

LANE COVE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Affiliated with the Royal Australian Historical Society

PATRON: The Mayor of Lane Cove

PRESIDENT:

Mr Doug Patrick
21 Fraser Street
Lane Cove NSW 2066
Tel: 9427 2186



SECRETARY:

Mrs Gwen Richards
P.O. Box 112
Lane Cove 2066
Tel.: 9427 5828

NEWSLETTER NO. 135 - FEBRUARY 1998

* The first meeting for 1998 of the Society will be held at 8.00 p.m. on Friday 24 *
* October in the Cove Room, Lane Cove Civic Centre, 48 Longueville Road, *
* Lane Cove. The guest speaker will be a conservation architect, *
* PETER MCLAREN *
* who will speak on *
* NORFOLK ISLAND *

THE ORIGIN OF THE NAME "LANE COVE"

By Judy Washington

The origin of the name "Lane Cove" has long been the subject of conjecture. Recent published research suggests that the issue should be re-examined once again.

Agreement is general among researchers that the first recorded instance of the use of the name was by Lieutenant William Bradley, when exploring the upper reaches of the Harbour on February 2 1788, just seven days after the arrival of the First Fleet in Sydney Cove.

In his diary Bradley writes:

Saturday 2nd February. We did not meet with any natives again till this day, at daylight saw several canoes in the Cove we were surveying, they all fled some out of the Cove up to a Cove above (Lane Cove). We could not by any means get these People near us. Having occasion to go to the bottom of the inner Cove where several of them had gone in their canoe, they thought we were following them & pushed up a Creek to avoid us.¹

Saturday 2nd Feb: We did not meet with any Natives again till this day, at daylight saw several canoes in the Cove we were surveying, they all fled some out of the Cove to their up to a Cove above (Lane Cove) we could not by any means get these People near us, Having occasion to go to the bottom of the inner Cove where several of them had gone in their canoes, they thought we were following them & pushed up a Creek to avoid us.

Sunday 3rd Feb. From Lane Cove to the 5th 3 Miles above the Cove the ships

However agreement is not general as to why the name "Lane Cove" was selected. Captain J.H. Watson J.P., F.R.A.H.S in a paper delivered to the Royal Australian Historical Society in 1919 on the origin of place names in Port Jackson Jackson² theorised:

A possible explanation is that the long string of boats which daily rowed up the narrow inlet, which is called now a river, manned by their convict crews, suggested to some of the rowers or the coxswains the idea of a procession through a lane.

This theory was quoted by the 1938 Council history of Lane Cove³, however its anachronism was not overlooked by the anonymous 1938 scribe. Obviously if the name "Lane Cove" was applied by Bradley on his first trip up the harbour, just one week after the first settlement, no one had penetrated the River to discover its wealth of tall timber. The flotillas of barges carrying sawn timber run by the government and legendary characters such as Joseph Fidden were to come much later. So too were those carrying farm produce, and the raw materials and finished products of our early nineteenth century industries such as soap and candles, leather, cornflour and paper.

C. Whitham in his *Book of the North Shore*⁴ also repeats Watson's theory:
Lane Cove was not named, as far as can be ascertained, from anyone named Lane, but because it was a lane of water reaching up into the big timbered country.

A more plausible explanation for the origin of our Municipality's name than both of these is required. The term "Cove" was generally used for a small indentation or recess in the shoreline of a sea, lake or river as opposed to a "bay" which was used for a recess larger than a cove. On his exploratory trip of February 1788 Bradley named several coves, including Spring Cove and Camp Cove. The term was not generally used for the entrance to a river, and one could presume that Bradley did not venture far enough into the indent between what are now named Greenwich Point and Onions Point to identify that it was the entrance to a River. The angle at the entrance is such that you would have to sail right into it to discover its continuation in a north-westerly direction. This was Bradley's first visit to this part of the harbour and he was making a sweeping coverage of the whole area rather than a detailed exploration.

Lane Cove historian, Eric Russell⁵ proposes that :

Lane Cove may have been named after Lieutenant Michael Lane R.N., a highly regarded marine cartographer who worked with Captain James Cook in Newfoundland waters in the 1760s. Hunter and Bradley, cartographers themselves, would have been familiar with his work; Hunter who fought in the American Revolution, could have met Lane during his service off North America.

In his 1937 biography of Governor Phillip, George Mackaness⁶ mentions an alternative source for the name - a London merchant, John Lane, who was one of Phillip's executors. The new research that has recently been published throws more credibility on this latter speculation. Certainly it is more probable that it would be named after a friend of Philip, rather than Cook, who was not involved in Sydney Harbour at the time of Lane Cove's naming. Surgeon John White in his diary mentions that '*Port Jackson is divided into a great number of coves to which his excellency has given different names*'. John Lane, a son of the Lord Mayor of London, was a friend with whom Philip corresponded and was an executor of his will. Lane exported to, and imported from, North America, and it is possible that Phillip was involved with him in trade.⁸

Michael Scorgie and PeterHudgson in a recent article in *History*⁹ support the theory of researcher Alan Frost that John Lane and Andrew Miller, the first commissary of the Colony of New South Wales and a close friend of Philip, may also have been engaged in business transactions, either privately or on behalf of the navy.

Frost advances the theory further by providing evidence in family trees that their relationship was familial. In his book *Arthur Phillip 1738-1814: his voyaging*, he writes:

Unclear also is the precise link between the Lane Family and Arthur Phillip. Circumstances suggest that this was a strong one. The Lane family firm (Lane, Son & Fraser, of 11 Nicholas Lane) acted as banker for both Michael Everitt and Phillip. Phillip was close to John Lane, and Eleanor Everitt [Lane's wife] and their immediate family throughout his life. In the later 1780s, after Michael Everitt's death, Elizabeth Gaiton Everitt lived close to her daughter in Nicholas Lane, and about this time she commissioned from Francis Wheatley the Portrait of Arthur Phillip now in the national Portrait Gallery, which she subsequently gave to Isabella Phillip. Isabella then bequeathed this to Eleanor Lane 'of Peckham'. In the later nineteenth century, the Lane house at Peckham passed to the Gaiton family.

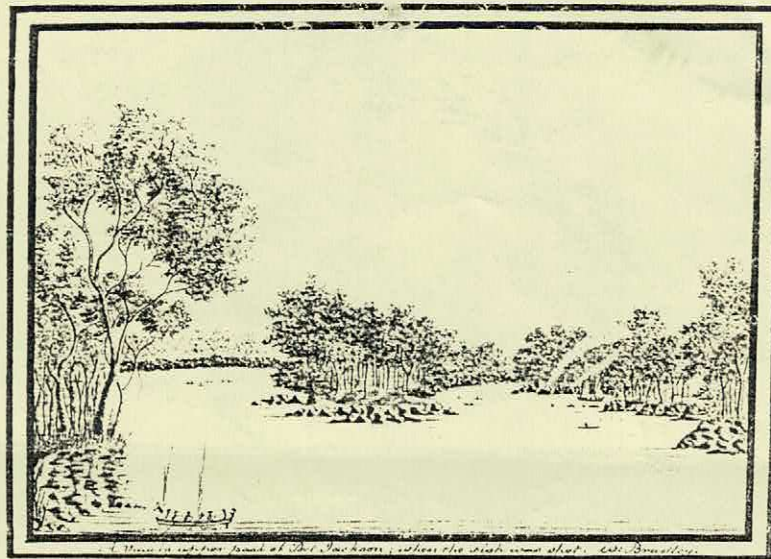


Because Bradley does not document the reason for his naming of Lane Cove it is not possible to be conclusive in sourcing its origin, but certainly the increasing evidence of a strong, even familial, relationship between Philip and John Lane provides further credence to the theory that it was named after this London merchant.

REFERENCES

1. Mackaness, George. Biography of Admiral Arthur Phillip. Angus and Robertson, 1937, p.445 *A voyage to New South Wales: the journal of Lieutenant William Bradley RN of HMS Sirius, 1786-1792*. Sydney: Trustees of the Public Library of NSW in Association with Ure Smith, 1969, p.74.
2. Watson, J.H. Origin of place names - Port Jackson. *Royal Australian Historical Society Journal and Proceedings*, Vol. IV, Part IX, 1919, p.445
3. *43 Years of civic pride! A history of the Municipality of Lane Cove 1895/1938*. Lane Cove: Lane Cove Municipal Council, 1938, p.11
4. Whitham, C. *Book of the North Shore*. ML MSS 4149, p.11

5. Russell, Eric. *Lane Cove: a North Shore history 1788/1895/1970*. Lane Cove: Lane Cove Municipal Council, 1970.
6. Mackaness, George. *Biography of Admiral Arthur Phillip*. Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1937, p.34
7. White, John. *Journal of a voyage to New South Wales*. Sydney: Angus & Robertson in conjunction with the Royal Australian Historical Society, 1962, p.112
8. Mackaness. *Op.cit.*, p.445
9. Scorgie, M.F. and Hudgson, P. Andrew Miller, Commissary. *History*, Dec. 1997, p.17



A view in the Upper Part of Fort Jackson. W. Bradley

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Guest speakers at meetings in the next two months will be:

**March 27 - Neil R. Patrick, B.Arch., Construction Architect
Wood Fired Baking Ovens**

**April 24 - Dr William Archibald
Archibald Family History**