

# **CAMDEN HISTORY**

Journal of the Camden Historical Society



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# **CAMDEN HISTORY**

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

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

## **Camden History, Journal of the Camden Historical Society Inc**

The Journal is published in March and September each year. The Editor would be pleased to receive articles broadly covering the history of the Camden district. Correspondence can be sent to the Society's postal address. The Society takes no responsibility for the contents of articles published in the Journal.

## **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 Image:** Camden Arcade 25th Anniversary (I Willis)

**Inside Back Cover:** Stables Camden Park Open Day 2016 (A McIntosh)

**Back Cover Image:** Camden Park East Lawn Open Day 2016 (A McIntosh)

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# Brian Stratton - the story of a local artist

**Linda and David van Nunen**

Brian Stratton writes:

*I have been a Camden ratepayer since 1972 when I purchased a 30 acre block of land in the then sleepy hollow of Bringelly. The land was part of a grant of 1500 acres made in 1815 by Governor Macquarie to the magistrate Robert Lowe. Bringelly has been my home, my studio and my refuge for nearly 43 years but this is coming to an end. With the Southwest Sydney Growth Centre all will change. My block will be in Lowes Creek. The rural aspects will disappear as the land has been designated for industrial and residential uses.'*

Born in Sydney on 23 May 1936 to Allan Thomas Stratton and Edna Mavis Lynch, Brian Stratton was the only member of the Australian Watercolour Institute to twice preside as president. Stratton's father, like many of his generation, was profoundly affected by the Great Depression of the 1930s and consequently devoted his life's energies to the union movement. A bookbinder by trade, Allan Stratton was to hold numerous positions in the Amalgamated Printing Trades Union, being a vigorous campaigner in the industrial fight for the 40-hour week, which was formally approved by the Commonwealth Arbitration Court on 8 September 1947 to take effect from 1 January 1948. He became Head Teacher of Bookbinding with the New South Wales Department of Technical Education, relinquishing his union position but remaining for many years their Returning Officer. However, his unremitting union activism took a heavy toll on the family, culminating in a marriage breakdown with the result that, for most of his life, Brian Stratton has had a close association with his mother and her relations.

At the outbreak of World War II, Stratton was a child of three but he distinctly recalls that his first intimation of its gravity was two years later, following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941, when his teacher, Mr Farrell, announced to the class at Punchbowl Primary School, 'Boys, we are saved. I got down on my knees last night and thanked God that America is in the War.'

He would witness the radical changes war wreaked on the home front. There were blackouts in cities and coastal areas and, due to petrol shortages, charcoal burners propelled cars while trucks and public buses were fuelled by massive bags of gas that was a by-product of iron manufacturing. With the entry of Japan into the war and the attacks on Darwin, women and children



**Brian with his entry in the 2010 in Quanhua Watercolour Gallery Zhujiajiao at Shanghai in China at which Brian won at award. (L & B Stratton)**

were evacuated from northern Australia. The widespread fear that this country would be invaded was somewhat attenuated by the influx of thousands of American soldiers. Holes were dug in backyards with galvanised sheeting for roofs as improvised air raid shelters but, when it rained, they flooded with water. Shop windows were boarded up and stringent rationing was in force for essential items such as food, fuel, clothing and footwear. Stratton remembers walking to school barefoot during winter frosts, wearing short pants mended with a succession of patches, always carrying with him a small draw-string bag containing cotton wool and an eraser. The cotton wool was intended to serve as earplugs while the eraser was to be clamped between one's teeth in the event of bombing raids.

In his last year at Punchbowl Primary School, Stratton's teacher, Mr Rufus, suggested that their classroom would benefit from some adornment on its barren walls. Money was collected and two reproductions were hung -- Hans Heysen's virtuosic 1909 watercolour, *Summer*, and Robert Johnson's bucolic *Burraborang Valley*, the original oil painting having been a finalist in the 1939 Wynne Prize at the Art Gallery of New South Wales. These two images

were Stratton's first visual experience of Australian art.

After obtaining his Intermediate Certificate, he commenced work in the printing industry, initially as a halftone, and then colour, etcher at the leading photoengraving company, Hartland and Hyde. Associated with Hartland and Hyde at that time was the renowned modernist photographer, Max Dupain. As the junior member of staff, one of Stratton's tasks was to buy the lunches so that there were times he would be in the dark room with Dupain and his assistants, among whom was Kerry Dundas, son of the artist Douglas Dundas MBE, who played an important role in his future career. Dupain would use an early oil painting by Stratton in the background of one of his commercial projects.

Following a five-year apprenticeship at the School of Printing (later Graphic Arts), Stratton was awarded the Bronze Medallion by the Premier of New South Wales, Joseph Cahill, at Sydney Town Hall as 'Most Outstanding Apprentice of the Year' in his trade. Continuing his studies at night, he subsequently obtained the Higher Trades Certificate.

In 1952, at the age of 15, he commenced part time studies in drawing and composition at North Sydney Technical College two nights a week under the tutelage of John Godson (a member of the Australian Watercolour Institute from 1934-50). On one occasion, Godson showed the class some of his unframed watercolours, which were the first original landscapes Stratton had seen. By far the youngest member of the group, Stratton was confident that his drawing was solid but felt his compositional skills were lacking. One of the guest lecturers in composition was the newly appointed teacher, Peter Laverty, who would be appointed as State Supervisor of Art for New South Wales prior to serving as Director of the Art Gallery of New South Wales from 1971 to 1977 and, subsequently, as vice president of the Australian Watercolour Institute.

An influential figure in Stratton's career was his teacher of life drawing, Douglas Dundas MBE, President of the Society of Artists and a trustee of the Art Gallery of NSW. During model breaks, his insights into art societies and galleries, as well as his informed responses to questions about artists and paintings, was an education in itself for Stratton. A member of the selection committee for full-time teachers of art, Dundas would be Stratton's first Head of School in TAFE. In 1970, Stratton interviewed Dundas in his studio, recording eighteen hours of tape concerning his life and career, which culminated, in 1974, in an edited, print version entitled, *Douglas Dundas Remembers*, copies of which are retained in State galleries and libraries throughout Australia. The original tapes were forwarded to the National Library in Canberra only to be destroyed when the delivery van burnt out. Stratton subse-





**Brian at the 2010 Inaugural Shanghai Zhujiajiao International Watercolour Biennial Exhibition Opening Ceremony in China at which he was a finalist. ( L & B Stratton)**

quently completed a 90-minute follow up interview, which he presented to the library.

The following year, Stratton began working in watercolour, assiduously producing three full-sheet paintings per day during his holidays from work. In 1954, he joined the Tuesday night 'Still Life Wash' class taught by New Zealand-born, realist painter, Alfred Cook, Head Teacher of Commercial Illustration and Commercial Art, who had a life-long passion for watercolour, working almost exclusively in that medium. His watercolour demonstrations were revelatory for Stratton, who cites Cook as the most important influence of his career in his approach to painting. By his third year in that class, he was doing as much teaching and demonstrating as Cook was, with his encouragement. Consequently, in 1959, upon the recommendation of Alfred Cook, L. Roy Davies, Head of National Art School, invited Stratton to take this class. For the next few years, he worked in the printing industry by day and was involved in Technical Education most nights of the week, teaching in the Art School and studying at the School of Printing.

In 1962, he was appointed a full-time teacher of Art in the New South Wales Department of Technical Education, which came as a surprise to Stratton, who had foreseen the possibility of a teaching position within the School of Printing but a vacancy never occurred. However, after five weeks in the Art School, the Head of the School of Printing approached him to transfer to his staff. Stratton declined the offer and retired nearly thirty years later as Senior Head Teacher of Art and Design at Liverpool College of TAFE.

At the age of twenty, in 1957, Stratton won his first art award, the South Strathfield Watercolour Prize, adjudicated by Sir Erik Langker and watercolourists, G.K. Townshend (AWI) and Rufus Morris. On the advice of Alfred Cook, he had made a minor adjustment to the work, a holiday painting from Kurrajong, after which Cook announced prophetically, 'This looks like a prize-winner to me'. After the award presentation ceremony, G.K. Townshend commented to Stratton, 'This will not be your last prize,' a prognostication that proved correct. To date, Stratton has won more than 280 art prizes, culminating in two prestigious international awards at the 2010 *Shanghai Zhujiajiao International Biennial Watercolour Exhibition* at Quanhua Watercolour Art Gallery, Zhujiajiao, and the 2013 *Shenzhen International Watercolour Biennial*, in Shenzhen. The subject of both winning entries was one of Stratton's preferred painting locations, the north face of Crookhaven Heads on the south coast of New South Wales. Like Cézanne's Mont Sainte-Victoire and Arthur Boyd's Pulpit Rock, Crookhaven Heads has been a recurrent motif in Stratton's *oeuvre*, the artist having painted, since 1985, in excess of 200 works at this site. Invariably, his watercolours are technically proficient, closely observed and masterfully rendered both in their realism and depth of illusion.

Following the *Shanghai Zhujiajiao International Watercolour Biennial*, Stratton was invited to hold a solo exhibition, *Sand, Sticks and Stones*, the first in the *International Watercolour Masters* series at the Quanhua Watercolour Art Gallery, with the production of a book-quality catalogue containing 30 full-page reproductions. The most touching moment of his career, Stratton says, was during the opening in Zhujiajiao when his interpreter, Jo Jo Chen, daughter of Quanhua Watercolour Art Gallery Director and eminent watercolourist, Xidan Chen, introduced two Chinese artists who had travelled 3,000 kilometres to view his exhibition and to meet him.

It was as a foundation member of the Ryde Art Society (later City of Ryde Art Society), in 1959, that Stratton initially learned the dynamics of societies, presiding as President from 1962 to 1969 and becoming a Life Member in 1968. During his tenure as president, he organised exhibitions and annual awards, attracting art luminaries as guest speakers, such as Douglas Dundas,





**Brian with David Naphine and his winning painting in 2014 (L & B Statton)**

John Coburn, Peter Laverty, Elwyn Lynn, Alfred Cook and Henry Hanke, among others. He also liaised with Drummoyne Council for the establishment of a new society and strongly supported the Drummoyne Art Society in its formative years. At the opening of the Ryde Art Society's 50th Annual Art Award in 2010, Stratton delivered an address, being the only exhibitor in the first and fiftieth exhibition. Since 1958, he has also been a member of the Royal Art Society, being elected a fellow in 1964.

When Stratton was nineteen years of age, Alfred Cook encouraged him to submit a work for the Australian Watercolour Institute's annual exhibition, which was accepted for hanging. Douglas Stewart, noted poet, art critic for the *Bulletin* and husband of artist Margaret Coen, commented favourably on his work in his review of that 1955 exhibition. As an exhibitor in the next two AWI annual exhibitions, Stratton's work was hung next to those by Kenneth Macqueen. Inevitably, lessons were learnt about being overshadowed by the

power of Macqueen's paintings. After exhibiting with the AWI for six years, Stratton was invited to membership, together with Elaine Haxton, in 1961, and served on the AWI Executive Committee from 1962-63. During that time, membership was extremely difficult to obtain, as the Institute was split on ideological grounds between traditional and modernist painters, and a two-thirds majority vote of the members was required. Through a later amendment to the Constitution, a 50% majority vote is now the requirement.

Upon George Duncan's resignation of the AWI presidency in 1964, he approached Stratton to succeed him in that role. Thus, Stratton was nominated for the office, as was Alfred Cook, his mentor. To Stratton's astonishment, Cook accepted the nomination, presenting Stratton with the immediate dilemma of whether to withdraw or go to a ballot. He has never comprehended why Cook stood, being certain that he voted for him. In what was perhaps the most bittersweet event of his life, Stratton was elected, with Alfred Cook and George Duncan serving as vice presidents. His saddest duty as president was writing a letter of condolence to Cook's widow in 1970. An initial difficulty he faced was filling the position of AWI Secretary. As no member was prepared to assume that role, Stratton's then wife, Adrienne (née Moore), supported him and the Institute with distinction as secretary throughout his presidency. One of Stratton's initial undertakings in his role as president was to draft letters to the Art Gallery of New South Wales requesting a comprehensive exhibition of watercolours and to Douglas Dundas, then Head of the National Art School, pointing out the lack of watercolour instruction given to painting diploma students. The AWI annual exhibitions were timed to coincide with Stratton's TAFE vacation to allow for his manning of the shows.

George Duncan was also Director of the David Jones Art Gallery (1953-1963), located in the Elizabeth Street store, where the AWI had held its annual exhibition for a number of years. The loss of this central, well-patronised venue, due to Duncan's retirement from the directorship of the David Jones Art Gallery, would affect the fortunes of artists and societies for years to come, presenting a particular problem for the AWI in siting its annual exhibitions.

At the beginning of the decade, there were five major art societies in New South Wales – the Royal Art Society, the Society of Artists, the Contemporary Art Society, the Australian Watercolour Institute and the Australian Art Society -- but only one gallery available to stage their exhibitions, notably the space on the top floor of the Education Department building in Bridge Street, Sydney. This space was *in extremis* satisfactory, although ill lit and in a state of disrepair. To redress this situation, Erik Langker, President of Royal Art Society, Lloyd Rees, President of Society of Artists, Jack Santry, Secretary of the Society of Artists, Guy Warren, Contemporary Art Society and Stratton



**Brian and two of his new friends at the Shanghai Museum in 2010 that are over 1000 years old. (L & B Stratton)**

collectively met with the then Minister for Education, the Hon. Frank Wetherall, with the objective of securing improvements to the venue. Unfortunately, their deputation was to no avail. In a few years, the Society of Artists and Contemporary Art Society, together with the Australian Art Society, were no longer existent but, interestingly, Lloyd Rees, John Santry and Guy Warren would subsequently become members of the AWI.

Among the reasons for the demise of these societies was the proliferation of art galleries, which meant that established artists were disinclined to belong to a group when their professional needs were being met by private dealers. Another factor was the aforementioned absence of a suitable space that could accommodate a large number of works. Also, there was a change in the purchasing policies of State galleries, particularly the Art Gallery of New South Wales. Prior to this change in the purchasing policy, a quorum of trustees of the Art Gallery of New South Wales, as well as Directors of other State galleries, would visit exhibitions on the preview day and have first pick of the works displayed to acquire for their respective collections. This ensured that, by the time the public attended, the exhibition was off to a successful start

with sales well underway. Stratton recalls an occasion when, just before the policy was abandoned, Hector Gilliland had three works purchased from one show by three State Galleries. This trifecta not only added greatly to the artist's reputation but also increased the status of the Institute and the annual exhibition.

From 1965-66 and 1969-71, Stratton replaced Rah Fizelle as representative of the Australian Watercolour Institute on the Australian National Advisory Committee for UNESCO (Visual Arts), which generally met in Canberra under the auspices of the Commonwealth Government. That committee comprised such luminaries as Sir Erik Langker (artist, art administrator, Trustee of the Art Gallery of NSW, President of the Royal Art Society and pioneer of the Sydney Opera house), Eric Westbrook (artist, Head of Victoria's Ministry of the Arts and influential director of the National Gallery of Victoria), Alan McCulloch (art critic, art historian, curator, gallery director and publisher of *The Encyclopaedia of Australian Art*), Ronald Appleyard (art administrator, curator and writer) and Professor Sir Joseph Burke (who was educated at King's College, the Courtauld Institute and Yale University before arriving in Australia in 1946 to take up his appointment as the Herald Chair of Fine Arts at Melbourne University). Stratton found him the most compelling among the participants. After one meeting, Sir Erik Langker exasperatedly remarked to him in the lift, 'They can talk, can't they!' Stratton shared the same view that, in the main, it was indeed a talkfest, as he cannot recall that committee achieving anything of significance.

After a period of 32 years, having been made an AWI Life Member in 1989, Stratton re-joined the Executive Committee in 2004 purely to make up numbers. In 2005, he opened the *82nd Annual AWI Exhibition* at Gosford Regional Gallery, which marked his fiftieth consecutive year of exhibiting with the Institute and, in 2011, he joined the elite group of artists who have held membership in the AWI for fifty years or more, notably Margaret Coen, Hector Gilliland, Jean Isherwood, Kenneth Jack, Ronald Steuart and Max Angus, who was made an Honorary Life Member in 2004.

The year 2006 was an unusual one in the history of the AWI, with all senior members of the AWI Executive Committee stepping down. Stratton stepped into the breach and was elected for a second term as president with a new team of officers and committee, the major priority on the agenda being a book, *The Australian Watercolour Institute: A Gallery of Australia's Finest Watercolours*, which the Book Committee did an admirable job in producing, with a print run of 4000 copies. After three years in office, with confidence that the group had the ability to serve the Institute well, Stratton stood down in 2009. He remains an honorary member of the AWI Executive Committee and a valued advisor.

Stratton's work has been exhibited in the United States, New Zealand, Mexico, Canada, Korea, Hong Kong and China, and he has been invited to judge over 100 art awards. He is represented in numerous public and private collections in Australia and overseas, including the Art Gallery of Western Australia and Art Bank.

In 2006, Brian Stratton was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for service to art as a painter and educator, and to professional organisations, including the Australian Watercolour Institute.

1. van Nunen, Linda, *Brought to Light II: Contemporary Australian Art 1966-2006*, Queensland Art Gallery, 2007, pp. 33-34.
2. Ibid
3. Smith, Bernard, Smith, Terry and Heathcoate, Christopher, *Australian Painting 1788-2000*, Fourth Edition, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2001, p. 433.
4. Eagle, Mary and Jones, John, *A Story of Australian Painting*, Macmillan, Sydney, 1996, p. 266.

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# Memories of Barbering

**Col Smith**

I remember it well.

It was the beginning of April 1956 I had just turned 15 years old and my parents, myself and my brother and sister sat down for our evening meal.

My mother said, 'Your father and I have made a decision about your future. You are not doing so good at school so we think it's about time you went out to work and learnt a trade'

Mum said a friend's son had just left a barber shop where he worked and got a job on board a ship. In those days it was a very good job to see the world. The barber shop where he worked was looking for an apprentice barber. I went for an interview with the manager Ray Holmes. He said he would give me a three month probation period to see if I liked the idea of learning the trade.

The shop was owned by the Thorburn family who had two ladies salons and one barber shop in Forest Road Hurstville. There were seven barbers chairs downstairs and three chairs upstairs. Upstairs was called the Space Ship Salon and it was used to cut kids hair, especially when the kids were screaming. My job naturally was to sweep the floor and refill the Brylcream Jars for the seven barbers who were constantly cutting. Non stop. There was a waiting area for about 20 people



**A young Col at Punchbowl (C Smith)**





**Beige, Col and Rachel at Col's Clip Joint in Camden (C Smith)**

which was pretty busy all day. Each barber was on a bonus system. He had to cut 130 clients before he got onto the bonus which was sixpence per head over the 130. The barbers were so busy trying their hardest to make a big bonus at the end of the week, that none of them had time to teach me any of the skills involved in cutting hair and using the clippers.

So I had to be content to stand behind the barbers and watch how it was done and now and then, ask questions. A barber back in those days could do up to six haircuts an hour. So you can understand why they did not have time for me and that included the manager Ray. But I guess I expected too much too soon.

At the end of the three month period I made up my mind that becoming a gents hairdresser was the way to go. Men and boys would require regular haircuts and my parents kept saying you will have a job for life.

Leaving Belmore Boys High School in Second Year was the right choice because I was not very academic. My parents made the decision for me. Not that I agree with parents choosing their children's occupation.

When my three months was up, Mrs Thorburn was the only person that could



**Col clipping John Southwell his Camden barber shop (C Smith)**

sign my apprenticeship papers. But she had gone for a holiday to the USA for a couple of months with her daughter.

I complained to my Dad who used to go to a barber in Punchbowl. His name was Fred Tozer. When Fred heard about me he came to see me. He said, 'If you want to come and work with me at my shop, do the right thing with your present employer by giving them plenty of notice. You have served your three months with them already and I will sign your apprenticeship papers.' I always remember when I left (Thorburns) because of my love for music; it was the week that Elvis Presley's song (Heartbreak Hotel) became number one on the hit parade.

I worked in Punchbowl for five years and in that time I formed a friendship with well-known radio personality John Burgess. He was one of our gang in those days. We were known as the Punchbowl Bogies. No! We did not look for trouble. We just went to stadium shows in Sydney and the usual rock 'n' roll parties etc.

I was not happy with my boss at Punchbowl John Frolich even though he was a better cutter than Fred Tozer. John had purchased the barber shop from Fred two years after I started which was 1958. At the beginning of 1962 I told my Dad that 'I was not happy working there anymore,' so my Dad said, 'Well, you have got your licence now, so maybe it's time to move on'.

Back in the 1960s there was always plenty of work for barbers. I remember ringing up for a job in Marrickville. The owner of the shop said 'If you can't do seven haircuts in one hour on a Saturday morning for four hours don't bother coming for a trial'. I told the owner of the barber shop that I could do six in an hour and he said 'Don't bother coming for a trial'. To think that my ex-boss John Frolich was happy with my six an hour back in Punchbowl.

I then saw an ad for a barber in Kingsgrove at Jack Meads barber shop. I went for a trial at Jack's shop and got the job. I lived in Belmore South in those days which was only minutes down the road from Kingsgrove. At the end of the first week on pay day Nancy, the boss's wife came up to me with my pay. She said Jack was happy with the way I worked. I said to her with a smile, 'Would you believe Nancy that when I was a boy I used to regularly have my haircut here after school. Little did I know that one day I would learn the trade and end up working for Jack'. I also told Nancy that when I was 12 years old I was selling newspapers at the entrance to Kingsgrove Station. When I was 13 years old I became a telegram boy after school and Saturday mornings.

Jack owned the barber shop and the residence upstairs. I envied Jack's setup and I told him so. He said, 'Follow your dream boy, you will get there'. Unfortunately by the time I opened my barber shop in Camden in the late 1960's I got the news that Jack had passed away through cancer. I wanted so much to tell him I had a barber shop. I know he would have been happy for me.

Jack had two barber shops in Kingsgrove, the one that he owned and lived in plus one next to Kingsgrove Railway Station which he rented. I became the go between barber, meaning when the shop near the station got busy I had to race up there help them and get back to the other shop. After 12 months of this I got tired. I decided to leave at the beginning of 1963.

I remember the barber shops in the 1950s and the 1960s. Especially the 1950s, if you owned a barber shop and you were a good cutter, you had a licence to print money.

Brylcreem, Vaseline and Spruso hair cream were very popular in the 50s and 60s, and also very messy. If some clients used too much of the product on

their hair it caused problems with our equipment. When we cut their hair it would keep sticking to our combs and between the blades of clippers. This caused jamming of our clipper blades although it was the only product to be used at the time.

I always remember one day when business was a bit quiet I said to Jack and his other barbers, 'You know boys we have the flat tops, the crewcuts and Tony Curtis haircuts but the day will come men and boys will grow their hair long'. Of course they laughed at me. I just did not realise how true that statement was.

Flat tops and crewcuts became very popular in the 1950s and early 60s and styles like these required regular cutting to keep them well groomed.

Shortly after James Dean died in that tragic car crash teenagers would bring photos in for me to cut their hair like James Dean. James was my idol. He starred in three movies, *East of Eden*, *Rebel Without a Cause* and *Giant*. It was quite common for young clients to bring in photos of their famous movie stars to have their cut the same.

There was no price cutting in those days because the price of haircuts was controlled by the Barbers Union. If you were found charging more or less than the price which was set by the union you would be fined! In other words you won business by good cutting not price cutting!

In those days a barber could support a wife and children without his wife going out to work.

At the finish of my apprenticeship I got my licence to become a barber. I saw an ad in the paper for a barber in Aware Street, Fairfield which was owned by Geoff Smee. The year was 1963. I got the job after the interview with Geoff on Saturday morning. I arrived for work on the Monday morning Geoff ran his shop like Thorburns did in Hurstville. You had to get a number off the wall before you sat down in the waiting area otherwise you lost your turn. The barbers were on a bonus system similar to the Thorburns - where - you had to do 130 haircuts before you got one "bob" per head .

I remember the first day. One of the barbers, Don Young, came up to me and said, 'Do yourself a favour, don't work fast this week because Geoff is not a barber. He depends on the manager of the barbers section Allan who will watch you closely the first week. If he sees that you are quick, he won't hire you because are on trial the first week'. I went slow the first week. On pay-day Geoff asked Allan 'Does Col get the job?' Allan said 'Yes' Then Don



**Col's Clip Joint celebrates 41 years of continuous service to the Camden community after being established in 1969 (C Smith)**

said to me after work on the Saturday, 'You are now hired and you can pick up your speed because he can't go back on his word'.

I spent six enjoyable years at Geoff Smee's barber shop. One of my clients Brocka Cortess was a wrestler from the Sydney stadium. I used to go and see the wrestling on a Friday night. I asked, 'It's all an act isn't it?' He kept saying, 'It's real'. I said, 'How come I have not seen you win a match?' He would say, 'I guess I'm not good enough'. I knew better so I never challenged him again.



About the first week in March 1969 the apprentice David Banks came to me and said, 'Where's Camden, Col?' He was holding *The Liverpool Leader* in his hand. He went on to say that there was a barber shop in an arcade in Camden that had to be closed down by the owner through bad health. The barber's name was Jim Flockart. My Dad and I went to his house in Campbelltown to find out how much he wanted for it seeing it had been closed for 8 weeks. We did a deal and both parties were quite happy with it. On 16 March 1969 I opened 'Col's Clip Joint'.

I remember the Saturday before I opened the shop. My wife and I had a counter lunch at The Plough and Harrow Hotel. The owner of the hotel back then was John Kennedy a friend of my parents for many years. It was Saturday after lunch when John stood on the bar and said to all the drinkers in the pub "Could I have your attention please. This gentleman sitting here is Colin Smith. He is a friend of mine and he is opening a barber shop on Monday in the arcade." John went on to say, with a smile on his face, "If you don't give him a go I will shut the beer off". Naturally they all laughed and booed him.

I always remember the first week in business. A man walked in, jumped into the chair and introduced himself as the Mayor of Camden, Bruce Ferguson. He welcomed me into Camden and said "You will do alright son, this town is a wealthy place to have a business". I soon found this out when you consider how strong the coal mines were doing and dairy farms also were very big. Ferguson said that he was known as "Mr Finance" amongst the business people of Camden. If any of the business people in Camden need financial help he would be there for them at a very low interest rate.

About a month later on a Saturday morning I had just closed my shop at 12 noon. All shops back then ceased trading at 12 pm and did not open again till Monday morning at 9 am. Back in those days if you worked from Monday to Friday you had plenty of family time because only two types of businesses were open on weekends: convenience stores and milk bars.

Anyhow back to my story about this particular Saturday morning. A gentleman wearing a white shirt and white pants knocked on the door. I opened the door, the man put his hand out to shake my hand and said "I am Albert Baker, the barber from down the other end of town. Welcome to Camden Col, I hope you do well." I said "Thank you Albert!" I said to Albert, "I guess you play cricket?" he said, "No! I play Lawn Bowls" and the rest is history. I have now played lawn bowls for 45 years. Albert was my first coach and was a great bowler himself.





**The first Crop The Cop fundraiser in Camden. Col Smith in blue shirt in centre. (C Smith)**

I knew from that moment that I had chosen a great town to open a business. Back then there was no Macarthur Bridge and only five shops in Narellan. There were only five shops in Tahmoor which meant that Camden was the closest place to shop. It was quite common for semi-trailers and coal trucks passing through the town. People going to Melbourne and Canberra had to pass through Camden. The passing trade in the town was quite good.

About six months later just before Christmas 1969 a man walked in sat down whilst I was cutting someone's hair. I noticed that he was watching me carefully, the way that I was cutting. When he got into my chair he told me his name was Mick Prior, a barber from Picton.

I had cut Mick's hair a number of times. At the beginning of the 1970's Mick Prior said to me while I was cutting his hair one day, 'I am thinking of retiring and selling my two shops and residence in the main street of Picton. Col I would love to see you in Picton'. Mick said that the shop next to his barber shop was being rented to a nursery by him for \$11.00 a week. 'Don't forget that this was the beginning of 1970 and I was paying \$22 a week for my shop', he said.

To think that Mick was asking \$18,500 for the lot. I said to Mick, "If I had

not taken up a loan 12 months ago to buy my first home in Campbelltown which I had to borrow \$10,000 to build, I would have purchased it for sure". As I continued to roll through the 1970's I did not realise what famous people's hair I was cutting. For example, I cut the hair of the late 'Gary Dowling' who played for Oakdale Workers Club. He played for the Canterbury Bulldogs as a fullback at the beginning of 1971. He ended up playing for Australia on the wing. I also cut the hair of John Fahey who was our local accountant and ended up being Premier of NSW.

Gary McCoy, Matt Mladin, Anthony Gobert were also clients of mine who went on to be champion motor bike riders. Each one signed their pictures which were hung on the wall of my shop for many years. Now the pictures hang on the wall of my "man cave" at home. One day in the shop Darren Britt, who played for Canterbury in the late 1920's gave me a signed jumper which read, "Thanks for the Bulldog haircuts".

The 70's became a cruel period for barber shops as men and boys started growing their hair long. I remember seeing write ups in the Sydney newspapers about how the long hair fashion had a bad effect on the barbering industry. There were even photos of barbers standing in their doorways hoping that the fashion would not last long. It ended up lasting about 15 years. In that time we started losing business to ladies hairdressers who were slowly taking our young boys which were our future trade.

Gone were the days when mothers would drop off their sons for a haircut and they would go to their ladies hairdresser for their cuts. So the Unisex Salons were created and slowly men and boys were drifting away from barber shops. What really affected after school trade was that the mothers would make an appointment for their sons so they did not have to waste time sitting in a barber shop. It became quite a disaster in most barber shops in the 1970's and 1980's.

I even noticed some of my solicitor clients, doctors and dentists disappear because they were making appointments in the salons. They did this because they shut their doors between 1pm and 2pm which was the only time they had for a haircut.

In conclusion I must confess that if I had the time over again I would not change a thing. I enjoyed 56 years working as a barber. I met a lot of nice people and made a lot of friends.

The biggest award that I received in 2011 was being named the 2011 business man of the year. This trophy sits in my 'man cave' at home. Every time I



**Col clipping Steve Austin for cancer fundraising in 1996 (C Smith)**

look at it I remember all the business people cheering me as I went up on stage. I am a very emotional person and I was fighting back tears as I received my award. I look at it now as a reward for coming to this lovely country town of Camden and opening my barber shop named 'Col's Clip Joint'.

# Horse History in Western Sydney: Kirkham Stud

**Mark Latham**

Every weekday morning, in driving my children to school, I pass by a local landmark in the suburb of Kirkham, near Camden in southwest Sydney.

It's a set of horse stables, brightly white in colour and featuring a series of ornate-looking arches.

The surrounding yards hold a few horses – perhaps an agistment facility for jumpers or recreational riders.

It's one of those places that's still ticking over but also gives the impression that it was much grander and significant in its heyday.

Earlier this year, I decided to do something about my daily curiosity and research the story of the white stables.

My morning friend has quite a history.

It's the Kirkham Stud, established in 1816 by the surveyor-explorer John Oxley (1785-1828), as part of extensive land grants he received in the Camden and Cobbitty districts from Governor Macquarie.

The stud was named after Oxley's birthplace: Kirkham Abbey in Yorkshire, England. Its heritage-listed stables are believed to be the oldest structure of their kind surviving in NSW.

In 1830, following Oxley's death, his business partner, former Navy Captain John Coghill, managed the farm. Coghill imported the British thoroughbred stallion, Bachelor (1926), to stand at Kirkham.

In 1845, John Oxley Jnr took over the property, aged just 21, but failed to advance the family's racing interests.

The golden era at Kirkham occurred during the last three decades of the 1800s, following the farm's purchase by James White (1828-1890) – a wealthy pastoralist, a NSW parliamentarian (in the Legislative Assembly 1864-68 and Legislative Council 1874-1890) and long-serving member of



**Kirkham Stables constructed around 1816 is the oldest farm building in Australia. It is a landmark building in a rural setting relatively intact from colonial times(Camden Images)**

the AJC committee, including two terms as AJC Chairman (1880 and 1883-90).

White was one of Australia's greatest-ever owners of racehorses, also establishing commercial farms in the Hunter Valley including the famous Segenhoe Stud.

In 1878 he purchased the Newmarket stables at Randwick, where he is thought to have been responsible for building, or at least lavishly enlarging, the historic Big Stable. Today Newmarket houses the Inglis auctioneers and sale-yards.

Among the sires White stood at Kirkham were the Melbourne Cup winners Chester (1874, Yattendon x Lady Chester by Stockwell) and Martini Henry (1880, Musket x Sylvia ex Juliet). He purchased Chester as a two-year-old from his breeder Edward King Cox of the Fernhill Stud at Mulgoa, near

Penrith, the horse having won the AJC Sires Produce Stakes.

Chester went on to win the Victorian Derby/Melbourne Cup double in 1877 (trained by the legendary Etienne De Mestre), a feat repeated by Martini Henry six years later. White reputedly won enough money backing the Chester double to fund the establishment of his Kirkham breeding operation. He also heavily backed the Martini Henry double in 1883, winning 25,000 pounds – millions in today's money.

Most horse owners dream of winning either the Cup or the Derby during the Melbourne Spring Carnival, yet White was able to win the double twice.

Chester is buried in the southwestern corner of the Kirkham property, his tombstone reading, rather plainly: Chester, Died 21<sup>st</sup> November 1891. He was a highly successful stallion with his best son being Abercorn (1884, ex Cinnamon by Goldsbrough – another son of Sylvia). Raced by White, Abercorn won the 1887 AJC Derby and 17 other stakes races. He is best remembered for defeating the mighty Carbine three times at weight-for-age.

Chester sired a total of 26 stakes-winners (for 104 stakes-wins) and was Australia's leading sire on four occasions. Martini Henry sired 15 stakes-winners. These are tremendous achievements but only one part of James White's dominance of racing during this period.

It is inconceivable in the modern era that any Australian owner could match White's record of major winners between 1877 and 1890, each carrying his renowned pale blue and white silks: two Melbourne Cups, six Victorian Derbies, three VRC Oaks, six VRC St Leger Stakes, three Caulfield Guineas, four Australian Cups, five AJC Derbies, three AJC Metropolitans, five AJC Sires Produce Stakes and four AJC Champagne Stakes.

In his masterful book *Horsemen of the First Frontier (1788-1900)*, Keith Binney chronicles the full extent of White's triumphs, writing of how, "At the Victorian autumn meeting of 1888, (he) had nine winners, which took out every important race on the card. In 1889 at the Randwick carnival, White's horses won the AJC Derby, the Oaks, the Spring Stakes, the Randwick and Craven Plates, the Second Foal and the Mycomb Stakes, as well as the Metropolitan."

In total, White raced 66 winning horses, which won a total of 252 races and more than 120,000 pounds in prizemoney. Remarkably, his stable rider Tom Hales rode 302 races for him and won 137 of them. As owners, what any of us would give for a single day at Randwick or Flemington standing





**View of the grave of racehorse ‘Chester’ winner of the 1877 Melbourne Cup with Kirkham Stables in the distance c.1997 (Camden Images/J Kooyman)**

in the shoes of the Honourable James White.

Not content with his Australian achievements, White embarked on a special breeding project: an audacious bid to win the English Derby. He bred the colts Kirkham (1887, Chester x La Princesse) and Narellan (1887, Chester x Princess Maud) to English time and transported them to the old country.

Unfortunately Narellan broke down in training. But Kirkham made it into the 1990 Derby field, the first Australian-bred horse to run in the classic. He finished sixth to the great Sainfoin (1887, Springfield x Sanda) – a permanent influence in modern pedigrees as the dam-sire of Phalaris (1913).

Today we have another reason for remembering White’s legacy. At Kirkham, the prolific Canadian-born colonial architect John Horbury Hunt built

two houses for him. One of them, the towering, Gothic-style Camelot, features as the homestead for the Australian television drama *A Place to Call Home*.

It was also part of the 2008 Baz Luhrmann film *Australia*, starring Nicole Kidman and Hugh Jackman. Camelot was built on the site of John Oxley's Kirkham Mill and partly on its foundations.

Following White's death from heart disease in 1890, most of his racing stock was dispersed. Kirkham passed into the hands of his wife, Emily *nee* Arndell, who continued to import stallions and breed thoroughbreds there until 1896. Then she remarried and moved overseas, passing away in Scotland in October 1897.

The Whites had no children to carry on their racing interests at Kirkham. With his passing, James White's business partnership with his brothers Francis and Henry was dissolved. In the resulting restructure, the four youngest of Francis White's six sons took over the vast Belltrees property on Gundy Road, Scone in the Upper Hunter. This was the boyhood home of the celebrated Australian author Patrick White, James White's great-nephew.

Founded by Oxley and expanded by White, Kirkham experienced its third incarnation under the ownership of Sir Fred Sutton in the 1960s and 70s – he the founder of the car retailer Suttons Motors.

As an owner, Sutton raced numerous good horses out of Tommy Smith's stable, including Flying Fable (1965, Snark x Miss Pilot), winner of the VRC Sires' Produce Stakes, AJC Oaks, AJC Flight Stakes and third in the 1968 Golden Slipper. But his biggest contribution to the industry was the restoration of Kirkham Stud, which had declined in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Sutton stood several imported sires at Kirkham, including the English stayer Proper Pride (1959, Prince Chevalier x No Pretender) and the Irish 2000 Guineas place-getter Kingfisher (1964, Alcide x Warspite). By far his best stallion was Agricola (1956, Precipitation x Aurora, ex Rose Red), which sired 31 stakes-winners, including the outstanding General Command (1963) and Roman Consul (1964). In May 1973, Agricola was transferred from Kirkham to the Kelly family's Newhaven Park Stud near Yass.

A schoolmate of TJ Smith, Sutton followed the master's advice: that a successful breeding operation relies on the purchase of the best fillies and



**Chester, winner of the 1877 Melbourne Cup c.1874 (cc Wikimedia/Turf Cavalcade)**

mares on the market. Thus Sutton acquired the 1962 Golden Slipper winner Birthday Card (1959, Edmundo x Magnificent Lady) for Kirkham – one of many high-quality broodmares on the property. Another was Better Gleam (1968, Better Boy x Silkes), winner of the 1971 Flight Stakes and dam (by Showdown) of the very good mare Kapalaran (1975).

Fred Sutton passed away in December 2004, aged 89. Kirkham has stayed in the family's hands: not as a horse breeding enterprise, but as a small working farm, running mainly cattle. Camelot is now owned and maintained by the Powers family. In contrast to the Suttons, they are very active in the local community, telling people about the heritage of their amazing home.

The Kirkham story is a powerful reminder of the role of the County of Cumberland as Sydney's thoroughbred nursery during much of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. With urban sprawl now touching the city's outer limits, it's hard to visualise Western Sydney as top-class horse country. But in colonial times, it was as important as the Hunter Valley is today – the go-to location for the very best thoroughbred breeders.

Hopefully, ongoing urbanisation will not mean the loss of iconic sites such as Kirkham Stud. What else will I have to daydream about at the end of my morning drive?

Chester, Martini Henry and Abercorn, through to Agricola and Birthday Card – they are more than just names in the Stud Book, they’re the memories, the romanticised Australian legends that make our racing industry unique. To love the thoroughbred, as we all do, means honoring the memory of places like Kirkham.

In an inspiring pattern of endurance and rejuvenation, Oxley’s stables have now reached their bicentennial year. High on their gable, a painting of the head of Chester remains – surveying what was once his breeding kingdom.

Below Chester’s portrait is the inscription: Kirkham Stud 1816, Metam Tegtig. This is Latin for “The post, he touched it”, or in its racing sense, “First at the Winning Post”.

In the glory days, indeed they were.

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# Dairy Farmer to Young Local Historian

**Sophie Mulley**

Since the professionalization of history in western society, a debate has turned between “amateur” local history writers and academic historians.[1] The academics questioned the depth of the writers historical understanding, they saw no importance in covering the history of small town or people, and quite often questioned the methods and approaches of these writers and whether their findings were of “historical truth.”[2] Now we can see in Australia, local histories of township and family have become increasingly popular in communities such as our own, and the debate between amateur and academic has continued.[3] Frank Furedi, a sociologist and former professor at the University of Kent, argues that the practice of local history leads to “the destruction of historical thinking.”[4] Through engaging with the local

**Sophie Mulley with her grandparents - Nan and Pop - Ian and Dawn Mulley. (S Mulley)**



community and Camden Historical Society I have found this statement to be a narrow judgement of local history, as I have found local history acknowledges the interests of ‘ordinary people’. Anna Clark describes this type of history as “familiar, experiential, and tactile”, being that it is “deeply connected to people’s families and communities.”[5]

My name is Sophie Mulley and generations of my family have lived in Camden since the year 1907. [6] As I am currently majoring in history at the Australian Catholic University and researching my family history with the Camden Historical Society, I have been given the opportunity to view this historical debate from both sides and evaluate how public and family history is approached, and discover what value history holds in the community. Overall, I have observed that historians play a role in shaping local history and therefore should frame their approaches and methods accordingly to help shape the future of a community and its view on the past, present and future.

As a volunteer researcher at the Camden Historical Society, I was given the task to research my family history since their arrival in Camden, 1907. I have conducted my research through a family tree, through the Trove digital database of newspapers and articles[7], scholarly books on Camden, and conducting oral interviews with my family. Throughout this project, as a historian I adopted various methodologies and approaches, which did not come without their peculiarities.

“It used to be said that facts speak for themselves. This is, of course, untrue. The facts speak only when the historian calls on them: it is he who decides to which facts to give the floor, and in what order or context.” [8] – E. H. Carr (1964).

Carr’s above statement has resonated throughout my engagement with the Camden Historical Society. Through the practice of genealogy, it was imperative to be mindful of the facts being drawn on and why these facts were being selected over others. For instance, when searching the Trove digital database, I would use search terms that I later realised had been developed by my own pre-existing knowledge of my family. I had always been told my family were dairy farmers on the old Camden Park Estate. Soon I realised searching ‘Dairy, Farm, Camden, Mulley,’ would only draw upon the evidence that upholds local and national discourses of Camden heritage, colonialism and agriculture. In fact, Bottero’s research also found “dominant discourses” gave shape to the way the family historian selects their facts.[9] Furthermore, Carr states “the historian is of his own age, and is bound to it by the conditions of human existence. The very words which he uses ... have current connotations from which he cannot divorce them.”[10]



It is not fair to say that local history is destructive due to the fact the amateur history writer is inescapable from the existing discourses that shape their life. What I have found is that for the participant, discourses create a bridge between the past and the present, allowing the participant to connect themselves with their ancestors in their present day understanding. If this is a common process of the family historian, then this is a valuable contribution to the community as it allows ordinary citizens to feel connected to the past and allows future historians to later examine the discourses that exist within a group of people.

“Genealogists not only trace ancestors but also find out about their lives and generate ‘storied’ narratives of connection through time.”[11] The Camden Historical Society, not only asked me to research my family history, but also to also reflect on these findings through my own experience of growing up in the Camden community. This meant bringing the past and present, into the future. My approach to my family history was inspired by David Walker and his book, ‘Not Dark Yet – A Personal History’[12]. Instead of choosing to write about national events, Walker chose to write about the ordinary events that revolved around his family and their community. Walker believes, “Small events also have their place in determining who we are and what we value as individuals and as a community.”[13]

The Mulley family were early colonial settlers, who moved from Juneë to Camden in New South Wales in search of land and work. The reality is my family did not own a great colonial estate like Camden Park, or Brownlow Hill, and they didn’t serve in the war. In interviews I felt my family had to explain away this ‘ordinariness’ of our family history. The truth is that there is a story to be told. Because our story does not align to popular national discourses, of war heroes and prominent colonial families, it does not make it any less important.

My approach was to discover ‘history from below’ which came out of social history. Edward P. Thompson chose to not write a history of the ‘winners’, but rather write a history on “the poor stockinger, the Luddite cropper, the ‘obsolete’ hand-loom weaver, the ‘utopian’ artisan, and even the deluded follower of Joanna Southcott,” and rescue them “from the enormous condescension of posterity.”[14]

My own family were from a class of tenant farmers who worked on the Camden Park Estate in Cawdor that was owned by the well-known Macarthur family.[15] Through interviews with my relatives, and research into the dairy industry in Australia, I discovered that the commercialisation of dairy farming in Camden meant that small dairy farms like my own family’s, struggled

to compete in the market and keep up with the changing dairy board standards. [16] This eventually led to the closing down of my great grandfather's dairy practice and the search for a new job outside of his known trade. As a member of the Camden community, I know this is not the type of story you would often hear about Camden's agricultural past. Through discovery of 'history from below' I found I was able to recognise those who had not been spoken for before. This historical approach is valuable to the community as it empowers ordinary people, while providing future generations with a 'realistic' history on an often idealised past.

One of the difficulties of writing about my family was that there is only so far you can write when only using snippets from news articles, and details found on birth and death certificates. In keeping with the movement of 'history from below', I turned to my family to learn their oral history. I believe that this is where academic historians begin to criticize the practice of family history, as oral interviews can be seen as "unreliable and tainted by personal subjectivity" due to its reliance on memories.[17]

Oral histories may be problematic with family history, as the interviewee may wish to withhold information about their family, or fabricate the family history for their own purposes. However, through reflection on my interviews, I discovered that this risk did not outweigh the potential to gain valuable memories of my family's past.

Three family members were interviewed over the course of my project. Each interview gave me a deeper insight into what life was like growing up and working in the Camden community and various other details about family life. What I observed was that the memories of my family did not provide specific dates of events, rather, each interview seemed to contain structured narratives of the family's past.

My Pop spoke of the hardship of living on the farm. There seemed to be a common theme of family struggles and how they got through them.

*It was a hard time during the war and I remember you couldn't buy much. You couldn't buy chewing gum ... I know that ... and dad and mum didn't do too easy either I don't think, only that we were on the farm, you know, there was a lot of milk, things to eat, you know, mum would make rice things and all that with milk. And we lived on that and we lived on rabbits ... rabbits and hares ... they were a delicacy! [18]*

Historians refer to this as "the way individuals constructed their life histories, to create a usable past," which makes the individual feel at ease with the past.[19]



**Original Mulley Farm house in Cawdor. Still standing today. C. 1988.  
(S Mulley)**

Oral history is now recognised as a credible source for interpretation. Within family history, it allows the historian to analyse the family in terms of gender roles, traditions and belief systems, and the overall structure of the family and how this has changed over time. Passerini states, “all autobiographical memory is true; it is up to the interpreter to discover in which sense, where, for which purpose.”[20] Oral histories, not only serve the historian, but also the interviewee.

My Nan and Pop were so happy to talk to me about their past, and appreciated being listened to and having their memories recorded. This is a unique method of history, as it allows ordinary people to be heard and they are given the opportunity to inform future generations of their past.

The practice of family history was valuable to my family and myself as it developed a deeper understanding of my identity and my family’s identity within the Camden community. Boretto expresses a similar sentiment, “Remembering the past is ‘crucial for our sense of identity’ with this ‘situating of self’ occurring through ‘the development of a self-narrative that starts, not at one’s birth, but with one’s forebears’.”[21] Family histories are



**Mulley Family. Top Row – Gertrude Mulley, Charles Reginald Mulley, Mabel Mulley. Middle Row – Charles Mulley, Mary Anne Mulley, Alice Mulley. Bottom Row – Claude James Mulley and William Cecil Mulley (S Mulley)**

also valuable to the community as they have the ability to challenge “social dislocation,” strengthen family ties, and discover family likeness in times of change.[22]

This project was valuable to the Camden Historical Society, as it ‘filled in the gap’ of my family’s local history as well as providing a new perspective on Camden’s past and present. It is important that young community members are involved with their local history, as they can offer new perspectives and approaches to history. For example, through conducting oral history interviews, I was able to approach the article as a ‘history from below’, telling the stories of ordinary people within our community.

Clark, states “rather than historians and politicians trying to overcome a perceived historical ignorance in the broader community, these participants might teach us a thing or two about how to make, write and do the sort of history that widely engages ‘ordinary people’.” This statement highlights the importance of the historian engaging with the community. I am truly grateful for the opportunity to work with my local historical society, as it has brought me closer to the Camden community, to my family, and overall has developed my historical understanding and the type of historian I would like to be in the future.

## Notes

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2. *ibid*; Edward H. Carr, *What Is History?*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964):
3. Anna Clark, *Private Lives, Public History* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2016): 5-7; Wendy Bottero, “Practising family history: ‘identity’ as a category of social practice,” *British Journal of Sociology* 66, 3 (2015): 534, doi: 10.1111/1468-4446.12133.
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9. Bottero, “Practising family history: ‘identity’ as a category of social practice,” 539.
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16. "The Australian Dairy Industry." Australian Bureau of Statistics. <http://www.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/abs@.nsf/0/B006A83A9127B0F5CA256DEA00053965?Open>; James Ian Mulley, Interview with Sophie Mulley (Sydney, 27th May, 2016).
17. Anna Green and Kathleen Troup, *The Houses of History: A Critical Reader in Twentieth-century History and Theory* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999): 230.
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19. Anna Green and Kathleen Troup, *The Houses of History: A Critical Reader in Twentieth-century History and Theory*, 234.
20. *ibid*, 236.
21. Bottero, "Practising family history: 'identity' as a category of social practice," 539.
22. *ibid*, 535 – 536.
23. Anna Clark, *Private Lives, Public History* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2016): 145.

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## **Editor's note**

Sophie's story has had an influence beyond her university project. Oral history, as Sophie mentions, can be more of a narrative than time, dates and places for some folk. Stories provide markers in peoples lives around family traditions, commemorations and celebrations.

After reading Sophie's story **Roslyn Tildsley** in a conversation with **Anne McIntosh** recalled fondly bonfire nights at Cawdor on the Mulley's property.

Dad was great friends with the Mulley's (they used to go away for week-ends/weeks shooting at Oberon) so we often spent time together. However cracker night on the Queen's Birthday weekend in June was what we looked forward to most.

We would save up and buy crackers and then keep them in our shoebox in our bedroom. My brother Wayne, sister Susan and myself each had our own shoe box full of fun.

On the night we would rug up and drive out with Mum (Margaret) and Dad (Frank) in Dad's Holden station wagon. Having packed the car with the necessities –including our tin mugs and plates, parkas, beanies, scarves and 2 camping seats (little fold up metal stools with a red seat cover – no armrests or cup holders in those days!) we knew we were headed for a great night with friends.

There would always be a huge bonfire to sit around and we would toast bread , marshmallows and boil water on the bonfire ready for the tea, coffee and hot chocolate.

However the highlight of the night for us kids was the fireball soccer game. It took Cec Biffin and family many days to make the ball as it entailed sewing rags together around and around into a tight ball and then leaving it to soak in kerosene for days. On the night we would then spend a wonderful time kicking and watching this lit ball fly through the air. The big boys especially liked aiming their kick at each other. We never did get burnt or burn our clothes and initially I was scared to play but as each year passed I enjoyed it more and more.

It is a very fond memory I have of my childhood - Bonfire night with the Mulleys and Biffins.

# Echoes of the Appin Massacre 1816

**Ian Willis**

This year is the bicentenary of the Appin Massacre when Governor Macquarie's troops clashed with the Dharawal people south of the village of Appin.

From 1813 Europeans had begun to move into Dharawal land after having established farms in the area. Between 1814 and 1816 relations between Europeans and Dharawal deteriorated, exacerbated by a severe drought. Members of the Gundagurra, from the Blue Mountains, attacked settlers and Governor Macquarie ordered out the troops with disastrous results.

This incident illustrates that the colonial frontier in settler societies like New South Wales was a violent place when there was dispossession of land from indigenous people.

This year there have been a number of commemorative events and Camden folk band Stringline performed a music piece to add to the commemorations. A poem written by Pat Took was put to music by Paul Malia a member of Stringline. The first public performance of the piece occurred at the Camden Sports Club in July this year at CK's Open Mike Night.

## **Wiritjiribin...Lyrebird Spirit**

P Took

### **Chorus.**

Spirits in this Pass shimmer  
the water - stir the bones.  
Hear lyrebird scream out...  
don't be in that gorge alone.

-----

Rocky cliffs, cool green gorge  
Lyrebird sang this place.  
Dreaming fire- straight past.  
.....Dharawal space.

Whites fella came with fence  
strange animals came.  
Land of drought/ short of food  
.....payback game.



**Stringline Folk Band performing *Wiritjiribin...Lyrebird Spirit* at Camden Sports Club on 2 July 2016. The line up in Stringline - on lute is Kris Took, fiddle Paula Holstein and on mandolin Paul Malia. (I Willis)**

#### CHORUS.

Macquarie ordered violence  
to quell the area's feud.  
Elders shot - hung - displayed  
.....heads removed.

To Gov't House – sugar bag  
full of trophied heads.  
White fellas, know they're safe  
.....in their beds.

#### CHORUS

Riding locals found the tribe  
Women/ children – meeting place.  
Horses' hooves on skin and bone  
.....bloodied disgrace.

Those not trampled up above  
sent to the river, alive.  
Herded off the cliff  
.....how many died?

#### CHORUS

Bones in the river gravel  
sandstone leaches blood.  
No need for Kadaicha Man  
.....death, in the mud.

#### CHORUS.

Go to the Pass today  
plaque speaks of the bones.  
Hear lyrebird scream out  
don't be near the plaque... alone.  
Don't be near the plaque... alone  
Don't be in that gorge alone.

The words of the song are published here for the first time.

For the full story of the massacre see Carol Liston, *Campbelltown, The Bicentennial History* (1988) and the Dictionary of Sydney [http://dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/appin\\_massacre](http://dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/appin_massacre)

# Show and Tell Night at the Museum

## History Week 2016

### Ian Willis

At the September meeting of the society a number of members spoke about cooking, cook books and their favourite recipes, as part of the 2016 History Week program in Camden. Cooking brings families, friends and communities together. It builds resilience and sustainability, and neatly fitted history week's theme of neighbours.

Stories of cooking and recipes were presented by society members Leonie Jackson, Marjorie White, Frances Warner, Joy Riley, Julie Wrigley, Gordon Bird, Warren Sims, and Betty Yewen. This turned out to be a very popular segment and many people were amused by the tall tales and yarns about favourite recipes. Members produced battered cook books that had been used to death. One cook book called 'Camden Town Cook Book' was put together as a fundraiser by the Camden Pre-School Kindergarten in the late 1970s. Betty Yewen's 'Xmas Fruit Cake Recipe' produced a laugh amongst the audience of 38 members. (see overleaf)

It must be noted that the society library has a number of cook books from earlier eras. Several of the presenters showed that they were good cooks as well as being story tellers. There were samples for tasting at supper time after the presentations. The goods quickly disappeared. The society has some hidden talent amongst its membership if their cooking talent is anything to go by.

One story presented by Marjorie involved 'Aunty Jean's Plain Sponge' which was given to Marjorie by her mother in 1958 in Moss Vale. She said, 'It is a simple fool-proof recipe'. Aunty Jean was her mother's aunt and gave it to her many years ago. Marjorie thinks that the recipe is probably of Scottish origins.

#### **Aunty Jean's Plain Sponge**

4 eggs, 6 oz sugar, 5 1/2oz self raising flour, 4 tablespoons hot water, 1 teaspoon butter, 2 teaspoon vanilla essence.

Beat egg whites until very stiff, add sugar gradually, whisk until sugar is all dissolved. Add egg yolks one at a time and add vanilla essence. Fold in sifted flour with a wooden spoon. Quickly stir in hot water and melted butter. Bake in an oven over 400°F for 20 minutes.

For additional advice, see Marjorie.

The 2016 Camden History Week program included the NSW Family History Conference called 'Cowpastures and Beyond' (350 participants), a tour of St Paul's Anglican Church Cemetery at Cobbitty (43), the mini-discoverers cooking adventures (40) and a photographic exhibition called 'Camden then and now'. The Camden programme was a joint event between Camden Council Library Service, Camden Historical Society and the Camden Area Family History Society.

# Xmas Fruit Cake Recipe

## Ingredients

- 1 cup butter
- 4 large eggs
- 1 cup diced fruit
- 1 tablespoon nuts
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 bottle whisky

## Method

1. Sample whisky to check for quality.
2. Take large bowl. Check the whisky again to be sure it is of the highest quality. Pour one level cup and drink. Repeat.
3. Turn on electric mixer, beat one cup of butter in a large fluffy bowl, add one spoonful of sugar and beat again.
4. Make sure the whisky is still OK. Cry another cup.
5. Turn off the mixer. Break two eggs and add to the bowl and chuck in the cup of dried fruit. Mix on the turner. If the fruit gets stuck in the beaters, pry it loose with a screwdriver. Sample the whisky again to check for consistency.
6. Next, sift 2 cups salt. Or something - who cares? Check the whisky.
7. Now sift the lemon juice and strain your nuts. Add one tablespoon of brown sugar, or whatever colour you can find. Mix well. Grease the oven. Turn the cake pan to 350 degrees.
8. Don't forget to beat off the turner. Throw the bowl out the window. Check the whisky again and go to bed.



# Growing up in Camden

## Joy Riley

I was born Lorna Joy Dunk on 1 February 1938 at Nurse Taplin's maternity home in Oxley Street, 'Welborn'. I was always called Joy, which was a bit confusing as I have to use Lorna on any medical or legal matters. My sister Doreen was seven years older than I was and was born in our home at 66 John Street.

My father Jack Dunk was born at Orangeville on 1 March 1908. He attended Camden Public School but left at age twelve. In the late 1920s he opened a garage with his brother Cliff at 126 Argyle Street, opposite the Post Office, doing mechanical work, and operating a tow truck, car hire and car sales business.

He owned a motor garage in Picton before World War Two but it had to be sold as staff and parts were hard to get. He enlisted in World War Two in 1940, returning in 1942. He served in the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion in the Middle East and was one of the Rats of Tobruk. After the war he did many things including having a market garden at 'Little Sandy' Chellaston Street, helping Chinese market gardeners by ploughing Miss Davies' area near Macquarie Grove, carting cement from Berrima, selling rotary hoes, tractors and farm machinery, and carting wheat at Grenfell. From 1949 until 1960 he owned a fruit and vegetable shop at 152 Argyle Street Camden (at the time between Wrench's store and Furner Brothers, and now Blooms chemist).

My mother Laura May Rix was born at Bowral in 1908. Her father Albert worked for Sam Horden at Bowral then moved to Camden. The family worked on a dairy on Werombi Road, 'Fairview', owned by the Watsons. Mum and her mother milked cows and lifted the heavy cans onto the milk stand for the milk truck to pick up. Mum and her sister, Dorothy (later Baxter) walked to Camden Public School over the head of the Carrington Dam and across the paddocks. After school they milked cows again. Their brother Allan was able to ride a horse to school.

The Rix family moved to Camden and lived in a house, owned by Camden Park, on the corner of the Hume Highway and Macquarie Avenue. Mum worked at the Model Dairy No 2 at Camden Park. She married Jack Dunk in 1929, and had two children. During the war Mum took in married couples from the air force stationed at The Grove. I used to go to Macarthur Park with the wives when they were aircraft spotting, I still look up when a plane goes over. I spent a lot of time playing on the guns in the park with Laurence

and Mary Rolfe who lived a few doors down from us. Doreen and I both went to Camden Public School. On leaving school Doreen worked at Frank Whiteman's shop.

In 1949 Mum and Dad purchased from Fred Betts a fruit and vegetable mixed business with a milk bar at 152 Argyle Street. I left school in 1952 and went to work at the fruit shop and Doreen worked there too. Trading was 7 days a week from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. On Sundays we had a lot of passing trade as the highway went through the town. Sir William McKell was Governor General and would call on his way to Yarralumla in Canberra. He said one of the attractions was the delicious milkshakes served at the shop. He called Yarralumla 'Frog Hollow'. He was first cousin to my grandfather, Albert Rix.

In later years we closed at lunch time on Saturday and all day Sunday. So Dad and I were able to become members of the local car club, and the Peugeot Car Club, participating in many car trials and other events.

Every morning the first job was to sweep the footpath. This happened at Wrench's Shoe Shop, Furner Bros, Mrs Kelly's Dress Shop, and Mrs Powe's

### **Camden Airfield (Joy Riley)**



Baby Shop. It was great in the winter as you got warmed up – no air conditioning in those days. Dad went to the markets twice a week in Sydney (Paddy's Markets now). We had a large cool-room and were able to keep food fresh. A lot of local vegetables were purchased from the Chinese market gardeners. Dad was great friends with the Chinese and when there were floods they would wait for Dad or the Bond Bros to come and move them before the water rose. Fruit was purchased from the orchard at Camden Park, where Charley Barrett was the manager. Dad went to school with him at Camden Public School. Dad would take the truck to Yetholme near Bathurst to get Delicious Apples and was able to store them in the cool room.



**Belgenny (Joy Riley)**

We had a fruit and vegetable run to Cobbitty where there were a few guesthouses and private homes. On Saturdays we also went to Mount Hunter and Spring Creek. I would go on the run with Dad and be back in time to go to the matinee at the pictures. We also took the bookings for the pictures on Saturday nights. In the eleven years working for our family we got to know most of our customers very well, including Miss Faithfull Anderson from 'Camelot'. At Christmas Dad would make up a fruit and vegetable box for all her employees and deliver them. When Miss Faithfull-Anderson attended Queen Elizabeth's Coronation she brought back gifts for each of our family.

We made many life-long friends with people from other businesses. Doreen married Col Shepard, the barber across the road; Joan Howlett from the hamburger shop was her bridesmaid; Joan married Les Tildsley from the butcher shop; my friend Dawn Howlett married Ron Shoesmith from the cake shop. Everybody knew everybody else. Due to Dad's ill health the shop was sold in 1960. Dad passed away in 1962, aged 54. Mum passed away in 1976.

After the shop was sold I went to work for Coles Grocery (formerly Haffendens) opposite the Crown Hotel. I worked there for 6 years to 1966. I transferred to Coles New World Supermarket and altogether I worked for 17 years for Coles in many positions, including store openings and supervi-

sion.

I married Bruce Riley in 1976 and left work in 1977. Bruce was a deputy in the coal mines. We moved to Elderslie in 1977. Unfortunately Bruce passed away suddenly in 1990.

Dad was president of the RSL for a few years in the late 1940s and was instrumental in acquiring the mess hall from the army camp at Narellan to be moved to Oxley Street. Many weddings, birthday parties, Friday night dances, deb balls, Slim Dusty Concerts, Maloney's mannequin parade, and other celebrations were held at the hall which is now the site of the Civic Centre.

I remember in Third Class our teacher Mrs Howe had a very broad Scottish accent. I still blame her for my not being able to spell. At a school reunion in 2009 for Sixth Class in 1950, a lot of the students mentioned Mrs Howe, though the boys seemed to like her more than the girls.

We didn't have excursions in our days at school but looked forward to bus trips for sports days to Picton, Moss Vale, or Campbelltown, if you played netball for girls or football for boys.

Doreen and I spent a lot of time with our mother's parents, Albert and Ellen Rix. Grandfather was head stockman and horse studmaster at Camden Park and lived in Belgenny Cottage in the 1940s and 1950s. One highlight of his work was in January 1947.

The Camden News wrote, *"When reckoned in years Albert Rix, Camden Park Studmaster, is by no means a young man. The years however, have certainly not affected his capacity for direct action. His masterly riding and experience of cattle enabled him to win the Camp Draft event at the last Camden Show. Then last week, after arrangements by Edward Macarthur Onslow and J.S. Haddin [Camden Park General Manager], Albert arrived at Macquarie Grove Flying School at 4 a.m. and boarded one of the school's aircraft. Two and a half hours later he was two hundred miles south and making a very successful cattle deal for Camden Park. Not bad for a man of sixty-four."*

Grandmother was a great cook and won many prizes at the local show. She was a member of St John's Mothers' Union Hospital Auxiliary and CWA. She drove a 1927 Pontiac - you had to keep clear of her because she would do a u-turn in front of you without any signal. She tipped the car over on the bridge over the creek into Camden Park and broke her collar bone, but she was still able to drive into Camden. On Tuesdays, together with Mrs Rita Tucker, they cooked and served at the saleyards canteen. They raised money

for the CWA Rooms in Murray Street, where the Baby Health Centre functioned.

My mother's parents purchased the house next door to us at 64 John Street from Dad's parents, William and Jemima Dunk. William died in 1930. Jemima moved to Regents Park to live with her daughter Vera and family. Jemima passed away in 1943, six months after Dad returned from the war. The John Street house was rented out until Grandfather Rix retired from Camden Park.

When I was growing up we went for holidays to Stuart Park Wollongong. We had a caravan that Dad had built before the war. Stuart Park was 'little Camden' as most local people went there for their holidays. The coal truck drivers were able to take their trucks loaded with camping gear and bikes. We swam and paddled in the lagoon and played in the park on the swings and seesaws, and playing equipment.

Looking back at my early years in Camden I think I have had a pretty good life so far actually.

## **President's Report 2015 – 2016**

**Robert Lester**

It is with pleasure that I present my report for the year 2015 to 2016 as it has been a busy and fulfilling one. Through the reading of this report I hope you gain an understanding of the society's activities, the operation of the Camden Museum over the past twelve months and the involvement of the society's committee members and volunteers who really make things happen.

The relevance of the historical society within Camden is shown through its involvement with the community and value given to our local heritage and history by community members. The society over the past twelve months has continued to be active in keeping the stories of Camden alive and raising the interest in local history especially amongst the younger and newer members of our community

### **Within The Community**

The society has been active within the wider community through attendance at community events including: Camden Show; Camden Antique Fair; Belgenny Farm Family History Day; Catherine Park House – ANZAC remembrance; The Oaks Heritage Centre book launches; Australia Day Parade; Camden Fire Service – celebration of 100 years in Camden; and the Narellan Rhythms Festival.

These events are an opportunity to provide people with information, showcase publications available for purchase and display photographs and information from our museum collection. They bring additional visitors to the museum and give support to other local organisations.

With ongoing community concern regarding the works taking place in the main street of Camden and future proposals for developments within the township, the society has worked closely with other like-minded groups to voice its opinion on what is occurring. Meetings have been held with council staff to keep abreast of the changes to the Argyle Street streetscape and it is encouraging to see some of our ideas being implemented, for example, retention of street furniture colour scheme of a heritage green flavour and breaking up of the predominately grey pavers with earthy pavers and sandstone. The society needs to remain vigilant to ensure it has input into any future works undertaken by council in order to preserve the heritage of our town.



There were also discussions with staff on the proposals to review the planning guidelines for the township and future development, stressing the need for proper and full community consultation. Council has appointed consultants to undertake this review over the next twelve months and the society looks forward to being a significant participant in this process.

The society made comments on two contentious development applications that we considered would have significant impact on the heritage of Camden, namely the decked parking station for Oxley Street and changes and additions to the Old Milk Depot in Argyle Street. Whilst council approved the parking station without any changes put forward by the community, it is still to formally consider the other development applications. Hopefully the community anger with this proposal will see it either changed to an appropriate scale or withdrawn by the applicants.

### **Society Meetings**

Whilst the purpose of our monthly meetings is to conduct the affairs of the society they are also important in providing its members and the general public with information and knowledge on local history. Again guest speakers have made presentations at our meetings on a wide and interesting range of topics:

Joel Kursawe – 100 yrs of Camden Fire Service  
Cameron Archer – Belgenny Farm development  
Brian Stratton – History through the eyes of an artist  
History Week Show and Tell – Treasures from my back yard  
John and Julie Wrigley – The Chinese Market Garden project  
Robert Wheeler – Major Thomas Mitchell  
John and Edwina Macarthur Stanham – The renovation of the stables at Camden Park  
Society members – My family and war  
Pauline Downing and Peter Hayward – The Camden School of Arts

Attendance at meetings has been steady with a number of visitors coming along for specific speakers. Thanks to our volunteers Joy, Jo and Frances they are always assured of a great supper afterwards. The committee of the society meets before some of the general meetings and quarterly on a Saturday afternoon to undertake the administrative requirements of the society, look at proposals to develop new projects and museum displays and ensure everything is operating for the benefit of our members and the community.

### **Volunteers**

Our volunteers remain the backbone of both the society and the museum without whom we would not be able to operate at the level we currently do.

Work on our photographic collection, improving our research files, operation of the website, exhibition formation and collection conservation are some of the many roles volunteers undertake behind the scenes. Rene Rem our Volunteers Coordinator keeps the number of volunteers high to meet all our shifts and ensure new volunteers are made welcome and aware of their duties.

The society committee has approved the design of a shirt for volunteers. Grey and white in colour, it is a way of promoting the society and making our volunteers recognisable at the museum and community events.

### **Museum operations**

The Camden Museum is the main venue within Camden that people come seeking history related information and to look at the wonderful displays. Many overseas visitors are recorded in our visitors' book along with a growing number of people from the newly developed areas of Camden. Schools continue to visit the museum as part of the students' learning curriculum along with organised groups and those on a bus trip around the area.

The society needs to encourage more of our new local community members to come along to the museum and learn about what will become their local history in years to come. Our highly successful Facebook page hopefully is reaching many of these households.

Exhibitions presented over the past twelve months have kept a focus on the First World War. A new display highlighting schools has received positive response from visitors as has the expanded photo display on the Camden Fire Station. In the past few weeks a major upgrade has occurred in the upstairs Dick Nixon Room with the purchase and installation of new display cabinets. When the work is completed they will make a very fine improvement to the room.

We continue to gather more photographs from local residents with many included in our online collection in partnership with Camden Library. New items have been included in our growing collection both from our members and members of the public. This support is greatly appreciated.

A significant event during the year was the publication of a new book featuring photographs from our collection and text by Ian Willis – *Camden and District*. It was successfully launched by its publisher Catherine Warne of Kingsclear Books at a function in November 2015 in the galleria of the library, attended by many society members and guests. This publication has been highly successful with many copies being sold by the Society and local retail outlets. I congratulate Ian and Catherine on a job well done.

## **Partnership with Council**

The society participates with council and the Camden Family History Society in a partnership to cooperatively work together. Activities around Heritage Festival in April-May and History Week in September are undertaken and the photographic collection on-line is a joint project between Camden Library and the society.

The society has submitted recommendations for street names and parks for new housing developments that reflect the names of past residents and historical events. Many more names are required into the future as new estates are planned and a list of over 450 names have been given to council for such use.

After much to-ing and fro-ing the Oxley anchor was finally moved by Council to its new site next to the Camden Visitors Centre. In addition Council placed a metal portrait of John Oxley on the wall of the cottage. An interpretation board will be erected in coming months telling the history of John Oxley in the area and the significance of the Anchor. This will be paid for from a generous donation by an Oxley descendant.

Council continues to support the society through a yearly subsidy that covers our insurance, the provision of two storage units at Narellan for our “excess items” and for the maintenance of the museum itself. The society appreciates this especially with all the issues we have had with water leaks in the building.

## **Communication**

The society's twice yearly journals were published through the efforts of Ian Willis including stories on local identities, historical places and events. Lee Stratton produces a number of newsletters displaying many photos of society activities over the year. This year Lee organised printing of them in colour for which we thank our local Federal Member's office. I thank our former member Russell Matheson for his support of the society over the years and look forward to working with our new member Angus Taylor who we have already gotten to know.

A Facebook page post by Brett Atkins of a photo of a line of coal trucks received a mammoth number of hits with over 18,000 people having a look at it and, hopefully other stories on our page. We even had a truck driver bring his big blue truck to the museum (well he parked it outside) to show the picture to his young son.

Society members continue to contribute stories to the well read Back Then page of The District Reporter. The society thanks its editor Lee Abrahams for

her ongoing support of local history and the museum.

### **Financial Assistance**

Last year the society received a \$5,000 community grant that will lead to the production of a DVD on the Chinese market gardeners who lived and worked along the Nepean River and elsewhere in Camden. This grant has been fully expended and through the process a host of information was obtained on the Chinese people who lived, worked and often died here. The Chinese display in the Museum will reflect this new information when completed. We express our thanks to John and Julie Wrigley for undertaking what, at times, has been a challenging project.

The society continues to receive financial support for its overall operations through donations from members, local residents and visitors to the museum. The Camden Show Society recently gave us a donation of \$1,000 from the proceeds of the Camden Show to help maintain its collection housed in the museum. This support, membership fees and sales of our various publications enables the society to cover its yearly operational costs. The society remains in a very healthy financial situation and I thank our treasurer Dawn Williams for the work she does maintaining our financial records and meeting our legal obligations.

In conclusion I wish to thank everyone on the committee and all society members for their support over the four years that I have been president. I have been honoured to be able to serve in this position of what is a highly regarded community organisation. I wish the incoming committee all the best for the coming year and encourage all members to continue to play an active role in the society whether as volunteers or by attending our monthly meetings and activities.

August 2016

# **Pansy, The Camden - Campbelltown Train**

## **Photographs by Wayne Bearup**

Text: Ian Willis

Images: Editing - A McIntosh, Scanning - R Rem

Pansy, the Camden train, never fails to raise vivid memories for anyone with an interest in steam. The train chugged and coughed its way between Camden and Campbelltown railway stations several times a day over many decades. It is now a nostalgic memory from the past.

Wayne Bearup from Manilla, NSW, has recently made a generous donation of a collection of photographs and ephemera concerning Pansy, the Camden train. The photographs illustrate many aspects of Pansy and its movements between Camden and Campbelltown.

Wayne is a keen railway and tram enthusiast and said, 'I have had a life-long interest in railways and tramways'. Wayne says that his photographs of Pansy were taken between 1960 and 1962. He has written a short history of the locomotive for the Bush Telegraph (Tamworth) which will be published later this year.



**The Camden train storming the grade out of Campbelltown towards Maryfield on one of the last runs. (W Bearup)**

Wayne writes that the Pansy DVD ‘brought back many happy memories and some that had faded from my memory’. He recalls when he lived at Lane Cove he was one of the keen tram enthusiasts who were able to ride on the last tram: on Sydney’s North Shore in 1958; from Martin Place to La Perouse in 1961; and down George Street in 1959.

**At the Camden terminus Camden Railway Station on the last service (W Bearup)**







**Camden Railway  
Station on the last  
day of service (W  
Bearup)**

**S Class Loco-  
motive 3077  
near Narellan  
Station  
c.1961 (W  
Bearup)**





**On the branch  
line heading to  
Camden c1961  
(W Bearup)**

**S Class Locomo-  
tive 3140 head-  
ing towards  
Camden c.1961  
(W Bearup)**





**S Class Locomotive 3140 with carriages bound for Camden (W Bearup)**

**Liverpool Campbelltown passenger service c.1961 (W Bearup)**





**Narellan Rail-  
way Station on  
one of the last  
runs (W  
Bearup)**

**Camden Rail-  
way Station  
c1961 (W  
Bearup)**



# **Camden Arcade 25th Anniversary Address**

**Christos Scoufis, Arcade Owner**

**23 September 2016**

Ladies and Gentlemen

Thank you for joining us today to celebrate Camden Arcade's 25<sup>th</sup> Birthday. Twenty-five years is a special milestone for us, as we look back on how the arcade has taken its place, as a prominent part of the Camden shopping precinct.

Today we have a vibrant mix of retailers, who each contribute to the arcade's bright future, ready for the next 25 years.

This year we are playing our part in keeping Camden's history alive for the next generation. As you can see around you, we are showcasing Camden's rich history with our photographic collage. It will be on display throughout the coming months.

We are very proud of the things we have done over the years, and of our contribution to the Camden community, including our instigation, electrical design, and supervision of the Light Up Camden 2000 project, in conjunction with Camden Council and the Camden Chamber of Commerce.

This popular annual event will continue to grow and draw people to Camden well into the future. Today I pledge the sum of \$5,000 to the chamber to improve the lighting on the trees.

Camden, we have the name, we have the history and no one can this from us. Camden is positioning itself as a major tourist destination and take its business houses will grow and prosper with this and the added influx of the many new people currently moving into the area.

I would like to thank all the shops that make up this wonderful Camden Arcade community. You have put on a great spread for us this afternoon. Thank you.

Special thanks to Trevor and Sue Robinson from The Strictly Limited Company who have presented this outstanding collection of images from the Camden Museum and to John Wrigley who helped access the museum ar-



chives.

And finally to our customers. It is through your continued support over the many years that we can celebrate today. Thank you.

Our birthday is your celebration. Please enjoy the afternoon.







**Camden Arcade owner Christos Scoufis (I Willis)**



# **A Personal Reflection on Local History Studies at the University of New England**

**Tara Eagleton**

My name is Tara Eagleton. I am currently studying a Bachelor of Arts (History) at the University of New England, Armidale. I study via distance education to allow myself the flexibility to look after my family, work and pursue my interests while attempting to keep up with the demands of course-work. My historical interests are varied but recently I was introduced to local histories and community studies that led to my joining the Camden Historical Society.

The unit mainly looked at different ways historians analyse and interpret local histories through a variety of primary and secondary sources. The unit also examined the different approaches and forms of presenting local and community history. My first assignment was to produce an annotated bibliography of four primary sources and two secondary sources that focused on the history of a specific locality or community. As I have an interest in the history of child welfare I decided to focus on childhood in Camden from the mid to late 1800s. This presented some challenges as a large portion of Camden's history centres on the Macarthurs and the settlement of Camden town and surrounds. Sources pertaining to the everyday lives of common people in this period are difficult to come by and sources relating to the lives of children are even more challenging.

I analysed a variety of different primary sources that could provide a glimpse into the past lives of different Camden childhoods – a photograph, newspaper clipping, painting, and a short biography. Atkinson's book provided some contextual background into the roles of women, family life, and schooling while Gorton and Ramsland revealed the employment of child convict labourers by the Macarthurs. [1]

I happily received a Distinction for this assignment and the unit overall. However, aside from the grades, I have maintained an interest in the local and social history of places. I have joined the Camden Historical Society to gain knowledge of Camden's local history beyond the textbooks. Camden still has much to share of its past.

## **A Camden Childhood 1840 to 1900.**

### **Locality**

Camden is a semi-rural town situated about seventy kilometres south west of Sydney, New South Wales. To the north and east of the town lies the Nepean River and to the south and west rises the Burragorang Ranges and Razorback Mountain. The town has a unique presence in history of colonial New South Wales, renown for the establishment of quality merino sheep farming by John and Elizabeth Macarthur in 1805.[2] However, the making of Camden as a village and farming community was founded by their son, James Macarthur. From the 1830s to the 1850s, Camden settled into its own local identity and sense of place. To this day, the Macarthur estate and farm is operational and descendants of the Macarthurs still reside on the premises. The town is also still home to descendants of other prosperous land owners of the 1800s. The original layout of the town centre is still intact and three of the original hotels are still operational under their original names.

### **Focus**

The following annotated sources focus on the childhood experience of the 1830s to early 1900s in the rural colonial village of Camden, NSW. Most of Camden's history is based around the Macarthurs' and other prosperous land owners. Less is known of the illiterate poor or other minority groups, including children.[3] There is no standard childhood experience. Childhood in Camden during this era largely depended on status, family management and other conditions of life.

### **Sources**

**Alan Atkinson, *Camden, Farm and Village Life in Early New South Wales*, Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1988.**

#### *Secondary source #1*

This book provides a rich history of the making of Camden as a community from the 1830s to the late 1890s. It steps away from the dominantly Macarthur history of agricultural and economic development and instead focuses on the people who lived and worked in the locality, their daily lives, relationships, families, faiths and neighbours. Atkinson accounts for the religious fervour of the Primitive Methodists who recruited children into the 'Band of Hope', who in its second year had children parade down the main street singing songs of 'total abstinence'. [4] Apart from religion, the book observes the changing roles of women and household management of large families. [5] This in turn impacts on the lives of children - increasing health and mortality rates, labour and family responsibilities, and schooling opportunities, albeit

dependent on the families' economic situation.[6]

Alan Atkinson is a well known authority on colonial Australian history. The book includes photographs, sketches, and maps throughout. Atkinson has included family trees and an appendix listing immigrant arrivals to Camden. There are extensive notes at the end of the book and a large bibliography that includes references to primary manuscripts and documents along with secondary sources. Also included is a number of unpublished works of an autobiographical nature. The book provides a thorough background for the observance of childhood experiences in this time.

**Kerin Gorton and John Ramsland, Prison playground? Child convict labour and vocational training in New South Wales, 1788-1849, *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, Vol. 34, No. 1, 2002, pp. 51-62.**

### *Secondary Source #2*

This article examines the lives of convict children during the early colonial period of 1788-1849. Gorton and Ramsland declare that the scarcity of written documentation on the lives of colonial children makes it challenging to provide a complete picture of their childhood experience. The authors investigate the use of convict children for labour in public and private enterprise, their deplorable working wages and conditions and the idea of convict children as independent adults.[7] The Macarthurs of Camden are referred to as a private employer of convict children. Stating further that John Macarthur preferred to employ convict children over adult convicts because they complained less. This reference illustrates a different Camden childhood experience from the Atkinson source.

John Ramsland is a skilled historian and author of numerous books, articles, and conference papers including a vast amount of research in child welfare history. He was a professor at the University of Newcastle when this article was written.[8] Kerin Gorton co-authored the article and was a PhD student at University of Newcastle in at the time. Although this source can only indicate the situations child convicts were placed in, rather than their actual accounts of life as a convict child, it does assist to expose the absence of childhood and family for convict children. With limited information available on children in colonial times and an even greater shortage of documentation for convict children, this article is an important secondary source. The bibliography provides access to further information into the colonial child of New South Wales.

**Elsie to Dear Dorothy, published letter, 13 June 1895, Camden News, NSW, Trove, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/133282218?searchTerm=camden%20news%20children%27s%20corner&searchLimits=l-title=638> accessed 2 March 2016.**

*Primary Source #1*

This is a children's column called "Children's Corner" published in the Camden News in 1895. Australian newspapers had begun to address children as readers in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.[9] American newspapers had encouraged young readers to write letters to the newspaper since the 1840s. Letters were addressed to an 'uncle' or 'aunt' that could provide advice on all manner of topics. The idea was replicated in Australian newspapers with 'Uncle Harry' in the *Adelaide Observer* and later 'Aunt Dorothy' in South Australia's *Advertiser*. Many country newspapers in South Australia and other states started to publish children's columns[10] and in the *Camden News*, 'Aunt Dorothy' received the children's letters.

Children's Corner gives an insight into the daily lives of local children. The letter from Elsie states that another local newspaper, the *Camden Times*, is publishing a fashion plate every week. Elsie and her sister are very receptive to this idea and suggest the *Camden News* might do something similar----. They are also pleased with the prospect of reading material for children each week. Elsie's style of writing and use of grammar show that she is a receiving an education from school and being taught the skills of dressmaking by her mother at home. Her older sister is already adept at this. This suggests that dressmaking was a skill taught to children from their mothers, likely to daughters. It is not certain why she does not want her name revealed. Further research is needed to place the location of Stump Farm. From this information in may be possible to trace who Elsie's family are.

**William Russell "Werriberrie", *My Recollections*, Glebe, 1914.**

*Primary source #2*

William Russell was born on the banks of the Werri-berri creek located in The Oaks, near Camden, in 1830. Russell is believed to be one of the last of his people and at the time of his autobiography, by far the eldest Indigenous man in the area.[11] The book is an oral history as told to grazier Alfred Leonard Bennett (1877-1942). The Gundungurra (Gandangara) group lived in south west Sydney, an area which includes the Burragorang Valley near Camden.[12] William recollects his childhood as a young Aboriginal boy living through rapid changes to the land and society around him as the Camden town grew. He describes different locations, but mainly recollects all the different people, both white and indigenous, that he grew up knowing or knowing of.

This is a short booklet of 31 pages. It includes a portrait photograph of William Russell, some information on Gundungurra language and two maps showing the locations Russell describes in his recollections. It is a useful primary source as it creates a visual image of early times in Camden from the perspective of an Indigenous person and particularly important in its descriptions of childhood from the first person perspective. Taking into consideration that memories are highly subjective and typically non-chronological, personal accounts provide an opportunity to access firsthand experience of events and times in history albeit from one individual's perspective.[13]



**Emily Macarthur, *Old schoolhouse at Camden by lower garden 1850s*, painting, National Library of Australia, 1850-1859.**

*Primary source #3*

1850 - 1859

By Macarthur, Emily. Contributed by National Library of Australia [[nla.pic-an11461090](https://nla.pic-an11461090)]

Emily Macarthur was a female colonial artist of the Macarthur family of Camden Park. This watercolour painting is part of a collection called Album of Emily Macarthur. The handwriting in the lower centre reads 'now pulled down 1928'. The title suggests that this schoolhouse was built on the Macarthur estate as it refers to 'the lower garden'. A schoolhouse on the estate indicates there were enough children on the estate to justify the building. Previous sources also indicate that the children in the painting would not be convict labourers or Indigenous children. The children depicted are dressed in bright colours suggesting their parents have affordable means and the children are not required elsewhere. The different ranges in height indicate the children range in ages.

The trees painted in the background are non-native; they resemble the evergreens and firs of the English countryside. It would require considerable time for such trees to grow to this height and considering the date of the painting, this would not be possible. Therefore, perhaps Emily Macarthur is reminiscing of home. Considering this, the painting may not reflect the actual landscape at the time. Landscapes of England may have been popular at the time or the artist was fusing the old environment with the new. A painting is very much open to interpretation but is a valued part of material culture that can enrich documentary research.

*Primary source #4*

Large collections of photographs can assist in the reconstruction of a place,





time or family.[14] This photograph is part of a collection of photographs of the Boardman family. It is portraiture of four of the Boardman children although their identities and familial relations are unknown; the photo suggests they are siblings. Portraiture would require the children to dress in their best clothing. It is difficult to ascertain whether this is a popular style of the time and to what status the children belong without referring to more photographs of children in the same time frame. The serious demeanour and lack of emotion implies a middle or higher class status. The children's gaze is

directed at the same place implying that there is something or someone in the background.

The photograph enriches the examination of children's lives in early Camden however more companion photos would allow greater perspective on the children's identity, status and a better understanding on the character of typical family portraits.

**Boardman family, photograph, 1896, Camden Libraries, Camden Images Ref. CHS2473, <http://catalogue.library.camden.nsw.gov.au/cgi-bin/spydu.exe/SET/ARCIMG/ARCENQ/1640026/5140830?NREC=10&NAVDIR=-1> accessed 20 March 2016.**

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# Ghosts and Shadows at Macaria

**Pauline Downing**

*If a man is killed before his life span is completed, his vital spirit is not yet exhausted and may survive for a while as a ghost - Chu Hsi (Chinese philosopher) 5<sup>th</sup> century AD*

For a house of this scale, Macaria is among the best picturesque Gothic houses in Australia. This, when combined with its importance to Camden, makes it a building of great significance. (National Estate Database) The building is part of the John Street group.

Macaria is a fine early townhouse of distinctive and interesting architectural quality, associated with an important figure of the town's early years. (NSW Heritage)

Macaria at 37 John Street Camden has always fascinated me. Macaria translates from the Latin and Greek to mean either *Happiness* or *Blessed*.

It is a beautiful mansion built in 1859-60 in the Victorian Italianate style (tending towards Victorian Gothic) for Henry Thompson, the local miller in Camden, who tragically was killed before his grand home was completed. The Thompson family sold the house to Mr Milford who did not survive long before passing it as inheritance to his daughter Sarah.

Not many years later Sarah Milford made, it seems, an unfortunate marriage to a farmer named James Tiffin who struggled with Sarah's determination for the house, Macaria, and its land to be left in her name and the rights not pass to him upon marriage.

Within several months Sarah became very ill and passed away. Convenient for Tiffin? Many consider the Victorian Era as the Golden Age of Poisoning. Poisoning was an easy form of murder to get away with because it could be done in secrecy. Moreover, the proof necessary to convict someone in a court of law in that time tended to rely on circumstantial evidence.

James sold the house and moved away from Camden and the district. Sarah, or her 'presence', is supposed to be unable to leave the house her father bought. Taken from life so early it seems as though she stays about the old place, happy and content, causing no problems.



My own childhood was shaped by my grandmother who cared for me until adulthood. An incredibly superstitious woman, as were most people born in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and who lived into the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, her superstitions come back to me frequently. They were an everyday part of my childhood.

She would cover all the mirrors and silverware in a thunderstorm; not put new shoes on a table; if we spilt salt it was vital to throw a pinch over your left shoulder; if someone sneezed it was thrown over your right shoulder; spilling sugar meant joy; a whistling woman was bad luck ... and so on. You will surely have heard some of these old beliefs from your own grandmother.

So I believed there are ghosts sharing this mortal coil with us. I was told so as a child, and today I cannot shake that lingering belief. I remember waking one night as a child and looking at a figure dressed in shining white standing at the bottom of my bed. Unbidden, although I know their worth, they still reside in my psyche. There are too many inexplicable reasons why spirits, or souls, could be stuck between here and there.

In 1880 the Camden Grammar School was established in Macaria. The students experienced strange noises at midnight, furniture moving and the

sounds of broken crockery. (Was it simply hungry boarders pillaging the larders?)

By 1900 the school had moved to Narellan. Ghostly beings awaited them at the new site of their school at Studley Park, itself imbued with stories of strange happenings, albeit these paranormals were happier beings. "*A cheerful, childlike presence*" was the reference.

A dentist established a practice in Macaria, but lost a patient in the chair when an oval section of the ceiling fell on the unfortunate patient. (Was this a result of a water damaged ceiling? An oval shaped puddle formed by a leaking roof?)

Dr. Lumley had his home and surgery there. Returning late after a house call he was thrown around his bedroom. Relatives of Mrs. Lumley (who lived in Larkins Cottage – also built by Henry Thompson) avowed there was '*something*' in that house.

There is another entity, '*Bill*', who causes problems at Macaria. Mrs. Farquar, who left the employ of Camden Council in 2008, was adamant there was '*something*' as there were experiences of an un-sourced feeling of coldness that signaled *Bill's* presence.

The late Derrick Thorn, one of Council's long time past employees, held Mrs. Farquar in great esteem as did the rest of the council staff. He had heard the stories and added another about a very level-headed staff member, who, working upstairs writing a report one night at 9.30pm, was spooked by the sound of footfalls on the stairs. There was nothing there. He decided not to work any later that night.

Common sense tell us not to forget the old house is very tall with an incredibly high, but beautifully pitched iron roof. Metal does shrink and contract with temperature changes. Wood does move and creak. Old sailors were only comfortable sailing a wooden ship that '*talked*'. The ceilings of Macaria are up to four metres high. Derrick suggested the chimneys attached to the outside walls could be sounding chambers for the breezes from particular directions.

So? Is it just the old girl stretching her old bones, or is it old bones stretching their attachment to the old house?

Thankfully, today Macaria is an integral part of our valued heritage architecture because of Miss Llewella Davies (1901 -2000). Camden was her town and she knew or wanted to know **everything** that was going on in her town.

The story goes that Macaria was to be demolished and the building behind, previously occupied by Council, be brought forward in its place. Miss Davies swung into action and Macaria still stands in John Street today.

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