

CAMDEN HISTORY

Journal of the Camden Historical Society



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CAMDEN HISTORY

Journal of the Camden Historical Society Inc.

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Meetings

Meetings are held at 7.30 p.m. on the second Wednesday of the month except in January. They are held in the Museum. Visitors are always welcome.

Museum

The Museum is located at 40 John Street, Camden, phone 4655 3400 or 46559210. It is open Thursday to Sunday 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., except at Christmas. Visits by schools and groups are encouraged. Please contact the Museum to make arrangements. Entry is free.

Camden History, Journal of the Camden Historical Society Inc

The Journal is published in March and September each year. The Editor would be pleased to receive articles broadly covering the history of the Camden district. Correspondence can be sent to the Society's postal address. The views expressed by authors in journal articles are solely those of the authors and not necessarily endorsed by the Camden Historical Society.

Donations

Donations made to the Society are tax deductible. The accredited value of objects donated to the Society are eligible for tax deduction.

Cover: 2017 Mother's Day at Belgenny Farm Camden (A McIntosh)

Back Cover: 2017 Mother's Day at Belgenny Farm Camden (A McIntosh)

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Sixty Years of Local History, 1957-2017

Ian Willis

Address given at the 60th Anniversary Meeting of the Camden Historical Society on 24 July 2017

Welcome all. First of all I would like to thank the 60th Anniversary Organising Committee for their work in organising this event. (Rene, Cathey, Dawn and Lee).

When I was told that I was presenting the keynote address at this anniversary meeting I was also told that there would be no other speakers. So what to say? The society has had 60 wonderful years since its foundation in 1957.

I want to drill into those 60 years and ask the question: What is the business of the society? What is our mission statement?

I maintain that the role of the Camden History Society is to tell the Camden story. Stories are an integral part of place making and the creation of community identity. They are full of meaning and allow the past to inform the present. They help those in the present to understand why things are as they are.

Stories are about context and help explain where we fit in the big picture of things. And telling the Camden story explains why our community is the way it is today.

Telling the Camden story has led to a number of firsts for the society.

The first history of the society was written by Peter Mylrea in the first journal published by the society, Camden History, in 2001. The upcoming issue of the journal will be part of volume 4.

The first public lecture was presented at the first ordinary meeting of the society in August 1957 by the society's first vice-president Harold Lowe. The talk was called the 'History of Camden Park'. Harold was an interesting local identity, a farmer from Elderslie and good cyclist who competed in the Goulburn-Sydney cycle races. He was an alderman on Camden Municipal Council for many years and in 1925 with Toby Taplin rescued undertaker Percy Peters and his driver George Thurn when their hearse was washed off the Cowpastures Bridge in the flood.

The first lobbying of Camden Council by the society occurred in 1957. The society was concerned about the location of the John Oxley's anchor that the Council had been given in 1929. The British Admiralty had given Australia three commemorative anchors to serve as memorials of the death of John Oxley. The other two are in Wellington and Harrington NSW. The Camden anchor was from the Destroyer Tomahawk. Oxley was a naval officer, the first colonial Surveyor General in NSW and had been assigned the grants of Kirkham and Elderslie. The anchor languished in the council yard for over 25 years all but forgotten. The society lobbied council for six years and in 1963 the anchor was unveiled in Kirkham Lane. The society has recently lobbied council again and in 2015 the anchor was moved to Curry Reserve, along with a sculpture of Oxley's profile.

The first community partnership was with Camden High School on the foundation of the society in 1957. The first meeting was held at the school and chaired by the president of the Camden High School P&C Society. The first president Bill McCulloch was the deputy principal of Camden High School, who was followed by John Brownie, the school principal. Society meetings were held at the school for 42 years. There have been a host of other community partnerships and two of the largest have been with Camden Rotary in the foundation of the museum in 1970, and currently with Camden Council Library and Camden Area Family History Society. Other organisations that have collaborated with the historical society have included Camden Lions, Camden Quota, Camden Show Society, Camden Red Cross, Camden Council, as well as our affiliation with the Royal Australian Historical Society.

Some other firsts for the society include: the first society excursion was a day trip to Yerranderie in March 1958 before the Burragorang Valley was flooded, with the first overnight trip to Canberra in 1964; the first time the society acted as tour guide was the visit of the Catholic Historical Society in September 1958; the first time community speakers were provided was at the Festival of the Golden Fleece in August 1960; the first newsletter was put together in 1970, with a short rebirth in 1985-86 as the 'Camden Historian', and most recently from November 2005; the first radio broadcast was Dick Nixon's 'Know Your Camden' for community radio 2CR in 1978; the first society publication was John Wrigley's, 'A History of Camden' in 1979; the first grant to fund society activities was \$150 in 1979 from the state government; the first website for the society appeared in 1997 sponsored by Christine and Steve Robinson and from 2006 the society launched its own website, <camdenhistory.org.au>; and in 2015 the society launched into the social media space with its own Facebook page.

I would argue that probably the most important first for the society was the establishment of the museum.

In 1967, a children's book, EL Konigsburg's 'From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs Basil E Frankweiler' was published in the USA. The book tells the story of two kids, 12-year-old Claudia and her 9-year-old brother Jamie, who ran away from home to live in the New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Claudia and Jamie have an exciting adventure living in a museum coming to face-to-face with the thrilling mysteries of art history. They immerse themselves in the adventures of learning about everything. The book won numerous awards and is used extensively in schools in the US.

Now, the Camden Museum is not the New York Met. I would hope that visitors to our museum want to learn everything about Camden.

Hopefully a visit to the Camden Museum will allow folk to immerse themselves in the mysteries of the past and be a learning adventure on the way.

A yearning for the past is not new. For some people the past provides security and safety. The Camden Museum provides a safe zone where visitors can immerse themselves in their memories. Nostalgia for the past.

By definition, nostalgia is a yearning for a sentimental rose-coloured view of the past. Recent research has shown that nostalgia can be a positive thing. But it was not always so. In the past nostalgia was considered to be a medical disease and a psychiatric disorder. Hopefully a visit to our museum does not affect visitors this way.

Local museums tell local truths and are trusted sources of local stories and histories. They are honest and straightforward. What you see is what you get. They are not fake news.

The Camden Museum is a mirror to the community where visitors can reflect on their past in the present. The museum displays, collection and archives represent the Camden community to itself. The museum is the custodian of these stories.

The Camden Museum can also provide challenges for visitors who take their time to look for the nuances in our stories. If you drill into the stories of museum objects they touch on deeper social and cultural characteristics of the country town of the past. Some of these elements include: class, rural conservatism, gender, intimacy, race, religion, parochialism, localism, rural ideology, city/country divide and a host of other things.

I would argue that the Camden Museum has a critical role in the construction of resilient communities of the present. The museum acts as a site of place making. The continued growth and expansion of the Camden Local Government Area demands sites that contribute to the creation of social connections and facilitates community networks.

The museum provides a space for the creation of social capital through volunteering and philanthropy. Museum volunteers provide a successful model as a centre of active citizenship and volunteering which contributes to the social glue of the community.

The museum helps create a healthy society characterised by trust, reciprocity, support networks and social norms. The museum provides an opportunity for volunteers to actively participate in the social, political and economic life of the Camden LGA. The museum is a centre of local tourism and can play a role in job creation.

So while the Camden Museum may not be the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art, it does provide a meaningful window into our past. Like the story of Claudia and Jamie, the Camden Museum can provide a learning adventure into the thrilling mysteries of our past. Something that we can draw on in the present.

So hopefully the legacy that we are currently leaving might ensure that the Camden Historical Society and the Camden Museum might continue to tell the Camden story for another 60 years and beyond.



Members of the organising committee Lee Stratton, Rene Rem, Dawn Williams (and also MC of the night) and Cathey Shepherd (absent overseas) (B Stratton)





The cutting of the 60th Diamond Anniversary cake by Past Presidents of the Camden Historical Society Bob Lester (L) and John Wrigley (B. Stratton)

The Rewards of Volunteering at Camden Museum

Robert Wheeler

Robert recounts some questions from visitors to volunteers at the museum desk and the discovery trail that followed. (ed)

A week in August provided an amazing range of questions that commenced with a lady from Queanbeyan seeking information on 'Caernarvon' house in Kirkham. Firstly we couldn't find anything as we were looking under 'Carnarvon' and not the Welsh spelling. It was eventually realised, however there was little in the folder, mostly an auction notice dated 2000.

I checked out 'Trove' on the computer and only found an article on the death of T M Sheil who had built 'Carnarvon' (the 1937 paper's spelling) in 1904. Not knowing exactly where 'Caernarvon' was I drove up Macquarie Grove Road and found the house on top of the hill, looking south towards the Nepean River and Camden Valley Way.

I stopped and walked to the front gate for a better look. The owner was feeding her dog and she came to greet me and said "Hello Robert." I was a bit shocked, but then I recognised Jenny, a past tennis partner, along with her husband Ross. They had bought 'Caernarvon' at the 2000 auction.

I explained my visit and Jenny said that a past resident had visited the house in 2010 and Council had taken an oral history from her. Her name was Mary Locke, the granddaughter of T M Sheil. Jo Oliver from the library had done the oral history. The 26 page transcription is now in the Museum's folder. It is a story worth reading.

Next day at the 'Antique Fair' volunteering at the Historical Society's table a lady from Campbelltown was reminiscing about Camden when she talked about getting off at Kirkham railway station and walking up Kirkham Lane to the dairy, which was of course, 'Caernarvon'.

Then the following Thursday I was playing tennis and mentioned my experiences with 'Caernarvon' in the last week with my tennis partner and he told me that he had rewired the house, probably just before the auction in 2000.

However it gets better as the next day at the museum an elderly man walked in asking about 'The Cowpastures', as he was retracing Hume and Hovell's 'Hoddle Track' around Kiama and was seeking to photograph any monuments about the cows.

Then he mentioned that he alone was just completing the retracing of the first white expedition in Australia on foot, which had occurred in 1797. It was from 90 Mile Beach in Victoria to Sydney Cove, about 700kms.

This story is not well known. I only found out about it when I read a new book in the library earlier this year called: 'From The Edge – Australia's Lost Histories' by Mark McKenna. He was surprised that we knew the story and went and got his laptop to show the photographs of his walk which he had started five months earlier.

I only hope the ABC does a documentary on this amazing story of retracing our history.

Volunteering at our great museum certainly provides its own amazing and rewarding encounters.

Editor's Note

The Museum welcomes volunteers in a range of roles. To learn more, contact Rene Rem Ph. 4655 3400. If Rene is not available when you call, speak to one of our volunteers on the phone, and leave your details.

Lively exhibition for the Centenary of Australian Federation

Sandra Dodds

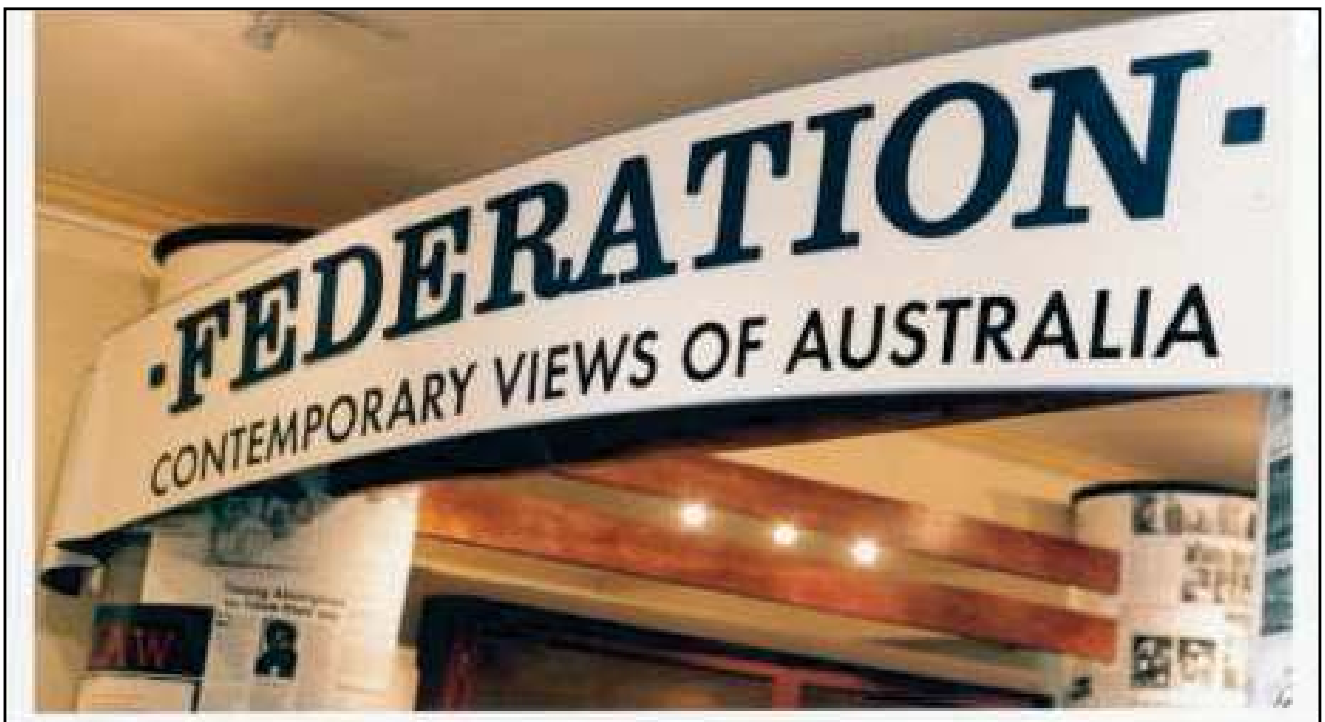
This article outlines the Australian Federation Exhibition mounted by the society in 2000 and curated by Sandra Dodds.

The Camden Museum was the place to be between November 2000 and July 2001 for the exhibition '*Federation – Contemporary Views of Australia*'.

Exhibition highlights:

- Over 800 school students at the Camden museum
- Objects from the time of Federation
- Contemporary artists and performers
- Specially designed and constructed Federation archway for the Museum entranceway
- Camden Museum featured on the cover of the local telephone book.

In a first for the Camden area, contemporary art was a key element within the context of an historical exhibition, making links between the past and contemporary issues. Contemporary artworks featured in the exhibition to en-



Federation Archway at the entrance of the Camden Museum (S Dodds)



Federation archway at the entrance of the Camden Museum. Joyce Dodds and Alan Cortissos study the images on the Federation archway at the Camden Museum on the opening day, November 12, 2001. (S Dodds)

hance the audience's understanding of the effects of Australia's First Nation people's exclusion from the Federation constitution.

Triumphal arches featured throughout all major centres for the inauguration of the Commonwealth of Australia in 1901. And for the Camden centenary exhibition the celebratory structure was built in the Camden Museum entrance. Richard Stringer designed the archway and he was assisted in its installation by Peter Hayward and other members of the Camden Historical Society.

The archway had juxtapositions of images and text from the time of federation and 2001 and proved to be of great interest to all visitors. It was a grand entrance to the exhibition and it was where school students sat for their introductory talk about the education program.

As Julia Doyle stated in *Museum Matters*, October 2001:

...'The arch highlighted notions of continuity and how issues of the past find their repetition and resonances through current issues and debates ... The arch began to liberate themes the exhibition hoped to examine such as notions of identity in Australia'.

And so it was, as we entered the museum, we started our journey through the exhibition. Standing under the archway made of four impressive columns covered with an array of images and text, we started to understand the context of the exhibition. Adjacent to the archway, in the display case were an interesting collection of objects from the time of Federation and the present, echoing the juxtapositions found throughout the exhibition.

Some objects from the time of Federation included a book owned by Edmund Barton on Constitutional law, programs for the opening of Parliament in 1901 and commemorative crockery displayed alongside contemporary Aboriginal paintings by Andrew Bell and stone tools.

Further through the exhibition, in another display case, were Aboriginal ceremonial objects, on loan from one of the artists, Jan Shipley. The objects included a didgeridoo and a feather headdress, arm and leg bands, spears, nulla nullas and carved sculptures.

Also included in the exhibition were reproductions of the Barunga Statement (1963), the Yirrkala Petitions (1968), posters and literature from the Reconciliation Council, Amnesty International and the United Nations, a map of Aboriginal Australia, videos: 'A Fair Go: Winning the 1967 Referendum', 'A Sea of Hands', 'From Sand to Celluloid', footage of the opening of Parliament and the Federation celebrations, and other events of 1901.

There were also numerous references including books and catalogues about the artists, International Council of Museums addresses, Barton lectures, the Vincent Lingiari Memorial lecture, 'The past we need to understand', material from Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation and other material.

Artists in the exhibition included Shirley Amos, Bronwyn Bancroft, Andrew Bell, Jonathan Jones, Marlene Cummins, Christine Christopherson, Leonie Dennis, Sally Morgan, Janice Shipley and Harry J. Wedge. The artworks were on loan from: the Boomalli Aboriginal Artists' Cooperative in Sydney; Campbelltown Arts Centre; and private collections and artists.

Jonathan Jones, who last year was the Kaldor Public Art Projects artist with the installation barrangal dyara (skin and bones) at the botanic garden in Sydney, exhibited his work entitled 'Tent Embassy' at the Camden Museum, a sculpture made from

'...corrugated iron sheets curved to resemble a shelter, the sculpture alluded to rudimentary housing, temporary structures, transient places. Inside each curved piece of metal there was a light bulb. Against the grey of the iron, the bright light created a harsh contrast. The sculpture was a metaphor for the



Jonathan Jones, Tent Embassy, 1999. Corrugated iron, marine cable and lights. Boomalli Aboriginal Artists' Cooperative (J Wrigley)

establishment of the tent embassy, the fight for representation and justice. ... [It] was based on the history of the struggle of Aboriginal people to gain land rights. The corrugated iron sheets held together with wire cable and lights suspended inside each iron shape represented hope and containment.¹

Inside the space where the paintings and prints were displayed, we were met with more powerful works with strong messages. On one wall there were three silkscreen prints by Sally Morgan: *'Citizenship'* (1987), *'Mother and Child'* (1990) and *'Brokenhearted'* (1989). *'Citizenship'* is a representation of how Aboriginal people regarded their citizenship certificates which had to be carried at all times, were conditional upon certain regulations and could easily be revoked.

Aboriginal people who applied for citizenship rights had to promise to give up their traditional ways and live a European lifestyle and keep away from other Aboriginal people. The certificates removed them from the restrictions of State protection laws (Commonwealth Department of Training and Youth Affairs, *Discovering Democracy Discussion Paper 6 NSW*, *Discovering De-*



'Federation – Contemporary Views of Australia' exhibition at the Camden Museum. Artworks by Sally Morgan. (S Dodds)

mocracy Professional Development Committee, Sydney, NSW, undated, 10 - 12, p.99, in S.Dodds MA thesis).

The fact that Australia's First Nation people had to apply for citizenship in their own country was a powerful message in the context of Federation and their exclusion from the Constitution. 'While discussions and meetings were taking place to create a federated Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were being removed from their families'²

In 1944, Aborigines were allowed to become 'Australian Citizens'. Aboriginal people called their citizenship papers 'Dog Tags'. We had to be licensed to be called Australian'.³

All of the artworks carried political messages about aspects of life from the perspectives of Australia's First Nation people. This gave us insights into how the main artefact of Federation, the Australian Constitution, excluded them.

The exhibition focussed on learning through the arts and drew on learning theories to inform both the content and direction of the education program. It



School children and teachers and parents from Mawarra Public School discussing artworks in the exhibition, '*Federation – Contemporary Views of Australia*' with Sandra Dodds, exhibition and education (S Dodds)

was extremely well received by teachers and students.

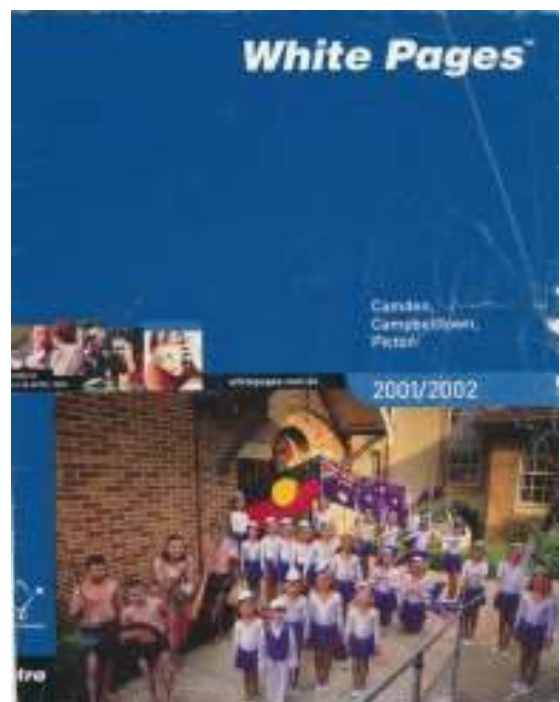
The exhibition and education program was a huge success and school students thoroughly enjoyed all of the art activities as part of their museum visit. The inclusion of contemporary art within the context of a social history museum made the interpretations of social issues accessible through the experiences of the artists.

The artworks lit up the museum space and students were drawn to the works. They were interested in discussing the artworks and they were enthusiastic about creating their own artworks. The juxtapositions of art and historical objects and ideas facilitated understandings of the past in relation to the present.

The exhibition and education program for the Camden Community Federation Education Program was made possible by a Commonwealth grant and was supported by the loan of artworks from the Boomalli Aboriginal Artists' Cooperative, Campbelltown Arts Centre, collectors and artists.

The exhibition and education program involved many people and provided a great resource for schools in the area. The opening day included Aboriginal dance performances, and performances by a children's dance group and a local musical society, demonstrations of wood carving and emu egg carving, a painting workshop and story telling. 'It was a great day, starting with our first Welcome to Country and it was such a thrill to see so many Aboriginal people in the museum grounds, painting, carving wood, dancing and telling stories.

'Members of the Bundabunna Miyumba Indigenous Heritage and Cultural Experience and the Society for Education in Dance and Theatre (EDTA) celebrate the opening of the exhibition 'Federation – Contemporary Views of Australia' at the Camden Museum.



The mayor and the local member of parliament were able to meet many people whom they had not met previously and to chat with them. One outcome was a lovely photo from that day used on the front cover of our local telephone book the following year'.⁴

Notes

1. Sandra Dodds, Representations of history in museums, MA thesis, School of Historical and Philosophical Inquiry, University of Sydney, 2004, pp. 97 -98.
2. Dodds, 2004. Camden Community Federation Education Program, 'Federation – Contemporary Views of Australia' exhibition rationale, in "Representations of history in museums", MA thesis, School of Historical and Philosophical Inquiry, University of Sydney, 2004, appendix.
3. Dodds, 2004. 'Citizenship' text by Sally Morgan quoted in Sandra Dodds 'Representations of history in museums', MA thesis, School of Historical and Philosophical Inquiry, University of Sydney, 2004, p. 98
4. Dodds, 2004. John Wrigley, President Camden Historical Society (2001), Camden, New South Wales Correspondence, January 25, 2004, p. 103.

President's Report 2016 – 2017

Ian Willis

It is with pleasure that I present the annual report of the Camden Historical Society. It has been a busy and fulfilling year with the society and its members fulfilling its aim of the telling the Camden story in a variety of ways and places.

The society and its members continue to take a prominent role in a number of ways in the Camden community. The society continues to contribute a number of roles within the community and they include:

- contributing to the construction of resilient communities by enhancing community networks and social connections
- acting as a centre of volunteering where we build social capital and allows members to contribute to active citizenship
- contributing to the local tourism industry as a major visitor attraction with the Camden Local Government Area.

Advocacy

Part of the role of the society is acting as an advocate for the Camden story and all it stands for including promotion of local history and heritage. The society has contributed to this role on a number of local issues including:

- sale of land at St Johns Church
- the Camden Town Centre Urban Design Framework
- a number of development applications eg, Camden Vale milk depot
- review of Camden Local Environment Plan
- providing suggestions for street names in new suburbs
- Belgenny Trust Strategic Planning Day
- The redevelopment of the old Camden Vale milk depot
- The reduction of the curtilage around Gledswood homestead

Participation in the Community

The Society has been active within the wider community through attendance at community events. They have included:

2016

- Camden Council Volunteers Night Dec 2016
- NSW & ACT Association of Family History Societies' State Conference
- Inspection of Camden Park Stables

- Narellan Rhythms Festival

2017

- Australia Day Parade
- Camden Show
- Camden Antique Fair
- Belgenny Farm Family History Day
- Preview of Baker Collection to go into Macaria

Society Meetings

The society's monthly meetings continue to provide a range of interesting and informative speakers, along with presentations from society members. Individual speakers have included:

- John Macarthur Stanham on the restoration of The Stables at Camden Park
- Maurice Augustyn on Warragamba Dam
- Andrew Allen on Lost Buildings at Campbelltown
- Stephen McMahon on Maryland
- Wen Denaro on her film 'One Hundred Yards of Silk'
- Roger Percy on the development of the art gallery in Macaria
- James Warrand on the grounding of the HM Bark Endeavour in 1770.
- Stephanie Trenfield on her visit to Mongolia.

60th Anniversary Celebrations

One of the highlights of the past year was the society's diamond anniversary. The 60th anniversary was celebrated with an early evening cocktail party which was attended by over 135 people. The event was organised by a small committee consisting of Rene, Dawn, Lee and Cathey. Great job and thanks to all concerned.

Volunteers

Our volunteers remain the backbone of both the society and the museum do a great job in a range of capacities from staffing the front desk, research, attending functions, advocacy and a host of other activities.

The roster at the front desk is ably managed by Volunteer Co-ordinator Rene Rem, who inducts new volunteers and looks after any issues. There are currently 56 volunteers on the roster that provides staff on the front desk.

Volunteers do a range of other activities including research, writing statements of significance, scanning and digitising material, representing the society at community events, and other things.

Volunteer Training

The society offers training opportunities for those who are interested and this helps the society achieve its aims. Some of these have included:

- The society was represented by John at the Metal Conservation Workshop at the Wollondilly Heritage Centre.
- Rene and Anne attended a MOSAiC Training Workshop. MOSAiC is the software package that the society uses to manage the museum collection.
- General training for those who want to be on the volunteer roster.

Museum

The most important activity of the society is managing the Camden Museum and the society's collection of objects and artefacts, as well as the museum's archives. The museum continues to attract over 6500 visitors a year including a number of community and school groups.

The society has purchased new display cabinets for the Chinese exhibits upstairs. There will be the return of the Percival wagon from Macarthur Anglican School where it has been partially restored. Camden Council funded a new kitchen cupboard, sink and hot water service, and the society purchased a new urn.

Education

Society Education Officer Stephanie Trenfield organised the Education Program Redevelopment project and two education workshops in July. Attendees discussed ways the school syllabus could be used with the museum collection.

Policy Matters

The society

- clarified its policy on life membership.
- streamlined its payment systems.
- investigated the matter of increased security for the collection and the building

Community Partnership

The society's community partnership with Camden Library and the Camden Area Family History Society continues to work well for all concerned. Joint activities are conducted as part of Heritage Week in April, History Week in September and the collection of photographs in Camden Images Past and Present.

The society granted Camden Area Family History Society use of the museum for its meetings due to a space issue in the library meeting room.

Communication

The society publishes the journal twice yearly and they have recently been posted online. Lee Stratton produces a number of newsletters and they are printed at the office of the local Federal Member of Parliament, Angus Taylor. The society is grateful for this assistance.

A Facebook page is looked after by Brett Atkins and Rene Rem, who regularly post some old images from the society's photographic collection. There are currently around 900 likes on the Camden Museum Facebook page.

A number of members write historic articles of interest for the Back Then page of *The District Reporter*. The society facilitated the publication of *Camden School of Arts – A History*, a new museum brochure, and a forthcoming book on the Nepean River Council Council.

Financial Assistance

The society has the continued support of Camden Council through a yearly subsidy that covers insurances, the provision of two storage units at Narellan for our "excess items" and the maintenance of the Museum.

The society has received a number of generous donations:

- Vintage Car Club \$500
- Camden Show Society \$500
- A member \$80

Membership

The current paid up membership is 111, and life members 9.

Final Thanks

In conclusion I wish to thank everyone on the committee, volunteers and others who have assisted the society to make the past year a success. I look forward to a successful 2018.

Making the Most of MOSAiC

Anne McIntosh

MOSAiC is a database developed in Australia to assist museums, art galleries and private collectors to record and manage their collections. More than 500 organisations use the software. The name ‘MOSAiC’ refers to its capability to link objects, books, events, places and people through internal hyperlinks, so that researchers can gain a multi-faceted picture of their subject of interest.

Camden Museum has been using MOSAiC to track acquisitions and donors for eight years. In early June 2017, there were over 3800 items documented in the database, with a brief description and a record of their ID number, and in all but 730 instances, the person who donated the item. Statements of significance have been linked to the 24 items that have one. The Museum would love to have more Statements of Significance in the database – if you are interested in researching any museum object, Julie Wrigley or Anne McIntosh will be happy to assist you with your project.

Having a central record of our collection is important because, over time, different people are more or less actively involved with the museum. The database provides a point of accumulated knowledge about each item, as built up over time. The information can be sourced when those who organised this addition to our collection are no longer involved.

Any museum volunteer can look at the database as a ‘Visitor’. You will not be able to see the administrative data, and you cannot make changes, but you can search for items and read about them. It’s a ‘risk free’ exploration! The instructions are clear and easy to follow (See page 173 for instructions), and available to any volunteer on the computer in the Research Room.

In early June, Rene Rem and Anne McIntosh attended MOSAiC training in Manly. Anne’s program was focused on searching across multiple fields and the creation of reports about museum items. Rene learnt about curating the collection.

John and Julie Wrigley ensure that all items donated to our Museum have a MOSAiC record and the donors are recorded. The known history of the item is noted at the time that they are donated. (This is why it is important that a donation form is completed for any item offered to the Museum – these can be found in the red folder at the front desk.)

We are working to include pictures of the all items in the the museum collec-

tion in the database. So far, about 120 items have a linked image. Many items have multiple images, enabling you to see hidden details that may not be visible on the display. Doug Barratt has photographed a number of objects from the collection which are linked to the items in the database.

Rene has been coordinating Stephanie Trenfield and volunteers to scan the items in the filing cabinets, a process that is likely to be ongoing over several years.

There are many tasks involving MOSAiC for which additional assistance would be welcomed. If you have some spare time and attention to detail, specialist knowledge, an interest in digital still life photography or enjoy computer and administrative tasks, have a chat with Rene or Julie.

Camden Museum has some very special records. MOSAiC will assist us to link the items in the museum (including those in storage) with other items and sources. We already have the files, but effort is needed to improve our database, so that we can produce complex mosaics that will reveal our stories in new ways.

Using the *MOSAiC* Catalogue as a Visitor

To get you started, you need to get a Committee member to log on to the computer and click the *Mosaic* icon - it looks like a Roman temple.

1. **Log on to *Mosaic*.**
2. **Name:** type 'Visitor'. You may need to delete the last name used.
3. **Password:** leave blank. (As a visitor you cannot change any data, so you do not have to worry about losing any data.) Click 'OK.'
4. **Find.** There is a choice of 3: "Find Item" which allows you to search for Objects. "Find Subject" which allow you to search for People or Subjects. "Library" which allows you to search the Reference Library books.
5. Click the one you are interested in searching. (The best one to start with is Find Item.)
6. **Find Items.** On the dark green page [FIND ITEM RECORDS] the 'Item type' is 'OBJECT'. The Accession Identity (if known) is the catalogue number but you do not need to know it. (You can also type a year such as '2017' to find the objects accessioned that year.)
7. **Search** by typing in the NAME field, or in the DESCRIPTION field, and click "FETCH ITEMS". (You may need to guess a word for the object's name e.g. 'mangle'.)
8. **Retrieve Records?** When the program finds a possible object it

will ask: "RETRIEVE 1 [or more] ITEM (OBJECT) RECORDS?
Click YES.

9. **View Records.** On the turquoise-coloured page [VIEW ITEM RECORDS] you can look at the name, description, significance, location, and possible photographs of the object.
10. Click the file if there are photographs.
11. Click the arrow at the bottom of the page to go forward or backwards to other records.
12. **Close.** Click CLOSE when you have finished that search. Start again if you wish.
- 13 **Reset.** Click 'Reset Find Criteria' to start a new search.
- 14 **Exit.** Click EXIT when you have finished all of your searches.

Write a note if you want to suggest any changes.
Julie Wrigley, 2017

Sample searches as a 'Visitor'.

You can see the results of your search as a form (ie. a list) or as a series of individual entries.

FIND items that include the word 'Elderslie' in their description

SEARCH fetched 9 items

Search Green Screen

- DRESSMAKERS' NAME PLATE
- 2 x INDENTURES (not on display)
- WHIP, SULKY
- TEASPOON, ELDESLIE HIGH SCHOOL
- BADGE, 'ELDESLIE HIGH SCHOOL SENATOR'
- WATERING CAN, CHINESE MARKET GARDENER'S
- ST MARKS CHURCH SIGN

FIND items with 'Elderslie' in their description AND an image attached.

SEARCH fetched 1 item



(image screen)

More complex searches are available and can be undertaken using a MOSAiC login.

Speak to Rene.

Anzacs of Macarthur: The Men and Women Who Served in the First World War

A Research and Writing Journey

Lauren Hokin

In 2012, the Federal Government developed an initiative to assist electorates in commemorating their First World War heritage. It was known as the Anzac Centenary Local Grants Program. Late the following year, politicians, RSL Sub-Branch members, and other interested parties from the Macarthur area, were brought together to come up with ideas for the Grants Program. I was approached by the Veterans' Recreation Centre in Campbelltown to develop some plans for their project. I came up with the idea to research and write a book detailing the wartime stories of servicemen and women from the Macarthur area who served in the Great War, and the efforts of those on the home front. The book was approved and as part of the Grant, was to be donated for free to every school, library, RSL, historical group and Government institution. However, as I was handing out the donated copies, many people within the community, especially descendants, were disappointed that they could not have a copy of their own. So at the beginning of 2017, I decided to do a re-print of a 2nd edition to be made available for sale to the public.

The book is an anthology of the 1100 plus soldiers, sailors and nurses who came from Campbelltown, Camden and Picton and their surrounding districts, now suburbs. The purpose behind the book is to provide the community with a resource of their First World War history to be used for commemorative, research and educational objectives. It also serves those interested in family and local history, thus ensuring that the stories of so many of our brave servicemen and women are not lost. I have always had an interest in history, and especially in military



**My great uncle Clifford Aubrey Jahns
killed in action on the 31st of May 1917.
Tamworth Daily Observer, 23rd June 1917.**



Gravesite of Clifford Jahns located in The Strand Military Cemetery in Ploegsteert, Belgium. Site: Hokin.

matters. My father served in Vietnam, my maternal grandparents both served in the army during the Second World War and I have several great uncles whom fought and died during the First World War. I have completed a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) and a Master of Teaching (Secondary) at Western Sydney University, carrying out a thesis on The Historiography of General Sir Douglas Haig and the Third Battle of Ypres.

The Process

Once the outline of the project had been approved by the Macarthur committee, I got to work. The first thing I had to do was generate a list of service personnel with verifiable connections to the Macarthur Region. This was achieved by going through rolls of honour, local newspaper articles printed during the war, official databases from the Australian War Memorial and the National Archives of Australia, such as embarkation rolls, and other resources including books and journal articles. I then went about researching and writing the book simultaneously, as the research informed the writing and vice versa, emphasising what needed further investigation or background information. The project was so large that understanding how to fit both the research and writing the book within a tight time frame was paramount. This required splitting my time into different tasks, namely research, writing, typing and editing.

The research component entailed by far the largest effort. The main source of material came from military service records, accessed through the National Archives of Australia.[1] Service Records are quite informative. First World War Army Records are divided into three sections, first the Attestation Papers including details such as age, employment, next-of-kin, previous military experience, to specific details such as height, weight and hair colour. Next is the Service/Casualty Forms, describing their training, departure overseas and war service. However, because of security and army standard operating procedures, these forms do not go into detail about where a serviceman was placed in the trenches or what battles they fought in. They simply say 'in the field.' So in order to make sense of a soldier, sailor or nurse's particular movements, you must read extensively about the development of battles, rest stations, hospitals and military organisational structure.

Lastly, and sometimes, most interestingly, Service Records contain correspondence. This correspondence is either between the military and servicemen or women, usually after the war, or between the military and the next-of-kin. Here, there is a plethora of information available. You can determine address changes, family details, such as marriages, children and siblings, wills, employment, education, and sadly, in too many cases tearful letters from mothers, fathers and wives desperately trying to find any information about their loved ones lost to the battlefields.

The Australian War Memorial provides useful sources concerning photographs, embarkation rolls, awards and recommendation details, rolls of honour, Red Cross files, unit diaries and circulars.[2] Further information about servicemen and women, their families, employment and aspects of their civilian life were found in articles from newspapers printed during the war, specifically the *Camden News* and *Campbelltown Herald*, and within publications such as the Camden Historical Society Journals. These periodicals were especially useful in providing material for what the war was like for those on the home front, such as the development of Recruitment Associations, fundraising for the Red Cross, the War Chest Fund and donating luxuries to the troops, to the throwing of farewell parties and solemn public memorials for those whom were lost.

Between researching, I would start writing the entries for each serviceman and woman's war service, describing their pre-war life, enlistment, proceeding overseas, battles they were involved in, any battle wounds etc. I would spend four days hand-writing the 30-40 entries before typing them up and then going back to researching. The most tedious aspect of the project was the editing. The book consists of half a million words, and required lengthy and laborious proof-reading and fact checking. This necessitated the construction of numerous drafts and correlation with the book design team, con-

cerning editing changes, placement of photos, captions and footnotes. With such extensive use of facts and dates; particulars such as birth, marriage and death details, name spelling and battle and unit details had to be checked against NSW Birth, Marriage and Death indexes and battle and unit histories respectively.

Throughout the project I encountered many problems. The biggest hurdle was the lack of information. As you can imagine the First World War began over a 100 years ago, and much of the memory of those who served and paper documents relating to them have been lost to the passage of time. Conducting research into the lives of those who lived so long ago is made difficult when the information you are after is unavailable. Sourcing newspapers on microfilm was particularly tricky, as there were only four surviving issues of the *Campbelltown Herald* between 1914-1918, and several issues missing from the *Camden News* over the same period. Finding birth, marriage and death details proved to be also problematic. Although a large majority of indexes are available from the NSW Birth, Marriage and Deaths Department, there is a selection of names which do not appear.

Whether this is a result of lost church records, inaccurate spelling or mistakes in uploading digital data is anyone's guess. Another issue was trying to connect servicemen or women to the area. Names appeared in newspapers and on honour rolls of personnel who were not born in Macarthur or according to their service records or embarkation rolls were not living here at time of their enlistment. During the 1800s and early 1900s, many labourers came to the area for work, but whom were not permanent residents. Farmers would often offer seasonal work on their orchards and farms to plant, pick or to drive cattle and sheep. Unfortunately, there are little to no records of these men working or staying in the area.

Other difficulties arose from record inaccuracies. No doubt keeping exact details of almost 400 000 service personnel during the Great War, in an age before computer processing, would have been an insurmountable task. Embarkation rolls and service records were particularly susceptible to accuracy problems. With embarkation rolls, quite often the address of the serviceman or woman was unavailable and it was assumed that they resided with their next-of-kin. Sometimes these addresses were overseas, such as in England, which is, not only, obviously wrong, but also, begs to question where in Australia that particular serviceman or woman was living. Attestation papers of service records were often filled in by military clerical staff, and consequently can be rife with inaccuracies. Names were often spelt wrong, and places of birth were recorded incorrectly or generalised, not to mention those who lied to enlist to conceal their age or criminal history.[3]



**Private William F.
Moore. Site: R. W.
Smith**

Regional areas which listed their servicemen and women, either in the newspaper as they joined up or on honour rolls, would frequently use nicknames or other names they were known by. This made finding a service record very challenging, as they would naturally enlist under their full name. An example includes a H. Lancaster. This name appeared on a local list, however, searching through the several hundred possible H. Lancasters, there was none born or living in the Macarthur area. There was a Victor Lancaster listed, who I could find, as he was killed in action, and I assumed this H. Lancaster was related to him but again no matches. While I was researching the correspondence section of Victor's service record, I came across his will. In it I found mention of his brother, a Gordon William Horace Lancaster.[4] I then searched for a service record for Gordon and eureka I found him. The lack of information and inaccuracies in official records made researching especially taxing. The only solution was to keep digging or trying different avenues to find the information, or simply work with what was available.

Another hindrance that plagued the project was the very tight time-frame. The committee wanted to see the book completed by the close of 2015. How-



William and his lovely bride, Emma, in England November 1918. Site: R. W. Smith

ever, during discussions in 2014, the area I was researching was increased to include certain suburbs that were not officially part of the Macarthur electorate, but essentially what is viewed as part of the Macarthur Region. This resulted in an extra 400 service personnel that had to be investigated, written up and slotted in. Thus, this limited how much research time and entry space could be devoted to each serviceman or woman.

Some Interesting Stories

Through the research, I have discovered many sad and inspirational stories of our servicemen and women. Sisters Mary Morton and Rose McAnene trained as nurses and came to the area to work at Camden Hospital, where Mary became Matron.[5] Feeling they could offer their services, they joined the Australian Army Nursing Service. They worked tirelessly to save lives while witnessing the ghastly mutilations that modern weaponry could do, assigned to various hospitals in Egypt, England and France.[6] Menangle born Peter Gallagher was always a good student. Completing various public service exams, he found work as a shorthand reporter for the Supreme Court.[7] Becoming a Lieutenant, he joined his unit at Pozieres, where he was caught in an artillery



**Trooper Henry James
Moore. Site: R. W. Smith**

blast, sending shell fragments into his left hand, arm and side.[8] Unfortunately his arm developed gas gangrene and was amputated. Remarkably, after he recovered, Peter refused to go home, asking to remain and serve. He was able to put his clerical skills to good use in the War Records Section in London.[9]

Brothers William Frederick and Henry James Moore were living on Broughton Rd in Camden when they decided to enlist.[10] The Moore family had developed strong ties to the area, while William and Henry worked as a carter and gardener respectively.[11] William joined the 20th Battalion at Gallipoli in August 1915. Developing dysentery, he was evacuated to Egypt. Shortly after being promoted to Lance Corporal, William was wounded during the Second Battle of Bullecourt, shrapnel slicing his scalp. On the 14th of March 1918, he was wounded again receiving a gun shot wound to his back. Sadly, a few months later, he was wounded a third time, caught in a gas attack.[12]

William was lucky to survive the war, marrying the lovely Miss Emma Elizabeth Buttridge in Shepton Mallot, England, on the 21st of November 1918.

[13] Henry passed his physical in Camden and officially signed up on the 22nd of March 1916.[14] Whilst completing his training, Henry and some other local lads were given a farewell social. Held at Foresters' Hall, Argyle Street, Camden, the boys were congratulated for joining up and presented with wrist watches.[15] Henry soon met his unit in Egypt, serving with the 1st Light Horse Field Ambulance.[16] The Field Ambulances provided forward medical assistance, with sections often patrolling alongside the Light Horse and following them into battle. Henry and his devoted unit helped save the lives of many sick and wounded troops, scared and far from home. Unluckily, Henry contracted malaria in Jericho, and was invalided home in January 1919.[17]

Notes

1. National Archives of Australia: B2455, First Australian Imperial Force Personnel Dossiers, 1914-1920 or A6770, Service Cards for Petty Officers and Men, 1911-1970. Found through www.naa.gov.au.
2. Circulars were a form issued to the next-of-kin of deceased service personnel shortly after the war. They were designed to provide the Government and historians with data concerning their war dead, such as education details, familiar relationships to other servicemen or women, employment and factors surrounding cause of death and gravesites.
3. Often service personnel born or living in Campbelltown, Ingleburn, Minto or Glenfield were emphasized as coming from via Liverpool and those from Cobbitty and Narellan were stated as coming from Camden; as military personnel from Sydney would be unaware of small rural districts outside the city centre.
4. National Archives of Australia: B2455, First Australian Imperial Force Personnel Dossiers, 1914-1920; Lancaster Gordon William Horace.
5. Camden Museum.
6. National Archives of Australia: B2455, First Australian Imperial Force Personnel Dossiers, 1914-1920; Mcanene M M p. 8 & Macanene R pp.21-23.
7. National Archives of Australia: B2455, First Australian Imperial Force Personnel Dossiers, 1914-1920; Gallagher P, p. 6.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.
10. Australian War Memorial: Australian Imperial Force Nominal Roll; 1523 Moore, William Frederick and 17272 Moore, Henry James.' www.awm.gov.au
11. *Ibid.*
12. All service information for William Moore came from National Archives of Australia: B2455, Australian Imperial Force Personnel Dossiers, 1914-1920; Moore W F, pp.13-19.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
14. National Archives of Australia: B2455, First Australian Imperial Force Personnel Dossiers, 1914-1920; Moore H J, p. 3.
15. 'Send-Off to Recruits' in *Camden News*, 1 June 1916, p. 1.
16. National Archives of Australia: B2455, First Australian Imperial Force Personnel Dossiers, 1914-1920; Moore H J, pp. 23-24.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 35.

Commander Frank Gardner RAN 1841 – 1927

Harry Stait-Gardner

My family moved to Camden in 1987. We have seen many changes since that time. Our street opposite the turf farm had very few houses. My trip to Sarah Redfern High School where I taught took only about thirty five minutes, there were no traffic hold-ups then except at the railway crossing into Campbelltown. My journey along the Narellan Road was through rural pasture and marshy swamps at Curran's Hill. It was about this time that the Native Garden at Mount Annan was opened. We could take the dirt track from River Road to the Nepean River where wooden stanchions marked where Little Sandy Bridge had once stood.

I first came to Australia from the UK in 1949 when I was 9 years old. We settled in Beverley Hills. I returned to the UK for a holiday in 1962 as a young man, met Janet, my wife, started a family and stayed in England for about twenty years. I grew restless to return to Australia and persuaded the family just to try Australia for a while. We arrived in Sydney in October 1986 and stayed with my parents before moving to Camden.

We chose Camden because it was the closest to an English country town we had seen despite its obvious differences of low rise shops with covered walkways and wide streets. My wife was feeling particularly homesick for green, albeit rainy Cheddar, in the West Country of England. The summer of 1986-1987 had been an extremely hot one. Estate agents drove us around some rather bleak estates. Rosemeadow was one. It was very new and there didn't seem to be a blade of grass or a tree in sight.

So when we came to Camden, St John's Church on the hill with its spire, the beautiful tree-lined streets and Camden's somewhat English atmosphere persuaded us to make it our home. It even had an English pub, The Camden Valley Inn. My parents thought Camden an excellent choice. They loved visiting Camden on days out since the early 1950s and had stopped regularly at Tildsleys, the butcher to buy their meat. My mother considered this to be the finest butcher in New South Wales.

There were other reasons for choosing this part of NSW. I had often spoken to Janet of my love for the countryside South West of Sydney. As a boy I lived in Australia and had attended boarding schools in Mittagong and Bowral. Journeys to the Southern Highlands took my family through Camden, where we stopped for lunch, and then along the old Razorback in our family Vanguard. It was common to pass cars pulled over to the side of the

road steam pouring from their boiling radiators. Sometimes we were forced to join them.

I had been aware that my father's family had had a long association with Australia. My Grandfather was considered to be a headstrong young man who needed sorting out so he had been sent to a sheep station near Orange in the colony of NSW to learn how to manage sheep and cattle stations. During his time in Australia he stayed with his uncle, Commander Frank Gardner, a notable citizen of Newcastle. I was aware that this great uncle of mine had a very colourful history but knew very little about him. With a great deal of help from Newcastle Library and Newcastle Historical Society, I have pieced together Commander Gardner's story, which, I must say, begins a little like a "Boys' Own" adventure. Some of what he did and achieved follows.



Commander Frank Gardner RAN VD

Commander Frank Gardner, V.D.

Commander Frank Gardner, V.D. (Volunteer Division) was one of the oldest and most esteemed citizens of Newcastle. He was born in the Bell Hotel, Church Street, Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire, England in 1841. His father died when he was very young and he went to sea at the age of fourteen. His first voyage was to the Crimea on board the troop ship, Earl Eglinton, then engaged in transporting troops and assisting in the evacuation of the sick and wounded. He visited the battlefields of Sebastopol.

As a young man of about eighteen or nineteen years of age, Frank Gardner took part as a volunteer in The Second Opium War. In the taking of the Taku Forts, he lost his little finger in the fighting. It was during this time that he met Harry Rawson, later to become Sir Harry Rawson, Governor of New South Wales.

After the China Wars, Frank Gardner joined the mercantile service. He sailed to Savannah, where he arrived at the outbreak of the American Civil War. He joined the confederate forces and was present when the northern ships were burned in the river. After six weeks service in Fort Palaska, at the mouth of the river, he was drafted to Charleston. He found the service



Going on parade New South Wales Newcastle Naval Brigade (Newcastle Region Library)

uncongenial and joined the steamer, Sir Charles Napier. He spent some time in blockade running making two trips from Liverpool to the States on this risky business.

Frank Gardner came to Australia as a ship's mate aboard the famous Boston clipper, Lightning, one of the fastest clipper ships that ever sailed between England and the Antipodes. The vessel arrived in Melbourne in 1862, from where she took a crowd of gold-seekers to New Zealand where a "Gold Rush" had occurred. Frank Gardner took leave of his ship and stayed a year in Sydney before settling in Newcastle in 1862.

Frank Gardner's connection with the Newcastle Naval Brigade dated from 1863 when he joined the ranks and rose to the post of Commander. He retired after forty years of service and was presented by the men of the brigade with an illuminated address. His name is included as one of the Commanders of the Royal Australian Navy lists in 1911. On his retirement he was one of the oldest officers in the Australian Naval Reserves. Commander Gardner had been a member of the Naval and Military Association since its inception and was always a welcome figure.



Commander Frank Gardner on the right

**Officers of New South Wales Newcastle Naval Brigade Cdr F Gardner
VD (R) (Newcastle Region Library)**

Apart from Commander Gardner's business life, his activities were many and varied and of a philanthropic nature. He was devoted to Newcastle Cathedral, which has benefited greatly from his generosity. He paid for the cost of the brick wall and entrances in front of the Cathedral and also for the marble altar in the Warriors' Chapel.

Commander Gardner's patriotism was intense. He subscribed liberally to every fund during the days of the Great War. As a fitting climax, he presented the City of Newcastle with its memorial monument and statue. This cenotaph is believed to be the first such one in Australia. It still stands in front of the Post Office.

With the late Mr. H. Contis, Commander Gardner was a founder of the Newcastle Sailors' Home. He was also instrumental, with others, in the formation of the Shipwreck Relief Society. During the period of the volunteer fire service, Commander Gardner was Honorary Superintendent of the Newcastle Brigades from 1882 and retired on the passing of the Fire Brigades Act in 1910, when the permanent system came into operation. He was one of the

founders of the Newcastle School of Arts and occupied the position of Secretary in the Newcastle Hospital.

Commander Frank Gardner was keen on sport. He was a Secretary to the committee which conducted the New Year's Day regattas on Newcastle Harbour. He was an excellent rifle shot and a very good fisherman. It was, however, as a keen lawn bowler that he was best known. In the northern district around Newcastle, he was referred to as the "Father of Bowls". His interest in bowls came from the famous bowling green at the Bell Hotel in England, his place of birth. There is a lot more to say about this early settler to the Colony New South Wales and his contribution to building a nation but space does not permit the full story to be told.

Commander Gardner died at his home, Church Street, Newcastle on 2nd November 1927. He was 84 years old. An extract from his obituary reads: *"The late Commander Gardner was of a quiet disposition and was extremely liberal in cases of need. During his long and useful life he had made many true and lasting friends. His Funeral Service was held in Newcastle Cathedral."*

Notes

Aldine Centennial History of N.S.W. W.F Morrison 1888.

Commander Frank Gardner, Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners Advocate. 14 March 1898

Commander Gardner Dies, Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners Advocate. 3 November 1927

Impressive Funeral, Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners Advocate. 4 November 1927

Newcastle Regional Library Photograph Collection, photos Nos 001 000775 and 026 000191. Nary List, 1 November 1911. Government Printers, Melbourne.

Acknowledgements

Newcastle Family History Society for research in 2002.

Memories of the Burragorang Valley

Ron Schofield

"The Burragorang Valley west of Sydney near the towns of Camden and The Oaks, was where I used to go camping years ago with my father and younger brother Geoff," writes Ron Schofield of Baulkham Hills, NSW.

"We enjoyed the peace and quiet, and the beauty of the valley with the fast-flowing Wollondilly River.

"The area was always teeming with wildlife, which made our camping trips most enjoyable.



"After completing my apprenticeship as a carpenter, father and I won a contract with the Sydney Water Board in 1959 to remove the farmhouse (in the photo above) and leave the site clean and tidy to make way for the catchment area of Warragamba Dam, which was nearing completion at the time.

"Our plan was to dismantle the seven-room timber-framed house, which was named Apple Grove, and rebuild it on a block of land in Vineyard Avenue,

Smithfield, an outer Sydney suburb.

"The house was very well built with high ceilings, timber weather boards, timber boxed frame windows and a high-pitched roof with corrugated iron roofing.

"Inside, the floorboards were wide with timber lining boards on the walls up to 1.2 metres fibro lining above that, with timber lining boards on the ceiling.

"The contracted time was six months and every weekend we would travel to the valley, work on the dismantling and transport the materials back to Smithfield on our three-ton tabletop truck.

"The dismantling work was very constant and after five and a half months we managed to leave the site clean and tidy. The house was rebuilt at Smithfield mainly by contractors and on completion was rented.

"It was a wonderful feeling to know that we were able to do our little bit to help keep the Sydney water supply clean.

[Originally published in The Senior March 2017 with the title 'They knew how to build 'em back when'. Reproduced with permission.]

Shirley Beaumont of Brisbane Queensland wrote in response to Ron Schofield's article saying that it brought back wonderful memories:

"They relate to my bushwalking days through the Burragorang Valley before it was flooded for the Warragamba Dam.

"Oh, how I wish I could see those places and walk them all again.

"Criss-crossing through the flooded river we walked, carrying our packs over our heads, sleeping in the old mines full of bats - the open campfires, sharing our tucker the stories we shared and the great social events.

"So many memories came flooding back when I read the article.

It also set happy memories in motion for Pat Allen who lives in at Springwood in the Blue Mountains.

“As a senior student at Burwood Girls High School together with six or seven other girls, we would travel by train to Camden, changing first at Campbelltown, and then taking the Nattai bus to the Burragorang Valley," she writes.

'It was 1954 and the residents of the valley were fast moving out, as required by the Sydney Water Board, and the timber-cutters were busy at work removing the trees below the expected water level.

"The valley was very quiet apart from the sound of axes felling trees.
"We stayed with Mrs Waldron at the Hillside Guest House and daily rode horses from Ernie Pippin's stables - this same Ernie Pippin had gone to school with my mum at The Oaks during World War I.

"The valley was ours and we rode to the deserted Wills Farm (a location in the film 'Bush Christmas') and to the ghost town to Yerranderie. The horses knew their way home, even after dark.

“In the summer we went swimming in the river or paddled the Wollondilly in canoes.

"Brown snakes were usually quickly disturbed when we arrived on a hot sandy beach.

"I remember a two-storey pine-log house we named the Artist's Cottage because there was a studio upstairs with a view of the valley and discarded works aplenty.

"My remembrance is of a most beautiful valley and fun times with school friends."

[Originally published in The Senior May 2017 with the title 'Bates, campfires in valley now lost'.]

A 1930 road trip from Sydney

Anne McIntosh

At the CHS meeting on 12 July, Roslyn Tildsley mentioned a reference to NRMA campsites at Narellan and Cobbitty in NRMA's magazine, Open Road.

Searching Trove, I came across this 1930 tour of the local countryside, which mentions a picnic ground near the junction of the Nepean River and Mount Hunter Rivulet. That reminded me that in the 1980s there was a roofed picnic table sitting on this small, flat block of cleared land.

The river's edge is today hidden by an overgrowth of woody weeds. I have copied the tour from page 8 of the Sun newspaper, 23 February 1935. Surprisingly, although there is now a freeway from the city, you could probably follow these directions today.

Picnic At Cobbitty, N.R.M.A. Tour, Historic Village

The old-world village of Cobbitty, with its historic buildings, famous polo grounds, and picturesque picnic areas along the banks of the Nepean, is visited today in the trip described by the N.R.M.A. touring department.

The drive from Camden through Douglas Park to Appin is off the beaten track, and, although the Nepean ford provides a doubtful point after rain, the attractive grazing and farming country makes for a pleasant drive.

From the city the motorist follows George Street west past Grace Bros, and continues on, passing the University on the left, to Summer Hill. Here Liverpool Road is taken to the left, passing through Ashfield and Bankstown before reaching Liverpool. At Crossroads Hotel take the Hume Highway to the right, and continue on to Narellan, where the Bringelly road is followed to the right.

Two miles further on, the tourist bears left along a road leading to Cobbitty village. The main road continues through the settlement and crosses the Nepean River by bridge.

Picnic Areas

Picnic areas are located along the river bank not far from Cobbitty village, and if the tourist travels across Cobbitty Bridge to the right of the road near the junction of the Mount Hunter Rivulet and the Nepean River.

Beyond the bridge the road to the left is taken, and the motorist runs south through undulating and hilly farming country to the Junction with The Oaks Road. At this point the way ahead is taken, and at the junction with the old Razorback road the tourist turns left and shortly afterwards enters Camden. At the southern end of the main street the main road to Picton is taken to the right, and it is then easy going over a moderately hilly road past a hospital to a point 4.7 miles [away], where the main Picton road bears to the right. The tour here described keeps ahead through farming country to Douglas Park, passing on the way turn-offs to Menangle and Maldon.

About a mile beyond Douglas Park the Nepean River is forded, and motorists are advised by the N.R.M.A. to take every care in ascertaining the depth of the water if heavy rain has fallen.

Bush Country

Then follows an interesting drive through mostly bush country to the Appin-Maldon road, which is joined near the turn-off to Cordeaux Dam. At this point a left turn is made, and shortly afterwards the road winds down through Broughton's Pass, at the bottom of which the Cataract River is crossed by bridge. After going up a moderate hill it is easy going to Appin, where the road from Bulli Pass comes in on the right.

The tourist keeps ahead at this town, and passes along a good road over undulating country to Campbelltown. The return trip to the city is then made by way of Denham Court and Liverpool.

The total distance of this round tour is 111.3 miles, and the most suitable place for a picnic lunch is on the banks of the Nepean River near Cobbitty village, which is about 41 miles from Sydney.

The CHS is interested to know whether anyone remembers the NRMA camping grounds located at Narellan and Cobbitty. Where were they? What facilities did they provide? Why did they close?

Memories of my first jobs in 1965 and 1966

Robert Wheeler

Last Friday (week before the society's August meeting) I visited Scots Church on the corner of York and Margaret Streets (fronting Wynyard Park) Sydney, with a small group of past Housing Commission architects. We meet regularly to explore Sydney's interesting buildings.

Scots Church was built in 1826 on what was known as Church Hill. It was demolished in 1929 for the construction of the Sydney Harbour Bridge roadworks, widening of York Street and construction of Wynyard Railway Station. The current building was commenced in 1929 is six storeys and of Gothic style. More recent additions of apartments have added another seven storeys to the building.

My first job, when 16 years old, after finishing the Leaving Certificate, was at 67 York Street with the architect Aaron Bolot. I remember my first job interview well, as sitting opposite Mr Bolot. I thought he must have been in his 70s, however on checking recently he was only 60, such is the perception of the young. The Royal Australian Institute of Architects have recognised his excellent work since the 1930s in an annual architecture award – the Aaron Bolot Residential Architecture Multiple Housing Award.

Aaron Bolot's work was mostly in the Eastern Suburbs at Potts Point, Double Bay, Point Piper and Bondi Junction, as well as Hunters Hill. I remember working on some town houses in Rosemont Ave, Edgecliff. It was considered one of Sydney's most attractive streets in the 1960s. The proposed town



Young Robert looking dapper in a suit on his way to work in the city at 17 years of age. (Robert Wheeler)

houses were considerably ahead of their time. Locally, Aaron Bolot designed the 1936 addition to the Camden AH&I Society Hall.

Standing in Wynyard Park, which was only a half a block away from where I worked brought back same fond memories. I was one of three who worked in his office. Being the youngest I was the office boy who was sent on messages, which was good fun. The best being going to the Australia Hotel in Martin Place to have all the office typing done. Sadly, the hotel was demolished for the MLC building.

Waiting for the typing I was introduced to the National Trust as they had all the recent leaflets of the Trust's excursions by the Women's Committee of the National Trust. This led me to join the Junior Group of the National Trust and the many amazing trips that they organised, as well as meeting Margaret and getting married. The best trip was flying to Lord Howe Island on one of the last flights of the flying boats from Rose Bay.

One of Sydney's most significant landmarks was only a few buildings from



Camden Show Hall brick frontage designed by Sydney architect Aaron Bolot in 1936. 191-195 Argyle Street Camden in 2008 (Camden Images Past and Present/P Mylrea)

where I worked, ie the AWA tower. It was the tallest building in Sydney until the AMP building was built at Circular Quay. In my early teenage years when you came to Sydney the aim was to go up to its observation deck to view Sydney Harbour out to the Eastern Suburbs, without any obstructions.

Standing in Wynyard Park I noticed that there was a gap created by the demolition of the Menzies Hotel. Another Sydney landmark gone.

After a year of travelling on buses, an hour and quarter each way, plus travelling to UNSW (one afternoon and one night) I looked for a job closer to home. This turned out to be at Edgecliff with the architects, McConnell, Smith and Johnson Their offices were at the old Grammar School. Still the office boy. Now had a car so my travelling was all around Sydney. Traveling from home to university was under half an hour.

My first visit to Edgecliff by train was in early 2015, doing a National Trust Garden visit at Darling Point, the highlight being visiting Thomas Mitchell's 'Carthona' on the point. However, on returning to Edgecliff railway station I realised that my desk at McConnell, Smith and Johnson was probably where I was sitting on the railway platform, the old school being demolished for the railway and the station was where the school had been.

Another amazing memory, as well as finding another part of our heritage had been demolished.

Mother's Day at Belgenny Farm 2017

Anne McIntosh

Mother's Day was 14 May and Belgenny Farm welcomed more than 1500 visitors, including many children, to treat Mum with food and gift stores among the historic buildings. Despite threatening clouds, the rain held off until late afternoon. This year's most popular events and performers included an opportunity to milk a cow, the working dog show, a reptile demonstration and Gold Creek re-enactments who brought horses and riders kitted out as WW1 Australian Light Horse.

If you missed this opportunity to experience the magnificent setting and buildings of the Macarthur's historic property, there are other up coming events.



Replica Australian light horse waits in a Belgenny stable (Anne McIntosh)

Volunteers share a yarn in front of a milking machine display in a model dairy. (Anne McIntosh)



A visitor to Camden

Anne McIntosh

A presentation at the Camden Historical Society in Heritage Week May 2017

I moved to Elderslie in Nov 2015. Why did I choose Elderslie? Well, I didn't. My parents wanted me to move nearer to members of my family. My mother looked at many houses. My parents chose the house that I am currently living in. ... Fortunately, I like it.

That might be the end of this presentation, but when I thought about my life, I realised that over a long period I have visited this area for many reasons. None are remarkable, but these recollections may remind people of how and when non-residents visit the area.

I grew up in Eastwood, a red brick, red roofed suburb, north of the city. As a child, I know that we went to the Rotolactor at least once, and the family also had picnics at Warragamba Dam.

In early high school, I came to Teen Ranch, Cobbitty with a school friend. Apart from contempt for the horse that I was given – it was a plodder – my memories are vague. But we did have a good time. I also visited El Caballo Blanco at some stage, probably with a school friend.

In Year 10 history, my class was taken on an excursion that included a long bus trip to a private colonial home in a very traditional style - sandstone, with a veranda at the front, a cellar underground and two wings at the back for the kitchen, bathroom and servants' quarters. There was a railway line directly behind the back garden.

I did not think about that excursion again until a friend bought a Victorian Regency house near Menangle called 'the Pines'. He was eager to show it to me. When I visited, I was troubled by a familiarity that was inexplicable. This haunted me. It was a few weeks before I realised that my friends' new home was the house I'd been shown on that excursion about 30 years earlier.

In my last two years of high school, I went to James Ruse Agricultural School. My friends included a boy whose family was keen on rally driving. He would drive a few of us home in his red Renault, scrunched around the roll bar. When a school car rally was organised, David asked me to navigate and spot. It was a fabulous day with a number of picnic and pub stops.

There were drink driving regulations at that time, but I don't think there were on-street breathalysers. Many of the drivers, most still on their Ps had a beer at lunch, and another on the way home. We were more concerned about the 18 year old restrictions on pub entry and alcohol purchases than the blood alcohol limit. Among the locations on this trip were Bents Basin, the Caltex globe, and Thirlmere Lake, a busy picnic ground for families. The water lapped against a rock wall, children played in clear water on a sandy base and people launched boats from a ramp. I don't recall passing through Camden, so we must have circled around the town.

On an agriculture excursion we visited the university farm at Badgery's Creek, a large dairy on Northern Road and Roseneath Stud in Cobbitty, where we had the opportunity to watch as a mare dressed in her 'slippers' was 'teased' by a pony, before completion of the task by the chosen thoroughbred stallion. Fascinated and embarrassed, one of my class mates tapped me on the shoulder and whispered in my ear, "I've got one like that." He wasn't talking about slippers, and was amused by my expression as I moved away.

I loved agriculture and was relieved when I got the mark to do my first preference degree – veterinary science at the University of Sydney.

As a first year vet student, you were required to travel to the University Farms (Werombi Road) every Friday in third semester. We shared the driving. It was a long day, getting picked up around 6.30am and then driving out along the Hume Highway. There was no expressway; we passed through Rhodes, the 'meccano set', Liverpool and along Camden Valley Way. The boys were excited to pass Oran Park Raceway.

On these days 'in the country', we were introduced to animal husbandry and other rural trades – milking cows, dehorning cattle, looking at pastures, butchering a sheep, picking up horses' hooves, sexing chickens and a range of other farm tasks. We practised holding rabbits and guinea pigs. This experience was designed to fill knowledge gaps for those with only single industry knowledge, or no agricultural experience.

We ate with the fifth year students in the dining room at Nepean Hall, paying what we thought was an outrageous \$4 for the hot midday meal. We watched the older students in their overalls and surgical greens, with awe. They seemed incredibly sophisticated and knowledgeable.

Every year during autumn, the final year students would organise BarBGrog on a Saturday. Students from agriculture and vet science travelled out from Sydney with copious quantities of beer and a swag in the car boot. In an



**Aerial view of the Sydney University Farms at Cobbitty in 2008.
Werombi Road centre right of image. (CIPP/P Mylrea)**

open area behind some pine trees near the first bend on the road heading into Cobbitty from Werombi Road, a series of crazy and gross competitive events involving farm equipment, veterinary clothing, hay bales, offal, mud and faeces would be organised. Loud Cold Chisel and Midnight Oil music blared from a ute, and there were copious quantities of beer, frequently skulled.

The party went through the night at Nepean Hall on Werombi Road, with celebrations and fireworks around a bonfire beside the oval. I have limited memories of the evening events - that may relate to the passage of time, or perhaps the consumption of wine.

There was limited space in the three common rooms. Some students pitched tents, others slept in swags in the back of utes. You could shelter under cover on the road outside the library. It was cold, damp and uncomfortable at 3am. I do remember waking up covered in dew, taking a torch and heading for the residential building only to find it had been locked. It was very cold behind a tree on the edge of a foggy oval.

After four years on campus in Camperdown, it was time to spend a year at Nepean Hall. It was 1987 and Dr Liz Kernohan managed the university farms, Dr Tony English taught bovine practice and legends abounded about

Bob Love, who was an expert on pig husbandry. We studied in an inadequate and uncomfortable lecture theatre opposite the equine centre. There was so much to be learnt before final exams in surgery, clinical pathology and medicine.

On the university farms and around Camden, there were opportunities to develop and refine our practical skills - we practised pregnancy testing of cattle, repositioning calves in 'artificial uteruses', watched artificial insemination of sheep and cattle, and did post-mortems on animals otherwise destined for the knackers.

Students visited farms with resident vets and interns consulting with hobby farmers, pony clubbers, pacing trainers, and a few dairy farmers. We assisted in the small animal clinic. At that time, the university equine centre was a leading facility and horses were referred by vets across the state - we were able to watch top-line equine surgery on well-known racehorses. One very memorable day, the university anaesthetised a tiger for a travelling circus and cleaned its teeth, ears and eyes. Students also attended shows and race meetings to check animals before they competed.

A few years later, my father's workplace, the Plant Breeding Institute (PBI) at Castle Hill, sold their research farm for development. Because they work with cereal diseases such as rusts and smuts, they needed land in a non-grain growing area. As a research facility of the University of Sydney, the PBI was consolidated with other university farms and relocated to Camden. The "new PBI" was built on the site, where Bar-B-Grog had been held. A new complex with innovative and sophisticated glass houses was constructed on the site.

My parents searched for a house close to my father's workplace. It was almost a year before they settled on five acres at Theresa Park. They moved there in the early 1990s, a few years after I graduated, and have lived in the same house since that time. My youngest brother was still in primary school and from Cobbitty School, he went to Macarthur Anglican, then in Narellan. He still lives locally.

I moved house in early December 2015. In Woolworths late one evening during my first week, I heard a supervisor talking to another staff member. They were discussing how Camden was changing. The supervisor said, "It's not the same as it used to be. I cannot believe it, but more than five people came through the store today, and I'd swear I've never seen them before. I definitely didn't know their names." I am sure that in the past year, this has become increasingly common for everyone born and raised in Camden!

Sculptures, Monuments and Outdoor Cultural Material project

Sandra Dodds

In 1999 my father, Doug Dodds and I surveyed all of the monuments in the Camden area on behalf of the Camden Historical Society as part of the Sculptures, Monuments and Outdoor Cultural Material project.

The project was organised by the Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Material in conjunction with the Art Gallery of NSW and the University of Western Sydney (now Western Sydney University). The project involved documenting the materials, dimensions, condition, significance, inscriptions and researching the history of each monument.

Photographs of the monuments were also part of the documentation process and they were enlarged and used for an exhibition at the Camden Museum. As part of the opening day events for the monuments exhibition I arranged for a local stone mason to provide a demonstration of various techniques.

The demonstration and talk proved to be of great interest to Museum visitors and complemented the exhibition. The information about the monuments has been made accessible on the National Library of Australia Trove website. Since the completion of the project, one of the drinking fountains has been repaired.

The completed reports about the monuments are in the Museum library.

**Anderson Drinking Fountain 1976
located in Macarthur Park (S
Dodds)**

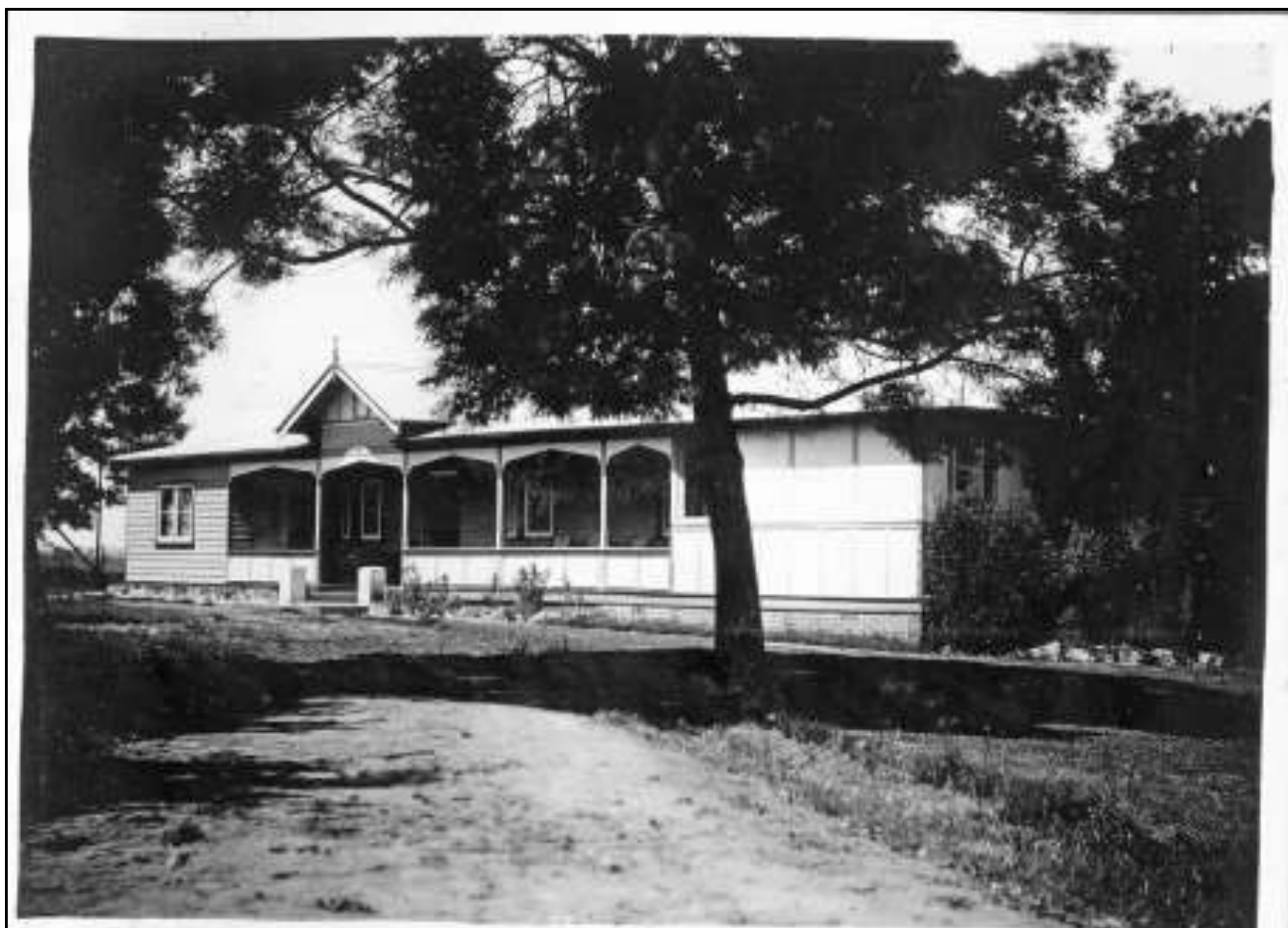


The Heath Years at Windamere, Cobbitty

Lenore Heath

This article was based on original notes written by Ella Heath and developed by Lenore Heath, daughter of Jeffrey and Ella Heath.

Ben Heath was born in England in 1887 and migrated to Australia in the early 1900s, marrying Alice Ward in Sydney in 1915. He served in the Australian Flying Corps in the First World War. On 3 December 1925 Ben and his wife Alice bought Cobbitty Park from the estate of Frederick Myers for £2050. It was a 200 acre farm extending from Cobbitty Bridge towards Cobbitty, and fronting the Nepean River. The sale of the estate had been advertised in the 'Camden News' and 'The Sydney Morning Herald' (SMH) in September and October 1925.



Windamere Guesthouse at Cobbitty (L Heath)

W Larkin has received instructions From the Executors of the Will of the late Mr F Myers to sell at his sale room, Camden on Tuesday, 8th October, at 1.30

the above properties, namely: - 'Cobbitty Park' close to Cobbitty School, Post Office, etc, 4 miles from Camden. Area 199 acres, 3 rd, 3 per., with extensive frontage to Nepean River. All cleared, every acre arable land, above 140 now under cultivation, growing excellent maize, oats, wheat etc., above 10 acres orange and peach orchard. Comfortable cottage, barns, corn sheds, vehicle sheds and all necessary improvements. ('Camden News', 17 September, 24 September and 1 October 1925, SMH 26 September 1925)

When they first arrived, Ben and Alice with their four children, Rodney (Rod), Jeffrey (Jeff), Joan and Dorothy and Ben's mother Susan Heath, lived in the old stone Cobbitty Park farmhouse. The Heaths had sold their business interests in Sydney, including a mechanical garage, Shell Oil Company agency, and private bus company. They had run the first daily bus service to the Blue Mountains using a 24-seater charabanc.

Ben was trained as an engineer's fitter and possessed mechanical skills, however he also had knowledge of, and experience in, the hospitality industry. His father had been publican in England and, prior to settling in Aus-



Relaxing on the verandah at Windamere Guesthouse at Cobbitty (L Heath)

tralia, Ben had worked for many years as a servant and steward on passenger ships.

The St Paul's Church journal of November 1925, welcomed the Heath family to Cobbitty. The school had been closed for a year because of insufficient numbers. The Heath children made up the required numbers for the school to reopen. From Jeff's memory the other children were: Doreen Malcolm; Lorna McIntosh; Dorcas McMinn, Tommy Holz; Keith and Kathleen Thorn; Eric and Ray Vicary and possibly Marjorie Vicary. Mrs Somers was the teacher and two of her children, Keith and Margaret, helped to swell the numbers. Miss Colty Wales followed Mrs Somers as teacher. Rod Heath later won the first bursary from Cobbitty School to Hurlstone Agricultural School, with the undoubted help of the wonderful Miss Wales.

The property deeds indicate Ben sold some of the property to Ernest Edgar Wyatt of Cobbitty in 1926. Ben's 1926 advertisements for the sale of farm animals, machinery and tools do not refer to "Windamere"; it is first mentioned in a 1927 advertisement.

Cobbitty. Saturday, May 22. Sale of cattle, poultry, machinery, seed wheat, tools and sundries. W LARKIN has received instructions from Mr B Heath to sell at Cobbitty, on Saturday, 22nd May, at 1.30pm, 5 Good Milking and Springing Cows; 45 Pairs Young W L Hens; 6 Hawkesbury College W L Roosters; 7 ½ Horse Power, Portable Meadowbank Engine; 2 Ton 4 speed International Truck, purchased new in January 1924, and done very little running; 6 feet Reaper and Binder; Corn Sheller and Husker; Bentall Corn Grinder; Martin Corn Planter; w Disc Ploughs; Garden 1 horse Cultivator; 20 bags Florence Seed Wheat; Lot Sundry Tools and accessories. THE WHOLE of above plant is in first class order and is only being sold as the owner has disposed of part of his property. Sale: - Saturday, May 22, 1926. ('Camden News', 6 May 1926)

For Sale. – Good farm implements, practically new: - 4 disc Sunrise plough, suit team or tractor; Sunshine 10 disc harrower; Sunshine 5 ft harvester; Massey 11 disc seed drill; 3 HP Sunshine Engine; Ford late 1925 model. Inspection invited, any reasonable offer will be accepted. Apply Mr Ben Heath. 'Phone 132 Camden. 'Windamere', Cobbitty. ('Camden News', 7 July 1927)

Around 1927, the Windamere guest house was built and the whole estate advertised as a health and holiday resort. The house was built of weatherboard and fibro and had 28 rooms including bathrooms and a tiled kitchen.



A picnic at Windamere at Cobbitty. From left Jeff Heath, Ben Heath feeding a pet dog, a guest and Joan Heath patting dog, Nicky. (L Heath)

It had a telephone service with the number Camden 132. The property had one mile deep river frontage. Extensions were later added by Mark "One Nail" Jensen and Alva George. Extra buildings included a club house and kiosk.

Cobbitty. –Windamere, New Guest House, 100 acres, Nepean River Frontage, electric light throughout. Own golf links, tennis court, swimming, shooting, dance and lounge rooms. Cuisine unsurpassable. Tariff £2/12/6 weekly, 10/6 per day. Our cars meet trains Camden. Fare 3/-. 'Phone, Camden 132 or write B Heath. (SMH, 19 February, 16 and 27 April 1927)

Ben installed the first electricity plant in the Cobbitty/Camden area, buying the electric generator from the Kings Cross Theatre in Sydney. A 3½ horse-power engine drove the generator which was installed by electrician, Jeff Durrant. Prior to this they used kerosene lights.

Ben also built the first tennis court in the area, fenced with fitted steel poles to house electric lights. Another first in the area was an American Maytag washing machine driven by a two-stroke engine. This was of course for the mountains of washing created by the guest house. There was a backyard toilet with the first sewerage system in the area. On the property were grazing paddocks, crops, flower and vegetable gardens, a small orchard, a 9-hole golf course and

a polo ground. Light aircraft could land on the grounds. Animals included horses (for farm work, riding and polo) and half a dozen dairy cows. The Heaths used a horse drawn plough and Jeff broke in two Clydesdales named Darby and Joan.

During the late 1920s and the 1930s in the carefree days before the Second World War, hundreds of people had many happy holidays at Windamere. Guests were met at Camden Railway Station and transferred to Windamere by car. Visitors also came by bus or their own cars. Activities included, golf, tennis, table tennis, billiards, horse riding, polo, boating, swimming and fishing at the Nepean River, shooting, car trips and entertainment such as music (with an electric gramophone and a resident pianist) and dancing. Initially the Heaths employed a cook and an assistant. However Alice was an excellent cook and took over as cook and hostess. As the children got older, the running of Windamere became a family affair, with Jeff operating a horse riding school and all the Heath children assisting with various jobs. In their spare time the children particularly enjoyed horse riding and swimming at the river. When it was quiet Jeff would sit by the river and watch for platypuses.

Running a guesthouse involved purchasing large quantities of supplies. Every day, Jackie Noakes brought the mail to Cobbitty Post Office on his BSA motorcycle. Camden butcher Ray Boardman delivered meat, while Clifton Brothers and F C Whiteman & Son delivered groceries. In a very old truck, Charlie Fuller would supply fruit and vegetables. As a young adult Jeff used drive to Sydney to buy some supplies from the food markets.

Entries in a surviving visitors' book start in April 1930, the first name being that of renowned Australian artist George Lambert, who sadly died of a heart attack at Windamere in late May 1930. The visitors' comments highlight that Windamere provided a venue for an enjoyable holiday for a couple of days to many weeks. Some overseas competitive polo players stayed for months. For some guests it was a quiet relaxing time while others became involved in more exhilarating activities.

George Lambert: "A nice place and my horses like it too."

Margaret Jonson: "Days of sweet idleness."

Netta Stark: "Hectic time."

Mr & Mrs E H Horton: "Wonderful and exhilarating climate – beautiful scenery, free and happy home with all comforts – sorry to go."

Ben advertised the guest house in the Sydney Morning Herald from 1927 until 1941.

Cobbitty – Windamere. 100 acres, Nepean River frontage, tennis, boats,



Guests outside Windamere at Cobbitty ready for a swim in the Nepean River (L Heath)

swimming, riding shooting, dance, lounge rooms, billiards, excellent cuisine. Tariff £2/18/6 week, 12/6 day. Phone Camden 132; or write B Heath. Car meets trains, Camden. (SMH, 5 October 1929)

Cobbitty. Windamere for enjoyable holiday. Tennis, riding, polo, swimming, excellent table, lovely surroundings. Electric light, sewerage. £2/10/ weekly. 10/6 day. B Heath. Phone Camden 132. (SMH, 24 February 1940)

Cobbitty. Windamere. Excellent accommodation and cuisine. Sewerage, electric light, tennis, riding, swimming, farm produce. £2/10/ weekly, 10/6s a day. Phone Camden 132 B Heath. (SMH, 17 May 1941)

In the early 1930s, polo commenced at Windamere, with Curtis Skene, son of Bob Skene (world famous polo player of the time), and the Ashton brothers (from the circus family) being the instigators. Other players included Max Wheatley; John, David and Rupert Downes; and Lance Skewthorpe, a rough rider. Jeff Heath, who was an excellent horseman, played when they needed him to make up the numbers. The ground became the home of the Australian Polo Club.

Polo was attended by many VIPs from Sydney, amongst whom was Sir Philip Game, the Governor of NSW. George McLeod, Consul General of Siam (now Thailand), also attended. The prestigious Dudley Cup was held at Windamere.

Jeff's horse riding skills went up a notch when he received trick riding tuition from a Worth's Circus horse trainer. In 1932 there were insufficient numbers to form the Camden Light Horse troop of 1st/21st Light Horse. So, at the request of Captain Edward Macarthur Onslow, Jeff Heath joined at the age of 15.

Ben and Alice became involved in the Cobbitty/Camden community.

Cobbitty. On Saturday evening a dance and euchre party in aid of the local school tennis club, was given by Mr and Mrs B Heath, at their club house, "Windamere", Cobbitty. Despite the inclemency of the weather about one hundred people attended and spent an enjoyable evening dancing to music supplied by Mr Heath's electric gramophone. Mr W Chittick made an efficient MC. The euchre tournament was won by Miss Vicary and Mr W Moore. During supper, which was provided by the ladies of Cobbitty, and dispensed by Mrs Heath, assisted by Mesdames L Sommer and T Holz, Mr Sommer thanked Mr and Mrs Heath for the enjoyable evening they had spent at their new club house. ('Camden News', 16 October 1930).

About once a month in the 1930s, wonderful dances and suppers were held in Cobbitty Hall (called "the ballroom"), music being provided by Mrs Huthnance and her son Lionel. In 1932, amongst celebrations for the inauguration of the ABC radio station, an Australian song competition was held. It was won by the resident Windamere pianist Pat Dunlop, with the song "Croajing Along".

In order to bring in more income Ben and Alice expanded the business to include boarders. They also catered for day visitors from the local and surrounding areas.

'Windamere', Cobbitty. An enjoyable afternoon always assured. Golf, Tennis, Swimming, Lawn Games, Clock Gold etc, with an excellent Afternoon Tea provided on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays, 2/- inclusive. Whole day with Luncheon, Afternoon Tea and Dinner, 6/-. Good riding Horses can be acquired at moderate rates. Entertain your friends at 'Windamere', Cobbitty, B Heath, Proprietor. ('Camden News', 25 March 1937)

In the late 1930s, prior to the outbreak of the Second World War, Ben made



Jeff Heath (second from left) at Windamere at Cobbitty conducting his riding school for his guests. (L Heath)

two trips to the Far East as Chief Purser on the SS Taiping of the Australian Oriental Line. Alice and Jeff were left in charge of Windamere.

On 14 February 1942 one of the last major events took place at Windamere. Jeffrey Heath married Ella Reid at St Paul's, Cobbitty and the reception was held at Windamere. Jeff and Ella had known each other since their childhood days in Sydney.

The Depression and the Second World War had an impact on visitor numbers and hence the prosperity of Windamere. In 1937 Ben had attempted to sell Windamere as a whole property. He was unsuccessful, and later subdivided the 100 acres into three properties and advertised them for sale.

Auction sale at Camden. Tuesday 30th March, 1937, at 1.30pm.

'Windamere', Cobbitty, On Account of Mr B Heath. The favourably known and well-established Guest House, 'Windamere', Cobbitty, on the Nepean River, with a beautiful parklike area of nearly 100 acres, including the Australian Polo Club's Ground, Tennis Courts, Golf Links and grazing paddocks, Small orchard, etc. The Guest House is built of weatherboard and

fibro, and contains 28 rooms, inclusive of, bathrooms and tiled kitchen, hot and cold water. Wired throughout, Four Unit Septic System. Abundance of water laid on everywhere. Tastefully laid out grounds of ornamental trees and lawns. Continuous telephone service. Regulation dairy and cow bails, numerous garages, stables, and feed rooms. The property is in perfect order. The house contains every modern convenience. It is beautifully situated with long river frontage and close to the glorious Brownlow Hill Estate. This property should be inspected to be appreciated, and certainly is a wonderful opportunity to secure a most popular Guest House and Sports Ground. William Inglis & Son Pty Limited have received instructions to sell the above property by Auction, at their Camden rooms, as above. 28 O'Connell Street, Sydney, and Camden. (Camden News, 18 March 1937 and SMH, 20 March 1937)

Camden. Tuesday, 20th February at 1 o'clock. To Guest House Proprietors, Market Gardeners, Agriculturists and Others. Important subdivision sale of Nepean River Frontage Property at Cobbitty. William Inglis & Son Pty Limited, have received instructions from MR B Heath to sell at Camden on the above date at 1 o'clock 3 choice Nepean River frontage blocks at Cobbitty comprising:- LOT 1 Area about 36 acres 16 per. All thoroughly cleared with Established Guest House of 28 Rooms, Electric Light, Telephone, Sewerage, Hot and Cold Water, Septic System, Garages, Stables, Bails, etc in perfect order. LOT 2 Area about 38 acres, 2 rds, 4 per. All cleared rich loamy soil and embraces The Australian Polo Grounds. Lot 3 Area 25 acres 1 rd. 20 per. All cleared and ideal Agricultural land. This Sales offer a wonderful opportunity to persons in search of Guest House and intense cultivation land with deep fresh water frontages. The owner is determined to sell as he is unable to manage the property. (Camden News, 8 February 1940; SMH 10 February 1940; SMH 17 February 1940)

Ben sold to Malcolm Robsart MacCulloch and Nellie Campbell MacCulloch in November 1941; to Edward Robert MacCulloch and Enid Rita MacCulloch in December 1941; and to Percy George Tait, in March 1942.

Jeff Heath had enlisted in the RAAF in December 1941 and Rod was working elsewhere in NSW as a veterinarian. Following the final sale of Windamere, Ben put his age down and enlisted as a private in the Australian Army in July 1942 but was discharged on 7 September 1942; he was actually 54 and in the First World War had been discharged due to an irritable heart. In October 1942 he was one of the many thousands of Australian civilians, from 15 years old to around 70, who joined the US Army Small Ships Section, South West Pacific Area. He served until August 1943 and twice met Jeff who was serving with No. 30 Squadron, once at Port Moresby and once at Milne Bay. Although it was at the height of the Japanese invasion, these were



**Guests on the front steps
of Windamere at
Cobbitty (L Heath)**

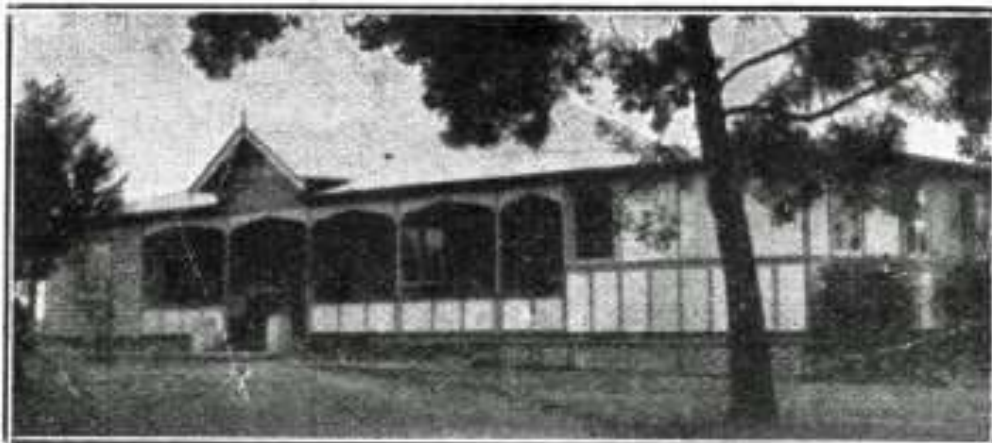
unusual and happy occasions for them both. Dorothy Heath and Joan Mason (nee Heath) both served in the Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force (WAAAF).

Following the end of the Second World War, Ben and Alice Heath moved several times before settling at Erina on the Central Coast. In 1952, Jeff and Ella Heath and their family returned to the Camden area. They lived in Wilkinson Street, Elderslie, with Jeff working at the Camden Milk Depot, and Ella working at the Camden News office then later as a proof-reader for the Campbelltown Ingleburn News.

The Heath years at Cobbitty were a time of happiness, adventure and achievement.

“ WINDAMERE ”

COBBITTY, N.S.W.



The popular guest house farm, ideally situated in a charming and historic old District. Scenery and Climate Unrivalled. Forty Miles from Sydney.

B. HEATH, Proprietor.

'Phone: Camden 132.

100 Acres of Park Lands, One Mile Nepean River Frontage, Tennis, Golf Links, 9 Hole, Putting Green; Polo Ground; Riding School; Swimming, Lounge and Dance Rooms. Electric Light, Billiards, Player, Wireless, Gramophone. Lock-up Garages.

CUISINE UNSURPASSABLE.

TARIFF: From £2/10/- per week; 10/6 per Day.

Motorists and Tourists Specially Catered for.
Own Car Meets Trains at Camden. Fare, 3/.

Write or 'phone **B. HEATH, Camden 132.** Continuous Service.

