

ON THE STREETS WHERE YOU LIVE



Charlish Lane and Charlish Park

As a thirty-four year old gardener, Elijah Charlish arrived in Sydney with his wife, Eliza in 1853 and by 1856 he had acquired a grant of thirteen acres of land in the area bounded by Burns Bay Road, Penrose Street East and Best Streets. Elijah established an orchard and built a house facing Penrose Street and overlooking Burns Bay. After his wife Eliza's death in 1856, Elijah married Martha McDonagh. Martha brought to the family a daughter, Mary-Ann, born to Martha from her first marriage to Alfred Marsh. Elijah and Martha had three children of their own, of which two, Alice and Elijah Junior survived to adulthood.

In 1866, Elijah Charlish was elected to the newly formed North Willoughby Council, where he served almost continuously until 1881. He was Mayor of Willoughby in both 1873 and 1881. He is remembered as one who served with fairness and integrity, but who could be come very heated when moved deeply by a matter.

Elijah built himself a new home on his property facing Buns Bay Road in 1884, allowing his son, Elijah and his new bride to move into the Penrose Street home. Over the next decades Elijah and his son, Elijah Junior increased their land holdings and expanded their orangery to include a boiling-down works (also know as a 'bone mill' or 'fat extractor'), a piggery and a dairy.

After Elijah Senior's death in 1893, and his wife, Martha the following year, the land that was the original grant around Penrose Street was sold. Elijah Junior, built a new home on his Centennial Avenue property. In 1904, Elijah's piggery is recorded as having thirty-seven pigs, but was replaced by the increasing dairy business by 1907.

Elijah Charlish Junior, had turned to dairying in 1906 when he purchased a neighboring dairy giving him a combined farm area of approximately thirty acres. He named it, *Norfolk Dairy Farm* after the area in England where his father Elijah had come from. The Charlish dairy business supplied much of the milk to Lane Cove residents for the next twenty years with two daily milk deliveries. They also supplied cans of cream to the city.

Charlish Lane first appeared in the Willoughby rate book of 1888 and was listed in the Sands Directory from 1890.



Cows on Elijah Charlish's (Jnr) dairy farm, circa 1900

Charlish Park was established after World War II when Council debated the need for playing fields and reserves in the West Ward. It is currently in use by Lane Cove Bowling and Recreation Club (formerly **Lane Cove West Bowling Club**). A children's playground remains on the Centennial Avenue side of the park.



Elijah Charlish Snr and his second wife Martha McDonagh, circa 1888

