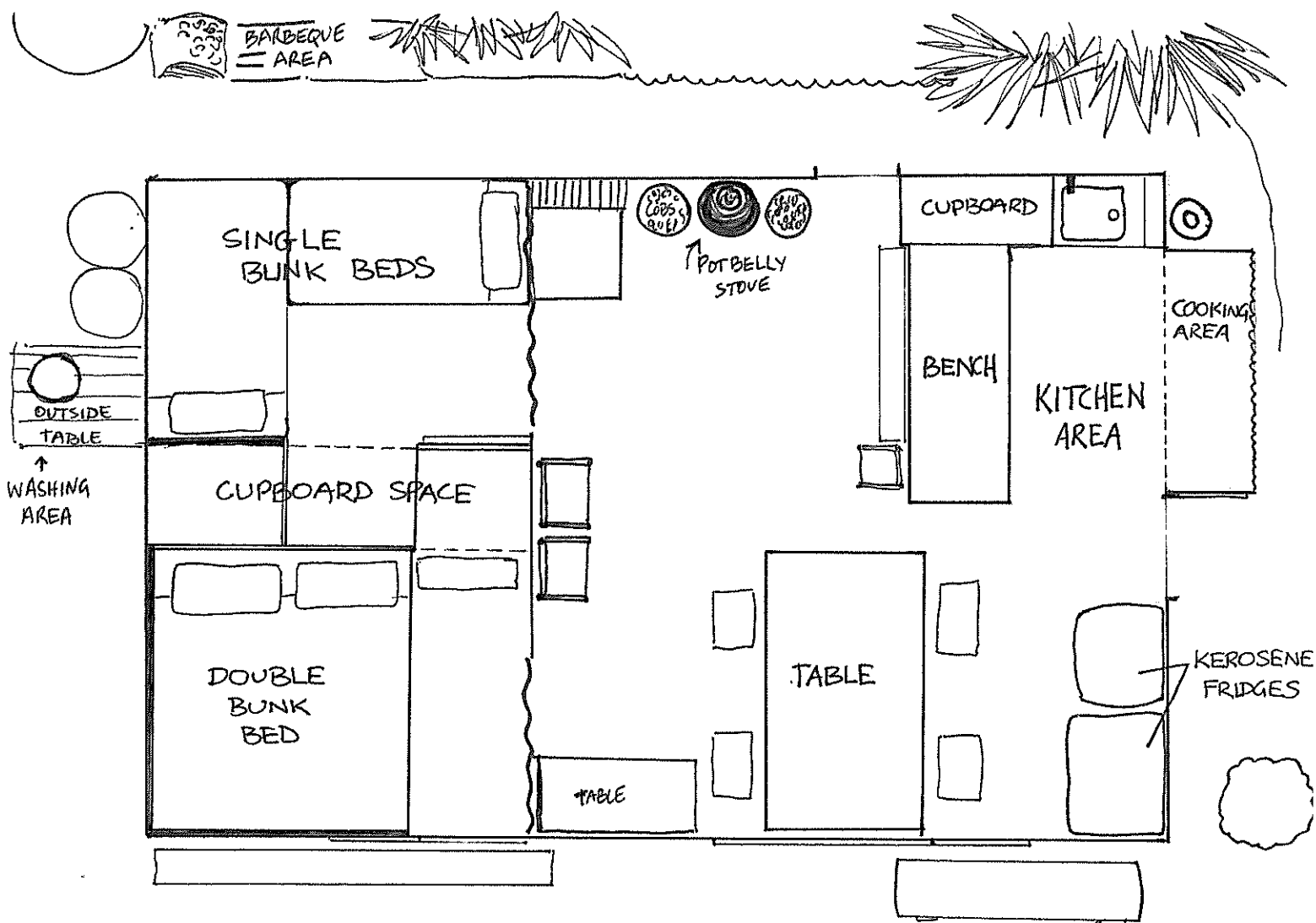
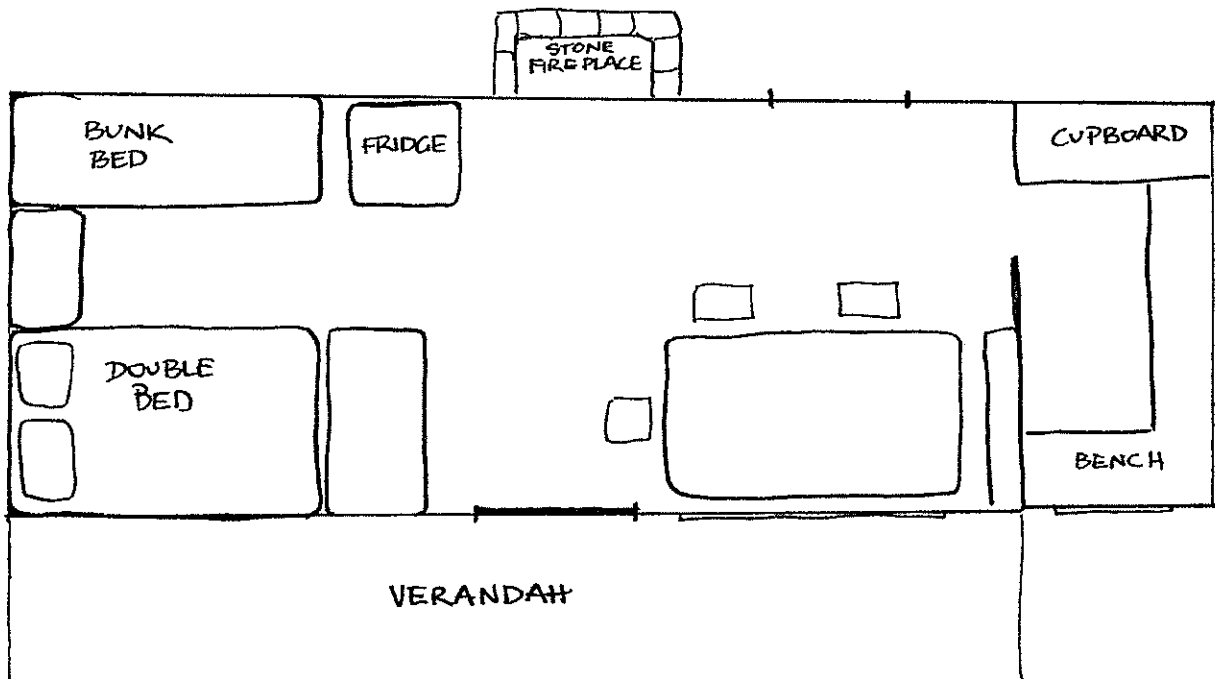
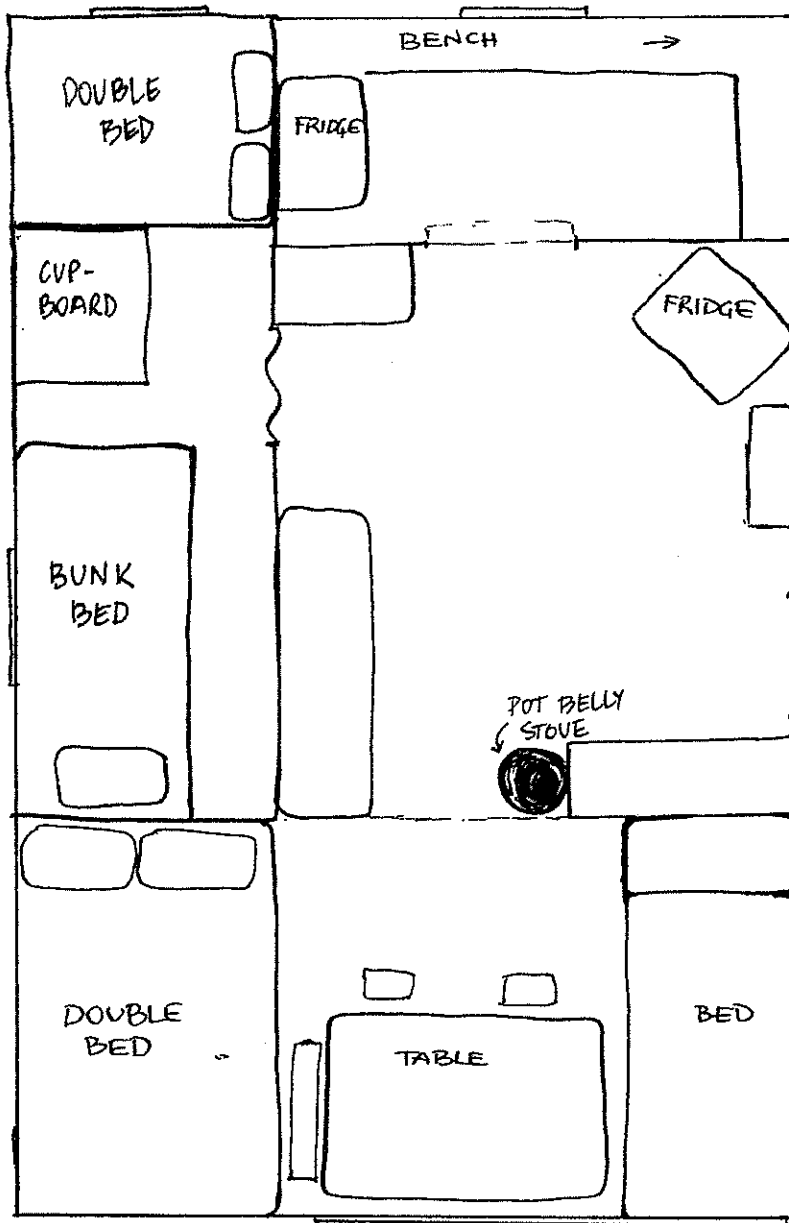


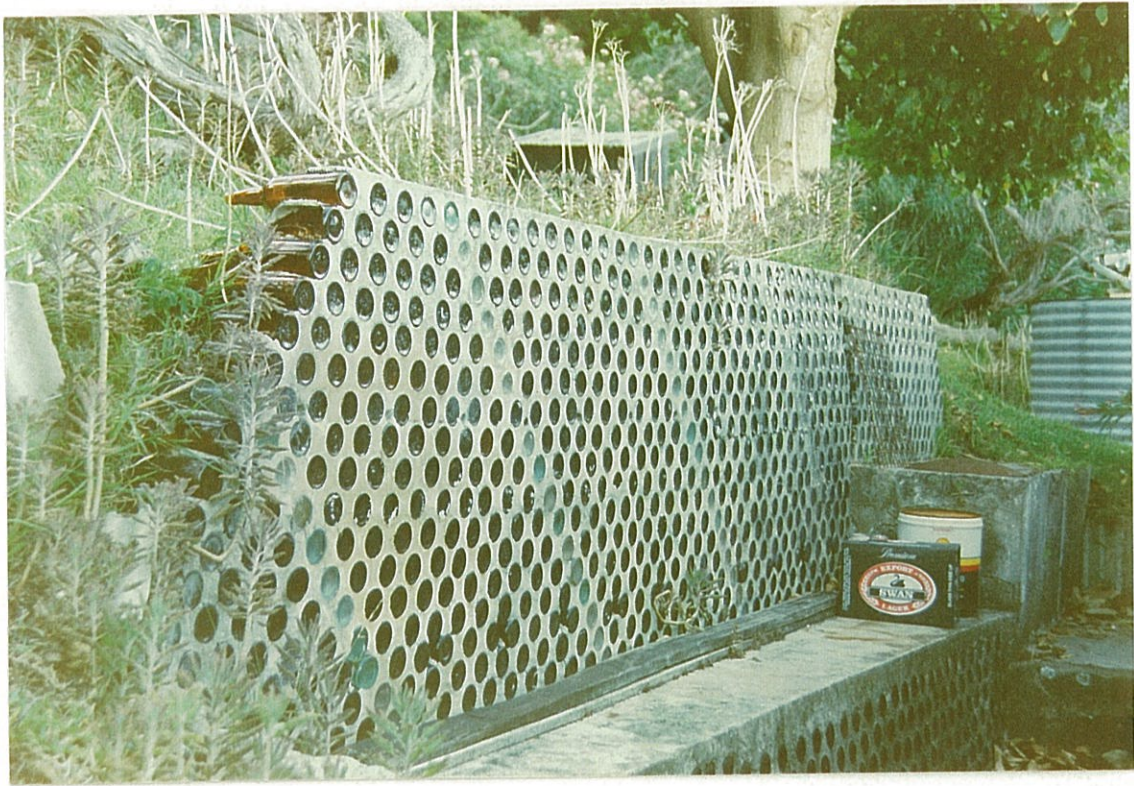
FIG 23(a)





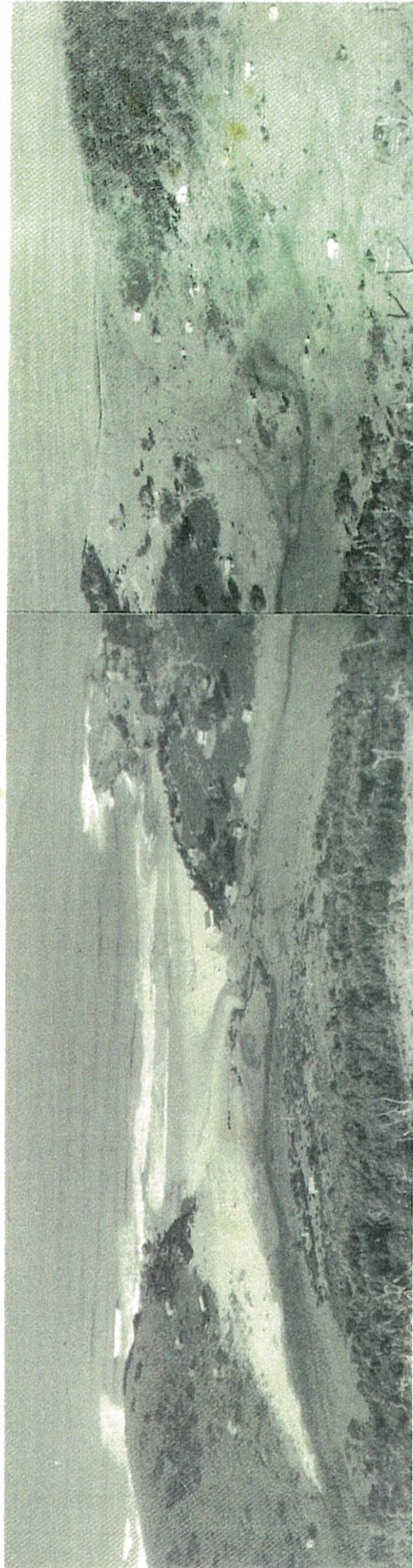
Working with Kerosene Stove in Kitchen Area

BOTTLE WALL



TOILET





View from lookout-Mid 1940's

8.0 CONSERVATION POLICY

Once a conservation order is in place a more detailed report should be undertaken and a management plan formulated.

It is suggested that the report be prepared by a nominee of the Era SLSC in cooperation with the NP&WLS. Failing the cooperation of the NP&WLS, another state instrumentality such as the Heritage Council, the Department of Sport & Recreation, the Department of Family and Community Services or the Lands Department in conjunction with the Era SLSC could take over the management of this area of the Park.

The conservation policy and management plan should:

- 8.1 Ensure the viability of the community by keeping the number of shackowners at a level that will sustain itself. It may be necessary to increase numbers slightly to keep the SLSC viable. If the SLSC fails, the community will slowly leave and there will be drownings. It may be feasible to allow families that have lost shacks recently to rebuild. It is suggested a small number be allowed to rebuild each year on their old sites.
- 8.2 Ensure the community mixture stays similar to that which has prevailed. Careful consideration has to be given to any proposal to raise the standard of accommodation, services or to allow free market prices to prevail. Otherwise the area could quickly become a haven for the rich.
- 8.3 Ensure the architectural and historic nature of the Depression Architecture is maintained. Guidelines will have to be formulated to allow for sympathetic alterations and possibly for additions and new shacks.
- 8.4 Ensure the old technology survives by not providing additional services such as water, electricity and roads.
- 8.5 Ensure the shackowners' rights to transfer their lease to a member of their family, who has use of the shack.
- 8.6 Allow shacks that are not being used to be acquired by the controlling authority and leased out to other people connected with Era or be used for community purposes. It is suggested that a value paid be related to the value of the structure only. A resultant figure may be \$6,000.
- 8.7 Encourage shackowners to be involved in management and work programmes. A large untapped labour force is on site willing to cooperate and carry out track maintenance, dune stabilisation, erosion control, eradication of noxious weeds and pests. With a little direction the environment can be improved at very little cost to the NP&WLS. Because of the remote location the NP&WLS has to use helicopters to move men and materials, or pay half a day's travelling time to get an effective half a day's work, ie a day's pay for four hours work..
- 8.8 Encourage a wider use of the area by allowing some shacks to be used by organised groups. It may be possible for the Department of Sport and Recreation, the Department of Family and Community Services or other organisations such as Lions Clubs to use some shacks for country children. These children could come to the beach for part of a holiday to be trained as lifesavers by the Era SLSC. City children could also be trained in bushcraft, surfing, fitness, fishing and given an understanding of the bush environment. The NP&WLS appears to do very little in this regard.
- 8.9 Encourage the NP&WLS to see the shackowners and users of the park as assets. The people are the NP&WLS biggest asset.



Shacks on the cleared hillside 1957

Typical shack with verandah on South Era 1957





Shacks at South Era using Palm logs 1957



Beer bottle retaining wall 1957

SHACKS

FIG28(a)





Shacks blend into hillside amidst regenerating vegetation

SHACKS
Depression Architecture

FIG 28 (c)



SHACKS

Depression Architecture



APPENDICES

4

The meeting was held in the Era Surf Club House on Sunday, October 10th, 1945 approximately 36 representatives of shackholders from Burning Palms and Era were present and Mr Lew Voysey was elected to the position of Chairman.

BUSINESS OF THE MEETING.

A report was tendered by Joan Hendry of what she had heard in relation to a proposed sale by auction of the Byrne Estate (Lot 1. Bulgo Parish Map) and in the ensuing general discussion Mr Johnson mentioned £1500 as the fixed price at the moment in the Valuer Generals Department and Mr Booth informed the meeting that the property was held under freehold title.

Moved by Mr F. Edmunds : That a committee of seven members be formed to
Seconded by Mr Humphries : investigate the actual position with regard to the estate and what steps should be taken to negotiate for the subsequent lease or purchase of the property.

The motion was carried unanimously.

Moved by Miss Joan Hendry : That voting be placed upon a proper basis by
Seconded by Mr Humphries : passing round a subscription sheet and that the committee be elected from those contributing.

Nominations were called for the formation of the committee and the following names were submitted:-

D. Hendry, L. Voysey, H. Campbell, F. Edmunds, G. Johnson, E. Walbank,
E. Holt, R. Collier, . Jarman, T. Simonsen.

as it was agreed that the committee should consist of three members from Burning Palms and four members from Era the following nominees from Burning Palms were elected unopposed:-

Messrs Edmunds, Holt and Johnson. Mr Simonsen was elected as the Era Surf Club representative and from the remaining six Era nominees Messrs Hendry, Voysey and Walbank were elected.

Moved by Mr Humphries : That the Treasurer be elected by the vote of the
Seconded by Miss Hendry: General Meeting and not by the committee members.

The motion was lost.

After general discussion the meeting was concluded and by majority vote it was agreed to hold the next General Meeting on Saturday, November 10th, at 1 p.m. in the Era Surf Club House.

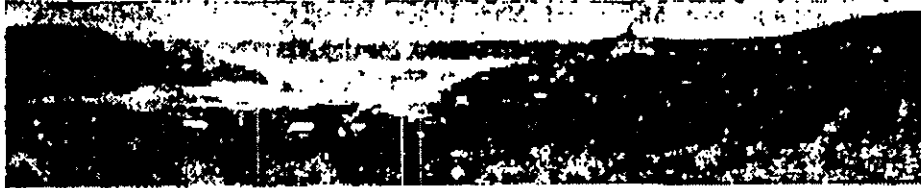
a Committee met immediately after the General Meeting closed.

L. Voysey
24/11/45.

0000010 (100100 00 01) 0011

AUCTION SALE OF To P 24

ERA BEACH, NATIONAL PARK



VIEW OF ESTATE SHOWING SOUTH ERA BEACH AND OCEAN BEYOND.

Under instructions from
THE TRUSTEES, EXECUTORS & AGENCY CO. LTD.,
1-3-5 Bligh Street, Sydney, and Messrs. W. B. Fitzgerald
and S. W. Evers, Trustees of the Estate of the late Andrew Byrne.

An unique opportunity to secure for development purposes one of the few remaining freehold areas in this delightful locality.

PORTION 1 — PARISH OF BULGO — 150 ACRES

Land granted in 1831 to late Andrew Byrne,
one of Australia's early settlers.

The attention of speculators and sub-dividers is confidently directed to the submission of this large area of land with its natural attributes, fine surfing facilities and extensive views, potentially one of the finest holiday resorts on the Coast.

No direct road access is at present available to the land which comprises undulating slopes with magnificent panoramic views and extending down to, and including, the whole of South Era beach and part of North Era beach.

The whole area is let on monthly tenancy at £175 per annum and there are erected approximately 100 cabins, such cabins not being included in the auction submission.

Detailed plans and photos of the Estate may be inspected
at the offices of the Auctioneers. **TITLE OLD SYSTEM.**

Solicitors: **W. S. GRAY & PERKINS.**

HARDIE & GORMAN PROPRIETARY LIMITED

will offer the above by Auction in the Saleroom,

36 Martin Place, at 11 a.m., WEDNESDAY, 1st MARCH, 1950

ERA - TURNING PALMS PROTECTION LEAGUE.Minutes of General Meeting - April 7th, 1947.

Chairman - Mr. D. Hendry.

PRESENT: Approx. 70 members were present.

The Minutes of the last General Meeting were read. There was no discussion arising out of the Minutes and it was then moved by R. Cottier and seconded by N. Clayton "That the Minutes be received". The motion was passed without dissent.

The Hon. Secretary then addressed the meeting advising of the approach made by the National Fitness Council requesting the co-operation of the League in a joint endeavour to obtain the Byrne Estate.

After some discussion and questioning relating to that proposal the following motion was received:-

Moved - Mr. Humphries.
Seconded - Mr. Cottier.

"This meeting agreed to the proposal that the League shall negotiate with the Trustees of the National Fitness Council for the joint purpose of purchasing the Byrne Estate".

The motion was carried with two dissentient votes.

The Chair then received a motion as follows:-

Moved - Mr. Collyer
Seconded - Mr. Robinson

"That the League retain it's separate identity and does not negotiate with the National Fitness Council."

The motion was rejected with two dissentient votes.

The Hon. Secretary introduced the subject of membership and informed the meeting that there were still several intending members who were unfinancial by not having deposited a part-purchase sum with the League's Accountants. The Hon. Treasurer also stressed the fact that 10/- membership fees were still outstanding in certain cases.

Following a discussion regarding the above matters the following motion was received.

Moved - Mr. Humphries.
Seconded - Mr. Pybble.

"That any unfinancial shareholder be notified that April... has been decided for the closing date for League Membership and that intending members have until this time to become financial."

The motion was carried unanimously.

The Hon. Secretary then invited nominations for a representative from each of the Surf Clubs and the League Committee to conduct final negotiations with the National Fitness Council.

C. H. P. 17. Nov-2-1947

Mr. C. McIntosh was chosen to represent the Burning Palm Surf Club.

Mr. Holt was elected as the Committee member and the Era Club proposed to elect their own member at a later date.

The meeting closed at 12.45.

F. O. G. 28/10/47

ERA-BURNING PALMS PROTECTION LEAGUE

C/- E. G. Holt,
5 Barrack Street,
SYDNEY.

18th May, 1947.

Director,
National Fitness Council,
Bent Street,
SYDNEY.

Dear Sir,

Further to our recent discussions regarding our interest in the acquisition of Lot No. 1 of the Byrne Estate at Burning Palms and Era, I submit herewith the details concerning our organisation and its objective.

During the past 15 years, a number of individuals have built small weekend shacks on the property known as "Lot No. 1." This property is now leased from the Trustees, Executors & Agency Co., by a Mr. Gray, and he in turn, collects 2/- per week from each shack on the property. Late in 1945, we were advised by the Trustees that the property would be sold by public auction, and acting upon this information, a syndicate was formed, consisting of every shack holder of Lot No. 1, who invested a sum of money to be held in trust until such time as the sale took place.

For various reasons, the sale has been delayed, and we have advised that a selling date has not yet been fixed. The syndicate therefore, now exists with an accumulation of investors, capital reposed in trust until such time as the sale is held.

During the past 10 years, the shack holders have formed and operate two Surf Life Saving Clubs, with an aggregate membership of 100. During the summer period these Clubs patrol the Era and Burning Palms beaches, mainly in the interests of the many hundreds of visitors who frequent these spots. The shack holders, generally speaking, are also acting as honorary wardens, protecting the natural bush from despoliation by the casual trippers.

ERA-BURNING PALMS PROTECTION LEAGUE

National Fitness Council

-2-

16th May, 1947.

It is obvious that shackholders who are regular weekend visitors, have the preservation of these beauty spots at heart, and are particularly anxious to prevent commercialization and exploitation by private enterprise.

As our interests and those of your organization appear to run parallel, it is suggested that we might combine in a joint endeavour to obtain the property for the benefit of all keen outdoor enthusiasts and nature lovers. With this end in view, we shall be pleased to co-operate with you to the fullest extent of our financial and moral ability.

By way of information, there are approximately 85 shacks on Lot No. 1, and it is estimated that the annual revenue of Mr. Gray is something in the vicinity of £400.

Yours faithfully,

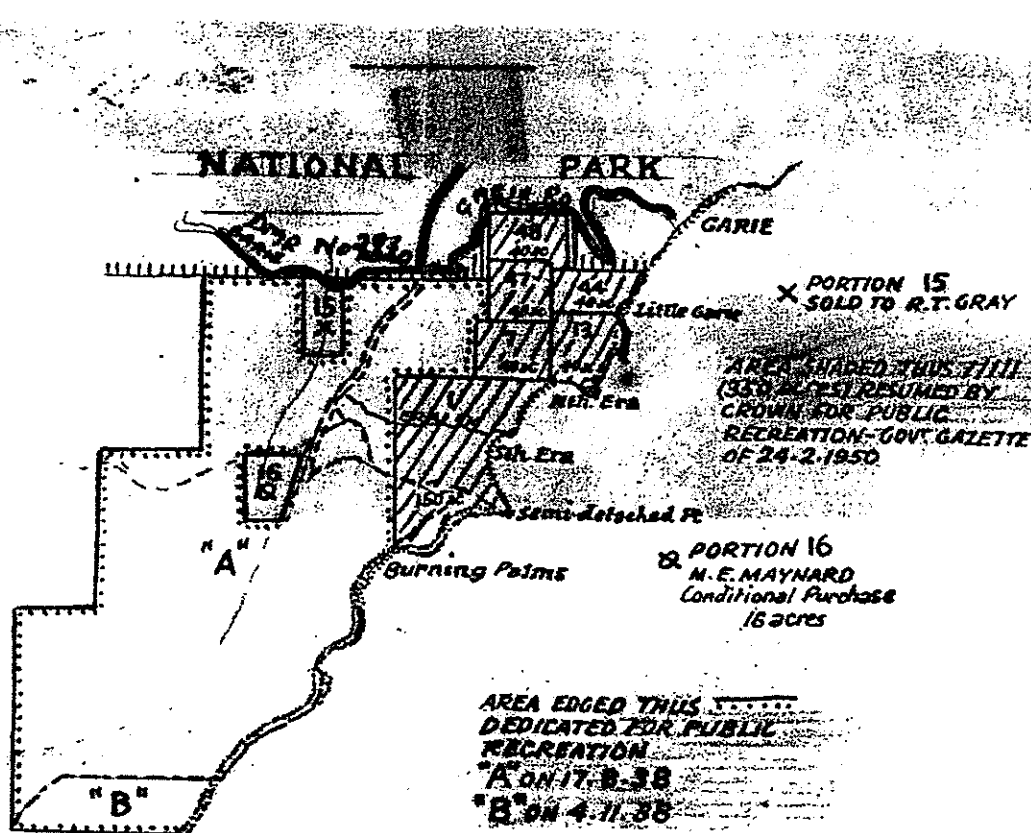
E. G. HOLT.
Hon. Secretary.

It is hereby notified and declared by His Excellency the Governor acting with the advice of the Executive Council that so much of the land hereunder described as is Crown land has been appropriated and so much thereof as is private property, has been resumed under the Public Works Act 1912 for the following public purpose namely for the establishment of a Public Recreation Ground at Era and Garie Beaches National Park, and is vested in the Minister for Lands as constructing authority on behalf of His Majesty.

Sgt. J. Northcott

(Governor).

all that piece or parcel of land situate in the City of Greater Wollongong County of Cumberland Parish of Bulgo being portions 1, 7, 13, 44, 47, 48 (of parish) having an area of 350 acres or thereabouts and shown on plans G296, O.R.; G41, 106, 116, 145 and 313-2030 in the Department of Lands.



THE STORY OF ERA.

Practically everyone has been voluble on this page of the Herald about the problem of Era Beach, except the Cabin Owners themselves, who perhaps have more right than anyone else to be so voluble, being the ones who will be most directly affected by any plans to change to status quo.

4

Now that the Government has decided to resume this much publicised Era Property, it is felt that the problems of the 500 or more occupants of the 140 Cabins on the area are for the most part solved, especially as the Minister for Lands has publically stated that the existing Cabins will remain. They have always been under the dual fear that the land would either be acquired by some private interest who would remove the Cabins to make way for subdivision or by over enthusiastic resumption authorities bent on trying to return the place entirely to its primitive state. The middle course chosen by the Government is the wisest in the opinion of these Cabin Owners.

The story of this holiday community (variously described as fishermen, miners, hikers, campers and even trespassers), and their weekend Cabins (likewise described as shacks, humpies, huts and hovels, depending on the point of view of the writer), is probably unique. For where else, in Australia at least, have hundreds of tons of various building materials (mostly second hand), 1,000 gallon water tanks, and at least two pianos, been bodily carried down 900 feet of narrow bush track! And all this for what must be described as "for the very pleasure of it."

The pioneers of the Community were indeed miners from Helensburgh and Otford, who came to this nearest seaside resort for a weekend's fishing. Their numbers were swollen during the depression of the early thirties when several unemployed lived at the beach and supplemented their meagre rations with fish and an occasional rabbit.

Then after the dull afternoon in '38 when a man was drowned in a grey sea, a Surf Club was formed to prevent a repetition of such a tragedy, and the building of Cabins accelerated, except of course for the war years, right up to the present day. Surf Club members brought their friends and they brought their friends and so on. There is one thing about Era and its neighbouring beach, Burning Palms; once the place gets you, its hard to resist, whether you are a carpenter, engineer, journalist, salesman or one of any other of the various walks of life who make the weekend pilgrimage.

The Surf Clubs have prospered, Annual Carnivals are held between the ~~the~~ in the area, Gatie, Era and Burning Palms; Saturday night dances are club house (shorts, shirts and sandals of course) and scores of

the healthiest bronzed children from one year up, romp about the clean sands. Santa Claus, for the last two years, has made history by arriving in a Surf Boat to distribute toys at the Xmas Party. Everyone who could make the grade has been welcome and hundreds of Sunday visitors ~~by~~ surf in the knowledge that a watchful eye is being kept for their safety.

Yes, the Cabin owners are quite pleased with the policy the Government has adopted and all it wants to do now is to get down to the job of regenerating as many as possible of those natural attributes that the original clearing, cattle grazing and some unscrupulous visitors have removed.

This will take time, but the Cabin owners believe that they are the logical, if not the only, ones to do it. The National Park Trust as the new Controllers of the area can expect every co-operation from them ~~in~~ in preserving and improving Era for the Public.

22/2/50.

L. VOYSEY
(Hon. Secretary)

ERA-BURNING PALMS PROTECTION LEAGUE.

Recd FV5557

22 Palmer St

Rose Bay Linn

Recd LA 5001

20th March, 1953.

The Hon. Minister for Lands,
Parliament House,
Macquarie Street,
SYDNEY.

Dear Sir,

The recent publicity concerning the lands at Era and Burning Palms has caused a certain amount of enquiry from my members. In particular, certain statements attributed to yourself in the Herald of 15/3/53 have been rather confusing.

We feel that the words "preserve the unrestricted use of these areas for the recreation of the public", if meant to apply to Era and Burning Palms, are rather harsh, because even when the land was still privately owned, there was certainly no restriction placed on the public - in fact the presence of small, but active Surf Clubs at both beaches rather enhanced and encouraged the public use of the place.

Again, if the reference to damage to flora and fauna applies to this area, we would like to suggest that more damage has been done by cattle, for which the land was originally cleared, than the occupants of week-enders.

It certainly is the policy of this organisation to prevent removal or destruction of nature flora or fauna. In fact soon after Mr. Sheahan, the then Minister for Lands had made a public announcement that the existing occupants would not be disturbed, an effort was made to get our members as interested in reafforestation as possible.

Unfortunately, with the difficulties created by cattle and the growing feeling of uncertainty as time elapsed, the efforts of the cabin owners were only partly successful.

However, it was the intention of the Society, once the area was passed over to its controlling body, to approach same and try and work out a formula whereby the Society could assume some responsibility for the area.

We know there are certain people in the bushwalking fraternity who, for no apparent reason other than rancour, would like to see all the

buildings removed, but we look to the fairmindedness of yourself and your Government in using restraint in this matter.

One other point I should like to make, and that is, I would like you to know that we do not support those who have built since resumption and, in fact, went so far as to warn in a general way that anyone building after 24th Feb., '50 might be looked upon by the Government as a trespasser and asked to remove his building.

In conclusion, I would be grateful if you could find your way clear to receive a deputation of 2 or 3 of our committee to discuss this matter further. We of course would await your convenience.

Yours faithfully,

LMV/RMA

(L.M. VOYSEY)
HON. SEC.



S Y D N E Y.

12 JUN 1953

Mr. L. M. Voysey,
Hon. Secretary,
Era-Burning Palms Co-operative
Society Limited,
22 Palmer Street,
ROSE BAY NORTH.

Dear Sir,

As you are aware the matter of determining the future control of the area of 350 acres at Era and Little Garie Beaches which was resumed for recreation on 24th February, 1950, has been before my Department for some time.

The question generally has been complicated by virtue of the fact that various individuals and organisations have from time to time in the past made representations urging that the decision to be arrived at be made in the light of the particular facts presented by the individual party or parties concerned. The opinions expressed have been widely at variance but all representations received have merited thorough investigation.

After full consideration of all aspects relating to the area under discussion I have come to the conclusion that the best interests of the public generally can be served only by vesting control of the resumed lands in The National Park Trust. I have accordingly approved that the subject lands be dedicated for Public Recreation and proclaimed a Public Park within the provisions of the Public Parks Act. Coincident with this action the area concerned will be incorporated in The National Park and the trustees of The National Park will be appointed trustees of the resumed lands. Pending finalisation of dedication and other associated action I have requested The National Park Trust to assume immediate control of the 350 acres in question.

I take this opportunity of pointing out that my decision in this matter has only been arrived at after very full and earnest consideration of all aspects relating to the future destiny of the "Era lands". I have thoroughly considered the various conflicting representations which have been received, as mentioned previously, but the circumstances of the case generally are such that the paramount point for consideration can only be the interests of the public as a whole.

Yours faithfully,

J. H. Hawkins
MINISTER FOR LANDS.



President:
~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~
HON. J. E. CAHILL. M.L.A.

Secretary:
MISS L. M. BALLHAUSEN.
~~XXXXXX~~ BL.2745

THE NATIONAL PARK TRUST

Challis House, Martin Place,

SYDNEY

1st July, 1953.

Allambie House,
Audley
THE NATIONAL PARK
via Sutherland
LB 2240

Mr. L. Voysey,
22 Palmer Street,
ROSE BAY NORTH...N.S.W.

Dear Sir/Madam,

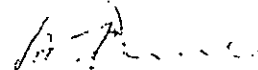
The Minister for Lands has approved of the Trustees of The National Park assuming control of the area of 350 acres at Era and Little Garie Beaches and collecting rentals from the occupiers of buildings in this area.

The Trustees have decided that rents shall be payable from 1st July, 1953.

It is understood that Committees have been formed and function in the various sections of the area.

The Trustees shall be glad if a Representative from each section, viz. Little Garie, Era and Burning Palms, will meet the Trustees, at the next Board Meeting to be held at 2.30 p.m. on Friday, 31st July, 1953, at this Office.

Yours faithfully,


MANAGER.



President:
Hon. J. J. CAHILL, M.L.A.

Secretary:
Miss L. M. BALLHAUSEN
BL 2745

THE NATIONAL PARK TRUST

Challis House, Martin Place,

SYDNEY

2nd November, 1953.

Allambie House,
Audley

THE NATIONAL PARK
via Sutherland

LB 2240

Mr. L. M. Voysey,
22 Palmer Street,
ROSE BAY NORTH...N.S.W.

Dear Sir,

Referring to your letter of 12th October, 1953, I have to advise that the rental of 5/- per week is the minimum charge to occupants of buildings erected in the Park and the Trustees are not prepared to grant a reduction.

As mentioned in the circular letter of 1st October, 1953, the rental will be reviewed in twelve months.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'A. Brown'.

MANAGER.

ROYAL NATIONAL PARK TRUST
(85-500)

Permissive Occupancy No. _____

SCHEDULE OF CONDITIONS relating to the occupancy by

..... of
(hereinafter referred to as the tenant) (address)

of Cabin No. situated within the
Section of the Royal National Park.

In the conditions of the Permissive Occupancy -
unless the context otherwise requires -

"Trustees" means the Trustees of the Royal National Park and includes the persons for the time being acting as such.

"Premises" means the cabin or any other structure the Trustees may have granted the tenant permission to erect and use for his enjoyment.

"Superintendent" means the Superintendent of the Royal National Park and includes the person for the time being acting as such.

- (1) The rental of per annum shall be paid in advance to the Superintendent of the Royal National Park.
- (2) The Permissive Occupancy is terminable at will by the Trustees.
- (3) The tenant shall not sell, transfer, sublet or part with possession of the premises, or any part thereof; shall use the premises for recreation purposes only and not be dependent on the premises as a permanent place of residence.
- (4) The tenant shall pay all rates and taxes and all fees and charges under the Local Government Act, 1919, or as may be levied by subsequent amending Acts, upon the premises during the currency of the Permissive Occupancy.
- (5) The tenant shall indemnify and keep indemnified the Trustees and/or The Minister for Lands from and against all actions, suits, claims and demands of whatsoever nature and all costs, charges, and expenses in respect of any accident or injury to any person or property which may arise out of the repair or maintenance of works as may be authorised under the Permissive Occupancy notwithstanding that the conditions of this Permissive Occupancy shall in all respects have been observed by the tenant or that any such accident or injury shall arise from any act or thing which he may be licensed or compelled to do hereunder.
- (6) The tenant shall not interfere with the rights of the public to use any part of the Royal National Park which is not covered by the area granted to the tenant for his use under this Permissive Occupancy.
- (7) The tenant shall not use or permit any part of the premises to be used for business or any unlawful purpose.
- (8) The tenant shall not permit any part of the premises to be used for hoarding or advertising purposes.
- (9) The tenant shall not make any excavation on the premises and any damage occasioned to the land by this occupation shall be made good by him as directed by the Trustees of the Royal National Park and within such time as may be allowed.
- (10) The tenant shall not permit any objectionable matter to be discharged into or allowed in any way to enter the adjoining waters.

- (11) The tenant shall keep and maintain the premises and the adjacent area in a clean and tidy condition at all times and no debris or refuse shall be allowed to accumulate or lie in or near the area.
- (12) The tenant shall cause the dwelling and any other structure as the Trustees may approve to be erected on the Park to be painted with two (2) coats of paint at reasonable intervals - no interval to exceed five (5) years and shall keep the premises in a state of good repair and to the satisfaction of the Trustees during the currency of the Permissive Occupancy and shall comply with any direction issued in this regard by the Trust or any officer acting on its behalf.
- (13) The tenant shall not alter in any way or add to the existing premises without first having obtained the written permission of the Trustees of the Royal National Park.
- (14) The Permissive Occupancy may be terminated at any time by a written demand signed by the President of the Royal National Park Trust or an officer acting on his behalf and should the tenant decide to vacate the premises he shall be required to give notice in writing to the Trustees or their representative of the date on which his occupation of the land is to cease and he shall be liable to occupancy fee up to that date unless the occupancy should be terminated by the Trustees at an earlier date.
- (15) Upon termination of the occupancy and within such time as may be given by the Trustees the tenant shall remove all structures or all or any material from the land and shall restore at his own expense and as directed by the Trustees any damage occasioned to and resulting from his occupation. Should the building not be removed within three months from the date of termination of the occupancy the Trustees may demolish and/or dispose of it as they may deem fit.
- (16) The tenant shall at all times observe all rules and regulations relating to the management of the Royal National Park.
- (17) Without limiting the generality of the foregoing the tenant shall comply with all requirements made by the Trustees from time to time with regard to his occupation of the land.
- (18) The Trustees of the Royal National Park shall not be liable for any act, default or neglect.
- (19) Without prejudice to the generality of Condition (2) hereof a breach of any condition will render the Permissive Occupancy liable to termination and the decision of the Trustees in this regard shall be final. In the event of termination no compensation will be payable to the tenant.
- (20) Termination of the Permissive Occupancy shall not exonerate the tenant from any liability incurred under the Permissive Occupancy prior to such termination.

I agree to the rent, terms and conditions as above stated and am retaining for my own information Tenant's Copy of the above.

.....
(Tenant's Signature).

The Superintendent,
Royal National Park Trust,
A U D L E Y. N.S.W.

Dear Sir,

Re ERA BEACH.

We refer to our discussion of the 19th October, 1965 with respect to the tenancy rights of the shackholders at Era Beach, and submit the following information in order to acquaint you with the situation.

HISTORY - It was around the time of World War No. 1 that a few hardy people, mainly from the Helensburgh area, first hacked their way through the rain forest and camped in the area at weekends and holiday periods. During the depression, many people from Helensburgh temporarily settled there in order to eke out their rations by fishing, rabbiting, growing vegetables, etc.

At this time also, the spot became a favourite walking place for hikers, mainly young people from Sydney who would entrain to Lilyvale and walk the five miles or so to the beach - many spending the whole weekend there.

The whole of the land embracing Era and North Era beaches was then owned by a Mr. Byrne, an old man living in Randwick whose family had been given the original Crown grant. He gave his permission for the erection of shacks and huts by the miners from Helensburgh and the bushwalkers and charged a small rental of 1/- per week, later increased to 2/- per week - this was collected from the campers by Mr. Gray who had a grazing lease of the land.

With the end of the depression Era beach became more popular and many more shacks were erected. It should be remembered that all the building materials (apart from local timber) comprising iron, fibro, cement as well as water tanks, furniture, refrigerators, glass, dressed timber, etc. has had to be carried by manpower down a steep, rugged track of a mile or more dropping 900 feet to the sea. Similar expansion took place at Burning Palms beach and Little Garie beach.

In 1939 a young hiker was drowned at Era beach and it was decided to form a Surf Club which has done a sterling job over the years, their proud boast being that not a life has been lost on Era Beach since its formation, which has helped to keep the beach safe for hikers and holiday makers.

With the onset of the war many of the young men of the Surf Club joined the fighting forces and served in various theatres of war. A number did not return, two were drowned in the "Centaur" and others fell in foreign lands, as attested on the Honour Board placed in the Surf Clubhouse.

In 1948 the last of the Byrne family died and the estate was put up for sale. The tenants formed an Era-Burning Palms Protection Society and each subscribed £40 with the object of purchasing the land as a joint venture. This was largely made possible by the fact that a substantial number were ex-servicemen and contributed portion of their deferred pay. Then a large Sydney firm of land developers became interested and was prepared to purchase the whole area.

At this point in time, around the year 1950, the Lands Department became interested in the area with the object of incorporating it in the National Park which adjoined, and the fusion was affected in that year. In due course the tenants received notice that their shacks had been numbered and they were required to pay a weekly rental of 5/- per shack. There does not appear to have been any general

or detailed discussion with respect to the rights and responsibilities of the interested parties, except that no more shacks were to be erected, but an assurance is believed to have been given by the Minister for Lands at that time, that the cabin holders could not be interfered with.

From the above you will see that the owners of these shacks and cabins cannot be classified as squatters on Crown land for they were tenants of the property by permission of the owner for many years prior to its incorporation in the Royal National Park.

CURRENT SITUATION - The position outlined above continued until approximately two years ago when, without warning or prior discussion, the National Park raised the rent to 10/- per week.

It is calculated that the total amount now paid to the Trust from the tenants of the three beaches, viz: 116 at Era Beach, 48 at Burning Palms and 30 odd at Little Garie is approximately £5000 per annum. In return for this sum the tenants receive no tangible service, nor do they expect any, feeling that the privilege of enjoying the natural amenities of the area is sufficient return to them.

Early in 1964 each tenant was given a form in duplicate entitled "Conditions of Occupancy, of which one copy was to be signed and returned to the National Park Trust. Many of the tenants have not signed this form as they feel that the terms and conditions therein are harsh and unreasonable, particularly Condition No. 14, which states that the Permissive Occupancy may be terminated at any time. Those tenants who have not signed the form have recently received notice that unless it is signed forthwith, their permission to occupy will be terminated.

In defence of their desire to remain as tenants of the National Park Trust and thereby conform to the limit with the rules and regulations of the Trust, the tenants quote the following:

The surf life saving club, which has a very good record and is substantially made up of members and their sons and nephews, ensures that the surfing beach is kept reasonably safe in the surfing season for the inhabitants as well as the many visitors, including bush-walkers, boy scouts and school groups, which regularly use the area.

Visitors to the beach are of course always welcome and never, at any time, have the tenants resented or opposed any who come to use the beach or environs.

In cases of accident, persons are present who can give first-aid and, if necessary, as often happens, organise stretcher teams to carry wounded persons up the steep mountain track or convey them by boat to Garie beach, where road transport is available.

Because of the relative isolation of the area the tenants take great pride in keeping the surroundings in their natural state and ensuring that cleanliness and hygiene are of a high standard. Their presence also ensures that the activities of the rowdy element of the general community are kept under control.

Should the tenants be forced to leave, would mean the virtual disbandment of the surf club which is mainly financed by the tenants, and without this financial assistance its existence would be doomed. Obviously also, the surf club members would not be prepared to carry the gear and equipment to the beach each weekend, but would join suburban clubs.

Many of the tenants are resentful of the action now proposed by the Trust, as they envisage the probable finish to the enjoyment of the rewards that their hard work and effort over many years has entitled them to. It is their earnest wish that a satisfactory and amicable

would welcome an opportunity for discussion with the authority in order to see where they stand in the matter.

Incidentally, the Era Beach community includes two members of the Police force, an Anglican padre, a Roman Catholic priest and some trained nurses.

We shall be most grateful if you would convey our feelings and aspirations on the subject to the appropriate Minister.

Finally, sir, we thank you for giving us of your time and consideration with respect to this (to us) important matter.

Yours sincerely,

C. Pracey.
F. Holloway.
J. Mead.
H. Walmsley.

H. Walmsley
20-11-1965

SYDNEY.

The Hon. B.A. Willis, B.A., M.P.,
Minister for Labour and Industry,
Chief Secretary and Minister
for Tourist Activities,
SYDNEY.

My dear Minister,

Further reference is made to your personal representations on behalf of Mr. J.B. Walmsley and other occupants of cottages on Era Beach, relative to their tenancy rights within the Royal National Park.

Since my last letter to you, I have discussed the future existence of buildings of this particular type with the President and Members of the Royal National Park Trust, and have advised them that they should take action as early as possible, to have all privately owned cabins, etc. removed from the area. At the same time it was suggested to the trustees that they should keep in mind the need to prevent any hardship that might arise in the case of pensioners.

Buildings which serve a community need, such as this life-saving clubhouses, however, present an entirely different picture from those occupied on a private basis and there is no likelihood of the particular ones mentioned being required to be removed at this point of time.

For your further information, it is advised that the revenue derived by the trustees by way of site rentals from the owners of these particular buildings has a reasonable impact on their overall financial position. However, the continued existence of this type of structure on our National Parks cannot be allowed to continue indefinitely and on a basis that the trust will be reimbursed with additional grant moneys to the extent of any losses sustained, the trustees of the Royal National Park are at present giving consideration to the question and method of their removal.

Yours faithfully,


MINISTER FOR LANDS.

A new look for National Park

Appendix 9

WE were standing on the ancient, wind-eroded headland overlooking Wattamolla when we first heard the steady thump of axe blows. "Hear that?" said Chuck Wilder. "That's another shanty coming down". He looked very pleased.

Chuck Wilder is an engaging 27-year-old Californian who has just spent four years getting a Bachelor of Science degree in park management at Sacramento State College. He's presently applying his scientific attitudes to the Royal National Park. Not everybody necessarily likes what he's doing.

For example, none of the 150-odd people who have weekenders — and some permanent shacks — in the park at South Era, Burning Palms and Little Garie Beaches want to go. These are the people who were allowed to move into the park by the trustees, when trustees still ran it. Things have changed since the National Parks and Wildlife Service took over.

Extensive view

From Governor Game Lookout, the view extends north over the low scrub plateaus of the park, east to the ocean and south to Port Kembla. Almost in the immediate foreground are 116 little timber and fibro houses, climbing in neat rows up the southern slope of Semi-Detached Point.

"We'll take a bulldozer from Garie over those first two headlands," says Wilder. "and round the back over that creek, and

Background

what isn't carried away we'll bury."

"There are 116 kerosene refrigerators down there," he says. "And would you believe two pianos. They manhandled 'em all down the track from the road here."

It's not that Chuck Wilder is getting some kind of mean-spirited bureaucrats' pleasure out of interfering with other people. Indeed, he's very conscious of the fact that there are pensioners living in the park who will find it difficult when they have to move. He's not acting precipitately, either. It's just that the National Parks and Wildlife Service is bringing to the National Park a new—and totally professional philosophy.

The man behind this philosophy is Samuel P. Weems, the American parks man Lands Minister Tom Lewis brought out to run the National Parks and Wildlife Service when it took over the State's national parks from the separate groups of trustees who had been running them for years.

And the basis of the philosophy is that much more attention, and pro-

fessional attention, will have to be paid to finding the proper balance between public use and enjoyment of national parks on the one hand, and on the other hand preserving them for the future.

The problem all parks men face is maintaining this balance. Clearly, a park without people in it to enjoy it isn't serving any purpose at all; but if you allow totally unrestricted use, the pressure of people can ruin the park.

Therefore, the argument runs, if there are to be necessary controls, they must apply equally to everybody. Thus, the 116 little shacks at South Era and the others scattered along the coastline and at one or two other places in the park will have to go.

Brought from U.S.

In the strict scientific park management sense, there are other things that will have to go as well eventually. The present parks men are a bit reluctant to talk about this too much, but the logic of their position demands that the old guest house at Audley will have to go some time, and so will a church youth camp on the shores of Port Hacking.

All of this is sure to cause a certain amount of complaint. And this is because the aim of national parks, their reason for being there, has changed in the past half century or so. And so has the way people use them.

An early history of the park records that the Royal National Park was set up originally because "the health of the people should be the primary consideration of all good Governments," and all the early writing about it emphasises the park's wonderfully healthy air and the romantic grandeur of the scenery.

These days, the emphasis is on the preservation of rare and irreplaceable flowers and animals. In the old days, the trustees knocked the indigenous trees down and put in exotics. And in the old history, there's one sentence that would turn a modern parks man a paler shade of grey: "Useless underscrub has given place to nutritious and ornamental grasses."

The people, too, have changed. The early history of the park recorded Arcadian scenes on the Hacking River and rhapsodised about "the sources of revelry and mirth from the river on a moonlit summer evening, as boat-load after boat-load of happy holiday excursionists glided along the shadows of the silent stream."

deal with happy holiday excursionists who push shelter sheds over, light fires on the tops of picnic tables, and unless stopped, turn the banks of the river into a drag strip for "hotties."

The casual beer-keg hooliganism is bad enough, so is the extraordinary amount of litter which people drop all round the park. (Even an ill-defined path to some secluded Aboriginal carvings is blazed with broken beer bottles).

Small armory of rifles

More dangerous and disturbing, are the hunters who are coming into the park after its deer and wallabies. Harold Senior has caught a number of them, and has court cases pending. His office is a small armory of confiscated rifles, including, at the moment, a high velocity Remington 303 with a powerful scope. Its owner came from Brisbane, just for the hunting.

Constant patrolling by Senior and Wilder, both by day and night, is keeping the hunting down. But the park is nearly 40,000 acres in extent and parts of it are very rugged. More rangers are needed, and so are heavier fines for having a rifle in the park. A man with a \$200 Remington who's come from Brisbane seriously to hunt deer isn't going to be worried too much about a \$100 fine for having a rifle in the park.

This is the preventive side of park work. But there's a more constructive side. At the moment, work is going ahead to reconstruct Garie Beach and its surroundings — and again, the plan is to balance preservation of the area with what park people call "public use." A proper car park is being made to prevent cars scattering all over the hill sides. It will mean fewer cars in the area, but it will also preserve the natural scrub.

Rangers are not officious

Other changes are coming. For example, Chuck Wilder would like to see scientifically designed walking trails through the "primitive" area of the park — its rain forests and gullies between the Hacking River and Kangaroo Creek. He would like to have botanists and naturalists taking small parties through.

He wants also to see the park accept the idea that rangers are not officious sports, but guardians — of the public's benefit — of the park's natural treasures.

These kinds of views are held by all the people in the newly established National Parks and Wildlife Service. And if the public

SNOWY MOUNTAINS AUTHORITY

invites applications for

CIVIL ENGINEERS GRADE A

\$3311/5047

Qualifications admitting to Graduate Membership of the Institution of Engineers, Australia, are required. Selected applicants will be engaged on any of the following work:

- The investigation, studies and design of hydro-electric works relating to dams, power stations and appurtenant works.
- Materials investigation including laboratory and field work for large dams and other major hydraulic structures.
- Hydrologic investigation of all types including the study of flood, yield, evaporation and the solution of problems with emphasis on the application of statistical method and computer solution.

Experience in any of the above fields is desirable but not essential. The Commonwealth Government has announced its intention to re-organise the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electricity Commission. The Snowy Mountains Authority after the completion of the Snowy Scheme. Location of duties will initially be in Cooma.

Housing on a subsidised rental basis is available for married appointees after a short waiting period during which a living away from home allowance is paid. For a single man of a married man awaiting allocation of a cottage, hostel accommodation is provided, subject to certain conditions, rates and removal charges will be paid.

Applications containing full details of qualifications, experience and references, and a recent passport photograph, must be sent to the Director, Snowy Mountains Authority, P.O. Box 100, Cooma, New South Wales.



NEW SOUTH WALES
MINISTER FOR PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT

Appendix 10

Mrs. K. Evans,
Era Surf Life Saving Club,
20 Curtis Avenue,
TAREN POINT. 2225.

25 NOV 1985

Dear Mrs. Evans,

I refer to your letter of 28th October, 1985, seeking approval for your Club to use and occupy cabin No.78 at South Era, Royal National Park.

I understand you are aware that cabin No.78 was demolished on the day you wrote to me. I also understand that you now have a sponsor who is willing to fund its re-construction in order for it to be used as a Club facility.

The decision to demolish the cabin was taken after the licensee, Mr. R. N. Clayton notified the National Parks and Wildlife Service and myself of his intention to surrender the licence. The licence provides for the cabin to be removed from the Park when either voluntarily relinquished by the licensee or on the death of the licensee, or for continual and serious breaches of the licence conditions.

This policy was formulated during the mid-1960's by the then Minister for Lands and the Trustees of the former Royal National Park Trust and was aimed at eventually obtaining the complete elimination of privately owned cabins from the Park. The continuation of the policy has been rigorously applied by the Service since the care, control and management of the Park was vested in the Director on 24th November, 1967.

Private occupations of this nature are objectionable in a national Park and are contrary to every accepted concept of national Park philosophy and management. The buildings themselves are generally unsightly and are occupying space which rightly should be available for recreational use by the general public. The Service is currently planning and undertaking new works to improve certain areas of the Park and mounting visitor pressures and planning schedules dictate that complete removal of all cabins from within the Park, by strict adherence to the adopted policy, is essential to ensure that areas currently occupied are ultimately available for public use.

Some of the problems associated with these cabins include a proliferation of uncontrolled cats and dogs which have a deleterious effect on the wildlife of the Park, and considerable damage to the Park as a result of unauthorised vehicular access to the cabins. Illegal connection to the Service's water supply, encroachment onto the Park beyond the licensed cabin site, and use of the cabins for permanent accommodation are other management problems that have confronted the Service over the years.

Your application to take over the site of former cabin No.78 to re-build a similar structure has been carefully examined. While I am mindful of the Club's community service at South Era Beach, I do not believe it would be in the best interests of the management of the national Park to grant your Club a licence for an additional cabin.

On the question of accommodation, I recently gave approval for the Club to occupy cabin No.100 to supplement its original facilities at cabin No.70. I am advised that both cabins have provision for multiple occupancy which should adequately accommodate your members.

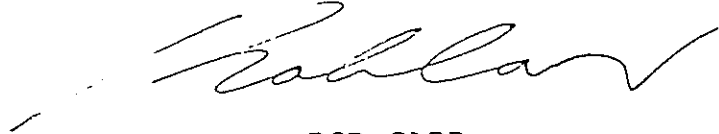
Your comments regarding the range of accommodation available for members of the Burning Palms Surf Life Saving Club have been noted. It is not considered, however, that the circumstances applying at Burning Palms and at Era are necessarily comparable.

It should be noted that, in considering applications for leases and licences for surf club facilities in Royal National Park, with provision for such facilities to include some overnight accommodation for members, the Service has always had regard to the isolated location of the beaches involved. The justification for providing some overnight accommodation is recognised, particularly during weekends and holiday periods due to the access problem and the need to protect facilities from vandalism. However, it is felt that the facilities should not generally be larger than what is necessary to accommodate the number of surf life saving personnel actually required to patrol the beaches.

In all the circumstances, I regret that I must decline your Club's application to construct an additional cabin over the site of former cabin No.78. However, should your donor be prepared to fund the refurbishing and/or internal partitioning of the Club's existing premises, I believe the

Service would have no objections to such a proposal subject to details of any proposed works being provided. In this event, I would invite you to contact the Service direct for the necessary building approvals.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bob Carr', with a long horizontal line extending to the left.

BOB CARR

ERA, LITTLE GARIE AND BURNING PALMS
PROTECTION LEAGUE

October 17, 1968

Dear Member,

At the Committee's request I called on the Minister for Lands, Mr. T. L. Lewis, MLA on Tuesday October 15th to discuss recent developments and newspaper reports likely to affect cabin owners.

Mr. Lewis was earlier supplied with a copy of the attached circular.

I explained that cabin owners were most concerned as to their rights and felt unsure of the Government's intentions. They would appreciate positive information as to how they were placed.

Mr. Lewis confirmed the following stipulations.

- (a) No transfers whatever of leases by those registered as rent-payers.
- (b) Once cabins were vacant, either by the death of present owners, or their removal to other States or elsewhere, they could not be re-let.
- (c) Non-payment of rent rendered owners liable to eviction.
- (d) Failure to observe regulations or to keep cabins and area in good condition could mean loss of tenancy.

Hal Missingham

HAL MISSINGHAM,
President

For the Committee:
Messrs. H. Vaughan, C. Dove,
L. Walker, F. White, N. Martin,
W. Arthur, E. Winstanley,
H. Missingham.



MINISTER FOR LANDS AND
FORESTS

SYDNEY

1 JAN 1976

Mr. F. Holloway,
President,
Era, Burning Palms and Little Garie
Protection League,
23 Pamela Avenue,
PEAKHURST, N.S.W. 2210

Dear Mr. Holloway,

Following our meeting on 17th December last I have given careful consideration to the points you raised about rentals for cabin sites in Royal National Park.

Having examined the facts I feel that the increase proposed by the National Parks and Wildlife Service to apply at Bonnie Vale from 1st January, 1976 is justifiable by reference to the value of the sites concerned and it is not intended to reduce the proposed rental. With respect to the other cabin locations however, it has been decided to reduce the weekly fee from \$6.00 to \$5.00. Fees for pensioner occupants will be half the normal rate.

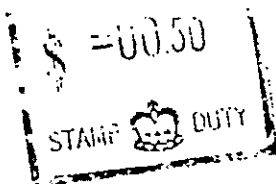
I appreciate also that cabin owners might reasonably ask that there be a measure of certainty so far as any future increases are concerned. In this regard I am prepared to give an undertaking that future reviews will be made at two yearly intervals and that any adjustment will be related to movements in the Consumer Price Index.

Might I take this opportunity to thank you for calling on the 17th and presenting the viewpoint of the cabin owners.

Yours faithfully,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'John M. Mason'.

JOHN M. MASON



CABIN SITE NO. 55/SE	
LICENCE NO.	RO 178

Appendix 13

THIS DEED OF LICENCE made the twenty seventh day of August 1979
between THE HONOURABLE DAVID PAUL LANDA the Minister for Planning and
Environment for the State of New South Wales being the Minister for the time
being administering the National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1974 (hereinafter
called "the Minister", which expression shall include his successors in office)
and JOYCE ELINOR WALMSLEY of 3/13-15 ALLISON ROAD,
CRONULLA, N.S.W.

in the said State (hereinafter called "the Licensee") WITNESSES that

WHEREAS

- A. on the first day of October, 1967 Royal National Park was reserved
under the provisions of the National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1967
and WHEREAS on the twenty fourth day of November, 1967 the care,
control and management of the said Park was vested in the Director
of National Parks and Wildlife and WHEREAS it is desired to provide
expressly for the occupancy referred to hereunder in accordance with
the National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1974, AND WHEREAS
- B. the Licensee is the occupant of the Cabin Site described hereunder
and claims that on the 24th day of November, 1967 he then owned
by virtue of a Permissive Occupancy relating to Cabin No. 55
at South Era said to be granted to him by the
Royal National Park Trust and still does own the building described
in Schedule A hereunto annexed, situated on the land (hereinafter
called "the Cabin Site") shown by red colour on the plan annexed
hereto and marked with the letter "C" AND WHEREAS the said site
is situated within Royal National Park (hereinafter called "the Park")

NOW THIS DEED WITNESSES THAT the Minister in consideration of the fee and
the covenants of the Licensee to pay observe and perform the fee terms and
conditions hereinafter reserved and contained on the part of the Licensee to be
paid observed and performed GRANTS to the Licensee full licence and authority
to use and occupy the cabin site from the 1st day of July, 1979 for the purpose
of the recreational occupation only of the Licensee and the members of his imm-
ediate family subject to the fee and terms and conditions herein AND THE
LICENSEE COVENANTS AND AGREES that:-

1. In this Deed;
 - (a) The "Act" means the National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1974 or any Act in substitution therefor.
 - (b) "Director" means the Director of National Parks and Wildlife appointed under the National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1974.
 - (c) "Regulations" means the Regulations and By-laws made under the National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1974.
 - (d) "Cabin" means the structure or structures situated on the Cabin Site referred to.
 - (e) "Superintendent" means the officer of the National Parks and Wildlife Service from time to time in charge of Royal National Park.
2. The annual fee shall be the sum specified in Schedule A annexed hereto and shall continue at such rate until the 31st day of December, 1979. The licence fee may be reviewed by the Minister as from the 1st day of January, 1980 and biennially thereafter.
3. The annual fee referred to in Clause 2 hereof shall be paid in advance at the office of the Superintendent by equal quarterly instalments upon the first days of April, July, October, and January in each and every year.
4. This licence shall be terminable at the will of the Minister and such termination may be effected by notice forwarded on behalf of the Minister to the licensee at his or her last known postal address.
5. This licence is personal to the Licensee and the cabin site shall not be the subject of sale, transfer, assignment, sub-letting or otherwise so as to be put into the possession of any other person.
6. The grant herein is for the personal use of the licensee and members of his or her immediate family and the Licensee shall supervise and undertakes to be personally responsible for the conduct of all persons who occupy the said cabin and will not permit any illegal improper offensive or riotous behaviour or nuisance on or in association with the use of the said Cabin site.
7. The Licensee shall not interfere with any right of the public to use any part of the Royal National Park which is situated beyond the said Cabin site.
8. The Licensee shall not use or permit any part of the site to be used for business purposes.
9. The Licensee shall not use or permit any part of the site to be used for hoarding or advertising or any unlawful or improper purposes.
10. The Licensee shall not make any excavation on the site and any damage occasioned to the land by his or her occupation shall be made good by the licensee as directed by the Superintendent and within such time as may be allowed by the Superintendent.

The Licensee shall not permit any objectionable matter to be discharged into or allowed in any way to enter the Park or adjoining waters.

12. The Licensee shall keep and maintain the cabin and the adjacent area in a clean and tidy condition to the satisfaction of the Superintendent and during the period of this licence shall keep the cabin and the adjacent area free from dirt and rubbish and inflammable materials and as required by the Superintendent will provide and keep in good order and condition proper refuse or other containers and from time to time will remove and take away or cause to be removed or taken away from the licensed premises and the Park all refuse in accordance with the requirements of the Superintendent.
13. During the continuance of this license the Licensee shall cause the cabin to be painted with two (2) coats of paint at reasonable intervals - no interval to exceed five (5) years and shall keep the cabin in a state of good repair and to the satisfaction of the Superintendent during the currency of this Licence and shall comply with any direction issued in this regard by the Superintendent as to materials, colour or otherwise howsoever.
14. The Licensee shall in a conspicuous position on or adjacent to the front door of the said cabin display the cabin number specified in this licence in numerals of an approximate height of ten centimetres.
15. The Licensee will keep the interior of the cabin free of vermin and pests.
16. In the event of any infectious illness occurring in the cabin the Licensee will notify the Superintendent and the proper Public Authorities and if it be determined by any lawful authority that fumigation and/or disinfection of the cabin is required the Licensee will meet the cost thereof.
17. The Licensee paying the licence fee and punctually observing and performing the conditions of this licence shall peaceably possess and enjoy the cabin site for the duration of the licence without undue interruption from the Licensor or his servants and agents.
18. The Licensee shall not structurally alter in any way or add to the existing cabin.
19. The Licensee may terminate this licence by giving to the Minister or to the Director prior notice of his or her intention to terminate. The effective date of termination shall not exceed one month from the date of such notification.
20. Forthwith upon termination of this Licence the Licensee shall remove all structures and all of his or her material from the site and shall restore at his or her own expense and as directed by the Superintendent any damage occasioned by and resulting from his or her occupation of the Site. Should the cabin not be removed forthwith upon termination of this licence the Superintendent may demolish and remove any structures and material from the Site. All costs incurred by the National Parks and Wildlife Service in this regard shall be at the licensee's expense unless waived at the discretion of the Superintendent.
21. The Licensee shall at all times observe the provisions of the National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1974, and the Regulations and By-laws thereunder and all other statutory provisions rules regulations and by-laws.

22. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing the Licensee shall comply with all reasonable requirements made by the Superintendent from time to time with regard to occupation of the site.
23. Without prejudice to the generality of Condition (4) hereof a breach of any condition will render the Licence liable to termination and the decision of the Minister in this regard shall be final. In the event of termination occurring no compensation will be payable to the Licensee.
24. Termination of this Licence shall not exonerate the Licensee from any liability incurred under the Licence prior to such termination.
25. Neither the Minister nor the Director nor any officer of the National Parks and Wildlife Service or their agents shall so far as the law allows be liable for any claim, default, action for damages or any neglect arising from the grant of this Licence and the Licensee shall indemnify and keep indemnified the Minister and the Director and their servants and agents from and against all liability including any necessary costs charges and expenses in respect of any accident injury or loss or damage notwithstanding any other provision of this Licence.

In witness whereof the parties hereto have executed this DEED the day and year herein first above written, and the Licensee hereby solemnly and sincerely declares that the claims referred to in the recital to this Deed are true and complete in every particular and makes this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true.

SIGNED SEALED DELIVERED and DECLARED)

by the said JOYCE ELINOR)

WALMSLEY)

in the presence of:)

J. E. Walmsley)

Justice of the Peace

J. E. Walmsley

SIGNED by me RICHARD JOHN MAGLETON,

Officer - in - Charge Concessions and Leasing,

National Parks and Wildlife Service for and on

behalf of the MINISTER FOR PLANNING AND

ENVIRONMENT this duly authorised delegate, in the

presence of: K. J. [illegible]

[Signature]

SCHEDULE A (CABIN SITE NO. 55 / SE)

LICENCE FEE (Clause 2)

The Annual fee shall be (\$39.00 per quarter) \$ 156.00

DESCRIPTION

Overall dimensions of Cabin Site :

5m x 3.8m

Materials used in construction:-

Roof Aluminium

Walls Galvanised Iron

60-70ha.

Some heath growth

Grassed ridge & headland

Mostly

gently

sloping well

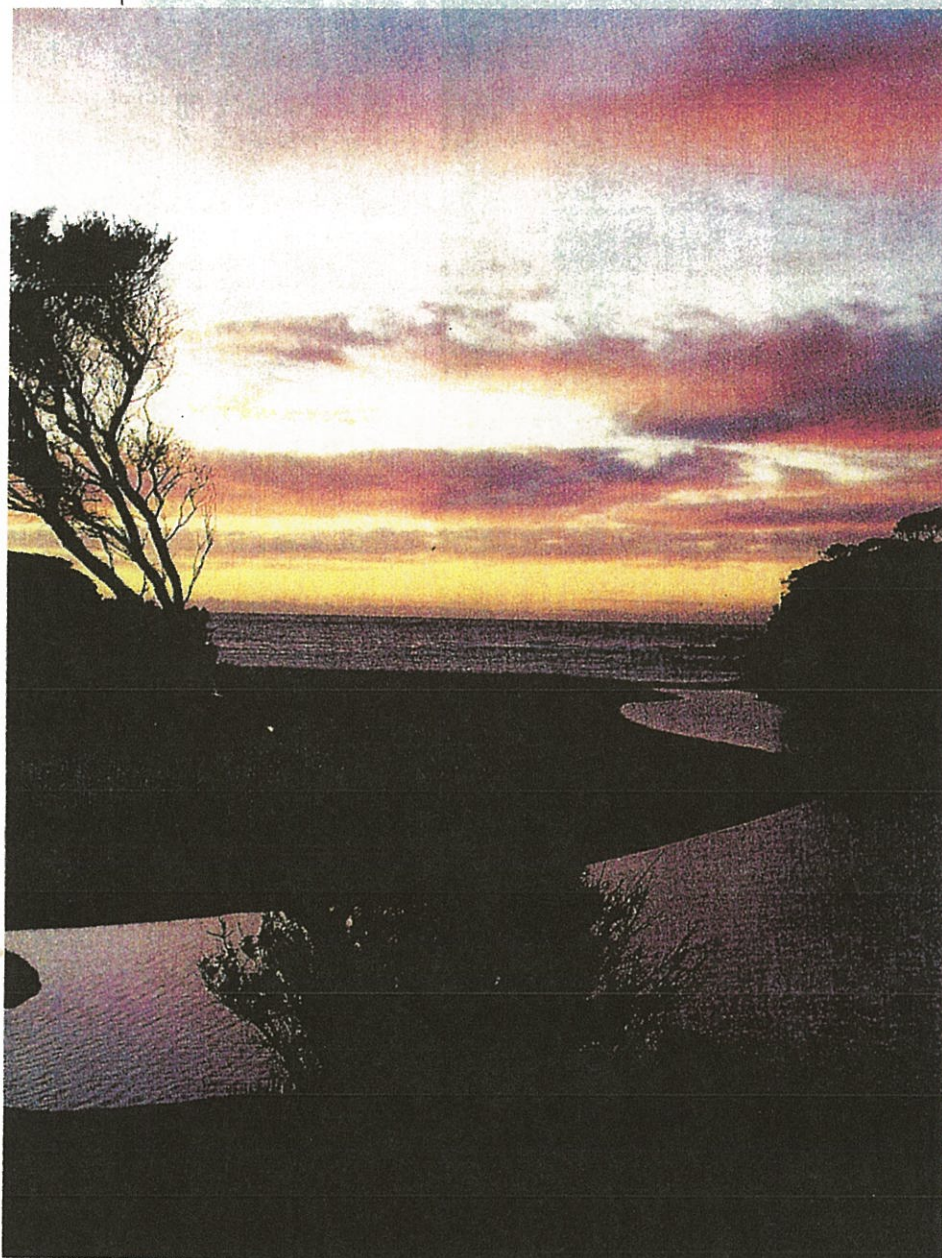
grassed

(Warning Notice Board here)

South Era Beach

This is the plan marked "C" referred to in
Deed of Licence dated 27/8/1979, between the
Minister for Planning and Environment and Mrs J.E. Welmsley
Licensor: [Signature] Licensee: J.E. Welmsley
Witness: [Signature] Witness: [Signature]

Semi-Detached Head



STOP PRESS — CLEAN BEACHES

Until Sydney's beaches get a clean-up, people who venture into the water must be brave or foolish. But there are picturesque and clean beaches ideal for family picnics and safe swimming only 90 minutes' drive south of Sydney, in the Royal National Park.

Senior ranger Col Davidson recommends **Garie Beach** and south **Era Beach** to school holiday expeditioners, as both are patrolled by lifesavers on summer weekends. Garie is the most popular because it is accessible to cars. South Era is about three kilometres' walk along a signposted track from the Garawarra

Farm car park, or along the headland from Garie. Stock up with provisions because neither beach has a kiosk.

Closer to the Sydney end of the park, **Wattamolla** (above) has a sheltered beach, lagoon, kiosk, barbecue facilities and car park.

It's where Matthew Flinders and George Bass camped at the beginning of their circumnavigation of Australia.

Although there are no creatures in the lagoon, Davidson warns swimmers to take care as the water is deep and cold, and there are no lifesavers.

The park's beaches close at sunset. Park entry is \$5 a vehicle.

PART III

ROYAL NATIONAL PARK

Situated close to Sydney's southern suburbs, Royal National Park is one of the city's most popular recreational areas, receiving over a million visitors a year. Despite its popularity, much of the park's 15 014 hectares still retains its rugged, unspoilt nature, and the walker will find satisfaction in the beautiful scenery, the diversity of vegetation, and the experience of freedom which is so much a part of the wilderness. The magnificent coastline, with its high sandstone cliffs and fine surfing beaches, is one of the park's most important natural assets. The park's other habitats include expansive heathlands, forested slopes, and the dense subtropical rainforest vegetation of the Hacking River, each supporting its own varied plant and animal life. The heathlands are renowned for their displays of wildflowers between August and November, and the park is a birdwatcher's delight with over 240 species being recorded.

Access: The majority of visitors enter the park by road, turning off the Princes Highway 2.5 kilometres south of Sutherland, which is only 27 kilometres from the city centre. An entrance fee per car is payable. This road descends to Audley, a popular picnic area, where the Park Information Centre is located. From Audley there is a road system giving visitors access to Bundeena, Wattamolla, and Garie Beach. The southern part of the park may be entered by road from Waterfall or Otford. Lady Carrington Drive, which connects the Upper Causeway with Audley along the valley of the Hacking River, is closed to vehicles. Train travellers may enter the park from Engadine, Heathcote, Waterfall or Otford stations or from the Royal National Park Station which is on the plateau, 1.6 kilometres above Audley. There is an infrequent bus service at weekends from Waterfall to Garie. Walkers along the coastal track usually take a train to Cronulla, where they connect up with the regular ferry to Bundeena.

Facilities: The park is well endowed with picnic areas and visitors' facilities. At Audley there is a kiosk, shelter-sheds, picnic and boating facilities and the park headquarters and information centre. Other picnic areas suitable for the car traveller are at Wattamolla, Garie, Upper Causeway, Garawarra, Bonnie Vale, and Warumbul, and there are many smaller roadside picnic areas. Wattamolla provides lagoon swimming and Garie Beach is patrolled by lifesavers. Both have change rooms and kiosks. The beaches of Era and Burning Palms can be reached only on foot and are patrolled by lifesavers at weekends and in peak periods. There is a serviced camping area at Bonnie Vale. Annual bush camping permits must be carried by all hikers who wish to camp and are available from the park headquarters. Enquiries should be directed to: The Superintendent, Royal

Era not until 1945. Prior to the 1920s it was mainly a military reserve. The Gara Estate and five small properties occupied about 142 hectares on the coast between Garie and Burning Palms. They were freehold and dated back to about 1830. Only a few fishermen used the beautiful beaches of Era, Burning Palms, and Werrong, and cattle roamed all over the area. Myles Dunphy may have been the first hiker in Garawarra, visiting it as early as July 1913. He subsequently named many of the landmarks, including Semi-detached Point, Era, and Burning Palms, the latter from the lighting of a number of dead cabbage tree palms at night for a beacon. The name Garawarra is derived from two Aboriginal words, 'Gara' meaning 'long', and 'Warra' meaning 'mountain' or 'range' (also used in Illawarra and Cambewarra).

As the area became better known, conservationists grew concerned about the cattle-grazing and timber-getting activities, the shooting of wallabies, the flourishing flower-picking trade, dynamiting of fish, bushfires, and the despoliation of the beaches and headlands by huts. As there was no fence to the south of the national park, many of these activities overlapped into the park. The first move to protect and preserve Garawarra came from Dunphy's Mountain Trails Club. In September 1925, a letter was sent to the Minister for Lands complaining about the vandalism and abuses and suggesting that it be added to the national park. The Garawarra Primitive Area campaign was joined by the Sydney Bushwalkers in 1927 and public meetings were held and petitions collected. A proposal to transfer two leasehold blocks on Black Gin Creek (near the Garawarra picnic area) to freehold resulted in a court case, and although the verdict went against the conservationists, a further survey of the land for small farm subdivision was abandoned. The campaign increased in fervour in 1933 when the newly formed New South Wales Federation of Bushwalking Clubs put a Garawarra Park as first priority. A map and pamphlet explaining the proposal was printed; federation members waited at railway stations between Waterfall and Otford to canvass the support of walkers; a petition signed by 5000 was sent to the Minister for Lands. The result was that a reserve of 1300 acres (about 526 hectares) was dedicated on 17 August 1934.

However, the freehold lands of Gara Estate, Upper Hacking, and Black Gin Creek were not included in the reserve, only the available crown land which had been reserved for defence. In 1937-38, the federation opposed the renewal of a lease on 57 hectares adjoining Garawarra. The renewal was refused by the land board and the area added to the park. On Gara Estate, bushwalkers had to share the valley of North Era with cattle; the owners encouraged the building of shacks at South Era and planned a country club and connecting road. Alarmed, members of the Sydney Bushwalkers Club decided at the end of 1943 to try to buy about 16 hectares along Stockyard Creek, North Era. Two prominent conservationists were involved—Myles Dunphy fostered the idea, and Marie Byles acted as solicitor in the transactions. A total of £350 was raised, and although the owners

agreed to sell, the government refused to sanction the sale as the price was above official valuations. Negotiations followed, in which it was suggested that the State government resume the whole area and have it added to Garawarra Park, and the outcome was that money was set aside by the government for the acquisition of the whole area in 1944–45. Thus, after a long fight, the bushwalkers were able to preserve this most beautiful southern portion of the Royal National Park.

Between the wars, access to the beauty spots of the park was improved and the use of the motor vehicle became widespread, although by 1933 the Lady Carrington Drive was still only a rough track not negotiable by motor traffic above the Upper Causeway. A sulky track ran from the Upper Causeway to Garie. A coast track ran along the plateau from Garie to Old Simpson's Hotel, Bundeena, following the route of an earlier saddle track from Clifton to Port Hacking, and another track ran from Audley to Wattamolla. Spots like Garie became very popular, and on a good weekend tents would cover the whole area of today's car park.

Until 1955 the park was known simply as the National Park; following Queen Elizabeth's visit, it was proclaimed the Royal National Park. As with the Kuring-gai Chase, control of the park by the trustees ended in 1967 when the National Parks and Wildlife Act placed the park under the administrative control of NPWS.

Bundeena–Marley–Wattamolla–Garie (See Maps 11 and 12)

Average Time: Bundeena to Little Marley—2 hours.

Little Marley to Wattamolla—1 hour 15 minutes.

Wattamolla to Garie—3 hours.

Distance: Bundeena to Little Marley—6.4 kilometres.

Little Marley to Wattamolla—4 kilometres.

Wattamolla to Garie—8.8 kilometres.

Map Reference: CMA, Royal National Park (scale 1:30 000).

General Features: Because of its ease of access, well-defined tracks and magnificent coastal scenery, this is one of the most popular walks around Sydney. The track hugs the coastline for most of the way; on one side sheer sandstone cliffs fall into the sea; on the other is the wide expanse of coastal heath. The cliff line is broken by the untouched wild beauty of Marley Beach, by the small cove of Little Marley, and by the popular picnic and swimming spot of Wattamolla. All along the track there are excellent opportunities for photography. The views are expansive; the shoreline, the sea, the waves crashing over the rocks, and the peaceful beaches all provide a contrast which delights the viewer. This walk is the first part of the coastal walk through the Royal National Park. The total distance from Bundeena to Otford is about 30 kilometres. However, many day walkers, especially those relying on public transport, prefer to go no

Lessons from the Plotlands

Appendix 16 (a)

More than fifty years ago, Lady Cynthia Mosley warned Parliament: "The time has come when we must definitely choose between the end of *laissez-faire* or the end of rural England."¹ What emerged over the years was something of a compromise—*laissez-faire* took a bit of a battering, but never wholly disappeared; while rural England, though spared some of the excesses feared in the 1930s, continued to change in ways that proved to be even more fundamental.

The question of whether to plan or not and, if so, how much to plan is always topical and beyond easy resolution. Lady Mosley polarised the issues in the 1930s and, until recently, the trend has been towards greater controls. Now, of course, the signs are that the pendulum is swinging slowly back again, with planning powers trimmed to fit a new political and economic context.

Immersed as we are within day-to-day controversies that seem to challenge the very foundations of a hard-won planning system, it may be instructive to take a more detached, historical view. Exemplifying and provoking many of the arguments for and against planning is the story of a strange, and now almost extinct, form of development—that of the *plotlands*. It is a form of development that is intimately bound-up with the emergence of the planning system, with its subsequent implementation and, it will be argued, with the current debate on acceptable limits of control.

The plotlands problem

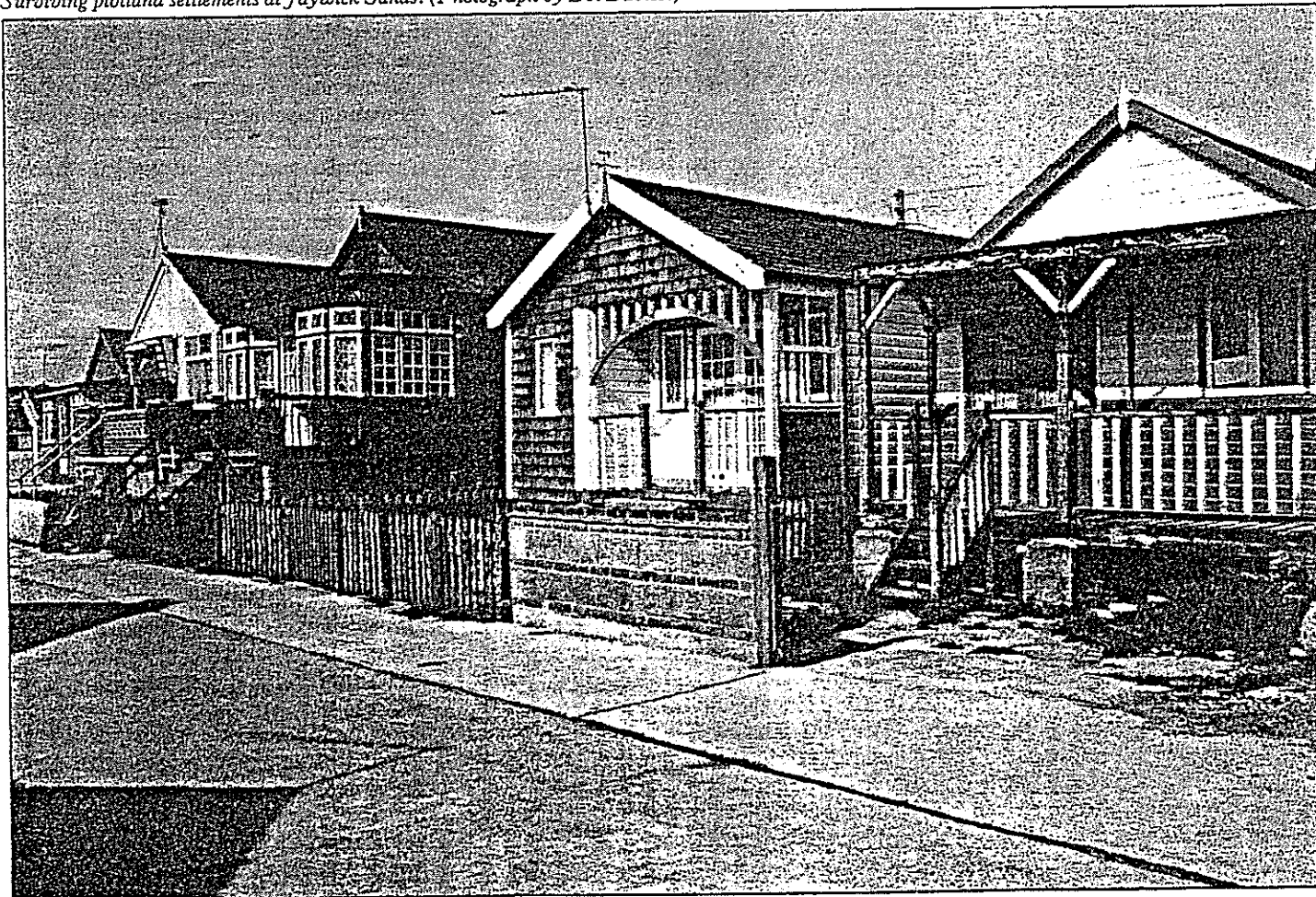
Plotlands are one of the '*bêtes-noires*' in the annals of planning. Many planners in practice today will recall only too well the 'plotlands problem'. For those to whom it means no more than a collection of dusty

files in the county records, the story is worth retelling—as much with an eye on the current debate on the limits of control as on the past.

From the end of the nineteenth century, but especially in the 1920s and 1930s, the quest was on for a place in the sun. Liberated at last, if only for a weekend, from the confines of the city, the dream of a country retreat became for many a reality. What had been for centuries a prerogative of the aristocracy—a home in town and country—now slipped down the social scale. But, inevitably there was a difference. No stately home in elegant parkland for the new lotus-eaters; instead, a rash of self-made structures in all shapes and sizes, seemingly scattered at will around the countryside and, best of all, along the coast.

The essence of the plotlands landscape was its cheapness—a product of marginal

Surviving plotland settlements at Jaywick Sands. (Photograph by Dot Davies.)



land, makeshift buildings and people willing to invest their own time and labour in place of capital. Agricultural depression and death duties contributed to a flow of cheap land onto the market. Sometimes this was bought by speculators, parcelled-up and resold in small plots, to be developed in the course of time. For new plotheholders, there was a ready supply of prefabricated bungalows at low enough prices, but cheaper even than that was a conversion job on second-hand buildings. Army huts from the First World War, old garden sheds and London trams all found a place in the plotlands, though none could compare for sheer character and durability with the Victorian railway carriage. For just a few pounds, delivered to site, the way was open to Arcadia.

Understandably, these makeshift retreats are recalled with affection by the

Fears of plotland development were based not simply on aesthetic and environmental grounds. In economic terms, a random pattern of building, a maze of unmade roads and an absence of essential services left the local authorities with a legacy of problems. Public health officials, too, viewed the scene with growing concern, likening it all to some of the worst examples of uncontrolled building in the nineteenth century.

From a variety of sources the case grew for the control of plotlands, as a big enough problem in itself but also as an exemplar of a wider process of urban sprawl that threatened to engulf the whole of the countryside. Particular plotlands like Peacehaven gained notoriety, and were frequently cited as evidence in the growing case for town planning: "One would have thought that the consequences of not planning which lie all

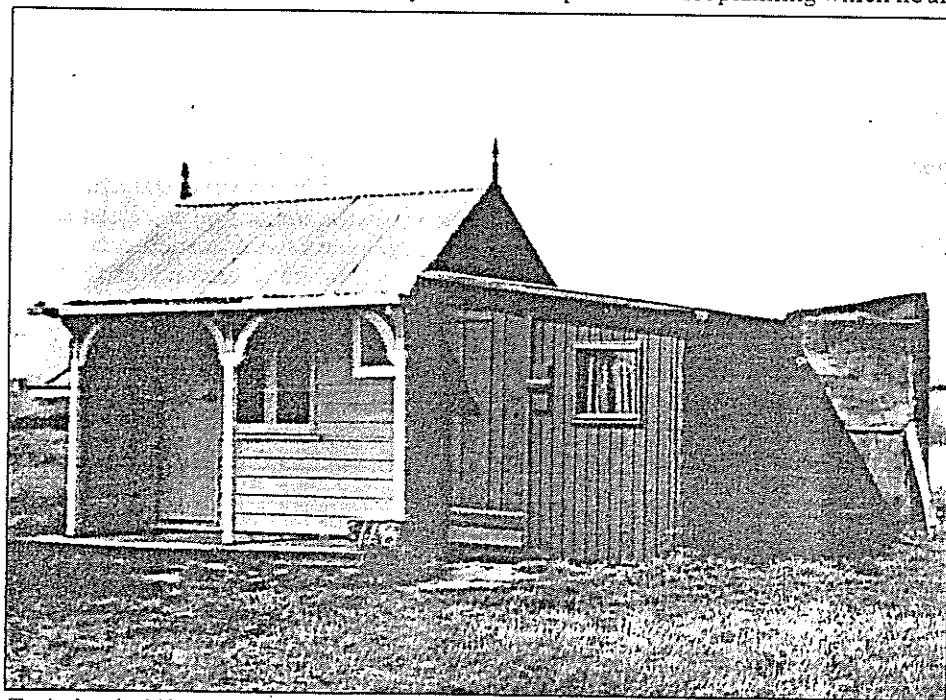
adjoining authorities to prepare regional plans, and these were used to take a broader approach to, for instance, scattered development along the south coast. Reviewing the situation at that time, Patrick Abercrombie took the view that there were already adequate powers to protect the countryside, but that man authorities were reluctant to use them.⁴ The intervention of county councils, following the 1929 Local Government Act, went some way towards reducing this problem.

In relation to the accelerating rate of development, though, the means of control were still far from adequate. Two measures, designed to provide for more positive ways to protect the countryside the 1930 Rural Amenities Bill and the 1931 Town and Country Planning Bill each foundered before enactment. As a compromise, the 1932 Town and Country Planning Act failed in many ways to meet the challenge of the day, yet offered some consolation for the countryside lobby. Rural planning schemes became more commonplace and, with a particular eye on plotlands, there was now provision to safeguard local authorities from compensation where schemes sought to prevent development that would be a threat to public health, or which would lead to "excessive expenditure of public money in the provision of roads, sewers, water supply and other public services".⁵

A second source of legislation, in addition to town planning, was through bye-laws derived from public health and housing Acts. Although (especially after the 1936 Public Health Act) these offered scope to deal with a variety of problems that were encountered in the plotlands—like road construction, temporary structures, drainage and nuisance issues—the record of their use is patchy. Many authorities had no bye-laws at all to regulate new development (a total of 110 such authorities in 1930), while many more had failed to make effective use of the possibilities.

Beyond general legislation, those authorities making most progress were the ones which, often in response to unusually pressing problems, obtained their own local Acts of Parliament. Lindsey County Council adopted this measure to tackle sporadic holiday development along a 25-mile stretch of coastline. Surrey was another county to resort to a local Act, one aim being to increase its powers in dealing with "moveable dwellings and camping grounds". Elsewhere, too, authorities devised their own measures, easing localised problems yet adding to the patchwork complexity at the time.

A further source of intervention was through agreements with landowners to restrict new development or, where this was not possible, through direct acquisition. The latter was, in the end, the only sure means of protection, but it was



Typical makeshift dwelling—Camber Sands, 1930's. (Photograph courtesy: Rother District Council.)

plotlanders themselves. Fond memories of childhood holidays under August skies, of fresh-caught fish cooking over driftwood fires, of paraffin-lit evenings and chintzy curtains, and relatives coming down to help build an extra room or dig a well. The Bohemian set came too, lured by the informality and eccentricity of the plotlands and in the process adding to the colour of it all.

But for an emergent planning profession there was little to love about the plotlands. Disorderly in the extreme, no part of the coast or countryside seemed safe from the onslaught. Chaotic colonies gained a foothold in all parts of Britain, though especially within reach of cities. In the South East, for instance, the Thames Valley, South Essex and the South and East coasts were favoured locations. Was Thomas Sharp right when he warned that nowhere was immune: that "all the land in the country can be regarded as building land . . ."²

around us would provide sufficient answer—the ribbon dwellings along the by-pass, the traffic jam in nearly every town centre, Peacehaven and similar anarchic messes."³

Controlling Arcadia

A consensus in the 1930s that something needed to be done to restrain development was not matched by agreement on how best to go about it. Plotlands were sometimes singled out for special treatment, but were normally dealt with under general legislation. In this respect, local authorities advanced along any one or more of four fronts.

First, there was town planning legislation itself. The first Acts fixed their sights on the immediate problems of suburban expansion, and it was not until the 1925 Act that the way was open for local authorities to prepare schemes for certain areas of countryside beyond. They were also empowered to get together with

most exceptional cases; Eastbourne U.D.C., for instance, purchased Beachy Head as a national beauty spot.

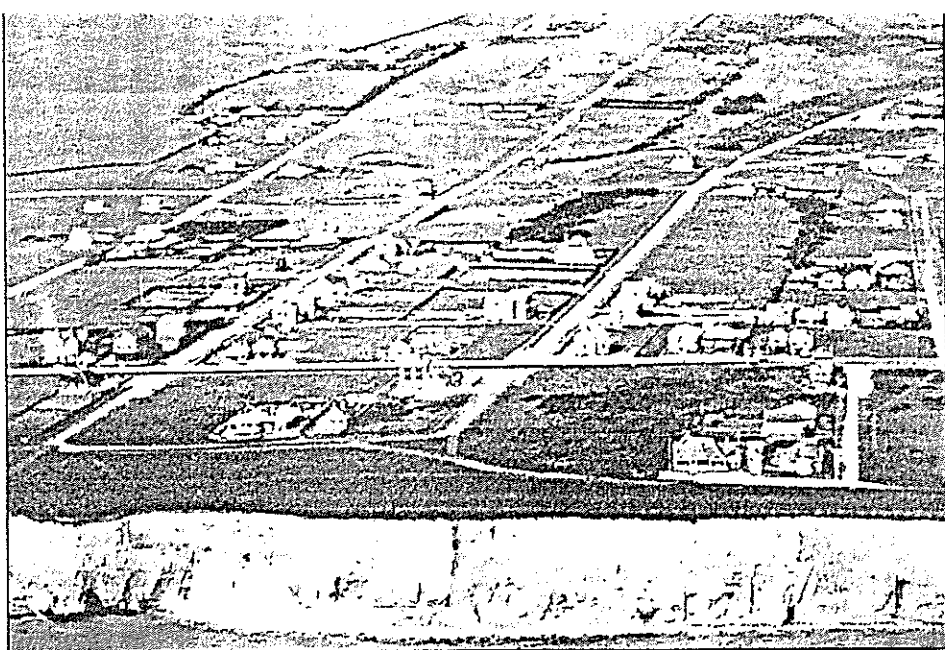
Progress was made in controlling development, yet the fact was that throughout the 1930s the means by which this could be done remained both complex and cumbersome. The law was generally no match for the speed and ingenuity of the plotlanders who continued to stake their claim to a corner of England. Once installed the whole aura of a property-holder's status, reinforced by generations of common law and custom, made them very difficult to move. It was correct to claim that public opinion was outraged by the desecration of the landscape, but there was still a widespread reluctance to see bureaucratic bodies step in to usurp traditional rights of property. As the case of the plotlands illustrates, town planning had come a long way but, by the end of the 1930s, there was still much to be done if it was to be effective.

1947 and after

With the Second World War (in the course of which many of the coastal plotlands were destroyed, more often than not to clear the ground for the home artillery) and the 1947 Act which followed, many thought that the plotlands problem was over. New controls did, in fact, prevent a repetition of the kind of development that had occurred before, but what was to be done with what was still there? Surviving colonies like Jaywick Sands, Laindon-Pitsea and Peacehaven posed an intriguing challenge to the comprehensiveness of the new planning system.

An early test-case was that of Shoreham Beach, or 'Bungalow' Town as it was known in the 1930s—a holiday mecca of assorted railway carriages in various stages of conversion, and brightly-painted bungalows. Most of these were destroyed in the War, and the local authorities were determined to prevent rebuilding along its former lines, exploring just about every method available to them. First, they looked back to the limited possibilities of the 1932 Act, then to the 1944 Act with its special provisions for war damage and, when these proved to be not enough, onto an ill-fated Private Bill. With the failure of past methods, hope was then pinned to the new 1947 Act and even before it had reached the statute book a 'Part Development Plan' was prepared to deal with the immediate problem of Shoreham Beach. It was this plan (the first to be approved under the new system) which was the basis of redevelopment along conventional estate lines in the years ahead.

The transformation of Shoreham Beach was by no means a straightforward exercise: local authorities interfered with private property rights at their peril. Even



Aerial view of Peacehaven, 1930's. (Photograph courtesy: Mr R. Poplett, Peacehaven.)

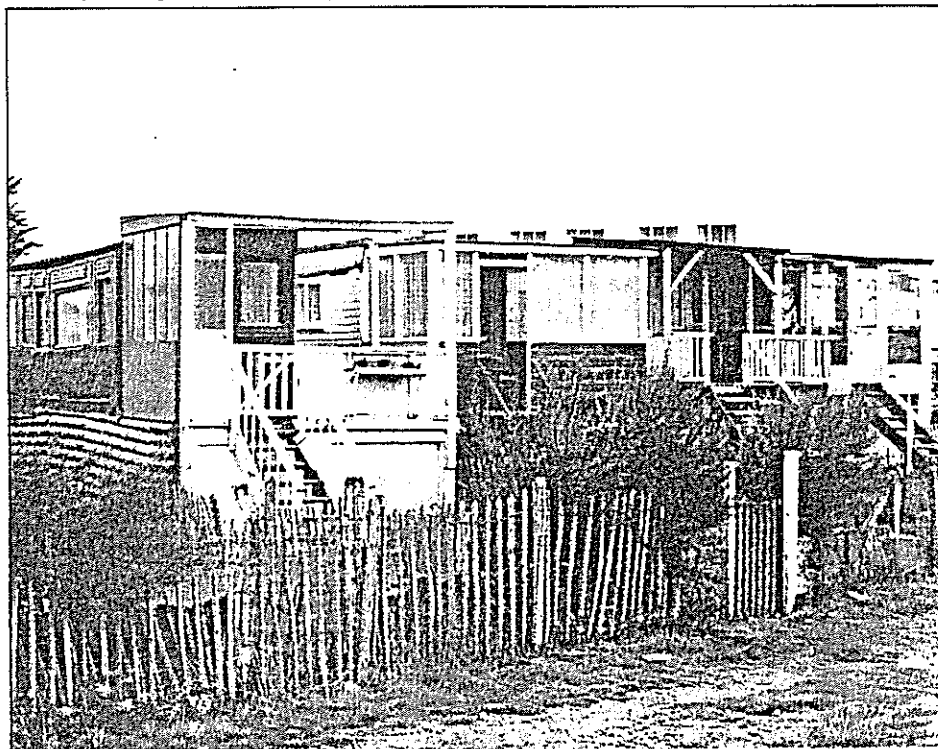
when sufficient powers were available there were other obstacles to be overcome. Local authorities in this role were characterised as unfeeling bureaucracies pitted against defenceless individuals. The kind of view expressed at Shoreham Beach, opposing intervention, was directed as much against the whole idea of town planning (striving to gain public acceptance) as against the particular case. In the words of a local objector, arguing that compulsory purchase was unsuitable and unnecessary: "I wish to register my protest against the county council's claim to have a royal prerogative over our livelihood, our destiny and our social life . . . The town planner dreams his way through life. There is no realism anywhere. I met town planners 40 years ago. They took a holiday in Germany and came home fanatics . . . the fantasy of the playboy town planner is no good to us."⁶

Elsewhere, too, plotlanders defended

their modest holdings with comparable spirit. In Laindon-Pitsea the full weight of new town planning machinery was brought in to recover the land from an estimated 25,000 plotlanders. This is the site of Basildon where, even today, pockets of plotland development remain within the designated area. On the Essex coast, at Jaywick Sands, plotlanders held out with greater success, resisting successive attempts over a thirty year period to prevent its consolidation. Policies have been modified over the years, so that its status as a permanent settlement is now beyond doubt. Likewise, along the Thames Valley various attempts by local authorities to use compulsory purchase powers and to veto any rebuilding proved to be unworkable.

The problem of clearance was not simply one of political controversy. It was also very costly, even for quite small area

Railway carriage conversions—Bognor Regis. (Photograph by Dot Davies.)



of plotland development, and the expected public benefits did not always seem to be worth it. East Sussex County Planning Department made an interesting assessment in the 1960s of a number of coastal sites that had for long been the object of ultimate clearance. The conclusion at Winchelsea Beach, for instance, was typical—namely, that improvements in amenity resulting from clearance would be too small “having regard to the cost involved and the likely opposition from residents and owners”.⁷

What planners have found is that in most cases the plotlands problem has gone away—resolved by a gradual process of site and property improvement over the years. Sensitive to the way things were changing, policies themselves have mellowed from outright opposition to a tolerance for improvements and ‘one-for-one’ replacements, and of raising standards of roads and general services within these areas. Indeed, some former plotlands are now even the subject of special note for their spacious, well-vegetated plots and eccentric architecture where original buildings remain to be seen. After fifty years, plotlands have come of age.

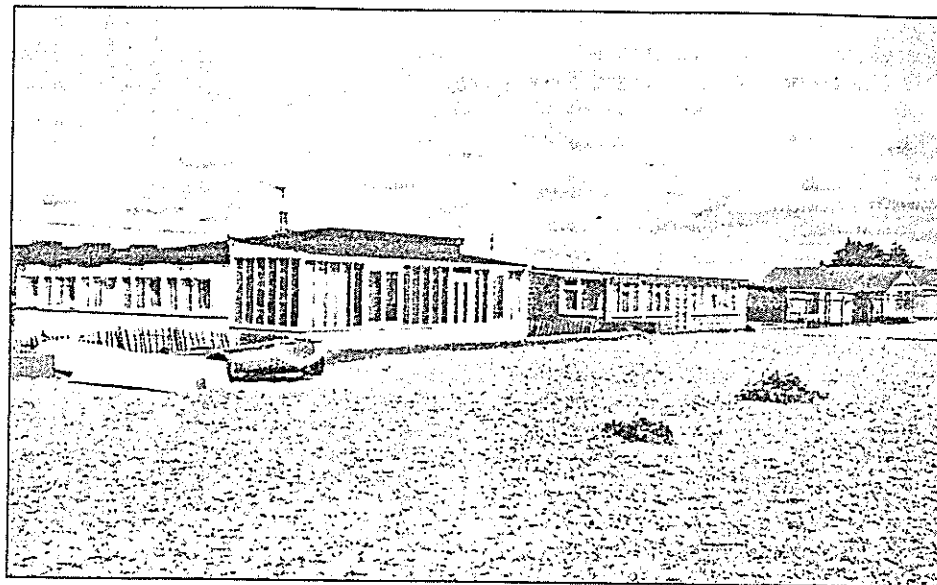
Lessons from the plotlands

So what can be learnt from the plotlands experience? In a political climate where planning is under pressure, can anything be gained from looking back to an episode which seems to have highlighted some of the best and worst in planning history?

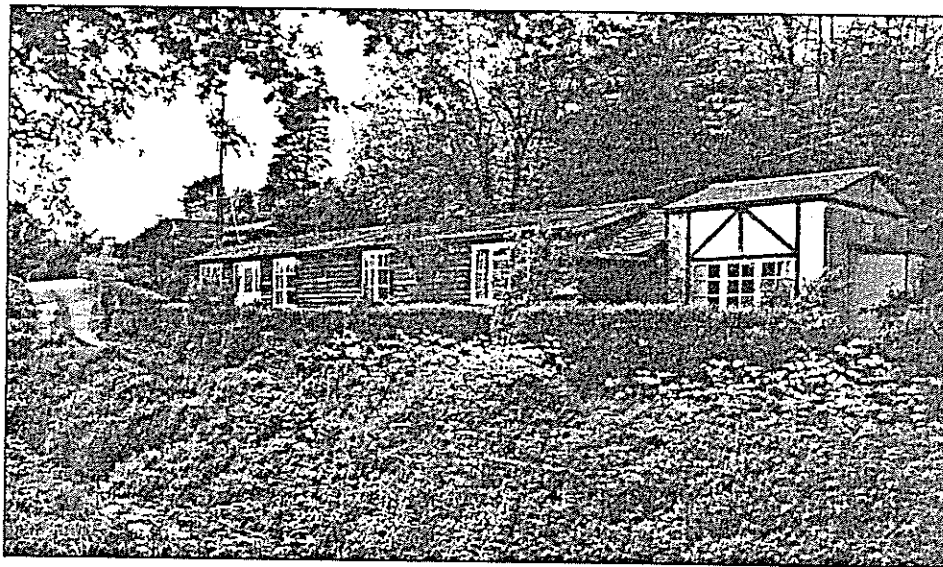
Perhaps the first thing is simply to note how seemingly-intractable problems fall into place over time. Plotlands that were widely reviled in the 1930s have long since been embraced by Nature, pink asbestos roofs have mellowed under a cover of lichen, and talk of clearance has given way to moves to conserve. Buildings have changed but so, too, has perception: the ‘shoddy bungalows’ and ‘horrid shacks’ of yesterday are now widely admired by architectural historians and a public intoxicated with nostalgia.

In social terms, for all the opposition to them, it can be recalled that the plotlands really did widen opportunities for more people to enjoy a place in the sun than would otherwise have been the case. We have encountered numerous cases of people scraping together the odd pound to buy a plot of land, spending the first summer in a bell-tent and gradually piecing together a holiday hut that in turn became a sound and respectable permanent home. Fresh air and the simple life, not to mention the material gains of home ownership, were undoubtedly there for the taking in the plotlands. Was it right, then, to attempt to close off these opportunities? More to the point, is there a case for re-opening some of these possibilities for people today?

A fresh look at this model of self-build and housing improvement over time



Improved plotland dwellings along Pagham Beach—some with obvious railway carriage origins. (Photograph by Dot Davies.)



Converted Army barrack hut from 1st World War—Pett Level (on the market in 1981 for £26,000). (Photograph by Dot Davies.)

would call for a relaxation of some planning restrictions and building regulations, but need not mean opening the floodgates to totally uncontrolled development. The protection of the countryside over the years is no mean achievement, and for this the planning system rightly enjoys considerable support. All that is questioned now is whether the full paraphernalia of protective legislation needs to be applied unyieldingly in all places and for all uses.

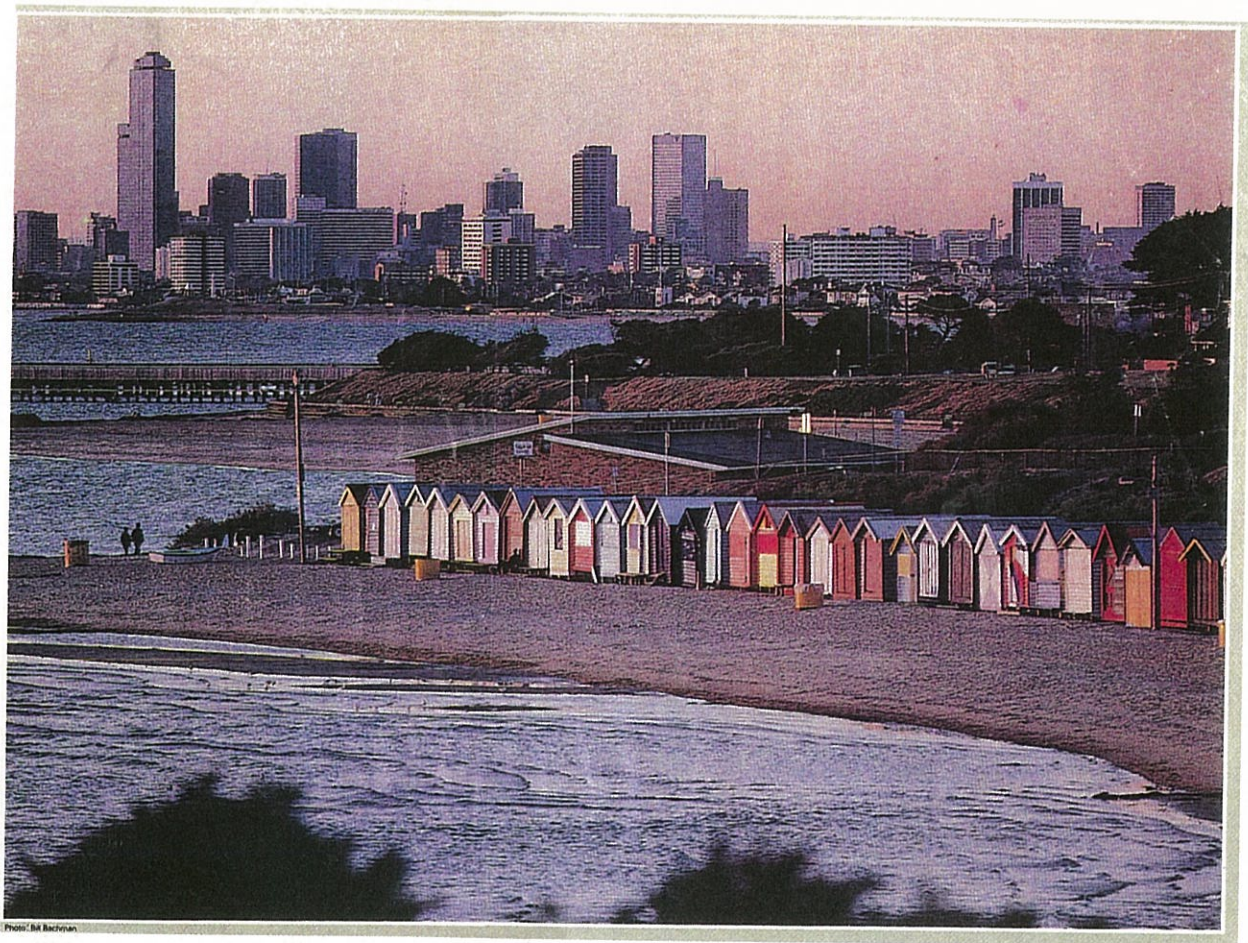
Without abandoning the general principle of environmental and building standards, a way forward might be to think in terms of localised areas where standards could be relaxed. Obviously, these ‘pockets of disorder’ would not be in landscapes of special environmental quality but, like many of the plotlands of the past, could be in relatively secluded and out-of-the-way parts of the countryside. Likewise, there is every reason to think in terms of inner city locations where both land and labour are available to create a new environment. Far

from undermining planning, the way is open for an innovative role in housing and community development that learns from past experience. This, above all, is the lesson of the plotlands.

- 1 In a debate on the Rural Amenities Bill in the House of Commons, 1930.
- 2 Thomas Sharp: *Town and Countryside* (London: Oxford University Press 1932).
- 3 Lewis Keeble: *Principles and Practice of Town and Country Planning* (London: The Estates Gazette Ltd. 1964).
- 4 Patrick Abercrombie: *The Preservation of Rural England* (London: Hodder and Stoughton 1926).
- 5 Section 19, *Town and Country Planning Act 1932*.
- 6 From *Minutes of Proceedings of Public Local Inquiry, February 1949: Shoreham and Lancing Beaches Development Plan*, West Sussex County Council Record Office, C.C.563.
- 7 East Sussex County Council Planning Department Report: *Coastal Preservation: Restoration of Amenities*, 3 December 1968.

This article is based on material from the recently published book on plotlands by Dennis Hardy and Colin Ward: *Arcadia for All: The Legacy of a Makeshift Landscape* (London: Mansell Publishing Ltd. 1984).

Dennis Hardy lectures at Middlesex Polytechnic. Colin Ward is author of *Anarchy in Action*, *Tenants Take Over* and *The Child in the City*.



BRIGHTON BEACH - Port Phillip Bay, Victoria
Historic privately-owned dressing sheds retained

**Airways Jan/Feb 1990 QANTAS INFLIGHT
MAGAZINE**

SOME INCIDENTS AND RESCUES PERFORMED BY SHACK OWNERS AND FRIENDS OUT OF PATROL HOURS

PETER PRACY

January 1980 Surfboard rider severe gash on head, left by parents to camp on beach; helicopter called.

February 1987 Two Chinese fell over on rocks, badly cut, gave assistance, bandaged etc.

ALBERT SCHWER

April 1983 Lobster fisherman (Terry) from Austinmer, boat tipped over when lines fouled motor. Pulled from sea and gear saved by Paul Bouffler, Tony Piccinelli, Peter Pracy, and self.

FRANK KRINKS

Kite flier came down on beach, gave assistance to get back to Garie. Given water and first aid to campers.

HUGH FAIRBURN

Saved surfboard riders.

Rescued fishermen on rocks and assisted with first aid. Given water and first aid to campers.

Woman suffering from heat exhaustion and severe sunburn- helicopter called.

PETER AND JAN HOWE

June 1980 Girl caught in rip, southern end of beach in big seas, swimming in jeans and jumper. Friends came out of water and left her. Jan Howe's brother took his board out and brought her in.

March 1987 Two young campers camping at North Era were chased by two men at 12:30 am; lent assistance by getting their gear and they set up camp beside shack.

JOHN AMPHLETT AND JILL COLLIER

January 1987 Three young children knocked on door at 4:30 am having been attacked at North Era by a gang of drug pushers. John Amphlett and Barry Goldsworthy went to camp site at daybreak to recover gear. Police informed and arrest followed.

DIANA GARDER

February 1986 Girl drunk from Tequila, went swimming late at night, pulled from water.

EILEEN MCGOWANS

Girl cut leg badly, helicopter came in at night.

KEITH MULLENS

Woman came to beach to have a natural birth, broke into shack; difficult birth as it was a breech. Ken and Narelle Holloway assisted helicopter was called.

BILL SELL

1976 Rescued three people from channel, 2 adults and 1 child; Tony Piccinelli assisted in tin boat.

1978 2 bushwalkers washed out to sea, rescued by means of flippers; big seas.

1982 1 male adult cut upper leg severely; exposed the ligaments of muscle tissue; bandaged and then flown out by helicopter.

TIRA KARIPA

September 1984 4 young children rescued from the surf, after continued warnings. Catholic School Priest in charge but not aware of the problems.

GORDON ADAMS

1979 A young boy hit on head by falling rock, unconscious, carried out by helicopter. Eight hour neurosurgery followed.

CLIFF WELSH

1981 Children digging hole in sand which collapsed, one nearly suffocated; lifesaver pulled child out and resuscitated.

1982 Midnight, young surfer severed artery in arm; treated by lifesavers and shackowners; taken from beach by IRB.

1988 Girl camper impaled thigh on bush timber; treated at surf club; shackowner alerted deerhunter who called the helicopter by radio.

GREG BARLOW

1984 Elderly woman walking from Otford fell and broke her leg on the ridge behind Burning Palms. No Ranger at Farm or Garie; made contact with Angler Base via local fishermen, helicopter attended.

1987 Flare from yacht in distress sighted during severe southerly storm; radio contact made with Police boat who affected rescue; only sighting of signal.

the privileged few.

It is the stronghold of Sydney "hide-away" house-builders, created by people who have built up and upon whom the "hide-away" house has taken a deeper psychological significance, as they have left childhood behind. They have recognized that the spirit needs a "hide-away" house from the trials of everyday life, and so they have built Era.

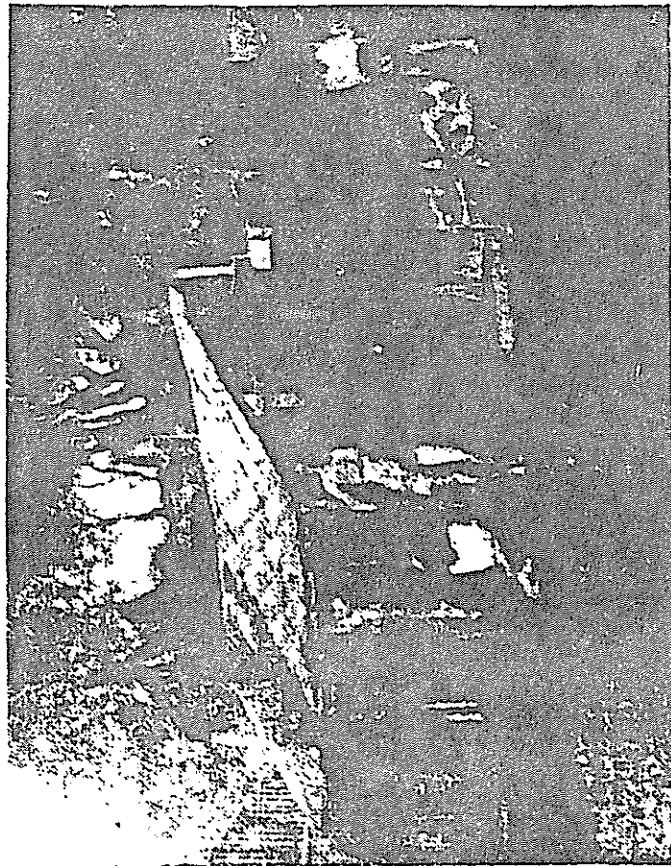
Most people have some sort of "hide-away" house psychologists will tell you. Some find their quiet moments in a favourite room at home; to others a bench in the garden or in the park, or a rock upon a headland will serve the purpose. Luckier ones build week-end cottages, where they can take rest from the conventions of city society and its routine.

But at Era a band of a hundred or so men and women, mostly young people, have built their own "hide-away" houses in the literal sense of the term. Their huts are too small to be real "cottages" and too durable to be camps.

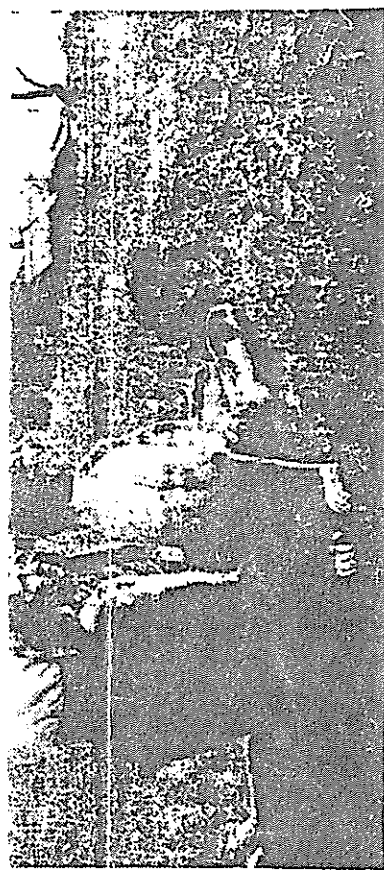
Miniature Homes

The first huts were built at Era nearly 30 years ago by Helensburgh miners when out of work. Some of these are still maintained by Helensburgh people for week-end holiday purposes.

During the recent depression other huts were



Worship to the name of this hut built from local timber. It is owned by one of the many families making regular visits to Era.



These three city business girls, who are regular visitors, are seen on the south headland, overlooking Era.

other's views and frontages that is a striking indication of the innate sense of good town-planning ordinary people have when not influenced by commercial propositions.

Local Pride

At first three "hide-away" house-builders, seeking the seclusion of a peaceful place to rest from the worries of city life, were hardly on more than nodding terms with each other; but since the formation of the Era Campers' League about 18 months ago, and the Era Surf Life-saving Club

Some of the huts have been built from timber felled in the neighbourhood; though this is prohibited now. Most of the Era campers, however, have carried sheets of iron, timber, bags of concrete, water tanks, and other material on their backs from Lilyvale to the top of the South Coast headlands and then down a precipitous hill that drops 900 feet in half a mile.

In this strenuous work many women and girls, members of hut-building families, have done their share of carrying.

Personal Effort

The average building time for one of these "hide-away" houses has been three months of week-ends; and about 200 miles of walking.

One house named West Wind has been built by a salesman in a city store. It boasts a concrete tiled floor, the tiles having been set in the concrete with arctic clarray.

One of the best-built cottages of the smaller type is "Wreck's," constructed by a timber trade expert who has been able to bring professional experience to bear on the selection of the right sort of woods for cottage building.

The unofficial clubhouse of the village is called "Chas Eola." It faces the sea front like a grand hotel, and beneath the name is printed in excellent lettering "Guest House." But when you look at it more closely you see in small type just above those words, "This is not a . . ."

All signwriting, poster-work, lettering, and so forth is done for the league by a "Chas Eola" member who is a bank officer by profession and

to some outer suburb and change their clothes and get into their holiday shorts and shirts and leave their good clothes with "Ma."

Nucleus of Youth Hostel

The benefits of this sort of call for the Era campers need little explanation. Whether it is Hargreaves's co-operation many of them would have to make lengthy journeys from work to their homes to collect their camping equipment. As things are, they can and do, walk out of their jobs and go straight to the train for Lilyvale.

Despite "Ma's" protests the Era Campers' League insists upon some payment so that now Mrs Hargreaves accepts a nominal fee for looking after her numerous friends' clothes.

She also provides them with ten and food when they are waiting for the train back to town on Sunday nights; and in cases of sickness or other necessity she has put people up for the night.

Actually, although she does not know it Mrs. Hargreaves has in her cottage the makings of an excellent youth hostel. She is already providing services which the youth hostels of England and the Continent provide for young people who go walking and camping all over the place; and she is providing it in the same utilitarian spirit which is regarded as essential in an English youth hostel warden.

Such organisations as the Youth Hostels' Association grow out of necessity; and anyone who was at Lilyvale on Anzac Day when campers, walkers, and picnickers descended upon the South Coast in thousands, will surely agree that Sydney has reached the point when the necessity for some such organisation is so great that it is only a start to set it off on a successful career.

When the Era campers held a dance in Sydney the week before last to raise funds for the surf club, "Ma" was voted the most popular girl of the evening. A special number was put on for her, when every Era man claimed his turn to have a dance with her.

All sorts of people have built "hide-away" houses at Era. There are bank officials, insurance men, artists, business girls, salesgirls, and in many cases whole families.

Crown Grant

There is a fair balance of ages in the community with the majority in favour of youth. One or two young children come down with their fathers and mothers; and mothers frequently come and stay at the huts which the younger members of their families have put up.

Era is on a Crown grant to Mr. A. Byrne of Randwick an octogenarian, through whose kindness the Era "hide-away" village has come into being.

At night when the light from lamps is shining through the windows of the huts, and smoke is curling from the chimneys, Era makes an attractive picture reminiscent of a Chinese print. During the week-end its surroundings echo to the laughter of happy people; but on Sunday evening the host of the train from Lilyvale is like the call of the Plover and the "hide-away" house-builders pick up their packs and hike over the hill to become ordinary work-a-day people once again.



ERA BEACH, recently transferred to the National Park Trust, is one of the most secluded coastal beauty spots near Sydney. Watered by underground streams, the little valley behind the beach is always green. In the summer the weekend population is about 200, and few tourists find their way to Era.

Gaily painted shacks form beach colony

Uninhibited use of strong primary colors in painting "weekenders" at Era Beach, about 32 miles from Sydney, has produced an attractive effect.

THE little valley in which the houses are built, and which backs the beach, is always green, thus heightening the effect of the bright colors in which the houses are painted.

No concerted move was ever made to start a color cult at Era. It simply happened.

Although owners have worked independently, giving free reign to their fancies and prejudices, the varicolored results somehow settle down to a harmonious whole.

The people who spend their weekends and holidays there say they

like the bright colors because even on a dull day the place looks cheerful.

Era is a secluded beach in Sydney's beautiful National Park, and the last stage of the journey to it must be made on foot.

Although only about 30 miles from Sydney, it is a two-hour journey by train to Waterfall and then by bus to the nearest point to the beach.

On leaving the bus a bush track is taken, over which all supplies and equipment must be carried.

Motorists make the trip more quickly but have to leave their cars at the top of the track.

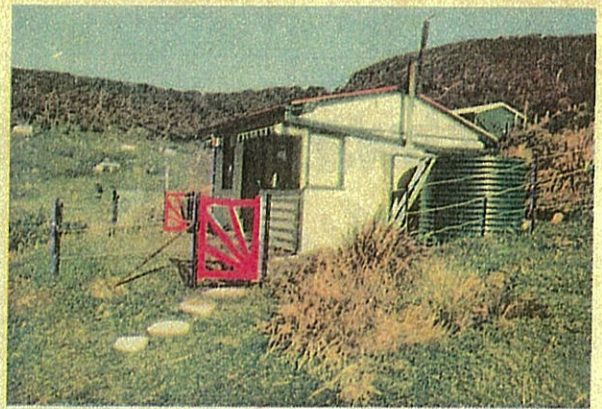
Building materials, refrigerators, stoves, and even a piano have been man-handled to the beach, some being hauled up to two miles to the farthest cottages.

It is about 50 years since the first weekender was built at Era.

Owners then paid the holder of the grazing rights a small sum for rental.

Since the area was declared a reserve three years ago and resumed by the Lands Department, residents have been warned that weekenders will have to be removed eventually and may not be sold to any new occupier.

The community has its own surf club, affiliated with the N.S.W. Surf Life Saving Association, and an Era Beach Ball is held in a Sydney ballroom once a year.



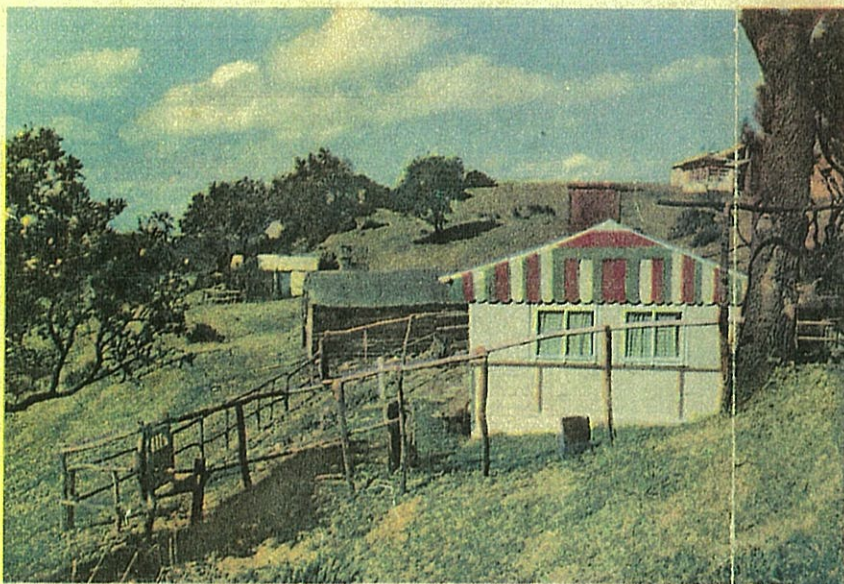
RED-AND-GREEN painted tin awning gives individuality to this house. The path to the gate is formed of roundstones gathered on the beach, and much prized for paving at Era. Timber, too, is often washed up.



BOLD USE OF COLOR—yellow, white, and dark blue—makes this one of the gayest looking of the weekenders. The corrugated iron roof has been finished with a silver paint. The house is right on the beach.



THE LIVING-ROOM of "Thalassa." The traveling buoys and shells hanging on the right-hand wall and the stag's antlers here were found on the beach. The owner is an artist. Photographs by H. Lloyd-Jones.



"TRADEWINDS" at the southern end of Era has a striped gable with a scallop decoration as a particularly lighthearted touch. Some of the houses have beautiful teak beams which have drifted up or to the beach. It is claimed that strong colors do not deteriorate as quickly as paler ones in the salt-aden air.



A PLEASING COLOR HARMONY is achieved in this little dwelling. Land at Era was first rented from the owner of local grazing rights, but the area was later transferred from the Lands Department to National Park.

Royal National Park

On Sydney's southern doorstep a richly varied coast—free of housing and commercial development for most of its length—stretches for more than 20 km. Behind it Australia's first national park, declared in 1879, covers almost 15 000 hectares of forest, bushland and heath. Roads give easy access to most of the park's natural attractions, and to picnic areas and lookouts. The only serviced camping and caravan ground, near Bundeena at Bonnie Vale, has lavatories and washing facilities but no power outlets. A long sand bar provides suitable swimming for children. Bush camping is allowed in most of the park, except within 1 km of roads and picnic grounds or in areas that are closed from time to time for conser-

vation purposes. Permits are issued at the park headquarters at Audley.

Well-developed walking trails lead to the rugged headlands and secluded coves of the coast. Beaches at Marley, Curracurrang, Era, Burning Palms and Hell Hole can be reached only on foot. They and the busier beaches with road access are linked by a coast track from Bundeena to Otford. Low-lying at first, it rises in the south to the rims of high cliffs, giving views as far as Port Kembla.

Marley is a 45-minute walk east from Bundeena Drive, through thick bush past Deer Pool, a pleasant swimming hole. The longer routes from Bundeena lead to the open sandhills of Marley Beach. Sandstone bluffs shelter the

beach, but the surf is considered dangerous. The track leads on through scrub above the rock shoreline to Little Marley, where there is a grassy area and the waves are more gentle. Watamolla can be reached by car. It offers picnic spots and walks with spectacular high-level views, as well as beach and lagoon swimming and fishing along the shore. Nearby Curracurrang is a 3 km walk from parking areas and has a rocky foreshore, but its waterfall and swimming hole make it an attractive picnic place.

Garie, the most popular surfing beach, has ample parking space near the lifesaving club house. Picnic spots with barbecues are scattered around the area, which is also favoured by rock

Varied beaches and camping spots between Burning Palms and Garie can be reached by roads or foot tracks from the Governor Game Lookout



From 'Readers Digest-Coast of N.S.W