

ON THE STREETS WHERE YOU LIVE



Best Street

While it has been said that Best Street is one of 'the best places' to live in Lane Cove, the naming of Best, Riverview, College and Pengilly Streets can be traced back to pioneer settler of the Riverview area, James Peter Best.

Born in 1833, James Peter Best, was the second son of six children born to James and Elizabeth Best in Cornwall, England. James chose a career in teaching rather than the family cabinetmaking business. His family emigrated in 1849, and James taught on the ship during the voyage. In the colony, James taught in many places including Dapto, Alexandria, Paddington, Parramatta, St Leonards, and Macquarie Fields. In 1860, he married a widowed teacher, Lucy Anderson, and settled and taught at Campbelltown. A son, George was born in 1861, followed by a daughter, Beatrice in December 1862. When both Lucy and George died from an illness in April 1863, James was left to raise his infant daughter. He subsequently resigned from teaching and moved back to Sydney, showing an interest in politics.

By 1866 James bought and settled on 30 acres of land in the Riverview area. His house *Tambourine Bay House* was situated between the present-day College Road and Pengilly Street. During the 1860s Best had become a landowner with interests in various properties and in 1869, he exchanged some property with his younger brother George for additional land at Burns Bay and in 1869 he bought further land in the Riverview area.

Best became a substantial landowner with 84 acres which extended from Burns Bay in the west to Tambourine Bay Road. In the 1882 Sands Directory his house was *Bayview Villa*, which may have been the same house or a new one. The 1884 Sands Directory lists his address as Best Street, now Riverview Street. When the Jesuits bought the property known as 'River View' in 1878, Father Dalton considered the 33 acres on the headland would not be sufficient for the future and he bought an additional 54 acres from James Peter Best in November 1878.

The first local government within the district came with the establishment of the Borough of North Willoughby in 1865. James Best was elected as one of two auditors of the Borough of North Willoughby in 1867 and he was unsuccessfully nominated for the Council in 1869 and 1870. Following the death of Alderman Broadfoot in 1870, Best was elected as his replacement, but an objection and court action was raised by an opposing contender and Best resigned. He was re-elected on 14 September 1870 when a new election was held. James Peter Best continued to serve as an alderman from 1870 to 1884. He was Mayor of the Borough in 1874 and

1883 and was said to be a hardworking alderman. His interest was in the provision of roads and their improvement, especially in his own area of Tambourine Bay.

In October 1879 Council agreed to Best's motion to clear the road, (now known as Riverview Street) and to name this **Best Street**. In 1882 Best also moved that the road which ran from Bridge Street to the Lane Cove River, between Best's land and land owned by Riverview College, be called **College Road**. Best died in 1884 and in 1890 Willoughby Council resolved that Best Street and the road through the Riverview property to Burns Bay be called **Riverview Street**. **Pengilly Street** appeared from 1894 and is the maiden name of Best's mother. The road now named Best Street runs from Centennial Avenue and crosses Penrose Street to the end of Bridge Street.



Real estate subdivision plan for the Cornwall Estate, 1890. The estate was named for James Best's birthplace of Cornwall, England.

(Courtesy of Lane Cove Library/State Library New South Wales)