

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.

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

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

Front Cover: Carrington Convalescent Hospital (I Willis 2018)

Back Cover: Carrington Convalescent Hospital Titles on door (I Willis, 2018)

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The Carrington Hospital and how its architectural design reflects the historical practice of open-air treatment for convalescents

Georgina Jeremy

Just west of Camden, on a plot of land named Grasmere, the old Carrington Hospital sits atop a hill by the Nepean River. Its impressive design is immediately eye-catching, boasting several storeys of hardy brick walls, long, vertical windows, open-air verandas and peaked roofs. Constructed in the late nineteenth century, the architecture of the Carrington Hospital was designed as such for a specific purpose: to provide the convalescents housed there with as much fresh air and open space as possible in accordance with contemporary medical beliefs. The Carrington Hospital is one in a long line of convalescent hospitals designed with the historical ‘open-air treatment’ in mind, to provide patients relief from the ills and miasma of the city, and to encourage a full and holistic recovery.



Carrington Hospital hilltop position (G Jeremy)

Carrington's construction plan was first conceived in 1888 when William Paling, a Dutch immigrant, donated five hundred acres of land on a farm called Grasmere to the state of New South Wales. He also donated an additional £10,000 to help establish what would become Carrington Hospital for convalescents. This was bolstered by a lump sum donated by a public committee organised by Sir Henry Parkes.¹ With his donation, Paling referenced his intention for the hospital, "that all benefits of country life, fresh air, good and wholesome food should be enjoyed by the occupants of the institution."² He further instructed that the hospital "should be built of brick and should be simple in design and construction," consisting of "an administrative portion,



Carrington Hospital with an example of the veranda spaces (G Jeremy)

male and female wards... day and recreation room, meal room and chapel."³ Paling's vision for the hospital aligned with his belief in open-air treatment for convalescents, intending to provide a large, open structure which united patients with the outside space. Camden was the perfect location for patients to spend time in the fresh air and sun; it was close enough to Sydney to be reached by train while still far enough from the city to enjoy the country benefits.

In 1890, Carrington Hospital officially opened and was named after Lord Carrington, the contemporary governor of New South Wales.⁴ The Carrington Hospital was generally utilised by Sydney residents, who, becoming sick, would turn to open-air treatment as relief from the ills of the city. The design of the Carrington Hospital served a critical purpose to the forms of treatment enacted there. A visitor to the hospital shortly after its opening commented that, "to even the most inexperienced it is plain that the object for which the hospital is built has been borne in mind throughout [the construction]."⁵ The building was nestled comfortably into the peak of the hill, providing a view

of the surrounding plains with plenty of space for gardens available for patients to spend time outdoors recovering. The gardens were of significant importance to visitors, including one who noted that “the garden, with comfortable shady seats, where patients may wander about and rest at will, is of great importance, as also the verandahs where they can obtain exercise in wet weather, and the large sitting or day rooms, in which so much of the patients’ time must necessarily be spent, if they should be prevented from going out of doors.”⁶ The design of the hospital was so closely tied with the treatment provided there that the intention of the architecture was evident to many who visited.

The model for open-air treatment in Australia was inherited through its colonial ties to England, where miasma theory, the notion that diseases are caused by ‘bad air’, had reigned for some time. Miasma theory was a long-held principle which informed medical treatments in Europe, particularly in the 19th and early 20th centuries. It posited that many diseases such as tuberculosis, cholera and plague were the product of ‘bad air’.⁷ Logically, the recommended treatment for disease was then an abundance of fresh air, which could be



Carrington Hospital here illustrating the windows that were crucial for ventilation. (G Jeremy)

sought in the countryside, away from the ‘bad air’ and ills of the city. Spending time in the fresh air and open space of the countryside became a popular remedy for all kinds of ailments, but particularly respiratory complaints. A number of convalescent hospitals were constructed with the specific intention of encouraging open-air treatment for patients.

In accordance with miasma theory, nineteenth century British physicians and architects concocted the ‘pavilion principle’ for hospital design. It stipulated that hospitals should be designed with a transition between indoor and outdoor settings in mind, plenty of space between beds, and large, well-ventilated rooms for patients to rest in. The relationship between miasma theory and the ‘pavilion’ design of English convalescent hospitals is evident in correspondence between Florence Nightingale and architect Thomas Worthington on the design of two hospitals in Manchester. Nightingale was a firm believer in miasma theory, which fuelled her support for ventilation, spacing, and sanitary measures in hospitals. In her letters, Nightingale suggested that there be “the arrangement of one bed to each window”⁸ in accordance with her belief that spacing and proper ventilation were essential to recovery. In addition to theoretically combatting miasma, the practical benefits of hospitals designed according to the pavilion principle were twofold, being both more sanitary for the patient and more convenient for attending nurses than existing styles of hospital.⁹

The hilly farmland around Camden, reminiscent of the English countryside, was the perfect setting for an English style convalescent hospital, taking advantage of the wide, open space. Visitors to the hospital at the time commented on the ‘Englishness’ of Camden and its surroundings, likening the scenery to the rolling green hills of the English countryside. The wide expanses of space, punctuated with livestock and small bodies of water, induced a warm sense of familiarity in visitors to the area, particularly in contrast to the urban Sydney environment.¹⁰ Like other convalescent hospitals, Carrington was intended for extended stays where patients could take their time imbibing the fresh air and open space in order to recover. In a monthly meeting report in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, the 11th of September 1902, it was reported that the average time spent at Carrington was just under four weeks.¹¹ Such extended stays reflect the fact that Carrington was intended to support the holistic recovery of patients in the long term, as opposed to short, intensive treatments given at non-convalescent hospitals.

Evidence of the history of miasma theory and the use of open-air treatment as a cure is still preserved today in the architecture of the building that was once the Carrington Hospital. The position of the building is significant, sitting just slightly down from the peak of the hill, facing outwards. Although obstructed today by other buildings, at the time of its construction and convalescent use,

the front face of Carrington would have appreciated a perfect view of the surrounding natural setting, welcoming patients to explore the vast expanse of land donated by Paling. Across the front and side walls of the building are long, vertical windows, which were likely allotted to patients individually, allowing them their own view and air source. At the back of the building, bricks fill spaces where windows once were. Around the outside of the building are inbuilt veranda spaces that, like the large windows, served as a transition between indoors and outdoors, again ensuring patients would have full access to fresh air. They also provided patients with access to fresh air during periods of wet weather, again exhibiting that open-air treatment was paramount to the hospital's design. The verandas would have acted as an intermediate space between the hospital and gardens, encouraging patients to spend time in the sun and fresh air without straying too far from their beds and nurses. It is evident that theories of miasma and open-air treatment are fundamentally ingrained in the architectural design and landscaping of the Carrington Hospital site.

The Carrington Hospital, an integral part of Camden's rich local history, thus remains a symbol of the 'open-air treatment' so widely used to treat convalescent patients in Britain and Australia. The practice of open-air treatment is woven into the architectural design of the building according to principles devised in England. The tall windows, spacious interior, and verandas which serve as a transition between indoor and outdoor all attest to the significance of architecture to the open-air treatment in the nineteenth century. They reflect theories of disease and treatment which permeated nineteenth century medicine. Although no longer in use as a convalescent hospital, the Carrington Hospital serves as a tangible and critical piece of Australian medical history.

Georgina Jeremy is a history student at Macquarie University. She is part of the Macquarie University PACE program is designed to function as a miniature internship in partnership with the Camden Historical Society in 2022.

Notes

R.E. Nixon, *Carrington, 1890-1990: The Centre of Total Care* (Narellan: Rex Warren and Sons, 1990), 12-13.

Ibid., 14.

Ibid., 9.

Ibid., 11.

"The Carrington Centennial Hospital for Convalescents and Incurables," *Illustrated Sydney News*, 24 May 1890, 7.

Ibid.

Stephen Halliday, "Death and miasma in Victorian London: an obstinate belief," *BMJ* 323, no. 7327 (December 2001): 1469.

Stella Butler, "'A model for the country': letters from Florence Nightingale to the

architect, Thomas Worthington, on hospitals and other matters 1865–1868," *Medical Humanities* 39, no. 2 (December 2012): 95.

G.C. Cook, "Henry Currey FRIBA (1820–1900): leading Victorian hospital architect, and early exponent of the "pavilion principle"," *Postgraduate Medical Journal* 78, no. 920 (June 2002): 352.

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Grave Matters: Insight into St. John's Cemetery, Camden

Mia van den Dolder

"They say you die twice. One time when you stop breathing and a second time...when somebody says your name for the last time."

Banksy

St. John's is a well known and iconic cemetery in the centre of Camden. As the first general cemetery in the area, it has become a memorial place for the Camden community over the past two centuries.[1] St. John's church is still in practice today, and as a result, I'm sure there are many individuals from Camden who have been to the cemetery without genuinely knowing the stories of those who have been buried there. This cemetery contains burials dating back to 1844 with the burial of Elias Thorn, an infant barely six days old. [2] This cemetery has a staggering range of mortality with many child burials. This cemetery also has prominent figures within Camden's history buried on its grounds and many community members that have important stories to tell. Sadly, these gravesites are in need of conservation as St. John's is



built on a slope, and the land is solid clay meaning there is a large amount of ground moment. This article will explain some issues surrounding gravesite conservation and the impact flooding and heavy rainfall have had, not only on conservation issues but some of the individuals buried in the cemetery.

Overview of the Site History

The Cemetery

The cemetery dates to 1844, with the first burial on the 28th of June. However, these early burials were before the church grounds were consecrated in 1849. This cemetery was the only general cemetery during the mid to late 1800s, which meant a diverse range of early burials. The earliest record of a grave with a Headstone is dated the 23rd of May 1845 and belongs to Hannah Lakeman. In March 1894, the church announced they would fill the 900 burial plots in two years and as a result, the church restricted burial plots to only congregation members. The last plot was sold in 1956 to Milton Ray, meaning even though the cemetery has no open plots available, there are still present-day burials, the latest in 2017.[3]

The Church

Named after St John the Evangelist, this gothic revival style building was officially finished in 1841. However, the spire and led light windows were not installed until later, around 1847. Interestingly, the construction of the Church ceased between 1844 and 1847 to utilise the cemetery.[4] The Bells, which are still at the church today, were given as a gift by Elizabeth Macarthur-Onslow, and upon her death in 1911, the townspeople erected the Lynch Gate on the property. There have been other extensions throughout the church's history such as a new hall that was installed in 1972.[5]



Site Conservation Issues

The main issues surrounding conservation are the soil of the site causing a landslide effect and destroying the foundations of the graves and the flora on the site as roots have started to also destroy gravesites. As has been mentioned the geological factors of the site have had a huge impact on the graves and in turn the remains beneath them. The clay soil in the area not only is unstable causing a landslide effect on many of the graves and especially during wet weather but it causes issues with the headstones themselves.[6] The stones that are used to create the gravesite and headstones are also made with stone with a high level of clay due to the area. This clay stone when placed in a wet climate causes it to swell and eventually break. This can be seen in many of the graves at St. John's where headstones are cracked in two or sometimes three places. This happens as clay retains water very well. When the headstones are rained on, they absorb the water expanding the particles and the stone but as the stone dries it shrinks on the outside and remains wet on the inside. The following figure demonstrates this.[7]

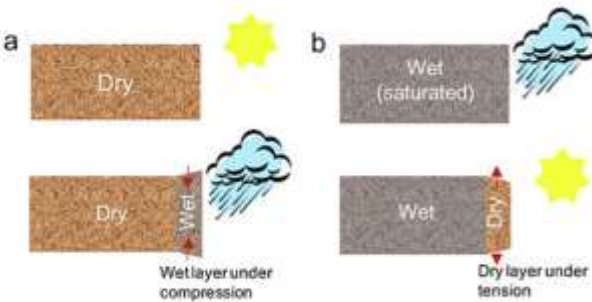


Fig. 6. Schematic of the expansion and contraction experienced by a clay-containing stone block upon wetting (a) during a rain event and subsequent drying (b). The wet layer in (a) at the beginning of the wetting period will be under compression, whereas the dry layer formed after full saturation of the stone block and the beginning of the drying period will be under tension. Modified after Jimenez-Gonzalez and Scherer [10]. (For interpretation of the references to color in this figure legend, the reader is referred to the web version of this article.)

There are some specific cases in which these grave sites are almost beyond repair. One such example is the grave of Dorothea and Joseph Campbell who died in 1901 and 1871 respectively. This gravesite is in section A056 and has sustained a fair bit of damage. The sides of the grave site have fallen leaving the dirt exposed. A tarp has been placed over the site to stop erosion however, this will not stop the damage in the long run, as it is not fixing the initial problem.



Dorothea Campbell

But why is it important to preserve these graves? In the case of Dorothea Campbell, she was born at sea in 1823 and lived in the surrounding area of Maitland and Camden. She had an accident in 1900 which fractured her hip resulting in her being bedridden and eventually her death. She holds a wealth of history not just regarding the life of farmers such as her husband but also gives information on the development of medicine and how major accidents can impact one's life during this time. These graves are important and hold information and as a sign of respect should be conserved.[8]



Life on the Flood Plains in the 1800s

The Nepean and Hawkesbury area, of which Camden is a part, is prone to flooding. These floods have been an important part of Camden's history and have cost the lives of many of the townspeople not only during the floods themselves but in the weeks after in which many died from common diseases. It is listed in the national archives that at least 3 people in St. John's cemetery died of disease brought by the 1867 Nepean floods which were disastrous. Predating this event, between 1795 and 1821 the Hawkesbury Nepean area in which Camden resides had flooded 36 times.

Waterborne Disease and Historical Treatments

Dysentery (Infectious Diarrhea)

Dysentery is a disease that is caused by inflammation of the intestines by viral, bacterial or parasitic infection. Because of this, it is very common when an individual has consumed flood water. Most cases of Dysentery are caused by the bacteria *Shigella* and can be spread when a person comes into contact with infected stool.[9] This is how it spreads rapidly during floods as sewage systems flood spreading to other areas of the town.[10]

How did the people of Camden treat this disease during floods in the 1800s? During the 1700s and 1800s, there were mass outbreaks of dysentery across the world but in Australia, there was largely no treatment available.

[11] Because of this many deaths that occurred were children and evidence of this can be seen in 3 grave sites at St. Johns cemetery. During the 1867 floods these children, under the age of 3, died from what we now call dysentery.

[12] In cases where the infection was not as extreme, an individual may survive with large amounts of hydration as the symptoms; Diarrhoea and vomiting create extreme dehydration and malnourishment. During this time the patient would have been given treatment for diarrhoea which consisted of opium and brandy consumption and hot baths.[13] Later in the 1890s chalk powder was also consumed.[14]

Salmonellosis (Salmonella)

Salmonellosis, known more commonly as salmonella is often associated with food consumption and food poisoning. However, it is a bacterial infection that is spread very similarly to infectious diarrhea.[15] This infection causes inflammation of the stomach or gastroenteritis and presents with fever, abdominal cramps and vomiting. Surprisingly this bacterium mostly affects children and young adults.[16] During floods, this bacterium can be spread in animals and stool and when ingested and during the 1800s could become fa-



Figure 13: View of the Windsor 'island' in the 1867 flood
Source: *Illustrated Australian News*, 27 Jul 1867 p.8; State Library of Victoria



Figure 7: View of Penrith from the Great Western Road, 1867
Source: *Illustrated Times* (London), 7 Sep 1867 p.145; State Library of NSW

tal.[17] Because of the nature of the salmonella infection, only a portion of people infected have symptoms. In some people, the bacteria will leave the body in about 6 days and if the individual stays hydrated, they will survive. In other circumstances, individuals are asymptomatic and become carriers of the bacteria. There is a portion of individuals who will have the bacterial infection for longer and it is in these circumstances that it would become fatal without proper medical attention.[18] During the time St. Johns first became active, an individual with salmonella infection would have been doused to reduce fever and given a mix of broths to reduce nausea and stomach cramping. In extreme circumstances where a patient was experiencing intense vomiting medical guidelines suggested bloodletting, but this was less common in the late 1800s.[19] While these treatments were sometimes effective with minor health issues they did not cure the salmonella but only reduced its symptoms which lead to higher mortality than other gastric infections.[20]

The 1867 Flood

The 1867 flood has been named the worst flood of the 19th century. It has been noted by historians that areas of Camden flooded to 19.26 meters above the normal level. During this flood not only did upwards of 1000 horses drown but 25 people lost their lives in the raging flood waters, and this is not

including the individuals who lost their lives to disease shortly after the flood. This flood has been marked as a landmark event due to the way it shaped flood management and understanding surrounding the flood plains [21]

Conclusion

Through my exploration of St. Johns cemetery it has become clear it is an important site with a history that should be shared. Whilst there are issues with conservation caused by geological phenomena such as location and climate there is a large amount of information regarding historical events in the area. I was able to use the Camden floods and specifically the 1867 floods to demonstrate this through the people who lost their lives and were buried in St. Johns. It is important to remember that each and every individual buried on these grounds has a story to tell and we as a community should listen to them.

Notes

- [1] Johnson, 2010
- [2] St John's, n.d
- [3] Johnson, 2010
- [4] Jessop, 2019
- [5] Johnson, 2010
- [6] St Johns, n.d
- [7] Elert & Rodriguez-Navarro, 2022
- [8] Karskens, 2016
- [9] Banach et al., 2017
- [10] Hellstrom, 2020
- [11] Bornstein et al., 1941
- [12] Johnson, 2010
- [13] Hellstrom, 2020
- [14] Niamkepo et al., 2016
- [15] Banach et al., 2017
- [16] Coburn et al., 2007
- [17] Hellstrom, 2020
- [18] Coburn et al., 2007
- [19] Hellstrom, 2020
- [20] Hellstrom, 2020
- [21] Banach et al., 2017

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Mia van den Dolder is a student at Macquarie University and participated in the PACE program as an intern with the Camden Historical Society in 2022.

Breastplate - 'Murrandah Chief of Burra Burra Tribe'

Julie Wrigley

This breastplate was originally given to Murrandah, a Camden and Burragorang Valley Aboriginal leader. His tribal territory extended to the Taralga area, and he used to visit the Camden area in the early to mid 19th century. It has been estimated by historians that Murrandah was born about 1795, was recognised as a strong leader in his prime, and died about 1849. The historian, Macalister, gives a detailed description of Murrandah's funeral and interment at Wallangriva, north of the Abercrombie River.

In 1815 Governor Lachlan Macquarie began a yearly practice of awarding inscribed metal plaques or 'king' plates, to indigenous identities who were recognised as leaders. This continued officially up to 1835. It was copied by colonists who rewarded faithful service.

Historian Jim Smith believes that the Macarthurs may have arranged for it to be given to Murrandah in appreciation for his assistance in locating the way to the lands at Taralga, which were more suitable for the merino sheep operations. The name which the Macarthurs first gave to their property at Taralga was Burra Burra until it was renamed Richlands.

The following inscription is handwritten on paper glued to the back of the item. It was written and placed there by Mrs Faith Lloyd-Phillips, daughter of Brigadier General George and Mrs Violet Macarthur-Onslow of the house "Murrandah", Camden.

The Burra Burra Tribe of Aborigines came from the Burragorang Valley. They used to visit the high ground near the Nepean River on Camden Park Estate where the house called Murrandah stands. When my grandmother, Elizabeth Macarthur, later Mrs Onslow, was about twelve years of age, Murrandah's brother went to Camden Park House and asked to see Missy, and handed this breastplate to her saying *Murrandah go long way off. He asked me to give you this.* For many years it hung in the Library at Camden Park. Then one day when my Aunt Enid was having a clean out of "heathen things" I rode over and asked my uncle to give me the breastplate, which he did.



Murrindah Breastplate on display at the Camden Museum (Camden Museum)

A letter from Elizabeth Macarthur-Onslow (granddaughter of the original pioneer, John Macarthur) in 1907 states it was Murrindah himself, not his brother, who gave the breastplate to her before his death. The letter shows Elizabeth Macarthur-Onslow believed Murrindah had given her the breastplate for safekeeping and that she looked back on Murrindah with affection.

When Faith married Dr Ivan Lloyd-Phillips in 1941 she went overseas and later settled in England. The breastplate hung on the wall of her lovely old cottage near Oxford, for many decades. The Camden Historical Society had correspondence in 2005 with Mrs Lloyd-Phillips and she indicated it was her wish that the breastplate be returned to Camden.

After the death of Mrs Lloyd-Phillips in 2007 the breastplate was returned to

Australia and donated to the Camden Museum on 6th April 2008 by her son, Hugh Lloyd-Phillips of Paddington, Sydney.

The breastplate is of significance because of its connections to both the Camden and the Taralga local areas. It has social value to the Camden community because of its connections to the Macarthur family and colonial history. It is also of significance to the indigenous community, particularly to the members of the family of Murrandah.

This breastplate helps the museum tell the story of the relations between indigenous people and colonists. It is an important centrepiece for the existing indigenous exhibition area in the Camden Museum.

Celebrating the Repatriation of the Murrandah Axe-heads

Julie Wrigley

On Saturday 18th June 2022 John Wrigley, Vice-President of the Camden Historical Society, welcomed about 70 people to an historic event at the Camden Museum. John welcomed the visitors including the State Member for Camden Peter Sidgreaves, the Mayor of Camden Theresa Fedeli, Cr. Eva Campbell, Cr. Peter McLean, Cr. Cindy Cagney, Cr. Usha Dommaraju, members of the Burra Burra Aboriginal Corporation, distinguished historian and author Dr Jim Smith, Aboriginal Heritage and Repatriation Manager of South Australia Museum Anna Russo, and members and friends of the Camden Historical Society. John thanked Taylor Clarke for her Welcome to Country.

The event was celebrating the repatriation of two metal axe-heads which came from the grave of Aboriginal leader Murrandah (c.1788-1849). From the 1830s, Murrandah was a warrior and leader of the Burra Burra group, who were a part of the Gundungurra people. His tribal territory extended from the Abercrombie Range and Taralga area near the Burra Burra Lagoon to Burraborang and Camden Park.

The axe-heads were collected by Edmund Milne (1861-1917) who travelled throughout New South Wales for 30 years as an amateur collector of Aboriginal artefacts. One axe-head has a painted inscription on one side, *King Miranda Chief of the Burra Burra or Abercrombie Tribe and on the other side Died 1849. His weapons were buried with him. This axe was dug up in 1913.* The other axe-head has no inscription, but both are highly symbolic in honouring Murrandah.

Mr. R.D.J. Weathersbee purchased the axe-heads from the Milne collection and thereafter presented them to the South Australian Museum, thinking that Burra Burra was a locality in South Australia.

Graham Maranda, Secretary and Co-Director of the Burra Burra Aboriginal Corporation, requested repatriation of Murrandah's two grave objects. The South Australian Museum Board approved the request in August 2021 and have repatriated the objects to the Burra Burra people through the stewardship of the Burra Burra Aboriginal Corporation. The Burra Burra Aboriginal Corporation has entered into an extended loan to the Camden Museum signed in March 2022. Ownership of the two metal Murrandah axe-heads remains with the Burra Burra Aboriginal Corporation.



**Top left: Axe heads. Top right: Breastplate.
Bottom L to R: Fred and Toni Schouten, Graham Maranda, John Wrigley, Anna Russo, Karen Lebsanft, and Courtney Jacques holding Aniyah (Graham's daughter and granddaughter). (J Wrigley 2022)**

On the morning of 18th June Anna Russo, Repatriation Manager of the South Australia Museum, flew from Adelaide to Sydney, and Graham Maranda brought Anna with the axe-heads from Sydney to Camden. At the moving ceremony Anna gave a short speech saying how pleased she was to repatriate the items in such a personal way to the descendants of Murrandah.

Graham Maranda, a direct descendant of Murrandah, gave a short speech accepting the axe-heads and explaining the long process in their repatriation. He said, “The axe heads are in remarkably good condition and bear the inscription of Murrandah identifying them as definitely belonging to him. It was crucial we returned the axe heads to family and I would like to acknowledge and thank the contribution of everyone involved in making this happen. Murrandah’s story is an amazing and inspirational one and having his collection displayed proudly at Camden Museum helps us spread his

story to many more people who can share in the remarkable life of this great warrior and leader.”

John Wrigley thanked the South Australia Museum for their program of finding opportunities to find appropriate keeping places for such items. He assured them that the Camden Museum is honoured to have been asked to provide a secure keeping place where the items can be appreciated by all our visitors.

John said, “We are delighted that the axe-heads will be on display beside Murrandah’s brass breastplate given to him in the 1820s or 1830s. One suggestion is that the Macarthurs may have arranged for the breastplate to be given to Murrandah. The Macarthur property was called Burra Burra until it was named Richlands. The breastplate is cast or engraved *Murrandah, Chief of Burra Burra Tribe*. We know the Macarthurs were granted land near Burra Burra Lake in the 1820s and the museum has an original land grant dated 1835 to Edward Macarthur.

On the back of the breastplate the following inscription is handwritten by Mrs. Faith Lloyd-Phillips, daughter of Brigadier General George and Mrs Violet Macarthur-Onslow of 'Murrandah', South Camden. Mrs Lloyd-Phillips told me that she had hand-written and glued the note on the back of the plate: *The Burra Burra Tribe of Aborigines came from the Burragorang Valley. They used to visit the high ground near the Nepean River on Camden Park Estate where the house called Murrandah stands. When my grandmother, Elizabeth Macarthur, later Mrs. Onslow, was about twelve years of age, Murrandah's brother went to Camden Park House and asked to see Missy, and handed this breastplate to her saying Murrandah go long way off. He asked me to give you this. For many years it hung in the Library at Camden Park. Then one day when my Aunt Enid was having a clean out of 'heathen things'. I rode over and asked my uncle to give me the breastplate, which he did.*

John said, “When Faith married in the 1940s she took it overseas. I first saw the breastplate about 1997 on a fireplace in a house in Oxford, England. Faith indicated that it was her wish that it be returned to Camden. After Faith died, her son donated the breastplate to the Camden Museum in 2008, where it has been on exhibition here since then.”

John said the axe-heads will be in the same cabinet as a copy of a sketch of Murrandah by English artist, Thomas Woolner, completed about 1853. The original is held at Camden Park House. John also mentioned the outstanding book by Dr Jim Smith, *The Aboriginal People of the Burragorang Valley*, which is on sale in the shop.

Lastly John thanked Camden Council for providing the afternoon tea as a special cultural event.



Murrumbidgee axe-head on display at Camden Museum (J Wrigley, 2022)

The WEST Journal

Dean Boone, Alexander Tomasiello, Bella Boone and Emily Anderson

The Camden History editor writes:

Camden has a new lifestyle publication called The West Journal. Launched in 2021 by local folk Dean Boone, Alexander Tomasiello, Bella Boone and Emily Anderson. The West Journal is headquartered in Camden through local publisher Olsen Palmer. This article profiles this local magazine and what it is trying to achieve in a highly competitive marketplace. The magazine editorial group describe their publication this way.

The WEST Journal is a celebration of Western Sydney and Regional NSW.

Accounting for over 44 per cent of Sydney's population, Greater Western Sydney is far from homogenous. The region is broad, diverse and full of history, stories and peoples. Through the lens of travel, food and culture, The West Journal is a publication that explores the individuality of the region while seeking to document and celebrate the developments.

We recognise that generational stigma about the West exists within and outside of the area. There is also a misconception that the CBD and the East are the only worthwhile destinations for travel, food and culture. We wish to challenge those who live in the West to go out and explore their own neighbourhoods. We wish to invite those who aren't from the West to venture out and about in the exciting hubs of culture. The WEST Journal is inherently about reducing the misconception of the West, by promoting it as a vibrant region, well worth visiting.

Further, Regional NSW has a strong and independent link to Western Sydney through family, travel and industrial ties that is largely unexplored. The WEST Journal is positioned to promote both Greater Western Sydney and Regional NSW in light of the economic links between the regions.

This is the niche into which The WEST Journal stands alone from all other publications. Our exclusive focus on Western Sydney and Regional NSW means that we are on a mission to celebrate all things West of the city and break the long-held stigmas. We exist to fill a gap by connecting people with the travel, food and culture in the West that they never realised were there.

The Origin

Naturally, the planning and decisions that resulted in The WEST Journal's



conception were a result of recognising this gap. The WEST Journal editor Dean Boone and creative director Alex Tomasiello have both experienced the stigma and negative perceptions of the west. Their passion for design, culture, food, and art collided to form and create The WEST Journal. The basis of which is intrinsically linked to the future plans of the Western Parkland City, the expansion, and development of Sydney and NSW as a whole.

“Being residents of Western Sydney ourselves and having grown up here too, we were well aware, firsthand, that no one was telling the true story of Western Sydney,” says Boone.

The West Defined

Western Sydney is changing. Development plans mean that more money and investment is funnelling into Greater Western Sydney which in turn creates new cultural hubs that will be the home of people from a diverse range of backgrounds. These new residents will not only live, but also work and play in Western Sydney. This is the vision of investors, developers, and state government who recognise the potential for Western Sydney to become a world-class city.

Specifically, Western Sydney is set to expand to be the home of three million residents before 2036. On top of the existing hubs of culture, the coming years of growth and development mean that the area is set to increase in significance. Few people realise it is already Australia's third largest economy, right after Sydney and Melbourne.

The WEST Journal is a publication that will exist in and alongside these significant changes. We work to celebrate the known and unknown sites in the areas and in doing so, we are documenting the changes occurring. We meet people, hear their stories, and share their work with the world. Because we are deeply involved and invested in the west, our genuine passion for the region is easily detected in the tone and content of The WEST Journal. We are advocates for the positive change going on in our communities, but also promoters of the existing landscape.

“A positive view of Western Sydney not based generic media stereotypes and stigmas has been long coming and long overdue,” Boone says.

Though the COVID-19 pandemic revealed differences between Western and Eastern Sydney, it also accelerated a shift away from CBD-based work and social life. Instantly, entire populations were forced to travel and get to know their immediate areas – and many liked what they have found. As the world re-emerges from the shocks of the pandemic, it is clear that the decentralisation effects of the pandemic are not temporary.

We have found an increase in openness for local and regional travel as people are motivated to explore their own town, the adjoining cities, and the country itself. The connection between Western Sydney and Regional NSW has always been strong and therefore, The WEST Journal is committed to promoting travel to the regions in and around Sydney. We categorise these regions as the *West of West* and seek to bridge existing ties between the areas.

“Exploring and celebrating the link between Western Sydney and regional NSW has largely been overlooked.”

Authenticity

The tone of voice is extremely important to the identity of The WEST Journal. Because The WEST Journal is about inviting locals to explore areas in Western Sydney, potentially in their own locality, the casual and informative tone is intended to be that of a trusted friend. We chose this tone because it is through genuine recommendations from friends, colleagues and acquaintances that people pass on their knowledge of hidden gems – The WEST Journal seeks to do the same.

We prioritise the authenticity of our writing, ensuring that we visit each locality before writing, and promoting content that withholds the integrity of not only our publication but the region itself. For this reason, we have adopted a celebratory tone, focusing on positive aspects rather than negatives.

Yet, our tone goes beyond our writing and extends to our photography. We share photos of what we see as we walk the streets. We don't hide the imperfections, instead we display the authentic scapes of the West. What some may see as unsightly, we recognise as part of an area's character. Through our photos, we wish to capture the West as it is— we do not believe the West needs to be airbrushed to appeal to people.

“The Photographs capture the very essence of where we visit, the changes that are occurring, the character or sense of the place, each town is unique and has something to offer,” says Tomasiello.

Aspirations

Western Sydney has long been a culturally diverse space, where millions of people live and flourish. Yet, the stigma that dominates, has inhibited a sense of pride, awareness, and exploration. The WEST Journal seeks to connect readers with the heart of the West and Regional NSW, by promoting food, travel, and culture in all localities. Such things transcend stigma, and when tried, provide a reason for trust and praise.

In summary, The WEST Journal is a platform for celebration. Our vision for Western Sydney is one of excitement and change, and our publication is placed to encourage all readers to take pride in an area that until now, has not received the celebration it deserves.

We're proud of the West and are excited to nurture a community who too is proud of all that the West is and will become.

Balconies: desirable feature or troublesome flaw?

Dianne Matterson

The removal of almost all of the charming 19th and early 20th century balconies along Argyle Street in compliance with an ordinance passed by Camden Council in 1936, was an action that has cast a long shadow, the effects of which are still very evident in the streetscape the town presents to the modern observer.

What began as a safety issue for two adjoining balconies, quickly erupted into a blanket ban that covered the entire main street. In October 1935, the local Sergeant of Police, Sergeant Porteus, drew Camden Council's attention to the 'dangerous state' of the balcony in front of the shops of Harry Bloom, chemist, and his neighbour, James Pinkerton, tailor,¹ both premises being owned at that time by the Estate of Ada Nesbitt. The Mayor recommended



Ben Hodge shop with balcony (Camden Images)

that Percy Butler be asked to inspect the balconies and report back to Council. This was approved. Mayor Larkin also flagged his intention to raise the issue of the removal of the balconies from all buildings in Argyle Street at a future Council meeting. Such a step would, he said, add ‘greatly to the appearance of the town’. He noted that the recent addition of cantilevered awnings to some buildings had already increased the property value.²

Safety report

By the end of the month, Percy Butler had passed the results of his balcony inspection onto Camden Council. He reported that the front plate of Harry Bloom’s balcony had started to decay in one place, the flooring was a little ‘perished’ on the ends, the roofing iron was rusted in one spot, and there were signs of rust evident at all the joints. Also, the downpipe leaked badly, allowing water to run down the brick wall. Despite this assessment, the balcony was classified as being ‘safe’. James Pinkerton’s balcony did not fare so well, however, despite the faults in the Pinkerton balcony bearing a marked resemblance to that of Harry Bloom’s. Described as being in a ‘very bad state of repair’, the Pinkerton balcony was considered to be ‘positively dangerous’ and in need of immediate attention. “The front and end plates, joists and two bearers [were] badly decayed, the flooring [was] perished on [the] ends, [and] the iron on the roof [was] rusted through similar to Mr Bloom’s”. The downpipe also allowed water to run down the exterior walls.

The Council had two courses of action available to them: to order either removal or repair. At this point the Mayor again raised the issue of the ‘advantage to the town’ if the Council ordered the removal of ‘all balconies and awnings’ over the footpath in Argyle Street. He went on to say that the balcony posts were a ‘hindrance to motorists’ who could not ‘pull up at the kerb without knocking their mudguards’. If the Council decided to take this action, the Mayor suggested that building owners be given 12 months in which to remove their balconies or verandahs. These could then be replaced with cantilever awnings. Alderman Boardman said that if the Council did pass such an order, it would mean ordering the demolition of many buildings as they were not structurally engineered to take the weight of a cantilevered awning. After some discussion about the general balcony issue, the Council decided, on a vote of 5-3, to only order the removal of the balconies of Messrs Bloom and Pinkerton. Not to be deterred, however, Mayor Larkin indicated that the issue of a general removal of balconies and verandahs in the main street would be revisited at a future Council meeting.³

Footpath obstructions

In February 1936, the balcony issue came up once more for discussion in Camden Council, and Mayor Larkin proposed the motion that all building owners be served notices to remove ‘all obstructions from the footpaths’

within 12 months. This was a motion that was sure to generate plenty of controversy, as balconies and verandahs provided a convenient outdoor space for the occupants of the building, or, if closed in, increased their indoor living space. In addition, they provided shade on the footpath that was welcomed by pedestrians on hot days. Alderman Furner opposed the motion on the grounds that many owners had already replaced their balconies and verandahs with cantilevered awnings during the last few years and was of the opinion that this trend would continue without intervention from the Council. He also thought that in many cases, the balconies were what made some places habitable. He refused to vote in favour of an order to have them removed. Alderman Boardman also opposed the motion on the grounds that cantilevered awnings were not an option for some buildings and this view was supported by Alderman Kelloway. Alderman Davies spoke in favour of the motion, as he considered the verandah posts to be obstructions that were dangerous to motor traffic, while also stating that Camden needed to be ‘progressive’, as conditions had changed from what was best in the days of horse drawn vehicles. This sentiment was supported by Alderman Crook-



Empire Theatre in Argyle Street Camden with balcony (Camden Images)

ston, who added that the motion should be altered to allow owners two years to comply; he also wanted a clause added to the notice to the owners saying that permission would be refused for repairs to existing structures or the building of new verandahs or balconies with supporting posts, and that any replacement balconies must be cantilevered from the building. The Council passed the motion with Alderman Crookston's amendments on a vote of 6-3, although it would be many months before this decision would be acted upon. Soon after, Bertie Nesbitt, Ada Nesbitt's son, wrote to Camden Council as executor of his mother's estate, asking the Council to reconsider its decision requiring the removal of the unsound balcony outside the Bloom and Pinkerton shops. He asked instead, that he be allowed to repair it until such time as all other balconies in the town were ordered by the Council to be removed. The Council voted to reverse their decision ordering the removal of the Pinkerton and Bloom balconies, instead allowing them to be repaired until the general removal of Argyle Street balconies took place.⁴

The following month, Camden Council wrote to Bertie Nesbitt regarding the expiration of time allowed for the repairs to the balcony at the Pinkerton and Bloom business premises. Mr Nesbitt replied that Henry Willis, the builder, had the matter 'in hand', an assertion that was confirmed by the contractor. However, due to 'pressure of work', he sought an extension of time. The Council granted a 14-day extension, but said the structure had to be strengthened in the meantime to render it safe.⁵

The elephant in the room

By October 1936, the thorny issue of a general order for removal of the balconies and verandahs in Argyle Street had to be faced. After being supplied with the 'correct wording' by the Local Government Association's solicitor, Camden Council unanimously passed the ordinance that required all balconies and verandahs built over the footpath to be demolished within two years of the date of the order. Individual notices were sent to all the affected building owners, including Percy Peters, Ray Boardman, William Watson, Fred Whiteman & Sons, Stuckey Brothers' Bakery, Fred Boardman, Ruby Moore, Harold Furner, Walter Furner, Emily Stevens, H Smidt, William Henderson, Phillip Fox, George Sidman, Daniel Maloney, Victor Reed and the Estates of John Moore and Ada Nesbitt. Any replacement structure constructed by an owner had to cantilever from the building's façade.⁶ Some owners found creative ways of reducing the loss that the Council order would inevitably entail. Fred Whiteman removed the balcony from the front of his building and immediately re-erected it at the rear of the property, while the Cleary Brothers purchased the Empire Theatre's balcony from Phillip Fox and erected it at the rear of their new shops at 165-171 Argyle Street (now the Albert Baker Arcade).⁷ Perhaps Glen Dunk, who owned the butchery now known as Tildsley's, made a quiet protest against the Council's balcony order without

risking prosecution. The removal notice from the Council very clearly only mentioned balconies and verandahs in Argyle Street; surely this meant the Oxley Street portion of the Dunk's wrap around balcony could be retained? Consequently, he only removed the Argyle Street balcony, leaving the Oxley Street part of the structure in place. This feature of the building is still standing today.

Time's up

Two years passed, and time had elapsed for the owners of buildings to remove their balconies as per the Camden Council order of October 1936. At the Council meeting on 14th November 1938, it was decided not to grant extensions to those owners who had not yet complied, as 14 days 'grace' had already been given. As a result, Bertie Nesbitt, on behalf of Ada Nesbitt's Estate, wrote to Council regarding the removal of the repaired balcony in front of the Bloom and Pinkerton shops. The Bloom premises were now occupied by Les Pinkerton's tea shop, while Arthur and Bob Pinkerton had taken over their father's shop, but now also sold electrical goods. In his letter, Mr Nesbitt stated that the removal of the balcony in front of the Messrs Pinkertons' business premises would be commenced the following week. At the same time, the Council granted building approval to the Nesbitt Estate to commence the replacement of the balcony with a cantilevered awning. Letters requesting an extension of time from between nine weeks and four months were received by the Council from Jim Cassimatis (the new owner of Vic Reed's store), H Smidt and Stuckey Brothers' Bakery, but these submissions were rejected unanimously and summonses were issued to the group of owners who had not removed or replaced their balconies.⁸

In an era when one person's waste frequently become someone else's treasure, Bertie Nesbitt placed the sale of the repaired Pinkerton balconies in the hands of William Inglis & Son.⁹ However, by February 1939 only the balcony on Les Pinkerton's shop had been dismantled and sold, leaving Arthur and Bob Pinkerton's premises to be the subject of further 'failure to comply' notices from Camden Council.

Summonses issued

The Council meeting in December 1938 was rather tense, as some aldermen were unhappy that summonses had been issued for failure to remove balconies and verandahs. Some aldermen regretted that their fellow residents were being prosecuted, while other aldermen thought that any backdown by the Council at this point, would weaken their position on other issues in the future. After much discussion, a decision was made to postpone all prosecutions until February 1939. This change of heart by the Council was the cause of some derision in the community. Some felt the Council had made its position clear and had acted accordingly, but at the first sign of a challenge, said

they ‘did not mean to do it’. Council’s solicitor, Mr Johnson, reported that in accordance with his instructions, summonses had been issued to Percy Peters, Stuckey Brothers’ Bakery, Jim Cassimatis, Bertie Nesbitt and Mrs O’Neill for failure to remove their balconies. There followed a great deal of discussion amongst the aldermen regarding the merits of allowing or refusing extensions of time for the work to be carried out, as well as the apparent ‘change of heart’ by some aldermen. Eventually, Alderman Kelloway moved that Mr Johnson be instructed to seek an adjournment from the Court until February and notify the people concerned. This was carried unanimously.¹⁰

But the issue could not be avoided for long. At the Camden Council meeting on 13 February 1939, the subject of the balcony and verandah removals from Argyle Street was once again raised. Council’s inspector reported that Stuckey Brothers’ Bakery and Percy Peters had not undertaken the work required. Mr Johnson, Council’s solicitor, reminded the Council that the postponed summonses were due before the Court on 16 February and asked for instructions. The Council had also received letters from Percy Peters, pointing out that his building was a weatherboard construction and was unsuitable for a cantilevered awning. Without an awning in front of his office, Mr Peter’s tenant would be greatly inconvenienced, so he asked for a three-month extension. Stuckey Brothers’ Bakery also communicated with Camden Council and pointed out that an ‘uncertainty’ related to their frontage had delayed the rebuilding work. They asked for a 12-week extension of time or, alternatively, to be granted permission to remove the posts and half the awning so their shop window would still be shaded.

Consideration of the matter was held ‘in committee’ (privately) and upon resuming the meeting, it was agreed by the aldermen to withdraw Jim Cassimatis’ summons entirely, withdraw the Stuckey Brothers’ Bakery’s summons ‘for the time being’ and approve their request for a 12-week extension, and serve prosecution notices on Bertie Nesbitt, Percy Peters, and Mrs O’Neill, requesting removal of all verandah posts within 24 hours or ‘proceedings’ would follow.¹¹

It was reported to Camden Council in May 1939, that Stuckey Brothers’ Bakery had removed only half of the balcony in front of their bakery. The Council indicated that it didn’t propose to proceed with a prosecution of the bakery owners and, at this point, the balcony saga petered out. Despite quietly slipping away from public debate in 1939, the controversy has still left an indelible mark on Camden to this day.¹²

Decades after that far reaching decision by Camden Council in 1936, a traditional-style balcony was reinstated on the Whiteman building, and, in a strange quirk of fate, also on the former Bloom building that was first de-

clared unsafe by Sergeant Porteus (now Argyle Gourmet Delicatessen). However, these balconies hide an illusion, as they are, in fact, cantilevered from the façade of the buildings. The posts that appear to support the front edge of the balconies have no structural function and are there for appearance only. Perhaps this is just the beginning of change; perhaps the idea of ‘What’s old is new again’ may start to stir one day and spread more of that former charm along Argyle Street once more.

Notes

- 1 Harry Bloom – 55-57 Argyle St (Argyle Street Gourmet Delicatessen; James Pinkerton – 59-61 Argyle St (Clearly Dental))
- 2 *Camden News*, 17 Oct 1935; 31 Oct 1935
- 3 *Camden News*, 31 Oct 1935
- 4 *Camden News*, 13 Feb 1936; 20 Feb 1936
- 5 *Camden News*, 30 Apr 1936
- 6 *Camden News*, 15 Oct 1936
- 7 *Camden News*, 13 Jan 1938; 13 Oct 1938
- 8 *Camden News*, 27 Oct 1938; 17 Nov 1938
- 9 *Camden News*, 24 Nov 1938
- 10 *Camden News*, 15 Dec 1938
- 11 *Camden News*, 16 Feb 1939
- 12 *Camden News*, 11 May 1939

N65929 Bede William Hennessy Part 2, Camden, City and War

Kalebh Pearson

After completing his service in World War One (WWI) and the Egyptian Revolt of 1919, Bede returned to his family and their pub in The Oaks. Bede's reintegration into the community is observable, as his charity work in the service of the Roman Catholic Church resumed with him taking the position of honorary secretary for a plain and fancy-dress ball held at The Oaks Literary Institute on 24 May 1920.¹ A cottage owned by "Mr Hennessy", which could indicate Michael or Bede as the owner, burned down at some point prior to 3 June 1920 and a sale of the surviving furniture was held on 5 June.² However, this incident did not seem to sully Bede's mood, as on 10 June he was reported to have "danced himself to exhaustion" at a party held for Mr Rowen's return to Yerranderie at Quig's Hall.³ Bede was secretary for another fancy-dress ball held for St. Joseph's at The Oaks Literary Institute on 21 May 1921, further highlighting his dedication to religious charity.⁴ He also re-



Macarthur Park Memorial Gates, Camden (K Pearson)

turned to the cricket pitch after the war as he was placed as an “emergency player” on The Oaks’ team for their match against Picton on 18 December 1921.⁵ Bede was once again secretary for another plain and fancy-dress ball with the proceeds going to the Sisters of St. Joseph’s.⁶ Bede lent his time to the Grand United Order of Oddfellows which held a ball at The Oaks Literary Institute on 26 June 1922. At which he saw to the repair of the dancefloor with the aid of Albert Wood.⁷ The Grand United Order of Oddfellows was an organisation which was founded in England in the 18th century, spread across the globe and found its way to Australia in 1848.⁸ However, there are no records indicating that Bede was ever an Oddfellow. The 16 September 1922 saw the unveiling of a memorial gate at Macarthur Park in Camden, which was created to commemorate WWI volunteers from the local area and was funded by the charity of the local residence.⁹ As a volunteer, Bede’s name was inscribed on this memorial, which still exists today. A party was held for the “Picton Boys” at Bede’s residence at The Oaks on 24 February 1926 which entailed singing and dancing up until midnight when the festivities ended.¹⁰ The boys in question were most likely from the Barnardo Homes, which was part of the larger Dr Barnardo Movement which had established a farm in the Picton area with the goal of providing agricultural education to young English orphan boys.¹¹ Bede attended a social on 8 May 1926 at which of the 40 couples present, he and his partner won the dancing competition dubbed the “chocolate waltz” which was held as a charity event for the local Catholic Church.¹² Bede’s life in the years following his return from service appear to have continued in much the same vein as before he had left, with a large focus on charitable work, usually within a religious setting, and a continued enjoyment of sports.

A major change in Bede’s life occurred when he left behind his country life and headed for the city. The first record of Bede’s city life is an approved application for the installation of a bowser tank and assorted piping for a petrol pump to be installed near Circular Quay, on Arbitration Street, which was approved on 9 September 1929.¹³ However, the pump was never constructed, which can most likely be attributed to the stock market crash which occurred on 28 October, also known as Black Monday.¹⁴ Records indicate that at some point after this business venture Bede returned to The Oaks, as in 1933 he hosted the Burragorang Axemen’s Association in a bushman’s sports competition.¹⁵ In 1937 on 26 February Bede’s father Michael Hennessy passed away at the age of 83 in Concord with his funeral held at The Oaks two days later.¹⁶ Michael left behind a considerable estate to his family which was evidence of the calibre of the business man he was. Michael’s total estate value including property owned was totalled at 10 023 pounds and 14 shillings.¹⁷ To Bede, Michael left 3 plots of vacant land at Yerranderie, a house on Elizabeth Street in Camden, and he was made co-owner of The Oaks Hotel with his siblings, with the exception of his younger brother Kickham who was ex-

clusively left a two-storey house in Dulwich Hill.¹⁸ Interestingly, Michael left a garage to his son Eugene which may have inspired Bede's earlier investment in a petrol pump in the city. Michael's lifetime contributions to The Oaks and Camden endures through his entrepreneurship and his prominent position in the community cannot be understated.

Bede reappears next in the historical record as the world was plunged into the Second World War and he once again answered the call to arms. During this time Bede was once again living in the city as he recorded his address as "80 Market Street Sydney" and enlisted at Paddington.¹⁹ Bede first reported to the Victoria Barracks for his medical examination on 23 January 1940 and was approved for Class 2 operations in the Australian military.²⁰ Class 2 categorisation allows for individuals to be accepted into the armed forces. However, unlike Class 1, they are unfit for active duty and instead are restricted on the grounds of health to employment in non-active service.²¹ On 24 January Bede was officially re-enlisted in the Australian Military Forces as he took the oath of enlistment for the second time.²² Bede was described as having dark hair and grey eyes with a "mole over left scapula".²³ At the time of his enlistment,



Grave of William Bede Hennessy at St Aloysius Catholic Cemetery at The Oaks (K Pearson)



The Oaks Public School Honor Board currently on display at the Wollondilly Heritage Centre at The Oaks (K Pearson)

he recorded his occupation as clerk, and perhaps due to this, was assigned to the District Accounts Office (DAO).²⁴ The DAO was responsible for the pay of servicemen and women.²⁵ On the same day as his assignment to the DAO Bede was promoted to Corporal and was again promoted to Sergeant on 22 April 1941.²⁶ During February 1942, Bede applied for and was issued the WWI medals he was entitled to. These were the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.²⁷ Bede was admitted to hospital on the 22 August 1942 for an accident resulting in “Left Eye Burns” and was discharged four days later.²⁸ Bede was appointed Staff Sergeant on 10 May 1943 which would be the final promotion of his military career.²⁹ At this time, he was living in Woollahra and the first report of him being unwell was on 10 January 1944 by the army medical doctor. The report stated that Bede was suffering from ulcers which were later diagnosed to be duodenal, or small intestinal ulcers and by 15

April 1944 a medical board changed Bede's classification for service to "medically unfit for service".³⁰ He was discharged on 17 April 1944 and subsequently sent to repatriation.³¹ After his discharge from the army, Bede relocated outside of Woollahra where he had spent his wartime service.³² After his discharge, Bede's records place him as a hotel employee up until the time of his death.³³ Bede appears to have returned to The Oaks to work in the family pub as his health declined while in the company of his sister Mary Therese Moore (nee Hennessy) who was the pub hotelkeeper.³⁴ Bede was rushed by ambulance to the Camden District Hospital where he was admitted and spent 4 days in the care of Doctors Crookston and Jefferis.³⁵ Despite the efforts of these doctors Bede Hennessy died on 12 July 1944 at the Camden District Hospital due to a perforation of his duodenal ulcers.³⁶ Bede left behind an estate of 825 pounds which included two properties in Mortlake and several packets of land in Yerranderie which he inherited from his father.³⁷ Bede died at 50 years old and left behind a lifetime of service to his country during the turmoil of the early twentieth century.

Bede's final resting place is within the St Aloysius Catholic Cemetery at The Oaks where he is buried alongside his parents.³⁸ Unfortunately, several issues plague his headstone as the inscription reads "William Bede Hennessy", an error also found on his death certificate.³⁹ The headstone also describes Bede as a corporal in the DTO when at the time of his discharge he was a sergeant in the DAO.⁴⁰ Bede maintains a presence in Camden and The Oaks to this day through several important local historical sights. Additionally, to the memorial erected in 1922, Bede was placed on the honour roll of the Camden RSL which is on display in the club's entrance. Also, within The Wollondilly Heritage Centre and Museum, Bede's name is inscribed on The Oaks Public School Honour Roll which is on display there. Through these locations, traces of Bede's life remain in the local area as a reminder of his lifetime of service to his country.

Kalebh Pearson is a history student who participated in a joint internship between the Camden Historical Society and Western Sydney University.

Notes

1. *Camden News*, 13 May 1920, Advertising, p.7.
2. *Camden News*, Thu 3 Jun 1920, Advertising, p.6.
3. *Camden News*, Thu 10 Jun, A Few Sidelights, p.2.
4. *Picton Post*, Wed 18 May 1921, Advertising, p.2.
5. *Camden News*, Thu 8 Dec 1921, Cricket, p.6.
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Letters To Camden From Gallipoli

Peter McCall

George Macarthur Onslow (1875-1931) was a prominent Camden resident whose career had three main elements- manager of the Camden Park Estate Pty Ltd, three times Mayor of Camden and officer in the militia and the Australian Army. At Camden Park House there a number of letters written by George to his wife Violet and daughter Fiona during World War One. These are from Egypt, Gallipoli, Palestine and Syria during his service with Australian Light Horse Regiments.



**George Macarthur Onslow
(Virtual War Memorial Australia)**

One letter refers to a cricket match held at Gallipoli on 17 December, 1915 during the evacuation of Anzac troops. The cricket match has a certain fame due to a photo taken by CEW Bean who was official correspondent with the AIF. Bean wrote this about the photo- “A game of cricket was played on Shell Green in an attempt to distract the Turks from the imminent departure of allied troops. Major General George Macarthur Onslow of the Light Horse in batting, is being caught out. Shells were passing overhead all the time the game was in progress.”[1]

There is a second photo of the cricket match. It is not clear who took it, but it was found in the images related to the service of Major Ray Stanley of the 5th Divisional Signal Company. The photo is inscribed “The day before we left, passing the time away. Col. Onslow batting.” [2]

The Stanley photo is dated 18 December 1915, but it appears to show the same cricket match, so the dating may be have been a later error.

There is no record of other cricket matches being played at Gallipoli [3] and apart from Shell Green there were not many patches of flat ground available. We don't know where the cricket kit came from- was it brought on a ship from Australia or made at Gallipoli? As far as can be seen from the photos the bat and stumps appear professionally made. There are only four rather than



The 2001 Australian Test Cricket Team at Shell Green copying some of the positions of the 1915 Shell Green cricket match as shown in the Bean photo. (<http://www.cricket.com.au>)

six stumps and they are playing with only one batter on the field. So maybe there was only one bat?

Already the descriptions of the two photos give reasons for the cricket match - Bean's "to distract the Turks" and Stanley's "passing the time away." George's letter supports Stanley's reason, but other sources (primary and secondary) support Bean's explanations.

One example of this is Brigadier General Granville Ryrle (George's superior) who wrote to his wife on 23 December 1915- "We had a game of cricket on Shell Green just to let them [the Turks] see we were quite unconcerned (as Jim would say) and when shells whistled by we pretended to field them." [4] In fact, there is no reason that both these reason couldn't have been valid. George's letter says, "A German aeroplane flew over our lines at 4.30 on Sunday afternoon, but he must have seen nothing unusual, but it added greatly to our anxiety; at the time a number of us were playing cricket on Shell Green (rather a weird thing to be doing under the circumstances),... - the cricket kept all the men who had nothing to do occupied." [5]

The evacuation was planned so that the enemy would have no knowledge of



Photo of cricket match at Shell Green with George Macarthur Onslow batting and being caught out. Taken by CEW Bean 17 Dec 1915. (AWM)

it until it was completed. CEW Bean stated that in the evacuation period, “almost every thought and action was tested by the rule of normality.” [6] George recorded that on the 18th December, “We kept everything normal in the way of sniping, bombing, the same number of men moving about...” [7] Les Carlyon supports this in his book on Gallipoli. “That day he [Bean] watched the light horsemen play cricket on Shell Green in another display of ‘normalcy.’” [8]

It appears that cricket matches were not “normal” on Gallipoli (George calls it a “weird thing”), but the above comments suggest that the match was seen as a way of fooling the Turks into thinking everything was normal. Peter Fitzsimons [9] suggests that the Turks would have found this spectacle strange and we can only guess what Turkish soldiers and Turkish and German officers (if present) would have made of it.

Most of the sources say that shells were firing overhead but there is no certainty that they were being aimed at the cricket match. George however, says that “the observer in the aeroplane must have seen us shortly after we got



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

P12584.006

Photo of cricket match at Shell Green dated 18 Dec 1915 (but probably 17 Dec). Possibly taken by CEW Bean, Located in images relating to the service of Lieutenant Col Ray Stanley DSO, 5th Divisional Signal Company (AWM)

shelled and [we] had to stop.”[10] Bean stated that “shells were passing overhead all the time the game was in progress”. According to Fitzsimons none of the players had to “retire hurt or worse.”[11] Shelling, or more intense shelling, was the reason for the end of the cricket match.

An unanswered question is who first suggested a cricket match. Macarthur-Onslow family history suggests it was George Macarthur Onslow, although only one source give any clues. Andrew Ramsey’s 2001 article about the visit of the Australian test team to Gallipoli states ” ... 40-year-old Major Macarthur-Onslow was the pivotal figure in organising a cricket match that has come to symbolise much of Australia's most eulogised military engagement.”[12]

Ramsey cites no evidence for this. It may have been a repetition of the family history.

The reason people ascribe George as being responsible for the match comes from his being batter at the time the photos were taken, but this may have been pure coincidence. George was the commander of the 7th Light Horse, although the sources only refer to “Light Horse” playing cricket. As the senior officer of the 7th Light Horse it makes some sense that he would have ordered/organised the match, but I cannot find any evidence to support this.

The cricket match was followed by other matches in Britain and after World War I. In 2001 the Australian cricket team visited Gallipoli and had a photo taken of them in the exact positions where the 1915 match was played at Shell Green.

Since 2011 a cricket match has been held in Brisbane every year on 25 April. The match is played between the Australian Defence Force and the Brookfield United Cricket Club and is named the Shell Green T20 Match “in honour of the daring and notorious Shell Green cricket match . . . , where members of the Australian Army participated in a cricket match as diversionary tactic to ensure the safe withdrawal of troops.” [13]

The Shell Green cricket match of 1915 has not been forgotten, and George Macarthur Onslow’s letter adds a little more information about it. It has become part of the Anzac legend.

Notes

[1] Australian War Memorial, GO 1289.

[2] AWM, P12584.006.

[3] Imperial War Museum <https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/205194029>.

[4] Ryrie, Granville to Mrs Granville Ryrie, 23 December 1915 AWM PR84/193 pp202-203).

[5] Macarthur Onslow G, Letter written to his wife Violet on 24 Dec 1915 from the SS Anchises p3. The letter is a carbon copy of the typed original. The copy is held at Camden Park House.

[6] Bean CEW, Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918, Vol II p884.

[7] Macarthur Onslow G, Ibid, p2.

[8] Carlyon, L, Gallipoli, (Sydney 2008) p521.

[9] Fitzsimons, P, Gallipoli, (North Sydney, 2014) p666.

[10] Macarthur Onslow G, Ibid, p3.

Nomination for a Blue Plaque for Camden Red Cross patriotic wartime sewing circles, 1914-1918, 1940-1946.

Ian Willis

What is a Blue Plaque?

The Blue Plaques program of the NSW Government aims to capture public interest and fascination in people, events and places that are important to the stories of NSW. The Blue Plaques program celebrates NSW heritage by recognising noteworthy people and events from our state's history. It is inspired by the famous London Blue Plaques program run by English Heritage which originally started in 1866, and similar programs around the world. (Heritage NSW)

What event is the Blue Plaque celebrating?

Camden Red Cross patriotic wartime sewing circles at the Camden School of Arts (later the Camden Town Hall now the Camden Library) – 1914-1918, 1940-1946.

What is the location of the Blue Plaque?

Camden School of Arts – later called the Camden Town Hall (1939-1945) and now the Camden Library. Installation of the plaque will take place in late 2022 and the plaque will be placed on the front of the current library building.

What is the story of the event?

The Camden Red Cross sewing circles were one of Camden women's most important voluntary patriotic activities during World War One and World War Two. The sewing circles started at the Camden School of Arts in 1914, and due to lack of space, moved to the Foresters' Hall in Argyle Street in 1918. At the outbreak of the Second World War, sewing circles reconvened in 1940 at the Camden Town Hall in John Street (the old School of Arts building – the same site as the First World War)

These sewing circles were workshops where Camden women volunteered and manufactured supplies for Australian military hospitals, field hospitals and casualty clearing stations. They were held weekly on Tuesdays, which was sale day in the Camden district.

Sewing circles were 'quasi-industrial production lines' where Camden women implemented their domestic skills to aid the war at home. Camden women



This image shows Camden's Sidman women volunteering for the Camden Red Cross in 1916 knitting, spinning and sewing. The women are: (L -R) Mrs Honor Sidman with her daughters Honor, Jessie, Mabel and Margaret. This type of image showing women knitting and spinning for the Red Cross war effort in Australia during World War One is rare. (CHS)

cut out, assembled, and sewed together hospital supplies, including flannel shirts, bed shirts, pyjamas, slippers, underpants, feather pillows, bed linen, handkerchiefs, and kit bags. The workshops were lent a number of sewing machines in both wars.

The sewing circles also coordinated knitting and spinning for bed socks, stump socks, mufflers, balaclava caps, mittens, cholera belts (body binders) and other items. The women also made 'hussifs' or sewing kits for the soldiers. During the First World War, the sewing circles attracted between 80-100 women each week. The list of items was strikingly consistent for hospital supplies for both wars, with the only significant addition during the Second World War being the knitted pullovers and cardigans.

The production output of the Camden women was prodigious. Between 1914 and 1918, women from the Camden Red Cross sewing circle made over 20,300 articles tallied to over 40,000 volunteer hours. Between 1940 and

1946, during World War Two, women made over 25,000 articles, totalling over 45,000 voluntary hours.

The operation of the sewing circles was fully funded through the fundraising of Camden Red Cross and community donations. In 1917 alone, over 95% of branch fundraising was dedicated to these activities.

In World War One, other Red Cross sewing circles in the Camden district were located at The Oaks, Camden Park, Theresa Park, and Middle Burragorang. During World War Two, other centres across the local area included Bringelly-Rossmore, Menangle, Narellan, and The Oaks. Each group independently funded its activities.

These patriotic voluntary activities by Camden women were part of the war at home and have received little recognition at a local, state or national level. Wartime sewing and knitting have been kept in the shadows for too long. There needs to be a public acknowledgement of the patriotic effort of these women.

Reference: Ian Willis, Ministering Angels, The Camden District Red Cross 1914-1945. Camden Historical Society, Camden, 2014.

Mystery of Girls' College Solved

Julie Wrigley

The Camden Museum recently received a copy of a previously unseen certificate which provoked some interesting mysteries. The 1891 certificate was from the Camden Agricultural and Horticultural Association Exhibition to 'Miss Sinclair, Camden College'. She had won Second Prize in 'Girl's Copy Book', and the certificate was signed 'W.R. Cowper'.

It was clear that the certificate was from the 1891 Camden Show, though its title is a mystery as the full name, 'the Camden Agricultural, Horticultural and Industrial Society', was adopted in October 1885 and in use from 1896 when the Camden Show started.

The owner of the certificate was able to solve the mystery of 'Miss Sinclair' by explaining about his grandmother Bertha, who won the award when she was eleven years old.

I do know that her parents came from northern Germany to Brisbane around 1880. After a short time in Brisbane they moved to Auckland where I believe Bertha was born. Their stay in NZ was short and they returned to Brisbane where they established a shoe manufacturing business. The family name was Behrens and for some reason they changed their name to Sinclair after settling in Australia. . .

In 1904 Bertha married my grandfather, [John McElligott] a first generation Australian and son of an Irishman from County Kerry Ireland. They had two sons and spent most of their married life in Drummoyne. Bertha passed away in Sydney in 1976 aged 96.

The signature 'W.R. Cowper' was not a mystery as he was the first honorary secretary treasurer of the Camden A H & I Society and acted in that role for 25 year. He was the manager of the Commercial Banking Company at Camden from 1885 until 1911, and was the first life member of the Show Society in recognition of his services.

As for 'Girl's Copy Book', the book by Neville Clissold, Camden Show 1886 – 2011, includes a schedule of prizes from 1886. There are sections for Needlework, Fancy Work, Lead Pencil Drawing, two prizes for "Copy Book by boy under 14 years" and two prizes for "Executed Copy Book by girl under 14 years attending any school in the electorate". Bertha must have copied out a set text in neat copperplate handwriting.



Camden Show Certificate 1891 (J Wrigley)

The last mystery was the line on the certificate, ‘Camden College’, as the historical society was not aware of a Girls’ College in Camden. The Grammar School for Boys founded in 1884 in ‘Macaria’ was known, but not a Camden private school for girls.

The wonderful *Trove* site came to the rescue. In the *Sydney Morning Herald* of 6 July 1888 the prospectus was posted:

Camden College, Camden (late Beresford School). Owing to the success which has attended this school - and for which the Principal, Miss Neville, thanks kind and appreciative friends - it has been arranged to take a second house (in which Miss Neville will receive resident pupils), and to adopt the title of Camden College. Professors from music, drawing, painting and dancing. The Principal (University Certificate) conducts or superintends all branches of study. Healthy district; home comforts. Interviews with parents 6th and 7th July, 3 to 5 p.m. at Loma House, Wynyard Square. Pupils reassemble July 16.

The question of where the Camden Girls’ College was situated was solved by the ‘*Sydney Mail and NSW Advertiser*’ on 13 April 1889, which was listing improvement to Camden’s main street.

Mr. Waterworth has greatly improved his property at the corner of Hill and Argyle Street, one half of which is occupied by Mrs. Huntley, who keeps a commodious boarding-house, the other being devoted to educational purposes – a seminary for young ladies, presided over by Miss Neville.

On 25 January 1890 in the ‘*Australian Town and Country Journal*’ it was announced,

Duties will be resumed at the [Camden] Ladies College on 29th January. Miss Neville, the Principal, has decided to open a school of music in connection with the college, for boys and girls. A system of examination, prizes, and scholarships will be adopted.

On 17 January 1891 the *Sydney Morning Herald* advertised:

Camden College, Camden, Principal, Miss Neville, formerly Governess to the daughters of Lord Plunket [Anglican] Archbishop of Dublin, and holder of a University Certificate. The aim of the school is threefold: to secure to pupils the advantages (1) of the Country – pretty, healthy locality, good food etc; (2) of the City – being only two hours from Sydney, the best masters can attend for accomplishments; and (3) of Home – the school is select, the number limited, and every measure taken for the health and happiness of the pu-

pils. References to Major-General Richardson, C.B. Dawes Battery; F. Rogers, Esq., Q.C. Burwood. Three Vacancies. Terms from 13 to 30 guineas per quarter, including extras. School re-opens January 27.

So the certificate has led to new knowledge about Camden College, Camden, which operated on the corner of Hill and Argyle Streets. It started in January 1888 as the Beresford School for Young Ladies, Camden. For six months it was operated by Mrs Janet Leacock (widow of Dr Leacock, Camden's Government Medical Officer, who died in December 1888) and Miss Kate Neville (holder of a University Certificate from Dublin). It was renamed in July 1888 the Camden College which was operated by Miss Neville, Principal, at least until 1891. The location was on the left facing up Hill Street (now a gym).

Camden Museum would welcome any further information, or copies of similar Certificates from the early days of the Camden Show.

Long gone: A story of development in Narellan

Anne McIntosh

When you stand on the front veranda of 'Rosedale', you look across a busy, four lane road and into the dark, gaping, concrete entrance to the shopping centre carpark. Above this 'hole' is a solid three storey wall, more than 150m in length, which occupies an entire block. A stream of cars approach uphill from the traffic lights on the Northern Road. Their left indicators flash and they disappear inside the dark entrance; other vehicles accelerate towards the junction with Camden Valley Way, where there are now traffic lights and a 4-lane concrete entrance to another carpark below the same shopping centre. Although quite close to the road, the old weatherboard workers cottage is barely noticeable, hidden within unremarkable shrubs and over-sighted by the two storey, brick motel beside it.

Two cottages on the Orielton estate

Like so many others from its time, 'Rosedale' was a two-room cottage with a central hall leading to the backdoor. The kitchen is at the back; it is an unusual set-up for a kitchen, with the sink and wash-up area to the left of the hallway, while the oven and food prep area is to the right, suggesting that changes had been made by one of the earlier owners. Perhaps the bathroom and/or kitchen were not always connected directly to the house. The living room, with its brick fireplace and 9ft pressed tin ceiling is on the right side of the hall (from the front door), and the main bedroom on the left. A second bedroom is at the back of the house.

The date of construction was estimated to be 1895. Rosedale was one of two cottages on the back corners of the Orielton estate, on land granted to Edward Lord in 1815. (He named this land, and another property in Tasmania, after the estate in Pembrokeshire, that his brother had unexpectedly inherited.) Orielton was probably never visited by Lord, and over two centuries, there have been a number of owners. Throughout, the land was used for grazing.

In the late 1800s, coursing, a free-range greyhound sport, brought visitors to Orielton. In 1944, the property was acquired by the Fairfax family who owned the neighbouring property, Harrington Park.

Casey's memories of Orielton are of a large homestead where the vet lived. He went there with his father looking at antiques. The two-storey mansion overlooked a creek and was run down. He was fascinated by the huge aviary at the house. The veterinary was run from the 'Orielton' property. Casey



**Rosedale, 9 The Northern Road in 2021 from Google Streetview.
(Screenshot)**

later visited Dr Jim Dellavedo when seeking care for his own animals, particularly for his birds.

The two Orielson cottages date from the 1890s, and some parts of ‘Rosedale’ would have been constructed at this time. It is probable that the kitchen and dunny were originally separate. At the back of the house on the kitchen wall, there are terracotta vents imprinted “Fowler”, in a style produced by that company between 1912 and the 1940s, suggesting when changes were made. The other cottage on the Orielson block was sold to George Blackmore who ran a general store with a bakery at the back. His business site on Camden Valley Way has been retained, encircled by the Narellan Shopping Centre. George Blackmore’s family home also survives on the opposite side of Camden Valley Way – the dark bricked house, ‘Ben Linden’, that later became a maternity hospital.

The steam tram that connected Camden to Campbelltown had passed on the downhill side of the cottage and Narellan station would have been about a block from Rosedale’s front door. When Casey moved to Narellan, all the track had been removed, however Tri-city trucks had a large block fronting

Camden Valley Way, and had preserved the concrete railway platform on their site.

Growing up in Narellan

Casey Long remembers his early childhood very fondly. His family lived on a five-acre block on the eastern side of Camden Valley Way, about a kilometre from the village of Narellan. There was room to run around, to keep chickens, a base from where he could explore the surrounding countryside. The Long's land was among a number of small farm blocks that were compulsorily acquired for the Smeaton Grange industrial district. He has always wondered why the government chose to acquire land from those small landholders, rather than from the much larger property on the opposite side of the main road!

His father Sid Long and mother, Gwen, had an antique business in Camden, near the corner of Argyle and Murray Streets. Their wares might be referred to as 'collectables', everything from old toys to cast ironwork. Sid would drop his sons off at Narellan Public School as he drove to work in Camden each day.

Before marrying and settling in the Macarthur district, Sid had been a cowboy on the country show circuit, riding bulls and broncs. When his son was born, he named him after one of the American rodeo legends, Casey Tibbs, who was also renowned as a movie star and sex symbol.

Thirty-five years ago, when Casey moved to 'Rosedale' in Narellan with his parents, the village was very different. It was a rural centre that had expanded around a coal loader and there had been an old steam tram that had passed near the house.

Even in the late 1970s, there were only four or five shops on Camden Valley Way between the primary school and the separate junctions with the North-



Streetview along The Northern Road in 2021 with Rosedale 9 The Northern Road on RHS of the image (I Willis).



The property Rosedale at 9 The Northern Road prepared for sale in 2021 with removal of the front hedge (I Willis).

ern Road and Narellan Road. Among those businesses, was the Shell garage where the staff pumped the petrol while you waited in the car or took a toilet break. There was a post office and the local shop was owned by Clutha. There were five or six fibro houses across the strip of bitumen from ‘Rosedale’. These also had links to Clutha.

Next door, a motel had been built by the owner of the neighbouring federation house, Ben Linden. There were six units for overnight stops. It was rented to Francesca and Angelina Scarcella, who were later able to purchase and develop the business. Beyond the businesses clustered around the town centre, were green fields.

‘Rosedale’ was set back from the road, behind well-kept hedges. The backyard was large with room for the car/truck, some storage sheds, aviaries for Casey’s birds, and the family’s pets. The front gate led to a verandah where you could sit quietly or chat to passing pedestrians as they walked up to the shops. The sunlight came in during much of the year, but it was well protected from the elements. Casey’s mother planted annual flowers. (Today the hedges are tall and ragged, groping towards the sunlight as the front of the house is permanently shaded by the enormous multistorey shopping centre. But they also block some of the street noise from the constant flow of traffic.)

After the family moved to ‘Rosedale’, the Long boys would walk to Narellan Public School. There was a significant green verge outside the front gate, but

no footpath, and the Northern Road was unkerbed bitumen.

Casey played football and had an affinity for the countryside and animals, particularly birds. He sometimes helped his father seeking out antiques, or carrying them into the yard at 'Rosedale' for storage. He fondly recalls helping out at shows, particularly in Camden on Australia Day. The Longs got to know the bullock driver who would perform at those events, a Dutch man named Joe, who came from down near Tahmoor or Picton.

Later, Casey was one of the earlier students at Elderslie High School, arriving soon after they had built up all the grades. He counted down the years until he could leave. Although you could get a job after you turned 15 years and 9 months, Casey hung on until 1990 when he had gained his School Certificate. There was work for those who were willing to work, and after working for others, Casey established his own business.

Moving on

He lived with his parents at 'Rosedale' until they passed away, leaving the property to him. Since the family had first moved to the site, he retained an antipathy for the development that came and went around them. Because of its position, over the years, there was speculation about the residential block increasingly surrounded by businesses.

But, his parents held onto their land after they retired. Casey would work, and continued caring for his birds and then his mother. Traffic outside the property increased; the road was widened and kerbed; it now passed only a short distance from their front verandah. You dodged trucks as you turned into or came out of the narrow driveway.

Due to its age, there was almost no scope to equip the house for modern life. There is no manhole in the high, pressed tin ceiling in the front rooms so they have not been insulated. Air circulates poorly through the rooms. The house is hot in summer and freezing cold in winter. Powerpoints are limited. Chopping wood for a large fireplace is hard work and burning wood is not sustainable, particularly as bushland is lost to suburbia.

After 35 years in residence, Casey has sold 'Rosedale' and will be moving to the country, where he can now afford to buy the acres he mourned when his much loved, childhood home disappeared beneath warehouses.

Old Days Old Ways

Memories of Dawn Gorrell (nee Richardson) (8 January 1934 – 15 March 2012)

Edited by Betty Yewen, Joy Riley, Beth Channell, Evan and Jan Lepherd

The following memories of Camden were given to Betty Yewen by Dawn Gorrell in 2007 for future publication.

Perhaps everyone loves the town where they grew up. However, I believe mine was very special.

Camden was quiet, well-ordered country village surrounded by farms. Camden Park Estate was very well known as an early wool producing property established by John and Elizabeth Macarthur.

The Governess's cart would deliver the three Macarthur-Onslow girls to school. The cart was a small square padded box with seats and a tiny opening door at the rear. We thought this would be a great way to travel as the cart was drawn by an adorable Shetland pony.

In 1934 when I was born there were few cars in Camden. The bread, milk and ice for the ice chest, were all delivered by horse and cart. The horses knew where to go and where to stop.

The milk came from two local dairies and was delivered by being poured into a billy can on our front veranda by the dairy farmers.

The street lights were gas along the main street and I remember watching them being changed to electricity.

The clock of St John's chimed



Dawn Gorrell (Image - Beth Channell)

every fifteen minutes until it was silenced during World War II so as not to identify our town to enemy spies.

Before the bells were stilled, chimes would peal out after a wedding, toll for a funeral and also before Sunday services to call the people to worship our Heavenly Father.

We could hear the distinctive gait of the very dedicated and expert bell-ringer walking up the hill in John Street past our home every Sunday morning.

This is long before the very clever prostheses which have expertly replaced lost limbs, were in use, therefore we could recognise Mr Prosser's gait by the sound of his wooden leg.

Soon we knew the church bells would chime delighting all. I doubt if he ever missed his post.

Many newly-weds would take the steam train, named 'Pansy' to Campbelltown as they set out on their honeymoon to Sydney. Few Camden young people had cars. The engine-driver would make the steam whistle 'Cock-a-doodle-doo'. All of Camden knew there was a special couple on Pansy.

The timber house we rented No. 64 was seven houses down the hill from St John's Church and three doors from our maternal grand-parents at No. 70 (Willmington). We had three bedrooms, a kitchen, a bathroom and a lounge room. We dined in the kitchen. Winter cooking was on a fuel stove which my mother painted black every morning before lighting.

Camden produced its own gas, so we had a gas stove with a cook top and oven. There was a built in gas heater in the fire place in the lounge room. Until we had an electric iron, the heavy black irons were heated on the stove.

When in the house, the front door was usually open and the back door never locked. Our meals were always delicious. We used coupons for meat, clothing and petrol as there were shortages of these goods and other items during the war. Man power was short as many people were serving in the war or at home in Australia producing such things as guns and ammunition.



64 John Street, Camden (Joy Riley)

The two town taxis had charcoal burners attached to the back which produced gas to run them.

My sister and I hurried to Macarthur Park after school on the days our parents were carrying out their 'Voluntary Plane Spotting Duties'. They telephoned details of the sighted plane, position, time, direction to a central control. I still love to hear the 'Flying Machine' overhead.

When Nanna went to Sydney to purchase ladies and children's wear for her shop, she would always bring us cute gifts.

Poppa grew very large and beautiful Sweet Peas and Dahlias. His veggie garden was great; potatoes, pumpkin and all.

After he retired from his sheep farm he worked in a grocery store in Camden. Rachel and Tom Eager's grandma was in the office and remembers Ashley's great-great grandfather with fondness.

My very clever and caring mother knitted all our woollies, even dresses for herself and us, sewed our dresses, blouses and skirts. Our hats were from nanna's shop. Hats were worn to Sunday school and Church. Gloves also as we grew older.

We had a cubby-house and a large back lawn where I had my Junior Farmers veggie garden. One year the carrots won first prize in the Junior Farmers competition. The lawn was mown by daddy using a push mower.

There was a large old weather-board shed which my dad used for his work. He built a swing for us.

The only time we spent in daylight hours in the house was during wet weather when there were colouring books, board games and other 'specials' for my sister and me.

On hot summer evenings we also played under the gum tree beside the front footpath. It had 'Bib and Bub' gum nuts.

The floors of the back veranda, bathroom, kitchen and hall were all covered in linoleum



70 John Street, Camden. (Joy Riley)

which my mother polished on her hands and knees.

The bath water was heated by a chip heater which went ‘Woof-Woof’!! when our dad fed too much paper into it. Mummy would chastise him for frightening the girls!!

As we did not have a piano I went up to Nanna’s to practice on hers. We had great times around the piano with Nanna playing and singing alto, daddy tenor and my sister and I loved to join in.

Some of my best memories

- Visits with my cousins and especially playing on the swing my dad made.
- The first day I took my precious little blondie sister to school.
- When peace was announced in 1945 going with our school to the church across the street to thank Our Heavenly Father.
- My father reading A. A. Milne before sleep every night. I loved ‘The Three Little Foxes who kept their handkerchiefs in cardboard boxes’.
- Helping daddy make a canoe for our great holidays beside Fairy Creek, Wollongong in a tent.
- Horace, our childhood dog. He was named after Camden’s Town Clerk, Horace Doust. A respected gentleman and family friend.
- Nanna and Poppa calling in when returning from work. Poppa’s chuckle was unique. When my sister and I were ill with chickenpox, he searched our room, even the fireplace and chimney, and declared it ‘Chicken-Free’ so we could return to school.
- I remember well responding to the practice air-raid siren at school and walking to the trenches our fathers had dug in the school grounds. We each had a little home-made first aid bag.
- During WW II when the town siren sounded twice in the night, we went to our own backyard shelter. Dad had dug deep into the ground, made a roof, and stocked it with rations. That was when the midget Japanese submarines found their way into Sydney Harbour in the early 1940’s.

I loved school. Indeed, I cried the day it was over.

In kindergarten we sang, did easy handcraft things and played games. There were no maths, writing or reading. We practiced doing up buttons and threading eyelets.

Yes we enjoyed sport, marching, learning exercise routines for special events

and demonstrating them for the school to learn. Once our muscles were so sore we walked the length of the school to bypass the stairs.

Basketball was my favourite sport and I enjoyed vigoro. I threw goal and was the school's high jump representative for State Athletics.

Each lunch time I walked home to a hot cooked meal then hurried back to basketball practice.

Junior Farmer's Club gave me my earliest interest in gardening.

Writing stories and spelling I loved, but maths and grammar were a pressure. Science was interesting until I had to remember chemical symbols.

All this, of course, was during WWII which meant there was a shortage of man power. The war commenced when I was in my first year of school and was over half way through 6th class.

My very special first class teacher married an airman based at Camden. How wonderful to see her in recent years at my school's Sesquicentenary Celebration in September 1999.

Our home, school, church, doctor, town hall, police station, Catholic Church and school were all in John Street. Later I worked for the dentist Mr David Noble in the doctor's house, Macaria, No. 37, and married in the Methodist Church all in the same street!!

Oh yes, I really loved school. However, I did not take the work very seriously. Our teachers were all totally dedicated and made our days so enjoyable.

The school choir was great. When we won the Bowral Choral Competition we were beyond joy. The whole school was thrilled. We were heroes!! We lauded our conductor, Miss Lois Doust and pianist Miss Jean McKenzie.

Sure the subjects were well presented and so very interesting. Reading, writing, science, maths, English, French, spelling bees (my favourite), sewing, art and architecture.

At this time I saw serious study only for dedicated pupils. My dedication was tested when I became a mature age student at forty three years of age.

My childhood and school days were certainly 'Old Days and Ways'.

They were shared with special people who, in the main, loved their town, their parents, their sibling, peers, and educators. Some even loved studying!!!

At school assembly we sang God Save the King.

A major percentage of the town, I would guess, attended their church. Many children went to Sunday school. The good news that Jesus died for the sin of

each person and rose again from the dead was heard and responded to by many.

My school had some Christian teachers.

How wonderful yours is a school which bears the name of the Messiah, God the Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Written for grandchildren Sarah, Elliott & Ashley

Presidents Report 2022

Ian Ramsay

Welcome to this our 2022 AGM when we look back over the past 9 months and what a year it has been.

We have experienced a resurgence of Covid and yet another round of flooding. We have seen devastation and a great loss of livelihoods but with that also comes the 'experts' who all too quickly express their views on the reasoning behind the floods, eg: climate change and any number of reasons that they think of and there is of course the old chestnut that Council is to blame.

I am not going to enter into a debate on any of these theories but I am going to enter into the debate as to what are we as the Historical Society doing about it.

There is one certainty and that is that all these floods add to and has a dramatic impact on the history of Camden.

This leads me to my point, there are an untold number of images out there in the community showing the floods that we have recently experienced and from my own experiences I have a large number of images.

In our research room we do have a folder dedicated to floods in Camden and I would like to see this folder increased dramatically with images to display the floods.

Murrandah Axe Heads

The biggest event of the year was the return of Murrandah's axe heads.

I would like to express our appreciation of the great work that our Life Members Julie and John Wrigley OAM liaising with the Murrandah Family and the South Australian Museum for the repatriation of these axe-heads.

A representative from the South Australian Museum accompanied these axe-heads from Adelaide to Camden Museum.

Following an official handover ceremony, the axe-heads are now housed in the First Nation's cabinet in the Museum for future generations to appreciate. A great deal of trust has been given to us by the descendants of Murrandah and we greatly appreciate this honour. A great gap has been bridged.

Grants

We have during the year been successful in gaining grants for the ongoing work within the Museum and I wish to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of our Treasurer Fletcher Joss and the Committee in gaining these grants.

Madras Mess Uniform

The Committee earlier this year approved the cost to have the Madras Mess Dress uniform professionally cleaned and the results have now ensured that life expectancy of this valuable uniform has now been extended.

Professor Graeme Clark

Negotiations are still progressing between the Society and Professor Graeme Clark and he is in the process of completing his story for our display.

Australia Day

For the third year Australia Day Parade was cancelled, but it was gratifying that we still managed to attract some 100's through our museum.

Publications

Two of the late Janice Johnson books were made available for sale at the museum. The first one is a revised edition of 'If Gravestones Could Talk' and the other is 'Camden Stories of Service in World War Two'.

Council Representation

The Society continues to actively engage with Council in regard to Development Applications as they become available. Submissions are also lodged to oppose these Development Applications where we believe that such proposals are negative to the integrity of the historical aspects of Camden.

Finally

I would like to thank the outgoing Committee and the Volunteers for their hard work and dedication to the benefit of the Society.

This year has been interesting and not without its difficulties and I thank members for their continued support over the past year.

