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THE MANLY FERRY

A history of the service and its operators, 1854-1974

Anthony M. Prescott

A thesis presented to the Faculty of Arts of the University of Sydney for the degree of Master of Arts with Honours in History.

March 1984
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*Thesis' includes 'treatise', dissertation' and other similar productions.
On the wings of pleasure.
Seven miles from Sydney and
a thousand miles from care!

From a company advertisement
displayed in Sydney tramcars.

Manly is the bathing suburb of Sydney - one of them.
You pass quite close to the wide harbour gate, The Heads,
on the ferry steamer. Then you land on the wharf,
and walk up the street, like a bit of Margate with
sea-side shops and restaurants, till you come out on
a promenade at the end, and there is the wide Pacific
rolling in on the yellow sand: the wide fierce sea,
that makes all the built-over land dwindle into
non-existence.

D.H. Lawrence Kangaroo
PREFACE

This work is the history of a particularly singular and strong human enterprise. Until the advent of several more recent interpretative works, Australian transport historiography has heavily emphasised engineering and operational development without examining the contextual social and economic forces. The Manly ferry, with its unique contribution to the history of Sydney's development as a suburban city, provides a distinctive microcosmic example with which to illustrate the evolution of an urban society - with its emphasis on mobility - in the wake of the industrial revolution.

Particular vigour is given to this subject by its long history of private operation and the emergence of strong personalities whose guidance and influence contributed almost as much to the development of the service as broader economic and social forces. It is also a history with great continuity and whose course is far from "complete", as the service still operates in the midst of substantial changes described in this thesis.

In such a profoundly human history, with strong associations and long memories, it is essential that acknowledgement be made of the many people who have generously assisted me with information, comments and memories. A considerable debt in this regard is owed to Messrs. G.E. Marshall and R.E. Dyer, formerly Traffic Manager and Accountant, respectively, of the Port Jackson and Manly Steamship Co. Ltd., and Miss J. McGlynn of the Manly, Warringah and Pittwater Historical Society. In addition, Messrs. R.K. Willson and J. Darroch have been constantly generous in sharing the benefit of their own considerable investigations into the service and associated aspects of Sydney's transport. Appreciation is also expressed to Mr. W. Heading and Captains R. Hart, S. Bolton and F. Walker (all formerly of the Port Jackson Co. and subsequently of the Urban Transit Authority), and the late Captain J. Ireland. Other acknowledgements are due to the many people I have had contact with in

I am indebted to numerous institutions, libraries and authorities, including: the Australian Archives Office, staff of Brambles Industries Ltd., Coal and Allied Industries Ltd. (per Messrs. Sparke Helmore and Wittycombe, Solicitors), Fisher Library, University of Sydney (particularly Ms P. Green, formerly Rare Book Librarian), the Glasgow Museum of Transport (particularly Mr. J.C. Clayson), the Latrobe Library, Melbourne, Macquarie University Library, Manly Municipal Council, Manly Municipal Library (particularly the Librarian, Ms C. Gerrard), the Maritime Services Board of NSW (including Senior Shipwright Surveyors and their staffs and the Librarians past and present), the Mitchell and State Libraries, the NSW Corporate Affairs Commission, the NSW State Archives Office, the former Registrars of British Ships, Sydney, the State Rail Authority Archives (particularly Mr. J.H. Forsyth), the Sydney Stock Exchange Library (particularly Ms P. Cain), Sydney Technical College Library, the University of NSW Library, the University of Newcastle archives officer (Mr. D. Rowe) and the Urban Transit Authority of NSW.

Special acknowledgements are due to my supervisor, Associate Professor B.H. Fletcher, and to Mr. Frank Strahan, University of Melbourne Archivist, who stimulated my interest in business history and gave me some essential contacts. Ms Fran Ingle-Olson kindly assisted with production of maps ML-3 in this work (though taking no blame for the damage I have superimposed on them) and recultivated my meagre capabilities towards producing the balance. My parents deserve particular thanks for comments and memories deriving from their respective experiences in the shipping industry and my mother took on the unenviable task of typing and retyping.
both text and complex appendices of this thesis. Any possible remaining errors are due to my habit of writing across a page in all directions. My wife has had the enormous patience to share her entire married life with the Manly ferry, but has also joined me on many happy ferry rides, walks down the Corso and dinners at the Pavilion.
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ABBREVIATIONS

ABB Australian Dictionary of Biography.
D.Tel The Daily Telegraph (Sydney).
HMAS His/Her Majesty's Australian Ship.
M Co-op SF Co. Manly Co-operative Steam Ferry Company Limited (1893-1897).
MV Motor vessel (powered by diesel or diesel-electric engine/s).
MW & PHS Manly, Warringah and Pittwater Historical Society.
NRBS (or NR) The Newcastle Register of British Ships.
PJ Co-op S Co. Port Jackson Co-operative Steamship Company Limited (1896-1907).
PJSB Co. Port Jackson Steam Boat Company Limited (1876-1887).
PS Paddle steamer.
PTC Public Transport Commission of N S W.
SMH The Sydney Morning Herald (Sydney).
SRBS (or SR) The Sydney Register of British Ships.
SS Screw steamer.
UTA Urban Transit Authority of NSW.

Other abbreviations concerning technical aspects of ships are explained in the key to Appendix 1 or in the Glossary.

METRICATION AND DECIMAL CURRENCY

Due to the quantity of historical material used here and the consequent problems of conversion, Imperial weights and measures and old units of currency (pounds, shillings, and pence) are largely used throughout. An additional reason for this is general familiarity with the old units for comparative purposes. Some nautical practices are so familiar that metrification is not yet appropriate in this historical context - knots and nautical miles, capacity or Register tonnage (not convertible), registered dimensions (feet and tenths of feet), and boiler pressures. Decimal currency is used after 1966 when it was adopted, but the older currency is not converted as this creates an over-facile comparison which does not account for inflation. (Michael Cannon estimates 1975 values compared to nineteenth-century values at about 20:1). For further notes on metrification see the key to Appendix 1. Some basic conversions are:

1 inch (") = 25.4 millimetres. 1$ (pound) = $2.
1 foot (') = 0.305 metre. 1s (shilling) = 10c.
1 statute mile = 1.609 kilometres. 1d (penny) = approx. 0.83c.
1 ton weight = 1.016 tonnes.
1 pound weight = 0.453 kilogram.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1. **Background**

The writing of a shipping history is invariably a multi-disciplinary task, as N.L. McKellar found in his history of the A.U.S.N. Co. Both social and economic (business) history are involved and often an important element of technological history as well.\(^1\) All these aspects are embraced in this work, as to take the narrow course of writing, say, a traditional business history would leave many important questions unanswered. Indeed, to work on a transportation history of any kind leads one to wonder why history as a discipline is sometimes divided into such categories. For interpretative purposes particularly (as opposed to mere recording), the eclectic approach is necessary because human society (and its history) is too complex to justify singling out any of the above aspects and treating it in total isolation - ambitious though such an approach may be. The Manly ferry, like many historical subjects, is microcosmic. Its story is that of a social unit, known as a business, servicing another social unit, known as an urban community. The business is part of a larger area of maritime enterprise (hence the more generic term "maritime history") and the various Sydney ferry businesses together constituted the only example in Australia, and one of the few in the world, of maritime enterprise performing such a large role in the physical growth of a city (hence "urban history"). The course of both maritime history and urban history are determined by many expressions of social needs and actions, as reflected in political and economic changes and as determined by geography and technology.

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1. N.L. McKellar *From Derby Round to Burketown: the A.U.S.N. Story* (Brisbane 1977), p. ix. A defence of the practical necessity for "tunnel" or categorised history is made by G.R. Elton in *The Practice of History* (London 1969), pp. 27-28, 162. By the same token, Elton accepts the view held by McKellar and the present writer that "tunnels do circumscribe the vision".
The history of the Manly Ferry is amenable to some categorisation on the basis of constraints of geography and time. It is part of the history of an urban society developing in the wake of the industrial revolution and in the midst of the technological revolution. "Transportation", in providing mobility, has been one of the major influences in the development of human societies since the industrial revolution (yet in Australia it has been virtually ignored by professional historians). The broader area of "communication" is one of the major influences of the technological revolution and, although perhaps too recent for perspicacious historical analysis, its effects have been evident in social developments of the past 20-30 years. Developments in transportation and communication affect the way people and their social groups, live and move about. In the context of the city economic unit, study of these changes can be termed urban history. Maritime history is at once more specific and more vague than this. It embodies development of an item of transport technology and its application to a range of endeavours including discovery, war and commerce, a range which can encompass the globe or a part of Sydney Harbour.

The role of the Manly ferry in the urban history of Sydney is the central theme explored in this thesis. Herein lies a dilemma for the concept of maritime history. The ferry was a maritime enterprise but it also happened to be an item of transport technology which, because of its earlier development and the existence of a natural highway system called Sydney Harbour, happened to play a significant early role in the development of Sydney. Strictly speaking, maritime history is really a category of the history of transportation - that is, extended (non-pedestrian) mobility. The separate status of maritime history comes from the fact that the technology of putting a hull in water precedes by thousands of years any remotely comparable mechanical transport technology.
Notwithstanding this slightly pedantic point, it may be said that the history of the Manly ferry illustrates the role of transport (maritime) technology in the development of urban society. More importantly, in as much as it illustrates that development into the age of the technological revolution, it is a history with continuity into the present and the future. As Chapter 6 will discuss, there is a tendency in the profession of planning to ignore the factor of continuity, to treat the present as a starting-point. In fact, human society operates in a chronological dimension with no convenient starting and finishing points, although profound changes occur which set society on a different course. The industrial revolution appears to be the profound change from which we currently measure the development of society in the "Westernised" world.

What of the Manly ferry and its factor of causation? The Manly ferry, in various small ways, reflects the role played by sea navigation in Australian history. This role was greater in earlier years due to the natural and technological advantages enjoyed by shipping and is still significant in certain areas of modern transport - particularly interstate and overseas movement of bulk commodities. As other methods of mechanical transportation evolved, notably railways, and later motor vehicles and aircraft, the role of shipping declined in certain areas, particularly that of passenger transport. Now, in terms of patronage, the Sydney Harbour ferries are the only significant passenger shipping service surviving in Australia, the Manly ferry being the largest single service.

It is naturally possible to overestimate the role of shipping in Australian history, but any such overestimation would hardly balance the years of underestimation and neglect this important subject has suffered in the "land orientation" of Australian historical studies. Geoffrey Blainey, of course, drew attention to the importance of whaling and in doing so went on to make a vital point.
One suspects that our reluctance to see the importance of whaling stems from an apathy towards maritime history. In Australia ... the sea and ships are still virtually banished from written history. Perhaps our justification for this attitude is that Australia for more than a century has paid huge sums to the overseas shipowners who have always manned its sea routes to the outside world. We do not readily believe that an industry carried on at sea could benefit us as much as an industry of comparable size operating on Australian soil.²

The role of ocean-based shipping is admittedly rather obvious, but it seems to have taken longer to appreciate that shipping played a significant role in opening up both the land and the larger cities, particularly Sydney. This role was effectively taken from shipping in the last two decades of the nineteenth century by the railways in the country and tramways in the cities, but for some five decades from the advent of the first steamships in 1831 shipping was supreme. Even after the advent of the rail systems, shipping continued to play a complementary role, for up to several decades depending on the specific situation.

It is not relevant to this thesis, nor is there space, to discuss the role of shipping in "opening up the land", but some reference must be made to particular situations in order to clarify what must otherwise be considered a rather contradictory statement. Before the advent of mechanical transportation³ prospects for extensive inland settlement in

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³ This term must be taken to mean, in the first instance, steam propulsion which in Australia was first applied to shipping, then to railways and tramways. The next major development, associated with steam (for generation) and likely to be the major source of power in the future, was electric propulsion which was applied, in Australia, to tramways from the 1890s and railways after the First World War. Finally, there is the internal combustion engine which in the present century liberated road transport from man and beast-power, made possible powered flight, and is even enjoying what is likely to be a short-lived supremacy in shipping and railways.
a country the size of Australia were limited by the problems of moving people and, more importantly, produce by manual means. The railways solved this problem in a substantial way, but the fact overlooked is that shipping performed this role before the railway system developed, and complemented the railways during the period when rail systems were not fully developed. To take the eastern part of the continent as an example, the obvious manifestations of this were: (a) the coastal shipping companies which served the Queensland ports and the north and south coast of N.S.W. (produce being brought to ports via coastal rivers or overland); and (b) the utilisation of the Murray-Darling River system to carry inland produce first to the coast in South Australia and later to railheads at inland "ports" such as Echuca and Bourke.  

Shipping has always had a natural advantage, even when powered by sail, because of the relative ease of moving a capacious hull through water. However, coastal navigation by sail is an extremely hazardous business and on inland rivers it is all but impossible (though a fine river such as the Hawkesbury could and did support a significant trade in both sail and steam.) It was the application of mechanical propulsion to shipping that gave it such a tremendous early advantage in landward trade. This freed coastal and river shipping from the vagaries of wind and tide and, moving from the general to the particular, gave ferries and estuarial services a new lease of life, and in certain situations such as Sydney, a temporary advantage.

It is a contextual assumption of this work that water transport played an early and significant role in the economic and social development of what has become the closely-settled part of the

Australian Continent. The reason for this was basically one of technological and physical advantage. The work which needs to be undertaken to further support this theme remains substantial, but a body of research is already underway and the subject area has spawned several good journals.5

The present study of the Manly ferry, as suggested earlier, is microcosmic - in this case in the context of urban history. It is common now to regard Sydney's large harbour and its tributaries as an impediment to the development of the city, placing as it does a serious physical obstacle in the path of circumferential road systems, rail extensions, etc. However, the harbour was for very many years a positive aid to the development of the city, simply because it provided a natural "permanent way" for what was at one time (at least in Australia) the foremost and most capacious item of transport technology - the steamship.

At a time when Sydney was still a "walking city",6 the steamship (which first appeared in Sydney in 1831) introduced its first mechanical public transport. In doing so it also introduced two urban social changes which in England were largely brought about by the railways. The most significant change was that the wealthier middle class could, by virtue of the commuting facility created by the new technology, move to new fashionable areas further from the city centre. This left the inner suburbs the domain of the proletariat, with the subsequent process of inner-urban decline being set in motion.7 By the time the tramways (and, to a lesser extent, the railways) had started to show their effect on the shape of Sydney by the turn of the century, the ferry services had already undone

5. Foremost among which can be listed The Great Circle (Journal of the Australian Association for Maritime History), The Log (Journal of the Nautical Association of Australia), and Australasian Shipping Record (Journal of the Australasian Maritime Historical Society).


the tight little knot of urban settlement around the city by stimulating (or making possible) suburban settlement in North Sydney, Mosman, Manly, Watson's Bay, Balmain, and Hunter's Hill. Ferries also served closer areas such as Woollahra, Pyrmont, Glebe, and Annandale. These latter ferries were early victims of tramway expansion, but other services were more resilient. The pioneering water link to Parramatta, as old as European settlement in Australia, survived until 1928 for passengers and 1941 for cargo, in spite of being rivalled by the railway since 1855. North Shore areas from Lane Cove to Mosman, of course, remained totally dependent on the ferries and punts for communication with Sydney until the Harbour Bridge opened in 1932.

The other social change encouraged by the advent of the steamship was the development of middle-class leisure (and later working-class leisure, when the fares came down): in 1854 the English institution of the seaside excursion was was introduced by steamers cruising to Watson's Bay and Manly. In this area the steamship enjoyed an aesthetic as well as a technological advantage and for this reason the Manly ferry in particular retained its advantage well into the present century.

The fact that ferries rather than railways initiated these processes in Sydney was a matter of geography and economics. Acquisition of steamers in the limited economic circumstances of a small colonial city - one endowed with excellent waterways - was simply more feasible than the establishment of railways with their massive capital requirements. However, there was to develop a cheaper form of urban "pioneer railway" namely the tramway ("the first really democratic way of travelling"\(^8\)), and this was to become the first threat to the superiority of the steamship in the urban context - particularly in the inner suburbs south of the harbour referred

\(^8\) Denis Winston \textit{Sydney's Great Experiment} (Sydney 1957), p.16.
to earlier. 9

In summary, therefore, the Manly ferry was a causal factor, through its technological and aesthetic advantage, in the development of a social phenomenon of the industrial city: the suburban community. Having fostered that phenomenon, however, it needs to be considered in the context of the technological revolution (and indeed even earlier) whether transportation in an urban commuting role such as this in fact continues to be causal. As Kellett observes, there is a tendency to overestimate the role of the commuter in suburban life. "The vitality and extent of the economic activity which the suburbs generate on their own account is often underestimated." Most residents of suburbs did not, and do not, travel to work in the city centre. 10 Indeed the majority of those who travel to work no longer even go to the city centre (see Appendix 6, table T8).

Initially, the isolation of Manly and its small size created the clear options of no travel or travel to the city by the ferry - allowing for the fact that travel to other destinations was largely channelled through the city by the radial transport system. However, as will be noted in this

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9. It would be an interesting subject for a separate study to compare the development of suburban transport (and by corollary, of middle-class suburbs) in Sydney, with its extensive waterways, and in the more land-oriented Melbourne. Whereas tramways developed on fairly equal terms in both cities, catering basically to similar extensions of inner-city development, Melbourne developed a stronger suburban railway network much earlier - and was first to introduce improvements, notably electrification, to that network. Sydney merely made the most (as it still does) of a railway network basically conceived to serve the rural hinterland. It could be argued that the early strength of the ferry system helped thwart suburban railway development in Sydney. Some background to this subject may be found in the following works, and the references contained therein. G. Wotherspoon "The 'Sydney interest' and the rail 1860-1900" in M. Kelly (ed.) Nineteenth-Century Sydney (Sydney 1978); I.A. Brady Eastern Suburbs Railway (Sydney 1979); I.A. Brady and others New South Wales Railways: the First Twenty-five Years 1855-1880 (1980); G. Wotherspoon (ed.) Sydney's Transport: Studies in Urban History (Sydney 1983).

thesis (Chapters 5 and 6 and associated tables), the technological revolution and its associated social changes have given increasing emphasis to Kellett's assertion. Moreover, it should be noted that much (at times, most) of the mobility to Manly was not commuter but recreational activity. This other distinctly modern urban phenomenon continues unabated.

This work is intended to illustrate how the astute operators of the Manly ferry maintained its causal role through business ingenuity and technological innovation, right up to the 1940s/50s when the ferry was challenged by alternative transport technologies (which the ferry operators in turn challenged in the 1960s) and when the urban region fostered by the ferry underwent change to its economic, geographic and movement patterns. In this last respect, the question of urban planning as a product of political efficacy is addressed.

2. Historiography

The original stimulant of this thesis was the need to record accurately the history of the Manly ferry. The lack of attention by professional historians to the transport industry in Australia has already been noted. Nowhere is this problem more acute than in sections of the industry which have been subject to extensive private operation, such as shipping, aviation and road transport industries. Government-operated systems - railways, tramways, municipal bus services - have had the benefit of substantial retention and availability of archives and, accordingly, extensive recording and other research. At the same time it must be said, as Robert Gibbons notes, that

transport historiography has long been tied in with the local enthusiast steam train, tram and trolley-bus literatures, which have a heavy engineering emphasis, and specialist historical analysis has only recently begun to balance the picture.

In addition, the gauntlet of popular mythology must be run. Sydney's

trams, for example, are recalled with an affection which disguises the reality of their loss of technological advantage and flexibility which Gibbons alone has examined in critical and contextual detail. Aside from this all-too-scarce type of analysis we are left with several genuinely well-rounded factual works (that is, not simply engineering records) which reveal (but do not interpret) the structure and operation of Sydney's government transport systems: pre-eminent is D.R. Keenan's *Tramways of Sydney* (1979); a little narrow in scope is *The Electric Railways of New South Wales* (1976) by S.E. Dornan and R.G. Henderson, and, appallingly structured but yielding useful (though sometimes inaccurate) information with a struggle is the bus history, *From City to Suburb* (1982) by G. Travers.

The ferries of Sydney have not even been so fortunate. Suffering an archival disadvantage which will be described in NOTES ON THE SOURCES, the basic facts of their operation - let alone any interpretation - have barely been recorded, and even where they have, it is with monumental inaccuracies. Even the most recent works, such as those of journalist and shipping enthusiast Graeme Andrews, are extensions of the popular mythology rather than true histories - recording or interpretative. With the partial exception of one author (Ronald Parsons), no writer had even accomplished what Keenan has done for the trams, that is, provide comprehensive information on operators, fleets, routes, patronage, fares and the many other factors which together may be used to analyse the subject.  

However, criticising the authors of the few ferry books which exist is one

12 The sole exception worthy of mention is the series of historical articles on Sydney ferry services by R.H. Parsons in *Australasian Shipping Record*, vols. 6 to 9 (1975-1978). These suffer largely from the drawback that they are sourced more in newspapers and shipping registers than in records dealing with the communities served (e.g. the valuable Henry Gilbert Smith papers, and ferry company and council minute books). This reflects a chronic problem in amateur local history - over-reliance on a narrow range of sources. However, unlike most writers, Parsons honestly admits reliance on these two sources which in fact together provide one of the most accurate bodies of basic information.
thing. The more damning fact is the evidently uncritical reliance placed by many academic writers on these, and other specialised/local histories, to provide supporting information and a basis for interpretation in more general works.13 In a review of one of the popular ferry books we find a well-known urban historian praising the technical detail of the book in spite of the fact that its virtually non-existent bibliographical resources (which should arouse suspicion in any case) include not one single shipping register or primary company document.14

This problem possibly starts with the relative lack of attention given by professional historians in Australia to local and corporate history. Until very recent times, Australian historians have been preoccupied with the broad themes, political and economic forces, and British Imperial history (though to the neglect of the maritime aspect as discussed earlier). In the early stages of the historiography of a young country this is to be expected.15 However, the dearth of professional interest has left the more specialised fields open to any interested person whose enthusiasm for the subject often exceeds their ability to collect and interpret information. It is a little unfair to be critical of people who embarked on local or specialised histories with the best of intentions, little training, and in the absence of professional interest. Much early local history has been produced in this way and has left a legacy of written mis-information mixed with genuinely correct information.

To use some of these writings for supporting information is somewhat

13. For example, Peter Spearritt's use of Graeme Andrews' work (referred to later) in writing about ferries in Sydney Since the Twenties (Sydney 1978), p. 151.


15. See also the tart remarks of P.R. Stephensen on the neglect of local history in his The History and Description of Sydney Harbour (Adelaide 1966), p. 231.
hazardous - a kind of historical roulette. However, whereas these earlier works appeared as closely-printed and, by commercial standards, unattractively presented booklets, the current equivalent is the glossy popular history, relying for much of its saleability on photographs - which is not to deny the enormous value of the photographic material brought to light in such books. On the other hand, the breaking of the drought is represented by such works as the essays in urban history produced by the Sydney History Group, and some other notable local and specialised works (perhaps more so in Melbourne than in Sydney, as Spearritt notes).  

16

The history of Manly and its ferry service provides a useful background for illustrating the development of local historiography. The factor which produced the first historical surveys was the transformation of the Manly ferry in the early years of the twentieth century, when new screw steamers were introduced and the old paddle steamers were phased out.

A Daily Telegraph feature of 23 August 1906 ("Ferry excursions to Manly") outlined the history of the service since 1865 (ignoring the ten years prior to that) and contained a few blatant errors,  

17

thus demonstrating that there is not necessarily any value in going to an earlier history in the hope that, being closer to the events, it might be more accurate.

In the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s one finds a small output of writing on both Manly and the ferries. In 1924 the Manly, Warringah and Pittwater Historical Society was formed and its existence has fostered a steady level of amateur research, of which the ferries have formed a subsidiary component. The fruit of its early work was the publication in 1946 of


17. Due to limitations of space, every error in such references cannot be listed here, unless considered important. A comparison of details may be readily made by examining the references against information provided in subsequent sections of this thesis.
Manly and Pittwater: Its Beauty and Progress, by P.W. Gledhill, then
president of the society. Gledhill was a conscientious worker who
maintained a useful chronology of Manly events during his lifetime. In
Gledhill's book appears the first attempt at a detailed listing and
discussion of vessels in the Manly trade, and the list appears so
meticulous in its presentation of dates and fine detail that it beca
(like the book in which it appears) something of an authority on the
subject. However, Gledhill has made numerous errors which later writers,
copying from him, have repeated.

For example, lack of care is exhibited in stating in one part of the
book that the service started in 1854 and in another, 1874 (a typographical
error presumably meaning 1847), while the introduction of a "more regular
service" by the Phantom is given as 1858 in one place and 1859 in another.

In both cases - and this happens in works by writers who have copied from
Gledhill - the respective vessels' years of build are confused with their
suggested date of entry into the Manly service. There are numerous
other frequently-repeated errors. As pointed out in Appendix 1, many
writers, including Gledhill, have misrepresented the ships' dimensions
given in the registers in feet and tenths of feet - not just once or twice
but throughout an entire list, and other technical details have
inaccuracies. (To be fair to Gledhill, the details probably came from
information casually assembled by the ferry company.) Gledhill's coverage
of vessels running excursions and regular services in the 1850s and 1860s

20. PS Brothers, often claimed to be the first ferryboat on the run, was
    built in 1847, and PS Phantom was built in 1858.
is far too brief. He numbers the list from 1 (PS Brothers) to 38 (SS South Steyne) as though no other vessels ran to Manly, yet a survey of newspapers of the 1850s and 1860s reveals at least another fifteen vessels not named by Gledhill. The list is unbalanced: the little Planet which put in a brief service in 1855 appears, while PS Victoria which put in regular service over four years and more is not even mentioned. There are many incorrect dates: Glenelg entered service in 1882, not 1875; Brightside entered service in 1877, not 1890; and so on.

However, it should be said that the art of reconstructing the past is to build on the work of previous historians, weeding out the errors. The real tragedy has been the failure of subsequent writers to improve on Gledhill's work. Fortunately, Gledhill left a few obvious mistakes which enable one to readily detect the plagiarists. (Lack of acknowledgement of sources has been one notable feature of writings on the ferries.) One vessel listed by Gledhill was Warlington, which on investigation turns out to be a copying or typographical error for the excursion vessel and tug of the 1850s, PS Washington. Yet Warlington makes subsequent appearances in seemingly authoritative articles and books such as Graeme Andrews' Ferries of Sydney (1969), L.A. Clark's North of the Harbour (1976), and Charles Swancott's Manly 1788 to 1968 (1968). Another Gledhill error, the Clommel (referring to PS Clonmel, wrecked in 1841, long before the Manly trade started), also makes interesting appearances in these and other works.

Also produced during the inter-war years were Manly and Warringah Shire (1922), edited by A. Vialoux, and the Manly Municipal Council Official Jubilee Souvenir of 1927. The historical content of both works is of interest, but is unexceptional. (The major value of such works is as items of history in their own right, giving as they do an insight into contemporary life and attitudes.) In the 1930s, Harold Norrie submitted a study of the Sydney ferries to the Royal Australian Historical Society.

Like Gledhill, Norrie's paper covered a lot of new ground (though, in its sourcing, hardly qualifying as major research work) but, again like Gledhill, his paper combines truth with careless error, and later writers have evidently relied on him as they have on Gledhill. Since 1946 there has been little (published) improvement on the work of Gledhill and Norrie. In the 1960s and 1970s nostalgic interest in the ferry services has heightened, particularly with the government takeover of the Manly service in 1974. In addition to this, the passing of many of the old vessels has made people aware of something which had previously been taken for granted. The main writer to go into print on the strength of this interest has been Graeme Andrews, who produced a small book, *Ferries of Sydney*, in 1969 and two expanded but little-revised works in 1975 and 1982.²² Although stimulating further public interest in the ferries, these works are an unqualified disaster as an historical record, for, despite presenting a lot of valid information, the catalogue of errors, omissions, and fictions, great and small, is so large as to make the works totally unreliable. The comments of reviewers who described the 1975 book as "a scholarly treatise" and "faultless record"²³ warn us of the precarious state of knowledge at the best of times.

To list Andrews' errors would fill a small book, so the provision of some examples must suffice here. In his 1975 book, for example, the lists of vessels in the appendices are characterised by omissions (for example, Manly boats *Manly*, *Cygnet*, and most early vessels), mis-spellings ("Kuringai","Barranjoey","Marra Marra","Colloden"), misleading dates (suggestive of service dates, but in fact referring to life of the vessel - though not consistent in this), and errors in statistics. The text is sometimes farcical, as this example shows:

²². G. Andrews *Ferries of Sydney* (Sydney 1969); *The Ferries of Sydney* (Sydney 1975); *A Pictorial History of Ferries* (Sydney 1982).

Iron-paddled, Breadalbane made her first run on the Manly service on Boxing Day, 1863, probably carrying holiday-makers. She and Black Swan earned their owners more than £1,600 in six months and soon after, in 1864, the Brighton and Manly Steam Ferry Company was formed. This company then bought the ... Phantom [which was] built in Melbourne in 1859 by J. Daw and soon after steamed up the coast to Sydney. She took four days, arriving in Sydney on 19 May 1859 .... Phantom's first Sydney owner, Henry Gilbert Smith, built the first Manly Pier for his ferry about 1854 but sold it for £300 and the Phantom for £2,240 to Tom Hesselton and J.J. Parker in 1864.24

The facts are that: H.G. Smith built the Manly wharf in 1855; he advertised for the formation of a Brighton, Manly Beach Steam Company early in 1859, stating that the steamer he had chartered (probably Victoria, possibly also Black Swan) had earned £1,623 in 100 days, excluding holidays; the company did not come into formal existence, but Smith bought shares in Phantom (built in 1858 by J.F. Dow) and brought her to Sydney (she left Port Phillip Heads on 19 May 1859 and arrived in Sydney about 27 May, spending four days at sea and the rest sheltering in Sealer's Cove, Victoria); in 1860 Smith sold his shares in the vessel to Skinner (the other partner) and Wilson for £2,240; Skinner and Wilson also bought Breadalbane which entered service on 30 November 1862 at 10.15 am. (Gledhill cited an advertisement dated 26 December 1863 referring to Breadalbane but did not state that this was when she entered service); after the deaths of Skinner and Wilson in 1867 T.J. Parker and, later, Thomas Hesselton took over the service and boats; and to Parker and Hesselton, H.G. Smith sold the wharf for £300 in 1873.25

Andrews' books contain enough of this type of inaccuracy to thoroughly discredit them as a reliable source. However, mention should be made of a

25. See Chapters 2 and 3, and Appendix 1 of this thesis; also *Shipping Gazette and Sydney General Trade List*, 6 June 1859.
photograph caption in which he describes Lady Scott as "a unit of the Balmain New Ferry Company somewhat out of location on the Lane Cove River."26 This betrays a lack of even fundamental knowledge of Sydney ferry history, as one of the major operational changes was the takeover of the Lane Cove River service by the Balmain Co. in 1906 and the construction of Lady Scott and her sisters for that service. Other perpetrators of such inaccuracy are the series of articles, "From Rose Hill Packet to hydrofoil," in Port of Sydney journal, volumes 9 and 10 (1968-1970), Charles Swancott's book Manly 1788 to 1968 (not a product of the Manly Historical Society, but which nevertheless plagiarises heavily - and often inaccurately - from Gledhill and other Manly historians), and L.A. Clark's North of the Harbour. 27 Like their counterparts in other areas of transport history, all these works have a heavy (but inaccurate) one-dimensional "rolling stock" bias. Little more than the fer'ryboats is examined and interpretation is utterly non-existent.

In very recent years, and concurrent with the present writer's work, there has been useful material produced in the form of articles and notes, including the work of Ronald Parsons, mentioned earlier, and studies of Manly's history by Jeanne McGlynn (a teacher of history) of the Manly, Warringah and Pittwater Historical Society. 28 An opportunity was passed up

27. A recent illustrated book, John Gunter's Across the Harbour (Adelaide 1978), if somewhat shallow, is more accurate (excepting the statistical tables).
28. Some of these formed the basis of a glossy booklet produced by Manly Municipal Council: Manly (Sydney 1976). A year before this, two Manly, Warringah and Pittwater Historical Society members, C.E. McDonald and C.W.T. Henderson produced The Manly-Warringah Story (Sydney 1975). This has deficiencies (not least of which is the fact that it simply does not provide a structured history of the district, opting instead for rambling disconnected tales) but is valuable for Captain Henderson's reminiscences. Another recent production was Charles Swancott's Manly 1788 to 1968 (Sydney 1968) which, though marginally more coherent than Gledhill's work, is a rambling, unsourced, "cut-and-paste" book.
in 1977 when Manly Municipal Council failed to commission a professional history for its centenary. For a community with such a profound, complex and fascinating history - glimpses of which are revealed in this thesis - Council's attitude was contemptible, though not uncharacteristic of the small-mindedness of local government.

In summarising the historiography of Sydney's ferries and suburbs (the two areas examined in this thesis) the term "curate's egg" comes to mind. Were it not for the occasional valuable insight and a body of correct information (which needs to be checked in any case) it would be tempting to totally cast off this bibliographical baggage. However, there is a great significance even in the works of Andrews. This is that such works are in fact important tangible evidence of the popular mythology which, though it may hinder both historical perception and current planning (see Chapter 6), is an utterly inseparable component of the history. Both Andrews himself and the reminiscences of other people (admittedly sometimes inaccurate) he relates convey with unwitting profundity the importance of ferries in the life of Sydney. Gibbons' view is that mythology conceals the real (economic) significance. This is quite true, but the mythology is part of the wider social significance and cannot be separated in either retrospective or forward views. In Chapter 6 it is noted that the Manly ferry's part in Sydney's popular urban culture has made it very difficult to close it down, notwithstanding economic considerations. The important factor should be to clearly identify the mythology and keep it in perspective. Once established, this perspective enables one to see that, just as recording and interpretation of events and statistics are part of the study of the history of Sydney's ferries, so is the powerful image (which drove many people to use them) of

29. See particularly chapters 3 and 8 in The Ferries of Sydney (1975) and equivalent sections in Andrews' 1969 book.
... those gay steamers converging on Sydney Cove, or emerging from it, on a blue-and-gold Sydney sunlit day, or with their lights reflected in the waters at night beneath a starlit cloudless sky. 30

This thesis examines predominantly the economic, political and technological elements of the urban history of the Manly ferry, because its images (though discussed here, and bearing as they do on the aesthetic theme) are covered well in many of the secondary sources listed in the bibliography. Normally it should not be necessary to dwell so extensively on the bibliographical background of a research subject, but "local history" in Sydney - as I have attempted to illustrate through Manly and its ferry - is in its infancy. There is a need for recognition that much work done to date, though it can provide important information, is in fact more a collection of nostalgic antiquarian essays. In the cases of Manly and Sydney's ferries, the real recording and interpretation have hardly commenced. This thesis is a first step.

3. Objectives

Given that the very facts of the history of the Manly ferry - and some of the facts of the history of Manly/Warringah - have not been collected and recorded, this thesis outlines the history of the Manly ferry from its inception as an excursion service in 1854, through its growth and decline as a major commuter service, to its present role as a minor commuter service and still-significant excursion service. These facts are assembled from surviving primary sources including company records, shipping registers and contemporary newspapers.

Secondly, it is intended to demonstrate in this work that sea transport technology played a significant role in the urban development of Sydney - not only an economic role but a social role in creating an urban myth. In this regard, the themes of the Manly ferry's dichotomous advantages - aesthetic/technological - are explored. It will be seen that

30. Stephensen op. cit., p. 143.
the ferry fostered the development of a suburban society which then, per
the technological revolution, developed into a form which had little need
for the ferry. However, although the economic role of the ferry declined,
its status as an urban myth expanded and this, combined with low political
efficacy, confounded attempts to restructure the servicing of regional
movement patterns. The Manly ferry reflects the history of Sydney's long,
unplanned suburban boom.
CHAPTER 2
THE EARLY YEARS

Although the story of Manly extends from the beginning of European settlement in Australia, 65 years were to pass before the district started to develop as an urban settlement of Sydney. This is where the history of the Manly ferry commences.

It is generally considered that Governor Arthur Phillip made his second landfall in Port Jackson at Manly in January 1788. Here, the "confidence and manly behaviour" of the natives encouraged Phillip to call the place Manly Cove. The natives apparently knew the area as Balgowlah (this being an English corruption of the aboriginal word). Both names have ever since been applied to "... Manly to the flats between the cove and the sea northward" and Balgowlah: the heights above North Harbour. A few months later, in April 1788, Phillip commenced his first overland exploration at Manly, heading towards Pittwater.¹

The first half of the nineteenth century saw the sparse occupation of the land between Manly and Pittwater by isolated settlers, most of whom would have supplied the Sydney market with agricultural produce. At the time this was a feature of many areas close to Sydney which are now densely-populated suburbs. Manly, separated from Sydney by rough bushland and an often turbulent waterway, was physically more isolated than equivalent settlements up the Parramatta River. (See Maps M1 – M4, Appendix 6, for locations referred to in this chapter.) Little wonder that the census of 1836 showed only 29 free settlers in the Parish of Manly Cove,² compared with 265 in the Parish of Hunter's Hill, a slightly

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2. Gledhill op. cit., p. 82. The Parish of Manly Cove embraces an area between the coast and Middle Harbour north to a line between St. Ives and Narrabeen Lagoon.
lesser distance north-west of Sydney. The first land grants in the area were made in 1819 to Gilbert Baker and Richard Cheers. This comprised the land east of the present Corso (but not including North Head - this land has always been under government control). These grants passed later to D'Arcy Wentworth who had also been granted land at Manly Vale in 1818. By 1822 a road connection (or more correctly, a track) had been established via Pittwater and Pyrmble. The path of this historic road is still followed, almost exactly, by Mona Vale Road to Mona Vale, then south along Pittwater Road and Condamine Street to North Harbour at Balgowlah. This was Manly's land connection with Sydney for many years and represented a distance of some 33 miles via North Sydney or over 50 miles via Parramatta. Although by the 1850s it was possible to travel via the Spit and North Sydney, making two water crossings, the advantages of the direct seven nautical miles (eight statute miles) by water was very obvious.

By 1850, the pattern of settlement had generally concentrated around Balgowlah and the start of the road at North Harbour from whence boats conveyed the district produce to Sydney. Several more land grants were made in the 1830s and 1840s and in 1848 there were 24 houses and 63 inhabitants in the Parish, all but three families being in the Manly-Balgowlah area (two families were at Dee Why and one fisherman lived opposite the Spit). In the 1820s and 1830s surveyors had laid out a "Village of Balgowlah" around the western reach of North Harbour with a grid pattern of streets much like that of Balgowlah today. However,

5. ibid., p. 4. Stephensen op. cit., p. 399.
Balgowlah did not become the first urban settlement in the area and for many years its "village" barely existed.

Items from newspapers of the early 1850s give a clue to the state of settlement at this stage. The *Sydney Morning Herald* in January 1850 described the country between Pittwater and Middle Harbour and referred to "several settlers residing at intervals of a few miles ...." At the Spit, travellers could cross Middle Harbour on a punt kept by "Hillary." This person, it seems to have been subsequently proved, was Peter Ellery, a local landowner who possibly started the punt not long before the *Herald* article was written. Ellery probably took his hand punt across at the site of the present Spit Bridge, but the *Herald* noted that "for a few pence extra" the punt would take travellers up to Willoughby Falls (at the head of Willoughby Bay, near the present Grafton Street, Cremorne), thus saving a long walk to the North Sydney ferry. Gledhill gives the punt charges as 1/6 for horse and trap, and 6d for foot passengers each way. In offering a regular means of crossing the water barrier, this punt was an early ferry to the Manly district. (Indeed, Ellery's service, though often considered the first, probably had a predecessor. The 1832 *New South Wales Calendar* noted that ships from the Hunter River often anchored in Pittwater in bad weather and passengers would walk down the track to Balgowlah from where they could cross Middle Harbour by ferry, walk to North Sydney, and cross another ferry to Sydney. The location of this Middle Harbour ferry is uncertain. It could have been at the Spit, or it

9. *ibid*.
11. *SMH*, *loc. cit*.
12. Gledhill *loc. cit*.
could been the sailing boat service claimed by a number of writers to have run between Balmoral and Balgowlah (North Harbour), operated by a Barney Kearns or Kerrins. "Kearns" was probably a harbour trader or waterman and patronage of his service would have been too light to guarantee a regular ferry service on the scale imagined by some writers. More likely he carried passengers as an adjunct to his trade in the local produce. 14) Ellery's punt was replaced by a government steam punt in 1889 and finally by the Spit Bridge in 1924. 15) In addition, a punt for transferring tramcars operated between 1912 and 1919. 16) This alternative land route, involving the crossing of two waterways, offered increasing competition to the Manly ferry over the years, as will be seen.

In 1853 an auctioneer's advertisement drew attention to a 30 acre farm for sale near Curl Curl lagoon (now Manly Lagoon). 17) The "facility of water communication" was stressed as well as the land route via the north shore. The farm was "about 3 miles from the boat wharf at North Harbour, from whence boats convey the produce of the district daily to the market." The prospect of "living quietly and comfortably, and deriving a handsome income by breeding poultry and growing green stuff for the Sydney market" was held out enticingly.

The picture that emerges by 1853 is one of isolated and scattered farming - basically market-gardening - and some fishermen inhabiting the

15. Gledhill loc. cit.
17. SMH, advertisement inserted from 3 October to 5 October 1853.
foreshores. Small sailing traders and other boats (the relatively new luxury of steam would not likely have been spared for such a small enterprise) would call at North Harbour to collect produce and bring supplies. The flats and hillsides of Manly Beach were "primeval forest" and virtually untouched. Along what is now Ashburne Street ran a small channel which at high tide allowed the waters of the harbour and ocean to meet - a reminder of how recently North Head was an island. By the mid-1850s all this was changing rapidly.

1. The Beginnings of Suburban Manly and the Manly Ferry 1853-1855

In the 1850s Sydney, in common with the eastern mainland colonies, entered a new era of growth. Early in 1851 Edward Hargraves brought back the news of his discovery of gold near Bathurst and the rush started. The economic changes of this decade made Sydney a centre of world trade and brought a growth of secondary industry which together with communication developments (such as the introduction of the railway), consolidated Sydney's dominance of the economic affairs of New South Wales. Important for the future of Manly were the growth of the shipping industry and the fertile environment for speculation and development.

With the gold rush came more immigration (helping to nearly double Sydney's population from 52,000 in 1850 to 95,000 in 1860) and trade. With this in turn came Sydney's rise as a great shipping port. This meant not only catering for overseas vessels, but the growth of local ownership and local shipbuilding. "The great age of Sydney as a shipowning port had begun", wrote Birch and Macmillan. An immediate need was towage, and

19. Gledhill op. cit., p. 5. According to Myers (op. cit., p. 57), writing in about 1885, this channel was still in evidence then. Retaining walls and urban development have since eliminated this interesting feature. See also reminiscences of Selby M. Cook, SMH, 24 March 1925.
Williams and Searle write of a situation which applied to many Australian ports:

The great increase in shipping in the early 1850s ... caught the local owners unprepared. Tugs were ordered overseas, mostly from England and Scotland, and arrived by various means. Some were brought out in prefabricated sections and erected by local shipwrights, and others made the long journey under sail, often rigged as schooners. 21

As few vessels at this time could be profitably employed in only one trade a number of these tugs supported the early excursion trade to Manly, as did the steamers of the coastal shipping lines which developed and expanded during the 1850s. At the same time the shipbuilding and repair industry grew and this decade saw the establishment of Mort's great dockyard at Balmain and the Cockatoo Island dockyard, among others. 22

Despite all these developments, Manly's growth might have been slow were it not for the impetus and ambitious plans of Henry Gilbert Smith. Smith was effectively, and almost single-handedly, the founder of modern Manly and initiator of the Sydney-Manly ferry service. Born in Northamptonshire, England on 15 February 1802, Smith arrived in Sydney on 24 August 1827. 23 Before long he had established himself as a prosperous merchant and investor and by the 1850s he and his brother Thomas had built PS Surprise, the first Australian-built steamship and one of the first two steamers in Australian waters. 24 He retired from his mercantile firm (which he left to his nephew, Thomas Whistler Smith) in 1848 and, after returning from one of his several visits to England, devoted himself to his various investment "hobbies". In 1836 he had bought land at Wollongong

and later devoted some time to developing this, but his major interest in the 1850s and 1860s was Manly.

How Smith "discovered" Manly is not recorded but on 9 March 1853, he purchased, for £8 an acre, the 100 acres of land granted to John Thompson, Deputy Surveyor-General, on 13 April 1842.25 The approximate boundaries of this land are between the present Corso and Manly Cove on the south, Manly Beach on the east, Steinton Street, to the north, and Parkview Road to the west. Francis Myers, writing in the 1880s, states that:

The Government surveyors ... had laid out the first township of Balgowlah, deeming the sandspit [Manly] perhaps a doubtful foundation for human habitation, but Mr. Smith recognised the inaccessibility of the Balgowlah site, and took the teaching of nature, as shown by gum trees at least 150 years old, as sufficient evidence of the permanent character of the flat.26

On 11 May 1853 he bought the 20 acre estate on North Harbour (at what is now Fairlight) which had been granted to John Crane Parker on 12 April 1837.27 This became the Fairlight estate and in 1854 the beautiful Georgian "Fairlight House" was built here for Smith and became his main residence until he returned to England in about 1880. This elegant landmark of Manly's early history was demolished to make way for blocks of flats in 1939. The Fairlight estate was not subdivided until 1902. "Fairlight" was the name of Smith's friend and associate, James Norton's property at Mulgoa, near the Nepean River, and was derived from the town in Sussex, England.28

Having established a landholding and a residence, Smith got to work on his grand plan. In 1853 he had written to his nephew Charles:

... I could give you a nice job, in planning and laying out a little watering place [seaside resort], to cover 120 acres all very desirable Land for building on - its situation, - 7 or 8 miles from Sydney by water, is as fine a thing as you can imagine and it takes in the only ground which has the sea beach on one side and a fine sandy cove on the other. It is in the Harbour therefore there is no getting a sea sickness to reach it. This spec in addition to my Wollongong properties, which is also to be a good Watering Place before long, tho' 50 miles away, make people think I am far gone on this point but I shall by and bye have the laugh at them. 29

Later he wrote to his brother John: "... there is no spot to equal it in the wide-wide world ...." 30 In mid-1854 he had two iron houses put up at Manly 31 and by the end of the year was spending two days a week there. 32

It was in 1854 that the Sydney-Manly ferry had its tentative beginnings, but by which boat and when remains in question. To commence with fundamentals, it is necessary to appreciate what exactly constitutes a ferry. The word "ferry" actually refers to the crossing of water and the vessel which carries passengers, vehicles, or goods over this crossing is a ferryboat - though it is common in popular usage to refer to the vessel as a "ferry". 33 Interpretation and local usage are

29. Letter dated 22 March 1853, Sydney. Letters of H.G. Smith quoted here are from typescript copies held in the Mitchell Library (MSS 660. Item 1.). The letters were formerly in the possession of F. de Villiers Lamb, a relative of the Smith family. As Smith seemed to own only the 100 acre Thompson estate at the time of this letter the reference to another 20 acres is unclear. He could be referring to Parker’s 20 acres which he bought several weeks later for the site of his house. However, this land was separated from the main Manly development and it is more likely he was referring to an area of about 20 acres north of the Thompson estate (between Steinton and Pine Streets). (See Appendix 6, M4.) On 14 May 1855 Smith acquired another 19 acres (east of Laurence Street, Fairlight, overlooking Manly Cove and adjoining the Thompson estate) from John Wheeler, to whom it had been granted on 18 April 1842. (Gledhill op. cit., p. 10. Morton Smith Papers (Mitchell Library), AS519, Box 1, Item 42.)


33. The extent of the stretch of water is open to interpretation. This could be a creek crossing, or an inter-island service. Even the trans-Atlantic shipping service was often called the "Atlantic ferry" - an extreme example, but indicative of the regularity of that service.
important factors and it is necessary not to apply the "crossing from one side to the other" definition too literally. In Sydney there have been the Parramatta and Watson's Bay services which convey their passengers for miles up or down the waterway and ultimately discharge them on the same side as the point of embarkation. These have generally been referred to as ferries, and yet, as Ronald Parsons points out, the similar Brisbane-Ipswich service in Queensland is seldom described as a ferry service.\textsuperscript{34} Manly at least involves a crossing and fits more conveniently into the definition.

Another aspect of a "ferry" involves some kind of regularity of service, and when a vessel makes a once-only call to a place like Manly it is more likely to come into the category of an excursion. Yet Manly, as both a seaside resort and residential area, does not lend itself to pedantic definitions. The "excursion" and the "ferry" to Manly developed, not separately, but in close relationship, each very much dependent on the other. Thus, in the early years one presumably would find the Manly resident boarding (or consigning goods on) one of the thrice-weekly "excursions" in order to travel to or from Sydney. Within twenty years the situation is (permanently) reversed and one finds the excursionist embarking on the regular Manly ferry. In retrospect, it is probably correct to refer to "the Manly ferry" from the introduction of scheduled services in 1855, but in other places the service would probably be called a steamer service or steam packet. In this context it may be noted that, in contemporary usage, the term "Manly ferry" did not really come into vogue until the present century. Prior to this the term was generally "Manly Beach steamers".

It is important to realise that it does not actually take a specially-built ferryboat to run a ferry service. In fact, of the 30 or so vessels which ran to Manly before 1877, only four or five were built

\textsuperscript{34} Parsons \textit{op. cit.}, p. 13.
specifically as ferry boats. As indicated earlier, it was often more sensible for an operator of harbour vessels in nineteenth-century Sydney to adapt his craft to a number of uses to keep them profitably employed. A typical multi-purpose harbour vessel would be built as a tug with all appropriate equipment for towing, but fitted also to carry cargo and passengers. Awnings would also be erected for the convenience of passengers. Thus equipped, the vessel could act as towboat and tender to incoming and outgoing ships, general conveyor of goods, excursion vessel, and ferry. The general pattern of early ferry travel in Sydney was often determined by its limited profitability. If the master of one of these vessels found a towing job he would take off to do that job, leaving the irate travellers stranded on the wharf. An oft-repeated yarn, not improbable, is that early Manly tug/ferries would occasionally, in mid-journey, sight a tow and take off to sea after it, carrying their passengers with them. 35 The same principle of exploiting all avenues of profit would be used by the owners of steamships operating in the NSW coastal trades. On public holidays, particularly over Christmas-New Year when normal business would presumably slacken, these vessels were pressed into service on harbour excursions which were a thriving business from the 1850s. If the idea of ocean-going ships cruising in Sydney Harbour seems incongruous, it is necessary to reflect that only a few of these vessels came anywhere near the size of a typical twentieth-century Manly ferry such as the Bellubere type. Most were little more than half this size.

In the 1830s and 1840s, encouraged by the advent of steam power, ferry services were developed linking Sydney with Parramatta, North Sydney, and Balmain. 36 With these services a small number of ferryboats,

especially acquired or built for the purpose, started to appear. One of these was PS Brothers, a 23 ton, 7 foot double-ended wood paddle-steamer built in 1847 for the North Sydney service. Brothers is credited with being the "first Manly ferry" by practically every writer on the subject since the 1900s. Charles H. Bertie, in A. Vialoux's 1922 Manly and Warringah Shire, wrote that Henry Gilbert Smith chartered Brothers in 1854 "and ran her from Sydney when a load of pleasure seekers required it". Other writers either support this date, suggest that she continued running to Manly after 1854, or give the year as 1847 (very likely a confusion with her year of build) or 1848. However, not one writer produces a scrap of primary evidence to demonstrate the existence of the service provided by Brothers. An extensive perusal of the shipping advertisements in the Sydney Morning Herald from 1847 onwards and the Shipping Gazette of 1854 and after fails to reveal evidence of such a service, and there is nothing in the vessel's Register to indicate that Smith had an ownership interest, as suggested by Gledhill. If Brothers ever ran to Manly, the comment by Bertie is probably closest to the truth. Under normal circumstances there would have been virtually no patronage for the service before 1855, and, as there was no wharf at Manly Cove until that year, passengers would either have been landed on the Manly Cove beach or at the Balgowlah wharf. As Smith was building "Fairlight House" and the two iron houses in 1854 he could have chartered a vessel then to carry labourers and material, and maybe to show some people his "spec", but this does not appear to show up in his correspondence. Indeed,

38. The author of "From Rose Hill Packet to hydrofoil" (Port of Sydney, v 9, no 6 (1968), p. 170) states that Brothers' owners, the Gerard brothers, placed her on the Manly service in 1848.
in January 1855 he wrote to his brother John that he spent much of the week at Manly and complained that it took him nearly two hours to get to Sydney - by land, crossing two ferries (at the Spit, and North Sydney). 40

In May 1855 a weekly excursion service commenced. It seems at least possible that, whatever happened in 1854, Brothers' service did not last into 1855. Ultimately, however, the possibility that Smith chartered Brothers regularly over a number of years (without advertising her) for the benefit of residents must not be entirely rejected. Perhaps one day some material evidence will come to light.

Despite the uncertainty concerning "the first Manly ferry", one vessel did run to Manly on an excursion in 1854. This was the Shoalhaven Steam Navigation Company's PS Nora Creina. The man behind the Shoalhaven Company, Edye Manning, was to play a significant role in the formative years of the Manly service. Born in Exeter, Devon, England in 1807, Manning came to NSW in 1831. His father, John Edye Manning, became Registrar of the N.S.W. Supreme Court. Like H.G. Smith, Edye Manning was something of an empire-builder and soon started speculating in shipping in a large way. In the 1830s and 1840s he started a number of coastal steamship services from which several companies evolved. Late in 1840 he pioneered a regular steamship service between Sydney and Melbourne with the big (for the time) PS Clonmel, but she was lost on her second voyage and the service failed. Also in the 1830s he entered the Parramatta River trade and introduced the well-known early ferries Emu (1841), Black Swan, and Pelican (both 1854), all of which made appearances in the Manly trade. By the 1850s he owned, or had significant interests in a number of coastal services and the Parramatta River service. His strongest interest, the NSW south coast service, finally took the form of the Illawarra Steam Navigation Company in 1857. From 1858 he lived at Hunter's Hill. He

retired in 1862 but continued to trade in second-hand steamers, selling a
number of his old vessels to China and Japan — including Nora Creina,
Illawarra, William the Fourth, Victoria, and possibly Washington, all of
which ran to Manly at some stage. He died in 1889, his shipping interests
being carried on by his son, J.E. Manning.41

Manning's major role in the Manly service will be described later,
but in 1854 he had just brought the five year-old Nora Creina out from
England for the south coast trade and, presumably anxious to show off the
new acquisition, he ran her on an excursion down the harbour to Manly on
Boxing Day, Tuesday 26 December 1854. In doing so he joined an excursion
boom developing on Sydney Harbour. The beginnings of this boom were
apparent early in 1854 when advertisements started appearing in the Herald
for excursions to Watson's Bay conducted by PS Victoria of the Sydney and
Melbourne Steam Packet Company. The company was probably promoting a
subdivision at Watson's Bay. 42 (Manning acquired Victoria in 1856 after
the Sydney and Melbourne Co. failed.) Soon other vessels such as
Washington, Huntress, Planet, Emu, and Pelican entered the excursion
business (in addition to their normal roles as tugs, ferries, etc.) and
eventually appeared in the Manly trade. For some time Watson's Bay
rivalled Manly as a resort but, as will be seen, Manly emerged the leader
in popularity.

41. See ADB, v 2 (1788-1850): I-2, p. 202. Also Parsons Paddle Steamers,
pp. 8-14; Parsons A Pioneer Australian Steamship Company (Lobethal
1970), pp. 6-7; Geeves op. cit., pp. 67-68, 92-93.
42. Parsons Paddle Steamers, pp. 34-35, 164. See also shipping
advertisements, SHB, 13 March 1854 and after.
At 10 am on Tuesday 26 December 1854, Nora Creina left the Phoenix Wharf, in Darling Harbour at the foot of Erskine Street, Sydney,43 and cruised to Manly, "landing her passengers at the head of North Harbour, by Manly Beach, a spot surpassing all others in the harbour of Sydney". She left at 6 pm to return to Sydney. Fare for the trip was 7/6, extremely expensive in those days and refreshments were provided on board.44 The description of the landing spot suggests, not Balgowlah, but Manly Cove and as there was no wharf, passengers probably went ashore by boat.

There is a regrettable lack of information on the contact between Smith and Manning, because although the Nora Creina excursion was not immediately repeated, Manning was back within a year with a regular excursion service to Manly. It is quite probable that Smith encouraged Manning to run Nora Creina to Manly, but I have found no evidence of this. By the end of 1854 Nora Creina was running in the Sydney-Kiama trade.45

At the beginning of 1855 Smith had completed his initial plans for the "watering place". For the former Thompson estate (soon to be combined with Wheeler's 19 acres to become what Smith called the Brighton estate) he prepared a plan called "Ellensville", dated January 1855. A note on this plan shows how strongly the idea of the estuarial resorts in Britain influenced Smith's ideas: "The distance from Sydney to [this] beautiful and retired site ... is not greater than that which is travelled on the Thames and Clyde in half an hour and for less than a shilling".46 It was

43. The wharf was possibly named for Manning's steamer Phoenix and was the departure point for his coastal services. This site became an important ferry terminal for river services and was the terminal for the Balmain ferries right up to 1964 when port redevelopment caused the closure of the wharf. For technical details of all chartered or contracted vessels which operated in the Manly service see Appendix 1B.

44. Advertisement in SMH, 22, 23 and 26 December 1854.

45. Advertisement in SMH, 30 December 1854 and after.

under Smith's influence that Manly nearly became known as Brighton, after England's famous seaside resort, but the older name ultimately prevailed. The "Ellensville" plan, with its wide promenades and reserves, soon evolved into the basic pattern of Manly as it exists today. The land east of The Corso - the original Baker/Cheers estates - was the subject of a plan called "Montpelier". The circumstances of this land were rather more complicated. As noted earlier, these estates passed to D'Arcy Wentworth who bequeathed them to his daughter Katherine in 1827. She married, firstly, Captain B. Darley in 1847, and secondly (after Darley's death in 1864) W.T. Bassett in 1867. Ultimately, there was doubt over the titles to the land and a special act of parliament was passed in 1877, empowering the trustees to sell the lands of the Bassett-Darley estate (or East Brighton estate as it became known). Thus, it was not until 1877 that this land was free for subdivision. Smith secured leases on the land in April and May 1853 and a 21 year lease from 1 January 1855. He then drew up the "Montpelier" plan which basically provided for parkland. There was, in fact, little he could with this land it remained primarily a recreational area until its sale and subdivision.

His plans established, Smith's development proceeded apace. The first necessity was to attract visitors who would appreciate, and hopefully propagate the attractions of Manly, both as a resort and as a potential

47. See plan of Brighton, Manly Beach (1860) held in the Norton Smith Papers (A5319, Box 2, Item 100). An 1832 development on the Mersey estuary in England had close parallels with Smith's Manly development. To establish the resort now known as New Brighton, the developer, James Atherton, issued a prospectus which said: "As New Brighton is likely to become a favourite and fashionable watering place, several gentlemen have proposed to erect there a handsome hotel and a convenient dock or ferry ... and to establish a communication by Steam Packets between that place and Liverpool." Cited in G. Bernard Wood Ferries and Ferrymen (London 1969), p. 113.


residential area. Again there is no documentary evidence, but it is probable that Smith made an arrangement with the owners of the new tug P. Huntress, for she began a series of Sunday excursions to Manly, commencing on Sunday 27 May 1855. On this day, Huntress left the "Windmill Street wharf" at Millers Point (probably the 11th. Nort : :.") ferry wharf which was near the present no. 6 wharf, Walsh Bay, at 10.30 am and left Manly to return at 4.30 pm. Return fare was 4s for adults and 2s for children. Initially, no refreshments were provided on board but by July this service was introduced. Also by July Huntress was advertised as leaving from Dawes Point (probably the same wharf or one nearby) and regularly travelled via Watson's Bay, thus presumably taking advantage of the other major excursion venue at the time. Huntress' weekly excursions continued until late in the year, by which time Manning had begun a twice-weekly service. Huntress was then withdrawn.

It is interesting to note that Huntress' part-owners were Newcastle colliery operators James and Alexander Brown, whose firm was to feature in the story of the Port Jackson Steamship Company later in the century. The Browns ordered her for use as a tug in Newcastle, though, as usual, she was fitted with a passenger saloon and cargo hatch. However, she seems to have seen little service as a tug and she spent her first years trading and running excursions on the Hawkesbury River and Sydney Harbour while her owners tried to sell her. As her engine-builder, G. Russell,

50. Advertisement in SMH, Saturday 26 May 1855, and every Saturday thereafter.
51. Advertisement in SMH, Saturday 30 June 1855, and every Saturday thereafter.
52. An account of the Browns' early years may be found in: J.W. Turner, James and Alexander Brown 1843-1877. (Newcastle History Monographs, no. 4, 1968.) On their tugs see pp. 16-17. Also Parsons Paddle Steamers, pp. 52-53.
53. Parsons Paddle Steamers, p. 106.
54. Ibid. Also advertisements in SMH, for example 20 December 1854.
held a major portion of the shares in the vessel, Ronald Parsons suggests that she might have had trouble with her engines—though this was not apparent on her trials when she was described as a "powerful little steamer" and turned out a good eleven knots. After only six years in local waters she went to New Zealand and was eventually converted to a sailing vessel. On the qualification of the uncertainty concerning Brothers, it may be said that this rather undistinguished little tug—that-never—was holds the honour of being the first regular Manly steamer.

When Huntress started running to Manly there was still no wharf at Manly Cove, but H.G. Smith was soon working on this and many other features of his new development. In August 1855 Smith applied for permission to build a wharf, and by 6 October, when Edye Manning's steamers started running, it was in use. Ever since this first wharf, the Manly ferry wharf has always (within variations of a few yards) been located at the same site—in the middle of Manly Cove beach, at the beginning of The Corso. The Corso was cleared by Smith probably late in 1855 and was a wide promenade linking the wharf with the ocean beach. In Smith's time it formed the boundary between his estate and the Bassett-Barley estate (or between Ellensville and Montpelier) and is still Manly's "main street" and shopping thoroughfare. By the end of 1855 Smith had completed the Pier Hotel at the wharf and for a while Manly's hotel development rivalled its population growth. By 1860 there were no less than three hotels to assuage thirsts and provide accommodation. Meanwhile Smith proceeded with

55. Parsons Paddle Steamers, loc. cit.
57. Notice of application to build wharf, 21 August 1855. (Tabled in NSW Legislative Assembly, 1877. See SMH, 22 January 1877.)
58. Advertisements in SMH, Saturday 29 September 1855, and after.
59. Gledhill Chronological History.
60. Advertisement in SMH, 5 December 1855. The Pier Hotel was demolished in the 1920s and on its site was erected the present Hotel Manly.
clearing and building. The next few years saw the construction of more cottages, a little church and schoolhouse, laying out of reserves, paths, and lookouts, creation of swimming baths and so on. In these years Smith also planted many of the Norfolk Island pines which have become a distinctive feature of Manly. It was probably in 1856 that he had erected the stone kangaroo on the hill behind Manly (Kangaroo Street) to attract people to the view. Still standing today, this landmark is probably the oldest surviving construction of Smith's original development. Possibly Smith's most farsighted act was the provision of extensive foreshore reserves on both harbour and ocean shores. Altogether, his exercise in town-planning was rather admirable, for in spite of the subsequent density of population the open foreshores remain Manly's most attractive feature.

Initially, however, the advantages of Smith's ownership of foreshores were not always appreciated. For one thing, other landowners resented the private ownership and the consequent lack of a public wharf. The jetty Smith built in 1855 was intended for the ferry service and he evidently exercised tight control over its use. In the latter part of 1855 he arranged a contract with Edye Manning whereby Manning would have the lease of the wharf in return for providing a service to Manly. Although no copy of this agreement appears to have survived it is safe to say that Manning probably had virtually exclusive rights to the wharf. Thus began the great monopoly issue which at times was a prominent factor in relations between Manly residents and the ferry operators. Writing in the Daily Telegraph in 1892 when the greatest of the monopoly debates was raging, Philip Cohen, who described himself as an "old identity" of

63. Gledhill Manly and Pittwater, p. 17
64. See, for example, letter dated 17 September 1859 from the Under-Secretary, Department of Lands and Public Works to William Nicholson, published in SMH, 24 September 1859.
Manly, stated that, in the 1850s, Smith would not make the wharf public and leased it to Manning. The result, according to Cohen, was a sporadic and unreliable service which held back the development of Manly.

To start with, Manning's excursion service was sparse, but at two days per week it was an improvement on Huntress' service. Manning's new service was inaugurated by his Parramatta River ferry PS Black Swan. The service commenced on Saturday 6 October 1855 and ran on two days a week (initially Wednesdays and Saturdays) from the Phoenix Wharf, "trading to Ellenville, Montpelier, Manly, North Harbour" (or, in short, Manly Wharf). The sole Saturday service left the Phoenix Wharf at 2 pm and left Manly wharf at 6 pm. The two Wednesday services left the Phoenix Wharf at 9.30 am and 5.15 pm and Manly at 11 am and 6 pm. Fares were 1/6 each way for adults and 9d for children. Other features were: refreshments available on board; people waiting in boats off Sydney Cove would be taken on, and; on Wednesdays, a waterman's boat accompanied the steamer "to take people fishing in North Harbour". Altogether a most organised affair.

This service continued, with only slight improvement, for another year. Black Swan was succeeded by her sisters PS Pelican and PS Emu in October and November respectively, and the three vessels alternated to provide the service, Pelican making the most regular appearances. In November Manning's

65. He was probably the first licensee of the Pier Hotel. See Swancott op. cit., p. 36.
66. Letter in D.Tel, 28 July 1892.
67. Advertisements in SMH, 29 September 1855, 6 October 1855. Also advertisements in subsequent issues. All details of services (timetables, vessels, etc.) in these and following years are, unless otherwise indicated, derived from the shipping advertisements in the Herald. As these advertisements were inserted constantly it is not practical to give a complete listing of their dates. Thus, when a date is given for an advertisement it is generally to indicate a specific example of a series of advertisements.
68. For example, advertisements in SMH, 13 October 1855, 24 November 1855.
little steamer, PS Planet put in an appearance. At 90 feet or so in length, the three river ferries were comparable to a PT50 hydrofoil such as Fairlight (II) but with even less beam, while at 74.6 feet the little Planet would now only bear comparison with a large launch. As seas were obviously no smoother in 1855, it does not take much imagination to visualise the nature of some voyages in these vessels. Indeed Black Swan alternated her river and Manly services with regular trips up the coast to Gosford. However, owners and masters would not, even then, take inordinate risks and a bout of heavy weather would cut the Manly service.

By November the days of the service had been altered to Thursdays and Sundays, probably partly to suit the arrangements of Manning's various services and partly to take up the Sunday trade after Huntress had finished running. The new arrangement prompted an excursionist to write to the Herald:

> Is there no possibility of inducing Mr. G. Smith, or some enterprising owner of a steamer, to run a boat to that beautiful spot, Manly Beach, at 2 p.m. on Saturdays? The steamer which used to go on that day and hour has been discontinued, and now only goes on Thursdays; but as Saturday afternoon is really the only time in the week during which numbers, who would gladly avail themselves of any opportunity of visiting this delightful locality, have it in their power to do so, I hope some arrangement may eventually be made for their transporting them to Ellensville.

His appeal was successful and by the end of 1855 steamers were running on Thursdays, Saturdays, and Sundays. From November, the boats called at Woolloomooloo on both outward and return trips - an arrangement which lasted for some decades. On Boxing Day, 26 December 1855, Manning put his coastal trader PS Illawarra on the Manly service to carry

69. Advertisement in SMH, 17 November 1855 (for service on Sunday 18 November).
70. Advertisements in SMH, 29 September 1855, 13 October 1855, etc.
71. Myers op. cit., p. 59.
72. Letter to the editor, from "SPES", SMH, 17 November 1855.
excursionists,73 and laid her on again on New Year's Day, 1856. This service, like that of Nora Creina two years earlier, was part of the developing pattern of the harbour excursion trade. Within a few years, places like Manly and Watson's Bay would see most of the coastal steamers which operated out of Sydney at the time carrying crowds to these resorts on holidays, such as Christmas and Boxing days (particularly the latter), New Year's day, Anniversary day (26 January), Easter, royal birthdays, and so on. In Manly's case, this influx of steamers on holidays continued until the regular Manly ferry fleet had grown to a size capable of handling the traffic - which was not until the end of the 1860s.

2. Regular Ferry Service Commences 1856-1858

In 1856 the service grew slightly, with boats running three or four days a week (usually Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday). On Easter Tuesday, 25 March 1856, an improvement was made to the service when Manning introduced PS Victoria which he had acquired on 8 March.74 As noted earlier, Victoria had already done pioneering excursion work on the harbour, and at 123.6 feet, with a capacity for about 200 passengers, she was a timely addition to the Manly trade. Although suited to the coastal trade (and originally intended for this purpose by her Sydney owners) she spent much of her Sydney career as a very busy and hard-working excursion boat, packet, and tender on Sydney Harbour.75 In 1860 she was lengthened 30.6 feet (a common "operation" for boats in those days) and was then able to carry over 300 passengers.76 Between 1856 and 1859 Manning operated her in

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73. Acknowledgement of the source of information for these special holiday excursions is considered superfluous here, as the information is always derived from advertisements in the SMH on the day of the excursion. For instance Illawarra's excursion was advertised in the SMH of 26 December 1855. "Up! Up! 'Ivitations were also inserted for a few days before the excursion.


76. SMH, 25 December 1860. Also advertisement, SMH, 24 May 1862.
the Manly service more often than any other vessel and she was the first boat to operate almost constantly in the trade over a period of years. Being built as an ocean-going vessel she was undoubtedly more suited to the Manly service than flat-bottomed, shallow-draught river ferryboats.

By this time, the popularity of Manly as a resort was assured. In 1856 H.G. Smith wrote: "The Sydney people come down to the spot as much as ever, and do not appear to tire." Of the Easter excursions in 1856 the Herald wrote:

The crowds who flocked to Manly Beach in the course of yesterday far exceeded in numbers those who generally seek the holiday resorts around the city. The steamers, which plied throughout the day, were crowded to excess, with men, women, and children, old and young, married and single — all testifying by their eagerness to reach the scene the favour with which the place is regarded, and all proving by their good humour and vivacity in returning that this favour is deserved.

Henry Gilbert Smith must have been delighted with the popularity of his creation. However, it is doubtful whether residents who had taken up land in Smith's estate and who worked in Sydney were entirely happy with a steamer service which was obviously more for the benefit of excursionists.

On 1 January 1857 there were 73 people now living in the vicinity of Manly Beach, and anyone who had regular employment in Sydney would have been obliged to take the overland route via the Spit and North Sydney. Residentially, Manly was to be a haven for the leisured upper middle class until the twentieth century.

On Monday 3 November 1856 the steamer service became a daily one, but the timetable was still oriented in favour of the "Sydney end" — that is, the excursionist. A typical day's operation would see the boat leaving the

77. Letter to brother John dated 18 May 1856, Fairlight.
78. SMH, 25 March 1856.
79. Gledhill Manly and Pittwater, p. 82.
80. Advertisement in SMH, 1 November 1856 (and after).
Phoenix Wharf at 10 am and 2 pm calling at Wooolloomooloo, and leaving Manly at 12 noon and 5 or 6 pm. It can be seen that the Manly resident had no possibility of travelling to and from Sydney by boat without an overnight stay. This timetable survived into 1858, but in September of that year services on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays were ended. Despite lack of evidence, it seems likely that Manning was seeking to cut back his service. The reasons for this could be manifold. Although in the long-term the excursion trade continued to grow, Manning could have considered the service over-extended in relation to patronage and returns. Alternatively, Smith may have been paying Manning a subsidy which was reduced. Whatever the reasons, Smith evidently set about improving the service and in November 1858 a new daily service was arranged (possibly by Smith) in which the steamers were chartered from Manning. On Monday 8 November the improved service commenced with boats leaving Phoenix Wharf at 7.10 am, 10 am, 2.30 pm, and 5.15 pm, and leaving Manly at 8.10 am, 12 noon, 5 pm, and 6.15 pm. The 10 am and 2.30 pm trips from Sydney and the 5 pm and 6.15 pm trips from Manly travelled via Wooolloomooloo. The fare was reduced on weekdays to 2/6 return for adults and 1s return for children (previously 1/6 and 1s single). On Sundays it was 3s adults and 1/6 children (return). These rather steep fares were described as "the lowest out of Sydney." (This conveniently ignored the North Shore and Balmain ferries, thus reflecting perception of the Manly service as an excursion voyage.) Payment was made on the Manly wharf where a return ticket was issued. The 7.10 am boat offered a return excursion for 1/6, with breakfast on the boat if required. For the first time, a "business" service was available for Manly residents.

81. For example, advertisement in SMH, 24 October 1857.
82. For example, advertisement in SMH, 11 September 1858.
83. Advertisement in SMH, 6 November 1858 (and after). This early morning excursion would have been a device to help cut the losses on what would have been an unprofitable service at that time.
This timetable continued, with slight variations, into 1859. The fare was reduced further on weekdays to 1s adults, and 9d children, single. There were two services on Sundays, usually at about 10 am and 2.30 pm from Phoenix Wharf, and 12 noon and 6 pm from Manly.\footnote{84}

Meanwhile, over the years to 1859 the special holiday excursions continued. The listing in Appendix 3 gives an indication of the combinations of vessels used on particular holidays. (Most boats up to 1860 belonged to Edye Manning.) The general pattern consisted of one or two coastal steamers, supported by some of the regular vessels. Some of the excursions included Watson’s Bay and Manly in the same round service.

By May 1859 Manning’s contract for the service to Manly had expired and in that month J.T. Crocott, licensee of the Pier Hotel,\footnote{85} was advertising that he had chartered a steamer (probably Manning’s Victoria) to run daily from Phoenix Wharf at 10 am and 2.30 pm.\footnote{86} It is understandable that a Manly hotelkeeper would have a strong interest in saving the steamer service from imminent collapse, but fortunately Crocott’s gallant action was not necessary for long. Henry Gilbert Smith was now busy trying to establish the Manly ferry on a more permanent basis.

* * *

For four or five years Smith had successfully promoted a growing interest in his “watering place” by arranging and encouraging the development of a steamer service. It was obvious that the water connection was fundamental to his plans. For one thing, few would have trudged miles through bushland to enjoy a day at Manly in the 1850s. But, in a more positive sense, one of the great attractions of an excursion to Manly was – and still is – the seven mile voyage through magnificent scenery. Although

\footnote{84. Advertisements in SMH, January 1859 onwards (for example 12 February 1859, 8 April 1859).}

\footnote{85. Advertisement in SMH, 23 May 1859. Also reference in news item on Easter excursions, SMH, 10 April 1860.}

\footnote{86. For example, advertisements in SMH, 28 May 1859, 9 June 1859.}
Philip Cohen was later critical of the "monopoly" on the service, it is probably reasonably correct to say that Smith might not have attracted a regular operator without a contract - and contracts work both ways. For Edye Manning there then had to be a profit in the service and the obvious success of the excursion trade must have assured this.

However, the resort was only one aspect of Smith's plans for Manly. The residential aspect could never develop properly while there was no guarantee of easy communication with "civilisation" (in the form of Sydney). Even if all of the 73 residents of 1857 wanted daily communication with Sydney, Manning would hardly have filled a boat with them - and sound, but short-sighted economics would have dictated that the service should wait for and follow the market rather than anticipate it. Thus, it is not hard to understand why Manning would not have provided a service convenient to residents. Smith, then, must have seen the closed circle - no residents, no boats; no boats, no residents. In 1858 - on the principle of anticipating the market - a decent service was finally established, probably at a loss, but by then, it could be surmised, Smith was thinking further ahead. A community which had to rely on the decisions of an operator to whom they represented only one of many interests would be in a very insecure position - and Manly, as long as it was so isolated by land, depended heavily on the water connection. If an operator could be attracted whose major interest was the Manly trade (even if the initial attraction was helped by a subsidy) the system might work much better. Such an operator would have a strong interest in a considerable residential trade, for one thing to insure against fluctuations in the excursion trade.Residents provided a naturally increasing source of business, while excursionists could fluctuate drastically in numbers when affected by factors such as weather and season. It will be seen that this theme recurred throughout the history of the service.

It evolved, therefore, that the Manly ferry acquired a life of its
own. Edye Manning had contributed to the formative years of the service, but to grow it now needed organisation.