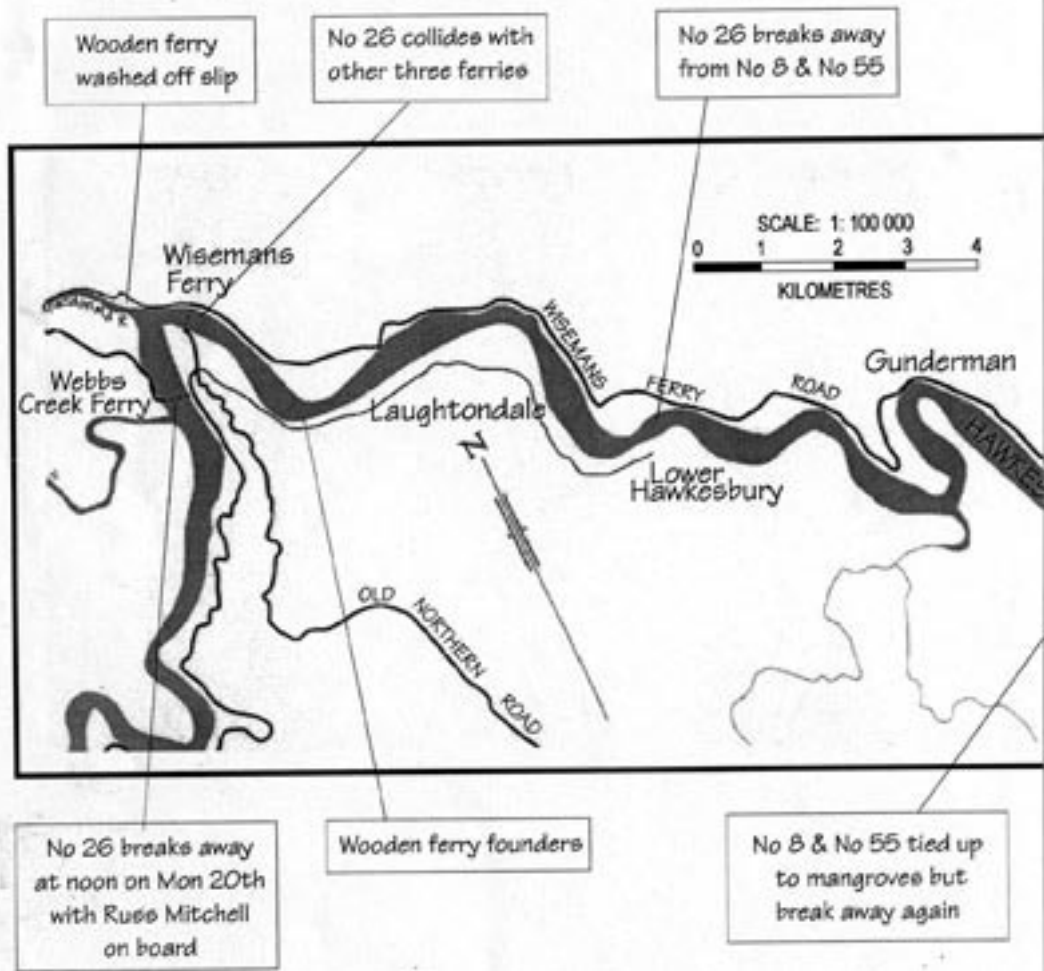


**APPENDIX ONE:  
Map showing location of major events**



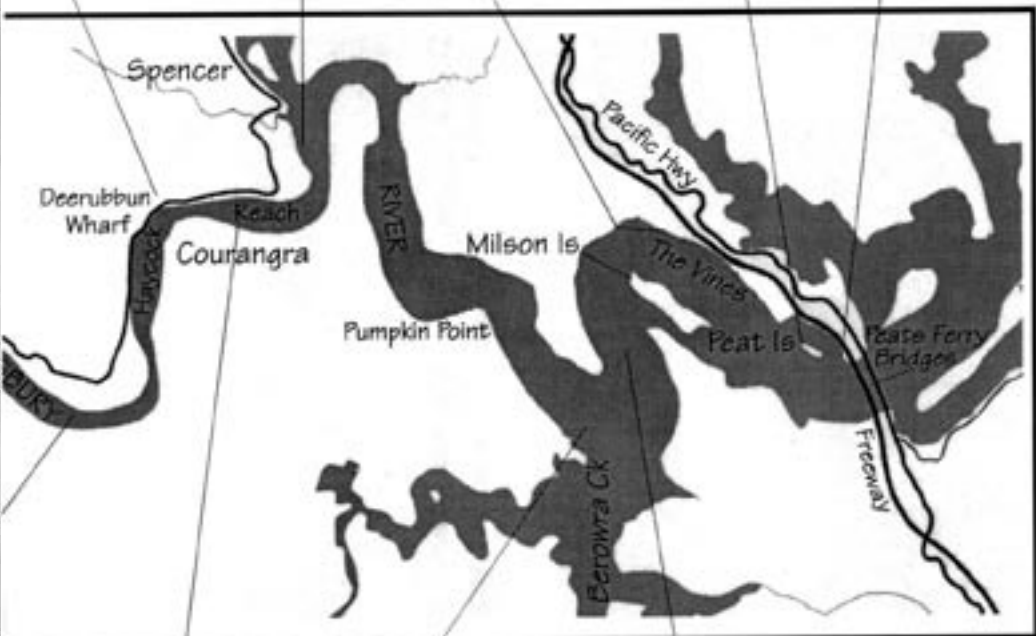
No 8 & No 55  
tied up to pile

Anchors  
cut away

Ruse Mitchell  
injured

No 8 stopped

No 55 stopped



No 26 secured  
to mangroves

Towline  
fouled

Cables holding ferries  
together cut

# APPENDIX TWO

---

## Some technical information about the Ferries

---

*Included in Russ Mitchell's talk to the Dharug and Lower Hawkesbury Historical Society were some details about the ferries and their operation which have been included here to provide more background to the drama.*

---

The Hawkesbury River system drains an area of 22,000 kms, extending about 270 kms in a north/south direction and 145 km between the Pacific Ocean and the western limit of the catchment. Major tributaries are the Macdonald River, the Colo River, the Grose River, the Cox River, the Warragamba River and the Wollondilli River. At the junction with the Grose River the Hawkesbury changes its name to the Nepean River. The river is crossed by road bridges at a number of locations, extending along the river to Windsor.

Between the Windsor bridge and the crossing of the main northern highway at Brooklyn there are five ferry crossings. These crossings are at Sackville on Main Rd No 182; at Lower Portland on Council-controlled roads; adjacent to Webbs Creek on Main Rd No 181; and at Wisemans Ferry on Main Rd No 225. The fifth ferry crossing is in Berowra Creek.

Four of these ferries are controlled by the Hawkesbury City Council with funding provided by the RTA in the case of those ferries that are on the main roads system. The cost of the ferry at Lower Portland is jointly funded by the Baulkham Hills Shire Council and the Hawkesbury City Council. The ferry at Berowra is controlled by the Hornsby Shire Council in conjunction with the RTA.

The ferries are operated on a 24 hour basis. The smaller ferry at Wisemans is only brought into operation at peak periods or as traffic demands. There is a notice at the Wisemans crossing advising that the ferry is not in service between the hours of 10am and 12 noon on the first Thursday of each month, but in effect the ferries usually operate continuously as No 55 is used to transport passengers during these periods when the big ferry is being serviced.

Details of the ferries are as follows:

**Wisemans Ferry No 8:** 24 cars. 313 tonnes deadweight and 39 m long. The river crossing at that point is 366m. It used to be in service at the crossing to Harwood Island in the Clarence River before it was brought to Wisemans.

**Wisemans Ferry No 55:** Came from Berowra originally, and from Raymond Terrace prior to that. 8 cars, 122 tonnes deadweight and 18 m long. Same river crossing length.

**Webbs Creek Ferry No 26:** 16 cars, 190 tonnes deadweight and 25m long. It was built at Brisbane in 1956. River crossing is 414m. Serviced between 9.30 and 11.30am on the first Tuesday of each month.

**Sackville Ferry No 5:** 12 cars, 160 tonnes deadweight and 24m long. River crossing is 290m. Serviced on 1st Wednesday of each month between 1 and 3 pm.

**Lower Portland Ferry:** 6 cars, 65 tonnes deadweight and 15m long. River crossing 209 m. The ferry that is at Lower Portland now was originally at Berowra, then it went to Wisemans, then to Webbs Creek, then back to Wisemans, then it was sold by the DMR to Colo Shire Council. Serviced on the 1st Wednesday of each month between 9-11am.

The four DMR ferries are fitted with 354 Perkins diesel motors with a torque converted drive through a Sonnerdale reduction box. Motors are governed at 2200 rpm and the ferries should reach a maximum speed of 8 knots during the crossing.

Barring other events, the ferry cables are replaced at 12-15 month intervals, depending on the salinity of the water. The ferries have a major overhaul every three years at Mortlake, adjacent to the present Putney Ferry crossing. They are towed there by ocean-going tugs and the spare ferry is used to keep the service operating.

The ferries are operated by contractors who are responsible for supply of staff, fuel, and the day-to-day maintenance of the vessels. Contracts are for three year periods and are subject to adjustment in accordance with the Consumer Price Index.

Council provides a small maintenance unit to service the ferry system. It consists of two men, the ferry foreman and his assistant, equipped with the necessary tools and gear, including oxy-acetylene equipment, to work on the ferries. The ferry foreman inspects the ferries daily. No charge is made for the use of the ferries.

---

## Appendix Three

---

### Hornsby Bushfire Brigade - RADIO LOG

---

*Included with Brian McKinlay's written report after the event was a transcript of the Radio Log for Monday and Tuesday, March 20 and 21, 1978. It's included here verbatim as an insight into some of what goes on behind the scenes when a drama like this one is enacted.*

---

#### Monday 20<sup>th</sup> March 1978

1520 hrs		Radio base station opened Message by S. Barnett by telephone - if needed, Colo Shire communications 045 571555.
1545	Ber 6	Berowra Waters not reading Base -any messages?
1570	Ber Waters	Now on air - will inform Colo ETA
1758	Group 2	In Hercules - passing Bujwa Bay - have contacted Colo
1803 lice	Group 2	At Pumpkin Point passing Po-downstream - Police indicate ferry must still be upstream - Police indicate to go back will contact Base when reached ferries
1815	Group 2	Message from fishing boat - also confirmed by FCO - that ferries are upstream from Spencer and are secure. Message passed to Ber Waters and Colo Shire
1835	Group 2	Ferries secure at Paddys Bight downstream from Sentry Box Reach - message for Colo Shire

1839	Group 2	Message from Colo - is it possible for one of the boats to remain with ferries until day break. Message passed to Ber Waters and Control - waiting for answer
1855	FCO	Fisherman's workboat to stay with ferries - they will be paid for time. Message passed to Group East.
2000	Group 2	Arrived at ferries
2005	Group East	At Spencer - radio contact with boat units difficult at this time
2020	Group 2	Ferries have broken loose. Advise Colo Shire. Organise fishing boats with steel cables. Recommend that ferries drift down river as current is too strong at present location
2035	Group 2	R. Witchard is standing by to organise fishing boats with 30 minutes notice
2050	Group East	Under way again - petrol problem fixed - has ferry in sight
2055	Group East	Request 20-30 gals super fuel for Trojan when fishing boats come
2110	Group East	Still under way - have not reached ferries yet
2130	Group 2	Group East at ferry - ferry is tied up at same wharf again
2150	Group 2	Message from Colo - river is still rising and Water Board will have to release a substantial volume of water about 9-10-am tomorrow. Suggest move

ferries at first light to Ber Waters. Two tugs have been arranged - will arrange for fishing boats

2220	Group 2	Please confirm whether ferry No 26 (third ferry) has broken loose from its mooring at Laughtondale
2225	Group 2	Colo have a report from Police that it is so, but cannot confirm
2240	Group 2	Request 2-3 boats from Brooklyn to come up to ferries in case third ferry comes down river. Bring 3/4" - 1" wire rope, radio from Brooklyn tanker, food for six men, 20-30 gals super for Trojan
2245	Brooklyn 1	Passed above message

---

**Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> March 1978**

0100	Brooklyn 1	Not able to get boats to go up river until first light. Have food and petrol. Wire rope is with tug
0500	Group 2	Advised of above
0530	Group 2	Colo advise they are without power - no radio link via Gosford
0537	Group 2	Ferry No 26 is passing along southern bank - approx 6-8 mph current
0540	Colo	Passed above message
0555	Group 2	Our two boats and three men plus Russ Mitchell (Colo) are

		now on No 26 floating down stream
0600	Colo	Advised as above
0700	Group 2	Ferry 26 is now moored with three lines to shore and two anchors about ½ mile down stream from Paddy's Bight on south shore
0750	Group 2	Water Board let water go last night - you should feel the effect of it soon. Started to let go at 2000 slowly at first reaching a peak at 2400
0900	Group East	Ferry 55 (two tied together) has broken adrift - one tug is in vicinity - will attempt to move ferries across into south bank - no danger at present. Relayed to Colo
0905	Brooklyn 1	Vicinity of Spencer and heading up river
0927	Group East	55 and 8 still adrift - 26 secure
0930	Group East	Request for Police boat
0933	Hornsby Police	Boat on way already
0935	Group East	Boat on way already
0945	Ber Waters	Two tugs in attendance - 55 and 8 drifting - Garry McC advised
1016	Ber Waters	Passing Pumpkin Creek. FCO, DMR and Colo Engineer en route Ber Waters shed
1105	Group 2	Passing Bar Point - having difficulty but managing
1110	Group 2	Require 1" steel cable (tugs

		don't have any) or 3" silver rope Passed message to FCO
1115	Group 2	There is some heavy rope in top shed - passed to FCO
1130	Group East	Cannot hold ferries - trying to beach them - using two tugs - fishing boats - fire boats - Police boat standing off
1140	FCO	Have advised Hornsby Police to be prepared to block traffic
1143	Group east	Be prepared to call ambulance - re injury to Russell's arm
1145 1150	Group east Base	Not able to beach and hold. Have requested assistance from Hawkesbury River Ferries but not available until 1:00 - 1:30
1200	Group east	Holding on mud flats south east of south end of Milson Island halfway between Island and bridges
1215	Group east	Not holding. On drift again
1220	Ber Waters	Lost power on motor - in difficulties - need assistance fast drifting towards bridge. Unable to contact GroupEast - contacted Police - request Police boat
1230	Ber Waters	Police have Ber Waters in tow to Fenwick Wharf
1300	FCO v'cle	Large ferry aground on mud flats - small ferry tied off at Peat Island
1305	Base	One Hawkesbury River ferry will be available approx 13:30. Second as soon as it returns

1315	Group 2	Request ferries be held at wharf pending advice
1400	FCO	Hawkesbury River Ferries no longer required - two ferries being secured by steel cable on either side of the river
1440	Ber Waters	Request big Volvo tow truck from Retriever Towing Service
	Ber Waters	Advise unit will be available 6:30-7:30pm tonight - will go direct to north side of Hawkesbury River Bridge.

---

**Note:** *Communications were difficult from the water. Much communication was from mobile to mobile and was not logged by the Base Station.*

---

## APPENDIX FOUR: Flood levels since 1799

*Heights at Windsor are taken from the mean summer level. Rises of more than 6.40 metres only are recorded. The height of the decking on Windsor bridge is approximately 7.00 metres.*

YEAR	M	YEAR	M	YEAR	M	YEAR	M	
1799	Mar	15.25	1877	May	9.15	1942	Oct	7.37
1800	Mar	12.20	1878	Feb	8.08	1943	May	10.11
1806	Mar	14.64	1879	Sept	10.52	1949	Jan	7.32
1806	Aug	14.33	1879	Sept	13.91	1949	June	11.97
1806	Oct	9.15	1889	May	11.74	1950	Mar	9.20
1809	May	14.64	1890	Mar	12.12	1950	Apr	9.20
1809	Aug	14.49	1890	Mar	10.52	1950	Apr	8.54
1816	June	13.88	1890	June	6.79	1950	May	7.32
1817	Feb	14.03	1891	June	10.85	1950	June	9.45
1819	Feb	14.03	1892	Sept	8.08	1950	June	7.32
1819	June	14.03	1893	Mar	8.62	1950	June	7.34
1857	July	9.91	1894	Mar	9.68	1950	June	7.55
1857	Aug	11.44	1895	Jan	9.30	1951	Jan	8.97
1860	Feb	8.16	1897	July	6.86	1951	June	7.17
1860	Apr	11.21	1898	Feb	9.61	1951	Sep	6.71
1860	July	10.45	1899	Aug	6.71	1952	June	9.35
1860	Nov	10.98	1899	Aug	8.08	1952	July	11.61
1861	Apr	8.31	1900	July	14.08	1952	Aug	9.71
1864	June	9.91	1904	July	12.22	1952	Aug	8.77
1864	June	14.64	1910	July	6.40	1955	May	9.76
1864	July	10.98	1911	Jan	7.85	1956	Feb	13.70
1866	Jun	7.93	1912	July	6.71	1956	Feb	11.56
1866	July	8.31	1912	Aug	7.32	1956	Feb	8.95
1867	Apr	6.40	1913	May	8.00	1956	Mar	7.44
1867	June	19.26	1915	Jan	7.62	1956	Mar	9.81
1869	May	11.21	1916	Oct	10.83	1956	May	7.01
1870	Apr	13.72	1922	July	9.45	1956	June	9.53
1870	May	10.83	1925	May	7.62	1961	Nov	15.10
1871	May	11.21	1925	June	11.36	1963	Apr	8.54
1873	Feb	12.66	1934	Feb	9.15	1963	May	7.93
1875	June	11.82	1942	Mar	6.25	1963	June	8.79
						1963	Aug	9.43 (New Gauge reduced 30.5cm)
						1964	June	14.51
						1967	Aug	8.79
						1969	Nov	10.06
						1971	Feb	5.64
						1972	Jan	6.80
						1974	Jan	6.60
						1974	Mar	7.24
						1974	Apr	8.53
						1974	May	10.28
						1974	June	7.82
						1974	Aug	9.39
						1975	June	11.10
						1975	July	6.48
						1976	Jan	9.22
						1976	Mar	7.92
						1977	Mar	8.80
						1978	Mar	14.31
						1978	June	9.55
						1984	July	8.01
						1984	Nov	7.01
						1986	Aug	11.30
						1988	Apr	12.65
						1988	July	10.74
						1989	Apr	9.07
						1990	Apr	9.80
						1990	Aug	13.36
						1992	Feb	11.00