

# **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:** Tildsley Butcher Shop, 155 Argyle Street, Camden in 2016 (I Willis)

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## From the Editor's Desk

In these times of Covid-19 it is a useful exercise to reflect on what these usual times mean for the historical society and the remainder of the Camden community. Our local community has suffered as have many communities around the globe in the pandemic. Covid-19 is a once in a generation event and has been life-changing many local people. Some immediate effects are quite obvious while others are more subtle and will only be apparent when the pandemic has gone,.

Covid19 is not the first pandemic to effect the local community and it will not be the last. Apart from the Spanish Influenza Pandemic of 1919, which I have written about in this issue, the community has been effected by a host of notifiable diseases in the past.

A quick search of Trove and the pages of the *Camden News* and *Picton Post* reveals the extent of notifiable disease within our community in the past. There were a host of outbreaks in the early 20th century and late 19th century reported by these newspapers. They have included: scarlet fever (1914, 1927, 1948); measles (1914); cholera (1899, 1900, 1902, 1911, 1914); infantile paralysis or polio (1932, 1946); typhoid fever (1914, 1916, 1921); consumption or tuberculosis (1912, 1913, 1916); diphtheria (1896, 1898, 1907, 1922, 1948); and others.

The content of this issue of the journal has a Covid-19 flavour. Jo O'Brien has reflected on the current impacts, while I have drawn observations from a number of other local residents. There is a contribution by a young member of the Camden community, Genevieve Lowry, who was on her life-time adventure overseas as many other young Camden girls have done in previous generations. Her journey was cut short in Turkey by Covid-19 and she had to make a hurried trip back to Australia. Major institution around Australia, including the National Library of Australia and the State Library of New South Wales have been collecting Covid stories from people as the pandemic progresses.

The workings of the Camden Council Heritage Advisory Committee, on which the society has a permanent presence, are covered by Laura Jane Aulesbrook. The committee has made an important contribution to History Week in 2019 and 2020 with Unlock Camden. Members of the society who are interested in the workings of the committee should consult the minutes on the council website.

The Oaks Historical Society has done a sterling job digitizing the collection

of glass photographic plates of Camden photographer Roy Dowle. Interested members should have a look at the images and help The Oaks Historical Society identify pictures. Our society has a number Dowle images on Camden Images Past and Present and former member Peter Mylrea has documented Camden photographers in a story in 2005 in *Camden History*.

The activities of the society were recognised recently in the New South Wales Parliament by Mr Peter Sidgreaves MP, Member for Camden. The society is appreciative for the recognition.

To round out his issue regular contributor Dianne Matterson has written an interesting and detailed account of a local business, Tildsley's Butcher. Stories of local businesses are not common and this is a valuable contribution about a local institution which has made an important contribution to the construction of place in Camden.

This is the last issue in the current series of Camden History. Volume 5 will commence in 2021 with a new cover colour and more exciting stories about out local area.

Ian Willis  
Editor

# **Camden's Heritage and the Impact of the 2020 Pandemic**

**Jo O'Brien**

A person's 20/20 vision implies clarity, but 2020 so far has been anything but straightforward. In the awful summer of bushfires and drought, we prayed for rain - and then there were floods. Finally, the sense of emergency passed. Not forgetting that even now some are still suffering from the problematic aftereffects of that summer, most of us could look ahead. Then a once in a lifetime event emerged – the coronavirus pandemic – and 2020 and our path to the future changed.

There was so much to look forward to for Camden's heritage groups. The family history Society calendar was packed with events. I was also looking forward to attending all the events planned for the historical society. I was particularly pleased that the family history society would have a table at the Camden Show for the first time, next to the historical society in the hall, an excellent opportunity to interact with many Camden locals and celebrate Camden's history and heritage.

And then came the pandemic. Slowly at first, distant, affecting those that travelled. Then it was here, and suddenly the situation changed every day. It felt like the ground was sliding under our feet like I imagine it feels in an earthquake. When I heard that the Easter Show was cancelled, I knew how serious this would be, and that everything was going to change. Soon after, the Camden Show was cancelled, along with all the other planned events, one by one.

The impact on historical and family history societies has been profound. Our regular contact and meetings have gone, our rooms have been closed for extended periods. All the events planned for the year ahead, the Camden Show, the heritage festival, book launches, speakers, meetings, all cancelled. Access to our rooms and resources was severely limited, and stopped altogether much of the time, hampering our efforts to keep things going. Opportunities to connect with new people have been lost, and we may lose existing connections as some members and volunteers may not return. It may be some time yet before we can resume our regular meetings and activities.

The loss of volunteer work is not as stressful and impactful as losing income, but it is a loss of meaningful work and the social connection and a sense of purpose it brings. We do these jobs. After all, we are passionate about history because we want to contribute to our community, and for many of us, it was an essential part of our lives.



**Camden's Argyle Street precinct where people stop and have a chat or just catch up on the latest gossip. These types of social interaction have been part of the Argyle Street precinct for decades of local residents. (I Willis)**

Societies like ours provide important social contact - the cuppa at the end was sometimes the most important part! We miss sharing information, ideas, and stories, and talking about our common interests and our love for Camden and its history.

We are also missing most of our other social interactions, both with friends and casual conversations with people in Camden. It was common to meet someone you knew in the street, and sometimes have quite a lengthy discussion, now lingering to chat is discouraged. Conversations have moved online or on the phone, but it is not the same without the personal connection, the greeting kiss, handshake, or hug (will this still be how we greet each other after this?). I miss sitting with friends, having lunch or coffee, and having an in-depth discussion and sharing a laugh with a group and talking through a topic, going to a seminar, and learning something new.





**The Camden Library Museum building is part of the John Street historic precinct where the Camden Historical Society manages the Camden Museum and the Camden Area Family History Society has their research room. (I Willis)**

All we can do is keep in touch online, on social media, and by emailed newsletters, although it is noticeable that not everyone likes to stay in touch this way. Luckily, many historians and family historians are independent researchers, can work online, and love to read - we have plenty of files to sort, and research to write about, so at least we have something to do at home.

Camden has always been a friendly place, with a country town atmosphere and a local focus. Even as Sydney grew and the town became part of the Greater Sydney metropolitan area, the locals still felt they had their community. Many live and work in the area, their families live here, and they have their continuous heritage here. The country town atmosphere has been challenged of late by the expansion of the urban area, new families moving to the district. The government plans to expand infrastructure building, encourage developers, and cut red tape, and this may speed up the pace of change. Will heritage, tradition, open space, and the environment be casualties of the quest to revive the economy?

The future of Camden township was already challenged with shops closing and so many people going to shopping malls and more significant centres for goods and services. In previous downturns and challenging times, locals needed the Camden shops and services, and Camden had a full range availa-

ble then. Many essential services have already moved, and it is hard to see how all of the local shops, services, restaurants, and cafes will survive this challenge. People are increasingly shopping online. Without a critical mass, shopping in Camden could progressively close down until there are stretches of empty shops. And that all-important social connection that gives the town its identity – its sense of community - will it continue if most people are shopping elsewhere? Camden businesses must be supported throughout the restrictions, and when the pandemic is over, a plan developed to promote opportunities for new businesses and shops in Camden.

There is a consensus that we should protect and promote Camden's remarkably well-preserved history and heritage, and encourage heritage tourism, art and culture, fresh and gourmet food. There will be a delay in these plans - as arts, heritage and culture facilities were amongst the first to be shut and are likely to be the last to open. Their role in the economy is less prominent, they are considered optional, and funding may become hard to get. Tourism and events that involve crowds and meetings will not return for some time, and we will lose the opportunity to connect with people and share Camden's stories.

We need our heritage, art and culture more than ever, to learn from the past, to come together positively with a focus on something wonderful and fascinating – things of beauty and history that inspire us, and make us think. We can learn a lot from studying our history, to see how our ancestors coped under challenging times. Perhaps, as the restrictions and pandemic continue, people will turn towards the arts and escapism as they did in the past – during the Depression and War. Those events lasted for years, and people survived and came out the other side, and moved on, and I expect we will as well.

I look forward to the time when we can all meet again, share a cuppa, and talk about Camden and its history.

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As I finish writing this, times have changed again, and we watch the worrying changes in Victoria. There are still so many questions and so much uncertainty about the future, but people need to do whatever they can to live their lives as naturally as possible. Words such as social distance, self-isolate, no touching, no hugging, stay home, keep apart are joined by a call to wear masks. While there is an apparent medical requirement for these measures, these increasing barriers to human contact will contribute to the sense of isolation that so many are feeling. I hope we can support each other and make an effort to stay connected and look after each other in these disconnected times.

# **Covid19 and the 1919 Spanish Influenza pandemic**

## **Ian Willis**

Corvid-19 has caused the introduction of washing hand and social distancing of 1.5 metres for the first time. Or is it the first time?

Well no, it is not the first time. It is an exciting proposition to note that the past is bound to repeat itself. The past has undoubtedly come to revisit us with this pandemic.

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought a new normal to our lives. What parts will outlast the pandemic?

Historian Frank Bongiorno reminds us that Spanish influenza pandemic was not all bad. The failure of the states to cooperate led to the formation of a federal Department of Health in 1921.

During the 1919 Spanish Influenza pandemic, people had to wear masks, wash hands and avoid crowds. Very similar to recommended health practices in the current Corona outbreak.

In Camden, the first case occurred in April 1919, and the patient had a speedy recovery. There was a more severe outbreak with nine patients in May 1919, and the emergency hospital was re-opened at Camden Public School for six weeks.

The Methodist School Hall became the site for the hospital kitchen. Matron McAnane from Camden Hospital provided supervision, and she was assisted by Nurses Burk, Smart and Mackay, and the local Voluntary Aid Detachment.

The Camden Red Cross opened a centre to distribute clothing, food and kitchen utensils.

Out at Mount Hunter, there were no nurses for the six beds that were made available in local homes. In April the Camden mayor reported that 'the people out here are ready to assist in any practical way'. (Camden News 10 April 1919)

At Narellan, there were 12 beds made available in several local homes. Local people volunteered as ambulance transport, stretcher-bearers, nurses, cooks, laundry workers and housekeepers. (Camden News, 10 April 1919)



**The northern end of Argyle Street Camden in the early 1920s. The town would have changed little from the days of the Spanish influenza pandemic. (Camden Images)**

There were many patients in local homes and both Dr West and Dr Crookston became ill, along with two nurses and one voluntary aid. The highest daily intake at the Camden emergency hospital was 36 patients with an average stay of 21 days. There were four deaths.

### **Kissing at Camden railway station broke social distancing rules.**

The habit of some railway passengers kissing and breaking social distancing rules caused consternation at the local council.

The matter was raised in April 1919 by the Camden Nuisance Inspector. He was worried that people would ‘insist on kissing’ in a report to council. He complained that ‘residents met the trains at the [Camden] railway station and hugged and kissed passengers’.

The inspector recommended to the all-male council that ‘council should take steps to prevent kissing altogether during the crisis’.

On discussion, the aldermen decided that they ‘did not favour framing a by-law to prevent kissing’ and that Mayor Furner ‘should visit the railway station’ to stop this type of fraternisation.

Council aldermen were quite amused by the discussion. They finally agreed that they would leave the supervision of kissing on Camden railway station to the Nuisance Inspector. (Camden News, 24 April 1919)

## Camden Covid comments

### Ian Willis

In these days of Covid19, we are all experiencing a new normal. In the Camden area, more people are walking and exercising in a time of social isolation.

Camden South resident Cathey Shepherd says, 'I have used this time to walk all over Camden.'

'This town has a distinctive country feel about it. I know we are always being told this, but becomes noticeable when you don't go beyond the town', says Cathey.

The Covid19 crisis and forced isolation have given some people a time to reflect on their past.

Elderslie resident Fiona Woods says, 'The current isolation has given me more time to think about my past and the people that came before me.'

'I have developed a fascination for their stories, especially discovering how they overcame challenges', she says.

'The extra time I now have has seen me reading through our family book, soaking up as much as I can about their lives,' said Fiona.

Fiona recounts the story of her great-grandmother, who had 15 children. She says, 'Suddenly I had a connection with an ancestor I've never met'.

'Everyone has a story', says Fiona. 'In years to come, I want to be remembered for more than my name on a page'.

Fiona thinks that love and kindness can triumph over many challenges in the current situation.

'If my ancestors could survive wars, depressions and the untimely loss of children, I can get through this pandemic thing. I may need a little more wine', she says.

'One thing I'm learning from this is we all have a story to tell. Maybe we should use this time to write stories down so our future descendants can read them', she says.





# COVID has grounded my travel plans for now

## Genevieve Lowry

With trepidation I moved forward along the line at the check-in at Singapore Airlines terminal at Istanbul Airport, I stifled a cough, glad at this moment I was wearing a mask. The words my family and friends from Camden said to me rang in my ears as I approached check-in – “Don’t cough and look relaxed.” I could hear every single word that was uttered down the phone when my family were beckoning me back home from what was supposed to be my year away overseas.

The trip is what I had wanted for so long, but university and the recent death of my much-loved grandmother saw me delaying my trip. At age 23, I finally did it. My friend Veronica and I finally took the plunge one-night booking one-way tickets. We booked three tickets to Paris to be precise without a return date; one for myself, one for her and one for my sister- although she wasn’t aware at the time. The price was right. Admittedly, the reason it was cheap was the fact it was right in the middle of winter.

My sister was surprised but excited. She is also the down to earth one, who without doubt booked a return ticket for February. She was starting an honours degree and had many different priorities to me.

For me, it was working at Shoe Talk, which I did from the age of 15. A stint in hospitality at Back Galley in Camden and administration work at a local Camden law firm, far removed from my International Studies degree that saw me save the money and a strong determination to spread my wings. As much as I love the relaxed setting of Australia, I wanted to be one of the many to make their rite of passage overseas. For years I had heard people of different ages tell of their experiences; I wanted to have my own.

The travellers going ended up including two other friends – we were now on our way to Paris – all beloved school friends from Magdalene Catholic High School at Camden; people I could not wait to share my excitement with. Paris was to be our first stop in a long itinerary – followed by Amsterdam, Switzerland and then the Alps of Chamonix. The rest of the journey was a solo mission, just myself and I.

We left Camden, 24 January with temperatures in the high 30s heading to a climate with single digits and with little sunshine.

I was so looking forward to finally being away. The world as people say “was my oyster” not sure if that’s the appropriate expression for a vegan, anyway, I





**Genevieve Lowry in  
Monaco (2020)**

had so many plans, and adventures in store and I thought I could dodge this virus.

We had arrived in Paris and were taking in the city and cafes; little concerned about what was happening at home. We headed off to the famous Louvre to see the works of art we had only read about and seen in photos, finally up close and personal. Admittedly, the Mona Lisa wasn't all that awe-inspiring – a small dark painting with long queues. On the other hand, the Moulin Rouge was just something else. We roamed the city taking in the different points of interest, and the numerous café delighting in vegan croissants – which are non-existent in Camden.

At this point we had heard stories of the coronavirus spreading across Europe, we shook our heads thinking “no way will it affect our trip”.

Now a group of four, we went onto the ski field of the Alps; it was the highlight of my entire trip. The mountains of Kosciusko, whilst beautiful, are minuscule compared to the Alpine ranges of Chamonix, a skiers version of Disneyland. After a long day of skiing, there was nothing more rewarding than

going to have a drink with other fellow snowboarders and skiers, all foreigners who were able to share their experiences whilst having a laugh.

At this point, the group of four then became two as my friend Veronica and I headed live in the South of France for four weeks before heading to Germany, Munich and Berlin to be exact and soaked up the atmosphere wholeheartedly. We are not beer drinkers by any stretch of the imagination but managed to enjoy one in the beer halls along with the beautiful vibrancy of the local people who were very welcoming and enjoyed a sing-a-long. I couldn't imagine doing the same thing in Camden.

Each city we visited had its unique flare. There were highlights of this short trip, which made me crave more adventures for the future. From cycling the congested pedestrian streets of Amsterdam, having a 'vin chaud' (mulled wine) and roasted chestnuts on the streets of Strasbourg, to hiking to the top of Pic- Saint loop in the South of France, a day trip which quickly taught us the valuable lesson of hitch-hiking to make it back to our temporary home in Montpellier. Everywhere we went, we were greeted warmly by locals; making friends in the most bizarre situations, friends I am still in contact with today.

In the background, the spectre of the virus was following us.

It was 11 March 2020, the last night together for Veronica and I before we went our separate ways, she was heading to England, while I was off on my own. We celebrated by going to a famous Berlin nightclub – where we were warmly greeted by the locals who shared with us their uncertainty, that possibly this would be the last night Berlin would be able to party. We laughed again with the stranger and thought nothing of it.

The next morning, on the 12 March 2020, I ventured alone to the airport, Turkey was my next stop – a country rich in history, art and culture with food I could appreciate.

It was this day that all the globetrotters were starting to feel grounded. I had just landed in Istanbul, Turkey, feeling both a sense of uneasiness and excitement. Turkey was the part of the trip I was anticipating the most, to test myself and see how I would be travelling solo. I accepted the challenge with open arms and was ready for whatever came my way, or so I thought.

After settling in comfortably in my new accommodation, it was seven stars, minus five – what more did I expect on my budget. I switched on my phone to hear the tragic news, my dear friend Veronica, had just informed me that all her travel plans were abruptly cancelled. A day before her trip was to start.



**The city of Istanbul. (Genevieve Lowry 2020)**

Feeling exhausted and distraught, she had booked a flight home.

The world had started to close up overnight. In response I reached out to my own family back home in Camden only to be notified the situation was getting much worse – all Australian travellers were being encouraged to book flights home. Ignoring the advice, I decided to travel to Cappadocia in Turkey and ride out the rest of this adventure, and no way was I heading home. Cappadocia was another world in already unfamiliar territory. With a small group of newly made companions, we explored the underground caves. We were travelling into the valley of Göreme, exploring the homes of ‘cave dwellers’ whilst enjoying the sunsets over the valleys. It was perfect, but a nervous sensation was washing over me, conversations of borders closing were becoming too apparent.

I began questioning everything I was doing. So my sister Ally did what any sister would do, thinking I was an idiot, and maybe I was, she booked my ticket home. It dawned on at that point I couldn’t go on.

My heart broke at the thought of leaving this adventure behind. But I accept-

ed the reality; nothing was improving.

There were too many experiences in the short two months to put into words, but none more so than the exact moment when I decided to go home finally. I was utterly heartbroken and in disbelief over the reality. I valued my eight weeks away because I was lucky enough to have been able to experience an adventure in 2020, and it's left me hungry for more.

It became a race against time. This was not how I wanted to leave Turkey. I didn't want to let the sadness I felt effect my mind-frame in such a beautiful part of the world. So with another group of soon to depart travellers, we set out onto the streets of Istanbul once more, to enjoy one last sunset across the waters of the city. I decided it's a place I will come back to one day.

As I arrived at the airport I was dreading the lady at the check-in, after hearing her ask passengers before me if they had been to any of the red zone countries during the last 14 days – I had and there was clear proof in my passport.

I don't know whether at this moment she felt sorry for me, realizing I was on my own or if it was simply luck, she told me to place my bags on the coveter belt and printed my boarding pass.

A final indication that I was on the way to Camden.

# Old Photographs

**Ian Willis**

Old photographs provide an entry to a world that was more authentic than the present. The viewer of an old photograph is a time traveller into another world. A snapshot of a moment frozen in time. The observer has a glimpse of a world before the present. For the viewer, it as a form of nostalgia, where they create a romanticized version of the past accompanied by feelings that the present is not quite as good as an earlier period (Willis (2020).

Peter Mylrea wrote an article about Camden photographers in 2005 for the Camden History Journal. He lists some of the districts photographers from the 1860s, and they have included: W Macarthur; JB Mummery; HP Reeves; HT Lock; W Norton; J Donnellan; C Kerry; W Jackson; W Thwaites; CA Sibert; OV Coleman; AE Cash; R Cash; HE Perkins; R Dowle; and J Driscoll (Mylrea (2005). More recent photographers have included: J Burge; R Herbert; J Kooyman; P Mylrea; J Wrigley; B Atkins and others.

The work of some of these Camden photographers can be viewed on the photographic database Camden Images Past and Present. (<http://www.library.camden.nsw.gov.au/camden-images>)

Photographer Roy Dowle created a series of glass plates during his photographic work. The collection of slides has recently found it way to The Oaks Historical Society where its digitisation was organised by members.

## Digitizing The Roy Dowle Photographic Collection

**Trish Hill and Allen Seymour**

Roy William Dowle was born in 1893, the first child to Charles and Madeline Dowle (nee Dominish) and his siblings were Frank (1896), Edgar (1898) and Leonard (1904). Charles Dowle purchased their “Collingwood” property in Quarry Road, at The Oaks around the time of Roy’s birth. It is presumed that Roy lived there until his marriage to Emily J Smith in 1915.

Roy & Emily’s home was in Camden at the top of Barsden Street. Roy was a photographer and the Camden News of 26 March 1914 records that he received an award for photography in the amateur section at the Camden show. In 1937 he supplied photographs of Camden to the Council for use by the railways in their passenger carriages. Roy worked for Whitemans, and in 1943 he was called on to make a presentation to Charles Whiteman when the



**Portrait of Roy and Emily Dowle in the 1920s. Roy was a keen photographer in the Camden district, and his collection of glass plate negatives is now with The Oaks Historical Society at the Wollondilly Heritage Centre. (TOHS)**

latter retired. The Dowle's also had a holiday home at Erowal Bay – St

George's Basin.

Roy died in 1955, but fortunately, a large number of his glass and film negatives survived. These were donated to the Wollondilly Heritage Centre in 2016 by Roy's grand-daughter. An index book came with the collection, but unfortunately, a lot of the negatives were not in their original boxes, making identification of the people difficult. The photographs range in age from around 1910 to the 1940s.

The Wollondilly Heritage Centre was successful in obtaining a New South Wales Community Heritage grant in 2019 to digitize the collection which consists of 1100 glass plate negatives and a further 120 plastic film negatives. There was considerable work in preparing the negatives for digitizing, as they all had to be cleaned and numbered. Volunteers from the centre did this work from the centre over several weeks, and they were then transported in batches to Digital Masters at Balgowlah for digitizing. Most were still in excellent condition, and the quality of the scanned images is superb.

Roy photographed a lot of people, with weddings, babies and young children being popular subjects. He also photographed local buildings and houses, views, animals, local events such as parades or sporting events.

Buildings photographed include St Johns church (inside also), Camden Hospital (even inside shots), Camden Inn, Plough & Harrow Hotel, Narellan Hotel, Oakdale wine shop, Maloney's store, Narellan school, Mt Hunter school, Camden railway station, Camden Milk Depot, Mater Dei and others.

The unveiling of the Mt Hunter war memorial (pictured) was also covered by Roy, along with Mt Hunter School and some beautiful interior shots which show honour boards with photos of local soldiers.

Some fascinating photos are of children in fancy dress, and two that stand out, are of the same girl dressed firstly as a wedding cake, and then as a lampshade!! A number of the houses have been identified as still being in Camden, and other more easily identified homes include "Edithville" in Mitchell street, the former Methodist parsonage in Menangle Road and Harrington Park house.

Among the groups photographed is St John's Choir, returned servicemen, cricket teams, football teams, Masonic dinner, the Royal Forrester's, staff and children from Macquarie House, visiting school teachers and Sunday school groups. One photograph of a group of three male cyclists picnicking may be one of the first selfies, as we believe the centre one is Roy himself, holding a



**The opening of the Mount Hunter Soldier's War Memorial, opposite the public school took place on Saturday, 24 September 1921, at 2.30 pm. Brigadier-General GM Macarthur Onslow carried out the official unveiling ceremony. The memorial listed 40 names of local servicemen. Afternoon tea was provided by 'the ladies' at 1/- with all money going to the memorial fund. (*Camden News*, 15 September 1921, 22 September 1921. Image Roy Dowle Collection)**

string which runs to the camera. Soldiers were another popular subject, and there are also some women dressed as soldiers. Roy also copied photos. This process was done by photographing it, and a lot of the soldier photos have been copied this way.

Some of the views are of Wollongong, Bulli, Burragorang, Douglas Park, Theresa Park, Chellaston Street and some great shots taken from St Johns steeple. There are also numerous flood scenes around Camden. Animals didn't escape Roy's camera, and there are shots of cattle, horses, poultry, dogs. Even a camel. Some other remarkable photos are of a shop window display featuring Persil washing powder. Some of these have been dated to 1910.

A lot of the film negatives show his holidays, with some taken at their holiday home, while others are taken whilst on a trip to the north, and scenes have been identified as Cessnock, Dungog, Taree, Kew & Paterson. There are some photos of Warragamba Dam in the very early stages before any concrete was poured, and a magnificent shot of the winding drums of the overhead cableway.

Several of Roy's photos have already appeared on the Back Page and in numerous publications on local history because his subjects were local and numerous copies of them have survived in private collections.





**The bullock team of Davy Nolan at Mount Hunter with a load of produce. (Roy Dowle Collection)**

The scanned photos can be viewed either on a computer or in albums at the Wollondilly Heritage Centre & Museum, open on Saturdays, Sundays & public holidays.

Check out old photographs from the Roy Dowle Collection at the Wollondilly Heritage Centre Website. <http://www.wollondilymuseum.org.au/archives/photographic-archives/>

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# Unlocking Camden's History with the Camden Council Heritage Advisory Committee

## Laura Jane Aulsebrook

The Camden Council Local Government Area is repeatedly referenced as the fastest growing LGA in the country with a focus on contemporary lifestyle and an abundance of new residents. Despite this rapid growth, it remains an area that is proud of, and eager to promote, the rich heritage of the community and celebrate the contributions the community had to the "birthplace of Australia's Agricultural wealth". To create a *continued vision to help inform strategic heritage directions and community education around the importance of Camden's heritage to the unique identity of the Camden LGA*, Camden Council resolved in 2018 to establish the inaugural Camden Council Heritage Advisory Committee [1].

## Who's who on the Committee?

The Committee consists of three community representatives who were appointed through an application process; two Camden Councillors and an alternate Councillor as nominated by their fellow Councillors, a Camden Historical Society representative and an Indigenous representative for the area. The Committee, along with key personnel from Camden Council meets bi-monthly, working to promote and educate the broader community about the heritage of the area.

## Camden Council Heritage Advisory Committee Members:

### Chairperson

Councillor Cindy Cagney

### Councillor Members

Councillor Eva Campbell - Primary

Councillor Paul Farrow - Alternate

### Community Members

Ian McIntosh – North Ward

Michael Kennedy – Central Ward

Laura Jane Aulsebrook – South Ward

Glenda Chalker – Cubbitch Barta Native Title Claimants Corporation

Dr Ian Willis – Camden Historical Society

## Unlock Camden - The start of an annual event.

Celebrating Camden's community and heritage in an accessible way that co-ordinates with national History Week was the focus of the inaugural Commit-



### **Camden Council Heritage Advisory Committee 2020 (with permission Camden Council)**

tee event in September of 2019. The theme of “Unlock Camden” was established as a way to celebrate what residents love about the Camden community and “unlock” something new about the history that surrounds the community and town in which they live. The celebration was designed to be a way for older residents, those that grew up in the area, and newer residents, to celebrate and share their experiences. The day also promoted a heritage education, by allowing residents to learn more about the buildings they walk by on a regular basis, along with the history of the many community groups and how each contribute to the fabric of the town. The event allowed the community to learn more about infamous buildings, the history of groups of the town and why they are so crucial to the fabric of the community.

Despite gale-force winds forcing the closure of other community events in town, the 2019 celebration in the foregrounds of the Macaria Building in John Street went ahead with more than a dozen community groups showcasing their heritage and contribution to the Camden community. The day was a celebration of the people and organisations that make up the Camden community. From Girl Guides in historical uniforms, CWA selling homemade jams and chutneys, to family history research with the Camden Family History Society and the Camden Scouts showcasing their role in the community for over 100 years. The Camden Heritage Walking tour and brochure were relaunched, and members of the Camden Historical Society were there to provide more information. The self guided tours are year round activities and the relaunch encouraged residents far and wide to take up a tour for the first time. The Camden Community Band and local duo The Honey Sippers provided entertainment on the day along with the recently launched Alan Baker



**This is a stall at the Unlock Camden street fair in 2019 on the front lawn outside Macaria Alan Baker Art Gallery (Brett Atkins 2019)**

Spring Exhibition which welcomed visitors inside Macaria.

Of particular excitement was the reveal of the #mycamdenstory artwork. The hitching post outside Macaria was revealed to have over 100 images of Camden residents. Local places made up from anyone who had used the hashtag #mycamdenstory over the weeks leading up to the event. It was a way of sharing the people and stories that make up the Camden history and community today, combining the modern-day social media phenomena with Camden heritage made the event accessible to all.

### **Unlock Camden Online**

By the time of print, the Unlock Camden Online event should be in full force. This year the Covid-19 Pandemic that forced the cancellation of all community gatherings and events for the year. The Heritage Advisory Committee decided to take the event online for 2020, by filming a “virtual walking tour” that allows residents and those further afield the opportunity to explore Camden and some of its iconic buildings from the comfort of their home. This virtual tour follows the Camden Walking Tour brochure, to provide an accessible tourism resource for residents and visitors to Camden alike, to explore the heritage the community has to offer. The virtual walking tour is being

published online via Camden Council's website and social media accounts and provides a global audience with the chance to tour Camden and learn more about the significant heritage buildings from the comfort of their home! Coinciding with History Week 2020, the virtual tour launch is alongside many other online resources to celebrate Camden's History that will be accessible year round. Of particular interest is the armchair time travel experience. Highlighting pictures from "Camden Images" and the Museum's database, the Camden Library's website is launching a series of "then and now" digital puzzles allowing for a visual time travel experience on our screens. It is hoped that these online resources will encourage an increased interest in the heritage of the Camden region.

### **#mycamdenstory - Accessing heritage in the Social Media Age**

Love it or loathe it, understand it or be confused by it, there is no denying that we live in the social media age and that it is here to stay. Social media and heritage promotion do not necessarily spring to mind as being complimentary; however, it is surprising how well they align as a platform with instant and widespread access. Social media is a powerful tool in the digital age, with a mainstream audience that allows greater accessibility to heritage. Hashtags are a mode of gathering like-minded viewers by combining similar images in a connected and easily searched way. The #mycamdenstory hashtag, first promoted in the lead up to the Unlock Camden event in 2019, allows social media users with the platform to share their "Camden Story" and connect to their heritage, sense of belonging to the Camden community and their personal experiences with iconic Camden locations.

In the isolated world that 2020 has become due to Covid19, this sense of shared connection and community outreach on a digital platform has allowed residents to take the time to connect to their lived heritage and find out more about the stories and histories that community members share within the region. Once again, these images will be collated to create an artwork for display on the hitching post outside Macaria. They are thus creating a piece of art history that celebrates residents' connection to heritage in 2020.

### **The Future of the Committee**

As Camden LGA continues to grow and develop, sharing the heritage of the Camden region with newer residents presents new and challenging ways to communicate this knowledge in an accessible way. The Camden Council Heritage Advisory Committee looks forward to being able to promote all elements of Camden's heritage and reach new and old Camdinites alike!

### **Notes**

1. CCHAC Website - Camden Council's Heritage Advisory Committee -<https://www.camden.nsw.gov.au/planning/heritage-conservation/heritage-advisory-committee/>

## **Community Recognition Statement given to the NSW Parliament by Peter Sidgreaves MP, Member for Camden, on 6 August 2020**

### **CAMDEN MUSEUM 50TH ANNIVERSARY**

Mr PETER SIDGREAVES (Camden)—The Camden Museum has long been an integral part of cataloguing and displaying Camden's rich history. This historical museum was established by the Rotary Club of Camden and

The Camden Historical Society. It was opened on the 20th of June 1970 by Major General Sir Denzil Macarthur Onslow CBE, DSO, ED who was an Australian Army Officer, businessman and grazier and whose family the iconic

Onslow Park in Camden was named after. On the 20th of June 2020, the Camden Historical Society celebrated 50 years since the museum's opening. The Society met and held a celebration for this important milestone of one of

Camden's great historic centres. I'd like to note the efforts of the Camden Historical Society's committee members Ian Ramsay, Rene Rem, Frances Warner, Robert Wheeler, Dawn Williams and Julie Wrigley as well as President Doug Barrett, Vice Presidents Warren Sims and John Wrigley OAM, Treasurer Fletcher Joss and Secretary Lee Stratton for all the work they do recording, maintaining and displaying Camden's rich and important history for our future generations.

### **Notes**

Legislative Assembly Hansard – 06 August 2020 <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/Hansard/Pages/HansardResult.aspx#/docid/HANSARD-1323879322-112208>



**Peter Sidgreaves MP,  
Member for Camden  
(with permission)**

## A Familiar Face: Tildsley's Butchery

Dianne Matterson

When Edward Griffiths leased the small shop on the corner of Argyle and Oxley Streets for his butcher's business in 1894, he would never have dreamed that the site would be continuously occupied by a series of butchers during the next 126 years, eventually culminating in the familiar Tildsley's Butchery at 151-155 Argyle Street. Before Edward's lease, and as early as 1840, the man who did much of the work on the font and stone flagging of St. John's Church, William Buchan, had his stonemason's business here.<sup>1</sup>

In the early 1850s, William left his family in Camden and joined the crowds trying to make their fortunes on the Victorian goldfields. In 1854, having not heard from him for some time, and believing he was at the Port Phillip diggings, his family appealed for information. They asked anyone who knew his whereabouts to contact his wife, Margaret, or his son, Alexander.<sup>2</sup> The outcome of this appeal is unknown although it is possible it revealed that William was deceased. In December, Alexander purchased the corner site for £60, possibly from his father's estate. When Alexander died in 1859, ownership of the land passed to Margaret Buchan.<sup>3</sup>

By the end of the 1850s, Richard Potter, a harness maker, was open for business on the Buchan corner,<sup>4</sup> followed by Charles Whiteman. The latter began his commercial activity in Camden in 1878 when he brought produce to the town to sell. He occupied the single-storey premises on the corner of Argyle and Oxley Streets and ran the store from here. However, before the end of the year, Charles' produce store had burnt down.<sup>5</sup> A former resident of Camden, PC Furner, recalled that Charles Whiteman subsequently rebuilt a wooden shop and residence on this same site.

In 1889, the newly incorporated Camden Municipal Council valued all properties within the municipality based on their rental values. As a result, owners were liable for council rates based on a levy of one shilling in the pound, revenue that was matched pound for pound by the New South Wales government.<sup>6</sup> At around this time, Charles Whiteman vacated the building.<sup>7</sup>

Edward Griffiths' tenure on the small Whiteman building began about 5 years later.<sup>8</sup> In 1895, he advertised in the *Camden News* for 'good condition' hides, telling the public he had negotiated a commission with a firm of exporters and could offer the 'highest possible price' to anyone able to supply him with quality hides.<sup>9</sup>

In March 1896, a public meeting was held to discuss the issue of land tax and to determine the unimproved value of land within Camden township. A year earlier, the New South Wales government had legislated for land taxes cen-



tred on the unimproved value of the land. This value was based on one penny in the pound of the capital value of a property.

## **Land Tax**

All landowners had to submit their land tax returns by 27 March 1896, but this was not possible until the unimproved value of their land was resolved. As there was no centralised land valuation agency, a meeting of local landowners was called to arrive at a 'fair and honest' land assessment. After some discussion, various values were agreed upon depending on their location within the town; the land from Oxley Street to the drill hall had an unimproved value of £1/10/- per foot.<sup>10</sup> Margaret Buchan's land had a frontage of 66 feet, requiring a land tax payment of £99 per annum.

## **Small debts court**

Edward Griffiths was the plaintiff in action he took against AJ Doust in the Small Debts Court in 1896 for the amount of £16/9/2, asserting he had supplied meat to Mr Doust going back to 1893 and some of those accounts were included in the current claim. He admitted he owed Mr Doust £11/18/- and just wanted to get the 'account settled and off his books'. However, Mr Doust said the meat 'was not sound' and was 'short in weight'. He also told the court that according to his records, he only owed £15/0/2.

Edward Griffiths responded, saying that his meat was sound when it was delivered and that he could account for the difference in weight as it was 'usual to charge for the bone taken out of meat for rolling roast meat.' The plaintiff and defendant were told by the solicitors present that the 1893 accounts were beyond the statute of limitations. After some discussion, the bench decided they had no jurisdiction to make a ruling on the case.<sup>11</sup>

In February 1897, Edward again appeared in the Small Debts Court, this time as the defendant. Mr Hamilton said he was employed by Mr Griffiths for a fortnight's tuition in preparation for the defendant's inspector of stock examination, at £2/2/- per week. The defendant had paid him £3/10/-, but this didn't include two days of tuition, leaving a deficit of 14 shillings.

## **Travelling expenses**

The plaintiff also claimed 5/11d. for travelling expenses, making a total claim of 19/11d. Mr Hamilton said he'd arrived in Camden at 7 p.m. on 2 December and began his tuition of Mr Griffiths the next day and continued – including working on the Sundays – until 14 December when Mr Griffiths' exam was held. Edward asserted that Mr Hamilton should have arrived on 30 November as agreed, but then telegrams were produced showing the court the plaintiff was unable to reach Camden on the arranged date.

The defendant said Mr Hamilton had worked on Sunday, but some of the day



was spent sightseeing, as he had taken the plaintiff for a drive around the area. The Bench's verdict favoured the plaintiff (14/10d) as they thought Mr Griffiths 'should have varied the agreement after the arrival of Mr Hamilton'. The plaintiff's application for expenses was disallowed.<sup>12</sup>

By 1897, Edward Griffiths had two assistants working for him, namely Jack Parker and Dave Wilson, the latter being the slaughterman.<sup>13</sup> Around this time, their employer met with an accident while feeding his horses in the stables. One of the horses attempted to bite the neighbouring horse, and when the harassed horse moved quickly out of the way, it struck Edward on the side of the head, knocking him unconscious for a time and resulting in severe bruising.<sup>14</sup>

### Nepean River floods

When the Nepean River flooded land and businesses in and around Camden in February 1898, Edward lost several sheep, who either drowned or were washed away from his slaughter yard. However, in a fortunate turn of events, his pigs escaped to higher ground.<sup>15</sup>

In September, nearly two years after falling out with Mr Hamilton over the training for the inspector's exam, Edward was offered a position with the Department of Health as a meat inspector, an opportunity he accepted and quickly made preparations to leave Camden.<sup>16</sup> He sold his business to Albert Dunk (Bert) who wasted no time advising the public he would buy hides, tallow, sheepskins, horsehair and 'every kind of produce' at the 'highest price-

A. E. D U N K  
(Successor to Mr. E. G. Griffiths)  
B U T C H E R,  
Argyle-street, Camden,  
Is a buyer of Hides, Tallow, Sheep-skins,  
Horse-hair, and every kind of produce at highest  
prices for cash.  
The support of the public will be esteemed a  
favour. The best only of provisions supplied.

**Bert Dunk's advertisement (*Camden News*, 27 October 1898)**

es'.<sup>17</sup>

Since 1897, when Margaret Buchan died, the corner site had been managed by her executors. In April 1899 this was about to change. The *Camden News* advised readers that the shop and cottage, with a frontage of 66 feet and a depth of 330 feet, were for sale by auction by the local auctioneer, R. Inglis.<sup>18</sup>

Overlaying these measurements on the buildings near this intersection in 2020, the extent of the Buchan land becomes apparent. It takes in the current Tildsley's Butchery, Camden Photo Centre and Queen's Charcoal Chicken in Argyle Street, as well as the Camden Dental Centre, the adjacent Oxley Street laneway giving access to Woolworths' carpark and about ¼ of Woolworths' store up to a point approximately level with the bus stop. In 1899, this was a most desirable site in a developing main street; bidding began at an eye-watering £250, before the hammer fell at £425, selling to brothers, Alfred and Frederick Little.<sup>19</sup>

In August 1902, Bert Dunk ceased delivering meat to his customers owing to the costs involved,<sup>20</sup> but just six months later was preparing to move into the new building constructed for the Littles on the site of the old shop by local builders, Hindes & Farindon. The two-storey building was considered an enhancement and a 'credit to the town', particularly when, a month later, a balcony was added that curved around the corner into Oxley Street; the location soon became known locally as 'Dunk's Corner'.<sup>21</sup>

### Winter shop fire

On a winter's night in 1907, Bert's shop could easily have been destroyed by fire if not for the skill of the Camden Volunteer Fire Brigade. The flames took hold in the shops of his neighbours, Horace Doust and H. Rafter, and were so fierce that by morning both premises were just smouldering ruins. Miraculously, Bert's shop and Mrs Wilkinson's boarding house were saved. The Littles had insurance on the two devastated properties and soon began rebuilding, this time constructing a two-shop premises with a residence above. At this stage, it is possible they subdivided the land, so the butcher shop and the new building each had separate land titles. Certainly by 1929 it had been subdivided, by which time the land on which the butcher's shop stood had a frontage of 26 feet.<sup>22</sup>

For two decades, Bert successfully supplied meat to the Camden public. However, in 1921 the Board of Health reported to Camden Council that the "improvement [previously] recommended was carried out, but upon inspection, I found the shop walls, particularly around benches, the interior of cool room and walls of salt room, dirty. The sausage filling machine was in a very dirty state. The plunger and cylinder were most dirty and encrusted thick with stale meat, grease and dirt. Outside the mincing room door was a tin dish containing scraps of mince-meat which was offensive and swarming



**MEAT  
THAT'S A TREAT  
TO EAT.**

*THERE is double the enjoyment in the meal when  
the meat is the best.*

*Only the choicest cuts are offered here, because we  
see to it that the cattle are in prime condition—every  
pound of meat is full of nourishment and of pleasing  
flavor.*

**LAURIE DUNK**

Quality Corner, CAMDEN Phone 18

**Laurie Dunk's advertisement (*Camden News*, 13 December 1923)**

with flies, and which the butcher admitted, had been there several days.”<sup>23</sup>

At the same time, stormwater and sullage from the Dunk premises and the adjoining two businesses were carried by a system of pipes, and open brick drains through the rear yards before discharging into an old garden at the Crown Hotel, creating a ‘nuisance’. The ‘nuisance inspector’ suggested mitigating the problem by breaking up the ground in the garden and ‘properly’ distributing the drainage water through the area.<sup>24</sup>

Bert Dunk died in October 1921 and his widow, Hilda, advertised the business for sale four months later. The sale notice stated that it was a ‘first-class family butchering business’. The sale included goodwill, cattle, sheep, horses, carts, harness, saddles, fixtures, utensils, sausage machine (horsepower), ice house and Drayton scales. All were in good condition.<sup>25</sup> By June 1922, Frank Paine occupied the shop and successfully applied to Camden Council

for a slaughterman's license.<sup>26</sup>

### **Town improvement levy**

In 1923, Camden Council introduced a 'Town Improvement' levy for all properties within the town's boundary. The rate was one penny in the pound on the unimproved value of each allotment. It raised £251/10/3 for the improvement of Macarthur Park and extensive tree planting for street beautification.<sup>27</sup> It is unknown what the unimproved value of the butcher's shop was in 1923, but in 1929 it was £286. Using this as a guide, the Town Improvement levy payable by the Littles for this site, would have been something less than £1/3/9.

### **Board of Health**

Like Bert Dunk before him, Frank Paine also came to the notice of the Health Inspector when the Board of Health's Inspector Curry, charged him with failing to keep his premises clean, a charge to which Frank pled not guilty. Inspector Curry said he found a wooden box used for the storage of bones in a dirty condition in the shop; the box had not been cleaned for several days and contained grease, blood and fat. Behind the ice chest, there were floor sweepings, the needle attached to the brine pump was in a dirty condition and a number of stale bones and waste was giving off an offensive smell and was covered with flies.

In the same room was a tin of waste fruit and vegetable matter, along with cooked meat and kitchen offal. The nozzle of the sausage filling machine was dirty and contaminated with mince and fat, while the mincing machine was also dirty. At the rear of the 'closet' was a heap of ashes, tins, kitchen waste, sawdust and shop sweepings. The cart used to transfer carcasses from the slaughter yard to the shop was dirty as was a piece of hessian used to cover the carcasses. In his defence, Frank said he was absent from his shop on the day the inspector arrived.

Frank asserted: the box used for bones was emptied daily and limed every Saturday; the sawdust at the back of the ice chest was placed there to prevent the sawdust in the chest running out through a hole near the floor of the chest that had been made during a recent removal; the bag of bones in the room adjacent to the shop would have been emptied that day and contained no stale bones or waste; the sausage machine had not been used for 3 or 4 months, was clean and could have been used immediately; the heap of rubbish at the rear of the 'closet' was harmless; the cart was washed twice a week with hot water; and there was no hessian used to cover the carcasses as he used a waterproof sheet instead, which was kept on the back veranda when not in use. Despite his protestations, Frank was fined £2 and 18/- costs. On a further charge of allowing his stable yard to become littered with manure, he was fined £1 and 18/- costs.<sup>28</sup> After this, he ceased business.

## Quality Corner

In December 1923, a Dunk once again occupied the butcher shop when Laurie Dunk opened for business, advertising his shop on 'Quality Corner'. He had previously owned a fruit and vegetable business before becoming the proprietor of a butcher shop next to Betts & Co in 1922.<sup>29</sup> Once he was settled in the former Paine shop, Laurie Dunk made 'vast' improvements to his butcher's premises. He enhanced the method by which meat was handled and rid his business of the difficulties of keeping meat cold using the ice storage he had used in the past. Laurie refitted the front of the shop with the latest appliances and installed a modern refrigerating plant powered by a five hp Hornsby gas engine fuelled by town gas.

## Refrigeration

The refrigerator, which maintained a temperature of 30°F, operated through two specially built rooms that were capable of storing the carcasses of ten bullocks and 25 sheep at one time, while also allowing for meat to be cut up. The refrigerator also chilled the brine tanks that cured and stored corn meat. The gas engine powering the refrigeration unit also provided electric light and fans for the premises.<sup>30</sup> However, the introduction of such modern technology was not all smooth sailing.

In June 1925, Les Marden, an employee in the Dunk butchery, was injured when his right hand was caught in a power-driven mincing machine. He lost a portion of three fingers in the accident and spent a few days in Camden District Hospital. Just a couple of months later, a number of residents living nearby complained to Camden Council about the noise from the gas engine, resulting in Laurie having to fit a silencer to the motor.<sup>31</sup>

By 1926, the drains from the butcher shop and its immediate neighbours fronting Argyle Street were once again cause for concern and were in such a bad state of repair that Alfred Little, the owner of both the butcher's shop and its neighbour, had no choice but to submit a sketch, plans and specifications of the proposed improved drainage work to Camden Council, ready for the Board of Health's consideration.<sup>32</sup>

## Supplying meat to Camden Hospital

In February 1927 as Camden Show approached, Laurie offered a 'beast' to the organisers of the weight judging competition and donated £2/2/- towards the prize for the competition winner. By December, he had successfully tendered to supply meat to Camden District Hospital, but in early 1928 found himself on the wrong side of the Board of Health when he was fined 30/- and 8/- costs for selling adulterated sausages containing more sulphur oxide than was allowed.<sup>33</sup> However, an inspection by the Health Department in August 1928 brought good news: his premises were reported to be in good condition,

although a few minor improvements were required.

Laurie's slaughter yard also received a tick of approval, but he soon found life as a businessman involved more than selling to the public, and in 1929, an oversight cost him another 10/- and 8/- in costs when he failed to pay the Department of Labour and Industry the required registration fee for his premises by 1 December 1928.<sup>34</sup>

In 1926, the New South Wales government had established a centralised Valuer General's Department, so the self-determined values settled on by the Camden landowners back in 1896 were now superseded by the assessments of the government agency. The rates of the Council were based on these new valuations. Consequently, in 1929, the unimproved value of the two-storey butcher shop and residence was determined to be £286 with an improved value of £1,100.<sup>35</sup>

In 1929, Laurie Dunk's butcher and slaughter yard licenses were transferred to J. & E. Smith (Smith Brothers) although Laurie still maintained ownership of the slaughter yard.<sup>36</sup> His business versatility came to the fore again, when he took up a living as a real estate agent and auctioneer after disposing of the butcher shop. The Smith brothers weren't in the shop for long, however, when an employee, Sid Dunk, was involved in an accident on the Hume Highway near Hilder Street, Elderslie in February 1930.

### **Truck accident**

Sid was driving the butcher's lorry when he was hit from behind by another vehicle. The lorry overturned and landed in a ditch, trapping Sid inside. His two passengers were slightly hurt, but, through good fortune, Sid escaped injury.<sup>37</sup> However, the death of the Smith brothers' father in the United Kingdom soon after, heralded another change to the proprietorship of the butcher shop. One of the brothers had to travel to the United Kingdom to attend to his father's affairs, so the partnership was dissolved in 1930 and the business sold to G. L. Chapman.<sup>38</sup> Within four months, Mr Chapman had sold to Fred and Glenroy Dunk, two well-known local men. "Thus, the corner...revert[ed] back to the old name of Dunk's Corner, which was established when the building was erected."<sup>39</sup>

Three years later, the shop was about to receive a facelift. Alfred Little called for tenders to paint the shop and residence occupied by Dunk's Butchery and the two adjoining businesses. However, before the month ended, Alfred died, and it seems the building was sold, and although the transfer date is unknown, the Dunks were certainly the owners by 1936.<sup>40</sup>

In 1936, Fred and Glenroy Dunk received approval – subject to the 'conditions' of the Board of Health – from Camden Council for a new slaughterhouse in Dunk's Road just off The Oaks Road. The site had received pre-



**Tildsley's Butchery c. 1948: (l to r) Reg Tildsley, Kevin Sinclair, Frank Tildsley [Camden Images]**

vious approval from the inspector, Sergeant Porteus.<sup>41</sup> Glenroy also had a slaughter yard at Cawdor, which now forms part of the garden of a home in the village. He did his own slaughtering and regularly attended the stock sales at the sale yards at the rear of the Plough and Harrow Hotel and Camden Hotel and, after 1940, in the new yards in Edward Street.<sup>42</sup>

Business was good for Fred and Glenroy and another local butcher, R. S. Boardman, if the number of animals passing through the Dunk slaughter yard is any indication. During the six months from 1 January to 30 June 1936, 308 cattle, 1,677 sheep and 78 pigs met their end at the hands of the slaughterman.<sup>43</sup> Although the exact time is unknown, Freida Dunk was employed as a cashier in the butcher shop, and two other employees were Peter and George Watson. At one stage, Glenroy Dunk had the motto, "Try our famous sausages" painted on a side wall.<sup>44</sup>

### **Balconies and verandas**

October saw Camden Council pass a controversial ordinance requiring that all balconies and verandahs built over the footpath be demolished within two years of the date of the order. Individual notices were sent to all the af-

fect building owners, including Glenroy Dunk. Any replacement structures had to cantilever from the building's façade.<sup>45</sup>

By March 1937, the Cleary brothers, John, Patrick and Daniel, had purchased the building two doors down, which had been the Royal Oak Inn before Mrs Wilkinson took it over as a boarding house followed in later years by Mrs Skinner. Soon after, the Clearys wanted to purchase 2 roods (about half an acre) of the adjoining Dunk land fronting onto Oxley Street.

The land in question was part of the backyard of Dunk's butcher shop, as well as the adjoining premises at 157-163 Argyle Street, which were also owned by Glenroy Dunk. Ownership of this piece of land would give the Clearys rear access to their newly acquired property at 165 Argyle Street. The subdivision was approved<sup>46</sup> and with the sale, the depth of the Dunk land (151-163 Argyle Street) was reduced from 330 feet to 225 feet. The access to the rear of the Clearys' property at 165 Argyle Street had a 105 foot frontage to Oxley Street, taking in the current Oxley Street lane access to Woolworths' car park, along with a portion of the land occupied by the Woolworths' building, up to approximately the existing bus shelter.

In April 1937, the Dunk butcher shop was remodelled, perhaps using the money received for the land sold to the Cleary brothers. As part of the renovation, the verandahs of the two shops at 157-163 Argyle Street, as well as Dunk's Butchery, were removed following the 1936 Camden Council order. However, as the order only applied to verandahs in Argyle Street, the portion of the Dunk veranda in Oxley Street was not demolished and still stands today. Cantilever awnings were erected in the place of the balconies. Brickwork was added above the residence to strengthen the butcher shop and form a parapet to screen the roof.<sup>47</sup>

In 1945, Council permission was given for the construction of a fibro cement garage and storeroom at the rear of Dunk's butchery, although the Council said they would prefer the building to be constructed from brick, or at the very least, to have a brick frontage.<sup>48</sup> Once more known as 'Quality Corner' – a legacy from Laurie Dunk's day – in 1946 the shop was leased from Glenroy Dunk (now sole owner) by Reg Tildsley, a butcher who'd worked in the family shops in Campbelltown and Narellan.

### **Reg opens butcher shop in Camden**

After these businesses were sold, Reg opened the butcher shop in Camden, along with his sons, Frank and Les, and by 1948, also employed Kevin Sinclair. Reg, his wife, Grace, and their three children, Frank, Jean and Les, lived in the residence. There were bedrooms and bathroom upstairs, lounge room and kitchen downstairs in what is now the tobacco shop – while the backyard held a garage and fruit trees.<sup>49</sup> After the 1937 subdivision, the rear fence was directly in line with the northern wall of the current Camden Den-





**Tildsley Butcher Shop at 155 Argyle Street Camden in 2016. (I Willis)**

tal Centre. In 1950, Reg Tildsley successfully applied for registration of his slaughter yard in Westbrook Lane (Mount Hunter) and over the next two years supplied meat to Camden District Hospital.<sup>50</sup>

Between 1950 and 1953, Glenroy Dunk sold another 60 feet of his backyard leaving a property depth of 165 feet, bringing the back fence to a line approximately level with the southern wall of the Camden Dental Centre. It had an unimproved value of £1,690 and an improved value of £3,900.<sup>51</sup> In 1956, Glenroy sold the property to Reg, Frank and Les Tildsley, and it stayed in the family for the next 38 years. Reg and Grace's granddaughter, Roslyn, recalls her grandmother sitting at the kitchen window talking to passers-by and keeping an eye on the comings and goings in the street.

The double garage in the backyard housed the 'famous green Bedford meat truck', along with the family's Holden car. During these years, like the Dunks before them, Tildsley sausages were famous in the area and highly sought after by locals. Roslyn recalls sausages even going interstate when the family went on holidays, and today she still hears people remark that Tildsley's is the only place they will purchase sausages. In the late 1960s, Keith Weatherburn began to work in the shop, followed in 1976 by his son, Mark. In the early 1990s, the residence's downstairs kitchen and lounge

room were converted into a small shop that was occupied by the ladies' wear business, 'Aussie Casuals'.<sup>52</sup>

In 1990, the size and style of the 87-year-old Tildsley building were duplicated by Les Tildsley on the land fronting Oxley Street that had previously been what remained of the backyard of Reg and Grace Tildsley. The new building (55 Oxley Street) had five shops on the ground floor with two residences above. During these years Mark Weatherburn continued to work in the butcher shop, and although the length of their employment is unknown, was a colleague of both Barry Harper and Wayne Wells.

### Sale of butchery

In 1994, the butchery was sold to Mark Weatherburn and his wife, Sonya, who continued to trade under the name "Tildsley's Butchery". To the Tildsley family, the sale of the business to Mark and Sonya Weatherburn felt like it was being kept 'in the family' as there had been a Weatherburn working for them for almost 30 years.<sup>53</sup> In 1998, Camden Tobacconist moved from premises at 167 Argyle Street into the small shop that had previously been the kitchen of the butcher's residence and continues to trade from this location today.<sup>54</sup>

And so, after decades of butchers on this site, Tildsley's Butchery continues to present a familiar and affable face to the shoppers of the town. The occupants of the shop have earned their place in the history of a main street that is filled with a collage of stories and characters. In 2010, the significance of the 117-year-old building was acknowledged when it was added to Camden Council's Local Environmental Plan, giving formal recognition to the comforting presence of an established part of the streetscape and the town's history.<sup>55</sup>

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> John Burge's 1993 Argyle Street index. Martin, J.B. et al., *Reminiscences of Early Camden*, Ed. J. Johnson, Camden Historical Society Inc., 2012, p. 26. *Camden News*, 7 October 1897; 7 November 1940

<sup>2</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 October 1854

<sup>3</sup> John Burge's 1993 Argyle Street index. N.S.W. Government Gazette, 9 August 1859, Issue 153, p. 1740. *Camden News*, 7 October 1897

<sup>4</sup> Atkinson, Alan, *Camden – Farm and Village Life in Early New South Wales*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1988, p. 54, 56. Hand-drawn map in John Burge's research papers.

<sup>5</sup> Willis, Ian, 'Whiteman's Commercial Building', *Camden History Notes Blog*, pub. 25 December 2017

<sup>6</sup> Sidman, G. V., *The Town of Camden*, Camden Public Library & Liz Vincent, 1995, p. 36

<sup>7</sup> Willis, Ian, 'Whiteman's Commercial Building', *Camden History Notes Blog*: pub. 25 December 2017

<sup>8</sup> Camden Council Municipal List: Rates Book 1894-1907

<sup>9</sup> *Camden News*, 20 June 1895

<sup>10</sup> *Camden News*, 19 March 1896

- <sup>11</sup> *Camden News*, 6 August 1896
- <sup>12</sup> *Camden News*, 11th February 1897
- <sup>13</sup> Recollections of the former resident, Ben Hodge
- <sup>14</sup> *Camden News*, 11 March 1897
- <sup>15</sup> *Camden News*, 17 February 1898
- <sup>16</sup> *Camden News*, 29 September 1898; 13 October 1898
- <sup>17</sup> *Camden News*, 13 October 1898; 27 October 1898
- <sup>18</sup> *Camden News*, 13 April 1899
- <sup>19</sup> *Camden News*, 27 April 1899
- <sup>20</sup> *Camden News* 7 August 1902
- <sup>21</sup> Martin, J.B. et al., *Reminiscences of Early Camden*, Ed. J. Johnson, Camden Historical Society Inc., 2012, p. 51. *Camden News*, 30 April 1903; 7 May 1903; 6 August 1903
- <sup>22</sup> *Camden News*, 18 July 1907; 25 July 1907. N.S.W. Valuer General's Assessment Book: 1929
- <sup>23</sup> *Camden News*, 5 May 1921
- <sup>24</sup> *Camden News*, 5 May 1921
- <sup>25</sup> *Camden News*, 6 October 1921; 9 February 1922; 23 March 1922
- <sup>26</sup> *Camden News*, 11 May 1922; 1 June 1922
- <sup>27</sup> Sidman, G. V., *The Town of Camden*, Camden Public Library & Liz Vincent, 1995, p. 72
- <sup>28</sup> *Camden News*, 19 April 1923
- <sup>29</sup> *Camden News*, 12 January 1922; 13 December 1923
- <sup>30</sup> *Camden News*, 16 October 1924
- <sup>31</sup> *Camden News*, 18 June 1925; 20 August 1925
- <sup>32</sup> *Camden News*, 2 December 1926; 10 February 1927
- <sup>33</sup> *Camden News*, 24 February 1927; 29 December 1927; 22 March 1928
- <sup>34</sup> *Camden News*, 23 August 1928; 28 March 1929; 16 May 1929
- <sup>35</sup> N.S.W. Valuer General's Assessment Book: 1929
- <sup>36</sup> *Camden News*, 21 November 1929; 27 November 1930
- <sup>37</sup> *Camden News*, 20 February 1930
- <sup>38</sup> *Camden News*, 27 March 1930
- <sup>39</sup> *Camden News*, 31 July 1930
- <sup>40</sup> *Camden News*, 2 February 1933; 2 March 1933
- <sup>41</sup> *Camden News*, 27 February 1936
- <sup>42</sup> Recollections of the former resident, Charles Dunk
- <sup>43</sup> *Camden News*, 16 July 1936
- <sup>44</sup> Recollections of the former resident, Charles Dunk
- <sup>45</sup> *Camden News*, 15 October 1936
- <sup>46</sup> *Camden News*, 4 March 1937
- <sup>47</sup> *Camden News*, 15 April 1937
- <sup>48</sup> *Camden News*, 15 February 1945
- <sup>49</sup> *Camden News*, 2 July 1936; 11 July 1946; 25 July 1946. Recollections of Roslyn Tildsley – Reg & Grace's granddaughter
- <sup>50</sup> *Camden News*, 15 June 1950; 28 June 1951; 17 July 1952
- <sup>51</sup> N.S.W. Valuer General's Assessment Book: 1953
- <sup>52</sup> Recollections of Roslyn Tildsley and Sonya Weatherburn
- <sup>53</sup> Recollections of Roslyn Tildsley; 'Joe', owner of J.P.'s Hairdressing Salon; Sonya Weatherburn.
- <sup>54</sup> Camden Telephone Directories 1968-2019, Camden Museum.
- <sup>55</sup> Local Environmental Plan – Schedule 5 'Environmental Heritage' Camden Council.

