



MEMOIRS.

JOHN FYFE, First President of the Engineering Association of New South Wales, was born in 1803, at Rutherglen, a suburb of Glasgow, and in 1817 was apprenticed as a millwright and engineer to the firm of Baird & Co., near Port Dundas, Glasgow, and remained with them after completing his apprenticeship until about 1828, at which time, he entered the employment of Messrs. Cook & Co., engineers on the south side of the Clyde, and remained there until about 1834, when he entered the employment of Messrs. Claud Girdwood & Co., at that time the most extensive works for land and marine engines and general machinery in Glasgow. Mr. Fyfe soon became erector, having charge of both land and marine machinery. At one of the last of these engagements, in the year 1839, two remarkable circumstances occurred, associated with marine engineering, and the professional career of Mr. Fyfe. A steamer, called the *"Archimedes," 132 tons register, came from London to the Clyde, and was moored alongside the vessel on which Mr. Fyfe was engaged. The object of her visit was to show to the Clyde engineers a new mode of propulsion, by means of a screw placed in the stern of the vessel, as a substitute for paddle wheels. The advantages were well advocated, and the vessel offered for sale, at what was a very low price, but without finding anyone to adopt the screw propeller, or offer to buy the vessel, so that she returned to London, and lay for many months in one of the docks without finding a purchaser.

*The s.s. "Archimedes" and "Novelty" were designed and built in London by Mr. Henry Wimshurst in the year 1838, and were the two first commercially successful screw steamers. Mr. Wimshurst devoted a very considerable amount of both time and money to the introduction and perfection of the screw propeller; and it is much to be regretted that he did not reap the benefits to which he was justly entitled for his perseverance.—EDITOR.

This was the first screw steamer ever built with a view to commerce. The other circumstance referred to was that of a new paddle steamer, also moored alongside, for the purpose of getting her boilers and engines lifted on board. This vessel was called the "Sirius," and, when completed, made her first trip to America, being the first steamer that crossed from the British to the American side of the Atlantic. Another incident had occurred in 1836 or 1837, with which Mr. Fyfe was also associated. A new partner had been admitted into the firm of C. Girdwood & Co.; and he was very desirous of obtaining any remains of the first steamer that had been used on the Clyde. After much inquiry, and advertising, the engine of the "Comet" was found, driving a water pump, at a stone quarry a few miles west of Glasgow. It was purchased, brought into the factory, and, partly under the direction of Mr. Fyfe, was put into good working condition, and formed an attractive relic to visitors from all parts. It was then presented to the Hunterian Museum, at Glasgow, and subsequently, after much influential negotiation, was transferred to London, and now is in the Kensington Museum.

Mr. Fyfe had made his way to London in the latter part of 1839, and obtained employment at Millwall, in the works of Messrs. Fairbairn & Co., who were under contract to supply a new iron steamer, for the Hunter River Steam Navigation Company, which had been formed the previous year, in Sydney, New South Wales. Mr. Fyfe was employed constructing the engines for this vessel, completed in 1840, and named the "Rose," 172 tons register, and in October of that year was engaged to proceed with her under steam, to Sydney. The voyage was completed in five months and twenty days, and the vessel entered the Sydney Heads on the 6th of April, 1841, being the first new steamer that had come to the land of Australia, and was also the first vessel owned by the H.R.S.N. Co.; the "Thistle" and the "Shamrock" (similar vessels) soon followed. Mr. Fyfe continued engineer of the "Rose," trading to Newcastle and the Hunter River district until October, 1845, by which time the trade of the Company had so increased as to require a superintendent engineer

on shore, and Mr. Fyfe was appointed to that position. The Company's premises were then situated at Margaret Street, City, and were retained by them until March, 1851, at which time the repairing works at Pyrmont (termed the Island) was started, under the direction of Mr. Fyfe. The H.R.S.N. Company was dissolved that year, and re-formed under the title of the Australian Steam Navigation Company. Mr. Fyfe continued in charge of the works until 1853, and then resigned, for the purpose of commencing a small foundry for himself at Pyrmont; £400 was voted by the directors, and presented to the retiring superintendent, as a recognition of his thirteen years' services. The new foundry was not successful, although Mr. Fyfe was aided by his two sons, who had been trained in the A. S. N. Co.'s works; the times were adverse to such an undertaking; it was therefore given up. About 1860 he was appointed superintendent engineer to the New Hunter River Steam Navigation Company, with whom he remained for several years, until he took charge of a Government dredge for about six years.

After the constitution of responsible Government, Mr. Fyfe always took an active part in the political questions of the day, and was a constant and firm supporter of the patriot, Dr. Laing, and his friend, Sir John Robertson; and when the Engineering Association of New South Wales was constituted in 1870, Mr. Fyfe was elected the first president, and of which he remained an active member until shortly before his death.

As indicating the rise and progress of steam navigation and business in Sydney since 1841, when the premises of the H. R. S. N. Co. then consisted of the piece of water side land at the lower end of Margaret Street. It was fenced in, and contained a small stone built house and a shed; a part of this shed by the advice of Mr. Fyfe to the general manager, was converted into a blacksmith's shop. The intention being to do some of the repairs needed by the three vessels, which then formed the company's fleet; an anvil, smith's bellows, and vice were put into position and made use of, but at the next meeting of the directors, this very modest plant was considered an unnecessary extravagance,

which the general manager should not have allowed, and the articles were immediately sold.

Mr. Fyfe's early training would now be considered hard lines in 1890; during his apprenticeship of seven years, and fifteen years after as a workman he had to walk summer and winter upwards of four miles to his work before 6 a. m.; often through heavy rains and snow, and return the same distance after 6 or 8 and frequently 10 p. m., when the day's work was finished. There was no kind of conveyance, and only three or four houses all the way on the country road between Rutherglen and his work at Glasgow; these twenty-two years include a part of his family life, for he had early married a Rutherglen girl, who has proved a worthy helpmate in the truest sense of the word during nearly seventy years' companionship.

The death of Mr. Fyfe took place at his residence at Surry Hills, where he died on the 6th day of August, 1889, at the age of eighty-six years, after being confined to his bed for two weeks.

The Editor is indebted to Mr. W. G. Wilson for the above information.

WILLIAM CHRISTOPHER BENNETT, son of Ignatius Bennett, of Rathmines, Co. Dublin, was born on the 4th of July, 1824. He was articled to Mr. P. Griffin, and was employed on the survey of several of the railways in Ireland until the year 1845. After which he passed several years in South America. In 1854, he left England for New Zealand, but the following year he decided to return to England *via* Sydney; but, on calling upon Sir Thomas L. Mitchell, then Surveyor-General here, he was induced by that gentleman to enter the survey department of New South Wales. In 1857, he obtained an appointment under Mr. John Whitton, the Engineer-in-Chief for Railways, and was placed in charge of the Campbelltown railway extension where he remained until 1858, when he was selected by Captain (afterwards Colonel) Martindale. R.E., then commissioner for internal communication, to superintend the repair of a large bridge at Bathurst, which had

been injured by floods. Captain Martindale was so pleased with the manner in which this work was completed that he offered to recommend Mr. Bennett for the position of Engineer to the Roads Department, and he was appointed to this office (just created) from the 1st January, 1859, and held this position until 1861. In the year 1862, he received the appointment of Commissioner and Chief-Engineer to the Roads Department. On the formation of the Water and Sewerage Board, Mr. Bennett was the first nominee appointed to represent the Government.

About the month of March, 1889, he had an illness, caused by failure of the heart, when his medical adviser urged him to give up the heavy duties he was performing; but, being desirous of seeing the completion of some important works then in progress, he continued on until the month of June, at which date he became so seriously ill that he sent in his resignation and retired on his well earned pension, while the Government in recognition of his able services in carrying out the city and suburban sewerage works, submitted to Parliament a vote on the Supplementary Estimates for 1888, of £2,700 as a gratuity for the supervision of this gigantic work, which was readily granted.

Unfortunately, he did not long survive these advantages, and from the date of his retirement was scarcely able to leave his bed.

His death took place on the 29th September, 1889.

Being of a genial disposition, and possessing the inestimable quality of friendship, he has left many true friends to remember him, while his works will stand for generations as monuments of his ability and great labour. Mr. Bennett was elected a member of the association in the year 1879.

THE HON. JOHN SUTHERLAND arrived in the colony in its early days. As far back as 1858 he carried on a large and prosperous business as a contractor. In 1860 he was elected to a seat in the Fourth Parliament held under responsible Government for the constituency of Paddington, and continued to represent that electorate until 1880. After the division of the constituency in that

year, he was returned for the Redfern portion, and except for a few months spent in the Legislative Council, he continued to represent and enjoy the confidence of that electorate up to the time of his death. He occupied the onerous and responsible position of Minister for Public Works in the Robinson Ministry of 1868, the Cowper Ministry of 1870, the Parkes Ministry of 1872, the Farnell Ministry of 1877, and the Parkes Ministry of 1887.

A mechanic himself, he was one of the first among the earnest workers of the period to recognise the importance of a sound technical education for the youth of the colony, and although other names are associated with installation of technical instruction in this country, it ought to be remembered that in John Sutherland the cause always had a warm advocate. During the long period of thirty years, he succeeded in gaining the respect and esteem not only of those who knew him personally; but the public generally who believed, and with good reason, that he at all times endeavoured to honorably and justly discharge the duties he had undertaken. He at all times showed a deep interest in the welfare of the association, in consequence of which he was elected an honorary member.

GUSTAVUS ALPHONSE MORELL arrived in the colony about 25 years ago, and entered the Government service. He was for some time engaged on the planning of the defence works of Sydney, Newcastle and Botany, under the direction of Sir William Jervois and the late Major-General Scratchley. On the completion of these works he resigned and commenced business on his own account in Sydney as a consulting engineer and architect. His services in conjunction with his partner Mr. J. E. Kemp, are identified with a number of the prominent buildings of Sydney. Among these are the Mutual Fire Assurance Company's Offices, at the corner of Pitt and King Streets; Her Majesty's Theatre, Pitt Street; Hill, Clark and Co.'s wool stores, Circular Quay; and various other important buildings. When it was decided by the Government of the late Sir Alexander Stuart to appoint a Royal Commission to

inquire into the condition of the railway bridges of the colony, the position of President of the Commission was offered to and accepted by Mr. Morell. The elaborate report and important collection of diagrams which were the outcome of the labours of the Commission were largely the results of his untiring efforts. He was a constant and hard worker, very methodical and painstaking. His death was sudden, though not unexpected by medical attendants; but the announcement came as a shock to the many that knew him, and esteemed him either as a genial and faithful friend or as an honorable and prominent citizen. Mr. Morell was elected a member of the Association in 1870.

WILLIAM GRANT was born in the year 1829, in Greenock, Scotland, and served his apprenticeship to the boilermaking and shipbuilding in the same town, at the Greenock Foundry, or as it was then known, Scott and Sinclair's Foundry, he afterwards worked at his trade under Messrs. Thompson of Glasgow, and Denny and Co., of Dumbarton. In 1854, Mr. Grant was offered an appointment by the A.S.N. Co., of Sydney, which he accepted, but before leaving Scotland he married, and shortly after arrived in Sydney, and took up his duties at the A.S.N. Works, Pymont, where he remained for a number of years. After which he joined the firm of Young and Mather, and was with them for a considerable period. In the year 1870 he commenced business on his own account, on some land in Sydney rented from Mr. Charles Halliday, Sen., which proved to be a most prosperous undertaking, so much so that towards the end of 1886 he built the extensive works at Pymont, but unfortunately did not long survive their completion; the business after his death was taken up by the sons. The unlooked for termination of a busy life which appeared to have reached the culminating point of success, was very much regretted by many whom he had attached by his genial disposition and business probity.