

ST HUBERTS ISLAND THROWS A PARTY

By Trish Schoer

To celebrate 200 years of its recorded history, St. Huberts Island threw a party which will long be remembered. More than 1200 people thronged to the site of the Gov. Phillip monument on Long Ann Reserve.

The re-enactment boats arrived to see the shore completely lined with cheering residents and friends.

St. Huberts residents have long been taunted by other locals with stories of the island sinking, or appearing like Brigadoon out of an early morning mist about 1970, are proven wrong when a little of the history of St. Huberts Island becomes known.

Gov. Phillip and his party on their trip of exploration just five weeks after the landing of The First Fleet in Sydney Cove spent the night of 3rd March, 1788 in the vicinity of the monument dedicated on the 3rd of March 1988. The Party was tired and wet after 10 days of continual rain. They landed, dried their tents, caught a crab and ate it. They departed next day after spending the night in the safety of the island.

The parcel of land now known as St. Huberts Island was first offered for sale in 1834.

The grant was taken up by Father Cornelius Coghlan in 1855. The selling price was 154 pounds and 10 shillings. Father Coghlan willed the island to his friend Bishop Polding, who sold it to Francis Fahey. There followed a series of owners including W.G. Collins, Mr Robertson, C.B. Browne and on the 9th April, 1906 passed into the hands of Charles Palmer.

In 1906 the Bank of NSW became the owner and the first known official reference to St Huberts Island was made.

A subdivision was registered in 1906 however it was later cancelled. Mr Kinnane purchased the whole island in April 1907.

He was the last owner of the whole island. He subdivided 51 lots to 27 to 30 perches in February 1914. He sold the first lot in 1915.

At the ceremony on the 3rd March, the residents were honoured to have as their guests, Mrs Head and her family. Mrs Head, then Mrs Holbert, her husband and six children were tenants of Mr Kinnane during the Depression. Mr Holbert owned fishing trawlers and was locally known as the "Daddy of Jackets". The Holbert family grew tomatoes and watermelons which they sold, and gave away in Woy Woy. They fertilised their gardens with seaweed and Mrs Head states that "The soil was so good it would grow babies". As if to prove that point, she gave birth to her daughter, Heather while living on the island. Heather's birth certificate is the only known certificate stating the place of birth as St Huberts Island.

All in attendance at the Bicentennial celebrations including Mayor Dr Patricia Harrison, the Chairman of the Gosford Bicentennial Committee, Tony Samson, were welcomed by the President of the Residents Association, Ken Campbell. The monument was unveiled, the muskets fired, the flags raised and the anthem sung. It was a time of deep patriotism and pride.

The Birthday celebrations continued into the night with a sausage sizzle and Bush dance. The residents would like to thank Mr Phillipe Tabuteau, Central Coast Sawn Sandstone, Gosford Council employees, the sailors and especially the Peninsula Lions Club who fed the multitude and in doing so bought out every bread seller and sausage maker on the Peninsula.

The monuments were financed by a Bicentennial grant and the celebrations were funded by the sale of St Huberts spoons and these spoons are still available by contacting Trish Schoer on 41 8936.

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