

Pittwater Pioneers

My grandfather, Herbert J. Fitzpatrick was a builder involved in developing residential areas and roads around Church Point, Newport, Scotland Island and Avalon in the 1920s. He was a keen yachtsman who was a foundation member of the Royal Motor Yacht Club and Commodore. He instigated a famous race called the Scotland Island Cup and he owned a very famous boat called the Bona. There are still some old yachting trophies in the family. His wife, my grandmother, Florence Fitzpatrick, was one of the first lady members of the club. She was also one of the first lady committee members. Both Herbert and Florence did a lot of voluntary work to help build up the Pittwater boating clubs. Florence also won some female sailing races such as the 1928 Ladies Handicap race on a boat named 'Elvina'.



The story goes that Herbert and Florence honeymooned on Scotland Island and named the parks and tracks after members of the family. My grandfather wanted to subdivide the island and sell the waterfront blocks. He also named Elvina Bay after Florence's aunt, Katherine Elvina Bouffier (known as Elvina). Unfortunately, Herbert fell into bad health and died in 1938 at age 48. After his death, the island was sold and my grandmother moved from Manly to Lewisham.

I was recently asked about the origin of the name Catherine Park on Scotland Island. Firstly Herbert Fitzpatrick named Elizabeth Park in the centre of Scotland Island after his

mother, Elizabeth Fitzpatrick (nee Finneran). Then Florence Fitzpatrick named the park near Tennis Court Wharf after her mother, Catherine Bouffier.

Florence Fitzpatrick's mother, Catherine Bouffier, (nee Gattenhof) was born in 1857 along the Rhine River area in Germany. Her family migrated to Australia in 1855, because there was a lot of unrest in Germany. When she was aged 21, Catherine married another German, Frank Bouffier. The Bouffiers had a similar history to the Gattenhofs in that they also originated from the Rhine River in Nassau and had immigrated in the mid-1850s. Frank's parents were vigneron and they were early pioneers of the Hunter Valley wine industry. Their winery, the Bouffier Brothers Vineyard (*Marcobrunner*), won a lot of medals and trophies.

Catherine Bouffier was a strong German Catholic woman who bore six children between 1881-1890, with two children dying in childhood. Catherine and Frank were very involved in the early NSW wine business and promoted Australian wine overseas. They owned a wine shop in Oxford St, Paddington. Catherine was also a wine judge at the Royal Easter Show. When her husband Frank died, he left the winery and the two shops to Catherine in 1898. It was unusual for a woman to run a business but she kept the wine shop operating for a few years. She was also involved in charitable work, such as raising money for the Waitara orphanage by organising a Ball at the Sydney Town Hall. Catherine died in 1940 aged 83 and is buried at Randwick cemetery.

I have included two valuable family history photos. The first photo from 1887 shows Catherine and Frank Bouffier with three of their children: Katie Elvina (standing), 7 years, known as Elvina; Stephen Vivien (standing), 5 years, known as Vivien, and Hilda Mary (sitting), 3 years old. (Note: Their fourth daughter, Agnes Florence (known as Florence), was born in 1890.)

The other photo from 1897 shows Catherine Bouffier proudly wearing a lace decoration with a grape motif, which is connected to her family wine business.

Today there are many landmarks and streets around the Pittwater area that continue the legacy of our hard working and community minded ancestors ; the Fitzpatrick and Bouffier families.

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Catherine and Frank Bouffier, 1887



Catherine Bouffier, 1897