

CAMDEN HISTORY

Journal of the Camden Historical Society



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CAMDEN HISTORY

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Meetings

Meetings are held at 7.00 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. 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.

Front Cover: Frances Warner named 2025 Camden Woman of the Year (CC)

Back Cover: Camden Men's Shed (W Sims)

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What did you keep your pens, pencil, rubbers, pencil sharpeners in while at school?

Dianne Smith

Inspired by the terquasquicentennial or the 175 anniversary of the opening of Camden Public School recently, the subject of pencil cases on display continues to excite and inspire me.

What an enormous amount of information can be gathered from these objects. All three of these examples are made from wood. The first two were on loan from Camden Museum.

Firstly, one from Camden's benefactress Miss Llewella Davies. Looking carefully at each surface of the young Llewella's pencil case it is possible to imagine her practising her initials - LHD, recording her friends' names or her full name in print and in script whilst whiling away the minutes before recess in class as her teacher attempted to pass on processes of mathematics or study of a poem.

Llewella inscribed friends' names into the side of her pencil case. We can only imagine what their lives may have turned out to be. Could any one of these names have represented someone she held special in her heart?

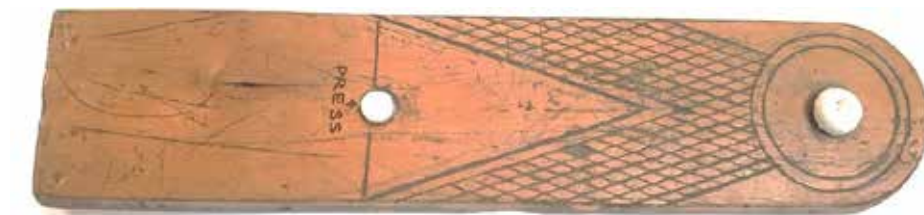
The zips and Velcro of today's version hold a multitude of pencils, textas, pens needs to be flexible, light weight as well as able to take the rough and tumble of 2024s student's daily use. I suspect that Llewella, the student, may have put her pencil case through some tough wear and tear too. The second pencil case has a fascinating locking device. Observe the lid of Llewella's



Llewella Davies pencil case, lid and base (Camden Museum)

pencil case and compare it to the second one. See if you see some similarities and draw your own conclusions.

Pencil case two belonged to Lesley Crossing of The Grove, Camden. The lid of this case seems to have been decorated professionally. It includes two white buttons. Compare the top and bottom of the lid. The small button must be pushed down depressing the internal lever while sliding the lid open



Pencil case, lid and base of Lesley Crossing, The Grove, Camden (Camden Museum)



Geoffrey Eagles, The Oaks Road, Camden. (Camden Museum)



Inside the lid of Lesley Crossing's pencil case. (Camden Museum)

other- wise the lid is locked. The incorporation of this device would have been a magic introduction in its time.

Lesley has revealed a wealth of information for any researcher to gather. She attended Kambala School and we could deduce that she travelled on 'Pansy', the local train. The timeframe of her schooling is clearly recorded by the date of 1913 and another being 1914. How did she and other students of this era view world events? Did they travel on Pansy discussing these possibilities and how their lives might be affected? Did Lesley find a life partner after the needless loss of so many young Australians through the War to end all Wars and then the 'Spanish flu'?

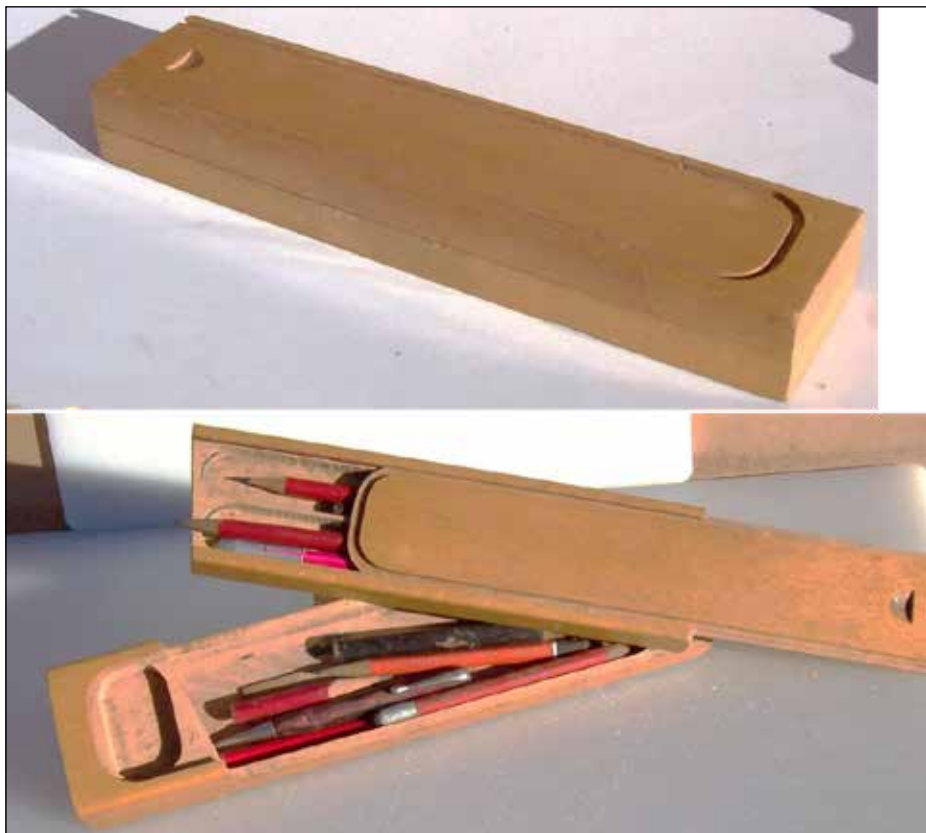
Clearly horses played a big part in Lesley's life. Note the names on the base of her pencil case. Again printing and script have been used. Probably the names of her friends as well as beloved horses such as 'Freckles' are recorded. Maybe these were inscribed while sidetracking herself from a tricky home- work task. Also we could conclude that Lesley had an aptitude for drawing too.

The final pencil 'box' as they were also known, belongs to Geoff Eagles. His roll top version would have been much admired in his classes throughout the 1950s. His mother, Joan ensured that it wouldn't be lost by writing his name and address on the base of it using pen and ink. It is amazing that this has lasted well over sixty years because although made from wood it's roll top mechanism is very fragile. Individual minute slats of wood are taped together underneath to emulate the roll top desk style so popular in furnishing of the era. Geoff made recent careful repairs to restore its roll top function.

To round off the attraction, especially to the boys of the 1950s, this pencil box has an image of a 'Red Indian' in full feather headdress as well as the word 'Indian' on the roller lid. For those too young to know 'Cowboys & Indians', they were made popular in the 1950s by popular American western movies.

Finally note the addresses of Lesley and Geoffrey. ‘The Grove’ is enough to identify her home while Geoff’s family lived on what was then known as ‘The Oaks Road’; now known as ‘Burrangrang Road’.

My personal experience in the 1950s was to own the wonderful double-storey wooden swing arm pencil case. It had a slide lid that exposed the top level for shorter pens or pencils plus a rubber eraser) concavity. I used it for my pencil sharpener and the inevitable wood shavings. I still remember the smell of them. When that arm was swivelled to the right the bottom level was exposed; a perfect fit for longer items like pens with their nib still attached. I imagine many Baby Boomers will have treasured a similar piece of equipment.



Dianne Smith double-storey wooden swing-arm pencil case (D Smith)

Thompson Mill Estate: A Hidden Past

Dianne Matterson

Background

The following stories tell of the ‘hidden’ history surrounding the very familiar tale of the mill that was built by Henry Thompson in 1858 on the 8.4 acres of land surrounded by Argyle and View Streets, Alpha Road and the wetlands near Camden Bike Track. Henry purchased this land for £2,000 after the first mill, built on the corner of Edward Street by his father, Joseph, was abandoned due to frequent flooding [see Diagram 1]. After building a ‘mammoth’ four-storey, brick mill on his new land, Henry successfully milled flour until the early 1860s, when rust decimated the district’s wheat crops and the milling industry quickly became uneconomical. At this point, despite advertising the mill for lease to ‘capitalists, millers, brewers, sugar manufacturers etc.’ as it was ‘admirably adapted’ for a ‘tweed manufactory’, a brewery or ‘any other purpose requiring ample room’, the mill lay idle for about 20 years. In 1884, the mill and 5 acres of surrounding land was leased to Messrs Burne and McKenzie for use as a tweed mill that could produce 1,600 yards of fabric per week. The mill’s 5 acres excluded all the land that was later subdivided by the Thompsons in 1892, as well as additional land later occupied by businesses along Argyle Street [see Diagrams 3 and 4]. The tweed mill met

with mixed profitability, until it was destroyed by fire in 1899.¹



**Diagram 1.
1858 Land purchase: H
Thompson.
Diagram: D Matterson**

Realignment of Argyle Street

When the Municipality of Camden was formed in 1889, one of their first tasks was to attend to some of the roads in the town but, being a newly constituted Council, they had no financial reserves with which to undertake the work, including kerb and guttering. Consequently, in October of that year, they successfully called for tenders for a loan of £1,000 to be repaid over 5 years. In preparation for the roadworks, a review of the town's streets was undertaken in 1891, resulting in a significant change occurring to the southern alignment of the Main Southern Road (Argyle Street). When Henry Thompson purchased the 8 acres of land from the Macarthurs in 1858, the Main Southern Road had a 'bulge' on the southern side at the point where it met Edward Street, which then tapered towards the intersection with Little/Upper Elizabeth Street (View Street) at its western extremity, and to a stone pillar at the eastern end that marked the north-eastern corner of the Thompson land [see Diagram 2]. At its widest point, the 'bulge' was approximately twice the width of the remainder of the road. Once the realignment was surveyed and officially gazetted in June 1891, the road had a consistent width of 75', with footpaths 12' wide. A shed, and some fences and verandahs encroached on the stated widths along the length of Argyle Street, all of which required rectification. In the section of road near the Edward Street intersection, the southern line of Argyle Street was moved northwards, thus removing the 'bulge'. The irregular shaped piece of land between the new southern alignment of Argyle Street and the northern boundary of the Thompson land had an area of 2 roods 32.5 perches (a little short of $\frac{3}{4}$ of an acre); ownership of this land was returned to the Macarthurs. A few months later, Elizabeth Onslow (née Macarthur) sold this land to Ann Thompson, Henry's widow and sole executor, for 10 shillings thus maintaining Argyle Street access from the Thompson Estate, which now had a total area of a little over 9 acres.² (See Diagram 2)

Family discord

At around the same time as Elizabeth Onslow sold the reclaimed land to Ann Thompson, a dispute arose within the Thompson family regarding the 'true construction' of Henry Thompson's Will, which was written on the day of his death in 1871, after he had been kicked by a horse. Ann and her 12 children were unable to agree upon the 'shares and interests' to which they were each entitled under the terms of the Will. By 1892, the Thompson Estate was extensive and included 9 and 4 acres in Camden, as well as Lot 9 in John Street, $\frac{1}{2}$ acre in Edward Street and Lot 8 on the corner of Edward and Mitchell Streets. Also included in the Thompson land portfolio were 116 acres at Wattle Creek; Lots 2, 3, 18 and 65 in Elderslie; 35 acres near the Wollondilly River; 50 acres at the Spring Rivulet; and parcels of land of 12, $5\frac{1}{2}$, 3, and 2 acres in Narellan, so there was a lot at stake for each of Henry's beneficiaries. Ann Thompson now lived on a half-acre property in Burwood, but it was

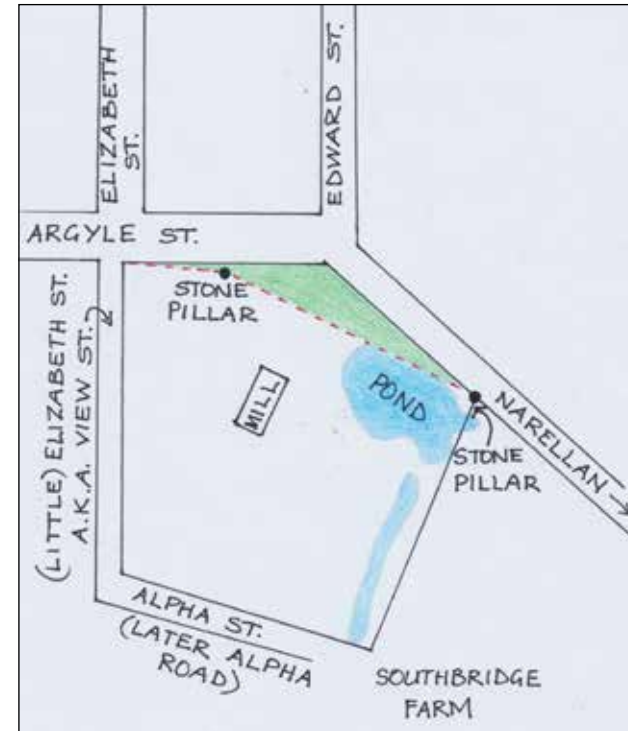


Diagram 2.
1891 Realignment of Argyle Street – showing the reclaimed land (shaded green) lying between the 1858 alignment of Argyle St (red dotted line) and the position of the current road (solid black line). Diagram: D Matter-son

owned by her in her own right. In an effort to resolve their differences, the family signed a Deed of Partition that was drawn up by a solicitor, James Norton MLC. This was a legal mechanism that put the family's estate into the hands of Trustees, who had to abide by pre-agreed conditions. Mr Norton was given certain rights to all of the above land, with the exception of the land in Burwood, but the use and possession of the land was retained by the Trustees. It is thought that the rights of James Norton enabled him to take over from the Trustees should they fail in their duties. The family agreed to appoint Ann Thompson and two of her sons, William and Alfred, as the Trustees, each of whom were required to:

- provide a home for Emily, Eva, Alice and Clara, Henry and Ann's unmarried daughters, for as long as they remained single;
- hold the Estate in equal shares on behalf of all the Thompson siblings after the death of Ann;
- share the proceeds of any sale of land equally amongst the parties or invest the funds;
- maintain, insure and/or improve property as they saw fit;
- not accept leases exceeding 99 years;
- reimburse Trustees for Trust expenses out of the Trust's funds;

- deduct from their share of the Estate, any money advanced to an individual family member (plus interest)

In addition:

- with the consent of a majority of the family members, the share(s) of any of them could be purchased by the Trust;
- if one Trustee was unable to continue their duties or wished to be discharged from their Trustee duties, a substitute Trustee could be appointed, or the remaining Trustees could continue alone;
- when handling assets of the Estate, each Trustee was only responsible for their own actions and not for those of any other Trustees, solicitors, bankers etc.
- if a Trustee left the Colony of NSW, he or she could, by power of attorney, delegate their responsibilities and authority to another Trustee or other person, during their absence.³

Subdivision Plans

Once the Deed of Partition was safely signed by Ann and each of her children, the Thompson family drew up plans for the subdivision of the land [see Diagram 3], but no allotments were sold until after the death of Ann Thompson in February 1912, leaving William and Alfred to carry on as the Estate's

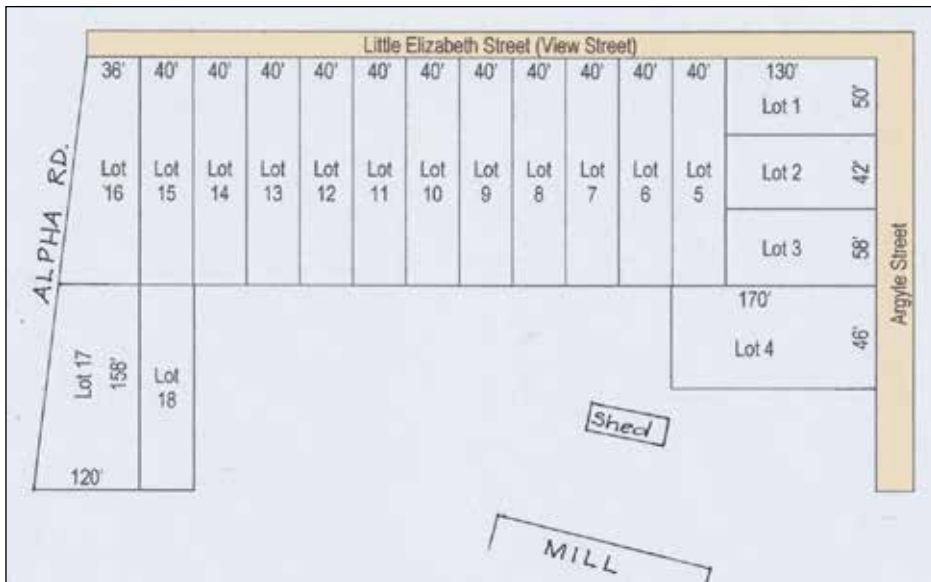


Diagram 3. 1892 Thompson Mill Estate Subdivision (Argyle St bend not shown). Diagram: D Matterson (not to scale)

Trustees. In May 1914, William and Alfred sold almost all of the 9 acres to their brother, Charles, for £1,000. About 10 months earlier, Lots 1, 2 and 5, measuring 92' along Argyle Street and with a depth of 170', had been sold to Walter Peters, so this land was excluded from the land sold to Charles Thompson. To pay for his purchase, Mr Thompson took out a £1,000 5-year mortgage with Anne and Frederick Whiteman at 6% interest. The 9 acres of land, minus the 23.87 perches belonging to Walter Peters was used as security for the mortgage.⁴

Between 1915 and 1929, Charles Thompson sold all of the subdivided allotments, 11 of which fronted onto View Street and were regarded as residential blocks, while the remainder, which had façades facing Argyle Street, were used for business purposes. In addition to the ownership of Lots 1, 2 and 5 by Walter Peters, the first owners of the other lots were: Lot 4 – Arthur Rideout; Lot 6 – Ernest Baker; Lot 7 – John Comyns; Lot 8 – Lillian & Leslie Stuckey; Lots 9 & 10 – Masonic Lodge; Lot 11 – Emma Cranfield; Lot 12 – Islet Smart; Lot 13 – Frank Smart; Lot 14 – Alice Lysaught; Lots 15 & 16 – Hiram Smart; Lot A (adjacent to Lot 4) – Arthur Rideout.⁵ (See Diagram 3)

Rideout's Paddock

On 20th November 1929, Arthur Rideout, a local timber merchant and sawmill owner, paid £275 to Emma Thompson, the widow and Executrix of Charles Thompson, for the 5 acres 2 roods and 17 perches of land formerly occupied by the woollen mills. This land stretched from the rear of the properties in View Street and the northern portion of Alpha Road, as well as the businesses in Argyle Street between View Street and the eastern watercourse [see Diagram 4]. Mr Rideout had previously paid a £25 deposit for the land to Charles Thompson, but with the death of the latter on 26th August 1929, the transaction was not concluded until Emma signed the land title documents in November. This area became known as Rideout's Paddock as it was used by Arthur Rideout for his horses.⁶

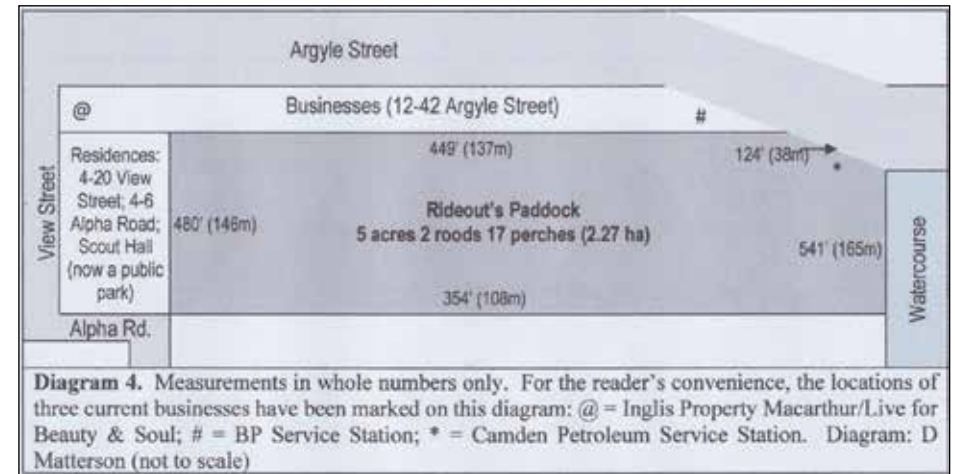
Sibella Macarthur-Onslow Memorial

After the death in 1943 of Rosa Sibella (known as Sibella) Macarthur-Onslow, a much-respected citizen and an active member of the local Red Cross since its inception, a Red Cross committee approached Camden Council asking for a public meeting to be held to start a trust fund for the establishment of a memorial to Sibella. A public meeting was duly held in June 1944, and it unanimously decided to establish a subscription fund. Two ideas were suggested at the meeting regarding the nature of the memorial: either a free public children's library or the planting of trees to create a road avenue or to beautify a central site. A memorial committee was formed, but the decision as to the nature of the memorial was deferred to a later meeting. The fund

was to be known as the Sibella Macarthur-Onslow Memorial Fund and was opened with a £50 donation from Mrs Arthur Onslow, and a £10 contribution from the Faithfull-Andersons. A few days later, Robert Adams, a local solicitor, suggested that a memorial park be developed in honour of Miss Macarthur-Onslow on the five acres of ground known as Rideout's Paddock, which had remained vacant during the 15 years it had been owned by Arthur Rideout. He thought it would improve the town's entrance in an area that he considered to be an 'eyesore' in its current state. Mr Adams suggested that trees be planted along the rear fences of the View Street houses and part of Argyle Street, while weeping willows could be planted along the watercourse, adding to those already growing in this area. He proposed that an entrance to the park be made between the Main Southern Garage [20-24 Argyle Street] and Camden Filling Station [12-14 Argyle Street].⁷ His idea received considerable support, and in August 1944, P Sorenson, a landscape gardener, visited Camden in preparation for the submission of plans for the establishment of a park in Rideout's Paddock. Camden Council planned to acquire the land from its current owners, Lawrence and Ina Rideout and would hold the land as Trustees on behalf of the community. However, six months later, those gathered at a public meeting were informed that the plans to establish the Macarthur-Onslow Memorial Park had been found to be 'impractical' as the site had recently been purchased by Clinton's Coal Carrying Co. (later Clinton's Motors). It was decided instead, to use the funds raised to establish a permanent home for the Camden Red Cross; a sub-committee of the latter organisation met with the local R.S.S. & A.I.L.A. (forerunner of the R.S.L.) to discuss including a headquarters for the Camden Red Cross in the new club building that was being planned for a site on the corner of Oxley and Mitchell Streets. These discussions led to the R.S.S. & A.I.L.A. setting aside a room (with an annex if desired) as a fitting memorial to Miss Macarthur-Onslow. Once constructed, the building would be named 'Anzac House' and the Red Cross room would be furnished from the £258 raised by the Memorial Fund Committee.⁸

View Street: What's in a name?

In the early days of Camden, View Street was an unnamed private lane that led from Argyle Street to Southbridge Farm and the land adjacent to St. John's Church. However, by at least 1895, the road had acquired four names: View Street, Elizabeth Street, Little Elizabeth Street and Upper Elizabeth Street, the latter three due to the proximity of the 'other' Elizabeth Street that ran between Argyle and Exeter Streets. No doubt, in an effort to lessen the confusion this created, the street was also referred to locally as View Street, but it still appeared in official records as Elizabeth Street. In May 1939, after discussing the issue, Camden Council agreed to endorse the name 'View Street', but, despite this, when they awarded Spar Trading Company a contract to supply and install enamelled street numbers to all residences in the



town area in 1941, the muddle was perpetuated for a little longer. Properties in the northern portion of Elizabeth Street were numbered sequentially up to the intersection with Argyle Street, while the numbering in the former lane was restarted, perhaps as a nod to the 1939 'View Street' Council decision. The irritation that had existed before amongst the residents, quickly evolved into exasperation and frustration. Was it Elizabeth Street, Little/Upper Elizabeth Street or View Street? By the mid 1940s, the name of the street was certainly a topic of discussion within the community and at Camden Council's meetings, as many looked for a solution to the confusing situation. By 1947, there was concern in some quarters, that changing the name of (Little/Upper) Elizabeth Street would require all land title documents executed prior to this date to be changed to reflect the new name. This, no doubt, was a daunting thought, and so, the official name, once again, remained unchanged. By 1950, the frustration of the residents in Elizabeth and Little/Upper Elizabeth Street was coming to a head, as mail addressed to a number in Elizabeth Street was often mistakenly delivered to the same number in Little/Upper Elizabeth Street or vice versa. The Council decided to take steps to officially establish the name of the street as View Street and applied to the Minister for Local Government for alterations to the name of Elizabeth Street between Argyle Street and Alpha Road. At last, in January 1951, Camden Council announced that they were now authorised to use the name View Street for this part of the former lane.⁹

2-6 Alpha Road

In 1922, Charles Thompson sold Lots 15 & 16 to Hiram Smart for £140. Lot 15 had a 40' frontage to View Street and was 150' deep; the corner allotment, Lot 16, was an irregular shape that measured 36' on the western side facing View Street and had a sloped southern boundary of 156' facing Alpha Road.

Hiram Smart successfully submitted a subdivision plan for Lots 15 and 16 to Camden Council that would align the allotments towards Alpha Road rather than View Street and would result in three lots, to be labelled as Lots A, B and C.¹⁰

Alpha Road Extension

The section of road beyond the bend at the end of the former private lane (now View Street) was known as Alpha Street from as early as September 1913, and then later, as both Alpha Road and Alpha Street before Alpha Road was in consistent use by 1931. At this stage, Alpha Road was not a 'through' road, but in August 1939, the idea of extending it so it would connect directly with Argyle Street below the Main Southern Garage, was first raised in Camden Council. The practicality and cost of the proposal was investigated and a report presented to the Council. The cost of the proposed work was estimated to be between £1,600-£2,000, a figure that was thought to be too high when the 'lack of compensating advantages' was taken into consideration. The investigating committee recommended that no further action be taken.¹¹ Consequently, Alpha Road did not become a 'through' road until the 1970s or 1980s when a subdivision of the land near St. John's Church included the formation of the circular Forrest Crescent and its offshoot, Tingcombe Place, and consequently linked the 'dead end' of Alpha Road to Menangle Road at a point opposite Macarthur Park.

Conclusion

With the demolition of the mill's chimney in 1971, the last piece of physical evidence of what had once been an imposing building and a substantial employer, was gone forever, but it left behind a story that, understandably, still exerts a strong attraction in our minds more than a century after it ceased operations in 1899. However, this has, perhaps, concealed other notable stories pertaining to the Thompson land and its surrounding streets that might now have the opportunity to shine and share a little of the limelight.

Notes

1. NSW Land Registry Services: Book 61 #953 and #954; Book 292 #525 – General Register of Deeds [Old System Deeds]. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 June 1869; 21 July 1869. *The Sydney Mail & NSW Advertiser*, 12 July 1884
2. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 October 1889. *Evening News*, 24 September 1890. *NSW Government Gazette*: 2 June 1891, Issue 331, p. 4069. NSW Land Registry Services: Book 487 #16 – General Register of Deeds [Old System Deeds]
3. NSW Land Registry Services: Book 488 #939 – General Register of Deeds [Old System Deeds]
4. *Camden News*, 22 February 1912. NSW Land Registry Services: Book

- 1030 #887; Book 1030 #888 – General Register of Deeds [Old System Deeds]
5. NSW Land Registry Services: Book 1058 #235; Book 1066 #175; Book 1121 #764; Book 1253 #588; Book 1335 #590; Book 1428 #895; Book 1442 #521; Book 1442 #521; Book 1457 #894; Book 1566 #785 – General Register of Deeds [Old System Deeds]
6. NSW Land Registry Services: Book 1584 #645 – General Register of Deeds [Old System Deeds]. *Camden News*, 29 June 1944
7. *Camden News*, 4 May 1944; 22 June 1944; 29 June 1944; 24 August 1944; 14 September 1944
8. *Camden News*, 24 August 1944; 14 September 1944; 29 March 1945; 19 April 1945; 24 July 1947. NSW Land Registry Services: Book 1966 #600 – General Register of Deeds [Old System Deeds]. Camden Museum Archives: *Rideout* (a family history), comp. by Z. Ware, p. 42
9. *Camden News*, 13 June 1895; 10 February 1898; 15 October 1925; 25 May 1939; 16 January 1941; 23 January 1941; 13 February 1941; 27 March 1941; 16 January 1947; 12 January 1950; 23 November 1950; 18 January 1951; 21 February 1950
10. NSW Land Registry Services: Book 1253 #588 – General Register of Deeds [Old System Deeds]; Primary Application #32607 – Primary Application Search Books & Primary Application Search Sketches. *Camden News*, 21 June 1923
11. *Camden News*, 17 August 1939; 16 November 1939

Remembering Foon Kee Pan

Julie Wrigley

Ian Willis and I edited the book *A History of the Camden Chinese Market Gardeners*. It was launched at the Camden Museum on 6 April 2024. About a year before that, when most of the book had been written, I was pleased to find some more information which was just in time to add to the book.

When I was on duty in the museum about the middle of 2023, a young man, Mason Pan, came up to me. He had looked at the storyboard about the Camden Chinese market gardeners and told me that his great-grandfather was **FOON KEE PAN**. I knew this name because it was on a copy of the lease which was on exhibition in the bay on the Camden Chinese market gardeners. I was delighted to find that Foon Kee Pan's son, Ben Pan, was still alive and I was able to speak to him by phone and emails. Ben, who is now 86, told me the story of his father and his uncle Yen Hung Pan. They were both Chinese market gardeners who worked in the 1940s on the Chinese vegetable garden at Macquarie Grove on the site which is now the Miss Davies Pioneer Walkway. Their names and signatures were on the lease in 1946 between Mrs Mary F Davies and the Tong Hing syndicate.

Research using the National Archives of Australia revealed that several of the seven Chinese market gardeners working on Miss Davies' farm in Camden in 1946 had been evacuated from the British Solomon Islands Protectorate in 1942 when the Islands were invaded by Japan during World War II. Before contact with Ben Pan we did not know that any Chinese market gardeners had come to Camden via the Solomon Islands. Ben was five years old when he was evacuated.

YEN HUNG PAN arrived Sydney per *SS Morinda*, in January 1942. FOON KEE PAN came to Sydney on 17 February 1942 on *SS Morinda* from Tulagi, a small island in the Solomon Islands. Foon Kee Pan's wife, daughter and son, Ben, were evacuated to Sydney in February 1942 on the *SS Bullolo*. The rest of the family group came on other boats, with some of the family delayed because of the war. The authorities confused the Chinese names and regarded Yen as the surname, so the extended family ended up frustratingly having different surnames of Yen and Pan. When each person gave his name to the authorities the first name was taken to be the Christian name, but the first name was the surname, e.g. John Smith; Smith John.

Ben said his father worked at the Camden farm seven days a week, except when he came to Paddy's Markets twice a week, Mondays and Fridays, taking vegetables by carriers. On his return to the farm the next day after the market, Ben would sometimes go with him back to Tong Hing Gardens on



Ben Pan family with Julie and Ian at the launch of the book Ian Willis and Julie Wrigley (eds), *A History of the Camden Chinese Market Gardeners 1899 to 1993* (Camden, CHS, 2024) in March 2024.

the Pansy train, until his father came back to Sydney for the next market day.

Ben explained that he lived in Sydney with his mother and family but visited the Camden farm as a boy travelling with his father on weekends and school holidays. Ben remembers that he went with his father to pay the rent to Miss Davies for the lease and that he swam in wells on the farm.

Ben said his father did not have time to spend with him because he worked such long hours. He said the cooperatives did not have much contact with each other but in times of heavy rain they gathered and played Mahjong the whole time.

Ben said he enjoyed seeing how the farmers lived and worked. They worked daylight to dusk, seven days a week, stopping only for food breaks. Ben stayed at the farmhouse, where there was a cooking area with a large table for the workers, and a verandah outside. There were small rooms on both sides of a hallway which led to the back storage area. There was a stable away from

the house for the workhorse. At the front there were two or three fruit trees where Ben lay for shade and ate the fruit. He also walked into town, where he met a friend, David Holyoake whose parents owned a tyre place.

Ben said the Pan family were happy to settle in Australia. His father, Foon Kee Pan, did not return to China as he thought it might be difficult to return to Australia. Foon Kee Pan worked on the farm until the 1950s when he had a fall and could not work. He left Camden and died in Sydney in 1955.

Ben said that he enjoyed his times in Camden, as people were so friendly. He still frequents the area when he can and the Pan family is in the area quite often.

I was very pleased that Ben, and 19 of his family including his wife Mary, sons Vincent and William, daughter Lorraine, and grandsons Jackson and Mason came to the book launch in April this year.

The Pan family joined the family of Biu Wong, the last Chinese market gardener in Camden.

Marking Time

Frances Warner

This talk was presented at the Camden Historical Society Meeting on 11 September 2024 during History Week 2024 with the theme Marking Time.

Remembering the past

How do we remember the past? By displays, statues, parades, photos. In a parade: My poor children on the back of a truck as Dr Who – Sarah Jane Smith. Amy dressed as an old lady in a parade. She exclaimed, ‘How embarrassing MUM!’

And diaries.

My Harry

My Harry had little education. Reading – no. Writing his own name was a task. With help he was able to learn chords on the guitar, but unable to read words of the songs of Slim Dusty.



Frances Warner and Ashleigh Cagney (Camden Mayor) where Frances was named 2025 Camden Woman of the Year (Camden Council)

I enrolled My Harry in Adult Reading and Writing classes at Campbelltown TAFE College. We did a 'reccie' of the rooms at the TAFE college. It was a good idea that I went with Harry to the first night. The location of the class had changed. I spoke to the teacher about the change. The teacher said, 'We put up signs!' Question: Aren't pupils here to learn to read and write.

We helped with Harry's homework tasks. We read onto a cassette tape and Harry followed the words with finger pointing. The family did this together. We used this method with Menangle Rural Fire Service and 1st Camden South Cubs. Harry enjoyed the course and the eight weeks went quickly.

An exercise at home was to write a story. Don't worry about spelling or grammar. Harry presented the 'Tuggalo Diary'. As a thank you gift to the teachers he gave them a box of Camden Park camellias.

Frances's Moments

Harry and I had been married for four years. We were wanting so much to have children. Medical help was needed. Many tests were needed. Phone calls for results. There was no phone at home so I had to use the public phone at Camden Post Office.

One Thursday I went to the post office to call for the results. This time WOW success. Frances thought, 'Who do I tell!' Very excited she went into Clark's Chemist Shop to tell Bruce Clark and the staff yelling with great excitement, 'Yes, yes, yes'. Frances admits, 'Well Bruce did help in a big way'. There were lots of prescriptions.

In December 1970 Frances had Bradley, Penny Anne in 1974, and Amy in 1980. Frances said, 'Thank heavens I was asleep for the birthing. Babies are not delivered like pizzas'.

Rene and myself hosted story time for the 'little ones' for History Week – old and new. Frances said, 'I think I was the old exhibit'. We were showing slate board, pen and ink, pencils, biros.

One little girl had a stencil sheet of animals from the library story time. She said, 'I's going to colour in with my new colouring in pencil with my beautiful Mummy'. Frances said, 'What a heart warming special moment'.

Frances finished with, 'Thanks for listening'.

The Suburb of Barker, Honouring The Past in Developing the New

Trevor Jensen

A public presentation to Camden Council on Tuesday 10 December 2024 in support of a motion by councillors to endorse the proposed suburb name 'Barker'.

Madam Mayor, Councillors, Council executive and officers,

Thank you for the opportunity to address Council regarding motion ORD14 that considers the creation of a new suburb named Barker. My name is Trevor Jensen and I am the General Manager of Maryland Estate Developments, the company charged with the responsibility and privilege of the creation of a new estate and township within the Lowes Creek Maryland precinct.

I also acknowledge and thank councillors and officers for your participation in the process and the Councillors that have brought the motion for consideration at this evening's meeting. We also acknowledge and appreciate the input of the Camden Historical Society who have supported this journey.



Maryland House c.1990s (rs.locationshub.com)



Thomas Barker 1873 by Barcroft Capel Boake. (State Library of New South Wales)

The land is unique and contains heritage assets of exceptional value which has prompted the listing of Maryland on the State Heritage Register of significant sites.

As stated in the Register,

“Maryland retains the nineteenth century estate layout and design by engineer Thomas Barker and his son Thomas Charles Barker. It contains an outstanding group of estate buildings including homestead, two gatehouses, winery buildings, a home farmhouse, stables, a coach house and a store building. The winery and store may be the oldest surviving winery buildings in Australia”

Our vision and goals for the new estate are clear. We seek to create a world class community that inspires pride, is a destination experience and leverages off the exceptional heritage assets to create a beautiful place where people want to be. We want to create a vibrant place for people to connect and belong. The creation of a new suburb will be an important element for the creation of the new community.

Many factors were carefully considered in the formulation of a new suburb name. The investigation considered various sources of inspiration including first nations people, natural features, flora and fauna, early settlers and landowners. Careful consideration was given to landowners Elizabeth and Annie Thomson who lived at Maryland from 1940 until they passed in 2006 and 2009 respectively. The sisters were prominent and well-liked members of the community.

There are also the compliance requirements set by the Geographic Names Board which include ensuring no duplication, names must be easy to pronounce and spell, along with a requirement that places are not to be named after living people. The Board does encourage names that are associated with the heritage of an area.

It is also important that affected landowners are supportive. This consultation has been undertaken by us and by council. We also have consulted with the extended Barker family and have their support.

After the research, the selection of the name to propose for the new suburb was a clear choice. The name of Barker meets the requirements of the Geographic Names Board and Mr Barkers contribution to the district and the entire colony is significant. His contribution to the establishment of the site as we now know it is second to none.

Evidence of the contributions, accomplishments and character of the Mr Barker is plentiful. In late 1864, a dinner was held at Camden Park to celebrate the return of James Macarthur from England. The dinner was chaired by Thomas Barker and reported in the *Sydney Morning Herald*. In response to a toast, James Macarthur spoke of Thomas Barker. In Macarthur’s words:

“Whilst in Sydney, Mr. Barker took a high place amongst those who represented the commercial interests of the colony, and since residing in the district he has done much for its advancement by the introduction of valuable stock, by the example of steady industry and by cultivation of a vineyard. In private life he is everything which we expect to find in a man and a gentleman; as a magistrate he has invariably acted according to the rules of justice.”

We thank council for your consideration. We request your support of the naming proposal and the creation of the new suburb of Barker.

Camden Community Garden

Marilyn Willis

A presentation to the Camden Garden Club 8 November 2024

A bit about the history.

Llewella Davies left the family dairy farm to Camden Council. She was quite an eccentric woman, and I remember seeing her walking around Camden with her dog, Tess. Her farm was in Exeter Street at the bottom of John Street. She wanted the farm to be used for agriculture and the community.

The whole area is known as the town farm, and the community garden is just one section of the town farm. Initially, the community garden got a builder's grant to set up. The hope is that once you get a builder's grant, it becomes sustainable and self-sufficient, which it has. The community garden was established in 2009. It has come a long way since it started due to the hard work



Camden Community Garden 2025 showing the herb section of the garden (M Willis)

of volunteers.

The community garden is entirely maintained by volunteers with no paid staff. The layout of the garden represents a platypus which is the council logo. It needs to be viewed from the air to see the shape. The platypus is outlined with a hedge of rosemary approximately 400 linear metres. The rosemary was removed after it died in the 2022 floods. It is gradually being replaced.

The garden is 1.6 acres, part of the total town farm area of 135 acres. The community garden has a membership of approximately 70 people. The aim of the garden is to build community and social inclusion and interaction through gardening.

Community involvement is an important part of the function of the garden. Several community groups have or have had veggie patches. School groups and other groups visit the gardens so they can understand where food comes from.

People can join the community gardens and pay a joining fee of \$10 and an



Camden History Journal v5n9

annual membership fee of \$10. If they want their own patch, they pay an annual fee. There are mainly two sizes, \$60 or \$120. There are also communal sections, herb gardens (a large variety), fruit trees, and other crops, such as potatoes and pumpkins. We now have beehives and sell honey to members and sell honey through the Epicure Store in Camden. We also have chickens and worm farms in the garden as well. Our members can share in the produce from these areas. We work on the communal sections at our working bees which are held monthly (3rd Sunday).

At the entrance to the community garden, there is a rose garden. The public is encouraged to visit on a Saturday while the produce markets are open from 7 am to 12 noon or on the monthly working bee days. There is also the opportunity at other times while members are working on their patches.

The garden is organic, with only poison used on paths to eliminate weeds.



Camden Community Garden showing the barn in the background and herb section of the garden in the foreground. (M Willis)

The Land of the Golden Fleece

Thomas Melliush

The Camden Museum is home to a plethora of curiosities evoking the spirit and history of the town and its residents. Within its walls, crowded by countless artefacts, it can be easy to overlook their long and storied pasts. However, one that fails to avoid suspicion is that of the Golden Fleece globe that hangs over the back wall, greeting all that enter with its bright blonde gleam. An icon of post-Federation Australiana, the petroleum brand represents an age, not only of burgeoning industry, but a burgeoning *identity* that remains prevalent to Australians and Camden locals alike. Its emblematic use of the merino, itself irrevocably tied to Camden and the Macarthurs as the birthplace of the wool industry, came to exemplify the country's idyllic mid-century aesthetic with hundreds of restaurants on its roads, and thousands of distributors of its branded products on its shelves and at its pumps.^[1] Yet, by the 1980s this exemplification would disappear almost entirely from the cultural plain.

A Land of Opportunity

In 1913, on the eve of war, Harold Crofton Sleigh, a shipping agent based in Melbourne, elected to take advantage of a unique entrepreneurial opportunity



View of Elizabeth Farm showing the exact spot where the first sheep were shorn in Australia.^[6]

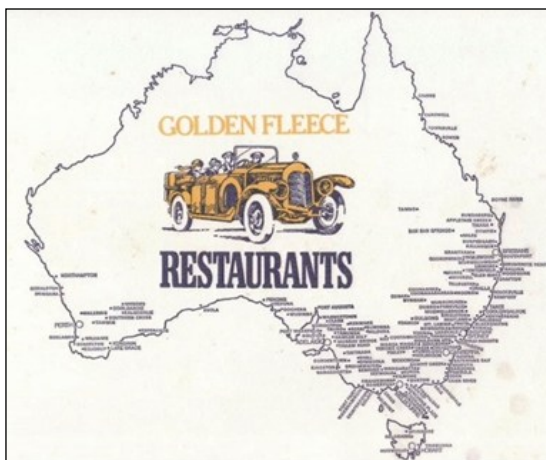


The very first HC Sleigh filling station in South Melbourne. ^[7]

that had fallen into his lap when a customer shipping several tins of “motor spirit” could not afford to pay freight. ^[2] After selling the tins to recoup his costs, Sleigh came to realise just how lucrative this new industry could be in a country acquiring a taste for cars in the absence of other transportation and infrastructure. Not unlike Macarthur who in 1797 purchased eight Merino sheep that arrived in Sydney after recognising the potential of the colony’s climate to produce high-quality wool in a time of great need for the material back home in Britain during the Napoleonic Wars. ^{[3][4]} In 1917, Sleigh registered the trade name “Golden Fleece”, and Australia’s first oil company was born. ^[5]

Space for Independence

In the decades that followed, the motor vehicle industry only continued to grow in popularity and with it the first filling stations started to appear. Introduction of the “bowser” in 1914 meant the old practice of buying petrol in the trademark four-gallon tin from a local grocer or hardware store was already a thing of the past and by 1926, Golden Fleece was shipping much of its fuel in forty-four-gallon drums. ^[8] However, the model of these petrol stations as



Map showing the locations of Golden Fleece restaurants across Australia. ^[11]



Map showing McDonald’s various locations across Australia. ^[12]

multi-brand outlets meant wholesalers like Golden Fleece who were supplying them were competing amongst themselves for space, with the overseas multinationals who set the price usually winning out. ^[9] Golden Fleece was one of the first to open their very own one-brand site that allowed them to take back this advantage. Its competitors soon followed suit, becoming the norm we see today.

To distinguish themselves from their competitors, Golden Fleece did not limit their service stations to the purpose of filling up one’s tank. Before the fast-food takeaways and drive-throughs we’re all familiar with today, service stations were the typical stop for a meal on any road trip, and Golden Fleece strived to do it better than anybody. While other companies like Ampol limited themselves to roadhouses, Golden Fleece wanted family restaurants with homemade meals cooked by professional chefs that offered more than a simple respite from the road. Their predominantly regional locales also meant they were often the only restaurant in town. According to a former employee, it was a common occurrence for people to go to their local Golden Fleece for a night out. ^[10] At its height, Sleigh’s chance investment would operate the largest restaurant chain in the country.

This family orientation in their business model was not limited to their customer base. The service stations of these petroleum companies, much like any franchise business, meant they functioned more like a real estate company with franchisees signing a lease that not only covered the business and its infrastructure, but also in some cases the land itself. These stations could be one of many under the control of a corporate operator or multi-unit owner, but in the mid-twentieth century it was just as common for these service stations to be run as a family business. This was certainly the case for Golden



The Golden Fleece Depot in Camden. ^[18]

Fleece. On May 3, 1963, *The Coromandel*, a local paper in Adelaide, reported on the opening of one of the franchise's latest service stations in Torrens Park by brothers Alan and Colin. "Take a man who has worked among car and truck parts and accessories for 18 years. Add a younger brother with seven years' experience as a motor mechanic. What do you get? The perfect combination to run a service station, of course!" ^[13] This familial phenomenon was evident nation-wide, including in Camden itself. On the corner of Elizabeth and Mitchell Street, Camden's own Golden Fleece distributor was owned and operated by Les Ray alongside his sons Peter and Milton. ^[14] The Ray family were foundational contributors to the history of the town, not only in its commercial sector – Camden's first Ford dealership was owned by Les – but also in its cultural heritage. ^[15] Milton was a founding member of the Camden Historical Society and integral to the museum's early development. ^[16] He also organised the installation of a commemorative cartwheel outside the old council chambers to honour the bullock drivers of Burragorang Valley. ^[17] While their service station has long since disappeared, a reminder of the family's legacy persists at the Camden Museum in the form of its pump top globe. The very same one, in fact, that welcomes guests to the museum.

A World in Crisis

By the latter half of the twentieth century the company went from strength to strength with its commercial presence expanding to about five thousand service stations, roadhouses, and distributors nationwide at its peak, alongside its acquisition of the Kangaroo and Phillips 66 brands, and the signing of lucrative contracts with major companies like Linfox. However, the company never had its own oil refinery and depended on Caltex to facilitate the importation and processing of crude oils at the Kurnell Refinery on its behalf. ^[20] This would come to be a source of regret in the 1970's when the industry started to mature and became increasingly regulated in response to the dec-



The pump top globe from the Camden Depot now on display at the Camden Museum. ^[19]

ade's energy crisis brought on by the Yom Kippur War and Iranian Revolution. This made a third-party operation like Golden Fleece's effectively inoperable and inevitably in 1981 the company was bought out by its supplier. Initially, Caltex promised to maintain the iconic brand but in less than a year's time the golden ram that adorned its service stations would be changed to a red star.

Much like the wool industry in Camden, what was once a leader in petroleum trade now persists as a relic of a bygone era. Yet, this persistence has ensured the company's immortality. Not as a staple of its industry but as the physical manifestation of people's nostalgia. A rosy retrospection contributing to their cultural identity. This transformation into tangible heritage can help to explain its presence in the Camden Museum where, just like Macarthur's merino wool, its wider significance becomes imposed on the local zeitgeist. ^[21] That is why the Golden Fleece globe persists as a visitor favourite. Not just as a prized piece of memorabilia, but as a snapshot of the town's ever-changing persona.

Notes

- [1] Brandel, 2024
- [2] Langmore, 1988

- [3] Macarthur-Onslow, 1914
- [4] It should also be noted that in 1802 after having his court martial dropped, Macarthur lobbied extensively for his wool production interests while in London, receiving particular support from the colonial secretary, Lord Camden, who backed his grant for ten thousand acres of the lucrative "Cowpastures" as well as nine Merino rams and a ewe from the highly-prized Royal Flock. Indicative of his success, Macarthur purchased a ship he gave the name "Argo" after the ship of the Greek hero Jason who constructed it in his search for none other than the Golden Fleece.
- [5] Commonwealth Patents, 1917, p. 40
- [6] Camper, 1894
- [7] Brandel, 2024
- [8] First Petrol Shipment for All-Australian Firm, 1930, p. 10
- [9] Brandel, 2024
- [10] *Ibid*
- [11] Photo by Dave Murchie
- [12] *Locate your local mcdonald's: McDonald's Australia*, 2025
- [13] *The Coromandel*, 1963, p. 5-7
- [14] Willis, 2009, p. 31
- [15] *Ibid*
- [16] Carroll, 2018, p. 274
- [17] *Ibid*
- [18] Willis, 2009, p. 31
- [19] Photo by Thomas Melluish
- [20] Brandel, 2024
- [21] Vunidilo, 2020, p. 1941.

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Celebrating Vinayaka Chaturthi with the Indian Community in Leppington NSW

Usha Dommaraju

As a proud former member of the Camden Council and someone deeply connected to the diverse communities that enrich our region, I had the privilege of attending the recent Vinayaka Chaturthi celebrations organized by the local Indian community in Leppington, NSW. This joyous event, which honors Lord Ganesha, the remover of obstacles and harbinger of new beginnings, is one of the most important festivals in the Hindu calendar.

The Leppington celebrations were a beautiful blend of tradition, devotion, and community spirit. I was moved by the sense of unity and shared culture that brought together families, children, and elders to participate in the rituals, prayers, and cultural performances. The event was a testament to the vibrant diversity of our local population and the strong bonds that tie us together across different cultures.



Celebrating Vinayaka Chaturthi with the Indian Community in Leppington NSW. Lord Ganesha (Usha Dommaraju)

The Significance of Vinayaka Chaturthi

Vinayaka Chaturthi, also known as Ganesh Chaturthi, is celebrated with great fervour across India, particularly in the states of Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh. Lord Ganesha, with his elephant head and symbolic attributes, represents wisdom, prosperity, and the ability to overcome obstacles. Hindus believe that by invoking his blessings, one can navigate life's challenges with grace and strength.

In India, this festival sees large-scale public celebrations, where intricately crafted idols of Lord Ganesha are installed in homes and public spaces. Devotees offer prayers, sweets, and flowers, culminating in the immersion of the

Celebrating Vinayaka Chaturthi with the Indian Community in Leppington NSW with Usha Dommaraju. (Usha Dommaraju.)



idols in water, symbolizing the cycle of birth, life, and renewal. The festival is not only a religious occasion but also a cultural phenomenon, fostering a sense of community and collective hope.

For the Indian diaspora in Australia, festivals like Vinayaka Chaturthi hold even deeper meaning. They are a way to stay connected with their heritage, pass on traditions to the younger generation, and strengthen ties within the community. These celebrations enrich the multicultural fabric of our society and are a reminder of the importance of cultural preservation.

A Festival that Unites and Inspires

The Vinayaka Chaturthi event in Leppington was a wonderful example of how traditions can transcend borders and connect people from all walks of life. As a former Camden councillor, I was proud to represent a community where such vibrant celebrations take place. Our diversity is our strength, and events like these enrich our shared social and cultural landscape.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to the local Indian community for inviting me to share in their celebration and for the work they do to foster unity, inclusivity,

Celebrating Vinayaka Chaturthi with the Indian Community in Lepington NSW with Usha Dommaraju. (Usha Dommaraju.)



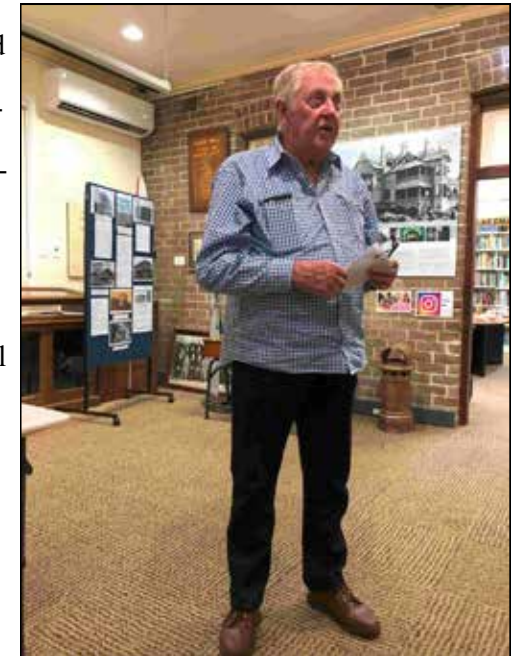
and cultural understanding. Festivals like Vinayaka Chaturthi remind us that while we may come from different backgrounds, we are all united in our desire for peace, prosperity, and the betterment of our community.

Camden Men's Shed

David Funnell

Talk given to Camden Historical Society on 13 November 2024

David gave a short history on the origins of the Camden Men's Shed which was started in 2008 when Mr Peter Standon placed an advertisement in the local Camden papers for any men interested in joining together for social interaction. Three local men responded to this ad, Steve Butler, Colin Calver and Alan Withers and with limited funding under the Government's Men's Health Budget, after several weeks of meeting in various locations Camden Council agreed to provide a "Shed" at the Bicentenary Equestrian Park on Ferguson Land with the members committing to maintain the Equestrian Park grounds and facilities. Camden Men's Shed grew to approximately 30 members over the years from 2008 until 2019 when many organisations were affected by shutdown due to Covid19.



David Funnell at the Camden Historical Society 2024 (I Willis)

On the 3rd March 2022, following the resumption of the Men's Shed David Funnell and other committee members were called into the Council in Oran Park and advised they were no longer required as Volunteers (effectively sacked by Council) and "the Shed" was locked up and access denied. During the year we had 3 major floods in Camden and most of our equipment was lost when the shed was flooded to the roof. After the cleanup we rescued what we could from the shed and many of our membership drifted away with approx. 9 members remaining.

David Funnell and several committee members started talking with AMSA (Australian Men's Shed Association) and several men's shed in other areas who helped direct us in a new startup as Camden Men's Shed Inc. We



Camden Men's Shed (W Sims)

looked at several possible sites such as Mater Dei and Carrington however after negotiations with Carrington Care we leased a block in Ferguson Lane and started fundraising to build a new “shed”. In the meantime the membership continued meeting every Wednesday morning for breakfast at Caffè 104 at the University Vet College and has now grown to 53 members.

After considerable support from state, federal and local government and many very generous local businesses and people, we been fortunate to erect a 500 square metre American Barn style shed on a 20-year lease and are currently fitting it out towards a grand opening in mid-February next year. In addition to woodworking and metal working workshops we have also created a third of the shed as a facility for other community groups to use. This space is set up to provide a tea room with a large table, toilets including accessible toilets, kitchen and a reasonably large conference room which will be available to community groups such as the Camden Quilters Guild, Camden Rotary and others. David handed out copies of the block plan and location of the shed on the block and a plan of the shed showing the facilities within.

We were very fortunate to receive several pieces of plant equipment from Campsie Men's Shed which was closing down for our workshops which has been stored in sheds on various farms in the district. We have now erected a new glasshouse which will enable us to get back to propagating local trees to



Interior Camden Men's Shed (W Sims)

be planted around Camden like the trees planted in Macquarie Grove Road. The Camden Men's Shed, as well as working towards getting our Shed to an operational level, has conducted several trips away such as to the Small Arms Factory at Lithgow and in December we are having a private tour of the Camden Aircraft Museum now located in Narellan.

We look forward to our grand opening in mid-February and hope you can support us in our ongoing efforts.

Pulling at Threads - Uncovering Camden's Dressmaking Businesses in the later 19th and early 20th centuries

Ashlee Glanville

Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, dressmaking was regarded as the responsibility of women. Genteel women and girls could demonstrate their skill and femininity through decorative needlework.¹ It has long been assumed that this essential skill operated only within the private and domestic spheres during the late 19th to early 20th centuries. Unfortunately, this has meant that women's participation in other areas, such as the business sphere, has been overlooked. However, as society changed, so too did the opportunities afforded to women. By pulling at the threads of available information, it is possible to uncover some of Camden's businesswomen who operated businesses and used their skills to forge their identities, livelihoods, and independence.

Unfortunately, there is very little information from the dressmaker's perspective, which hinders our view of the woman behind the needle and thread. However, considering these parts of society, which have been forgotten throughout history, some aspects of female participation are observable. Delving into the archives of *The Camden News*, observing the items on display in the Camden Museum, and exploring the concepts developed by academics, one can see the places and opportunities afforded to some of Camden's businesswomen. Once uncovered, it is clear that Camden's dressmakers operated in the public and private spheres and managed the complex relationship between family life and earning an income.² Their tools, advertisements, and products have a role in shaping the community and telling personal stories. The different ways Camden's early businesswomen undertook their dressmaking businesses can shed light on the economy of the time and the more prominent place of Camden.

These women have been previously overlooked, with the focus instead being on traditional gendered assumptions.³ However, Camden's business women can be divided into five dressmaker categories, each providing a small glimpse into their lives and experiences.

Women who ran their own dressmaking business in Camden

Several Camden women operated a dressmaking business in a public space during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The earliest mentioned businesswoman operated in a public shop was Mrs W.M. Maloney on Argyle

Street in Camden, opposite the Camden News. Further details, such as her date of birth and first name, are difficult to determine; even her last name is uncertain. Yet, she advertised her business, like a majority of the women, in the local newspaper.⁴ The most prominently mentioned are Annie Mary Thurn (b. 10th December 1886) and her sister Florence Margaret Thurn (b. 26th October 1888). The sisters were born in Elderslie and operated their business at 190 Argyle Street.⁵ Annie and Florence advertised their business numerous times in the Camden News, with Annie listing her experience at Messrs and David Jones in Sydney.⁶ The sisters are also prominently featured in the Dressmakers exhibit in the Camden Museum. Other local Camden women who also advertised their business were Miss Kirkpatrick, whose first name is unknown, and conducted her dressmaking on Elizabeth Street and had experience working at Madame Beatties in Sydney.⁷ Two other women appear to have multiple dressmaking businesses throughout Camden during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Miss Low placed an advertisement in the *Camden News*, listing her businesses at Argyle Street and Broughton Street.⁸ Miss Low is an example of a woman who may have operated in multiple locations, or she may have undertaken her business at her home in addition to a public place of business. Interestingly, an obituary from January 1936 describes Mrs. S. Jenkins, who, before getting married, "entered upon business pursuits" as a dressmaker where she had rooms on Oxley Street.⁹

These businesswomen have been essential participants throughout history and provide valuable insight into not only Camden at the time but also women's roles. It is easy to discover the minimizing of female labour within the context of local history.¹⁰ Nevertheless, this notion is at the expense of those women who were able to step away from this gendered assumption. Nonetheless, the extent of Camden's businesswomen's participation within the public sphere has been uncovered instead of overlooked.¹¹

Women who were employed as dressmakers and worked in a public location

The Argyle Street Index provided insight into Camden's 19th and 20th Century women employed as dressmakers. The index was compiled by Dianne Matterson in 2022 and is an invaluable source for the Camden Historical Society and for learning about specific details of the local area. One woman employed as a dressmaker was Miss Heafey, who worked for Abraham Black at 130 Argyle Street in 1910.¹² Miss Kopper was also employed as a dressmaker by Henry and Ted Dobell Bros at 180 or 190 Argyle Street in 1900.¹³ Miss Aynsely also operated as a dressmaker at her home, 152 Argyle Street, in 1900.¹⁴ Unfortunately, the first names of the three women are omitted, with only Miss Aynsely's first name suspected to be Isabella. A notice in *The Camden News* from November 1897 mentions a first-class dressmaker from

Miss Young,
OF ELDERSLIE, from?

BEGS to announce that she is prepared to do dressmaking and plain sewing at home,

Miss A. Thurn,
ELDERSLIE.

HAVING had experience at Messrs. David Jones & Co, Sydney, is now prepared to undertake all kinds of sewing, dressmaking, etc.

Miss Kirkpatrick,
DRESSMAKER.

Late of Madame Beatties, of Sydney.

Has commenced business at 'Machadodorp, Elizabeth St., Camden, near tram station. A trial solicited.

Miss Young, Miss Annie Thurn and Miss Kirkpatrick's advertisements in the *Camden News*, 31st October 1907 (Trove).

Sydney whose trial began with Mr N.A. Whiteman.¹⁵ Miss S. Burrows, who has experience working at David Jones, was employed in Maloney's rooms on Argyle Street, per a *Camden News* advertisement from 1922.¹⁶

"Dressmaker by day": Women operating their own dressmaking business from home

The next category of businesswomen engaged in dressmaking can be conceptualized as 'Dressmakers by the day'.¹⁷ These women conducted their business in the private sphere, either in their own homes or clients' homes. These include Miss Lucy Sturgess, who first operated her business at either

Miss S. Burrows

(Late of David Jones' Limited).

FASHIONABLE DRESSMAKER. MALONEY'S ROOMS,

ARGYLE STREET, CAMDEN.

Miss S. Burrows advertisement for her dressmaking business at Maloney's Rooms on Argyle Street, 28th September 1922 (Trove).

130 or 132-134 Argyle Street from 1932-1933.¹⁸ It is unclear if this was at a public building by herself or if this address was her residence, Argyle Street, as per *The Camden News* advertisement in 1933.¹⁹ Then there is Miss Young of Elderslie, who advertised her dressmaking and plain sewing skills in *The Camden News* in January 1907 and 1909.²⁰ Venturing further out, Miss Watson conducted her dressmaking business from her home in Narellan in 1917.²¹ There was also Madame Louche, who was a dressmaker for some time in Camden before her death in June 1896.²²

The idea that many women in Camden operated a business from their homes alludes to the duality of women's dressmaking skills within the domestic and public spheres. Many women may not have advertised their skills or businesses and instead relied on word of mouth.

Women whose tools were left behind

This category is based on evidence from the Camden Museum. The "Dressmaking" display in the Nixon Room offers a variety of tools, items, and documents that further demonstrate women's participation.

On display are two wicker sewing baskets. One of the baskets belonged to Mrs Daphne Smith, who lived on Broughton Street, Camden. The other wicker box belonged to Mrs Sid Richardson, which still contains needlework items such as various colourful thread and needles. The prominent Miss Llewella Davies sewing boxes are also on display in the Museum, which she used at home from 1910. Unlike the other women mentioned throughout,

Miss Lucy Sturgess, who has been carrying on business in Camden for the past three years, as ladies' and children's outfitter, has disposed of her business to Mrs. Willmington, who will be carrying on business on the same lines. Miss Sturgess will continue her dressmaking business at her parents' residence, next to the Argyle Refreshment Rooms in Argyle Street.

An advertisement in the *Camden News* by Miss Lucy Sturgess regarding the changing of her business, 13th July 1933 (Trove).

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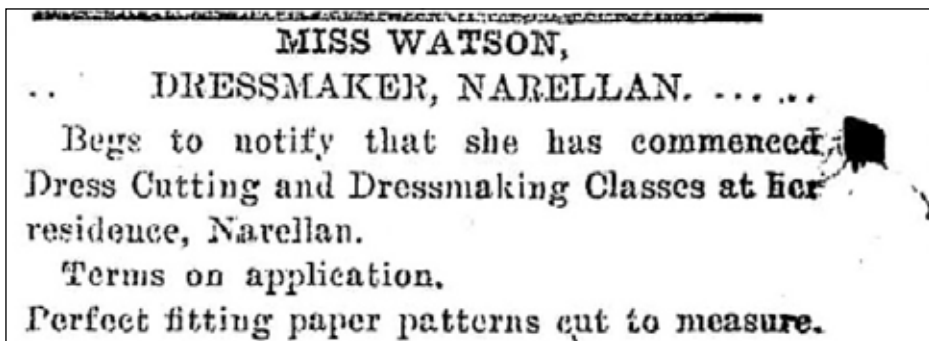


Dressmaking display at Camden History Museum. (Image Ashlee Glanville 2024)

Willcox & Gibbs tabletop manual sewing machine and more of her sewing cotton, wicker sewing basket, and needle case. Mrs Edith Hardyman's items, such as Thimbles, crochet hooks, needles, and thread patterns, are also on display in the Museum. A number of crocheted patterns used by local Camden women are also on display. This category suggests necessary skills, yet there is no clear evidence of how these specific women utilised them.

Women who held dressmaking classes

The final category uncovered was the women who may not have offered their dressmaking skills in the traditional sense. Instead, these women provided dressmaking classes to local Camden women. Miss Hart, Miss Frost, and Miss Watson are some of just a few who placed advertisements in *The Camden News*.²³ Some of these women, such as Miss Watson, crossed over categories and offered not only her dressmaking skills for paying customers but also her knowledge to help other women further their own skills.



Miss Watson's advertisement for her dressmaking classes in the *Camden News*, 15th March 1917 (Trove).

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Female participation in business during the 19th and early 20th centuries has been overlooked. Yet, looking at local newspapers and using indexes and other sources has revealed some of Camden's businesswomen who operated in various settings. While it is challenging enough to discover the women of the past, let alone their endeavors, it is clear that Camden's local businesses existed. Interestingly, many of Camden's women who undertook and engaged in one of the many forms of dressmaking business in the past were employed on the main street of Camden. This means that many of their workplaces still exist today. This can further strengthen and reinforce local connections to the

past and provide a new source of community. Whilst it is not always obvious and easy to find, it is clear that some of Camden's women played their part in the local economy and forged their own identities during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

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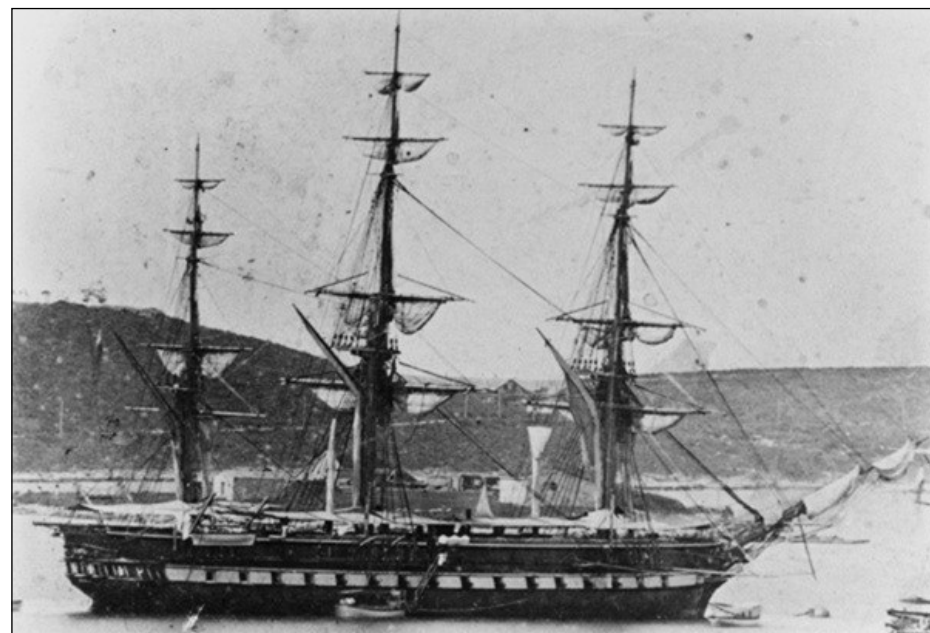
Ashlee Glanville is a CHS public history intern from Macquarie University.

Austrian Visit to Camden Park House in 1858

Peter McCall

In November 1858 an Austrian frigate visited Sydney. The purpose of the expedition was scientific. They visited Sir William Macarthur at Camden Park House as part of this. For Sir William it formed part of what has been described as his “Empire of Science”- his worldwide network of connections with people interested in science- mostly by letter and sometimes swapping specimens.[1] The visit was part of a round the world scientific expedition sent out the year before under the patronage of the Archduke Maximilian, brother of the Austrian Emperor Franz Josef. Maximilian was later the briefly reigning and ill-fated Emperor of Mexico executed there in 1867. The ship was the *Novara*, a frigate with 42 guns and weighing 2,107 tonnes with 18,291 square feet (1,699 square metres) of sail.[2] An auxiliary engine was added after the round the world trip in 1861. It was the largest man of war to have entered Sydney Harbour up to that time.[3]

Although only scheduled to be in Sydney for eleven days, the stay was extended to over four weeks[4] due to repairs that had to be carried out because



Novara before 1861 (VK)

Bernhard von Wullersdorf-Urbair (Wikipedia)

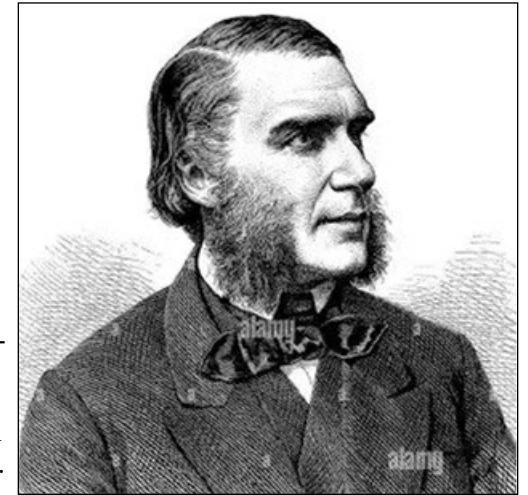


of storm damage on the last leg of the journey from China. The *Novara* was repaired at the newly opened Fitzroy Dry Dock on Cockatoo Island.

There were 352 men on board[5] under Commodore Bernhard von Wullersdorf-Urbair. Amongst the complement were seven scientists- Ferdinand Hochstetter (geologist), Georg Frauenfeld and Johannes Zelebor (zoologists), Eduard Schwarz and Anton Jelinek (botanists), Karl Scherzer (historiographer, ethnographer and economist) and Joseph Selleny (artist). A number of people kept diaries of the voyage and there are accounts from people in Sydney of the visit. Our knowledge of the trip to Camden comes from the Journal of Karl Scherzer[6] and his subsequent publication *Narrative of the Circumnavigation of the Globe in Austrian Frigate Novara...*[7] This three volume set was a translation of a German language version published in Vienna in 1862[8] (called in the text here the *Reise*).

During their enforced stay in Sydney, the scientists split up and travelled in different directions. The visit to Camden and after that Wollongong took five

days and included the Commodore, Zelebor, Selleny and Scherzer. There were also others unnamed (except for Kraus).[9] In Sydney they visited a number of prominent people and places with scientific connections. Among them were the University, Observatory, Botanical Gardens, the Australian Museum and William Macleay.[10] Since William Macarthur “corresponded with the leading scientific thinkers,”[11] it is not surprising that they received an invitation to visit Camden Park. Probably Scherzer was aware of Macarthur’s scientific interests before he left Austria; if not he would have been made aware of them in Sydney.



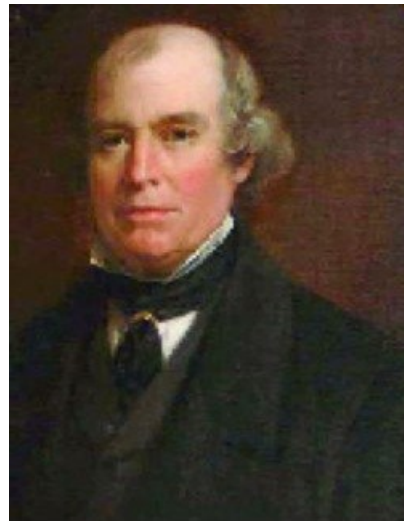
Karl Scherzer (Bridgeman Images)

They visited Sir Daniel Cooper, the Speaker of the NSW Legislative Assembly.[12] He lent them a hunting chaise (coach) but they also had at least one more carriage and horses.[13] They caught the train to Campelton (*sic*)[14] where Sir William Macarthur met them. Scherzer recorded that Sir William was one of the foremost wine-growers in the country with the best wine,[15] and also as belonging to “one of the most distinguished families in the colony.”[16]

He described the route from Campbelltown to Cambden Park (*sic*) as very lovely. Scherzer noted the existence of an understorey in the forest, which was contrary to what he had been told about Australian forests.[17] Camden Park is described “a charming country estate” where Sir William lived with his brother, his wife and their daughter.[18] As elsewhere, Scherzer and his companions were keen to meet German immigrants.[19] They met some of the ones Sir William had brought out from Germany (specifically the Rheingau) to tend his vineyards.[20] These people knew about the *Novara*’s visit to Sydney and were happy to see some Germans who were fresh from the mother country. They were happy with their lot, but still felt a certain amount of homesickness.[21] In the *Narrative* Scherzer gives a summary of German immigration to Australia. He seemed unaware of German migration to South Australia and their role in the wine industry there. Whilst at Camden Park Selleny did some drawings of the area. One of these was reproduced in the *Reise* under the caption “Nepean River im Cambden Park.”[22] Despite this title, the drawing seems a fairly generic

Australian bushland scene.

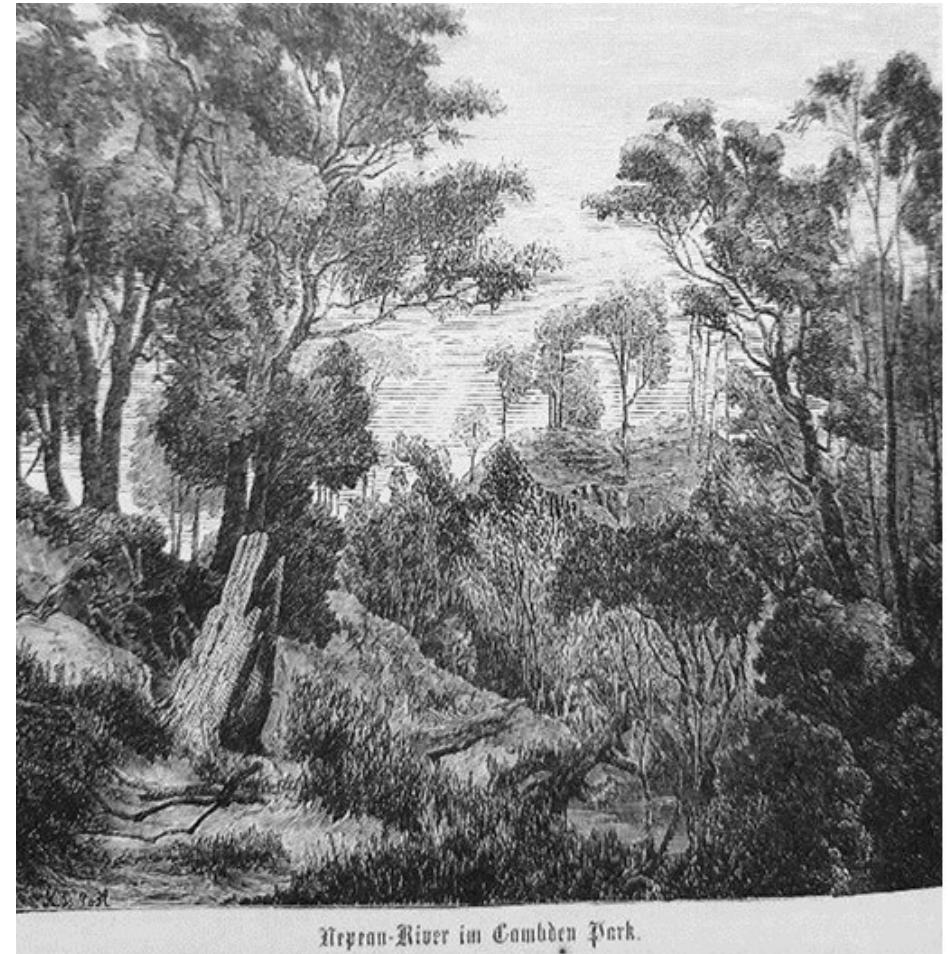
Scherzer and his companions were astonished at the high wages workers received. This was because of the shortage of labourers, due to the attractions of the goldfields. Sir William complained bitterly about the numbers of workers who abandoned their workplaces. He stated, "There is no greater tyrant in this country than the labourer."^[23] His views aligned with those of his brother James- who believed "the colony's advancement was seriously hindered by the absence of an 'honest, industrious and orderly labouring class', for the colonial labour shortage allowed workmen to grow lazy and contemptuous of their betters."^[24] Despite this (or perhaps because of it), Scherzer believed that Australia was "a country where a hardworking person must do well for himself."^[25] William's and James's opinions reflect their interest in establishing at Camden an estate with feudal relationships as in England. However, by this time they were beginning to accept that employer-employee relationships in Australia were not those of master-servant.



**Sir William Macarthur
(Belgenny Farm)**

Scherzer spent that evening in Sir William's library where he noted seven works about Australia that he did not know. At least three of these books are still in the library at Camden Park today, including two by Sir Thomas Mitchell and one by Sir George Grey. One by Ludwig Leichhardt is probably there (Scherzer's title is vague). The other three appear to have been sold or moved many years ago. Scherzer commented on his surprise as a traveller from a long-settled country, at the large numbers of "costly collections of rare works and valuable cabinets of natural history" he found in Australia. He said he expected Australia to be full of convicts and gold miners and had not realised that a number of younger sons of the highest circles of English society had come here to gain fortune and position that they could then take back to England.^[26] This is a generic summary of what he found in Australia, and to a certain degree reflects the aims of John Macarthur and his sons, even though the Macarthurs did not spring from the highest circles of English society.

They spent the night at Camden Park and next morning Scherzer visited the vineyards and cellars with Sir William. He learned that viticulture had been



Nepean-River im Camden Park.

Nepean River in Camden Park. From K Scherzer, Reise der Oesterreichischen Fregatte Novara um die Erde in den Jahren 1857, 1858, 1859. Wien 1862.p20. (Held at Camden Park House.)

seriously practised since 1838 and that 50,000 gallons (189,000 litres) were produced annually. Scherzer sampled the wines and mentioned the white as being best, comparable to what was produced by the Cape (of Good Hope). In the *Narrative* he noted that Australian wine was "little inferior ... in body and *bouquet* to those of Spain."^[27] He also mentions that one muscatel from Camden was very similar to a vin muscat from the South of France.^[28] Sir William Macarthur did business with the London company Mr James Veitch and Sons, Exotic Nursery, King's Road, Chelsea. He advised Scherzer that he could obtain plants and seeds from Australia there.



Camden Park House by Conrad Martens 1843 (Fine Art America)

About 10am the Austrian party left for Campbelltown and then headed to Wollongong via Appin. It appears Sir William accompanied them as he showed them a panoramic view from the escarpment of the Illawarra. Next day in Wollongong Sir William observed that all the rivers of the country started near the sea and then flowed inland.[29] This reflected the state of European exploration at the time and was generally true for the eastern half of the continent. Sir William joined the Austrians for dinner at the hotel where they were staying Sir William was accommodated elsewhere. Sir William was not mentioned again in Scherzer's Journal. He probably didn't accompany them on their return journey to Campbelltown where they joined a train for Sydney.

On their return to Austria in 1859 the seven scientists produced a multi-volume scientific account of the voyage which was published between 1861 and 1877.[30] Fletcher's "Karl Scherzer and the Visit ..." states there were nineteen volumes, Organ's "Österreich in Australien" says there were twenty one volumes.[31] Organ also mentions that scientific bodies such as the Vienna Academy of Sciences published many research papers from the expedition. Much more popular was the publication of Scherzer's three volume *Rei-*

se, which became the nineteenth century's German language second bestseller.[32] In Appendix IX at the end of the third volume of the *Reise*, Scherzer listed all those who had helped on the voyage. Sir William Macarthur was listed there. All of these were offered a copy of the *Reise* and it is likely that this is how a German copy of the volumes appeared in the library at Camden Park House.

The Austrian scientists' journey to Camden indicates the role of Camden Park House and particularly Sir William Macarthur's part in the "Empire of Science.[33]. We know that two overseas explorers with scientific interests, Edmund Strzelecki[34] probably (in 1839) and Ludwig Leichhardt[35] in 1846, spent time at Camden Park House. Before 1862 Sir Charles Nicholson, doctor, co-founder of Sydney University and philanthropist visited William and in 1864 John Gould Veitch, nurseryman and plant hunter did the same. [36] This John Veitch was the grandson of the James Veitch mentioned above.[37] In 1879 the Russian scientist Nikolai Mikhoulo-Maclay wrote to William Macarthur promising to visit Camden Park when he returned in five or six months (we don't know if he did).[38] Other scientific expeditions may have done the same.

Sir William Macarthur was recognised as an important scientific expert- especially in the areas of horticulture and viticulture. This was based on his own research and contacts with scientists all over the world. He had established Camden Park House as an important destination for scientists from all over the world. The visit of the scientific party from the *Novara* was part of this process. One small insight is due to the journal of Karl Scherzer.

Notes

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8.Karl Scherzer, *Reise der Oesterreichischen Fregatte Novara um die Erde in den Jahren 1857, 1858, 1859*. Wien 1862.

9.Scherzer, *Journal* p5

10.*Ibid*, p3-4.

11.McIntyre, p324

12.*Ibid*, p4.

13.*Ibid*, p6.

14.Scherzer, *Narrative* p20.

15.Scherzer, *Journal* p5.

16.Scherzer, *Narrative* p20

17.Scherzer, *Journal* p5.

18.*Ibid*. These were James, Emily and Elizabeth Macarthur. Scherzer makes no further reference to them in the journal or the *Reise*.

19.Austria at the time was part of Germany. It was a much larger state than today with access to the Adriatic Sea, which explains the existence of an Austrian navy and ships like the *Novara*.

20.Scherzer, *Narrative*, p21. The *Rheingau* is a wine growing district of Germany, now in the state of Hesse

21.Scherzer, *Journal* p5.

22.*Reise*, p20.

23.Scherzer, *Journal* p6.

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25.Scherzer, *Journal*. p5.

26.Scherzer, *Narrative* p25

27.*Ibid*, p21.

28.Scherzer, *Journal*. p5.

29.*Ibid* p8.

30.Fletcher, "Karl Scherzer and the Visit ..." p189.

31.Michael Organ, "'Österreich in Australien': Ferdinand von Hochstetter and the Austrian *Novara* Scientific Expedition 1858-9" *Historical Records of Australian Science* 12(1) 1998 p1

32.Fletcher, 'The "Novara" in Sydney,' p9.

33.McIntyre, "Empire..." p321

34.Organ, Michael, Lecture on Strzelecki at Illawarra Historical Society 5 Sep 2024 and Wrigley, J, *Camden Park House and its People*, (Unpublished, ND) p2.

35.Wrigley, *Ibid*, p3.

36.*Ibid*, p4

37."James Veitch (horticulturalist)" *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia*. Wikimedia Foundation, Inc, 31 August 2022, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Veitch_\(horticulturist\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Veitch_(horticulturist)) Accessed 17 October 2024.

38.Mikhoulo-Maclay N, Letter dated 15 May 1879 translated from French by RJ Sheridan, Vice President Mikhoulo-Maclay Society of Australia ND State Library NSW

With thanks to John and Edwina Macarthur-Stanham and the staff at the State Library of NSW.

Joy Riley, a life well lived

Joy Riley

Genealogy

(1) Jesse Dunk, a man of valour and adventure, was born in 1787 and laid to rest at St John's Camden in 1860. His life was a tapestry of service, as he fought in the English army in Spain, Portugal, Canada, and France under the esteemed Duke of Wellington against Napoleon's armies.

(2) On 12 June 1839, he boarded the ship 'Florist' with his second wife, Charlotte, and seven children: John, William, Jesse, Sarah, Martha, Thomas, and Elizabeth. He came as a bounty immigrant free man.

William married Eliza Barker and had four children.

(3) William Henry married Jemima Small.

(4) Jack Northcote married Laura May Rix.

Lorna Joy married Bruce Anthony Riley.

My Story

My father, Jack Dunk, was a mechanic in 1920 at a garage on 7 Argyle Street opposite the Post Office with his brother Cliff. In the 1930s, they had a garage in Picton and enlisted in WW2. Mum had to sell the garage as she could not staff or parts. Dad served in the Middle East in the 9th Division as one of the Rats of Tobruk. He came home in November 1942 and was discharged with hypertension.

When Dad was president of the Camden RSL sub-branch, they acquired the 'mess hall' from the Narellan Army Camp at Green's Corner and moved it to Oxley Street. The Civic Centre is there now.

Dad had many jobs: carting



Joy Riley (J Riley)

wheat at Grenfell, managing the market garden at the bottom of Chellaston Street in Camden, acting as an agent for rotary hoes and tractors, and ploughing the Chinese market gardens at Mrs Davies along Macquarie Grove Road.

In 1949, he purchased a fruit and vegetable, milk bar, and mixed business at 152 Argyle Street, next to Furner Bros. My mother, sister Doreen and I all worked here. The shop was open seven days a week from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m., which were very long days.

Dad went to the Sydney markets two days a week. He left home at 4:00 a.m. Some days, he would bring home some of the men from the Chinese gardens with their large bags of rice.

We had a fruit run to Cobbitty and Spring Creek once a week. On Saturday mornings, I would go with Dad to Spring Creek and be home in time to go to the pictures. I would go to the matinee. I would meet Dawn Howlett from the hamburger shop across the road. We were 12 years old and are still the best of friends.

Because we didn't close until 10:00 p.m., there would always be someone coming in from 5 to 10. We were lucky we lived on John Street, not far from home.

We had very good customers. One was Miss Faithfull Anderson from Camelot. Dad would make a Christmas box of fruit every Christmas and deliver it to all her workers. She gave us a gift when she went to England for Queen Elizabeth's coronation. I got a string of pearls. We had a lot of passing trade as the main road (Hume Highway) was still going through Camden. Visitors were going to the Rotolactor. We had a good name for our milkshakes.

My grandfather Albert Rix's first cousin was Sir William McKell, the Governor General. He would call in on his way to Yarralumla in Canberra, which he called Frogs Hollow.

Later, we only opened 5½ days a week: Monday through Friday, 9:00 am to 6:00 pm, and Saturday, 9:00 am to 1:30 pm. The shop is now Camden Valley Meats. The shop was sold in 1960 due to Dad's ill health. He passed away in August 1962, aged 54.

Growing up in Camden at 66 John Street.

I was born in 1938 at Welbourne Nursing Hospital in Oxley Street, Camden, where the council park is now. I lived in the family home until 1977. Nurse Taplin owned the Wellbourne Nursing Hospital.



JM Dunk Fruit Shop & Milk Bar 152 Argyle St 1949-1960 (JRiley)

I went to Camden Public School from 1942-1952.

My Kindergarten teacher was Miss Frazer, who later married and became Mrs Hider. Her husband was a pilot stationed at the Camden Airfield. One day, he flew over the schoolyard and dipped his wings of the plane. He was killed at war and never returned. Everyone loved Mrs Hyder.

There was another teacher in the 3rd class. None of the girls liked her, but the boys loved her. She was Scottish, and I couldn't understand her. I blame her because I can't spell.

Mrs. Kerrigan was the sewing teacher. I was expelled from sewing for laughing and had to spend the lesson on the verandah. I still can't sew. My best friend is a safety pin.

My 6th class teacher was Mr Bowen. Everyone loved him. I repeated 6th class.

I left school in December of my 2nd year, six weeks before my 15th birthday. Mr Baker said I had to come back for one day, my birthday on the 1st February. I didn't.

In 1960, after the fruit shop was sold, I went to work at Rodney's Grocery



Cottage, 66 John Street, Camden (J Riley)

shop owned by Coles, situated in the Haffendens building opposite the Crown Hotel.

I worked there for six years. After two months on holiday in New Zealand, I returned home to work at Coles' New World supermarket. In 1966, Liverpool was Coles' 2nd supermarket in NSW. I was the head girl. From there, I went to Bankstown, store openings, and head office supervision. In all, I worked for 17½ years for Coles.

Then, I married my husband, Bruce Riley, who passed away in 1990. I gave up work in 1977. I worked in our fruit shop and then at Coles since I was 11 years old. I thought it was time for a break. My sister Doreen married Col Shepard, the barber. They had a shop in Argyle Street, now the handbag store. Doreen had a jewellery and gift shop at the front, and I worked there one day a week.

Today, I am involved in Cawdor Over 55s, Harrington Park Over 55s, Camden Area Family History Society, and the Camden Historical Society, The Oaks Historical Society, and lots of lunches with friends. As you can imag-

ine, I have lots of relatives—Dunk, Small, Rix, Murdoch.

At 86, my memory is still good, so I have lots of information for the museum and family history.



**Jack N Dunk
NX32715 (J Riley)**

Camden Council vote on listing the Camden Township on the State Heritage Register

Ian Willis

On Tuesday, 11 March 2025, Camden Council listed on its business papers a motion from Councillor Peter McClean for the council to apply to have the Camden township listed on the state heritage register on its business papers.

Notice of Motion

SUBJECT: NOTICE OF MOTION – STATE HERITAGE REGISTER

FROM: Cr McLean

EDMS #: 25/106623

“I, Councillor Peter McLean, hereby give notice of my intention to move the following at the Council Meeting of 11 March 2025:

That Council apply for Camden Township to be listed on the State Heritage Register.
BACKGROUND



An aerial view of Camden township in 1940 taken by a plane that took off at Camden airfield. St John’s Church is at the centre of the image (Camden Images)

Camden Township has nationally significant historic and cultural heritage values and status. We must protect our local gem because it is so unique but also due to its strategic economic importance as the only historic township of its kind in greater Sydney.”

RECOMMENDED

That Council apply for Camden Township to be listed on the State Heritage Register. (Camden Council Business Paper 11 March 2025, p79)

Presentation to Camden Council Meeting

Dr Ian Willis, president of the Camden Historical Society, gave a public address during the council meeting’s public address session to support the motion.

Dr Willis had four minutes to speak and his address follows:

‘The Camden Historical Society would like to support this motion proposed by Councillor McLean.

‘The Camden Township, represented by the Camden Heritage Conservation Area, has been identified as important for its historic and heritage significance.’

‘Sydney architect Hector Abrahams of the firm Clive Lucas, Stapleton and Partners, stated in 2006 that Camden was ‘the best preserved rural town in the entire Cumberland Plain’.

‘I maintain that the Camden town centre is essentially unchanged in form and structure from its 19th century origins as a privately developed village by the Macarthur family. Combined with Edwardian and Inter-war growth and infill the town centre has amazingly retained its integrity and rural aesthetic, particularly given its location on the Nepean River floodplain.’

‘Camden’s aesthetic was noted in publications as early the 1880s, and re-enforced by tourist journalism of the Inter-war period which championed its Englishness and village nature. These characteristics, surprising to some, are still identifiable and have shaped the community’s sense of place and identity.’

‘Historian Emeritus Professor Alan Atkinson, who wrote *Camden Farm and Village Life in Early New South Wales*, has detailed the first 40 years of the town’s growth. He maintains that Camden’s town plan, drawn up in 1836 by Surveyor-General Sir Thomas Mitchell, is one of the best-preserved aspects of the town.’

‘Atkinson argues that Camden ‘is a small masterpiece’ due to its sensitive positioning in the landscape by Surveyor-General Mitchell with ‘the human and natural dimensions of landscape’. The town, according to Atkinson, is

the most successful ‘engineered community’ by the Macarthur family of the mid-19th century, and overall the town is a ‘profoundly important place’ for its historical and heritage values.’

‘According to Historian Emeritus Professor Grace Karskens ‘Camden and its surrounding rural landscape clearly have national as well as state significance because of their links with vital developments in the early colony, including foundational contacts between Aboriginal people and settlers, early breakthroughs in the cattle industry, the strong association with the illustrious Macarthur family and the wool industry, and the way this landscape – which you can still see today – was so much admired by settlers.’ Karskens argues that the Camden township is ‘precious’.

‘The Camden Historical Society agrees with these sentiments and recommends that the Council support Councillor McClean’s motion.’

Discussion

The mayor put the motion forward, and a short debate followed. Councillor Peter McClean endorsed his motion and stated his strong support for the council supporting the move. This was endorsed by Councillor Eva Campbell and Councillor Abha Suri. Councillor Damien Quinnell spoke against the motion, followed by Councillor Vince Ferreri, who listed several objections to the motion, including that it would adversely affect small businesses in the town centre and make any development more complex. Councillor Ashleigh Cagney stated she would not support the motion because the term ‘Camden Township’ was too vague.

The motion was lost 6-3.

