

# BLUE MOUNTAINS HISTORY JOURNAL

Blue Mountains Association of Cultural Heritage Organisations



Issue 6

December 2015

Cover Photo Ivanhoe Hotel, Blackheath. c.1903.

[A used postcard with this image is in the Blue Mountains Historical Society's collection, it is franked with the date "FE 29 1904". Hence the photograph is likely to have been taken in 1903 and the postcard was probably printed late in 1903 in readiness for the Christmas trade.

# Blue Mountains History Journal

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It contains refereed, and fully referenced, articles on the human history, and related subjects, of the Greater Blue Mountains and neighbouring areas. Anyone may submit an article which is intermediate in size between a Newsletter contribution and a book chapter.

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<http://www.bluemountainsheritage.com.au/journal.html>

(A publication of the BLUE MOUNTAINS ASSOCIATION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE ORGANISATIONS INCORPORATED)

ABN 53 994 839 952

**ISSUE No. 6**

**DECEMBER 2015**

**ISSN 1838-5036**

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## EDITORIAL

Issue 6 of **The Blue Mountains History Journal** contains five papers. One paper relates the story of part of the explorations of Robert Hoddle, and another deals with the history of Woodford Academy, a prominent and iconic building in the mid-Blue Mountains. Those are followed by a paper on the life of a prominent early resident of Blackheath. The final two papers deal with artefacts; one on a specific type of tourist postcards of the Blue Mountains and the other on horse troughs which are to be found all over New South Wales.

A frequent contributor to this Journal has been Andy Macqueen and for this issue he has written about the killing of aborigines at the time of Robert Hoddle’s 1823 expedition. He starts by presenting his interpretation of the exact route taken by Hoddle’s party from the Upper Blue Mountains to what are now called the Gardens of Stone, views gathered by walking that route with the relevant diary extracts in hand. But he also hints at the possible connection between the two events - the expedition and the killings.

The Woodford Academy building has had a long history which Ken Goodlet presents in a logical sequence that is easy to read; from a pub, to a School, to a private residence and now to a heritage building protected by the National Trust.

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Thomas Rodriguez was a late 19th and early 20th century resident of Blackheath who was extremely active in the development of the village. His somewhat complex life has been unravelled by Peter Rickwood and Joan Steele and the many turns and deviations in his life are fully referenced for the first time.

Few historians have researched the tourist memorabilia of the Blue Mountains of which postcards are a significant and low cost part. Erik Halbert and Ross Ellis have delved into the postcards that were purposely printed to mimic oil paintings and they have investigated the technology involved. I may have made it sound like a technical account but there is also an interesting story behind those commonly posted items.

John Low is another of our frequent contributors and for this issue he has commenced to write up the story behind horse troughs - artefacts for which he is well known to have a great passion. But the account has had to be presented in two parts so watch for the conclusion next year in Issue 7.

For the convenience of readers, at the end of this issue there is a cumulative list of the papers that were published in Issues 1 to 5.

Extracts from this publication may be reproduced provided that the source is fully acknowledged.

Dr Peter C. Rickwood,  
Editor



## ASSISTANT SURVEYOR ROBERT HODDLE'S 1823 EXCURSION IN THE GARDENS OF STONE – AND A DARK SECRET?

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### Abstract

In 1823 Assistant Surveyor Robert Hoddle (later Surveyor General of Victoria) was ordered, as his first substantial job in the Colony, to survey the route of the Blue Mountains crossing defined by Archibald Bell, and then to establish whether a road to the Hunter Valley could be found by heading northward from the Bell area. In pursuit of the latter task he became embroiled in the sandstone pagoda country in the headwaters of Bungleboori Creek, but finally turned back at Birds Rock on Sunnyside Ridge. His brief descriptions of the pagoda rocks and ravines are almost poetic and thus unique in the early literature of the area. However, it is possible that the expedition was marred by an unreported event involving the death of Aboriginal people.

**Key Words:** Hoddle, Gardens of Stone, Aborigines, shootings, Blue Mountains

### INTRODUCTION

In 1823 Archibald Bell junior, age nineteen, became the first known European to cross the Blue Mountains by an alternative route. It required two attempts, and both are described in his diary (Bell 1823). He took an unspecified number of Aboriginal guides at least on the first trip, though he did not name them. Many years later various correspondents, all born after the event, made unsourced claims about the guides' identities. As pointed out by Geoff Ford, such information must be regarded with much circumspection (Ford 2010, pp.96-99). Regardless of their identity, however, these people may have played a role in the subsequent expeditions by Robert Hoddle and Hamilton Hume, as we will see.

Bell's first trip started on 1 August 1823. On the fifth day out from Kurrajong he was confounded by the complexities of Mount Tomah, being unable to take his desired westerly course off the mountain. It was too steep for his horses, and in any case it would have been impossible as he was heading straight into the gorge of Mill Creek. He went home, blaming his guides for the failure, but immediately planned another attempt.

The second trip started on 1 September 1823. This time Bell was

“enabled to correct an error which the Natives had before led us into” (Bell 1823; see Else-Mitchell 1980, p.94).

He decisively took the correct course, which involved steering southward onto Tomah South in order to head Mill Creek. Perhaps he had a new guide (European or Aboriginal), or perhaps he still had his original guides and realised that he had not listened to them properly on the first occasion – in which case his attribution of blame was dishonest. This is not unlikely, an anonymous writer claimed that Bell was due “sole merit” for his “discovery” of the route (Anonymous 1823).

Having crossed Mount Tomah, and travelled around the steep northern slopes of Mount Bell, the party proceeded uneventfully along the range. They were aided by the fact that the country had recently burnt, and it is tempting to believe that they had set fire to it when retreating from the first attempt.

In the end they reached today's Bell, turned southwest along the Darling Causeway and descended to Hartley Vale via the ridge immediately south of Hartley Vale Road, also called Hartley Pass. From there they proceeded to meet Coxs Road.

The journey from Richmond had taken them just four days. A few weeks later the above anonymous writer announced that the route was superior to the established one (along Coxs Road) and advised that “a Gentleman from the Surveyor General's office” had gone to survey the route (Anonymous 1823).

[Note that while today's Bells Line of Road is assumed to continue past Bell and along the range to Lithgow, Archibald Bell himself did not cover that ground. The same applies to the so-called “Old Bells Line of Road”, which turns off the above at Clarence. Both roads have to do with the efforts of Hamilton Hume, whom we will meet shortly.]

The gentlemen sent to survey the route was Robert Hoddle, one of the three Assistant Surveyors working under Surveyor General John Oxley. Aged 29, he had arrived in the Colony in July 1823, and had been appointed to the position in September. This was

Hoddle's first substantial assignment. He was totally new to the Australian environment in general and the Blue Mountains terrain in particular, though unlike some other appointees he was no newcomer to surveying: he was trained as a surveyor and draftsman by the Royal Engineers and had eight years experience with them. Finding himself out of work and on half pay, he had left his sick wife Mary and their child Sarah behind in England while he sailed in search of a new job (Colville 2004, p.272).

Oxley's instructions to Hoddle were contained in a letter of 26 September 1823, while details of the undertaking may be found in Hoddle's field book, his report to Governor Goulburn and his subsequent map (Oxley 1823; Hoddle 1823a,b,c).

Hoddle started from the Bell family residence at Richmond on 6 October 1823. He took with him

“Mr Bell Junr, 5 Men, exclusive of 2 Black Natives, and 3 Horses”.

The “5 men” included his three convict assistants (one to look after the horses and two to assist with the surveying); the other two were also convicts, possibly assigned to Bell, or they may have been William Cox's men, temporarily assigned to Hoddle to mark the “road” (Hoddle 1823b; Oxley 1823). The two Aboriginal people were very likely Bell's own guides.

Hoddle had no difficulty running his survey along Bell's route. As a guide he had Bell, who had blazed the route, and the sandstone country before and after Mount Tomah had been burnt. (A few weeks later the botanist Allan Cunningham attempted to follow the same route to examine the plants. He ran into difficulties at Mount Tomah, which is another story, but he blamed in part “the surveying party” who had started the fire and thereby destroyed all feed for the horses. The blame seems misplaced given that, by Bell's account, the fire occurred prior to Bell's second attempt, and was possibly lit by Bell during his first attempt to facilitate that second attempt. Strangely however, Hoddle reported none of Cunningham's problem with cattle feed (Cunningham 1823; p.55 in Heward 1842)).

Hoddle and party reached Hartley Vale on 17 October 1823. They set up a base camp near the River Lett around 1.5 kilometres north-east of Collit's Inn. That day they had been joined by an additional two men who had caught up with them from Richmond. On 18 October the day was spent running a survey line along Coxs Road to the ford at Coxs River, while the 19<sup>th</sup>, being Sunday, was a day of rest.

### To the Gardens of Stone

On Monday 20 October 1823 Hoddle set off on a little-known four-day excursion to the north. Oxley's instructions had included the following:

“On returning by the same route from Cox's River, you will when on the range above the source of the Grose River proceed a few Miles to the Northward in order to observe the nature of the Country in that direction, that some opinion may be formed of the probability of finding a better Road to the Settlements on Hunter's River, than the one in present use.” (Oxley 1823).

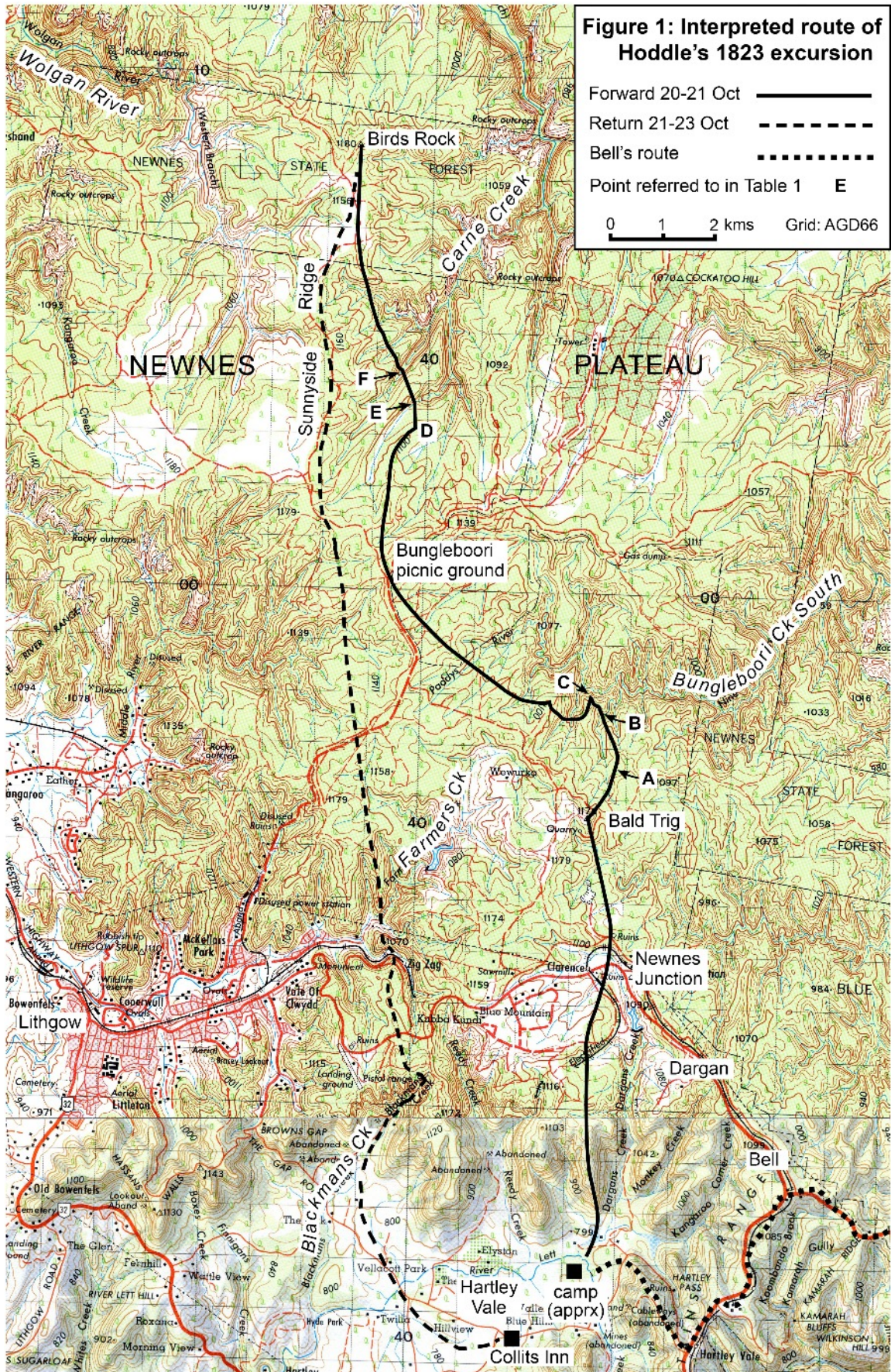
Taking this literally Hoddle would have headed directly north from Bell. No doubt he had already perceived that to be a pointless option, but had observed the high country of the Newnes Plateau beyond and realised that a course slightly to the west held more promise. It was a doomed endeavour nevertheless. Oxley's “road ... in present use” was Howe's Track, being more or less today's Putty Road (Macqueen 2004, p.129). It was certainly rough, but as we now know there was simply no possibility of a better route to the Hunter starting from the Newnes Plateau.

If Hoddle made any map or sketch of his northward excursion it has not survived. Furthermore, he made no detailed record of distances and bearings. What follows here is my interpretation of the route, based on the accounts in his field book and his report (Hoddle 1823a,b), combined with my own explorations. The interpreted route is shown on Figure 1, while the relevant parts of Hoddle's accounts are in Appendices A and B.

Hoddle wrote that he was accompanied by four men (Hoddle 1823b). They were probably his two survey assistants plus two others who might have been Cox's two men. One of his men would have been left to look after the horses at the camp. There is no mention of Archibald Bell: presumably he had gone home. In fact there is no certainty that Bell had accompanied Hoddle all the way to Hartley Vale.

Nor is there any mention of the two Aboriginal people who had started with Hoddle from Richmond, though they could well have been present. Hoddle didn't count them as “men” at the outset. This is not necessarily a reflection of his attitude towards them: the term “men” was commonly used for convict assistants and other non-Aboriginal people who were not of the gentlemen class. Moreover, for a variety of reasons Aboriginal companions were apparently not mentioned at all in some early accounts. Given what





we are to learn later, Hoddle might have had a specific reason in this case.

The party travelled on foot, apparently with no packhorses. The first stage of the route is quite clear. They left the camp in Hartley Vale (Figure 2) and

ascended the ridge which runs to the immediate west of Dargans Creek. Hoddle described the ascent as “mainly perpendicular for 600 or 700 feet height” and “extremely steep and dangerous”. Then they proceeded due north; traversed the headwater swamps of Dargans Creek; crossed the Blue Mountains Range



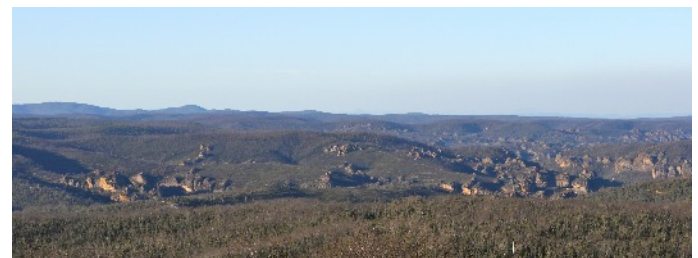
Point	Description	AGD 66 coordinates	GDA coordinates
A	"springs on the side run east to west"	56 H 243740 6296599	56 H 243844 6296790
B	"fine spring runs from west to east"	56 H 243477 6297699	56H 243581 6297889
C	Confronted by a "deep and perpendicular ravine"	56 H 243244 6298065	56H 243348 6298255
D	False range	56 H 239719 6303076	56 H 239823 6303266
E	First of "two fine Springs running Easterly with sufficient velocity to Turn a Number of Mills"	56 H 239706 6303579	56 H 239810 6303769
F	Second such spring	56 H 239465 6304247	56 H 239569 6304437

**Table 1.** Points along the interpreted route.



*Photo: Andy Macqueen 2015*

**Figure 2.** North-west view across Hartley Vale. Hoddle's camp was somewhere left of centre, and his northward excursion probably ascended the ridge to the right of centre. His return route emerged down the valley of Blackmans Creek, at far left.



*Photo: Andy Macqueen 2014*

**Figure 3.** View from Bald Trig.

At Panoramic Hill they had walked about 10 kilometres from their camp. Hoddle gave it 10 miles (16 km – even colonial surveyors over-estimated their distances when they did not actually measure them.)

just west of Newnes Junction; passed between today's Clarence Colliery and Hanson Sand Quarry; crossed the headwater swamps of the Wollangambe River, and ascended a "high barren hill".

Commenting on the "extensive view of the Ranges towards Hunter's River", Hoddle named the eminence Panoramic Hill. As concluded by a number of past researchers, including Alan Andrews (Andrews 1983, p.7), this was clearly the hill now surmounted by Bald Trig (Figure 3). A few years after Hoddle, Assistant Surveyor William Govett called it Barren Hill (Govett 1833): apparently he was less inspired by the view. Unfortunately the hill itself (as opposed to the trig) now has no name, a matter which should perhaps be attended to. The extensive view was not all that Hoddle commented on. He also remarked on the "plentiful" kangaroo, the lack of "coarse grass", and the stunted, fallen and burnt trees. He speculated as to the role of violent winds, lightning, and fire lit by Aborigines who frequented the area for hunting.

The day was not yet over. They dropped off Panoramic Hill in a north-easterly direction and continued walking northwards. A little while later they passed westerly-flowing springs, probably those in a small gully around Point A (see Table 1 and Figure 1). After "two miles" from Panoramic Hill they seem to have dropped into the unnamed creek or "fine spring" at Point B, where they "dined". Emerging from this gully onto the ridge on the other side they were immediately confronted by a precipitous ravine. At the bottom was the watercourse more recently named Bungleboori Creek. The creek and its tributaries are now well known to canyons.

Standing probably at the cliff edge at about Point C, Hoddle described the scene:

"a deep and perpendicular Ravine, running east and west. The appearance of the Rock was singular and romantic, and had the appearance of a Castle and Towns in ruins. The Stream at the bottom was very rapid and run from west to east." (Hoddle 1823b).

In his field book he wrote that he was

“much gratified with a geological description which had the appearance of an old ruin, which was in reality, stupendous masses of sandstone rock in various forms, under which were perpendicular masses of rock, through which run a stream of fine spring water.” (Hoddle 1823a).



*Photo: Andy Macqueen 2014*

**Figure 4.** Hoddle’s “towns in ruins” at Bungleboori Creek.

This is the first recorded instance of a European person appreciating the famous ‘pagoda’ and canyon formations which characterise much of the Gardens of Stone and Wollemi National Parks, and the Newnes, Ben Bullen and Wolgan State Forests. And it was the last for quite some time. Most of the explorers and surveyors who followed Hoddle – including Hamilton Hume and Robert Dixon – either made no comment about the formations, or described them with a jaundiced eye. For instance, William Govett considered the whole area to be

“one vast, wild, abrupt, deserted, barren country, intersected by impassable ravines and gullies even to the Colo and Capertee Rivers .... Some of the ridges are, in places, so actually bare, so completely deprived of earthly substance with which they might have been once covered, that nothing but the naked rock is seen, which no tempest has hitherto been able to destroy ... the ravines are much confined and deep. It will remain forever, as it is now, a desolate and uninhabited region, where even the animals indigenous to that part of the globe are seldom seen, where nature itself has been rendered defective, and useless both to man and beast, and where the observer would exclaim and feel, that He who made these mountains alone can declare their use.” (Govett 1977, p.4).

Hoddle might have been “gratified” by the view but the practical reality was that the ravine barred his way. He realised he would have to head the creek off by steering west, and commenced a “5 or 6 mile” sweep to the west, crossing various small Bungleboori tributaries.

Their first night out was apparently spent a little further on. It proved to be a “stirring” and “uncomfortable” one for Hoddle. That would be an understatement. It “lightened and thundered a strong wind with rain”, and they had no tent. Perhaps they sheltered in a cave, though there is no mention of such. When the next day dawned fine Hoddle pushed on without delay. Still endeavouring to head the waters of Bungleboori, he turned up on the Blue Mountains Range near Bungleboori picnic ground – at the junction of the so-called Old Bells Line of Road and Glowworm Tunnel Road – but soon afterwards, in his endeavour to proceed northwards, he found himself not on a range but a terminating spur, at around Point D.

Spotting the higher ground of Sunnyside Ridge to the north-west, Hoddle steered slightly westward and in doing so crossed the two headwater streams of Carne Creek. These both had “sufficient velocity to Turn a Number of Mills”. Likely crossing points are at Points E and F. On my own inspections the flow at these places has been small, but I have not followed a rainy night, and moreover the natural flow has probably been reduced by long-wall mining of the coal beneath.

Having finally climbed onto the flanks of Sunnyside Ridge, the party carried on northwards until, late in the day, they found themselves at a rocky high point which Hoddle named Pyramid Hill on account of its appearance from the south-west side. He described it as follows:

“[We] reached a Hill, distant 25 Miles Northward from Encampment. Near the summit was a Sandstone Rock in the form of a Pyramid, whose base was 70 feet wide, and 50 feet high, which I called Pyramid Hill. From its summit, have an extensive view of the different Ranges, leading to Hunters River.” (Hoddle 1823b).

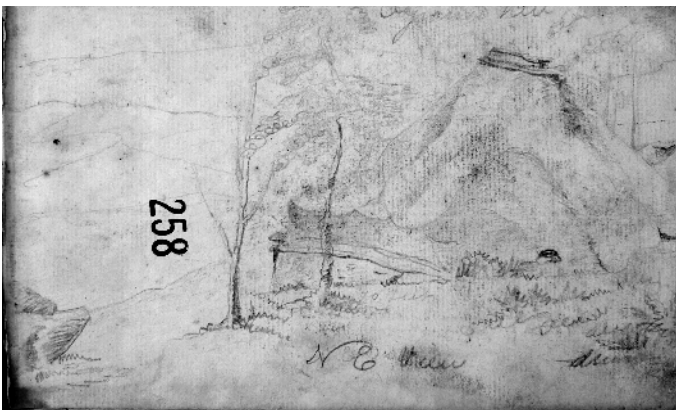
...

“I ascended a Hill which I named Pyramid Hill, on account of the resemblance of a Large Stone near the Summit of a high Hill which commanded a View of the Ranges of Hills heading to the Coal River. I have no doubt a Route might be found for Horses and Men to travel direct to Coal River.” (Hoddle 1823a).



These are rather shaky descriptions of Bird Rock, named after R.E.B. ‘Bert’ Bird (1891-1961) in the 1940s (Macqueen 2001). I once spent much energy looking far and wide for another candidate, without success. Thankfully however, Hoddle also sketched a “NE View” of it in his field book. At first glance this seems just as poor a representation of Bird Rock as does his description, but when I finally visited the place armed with a good copy of the sketch, I realised that while it is difficult to obtain a clear corresponding view due to intervening shrubbery, some of the detail provides a convincing match (Figures 5 and 6).

Hoddle recorded that the bearing from the Pyramid Hill to “Yengo Hill” was six degrees (Hoddle 1823a). This was absurd: Mount Yengo was not visible from there and, even if it were, the bearing would be much greater (Figure 7). Adjusting for the temporal shift in magnetic declination, his figure is in fact the bearing from Bird Rock to Mount Monundilla, which is visible. Given that he had taken bearings to Yengo from earlier spots along his journey from Richmond, and would have had many views to Monundilla, it was surely just a simple mistake on Hoddle’s part.



**Figure 5.** Hoddle’s sketch of his Pyramid Hill (Published with the permission of State Records NSW).



*Photo: Andy Macqueen 2014*

**Figure 6.** Matching photo of Bird Rock.



*Photo: Andy Macqueen 1999*

**Figure 7.** Northward view from Bird Rock.

From his vantage point he probably surmised that if he went any further he would be stopped by the Wolgan Valley, but he looked to his left and right and noticed what appeared to be northward-heading ranges and concluded

“I have no doubt a Route might be found for Horses and Men to travel direct to Coal [Hunter] River.” (Hoddle 1823a).

He was wrong of course: aside from the dissected nature of those ranges, there would be the matter of enormous gorges to cross.

Deciding to turn back, Hoddle estimated he was 25 miles (40 km) north of his camp near Collit’s Inn, having walked 30 miles (48 km) in two days. In fact he was 22 kilometres (14 miles) north, and had probably walked close to his 30 kilometres (19 miles – nevertheless no mean feat in unknown country with unexpected challenges.)

The party stopped for their second night soon after turning back. Again, it “thundered and light [*sic*]



excessively”, though this time he does not mention rain or discomfort.

Day three saw the party continuing generally southwards. This time Hoddle deliberately kept west, ostensibly to avoid the headwaters of the Bungleboori, but in doing so they became embroiled in several other “nearly perpendicular” ravines, some of which were “impossible to cross”. The route at this stage is less certain, but they probably crossed Farmers Creek (now Lithgow water supply) and Lithgow Valley Gully (now occupied by the railway). The third night seems to have been spent in the head of Blackmans Creek, where they had trouble finding water in the sandy bed. Their rations were probably almost exhausted, as it is clear they only provided for three days.

On the final day they appear to have continued down Blackmans Creek, before swinging south-east to cross the River Lett and connect with the Bathurst Road “about a mile from Collets” (Hoddle 1823a). It was time to head back to Sydney and get on with the next survey job, which Oxley had already spelt out.

Hoddle summed up his findings rather bleakly, making no reference to the scenery which had “much gratified” him:

“The Soil was Sand and barren the whole distance, excepting for two or three Miles, in the Ravines towards Cox’s River. The trees were crooked, small and useless, and the lightening had shivered them in every direction. I do not doubt could have reached Hunters River, but cattle could find nothing to support existence. A range to the West of Cox’s River seemed to run in that direction.” (Hoddle 1823b).

His “range to the west” was probably the ridge on the west side of the Wolgan, which is decorated with some of the best rock formations of the Gardens of Stone. It certainly provides no route to the Hunter.

### **A dark secret?**

At face value Hoddle’s expedition to the northward achieved nothing, other than some short enduring remarks about the landscape. It was soon forgotten, and in any case the little he recorded would have been useless to those who followed in the area, such as Hamilton Hume and surveyors Wilford, Dixon and Govett. Perhaps it’s regrettable that it took place at all, for there may have been a tragic event that Hoddle never revealed.

Four years after Hoddle, Hamilton Hume was in the area searching for an alternative route to Bathurst.

This was in response to a public notice, issued by the Colonial Secretary, offering a reward to anyone who could identify a route to Bathurst which avoided Mounts York and Blaxland (McLeay 1827). Hume was Australia’s first native-born white explorer, had a proven track record, and was at home in the bush and with Aboriginal people. He became a friend of Surveyor General Mitchell, and it has been suggested that he was responsible for Mitchell’s view that Aboriginal names should be adopted (Webster 1982, p.98).

In October 1827 Hume set off from Mount Victoria with his brother Rawdon, four convicts and two Aboriginal guides. After a false start they found their way to Bell, following what we now know as the Darling Causeway, though Hume applied that name to the entirety of his journey. They then continued past Dargan and eventually found three routes to the west – one into the Lithgow Valley, and two descending to the headwaters of the Coxs River north of Lidsdale (Andrews 1983, p.8).

The details of Hume’s expedition need not be repeated here. However, it is of particular interest that in a margin-note to his journal entry for 9 October 1827, he wrote the following:

“[W]e came in sight of a number of natives fires, on the mountain, in the direction that we were going. This so intimidated the Natives that were with us, we could not prevail upon them to go any farther; they therefore left us, and returned direct to Richmond. The cause of their being afraid to proceed with us, was I believe, in consequence of one of them, some years ago, having attended a Party as a Guide, when a number of the Natives were shot.” (Hume 1827).

At the time the party was somewhere near Dargan. The Aboriginal guides, who were apparently from Richmond, were clearly afraid of reprisal arising from a past serious shooting incident. One of them had been a guide to the party involved. The location of the incident could have been anywhere in the region, but the suddenness and severity of the guides’ reaction at this point suggests it occurred in the area they were approaching – perhaps at Newnes Junction, Bald Trig or the Newnes Plateau beyond.

I can find no evidence of any prior expedition in the area, let alone one which would have engaged a guide from Richmond, other than Hoddle’s expedition. It therefore seems likely that the shootings referred to occurred during that expedition. There is no hint of an incident in Hoddle’s report or field book, which of

course proves nothing. Nor is there any hint in his personal diary which, with regard to his whole expedition, contains only a transcript of his report to Governor Goulburn (Hoddle 1822-1827). In contrast, his later field books are full of concerns about encounters with bushrangers and Aboriginal people. In an 1825 field book Hoddle would refer to Aborigines as “savages” and “troublesome”. While he understood that “the whites are frequently the aggressors” and had destroyed their subsistence, and that his surveying contributed to the white occupation of traditional lands, he stated that

“... nothing can justify the means they take of retaliation: by indiscriminately murdering, by craft, the first person they meet.” (Hoddle 1825; Colville 2004, p.77).

But, years later, at the site of fledgling Melbourne, he mentioned in a private letter:

“The blacks are not to be trusted. I do not allow any of them about my tents. If they come after dark, they must expect some leaden pills. I think I must have been crazy to have brought my single-barrelled gun in lieu of a double one.” (Hoddle 1837).

At face value then, it appears that Hoddle had a less tolerant attitude towards the indigenous people than some of his surveying and exploring contemporaries. Such an attitude may not have served well when combined with his broader character. He has been described as aloof, formidable, terse, judgemental, short-tempered, quarrelsome and reclusive (Wright 1989, p.26). Add to that the facts that when Hoddle set forth into the mountains in 1823 he had freshly arrived in the colony, and after Bell went home he only had convict assistants for white companions. It was his first experience of remote country where Aboriginal people were probably still living a traditional life. We can be sure he lacked sound and sympathetic strategies for managing any encounter. He may also have lacked strategies for managing his convict assistants, who could well have been nervous and trigger-happy.

If something regrettable occurred during Hoddle’s northward walk, it might explain why his return journey, in taking a more westerly course ostensibly to avoid the Bungleboori headwaters, seems to have

tracked further west than was called for, and for a longer duration that he had prepared for. Was he trying to avoid a second encounter?

We can only speculate as to what unrecorded event might have taken place during that 1823 excursion. However, I suggest that if there was an incident and if it had arisen as a regrettable outcome of some sort of dispute – or even an unprovoked attack by some of his convict assistants – then Hoddle would have reported it. The fact that he didn’t might suggest that he himself was implicated in a more sinister and shameful event, such as an unprovoked massacre; an event which so horrified his Aboriginal companions that they fled the scene and, like the event itself, never came to figure in Hoddle’s accounts.

But we cannot know!

If Hoddle ever delivered any “leaden pills” during that northward excursion – or anywhere else – he was certainly never brought to account for it. On the contrary, his career eventually blossomed. In 1837 he was sent to Port Phillip to take charge of the three surveyors surveying the proposed site of Melbourne. One of them was my ancestor Frederick D’Arcy, with whom Hoddle had a prolonged and unpleasant dispute. As I have argued in my biography of D’Arcy, Hoddle was not blameless: both men had their faults (Macqueen 2010, p.128). Hoddle himself was almost dismissed in 1838 (Cannon & Macfarlane 1988, p.89).

Nevertheless, 1851 saw Robert Hoddle appointed the first Surveyor General of Victoria: far removed from that first job in New South Wales.

### Conclusion

It is almost certain that some time prior to October 1827 there was an incident involving the killing of Aboriginal people somewhere around Newnes Junction or the Newnes Plateau. The only known possible perpetrators are Robert Hoddle and his assistants, in 1823. Hoddle’s character and circumstances are not inconsistent with his possible implication. However we must be careful not to blacken the name of a competent surveyor based on limited evidence: the possibility remains that others, also with Aboriginal guides from Richmond, were in the area.

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## APPENDIX A

**Extract from Hoddle's field book describing his excursion north from Hartley Vale (Hoddle 1823a).**  
(Published with the permission of State Records NSW)

Monday October 20<sup>th</sup> – from our camp near Collets took a Northerly direction for [about] 1/3 mile and ascended a Mount about 1,000 feet high mainly perpendicular for 600 or 700 feet height. Separated from another Ridge by a Ravine in which the water descended rapidly in a stream. For two miles excellent run for Cattle in the Ravine. At above 3 Miles in the Ridge running North crossed a Swamp and ascended another Hill after which crossed two or three more and ascended hills running in an easterly direction and connected by Necks. At the distance 10 Miles we ascended a high barren Hill from which we had a very extensive Panoramic View, and could plainly perceive Yengo Hill 26 Mile distant from Coal River The Range of Hills seemed to run East and West connected by Necks by which we passed towards. The Country very barren and sandy in many places abound with Sandstone Rock, and but little coarse Grass. The Timber very small in general and bore evidence marks of the violence of the wind. There winds [*sic*] many Trees that had recently been blown down and many had been burnt by Fire, I should suppose either by lightening or the Natives who had been visiting them for the sake of the Kangaroo which were plentiful. At 11 Miles Springs on the side runs from East to West. At 12 Miles – fine Spring runs from West to East where we dined. At 13 Miles was much gratified with a geological description which had the appearance of an old ruin, which was in reality, stupendous masses of sandstone rock in various forms, under which were perpendicular masses of rock, through which run a stream of fine spring water. The ravine was so steep as to prevent me crossing and obliged me to pursue my course for 3 miles to the west to head the ravine on Tuesday — but found the Range had taken a southern course, and the ravine ran into several branches into the Grand Ravine had not been able to cross. The Country was extremely barren with little coarse grass and coarse sand soil and sandstone rock the soil was composed of. The Trees were small growth but thickly wooded. This Night was very stirring. It lightened and thundered a strong wind with rain. Having no Tent I passed a very uncomfortable Night. I had nearly despaired of finding a Passage but accidentally found a Neck which nearly connected the opposite Range. At [?70] miles distance I found within a Mile of each other two fine Springs running Easterly with sufficient velocity to Turn a Number of Mills.

I ascended a Hill which I named Pyramid Hill, on account of the resemblance of a Large Stone near the Summit of a high Hill which commanded a View of the Ranges of Hills heading to the Coal River. I have no doubt a Route might be found for Horses and Men to travel direct to Coal River. We recognised again Yengo Hill bearing N<sup>o</sup>6 nearby. Several ranges arise west and east and afterwards run north and south which once had deterred me from proceeding further. I reached the distance of about 25 miles directly North from my Encampment near Collets Inn and travelled 30 miles on account of the perpendicular Ravine I before mentioned. Returning back I diverted my course westerly 10 miles and found the Country Level and left the Ravine on the Eastern side. I encamped and found plenty of water. It thundered and light excessively.

Wednesday. I directed my Course E but was frequently obliged to alter my direction as the Ravines were nearly perpendicular, and it was impossible to cross them, although we climbed several. Finding we should be unable to get home that night encamped in a Ravine, where there was a difficulty to find water as the river was porous.

Thursday we found ourselves in a Valley abounding with coarse Grass for Cattle, and swampy in places, which led to the Bathurst Road about a mile from Collets.

The whole way we travelled never met with good soil, or grass, and with few exceptions the Timber very small of growth. The soil universally sandy and the tops of the hills sandstone rock elevated considerably above the general levels.

**APPENDIX B**

**Extract from Hoddle's report to Governor Goulburn, concerning his excursion north from Hartley Vale (Hoddle 1823b)**

(Published with the permission of State Records NSW)

On Monday 20<sup>th</sup> [October]. I left Encampment marked and proceeded on foot, accompanied by 4 Men, on a Northerly Course. After ascending the Mountain which was extremely steep and dangerous, travelled 10 Miles, and crossed several Swamps, until we ascended a Hill I named Panoramic Hill, from which you have an extensive view of the Ranges towards Hunter's River. From the latter Hill had no difficulty to obstruct us, until we came (13 miles distance) to a deep and perpendicular Ravine, running east and west.

The appearance of the Rock was singular and romantic, and had the appearance of a Castle and Towns in ruins. The Stream at the bottom was very rapid and run from west to east. We found it impossible to cross, and was obliged to keep a westerly course for 5 or 6 miles before we could cross it, and then had some difficulty to accomplish, as we found a number of Ravines from the Southward, falling into the one which first checked our progress.

After crossing several Swamps, which connected a number of small Ranges, reached a Hill, distant 25 Miles Northward from Encampment. Near the summit was a Sandstone Rock in the form of a Pyramid, whose base was 70 feet wide, and 50 feet high, which I called Pyramid Hill. From its summit, have an extensive view of the different Ranges, leading to Hunters River. Before reaching this Hill passed two rapid Streams, running west to east, with sufficient velocity to turn two or three Mills. On returning back, kept more to the west to avoid several Ravines, which I headed, but finding should be too far from home, without Provision, crossed several Ravines, which I might have avoided by going further west. I returned back the 4th day to my Encampment near Collet's Inn.

The Soil was Sand and barren the whole distance, excepting for two or three Miles, in the Ravines towards Cox's River. The trees were crooked, small and useless, and the lightening had shivered them in every direction. I do not doubt could have reached Hunters River, but cattle could find nothing to support existence. A range to the West of Cox's River seemed to run in that direction.





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### **Abstract**

The Woodford Academy, a National Trust property, is the oldest surviving complex of colonial buildings in the Blue Mountains. Built originally as an inn in the 1830s, the building was expanded and adapted to changing lifestyle and building fashions. After life as an inn, the building became a gentleman's residence, a guest house, a boarding house and then, from 1907 to 1936, a private school called Woodford Academy, run by rector John McManamey. McManamey's daughters remained in the building after his death, ensuring its survival until 1979, when Gertrude McManamey gave the property to the National Trust of Australia (NSW). It is now a museum that offers a rare and multi-faceted window on the heritage of the Blue Mountains and its highway.

**Key Words:** Woodford Academy, *The Woodman*, *Buss's Inn*, Blue Mountains

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **The site before the Academy was built**

Human occupation of the Blue Mountains goes back at least 22,000 years and the traditional custodians are the Dharug and the Gundungurra. On the northern side of the Academy, in what is now a local council reserve, there is a ten-metre-long deeply engraved groove in the sandstone slab, believed to indicate ancient Aboriginal occupation and to represent a 'connection line' between one place and another.

[Archaeologist Dr Eugene Stockton and Wayne Brennan, the Senior Team Leader Heritage, NSW Office of Environment & Heritage, studied this site in 2004 and came to the conclusion that this line is of Aboriginal origin. In December 2014 Brennan confirmed to the author that this groove in the Blue Mountains City Council Reserve was a connection line, but to what and from what is unknown. In May 2015, Brennan did a thorough survey of the site. Dharug elders Auntie Carol Cooper and Auntie Jacinta Tobin believe that a spring in the centre north of the reserve was a preparation site for birthing at Gloria Park further west in Hazelbrook.]

The 1813 route of the explorers Blaxland, Wentworth and Lawson and the 1814 road built by William Cox's convicts passed by the Academy site, bringing Europeans whose desperate search for pasture had a destructive impact on the traditional way of life of the

Dharug and Gundungurra people, and on the Wiradjuri, the custodians of the western plains. Finds of bottles and coins on the site suggest the site, which contained water and native grasses, was used as a camping ground by European people as early as the 1820s.

[Peter Staton, Hazelbrook antiques dealer, was given permission by Gertrude McManamey to explore the site for remains in 1979 prior to the takeover of the property by the National Trust. An encrusted and unidentifiable coin in the State Library of NSW that was found on the site in 1934 has been labelled by the Library as an 'early 1815 penny', and may be a holey dollar, in which case it predates the withdrawal of holey dollars from circulation in 1829.]

#### **Days of isolation and desperation**

There was no settlement in the mid mountains up to the early 1830s apart from huts for the work gangs of convicts on the Linden and Woodford bends and the 1831 illegal sly grog shop established at Woodford, then known as 20 Mile Hollow, run by William and Mary James (William James relocated there from Campbelltown to escape charges of cattle stealing) (Johnston 1979, p.3). In that year Governor Darling granted former convict Thomas Pembroke two acres (0.81 ha) of well-watered, well-grassed flat land to establish an inn to the east of, but overlapping, James' squat, the site of the present Academy (Goodlet 2006, p.21). A condition of Pembroke's acquisition was that he would be assisted by his father-in-law, Pierce Collits of Collits' Inn at Hartley, to build 'a respectable inn'. The Pembroke grant came through in November and Thomas recorded that at the end of 1831, with the help of his father-in-law, he was building

"a respectable inn...having stone masons, carpenters, splitters and fencers employed" (Pembroke 1831).

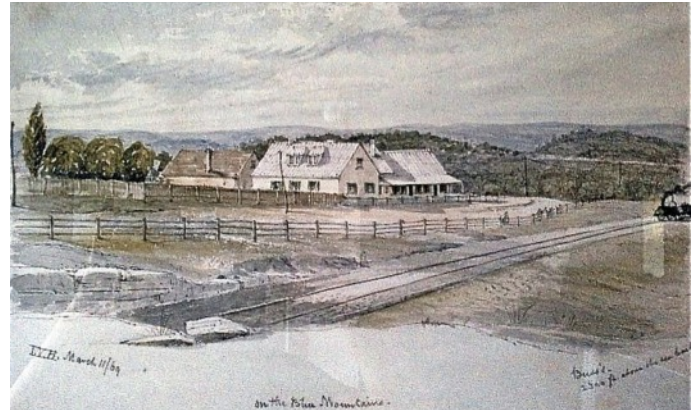
But all was not well. In November 1832, Pembroke petitioned the governor to remove William James from his property on the grounds of his selling spirits without a licence and the unsavoury characters staying with James whom Pembroke claimed posed a threat to his wife and six children. After constant appeals, on the grounds that his land was just a 'Rock' that could produce nothing, in September 1834 Pembroke

was granted a liquor licence. What was life like for James' wife Mary and Pembroke's wife Frances (Fanny)? In an age when women were often the grey invisible figures in the background, events catapulted these two into the limelight and gave some insight into life on this lonely stretch.

By 1834 Pembroke had constructed *The Woodman* (Internal Revenue 1834) and Lucas (1984) considered it was fully operational by 1835. This appears to be the modified eastern wing of the main building of the present day Woodford Academy, which has five bays and a typical pattern of rooms for the period, consisting of two large rooms with three smaller ones on the north, with a detached kitchen. In addition, there were weatherboard rooms on the corners of the building as sketched by Sir Oswald Brierly. The first sketch we have of the five-bay east wing of the building is one made in 1842 (Figure 1), the year Hogan received Certificate of Title to the property.

[On the basis of the roofline and what appear to be additional wooden rooms at either end, Clive Lucas argued that this is a different building from the present ESE section of Woodford Academy. Clive Lucas, 'Conservation and Analysis Guidelines of Woodford Academy', report commissioned by the National Trust 1984. It is, however, possible that the 1842 sketch shows the 1834 building with modified roofline and wooden extensions, especially as the building resembles Pierce Collits' earlier inn at Hartley Vale, and Pierce's involvement in the construction of the inn at Woodford. At some stage between 1842 and the 1869 painting of the Academy (Figure 2), the wooden bays beyond the five-opening central section were removed and new chimneys were inserted on the new east gable and at the junction with the western extension. It seems to me that the advertisement of 22 October 1838 (Pembroke 1838a), repeated in that newspaper in seven subsequent successive issues (Pembroke 1838b), that it is: "Recently built, containing nine Rooms, Verandah and entrances south and east..." includes the five original rooms and the four weatherboard corner rooms.]

In 1835, in recognition of this effort Governor Darling granted Pembroke an additional 48 acres (19.4 ha) of land north of the inn (which together comprise the 50 acres (20.2 ha) of Portion 1 (Figure 3), the more



Mitchell Library, Springwood Library [HS0\HS0554] and Woodford Academy archives

**Figure 2.** Sketch by L. Vine Hall, 'On the Blue Mountains 2,300 feet elevation, Mar 11 1869', showing what was still commonly called *Buss's Inn* (later *Woodford Academy*) and Buss's Platform (later Woodford Station) in the cutting at bottom left.

southerly and flat part of which was used for sheep yards and a productive garden (Searle 1980, pp.33-34). Until the mid-1840s *The Woodman* was a day's travel from the nearest inns at Valley Heights and Wentworth Falls. Today these distances are traversed in just 20 minutes by car, but in the nineteenth century they were a welcome sight for travellers undertaking the treacherous, bone-shattering day-long trek through what was considered a forbidding and dangerous landscape.

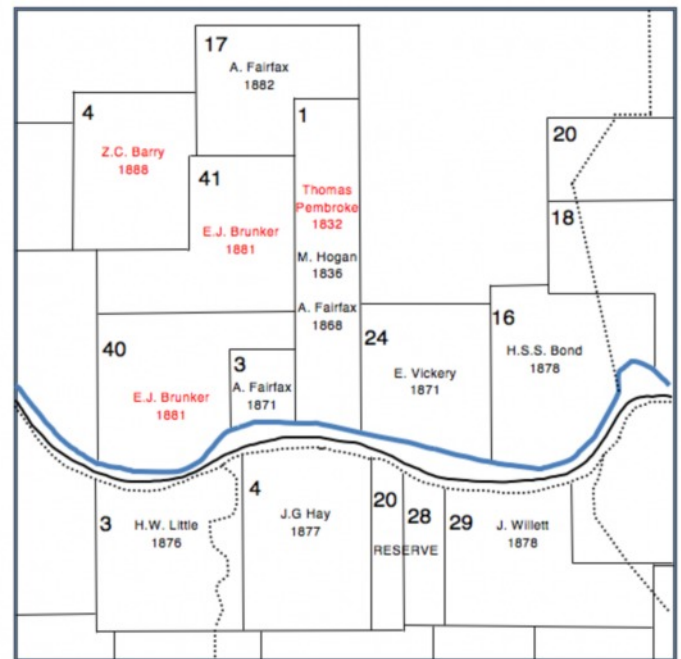


Mitchell Library [ML 142] & Woodford Academy archives.

**Figure 1.** Sketch entitled 'Inn at Twenty Mile Hollow', Oswald Brierly 1842.

The official name of the building was at first *The Woodman*, then *The King's Arms Inn* (or *Buss's Inn*), then *Woodford House* and finally *Woodford Academy*.

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**Figure 3.** Land holdings in Woodford; traced from the Maps of the Parish of Linden 3rd Edn. 1897 & Woodford 2nd Edn. 1897, County of Cook. [In red are the Land Grants; in black the land purchases.]

It was a hard and isolated life for the publicans. Mary James appears to have committed suicide (with a little help from her husband), saying she would be “better off in a better world”. William was tried for murder, though not ultimately convicted, and his children were for some time penniless waifs without anyone to care for them (Anonymous 1836, col.7).

Thomas Pembroke and his wife Frances also suffered. Thomas was gaoled in 1837 for theft and Frances appealed to the governor to release him as she was an “unfortunate and destitute wife” with a “young and helpless family of nine children”. In desperation she had sexual liaisons with coachmen in return for material support (Goodlet 2013). Pembroke was admitted to a mental asylum and Frances later remarried.

[Thomas Pembroke was admitted to a mental asylum at least four days before his death in June 1840. Another child was born to Frances and John in October 1840 and they were married in January 1841, seven months after Thomas Pembroke's death. This second marriage appears to have been much happier.]

In 1839, a new owner, Michael Hogan, agreed to purchase the heavily mortgaged former Pembroke 50-acre (19.5 hectare) property and inn for £450 (CoT 1924; 1937).

### **A reliable and at times prosperous inn**

Clive Lucas (1984) has written that Hogan was “a man of some financial standing” and his property appears to have been leased to a succession of publicans.

[Government liquor licences for the inn were issued to Josiah Workman in 1840, James Nairn in 1841-1845, William Barton in 1846, John Cobcroft in 1847, Joseph Cobcroft in 1848, Thomas James in 1853 & 1855, Anne James in 1854 and William Langford in 1856. Hogan appears to have left for the Californian goldfields during his period of ownership of the inn.]

The inn (Figure 1) was renamed *The King's Arms* by licensee Josiah Workman in 1840, perhaps because of a close connection with the road maintenance convicts and soldiers at 17 Mile Hollow (Linden) and 18 Mile Hollow (Bulls Camp), east of the inn (Lucas 1984, p.11; Searle 1977, p.21; Silvey 1982). The presence of convicts brought a measure of prosperity, particularly during James Nairn's time as publican. In 1907 three tombstones, dating from the early 1840s, were discovered on the Academy site and are at present housed in the Academy. They suggest a connection between the inn and the 50 non-commissioned soldiers, their families and the convicts.

[Some interpret the headstones as indicating the inn was a military barracks during the 1840s. There is no evidence to support such a claim, though Captain John Bull and his men and their families patronised the inn and might have lived there for some time. The headstones may not have originated on the

property; there was a cemetery at the military barracks at 18 Mile Hollow (Lavelle 1990).]

### **Woodford during the gold rushes**

The discovery of gold in the Bathurst district in May 1851 ended the isolation at 20 Mile Hollow. Thousands of people, from all walks of life, travelled along the Western Road from Sydney to Bathurst, keen to seek their fortune.

There is no evidence that Hogan carried out any construction on his Woodford property (Lucas 1984, p.11).

Most historians hedge their bets on who built the extensions by opting for the year 1855, when Hogan sold the property. At that time the inn tripled in size (Figure 4). The main stone building was extended on the western side and a suite of rooms was added on a first floor on the western end of the main building. These tiny, low, quaint rooms are rare surviving examples of mid-19<sup>th</sup> century building and have been little changed – one feels the history as one enters them.

[The position of the lockup in relation to the *King's Arms* is clearly shown on a railway survey map of 1863.]

A large two-storey building – the dairy – was added to the western side of the courtyard and a more substantial kitchen was added on the eastern side, incorporating or replacing the old one. There was a separate stable farther north of the kitchen. The exceptional and rare arched fireplace and stone sink appear to have been installed in the kitchen at this time. In 1855–1856, the police lockup and mounted patrol station was relocated from Wentworth Falls to 20 Mile Hollow, on a 10-acre (4 ha) site that impinged on the inn property on the western side (now Por.3).

William Buss purchased the inn in 1855 for £1040. A former convict, Buss was renowned as a colourful character, reportedly wearing a scarlet waistcoat to welcome guests at the front door. Although still licensed as *The King's Arms* the inn was popularly known as *Buss's Inn* (Figure 2) until his death in 1867 (Searle 1977, p.37; Goodlet 2006, p.22).

Buss prospered from the onslaught of hopeful gold diggers and hosted, as honoured guests, the soldiers tasked with escorting the gold safely back to Sydney. The fact that he attempted (unsuccessfully) to sell the property in 1863, the year of the railway survey, suggests he saw the writing on the wall for the future of his roadside inn (Mort & Co. 1863).



At this time the ground floor of the main building consisted of a large taproom, a ladies' parlour, and self-contained quarters for Buss, his wife and their six children. Additional accommodation for guests or employees was provided in the first floor attic. The taproom, or the bar, was the busiest room of the inn and still features a cartouche of painted grapes,

well as a coach-house. There were appropriate facilities for crops, orchard and stock.]

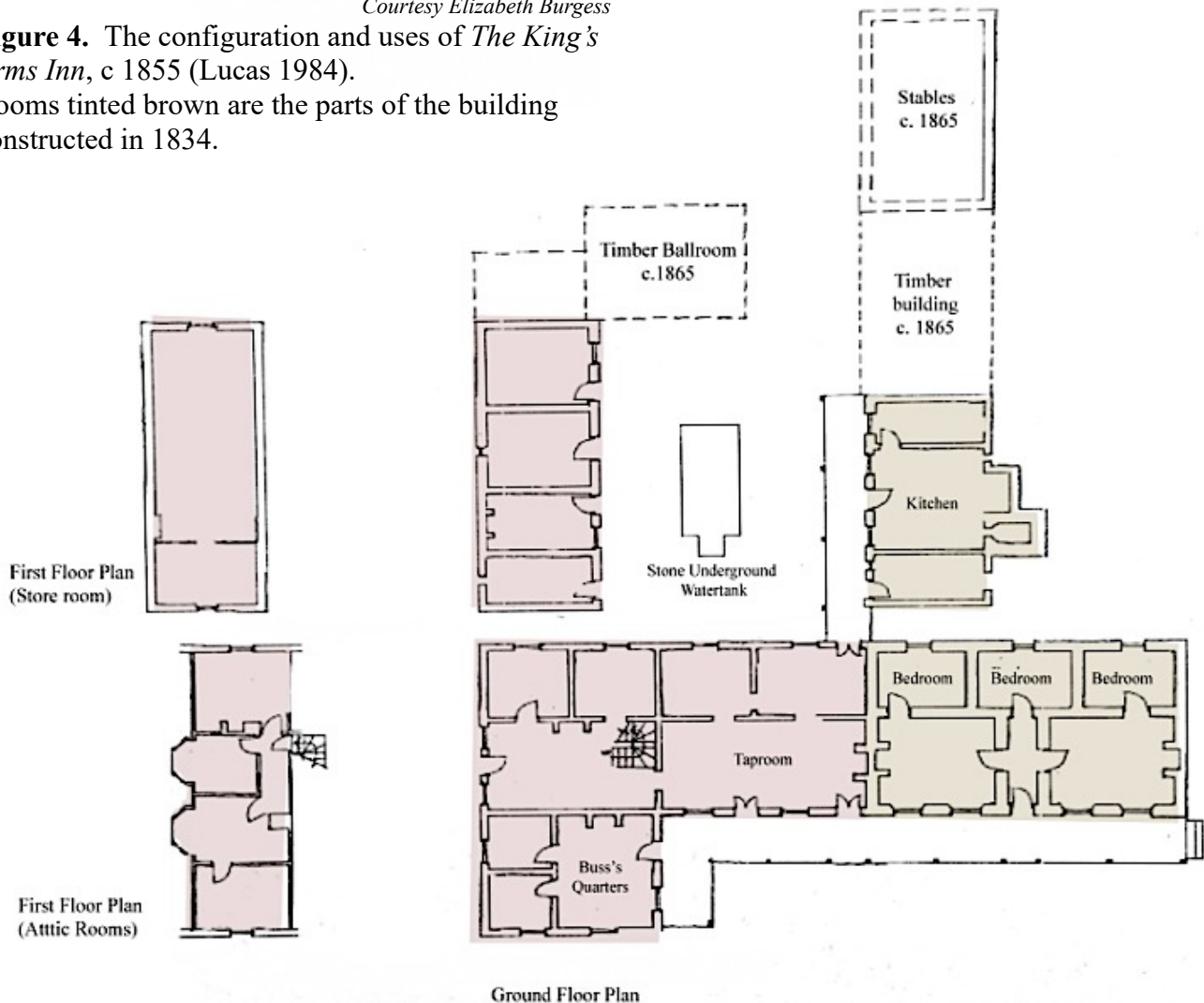
#### A gentleman's residence and guest house

In 1868 Sydney merchant Alfred Fairfax, a cousin of the newspaper proprietor John Fairfax, purchased the property for £450 as a country retreat, renaming it *Woodford House* and making it the first substantial

Courtesy Elizabeth Burgess

**Figure 4.** The configuration and uses of *The King's Arms Inn*, c 1855 (Lucas 1984).

Rooms tinted brown are the parts of the building constructed in 1834.



peaches and corn, representing the fruits that were fermented to make spirits. The dairy wing and the newly constructed wooden ballroom to the north closed off the courtyard (Wright 2014).

[There is a lucid account given in the contemporary press (Mort & Co. 1863a,b,c) of the property in a sale advertisement that states that the main stone building contained in 1863 a front verandah, entrance hall, large bar and bar parlour, dining room, three sitting rooms and twelve bedrooms. The buildings at the rear contained on one side a pantry, large kitchen and servants' rooms, and on the other side two stores, two bedrooms and a granary capable of holding 2,000 bushels of maize. Moreover, the advertisement of 1863 gives a proper description of the reservoir in the courtyard, supplied from the guttering of the inn, 20 feet long, 12 feet deep and 10 feet wide, a reservoir that is still in operation. In 1863 there was stabling for 40 horses as

private dwelling in the Blue Mountains. The construction of the main western railway from Penrith to Weatherboard (now Wentworth Falls) in 1867 might have influenced his decision to purchase the inn. By 1869 the property was serviced by a railway platform called 'Buss's Platform' located slightly west of the inn. The railway platform was renamed 'Woodford' in 1871. Fairfax expanded the property to a 90-acre (36 hectare) estate (Johnston, 1979, p.22). He bought Portion 17 with the house, a 40-acre (around 16 ha) block extending northwards to Mabel Falls and Portion 24, a block of the same size that included an orchard (Figure 3); in 1871, Fairfax purchased 10 acres (4 ha), (Portion 3) adjacent to his Portion 1 on the west side. The house was at first used as a retreat

for Fairfax and his friends, representing a significant change in perceptions of the Blue Mountains. No longer feared as a wild and threatening landscape, the mountains were now valued for their fresh, healthy, cool mountain air, and for their waterfalls and broad vistas. Land grants released in the early 1870s were taken up by a number of wealthy Sydney businessmen, who built substantial mountains retreats.

John Shiels was the first manager of *Woodford House* in the Fairfax era, having formerly managed *Regentville House* near Mulgoa. At an 1869 inquest into the fire that had destroyed *Regentville House*, Shiels stated he had a mountains property

“which I keep as an accommodation house” and had taken “the house so well known as Buss's, on the Western Road, which will in future be called Woodford” (Anonymous 1869, col.5).

From this point, Shiels disappears and there is no knowledge of another caretaker/manager until 1876.

### The Transit of Venus at Woodford

In 1874 Alfred Fairfax gained fame for hosting the participants in the observation of the Transit of Venus on the former police lockup land, immediately north-west of *Woodford House*. Woodford was chosen because of its clear steady atmosphere and proximity to the rail and electric telegraph, enabling connection to Sydney Observatory. Fairfax was an amateur astronomer who was willing to open up his property to the observers, and owned a 4.75 inch refracting telescope, considered one of the finest in his day (Goodlet 2006, p.29; Lomb 2004, pp.15-18).

### Refinancing and reconfiguration

From 1876 Alfred Fairfax was heavily indebted, owing largely to failing investments in mining ventures at Hill End. He transferred the management of *Woodford House* to his business associate and brother-in-law Hague-Smith (whose given name is disputed but most probably was Samuel (CoT 1882)) to run the inn as a paying concern. The property was listed for sale in 1876, mortgaged to the Australian Mutual Provident Society in 1877 and then in 1878 to C.H. Myles, who appears to have been a well-off fellow Congregationalist (Anonymous 1918).

[For prompt sale, Woodford House' notice. In May 1877 the property was mortgaged to the AMP and in October 1878 to Charles Henry Myles, whose will (Anonymous 1918) indicates that he had the means to assist Fairfax financially and the bequests suggest that Fairfax and Myles had common links with the Congregational church.]

The 1879 Railway Guide of NSW still recorded that

“Alfred Fairfax has a commodious residence and large gardens named Woodford.”

Around this time Hague-Smith constructed a second storey on the northern wing above the kitchen, and replaced a wooden dining room between the kitchen and the stables with the present substantial brick room.

In 1880, the main rooms of the Academy were organized into two sitting rooms with three smaller bedrooms, a drawing room with two smaller bedrooms and a large bedroom with a hall and linen room. The south-west wing had a large smoking room and two smaller bedrooms. On the western first floor were servants' quarters. The two-storey building west of the courtyard had a meat room, servants' dining hall, tool room and stores. The two-storey building east of the courtyard had a pantry, kitchen, cooks' pantry, the new large dining room, and two bedrooms on the ground floor, with new guest bedrooms and a sitting room on the first floor. The courtyard was enclosed on the north by the wooden ballroom c.1880 (Wright 2014). An 1889 etching in the *London Illustrated News* shows the large two-storey block (Figure 5).

In 1886, under the management of John Robert Place, *Woodford House* was promoted as having “superior accommodation”, providing a “change of air & mountain scenery” and having “a capital tennis court on the grounds” (Place 1886). In 1889, a Mrs. Farr had her publican's licence withdrawn because there was no liquor on the premises and in October *Woodford House* was under the management of Mrs.

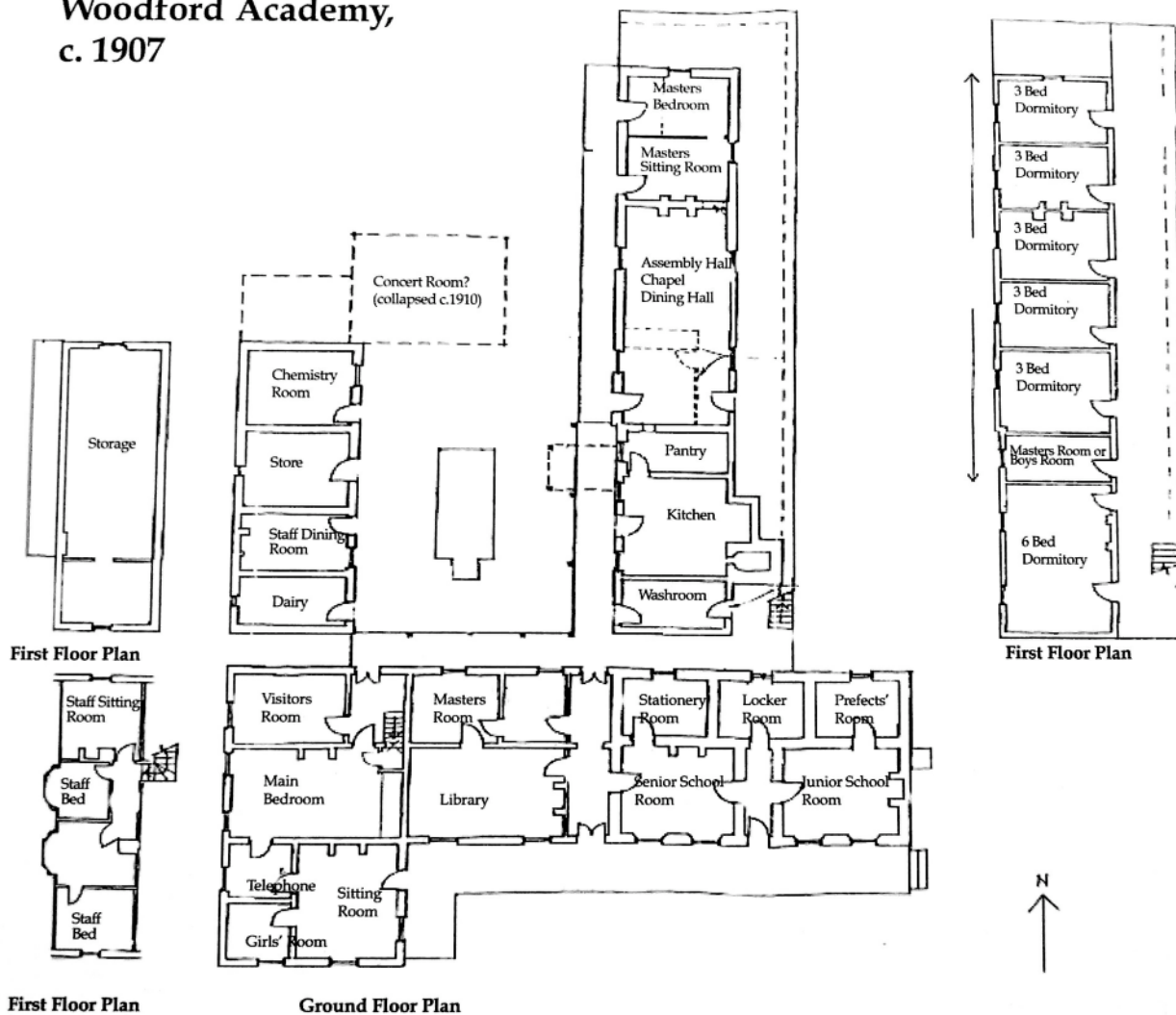


WOODFORD HOUSE, IN THE BLUE MOUNTAINS, NEAR SYDNEY.

Courtesy Chris Parr.

**Figure 5.** *Woodford House* 1889 - *London Illustrated News*, 6 February 1889, p.212.

## Woodford Academy, c. 1907



Courtesy Elizabeth Burgess

**Figure 6.** The configuration and uses of Woodford Academy, c 1907 (Lucas 1984).

Margaret Shiels, widow of John Shiels (Shiels 1889). In 1893-1894 the property was leased to Mrs. Shiels who had tenancy to 1 March 1896. For a year from 25 January 1896 Mrs. Shiels held a Colonial Wine Licence.

An 1890 *Woodford House* accommodation receipt book in the Academy files shows that accommodation at Woodford was expensive for the time – two weeks' board for one person for 30 December 1890 was £4/4/–, slightly more than the £4 per fortnight a waterside labourer received in that year (Ryan 1985). In 1895 the guest house had been mortgaged to the Hon. Sir William Manning and Charles George Shaw. [Sir William Patrick Manning (1845-1915) was a leading Sydney financier and politician, serving as Mayor of Sydney 1891-94, knighted in 1894, and director and chairman of Sydney insurance companies and banks (Ward, 1986, p.397). The name of the English Lord Rosebery crops up at this time as being related in some way to *Woodford House*. It is likely that, as Manning managed Rosebery's financial interests in Australia, he was financially involved in the Woodford venture. Manning kept a

suite of rooms at *Woodford House* which he used at times (pers. comm. Isobel Bowden to Colin Johnston on 25 January 1980; Isobel referred to the source as 'an elderly lady').]

The property (comprising Portion 1 of 50 acres (20.2 ha) and Portion 17 of 40 acres (16.2 ha)) was placed on the market in June 1897. It was sold to David Flannery and mortgaged back to Sir William Manning who retained his suite of rooms. Flannery continued to run it as a guest house, leasing it to a succession of tenants.

### Woodford Academy

In the early twentieth century, small private boarding schools proliferated in the formerly grand estates of the Blue Mountains. The appeal for those families wealthy enough to afford the fees was the fresh mountain air and bracing climate which were perceived as beneficial to both children's constitutions and academic performance.



In 1907 distinguished scholar John McManamey leased *Woodford House* (Figure 5) from Sir William Manning, establishing the 'Woodford Academy for Boys' and taking the title of Rector (Goodlet 2006, p.42). John McManamey had previously been Headmaster at Coerwull Academy at Lithgow and both Coerwull and Woodford Academy had close ties with the Presbyterian church and the University of Sydney, feeding their best students to the university. In its first year the school had 28 pupils, 15 of them boarders, ranging in age from 9 to 21, and quickly achieved academic success. In 1914, as World War I began, McManamey bought 12.5 acres (5.1 ha) from his neighbour Mary Jane Waterhouse, which he immediately mortgaged back to her and paid off over the next few years.

There was no structural expansion of the Academy in the McManamey period. The largest four rooms of the main building were, working east to west, two classrooms, and the McManamey library and main bedroom. The south-west section was a McManamey family area. Upstairs on the west were the staffrooms. In the dairy wing on the west of the courtyard, working north, there was the dairy itself, and staff dining, store and chemistry laboratory rooms, with further storage upstairs. Working north on the ground floor of the wing east of the courtyard were the kitchen/washroom, pantry, dining/assembly/chapel room and staff sitting room and bedroom, while upstairs were the student dormitories. The wooden ballroom, enclosing the courtyard on the north, blew down in 1910.

### **Woodford Academy schooldays 1907-1925 and 1929-1936**

Each morning, at 7.00 a.m., the boarders would come downstairs from their dormitories and run 1.5 kilometres north to Mabel Falls where they would swim before running back, a practice that also applied in the depths of winter, according to David McManamey, whose father Kenneth Austin McManamey enrolled in the Academy in 1921. They would then wash in the scullery/washroom where there was a long bench with holes to hold tin washbasins. They would dress, breakfast in the dining room at 8.00 a.m. and at 9.00 a.m. assemble via the locker room – entered from the door opposite the steps to the dormitories. They sat in the classrooms for prayers, scripture reading and classes until 12.30 p.m. when they would adjourn for dinner. Classes resumed at 1.45 p.m. and tea would be served at 3.45 p.m. There would be lesson preparation for two hours from 7.00 p.m. and then bed for the night.

The curriculum consisted of English, History, Mathematics, Science, Latin and one modern language, as well as book-keeping, music, dancing and Greek on occasions. Religious instruction was non-sectarian but the boys were taught the catechism of their respective churches. The Rector did not believe in punishing with the cane and thought lines a waste of time, preferring to impose extra study and manual work on the wayward. Sport, particularly Rugby Union and cricket, played a big role. There was participation in such events as the 1913 centenary of the mountains crossing, World War I support efforts, concerts and dramatics. Neryl Medcalf wrote

“In spite of the Spartan and rigorous life...letters, cards, and visits by ex-pupils and later on, by their descendants, all point to John McManamey being a good and fair 'Boss' and the school a happy place. Mr. McManamey's wife and his two young daughters, Jessie and Gertrude and the small number of students would have contributed to an atmosphere more of a large country family than a very strict boys' boarding school.” (Medcalf 2005).

Over 300 students were educated at the Woodford Academy between 1907 and 1925, the largest enrolment being 37 boys in 1921 (Woodford Academy Admissions Register). McManamey's distinguished academic career in Classics (Ancient Greek and Latin) was an attraction as Latin was necessary for university admission in Arts, Medicine, Law and Dentistry at the time.

Believing his fine students would 'make their mark' in history, John McManamey encouraged them to engrave their initials on the desks, on window frames, and outside on the rocks in the playing fields of the Academy (now the Woodford Reserve and the Presbyterian Church) (Wright 2014). Many of them did indeed make their mark, becoming university-trained professionals in Latin-dependent areas at the time, and distinguished servicemen in both world wars.

The Academy archives are particularly detailed for this period and include a complete set of school admissions from 1907 to 1925. This has enabled volunteers at the Academy to trace the World War I records of every one of the 55 former students who enlisted, as well as their repatriation records.

[The admissions register has enough information to ensure that each serviceman in the Australian National Archives in Canberra and in Chester Hill Sydney can be identified with certainty. The war records are online, and the repatriation files, most of which have not been accessed for inspection before, are becoming available at the reading room in Chester Hill.]

In 1925 the school closed. It reopened in 1929 as a day school for local boys and girls, with 31 students in 1935, but then closed permanently in May 1936. Mary Campbell, a student at this time, has “many lovely memories” of the school and of the McManamey daughters Gertrude and Jessie, who taught drawing and sewing respectively. Mary recalled walking to and fro each day from her home in neighbouring Hazelbrook, the cows, and the old bull Theseus, which were herded into the property each day, the children and the kindness and eccentricities of John McManamey. Mary revisited the Academy in the 1980s to see Gertrude McManamey, for whom she retained affection.

### **The Academy as private residence**

John McManamey continued to tutor private students in the late 1930s and early 1940s. He died in 1946 after being hit by a car as he crossed the highway outside the Academy. His two spinster daughters Jessie and Gertrude lived on in the building, taking in boarders and selling off property as sources of income. From 1945 to 1965, there were at least ten long-term boarders at various times at the Academy (Campbell 2001). In 1972, Jessie died but the Academy remained the McManamey-owned family residence until John McManamey's sole surviving daughter, Gertrude, bequeathed the property to the National Trust in 1979, on condition she would retain lifetime residency. Again, the Academy was reinvented to suit the times. It was by then surrounded by private residences within modest grounds. Gertrude lived on in the house until 1986, when she required better care and went to Queen Victoria Hospital at Wentworth Falls, where she died in 1988.(Wright 2014).

### **The Academy as a National Trust property**

The National Trust improved the eastern wing of the main building for occupation by Gertrude. Between May 1979 and November 1982, the roofing, drainage, plumbing requirements, windows, verandah, chimney, flagging and stone walls, including buttressing, received emergency repairs (Lucas 1984, pp.67-72).

In 2000 the National Trust received a Federation Cultural and Heritage Projects Program grant of \$1 million for the restoration of the Academy, and the restoration project was completed by October 2001. The Federal Minister for the Environment and Heritage at the time, Senator Robert Hill, stated:

“The Commonwealth Government is now pleased to have played its part in the property's colourful history by supporting the trust in its valuable restoration work. The work has included work on the east wing stairs, interiors and verandah. It has

also involved conserving the McManamey collection and having the principal rooms of the main house interpreted.” (Hill 2001).

Works also included repair of flooring and joists, plaster and skirtings, windows, wiring and electrical items, wallpaper, woodwork and architraves and roofing, as well as plumbing and toilets, fencing, polishing, conservation of the collection, security, storage and landscaping (Lucas et al. 2000).

The Friends of Woodford Academy was set up at this time. On behalf of the National Trust, this group of volunteers, numbering as many as 130, handled exhibitions, Open Days and events group visits until February 2008 (Friends n.d.). Since 2008 day-to-day administration has been the responsibility of the Woodford Academy Management Committee.

### **Woodford Academy today (Figure 7)**

Today, the Academy is set up as a museum of this significant building's past. The modern entrance faces the southern verandah, and is on the south-west wing of the main building. The first room, originally the William Buss sitting room, is now the reception/office space. The next major room on the western end of the west wing is set up as the ladies' parlour of the Fairfax guest era, with its double doors on the west side



*Courtesy of Noel Burgess*

**Figure 7.** Woodford Academy in 2015.

leading to what had been the Victorian pleasure garden. The steep stairway in the north-east corner of the ladies' parlour leads to the attic rooms, left much as they were when constructed in 1855 and one of the most historically atmospheric parts of the building. Farther east is the 1855 taproom with its evidence of liquor shelving and the cartouche, afterwards the Academy library, with some of John McManamey's books displayed. Beyond the hallway moving east is the original part of the building, the east wing, the western room of this east wing a hundred years ago being a classroom of the Academy and set up with McManamey era memorabilia. To the north of this room is the Academy locker room with its original school lockers. At the eastern end of the building is

the other classroom set up as it was 100 years ago, with the original desks scored with student initials and other memorabilia. A display of school memorabilia is in the small room north of that classroom.

The northern two-storey wing of the building, also called (somewhat confusingly) the east wing, is set up very much as it was in Academy times. This contains the washroom and the kitchen. The latter is perhaps the most historically significant part of the building, with its archway fireplace and stone sink. The adjacent dining room has been set up as a Fairfax guest house room, though it was a chapel in Academy times and hosted Presbyterian church services from 1908 to 1965.

Significant sites in the surrounding property are:

- the underground reservoir under the courtyard, which is four metres deep with a steady two metres' depth of water and, if the apparent involvement of convicts in its construction can be authenticated, it may date from the 1840s,
- the Aboriginal groove,
- an 1860s China pear tree that still bears abundantly,
- rocks on site engraved with 100-year-old initials, inscribed by Academy students.

There is a lot more to be unearthed about the Academy, in the still not completely explored archives at the site;

in the property around; and in information constantly coming to light in the National Archives, on Trove, in libraries around the State, and through descendants of the Academy's many past inhabitants.

The possibilities of the site are enormous. The Academy is now on a more sound financial footing than it has been at any time since it became a National Trust property in 1979. Money invested in it is being seen to provide a worthwhile return. It, and its activities, are being noticed more by National Trust members, the mountains community, and the wider community than ever before. It is seen as a fitting backdrop to community events and its status as a rare treasure is gaining more recognition.

### **Acknowledgement**

The author wishes to acknowledge the support of Deputy Chair, and Woodford Academy Management Committee colleague, Elizabeth Burgess in contributing substantially in the early stages of preparing this paper and in providing good quality images to accompany it.

### **Abbreviation**

n.d. = no date



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## T.R. RODRIGUEZ (1860-1929) – “Blackheath’s Father”.

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### Abstract

Tomas Rodriguez was an 1883 immigrant who became an innovative stationmaster at Blackheath (1889-1901). Subsequently he managed three hotels; the Ivanhoe, Blackheath (1901-1907), the Hydro Majestic, Medlow Bath (1904) and The Grand View in Oxford Street, Sydney (1908-1909). In later life he was a local real estate agent (1914-1929), mostly operating alone but sometimes in partnerships with C.R. Thompson (1922-1926) and A.W. Thew (1929). He volunteered to serve on many of the Blackheath community organisations and was an Alderman, but he is best remembered for organising the creation of three tracks, the Williams Track to the bottom of Govetts Leap (1899), the link track from there to Evans Lookout which was named the Rodriguez Pass (1900), and the Grand Canyon Track (1907).

**Key Words:** Tomas Rodriguez, Blackheath, Estate Agent, hotelier, stationmaster, pioneer, Blue Mountains.

### INTRODUCTION

Perhaps the names most associated with Blackheath are William Romaine Govett (his association being with the waterfall, the gorge and two street names) and Andrew Gardiner (his name is used for the main hotel and one street). These were people alive before the village really developed but Thomas Rodriguez (Figures 1 & 2) has been most commonly thought of as the person who ‘got the village going’:

“... Mr. Thos. R. Rodriguez, who has done more for Blackheath than any dozen residents combined.” (Argus 1903).

Moreover, he was even dubbed “The Vital Spark” (Anonymous 1899h, col.7; 1899o, col.5; 1934b), “Blackheath’s Father” (Yeaman 1983) and “The Father of Blackheath” (Anonymous 1924b).

[That latter title has been rather overused having previously been attributed to William Henry Hargraves (1839-1925) (Cyclopedia of N.S.W. 1907, p.322; Merriman 2015) and then to

John George Neate (Anonymous 1921b,c; 1923a) and later to Henry Justice Collier (Anonymous 1933d).]

Rodriguez’s name is best recorded in the bushwalk called the Rodriguez Pass, but it is also used as a street name - Rodriguez Avenue, and for a vantage point near the lower end of Popes Glen - Rodriguez Lookout (Figure 3), as well as in Rodriguez Walk, a now unused alternative name for that route down Popes Glen.



*Yeaman 1976, p.358; Rickwood 2005a, p.213.*

**Figure 1.** Thomas Rodriguez - undated.

'Roddy', as affectionately he was often called (e.g. Anonymous 1920g, 1922c; but sometimes just 'Rod' e.g. Anonymous 1918a), was a late nineteenth and early twentieth century 'mover and shaker' who got things done as we will endeavour to relate. But in the latter half of his life he alienated some of his contemporaries with his somewhat aggressive actions that seem to belie his dapper mode of dress (Figure 1).

To many he undoubtedly became a difficult man! and his letters sometimes got him into deep water - e.g. Anonymous (1917c,d). His attendance at meetings ensured a lively event as his statements were sometimes abrasive (Anonymous 1917b) and often led to heated discussion (Anonymous 1920g), commotion (Anonymous 1918c) and even mayhem (Anonymous 1921f).



Photo: Peter Rickwood 2010

**Figure 3.** Rodriguez Lookout, N end of Cliff Top Walk, Blackheath.

His wife never stole the lime-light, her occupation listed in all electoral rolls being either "domestic duties" or "home duties". Only occasionally was Aimée mentioned in the press such as for helping to organise a Christmas Tree in 1898 (Anonymous 1899c), for assisting with the 1899 Blackheath School Picnic (Anonymous 1899i), for being on the general committee of Lithgow Hospital and assisted with the Lithgow Hospital Ball (Anonymous 1899n), for participating in organising a "Blackheath Grand R.C. Social" (Anonymous 1904j), and running a stall at the School of Arts Bazaar (Anonymous 1905a). Their three daughters lived diverse and pro-active adult lives mostly away from the Blue Mountains.

A concise account of this man (and to some extent his family) was given by Rickwood (2005a, pp.212-217), and a very brief biography by Rickwood (2008), but further research has generated much more information so as to warrant this paper.

## THE LIFE OF THOMAS RODRIGUEZ

### pre-1880

Tomas Ramon Rodriguez was born in 1860 (Yeaman 1983) in Porto Plato (NSW BDM 1888a,b) (now Puerto Plata), on the north coast of Santo Domingo (then part of Spain but now in the Dominican Republic). He was the eldest son (Lear 1967, p.ii) of affluent Castilian parents from Spain, Thomas (or Tomas - Anonymous 1863) Alonzo (or Almzo - the handwriting is difficult to decipher in NSW BDM 1888a) and Maria Rodriguez (née Mary MacMachon) who

"owned sugar plantations, combined with tobacco-growing, cigar-making and as well ... had wide acres of Mahogany forests" (Lear 1967, p.i).



BMCC Photo Library PF1932

**Figure 2.** T.R. Rodriguez.



His father also owned a tobacco store, along with several similar warehouses in Porto Plata that were destroyed by fire in July 1863 (Anonymous 1863).

According to Margery Lear, Thomas' youngest daughter,

“Tomas had three sisters and a brother in his part of the family. There were also two sisters by a previous marriage.” (Lear 1967, preface p.i)

but that anecdote is partly contradicted by evidence on marriage certificates (NSW BDM 1890 & 1891). Thus it would seem that Tomas, three sisters and a brother were from the second marriage of Tomas Alonzo Rodriguez to Mary MacMachon, and the two half-sisters were from the second marriage to Alice (or Angelina) Mercier these being Felicie (*aka* Felicite or Felicitie or Fée) and Neige (*aka* Maria de las Nieves) both of whom came to Australia on 6 October 1887 (Anonymous 1887c), married here (NSW BDM 1890 & 1891), but lived the latter parts of their lives in England. His

“... two elder sisters remained in Santo Domingo and later married two managers of their father's estates” (Lear 1967, preface p.i)

and so the third sister and the brother most probably were born after Tomas; the names of these four siblings are not known.

From the age of three Tomas was educated by Jesuit priests in Belgium (Yeaman 1976, p.357) but he

“... finished his education in Paris. French became his mother tongue.” (Lear 1967, preface p.i; also see Anonymous 1929i).

He spent his vacation time at the family property in the Bois de Boulogne (Lear 1967, p.i) (a location which may account for his half-sister Neige being born in France) and about this time his father married for a third time. After leaving College he was employed in Paris by the Banque de France and later was transferred to their London branch making it necessary for him to learn English. In his spare time

“He studied to become a Surveyor as he did not believe that he cared to be confined to the banking business.” (Lear 1967, preface p.ii).

## 1880s

Next he moved to South Africa (Anonymous 1929i) and worked for the Cape Government Railways which:

“gave him a good recommendation and he felt sure he could get a job doing the same work in

Sydney” (Lear 1967, preface p.ii).

The name of the ship on which he travelled to Australia is not known for certain but a Mr. Rodriguez was a passenger on the *Le Precurseur* which arrived at Sydney on 22 June 1883 (Anonymous 1883c; Mariners 1883; Shipping Master's Office 1883; NSW Unassisted Passenger Lists 1826-1922; AGCI 2004). That vessel had sailed from Pauillac (the shipping roads near, and north-west of, Bordeaux) on 22 March (Anonymous 1883a), called in at Cape Town on 28 May (Anonymous 1883d,e) where Tomas could have boarded, and then successively stopped at Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney (Anonymous 1883b).

He was first appointed to a position with the NSW Government Railways on 27 June 1883 just five days after the *Le Precurseur* arrived at Sydney so it is most likely that the appointment was made in Sydney and then he travelled to his work place, a location which is not known for certain but most probably was Wellington where he resided in 1888. At the age of 25, on 23 December 1885 he was promoted to a new position of Officer-in-Charge in the Relieving section of the Traffic Branch at a salary of £130 p.a. (in 1887; ARHS 1887).

It is about this time that he unofficially anglicised his name to Thomas Raymond Rodriguez and it is by such that he is recorded on his marriage certificate (NSW BDM 1888a,b) and is so listed in some of the employee records of the NSW Railways (e.g. NSWGR 1891).

[From this point on, the anglicised version of his name will be used, except where his birth name was specified within quotes.]

Being in the “Relieving section” indicates no fixed place of employment so he would have been temporarily allocated to stations nearby to his residence at Wellington and therefore would not necessarily be on lists of their staff. He could have been sent to the north to work for:

“The single track railway from Wellington to Dubbo was opened on 1 February 1881 with Dubbo station opened on the same day.” (NSW E&H 2015; also see Gunn 1989, p.169)

However to the south the track from Orange to Wellington (opened on Tuesday, 1 June 1880 - Althofer 1985, p.37; Gunn 1989, p.162) passes through Ironbarks and hence had he been assigned in that direction he would have had opportunity to come into contact with the Shillington family for

“Tomas was sent first to the country where he met and was fascinated by Aimee Shillington. ...

Tomas let no time elapse before they were married.” (Lear 1967, preface p.ii).

[Ironbarks is sometimes written as two words - Iron Barks - but the NSW Geographic Names Board approved the single word; the place was formally re-named Stuart Town from 1889 although that name was in use previously e.g. Anonymous (1887b).]

As the Shillingtons only moved from Wallerawang to Ironbarks in May 1887 (Anonymous 1887a) Thomas acted very swiftly! At the age of 28, on 4 January 1888 at St. James Church, Ironbarks. Thomas Raymond Rodriguez married (NSW BDM 1888a,b,c)\* the 18 years old Amelia\*\* Theodora Shillington (born in Bathurst - NSW BDM 1869) who was also known as “Aimée”.

[\*: The transcript of the Marriage Register is: “Thomas Raymond RODRIGUEZ Railway Official aged 28 (b. Porto Plato, San Domingo, Parents Thomas Almzo RODRIGUEZ (Merchant) and Mary (née MACMACHON), Residence Wellington) to Amelia Theodora SHILLINGTON aged 18 (b. Bathurst, Parents John SHILLINGTON (Police Officer) and Maria Wilson (née Datto or Oates *indistinct*), Residence Iron Barks.” (NSW BDM 1888a)]

[\*\*: Amelia was the daughter of John (b. 1839; d. December 1924) and Maria Wilson (née Oates) Shillington who were married at Ballarat in 1865. In c.1866 John Shillington had come to Australia from Canada (Lear 1967, p.26) and joined the Police Force, was promoted to Senior Police Constable in 1881 (Anonymous 1881) and was sent to Stuart Town (Ironbarks) on 1 July 1887 (Anonymous 1887b) after nine years at Wallerawang (Anonymous 1887a). Lear (1967) spelled the pet name “Aimée” throughout her manuscript but “Aimée” is the correct version of this French name and that appeared in the newspaper notices of her marriage (Anonymous 1888a,b). When signing she normally used initials (Figures 4A & 4B) but she was inconsistent when having to write her full name (Figures 4C & 4D). On her tombstone the French pet name was used i.e. “Aimée Theodora” (Figure 13).]

Significantly, one of the witnesses was Neige Rodriguez (NSW BDM 1888b) the half-sister of Thomas who had already been enticed to Australia. Eight months after the marriage the birth of their first child, Vera, occurred at the Shillington home in Ironbarks on 3 September 1888 (Anonymous 1888c,d) and was registered at Wellington (NSW BDM 1888c). Thomas is not listed in any of the Wellington electoral rolls from 1882 to 1889 so he did not register to vote as not owning any land or property at that time he would not have been eligible.

## Blackheath

Quite when the Rodriguez family arrived in Blackheath is not known for certain. One estimate stems from Canon Boyce who stated Porters Pass to have been “... quite recently discovered by Mr. T. Porter..” (Boyce 1887, p.29) so that gives an approximate date

of the first descent. Curiously, Bowmaker (1945, p.2) claimed that:

“The first man he (*Timothy Porter*) took down with him (*actually the second as Porter’s son-in-law William Talbot had assisted in the first descent*) was Mr. Rodrigues (*sic*) who was then Station Master at Blackheath.”.

But this is a dubious claim as Rodriguez did not commence to work at the railway in Blackheath until 1889 and Porter surely would have taken others down his pass in the previous two years since the discovery of the route.

Certain is the fact that on 22 April 1889 Thomas Rodriguez started work at the railway in Blackheath (Anonymous 1889a) but as Officer-in-Charge and not as stationmaster as another related (Anonymous 1889b). Thomas was the first person to be appointed to work solely for the Railway at Blackheath as his predecessor based there, Mr. W. Player (Anonymous 1889b), was under the control of Mount Victoria.

When the railway line to Mount Victoria was opened on 1 May 1868 Blackheath was designated a ‘platform’ and it was after Thoms had started his employment there that it was promoted to being a ‘station’. But the platform was still primitive (Figure 5) being

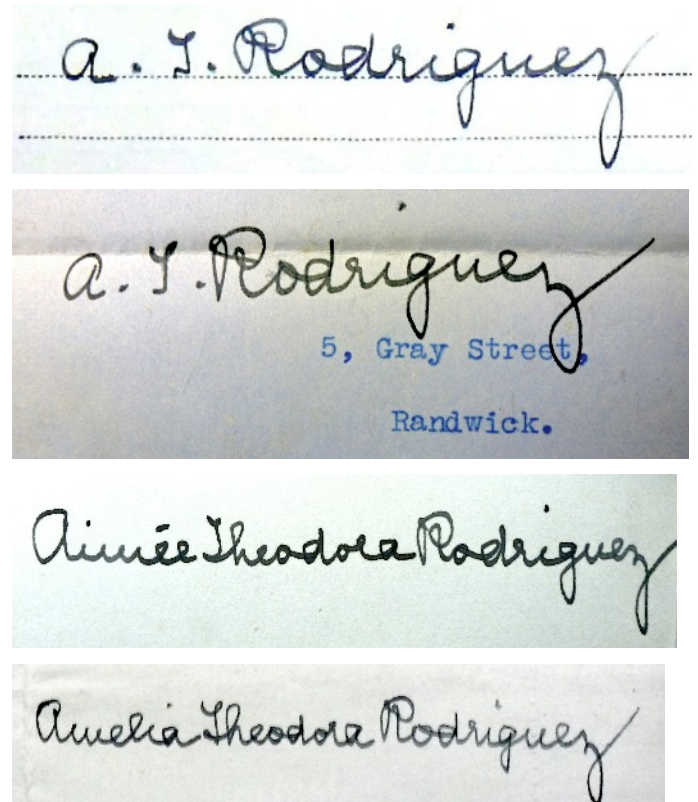


Figure 4. Examples of the signatures of Mrs. A.T. Rodriguez.



*Blue Mountains Historical Society Inc. P 736.*

**Figure 5.** Blackheath Railway Station c.1890-1892.

[This photograph was taken pre-1898 when an island platform was built. The station building appears to be brick which therefore dates this photograph as post-1884, and the existence of the wooden parcels office moves that date to post-April 1889 (Wylie & Singleton 1958: p.49 photo, 53 map). But the western end of the verandah of the parcels office was boarded up in 1893 (Garside 1975, p.68) and it is not so in this photograph, hence the picture was most probably taken in 1890, 1891 or 1892 - all within the first few years of Thomas working there.]

single sided with easy access to the adjacent Bathurst Road.

By August 1889 he was sufficiently established in the village to be presented with a testimonial, and a gold locket with monogram (Anonymous 1889d,e),

“from the contractors and workmen employed on the building at the Red Leaf Nursery, now in course of erection, for the courtesy always shown to them by Mr. Rodriguez in all their transactions with him at the station.” (Anonymous 1889e).

[“the residence of Mrs. Bettington, or which is better known as the Red Leaf Nursery, situated about one and a half miles from the Railway Station along the Hat Hill Road.” (Anonymous 1889f, p.5).]

Then in December 1889, a mere six months after his arrival, it was announced that

“Blackheath platform to be turned into a station”  
(Anonymous 1889g; 1889h)

which automatically, and unofficially, made Thomas the first ‘stationmaster’!

### 1890s

The second child of Thomas and Aimée was named Rita Theodora<sup>\*\*\*</sup>; she was born on 26, 27 or 28 June 1893 (Lyre Bird 1893; NSW BDM 1893), five years after her sister Vera, and the birth was registered in Lithgow so the delivery was most probably in Blackheath.

[<sup>\*\*\*</sup>: in many official documents she is listed as Rita Aimée.]

It has been stated that Thomas was the first “Station Master” from 1890 (Yeaman 1976, p.358) but formal promotion did not come for several years. In that year he was still “Officer-in-Charge” (NSWGR 1891, p.4743) being paid £140 p.a. But five years later a newspaper reported:

“A short time ago the Railway Commissioners recognised the faithful services of this member of their staff ..... and ... he appeared in the garb of his new rank.” (Anonymous 1895e).

And so it was October or November 1895 when he was given the title of stationmaster and an increase in salary to £165 p.a. (NSWGR 1897, p.4537). At the end of his time working for the Government Railway this was still the title recorded (NSWGR 1900, p.4381) but his salary had risen to £180 p.a. “and free house” (NSWGR 1900, p.4381) - that being adjacent to the station at 141A Station Street and now called *Kintire*; it is a building listed under the NSW Heritage Act (BH067; NSW Office of Environment & Heritage (post 2008)).

But he was no ordinary stationmaster. Soon after starting work at the station Thomas made his mark by clearing scrub around the Station and preparing holes for planting new bushes (Anonymous 1889c). That continued into the following year for

“Our much respected officer in charge at this railway station (Mr. Rodrigues – *sic*) has had a large number of trees planted on the western side of the line, opposite the station, which will be grand for the shade purpose when they grow up.” (Anonymous 1890).

In 1893, but as “E. Rodriguez, Station Master, Blackheath”, he was still advertising for tenders to clear “about 4 acres of land” and “for the erection (work only) of a Picket Fence” (Rodriguez 1893a).

Within the station he

“...at once he started to tidy up the waiting room by having an Italian artist paint pictures on the ceiling” (Lear 1967, p.1).

“Surely that would make Blackheath unique amongst Australian railway stations!” (Clement 1976, p.58).

Later in 1899,

“The ceiling of the general waiting room at the railway station has been artistically painted in suitable colours and gold leaf by Mr. A. Porter, by order of Mr. Rodriguez” (Anonymous 1899d)

– so that must have been a second painting!



In the NSW Electoral Roll Hartley/Penrith 1893-94, his qualification for registering is given as "freehold" which was due to his purchase of two properties on 28 March 1892 from Robert Thomas Carter (CoT 1889a,b). However it probably was land speculation for he on-sold to Maria Shillington on 31 September 1901.

[She likewise on-sold Lot 7 on the south side of Kennedy Street on 16 May 1902, but retained Lots 13 & 14 on the north side of Wills Street until her husband John Shillington acquired them on 4 February 1913 long after her death on 26 October 1909 (Anonymous 1909b). By then John had remarried for on 13 March 1913 Lots 13 & 14 were transferred to his new wife Ellen and she kept those lots until 27 January 1917 when they were acquired by Alice Will after whom the street is named. The residence of John Shillington shown on the Shillington Estate Map (Figure 10A) was on Lot 13 and was probably built during Maria's ownership of the land.]

Thomas made a second purchase of land on 4 September 1899, that being Lot 11, Section 2 on the western side of Wentworth Street (CoT 1893; now number 166) and it was reported "Mr. Rodriguez intends building at once." (Anonymous 1899k). But again he only retained it briefly before on-selling on 21 August 1901. Throughout that period he was living in the Station Master's House so he had no need to build on that land.

## 1. Tennis Courts

During Thomas' term as stationmaster the tennis courts formed on the Government Railway land became an important sporting centre for residents of Blackheath, however whether or not there were tennis courts when Thomas arrived is unclear.

The report of the costs of the work at the railway (Anonymous 1893a,b) throw doubt on there being tennis courts in the late 1880s as surely the Commissioners would not have replaced a tennis court so soon. Moreover that 1893 date accords well with tennis tournaments being held from 1894 (Anonymous 1894a), with the praise accorded to Thomas in September 1894 for

"laying out and forming two tennis courts, opposite the railway station" (Anonymous 1894e),

and with the formation of the Blackheath Tennis Club on 21 March 1895 when it attracted 40 members (Anonymous 1895a,b).

Thomas and Aimée Rodriguez arranged with others to hold tennis parties for which.

"an Italian Orchestra was engaged, and the Ladies of The Tennis Club provided delicious things to eat. No one had ever heard of anything like this

in those days, and I am sure it would be unusual today." (Yeaman 1976, p 297; also see Lear 1967, p.1).

In addition, Thomas and others organised Tennis Tournaments (Figure 6) that were often affected by the weather and sometimes extended over several days (Anonymous 1896a); in 1899 a crowd of 200 was attracted (Anonymous 1899a) and 150 a week later (Anonymous 1899b).

When he left the employ of the NSW Government Railways & Tramways, one local resident was moved to write a letter to the press praising Thomas' work on the Tennis Courts (Onlooker 1901) and urging the Railway Commissioners to continue to let the town-folk use them and the Progress Committee concurred (Anonymous 1901k). At a Council meeting two decades later, Thomas bemoaned of:

" the bad state of the tennis courts. The men employed on the improvement work had been burning off the rubbish in the centre of the court." (Anonymous 1920b).



BMCC Photo Library PF1127

Figure 6. Railway Tennis Pavilion 1894 or 1895 (see Anonymous 1895a).

## 2. Volunteer Achievements

Thomas Rodriguez.

"was a born leader and possessed genuine charm of which he was quite unaware." (Lear 1967, p.1),

and because of his enthusiastic personality he inspired others to join him. Thomas (Figures 1, 2, 7 & 11),

"found himself on many committees and was the driving force in the making of 6 parks, School of

Arts, etc.” (Lear 1967, p.5).

His other notable activities in the first decade after arrival include:

- March 1890 - he was appointed Secretary of the newly created Rifle Reserve Club (Anonymous 1924a) but resigned in January 1891 (Anonymous 1891a).
- June 1891 - he was elected to the Blackheath Progress Committee (Anonymous 1891b,c), and in 1892 was made Secretary (Diogenes 1892); again in June 1894 (Anonymous 1894b) he was also made Secretary (Anonymous 1894c). The Committee wound up on 1 June 1895 (Anonymous 1895c) with Thomas the last Secretary; the Committee was reformed in 1900 (Anonymous 1900e) but to the surprise of many residents, Thomas lost at the election of committee members (Anonymous 1900f).
- 1890s - “Early in the 90s Mr. T. Whitley and T.R. Rodriguez with a Progress Committee, had the site of the Blackheath Gardens cleared and fenced, also the cricket ground.” (Boyd 1947, p.62).
- 1893 - He was appointed a member of the Govetts Leap Reserve Trust on 15 November 1893 (Fox 1999, Item 848; 2001, Item 1165; 2006, Item 1718).
- 1894 - He had the reserves along the Bathurst Road trenched and planted with ornamental trees (Anonymous 1894d) and later installed swings etc. for the benefit of children (Anonymous 1896b); “The Railway Commissioners ... paid a like tribute to the stationmaster (Mr. Rodriguez) for the part he had taken therein, and the activity and taste he had displayed in improving and beautifying the reserves adjacent to the station.” (Anonymous 1896c).
- by 1895 he was chairman of the Blackheath Lodge of the IOOF (Anonymous 1895d).
- 1898 - with Tom Daly, he was instrumental in commissioning the construction of the track to the base of Govetts Leap (Anonymous 1899g; Rickwood 2006)) which opened on Saturday 25 January 1899 (Collier & Rodriguez 1899; Smith 1999, p.36; Musescape and Beaver 1999, p.35 BG 3); an early suggestion was that it be named the Williams Track after the father and son who built it (Anonymous 1899h, col.7) but until 1997 it had always been known as the Govetts Leap Track (Macqueen 1997, p.142; Rickwood 2006).
- 1899-1900 - he led the construction of the Pass from Govetts Leap to Evans Lookout (Anonymous 1899m)

“and no one should begrudge this work being designate – say Rodriguez Pass” (Anonymous 1899j; Yeaman 1976, p.87; Smith 1999, p.36; Musescape and Beaver 1999, p.33 BG 4).

A trust for this pass was established in April 1901 with Thomas being one of the six members (Anonymous 1901a). A contemporary description of the track (H.A.R. 1899), and an account of the work involved (Anonymous 1925), have been published.

- October 1899 - he offered to assist the committee of the Blackheath Improvement Association (Anonymous 1899l).

On 28 January 1899 a presentation of

“an illuminated address, a gold watch, chain, and sovereign purse, suitably inscribed; also a purse of thirty sovereigns.”

was made to Thomas Rodriguez by the townsfolk when it was rumoured that he was about to leave the employ of the NSW Government Railways & Tramways (Anonymous 1899e,f). That show of affection and respect temporarily delayed matters.

“On the top left-hand corner of the address is a splendid photo of Mr. Rodriguez in his official uniform. ... below... pictures were taken from photos. by Mr. Neate, sen.” (Anonymous 1899e).

Sadly that address has not been located so these historically valuable images are missing.

## 1900s

### 1. Employment

In May 1900, Mountaineer (1900, p.1110, col.3) wrote:

“Mr. Rodriguez is a model stationmaster” (Figure 7).

Nevertheless,

“Many of his friends thought that he should better his own life and so he was influenced in leaving the Railway and going into the hotel business on a grand scale.”(Lear 1967, p.5; Yeaman 1976, p.358; 1983).

"Mr. T.R. Rodriguez, our energetic stationmaster, who has been here for some ten years, is about to sever his connection with the railways, and next month takes over the proprietorship of the Ivanhoe hotel here." (Anonymous 1901g).

Thomas Rodriguez finally left the employ of the Government Railways at the end of September 1901 and on 30 September a presentation of a marble clock was made by his staff and the fettlers (Anonymous

1901h,i,j). His employment by the Government Railways had provided the family with a residence - the Station Master's House - so they would have had to vacate it promptly when his employment ceased.

The third daughter of the family, Marjorie, was born on 6 August 1901 (NSW BDM 1901; Anonymous 1901e), when Vera was 13 and Rita 8.

[At birth her given name was Marjorie but she unofficially changed that spelling to Margery although in some official documents the original spelling was used. Throughout her married life she used her maiden name as a second given name so becoming Margery Rodriguez LEAR (see e.g. Lear 1967, p.29).]

The confinement was "at her residence" (Anonymous 1901e) and in August the family was still living in the Station Master's House in Station Street.

Thomas acquired (Silvey 1996, p.37), and became proprietor and Licensee of, the "Old" Ivanhoe Hotel (Figure 8), Govetts Leap Road (Anonymous 1901f) on Tuesday 1 October 1901 (Anonymous 1901i) and the family moved to the Hotel. It became famous for its "superior cuisine" (Rodriguez 1902) and was the centre in Blackheath for the 'well healed' tourists in the first decade of the twentieth Century. But there were insufficient bedrooms to make it an economic success, and the cuisine and the standards he had set

made it impossible to be a paying proposition (Yeaman 1976, p.358; Silvey 1996, p.38).

His hotel operation was not entirely smooth for on 13 August 1902 Rodriguez was fined 40/-, plus 5/6 costs, for breaching the Licensing Act by serving beer after 11.00 p.m. (Anonymous 1902c). Four months later he was back in court on 17 December 1902 (Anonymous 1902f) to answer a summons issued by a troublesome Blackheath butcher in complaint of "insulting language"; but

"the magistrates ... dismissed the case on the ground that the evidence in support of the charge was not conclusive"!

More serious were the events that led him to be summoned to court on 25 January 1904 in response to a claim by a hotel porter

"for £1 17s 6d wages due and for an assault on 20th inst." (Anonymous 1904c).

He admitted hitting the plaintiff so the magistrates had no choice but to find him guilty

"and awarded 2s 6d and 7s 4d costs for the assault and the full amount of £1 17s 6d and 4s 10d costs of court, and one witness at 5s"

a costly lesson for 'mine host'!

To improve revenue, Thomas diversified and in 1902 he became a car importer in association with Mark Foy (Yeaman 1976, p.45). On 1 July 1903 Thomas was in Katoomba demonstrating his car and announcing the proposed start of a service to Jenolan (Anonymous 1903d) for which he had

"obtained a licence to run a motor-car to all points on the road from Lawson to the Jenolan Caves" (Anonymous 1903b; - also see Anonymous 1903c,i).

and it was to carry eight passengers (Anonymous 1903e, col.4). The first trip from Blackheath to Jenolan did not eventuate until Tuesday 8 September 1903 (Anonymous 1903f) and the service was formally inaugurated by the Hon. John Kidd, Minister for Mines & Agriculture, on 28 September 1903 at the Ivanhoe Hotel (Anonymous 1903g,h).

[Some decades later V.M.C. (1938) reported that on an unspecified date in 1903 Rodriguez had been one of the five passengers in the first car to visit Jenolan Caves, a De Dion 8 h.p., which was driven by Bert Beckman leaving Medlow Bath at 11 a.m. and arriving at Jenolan Caves at 7 p.m. A 6 h.p. Liberia car was driven by Mark Foy and that arrived at 7.30 p.m. Presumably that journey occurred early in 1903 before The Mountain Motor Car Co. started up.]



MR. T. R. RODRIGUEZ,  
Blackheath Stationmaster, Blackheath.

*Mountaineer* (1900, p.1110)

**Figure 7.** T.R. Rodriguez - 1900.





*William Hume collection.*

**Figure 8.** Ivanhoe Hotel, Blackheath. c.1903.

[A used postcard with this image is in the Blue Mountains Historical Society's collection, it is franked with the date "FE 29 1904". Hence the photograph is likely to have been taken in 1903 and the postcard was probably printed late in 1903 in readiness for the Christmas trade. But is the prominently positioned seated man Thomas Rodriguez ? (see [Figure 7](#))]

This tourist work became more formalised and from October 1903 he was Managing Director of The Mountain Motor Car Co. (Anonymous 1903a) which ran daily (Anonymous 1904a) trips to Jenolan Caves for a return fare of 40/- (Anonymous 1904b) taking 2½ hours to complete the 63 km (39 mile) journey (Anonymous 1903a).

Thomas Rodriguez acquired a new 22 h.p. motor car in May 1904 (Anonymous 1904d,e) and the winter service to Jenolan was announced on 1 June 1904 (Anonymous 1904f) intending to operate twice a week using an open 22 h.p. Daimler that seated 12 passengers and taking two hours each way; no doubt a cold experience! but one that was well described (Stocks 1904). Conflictingly, in July 1904 a newspaper printed

"Mr Rodriguez's motor cars are doing good business in Sydney, and are to remain there for the winter months." (Anonymous 1904g).

That car was replaced in 1905 (Anonymous 1905b).

A sign of the future career in Real Estate came in August 1903 (Rodriguez 1903) when he advertised a Blackheath cottage for sale which is not known to

have been his; the Ivanhoe Hotel was the address used in the advertisement.

Meanwhile in March 1904, and concurrently with running the Ivanhoe Hotel, he was appointed Manager of the Hydro Majestic Hotel at Medlow Bath (Yeaman 1976, p.358; Anonymous 1904h, col.2). It was to be a short term venture as Thomas resigned from that position after a few months yet he must have made a strong impression for on 1 November 1904 he was presented

"... with an illuminated address and a handsome dressing case." (Anonymous 1904m) .

Another report of that resignation wrongly announced:

"Mr. Rodriguez is leaving the district." (Anonymous 1904k).

Thomas carried on running the Ivanhoe Hotel until 25 November 1907 when he sold it (Silvey 1996, p.38); the Publicans' License was transferred to William George Adams, as was the Billiard License (Anonymous 1907d). Being at that time depressed over the economic failure of his hotel project, he moved his family to Sydney (Silvey 1996, p.38) leaving Blackheath on 4 December 1907 (Anonymous 1907c)

when aged 47. His wife Aimée and two of his daughters, Vera and Rita, never again lived permanently in Blackheath.

In December 1907, stating his residential address as “New Canterbury Road, Dulwich Hill”, he paid £300 for a lease on 12¼ per. of land (309 sqm) on the corner of Oatley Road and Oxford Street, Paddington (Land Titles Office 1906-1910; 1907 (indistinct)) which is the area covered by Certificate of Title (1899). On part of that land was The Grand View Hotel [251 Oxford Street, Paddington - on the corner of Oatley Street and adjacent to the western side of the Paddington underground reservoir] to which Thomas and his wife (and it is presumed the daughters too) went to reside. In April 1908 he acquired the Publicans’ License (Anonymous 1908b) which he held until the end of 1909 (Anonymous 1909c). Both Thomas and Aimée are listed in the 1908 & 1909 electoral rolls (NSW Wentworth/Paddington) as residing there, the former as a ‘hotel keeper’ and the latter by the incorrect name ‘Annie’! and as ‘home duties’. He is listed in Sand’s 1909 edition (p.1237) as residing there and again in the following year (Sand’s 1910, p.1294) but information for that 1910 edition had to be submitted by the first week of October 1909 so it seems unlikely that he was actually living there in 1910.

Little is known of his activities while living at the Grand View Hotel except that in 1908 he wrote to the Blue Mountains Shire (Anonymous 1908a, col.5) for

“permission to remove certain railway sleepers which had been used as a crossing to his land and which was not now required. Permission granted.”

and in 1909 he used the address of the hotel when advertising to buy a horse (Rodriguez 1909a) and to sell block of land in Blackheath (Rodriguez 1909b). He attended the opening of the Blackheath Telephone Exchange on 24 July 1909 (Anonymous 1909a, col.1) but did not have a private telephone at that time neither in Blackheath nor in Sydney (so he is not listed in the Sydney Telephone Directories for 1908-1910).

## 2. Volunteer Achievements

The notable efforts of Thomas Rodriguez in the 1900s were:

- By 6 April 1901 he was already Hon Sec. of the Blackheath Presbyterian Church (Anonymous 1901b) despite having been brought up as a Catho-

lic (Lear 1967, p.13), and having been married in a Church of England ceremony. In fact he was the first Secretary for the Blackheath Presbyterian Church (Anonymous 1926a).

- 4 May 1901 – elected Chairman of the Evans Lookout Reserve (Anonymous 1901c).
- 19 July 1901 – elected Secretary of the Blackheath Lodge of the IOOF (Anonymous 1901d).
- 14 November 1901 – instigator of, and committee member for, the Blackheath Industrial Exhibition (Anonymous 1901i) and became a Secretary (Laws & Rodriguez 1902).
- 1902 “Mr Rodriguez, of the Ivanhoe Hotel, Blackheath, has secured a lease from the Government of some land for golf links, which he intends to have in going order for next season. The introduction of this game should be a special attraction on the Mountains.” (Anonymous 1902a).
- April 1902 – “Mr. Rodriguez, of the Ivanhoe Hotel, recently laid out golf links (250 acres (101 ha) having been secured for the purpose) in the direction of Evan’s Lookout, and beginning about half a mile from the hotel, ...” (Anonymous 1902b).
- 30 August 1902 he was elected Vice-President of the Blue Mountain Public Schools Amateur Athletic Association (Anonymous 1902d,e) and was still renewing that position two years later (Anonymous 1904i).
- 13 November 1904 elected Assistant Secretary of the first committee of the School of Arts (Anonymous 1904i).
- November 1905 – elected an Honorary Secretary of the Management Committee for the Blackheath Catholic Social (Anonymous 1905c).
- December 1905 - elected Vice-President of the newly formed Cricket Club (Anonymous 1905d).
- December 1905 - elected Vice-President of the newly formed Cricket Club (Anonymous 1905d).

## 3. Track Construction

### (a.) Rodriguez Pass

“On the completion of a track leading underneath the Govett’s Leap Falls, the idea of connecting Evans’ Lookout and Govett’s Leap by a circular track was mooted.” (Blackheath Progress Committee 1903, p.41).

Thomas instigated the construction of this track and

“On the 16<sup>th</sup> August 1899 three men were put on the job, and since, their number has been increased to five. The length of the pass—which is known as

Rodriguez Pass—from the top of Evans’ Lookout, right down to the bottom of the valley and up Govett’s Leap to the top will be a distance of about nine miles.” (Anonymous 1900a; Yeaman 1976, p.87) (also see Mountaineer 1900, p.1111, col.1.).

[That distance is a gross exaggeration as from the base of Govetts Leap to Evans Lookout via the Govett Gorge is c.7.5 km (4.7 miles). Another less enhanced account is “The track is 5.5 miles in length, and is, for a long distance, perfectly level.” (Blackheath Progress Committee 1903, p.41).]

The contractor for the construction of the Pass was John Cliff; within about six weeks (October) his men had reached Beauchamp Falls and by December 1899 it had been named Rodriguez Pass (Smith 1998, SHI 3900226) as a tribute to the gentleman whose energy and perseverance had been responsible for its formation. There was an official “extravagant ceremony” (Macqueen 1997, p.146; 2007, p.151) held on Saturday 21 April 1900 for the Hon. J.H. Young (formerly the Minister of Works) (Anonymous 1900b,c; Smith 1998, SHI 3900226; Smith 1999, p.36) to do the official opening.

#### (b.) Grand Canyon

By early in the twentieth century there were tracks to Walls Cave, Neates Glen and The Fernery at the top of Rodriguez Pass, so it was logical to try to link them. In 1906 a track down Grand Canyon was proposed from Walls Cave to the Rodriguez Pass and it was Thomas Rodriguez, as Chairman of the Rodriguez Pass Trustees, who was instrumental in commissioning the construction of it (Anonymous 1907c; Smith 1998, SHI 3900215; Smith 1999, p.36).

Tenders were called but there was no response as prospective bidders thought the task impossible. But Thomas Williams (1864-1946) had previously constructed the track to the base of Govetts Leap (1898-99), so he was approached and accepted the challenge. By December 1906 he had completed a track down the Grand Canyon and it was being heavily used while he was “touching up the Evans’ Lookout Track” (Anonymous 1906). The three and a half miles (5.6 km) long track was ceremoniously opened on Saturday 16 February 1907 by Premier J.H. Carruthers (Anonymous 1907a,b; Macqueen 1997, p.149; 2007, p.154; Smith 1998, SHI 3900215; Smith 1999, p.36 - 17 February 1907; Musescape and Beaver 1999, p.31 BE 8) and

“The new track has been named the Blackheath Grand Canyon.” (Anonymous 1907a).

## 1910s

### 1. Employment & Residence

No information has been found concerning Thomas’ residence and employment in either 1910 or 1911. He is likely to have left the Grand View Hotel when the Licence was transferred to another in December 1909 (Anonymous 1909c) and probably was living in that part of Sydney as in March 1910 he was elected to be one of the 18 ! Vice-Presidents of the Paddington Club (Australian Rules) (Anonymous 1910). He was recorded as a visitor to the Blackheath Golf Club when it had a ceremony for the re-opening of a 9-hole course on 7 January 1911 (Anonymous 1911a,b; Jock 1911, col.4) so he was not living in Blackheath.

Curiously, in 1912 his name appears in relation to the School of Arts in Parkes, he being elected secretary of the ‘People’s Institute’ in July (Anonymous 1912a). In that capacity his name appeared on advertisements e.g. Rodriguez (1912a,b) and he formed

“a shorthand class, and has typewriting and other classes under consideration” (Anonymous 1912b).

His work in Parkes extended into the following year (Anonymous 1913) by which time typewriting was being taught but no mention of later activities has been found. His name does not appear in any of the 1911-1913 notices of the Parkes Licensing Court published in the *Western Champion* newspaper so it would appear that he did not follow his previous occupation of hotelier while he was in the town. It seems probable that he was only a temporary resident in the area as his name only appears in one electoral roll (NSW Calare/Parkes 1913) and that with no residential address but the curious occupation of “tin smith” [*Was that a cheeky response to an annoying question posed when registering?*]; and his name is only in the 1913 edition of Sand’s Directory (Sands 1913, p.169A under ‘Parkes: People’s Institute’ and on p.125B ‘Country Alphabetical: R’). There is no other report of him having skills necessary for that peculiar occupation so what was his real reason for going specifically to Parkes? He might have been familiar with the town as it is only 108 km south-west of Wellington to where he was assigned when he first arrived in Australia.

He was 52 in 1912 so that foray out west is suggestive of a mid-life crisis and a possible marriage rift for it seems that he went to Parkes alone as Aimée is listed in a Sydney electoral roll (NSW Wentworth/Waverley 1913) living with Vera Marie



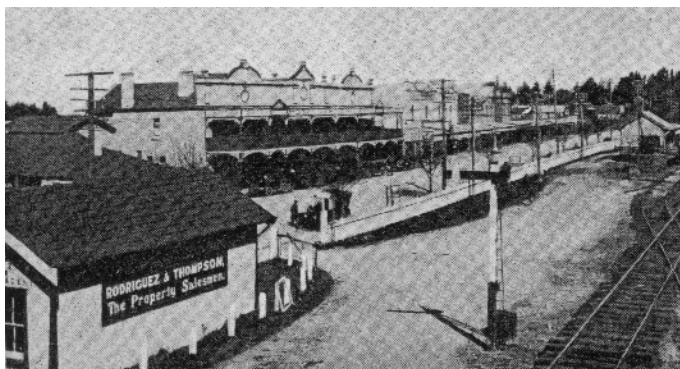


Photo: Booth 1924, p.14.

A. Rodriguez's Estate Agency Office.

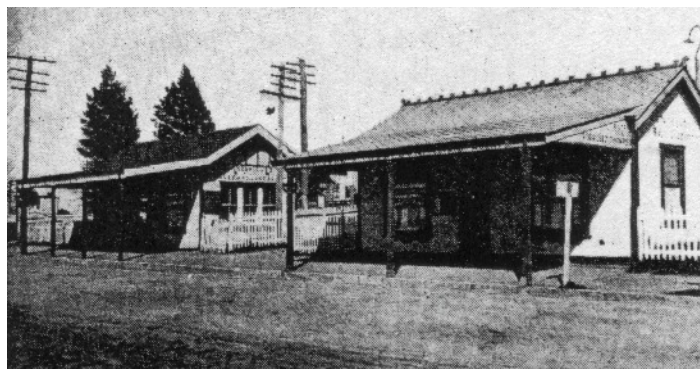


Photo: Booth 1924, p.21.

B. Left to Right: Offices of Estate Agencies of T.R. Rodriguez and his rivals.

**Figure 9.** Rodriguez's Office on the Great Western Highway.

(saleswoman; and probably her sisters who were too young to be enrolled) at 82 Ebley Street, Waverley and the December 1913 Sydney Telephone Directory reveals that the name of the house was *Verona*. That site on NE corner with Bronte Road is now part of the 'Surf Culture' building which may not be the same as the one that was there in 1913. In 1914 Aimée moved to *Ventura*, Barker Street, Randwick (Sydney Telephone Directories August 1914 to April 1915) but her residence there was not entered into Sands Directories; when first numbered that house was no.147 (Sands 1929, p.647) but the exact building has not been identified though now it is one of those about no. 223.

When next Aimée moved she made a major district change by going to live at *Loretto*, Eurella Street, Burwood (Sydney Telephone Directories October 1916 to October 1918) (now number 21) and the electoral rolls (NSW Parkes/Burwood 1916 & 1917) confirm that Rita Aimee & Vera Marie were also residing there, maybe Margery too for she was not 21 until 1922 so could not be in electoral rolls prior to that year.

It seems possible that in the latter part of 1913 Thomas went back to live with Aimée, but it could only have been a temporary arrangement for he could not keep away from Blackheath. On 31 January 1914 he advertised land for sale in his Shillington Estate using the appellation "T.R. Rodriguez, Land Agent, Blackheath" (Hardy & Gorman Pty. Ltd 1914a) so plans were obviously afoot to change his abode. Indeed, he returned to Blackheath on Wednesday 18 February 1914, six years and two months after leaving, but declaring his intention to remain permanently as he had an interest in a large portion of land on Hat Hill Road (i.e. The Shillington Estate - Anonymous 1914a); significantly, Aimée did not go with him.

Thus when aged 53 or 54 (the month of his birth is not known) he had an occupation change - he became a House Agent (Garside 1975, p.73) and later he built his office (Anonymous 1918a,b) on Railway owned land at the foot of the pedestrian bridge (Figure 9) (valued at £200 - Blackheath Rates 1918), a building which, it is reported, "went by default to the Railway Department" (Lear 1967, p.23) on his death but that cannot be true for Rodriguez & Thew (being continued by A.W. Thew) were advertising it for sale in mid-1939 (Rodriguez & Thew 1939).

"Ald. Rodriguez' (*sic*) Office was something of a Club. ... Everyone was welcome for a social chat and Roddy grew some very nice rose bushes around it as he had a passion for flowers." (Lear 1967, p.13; Yeaman 1976, p. 358).

He was an early riser often being at work in his office by 6.00 a.m. (Lear 1967, p.14) and in the summer months of some years he prepared secretarial work for Margery to do when she came in. In 1919, just a year after Thomas had built there, H.R. Neate occupied a similar office to the north of the railway steps (Blackheath Rates 1919; BMCC Photo Library PF 1276) which Thomas' competitors, William Downie and Hugh Robertson, acquired in November 1921 and where they conducted an estate agency (Richardson and Wrench 1922; Rodriguez & Thompson 1922a; Yeaman 1976, p. 357) until October 1922 (Anonymous 1922f).

Thomas' prized Shillington Estate, named after his wife's family, was put up for auction on 21 March 1914 (Hardy & Gorman 1914a) and on New Year's Day 1915 the remaining lots were offered for sale (Anonymous 1914g; Hardy & Gorman 1914b). On behalf of Aimée he applied to Council for permission to subdivide Portion 42 and it was granted in July 1926 (Anonymous 1926h).

In his second residency in the town,

“For some years Ald. Rodriguez stayed with his old friends the Phillips family who ran the guest house, ‘Glenella’ [*Govetts Leap Road*]. In the summer his wife and younger daughter .... came up to a cottage in Wentworth Street near the Post Office.” (Lear 1967, p.15).

At other times

“Ald. Rodriguez spent long weekends with his family in Randwick ...” (Lear. 1967, p.13).

## 2. Volunteer Achievements

On returning to Blackheath, Thomas Rodriguez soon got back into the activities of the Village.

- 1914 – He was one of several who lobbied for the establishment of a Golf Club on its present site. Ramsey Salmon and Alick Morton purchased the land in 1914  
“... which was to be known as “*Belvedere*” and with the idea given them by the ... Mr T.R. Rodriguez, they proceeded to acquire land in the valley that Belvedere overlooked, part of which had been used as a market garden by ... Thomas On Sing.” (Hatswell 1976b, p.279).
- April 1914 – Thomas Rodriguez commenced a campaign for street lighting (e.g. Anonymous 1914b) and continued all year (Anonymous 1914f).
- July 1914 – he was appointed organising secretary for Mr. Dawson Moore, Liberal Candidate for Macquarie (Anonymous 1914c,d).
- 18 July 1914 – he was elected Secretary of the School of Arts (Anonymous 1914e).
- March 1915 – as “Hon. Sec. Separation Committee, Blackheath” he was continuing a campaign for a separate Municipality of Blackheath (Rodriguez 1915a).
- 22 November 1915 – speaking for the Progress Committee, he advised Blackheath Municipal Council that he would find sponsors for a Water Supply and he was also writing as “Hon. Sec. Blackheath Progress Assn., Blackheath” - Rodriguez 1915b.
- 4 October 1916 - he was appointed Secretary of the Blackheath Branch of the War Service Committee (Anonymous 1916, col.4).
- February 1917 – he was elected a Councillor for the “A” Riding of the Blue Mountains Shire (Anonymous 1917a); he retired November 1919 (Anonymous 1919c).
- At the start of 1919 a formal notice of separation of Blackheath from the Blue Mountains Council had appeared (Anonymous 1919a) and Thomas

gave evidence that the opposition petition contained forged signatures (Anonymous 1919b).

- by March 1919, Thomas was Hon. Sec. for the Trustees of the Blackheath Group, Mountain Sights Reserves (Rodriguez 1919).
- 15 December 1919 – he was elected to the Provisional Council of the Municipality of Blackheath (Anonymous 1919d) but he resigned within a few weeks (Anonymous 1920c) only to be elected to the first proper Council (Anonymous 1920e).

Prior to WWI he was the owner of Portion 94 on the NE corner of the Great Western Highway/ Radiance Avenue NW (Robinson 1915?, Sheet 47) and there were other plots of land that he acquired subsequently but most were in Aimée’s name; Rita and Margery owned one each but none have been found as being owned by Vera until after her father had died (Geddes 1939a,b).

## 1920s

### 1. Residence

At the start of this decade Thomas was 60 and thus entered what then was regarded as old age. He would have been in need of a warm home but where he lived is unclear. He may still have stayed at *Glenella* in Govetts Leap Road (Lear 1967, p.15) and although his daughter wrote of his “contentment in his home-life” it would seem that his wife was only with him in the summer months when they lived in a (? *rented*) cottage in Wentworth Street near the Post Office (Lear 1967, p.15) but

“It was here he kept his poultry and had a beautiful flower garden.”

so it would seem that he might have had use of the place all year.

Thomas is listed in the electoral rolls (NSW Macquarie/Blackheath) from 1915 to 1928 as a house and land agent and in 1919 and 1921 both Aimée and Vera were also listed in that roll - but no addresses were provided. Vera is also in the NSW Macquarie/Blackheath 1922 roll but in that year Aimée resided in *Granada Flats*, 117 (now 165) Arden Street (NSW South Sydney/Randwick 1922 roll) - but the building is not now labelled with that name. In the Sydney Telephone Directories from April 1920-October 1924, a telephone at an unspecified house in Arden Street, North Coogee is listed as being in the name of T.R. Rodriguez but Thomas was registered as an elector in Blackheath so in 1922 he must have organised that telephone for his wife.

## 2. Employment

In November 1921 the Blackheath Motor 'Bus Co. was granted a licence to operate (Anonymous 1921e) and by December it was inaugurated (Anonymous 1922b) and a timetable was published (Rodriguez 1922). But it was not long before Manager Rodriguez was complaining that Mr. Rolfe, a competitor, was unfairly taking his customers (Anonymous 1922a) and was masquerading as its agent and operating with a vehicle that was merely a large motor car (Anonymous 1922b). Moreover Rolfe's unreliability was bringing the Blackheath Motor 'Bus Company into disrepute and in danger of folding up so Council framed an ordinance indicating that all competitors must run buses to an advertised and legitimately approved timetable. Conflict between the two operators continued for most of the year (Anonymous 1922e) but in October Thomas announced that he had resigned as Manager (Anonymous 1922g).

When, in October 1922, Downie and Robertson gave up their Blackheath estate agency through the ill health of Mr. Downie (Anonymous 1922f), the business was purchased by C.R. Thompson and he amalgamated with T.R. Rodriguez to form a partnership (Rodriguez & Thompson 1922). After four years that broke up in July 1926 and Thomas went alone as T.R. Rodriguez & Co. with offices in Challis House, Martin Place, Sydney (Anonymous 1926g) and Blackheath; he was off the mark quickly, advertising on 3 July (e.g. Rodriguez & Co. 1926a) and in November as

“Sole Agents for HOLLY RIDGE, GOVETT'S WALK, CROWN RIDGE and PINE RIDGE ESTATES.” (Rodriguez & Co. 1926b).

Later in 1926 he bought up the rival business of Peter Sutton (Anonymous 1926j) yet subsequently Sutton claimed that his “land and estate agency, later *amalgamated* with the late T.R. Rodriguez.” (Anonymous 1930d), a claim that has no apparent substance!

In July 1929 Thomas was taken seriously ill (see below) so early in August he advertised that his business was for sale (Rodriguez 1929a,b) and T.R. Rodriguez & Co. last advertised at the end of August 1929 (Rodriguez & Co. 1929a,b). But instead of ceasing completely, he formed a new Real Estate business with A.W. Thew that started to advertise on 7 September (Rodriguez & Thew 1929a). After Thomas died in November 1929 Thew continued using that business name until at least mid 1939

(Rodriguez & Thew 1939) when the office at the foot of the railway steps was advertised for sale.

[NSW Country telephone books covering Blackheath exchange listed Rodriguez & Shaw, Estate Agents in November 1929 and continued that listing in subsequent editions including November 1934; it seems likely that the second name was a misinterpretation of the handwritten 'Thew' on an application form.]

At death Thomas owned lots in Govett's Walk Estate (Dell Street) and Crown Ridge Estate (Row and Connaught Streets) plus Portion 94 (Shillington 1929), remarkably little after a career in real estate, but then he had wisely put much of his property in the name of his wife.

## 3. Volunteer Achievements

Thomas Rodriguez was elected to the Blackheath Municipal Council (Anonymous 1920c) (Figure 11) and through this position he renewed his connection with the NSW Government Railways & Tramways. On 28 March 1922, as Alderman T. Rodriguez, he moved that the Government be asked to immediately initiate the electrification of the railway line from Sydney to the Blue Mountains (Anonymous 1922c), this to be considered as within the suburban area of Sydney (Yeaman 1976, p.116). He maintained that stance from time to time both in print (Rodriguez 1924) and at Council (Anonymous 1924f) but he was well ahead of his time because electrification did not come until some 35 years later!

- February 1920 – Thomas was declared elected Councillor of the Municipality of Blackheath (Anonymous 1920f).
- 31 March, 1920 – he was elected to the first Committee of the Blackheath Horticultural Society (Thompson, 1976, p.219).
- 13 October, 1920 – he was one of the first members of the Lodge Blackheath (Hatswell 1976a, p.231) although not prominent in the organisation of Freemasonry.
- 18 April 1921 – Thomas was elected Hon. Sec. of the Blackheath Soldiers' Memorial Committee (Anonymous 1921a; Smith 1996, p.48).
- October 1921 – he instigated the move to reclaim “The Gardens” from the Police Department (Anonymous 1921d).
- 31 March, 1922 – he was one of the persons involved in arranging the purchase of the Belvedere Golf Club which thereby led to the establishment of the Blackheath Golf Club (Hatswell 1976b, p.293; Lear 1967, p.9-11).



Some of the development areas that Thomas (and his various companies) handled were:

<b>Estate</b>	<b>Year(s)</b>	<b>Approximate Location</b>
Shillington Estate <sup>1</sup>	1914 & 1915 <i>T.R. Rodriguez</i>	Shillington Road, Lawrence Street & SE side of Hat Hill Road between Cleopatra and Clarence Streets.
Belvedere Golf Links Estate <sup>2</sup>	<i>T.R. Rodriguez</i>	1919 part of the N side of Brightlands Avenue, part of the E side of Valley View Road, Linkview Avenue, S side of Hargraves St From oreas St. to W of Prince Edward St.
Blue Ridge Estate <sup>3</sup>	1921 <i>Rodriguez, Estate Agent</i>	SE side of Aerodrome; Hat Hill Road east of Clearview Street and Boronia and Waratah Streets
Premier Estate <sup>4</sup>	1921 <i>Rodriguez, Estate Agent</i>	Irvine Street S, Clanwilliam Street E, Hargraves St. N & Prince Edward St. W including Belvidere Ave. & Walker St.
St. Elmo Estate <sup>5</sup>	1921 <i>Rodriguez, Estate Agent</i>	St. Elmo Avenue, Bettington Road.
Pine Ridge Estate <sup>6</sup>	1924 <i>Rodriguez &amp; Thompson</i>	Rodriguez Avenue & SE side of Hat Hill Road between Bettington Street and Connaught Road
Glen Estate <sup>7</sup>	1924 <i>Rodriguez &amp; Thompson</i>	Somerset Avenue (off Evans Lookout Rd)
Neate Estate <sup>8</sup>	1924? <i>Rodriguez &amp; Thompson</i>	Neate Avenue, Hat Hill Road NW
Govett's Walk Estate <sup>9</sup>	1923 <i>Rodriguez &amp; Thompson</i>	Dell Street
Sylvan Estate <sup>10</sup>	1925 <i>Rodriguez &amp; Thompson</i>	Prince Edward Street (overlooking Memorial Park)
Crown Ridge Estate <sup>11</sup>	1925 & 1926 <i>Rodriguez &amp; Thompson then T.R. Rodriguez &amp; Co.</i>	Row Street & W side of Connaught Road (not Street).
Golf View Estate <sup>12</sup>	1926 <i>T.R. Rodriguez &amp; Co.</i>	E side of Great Western Highway between Whitley Park and Hargraves Street, W side of Wentworth Street between Eady Street and Hargraves Street
Holly Ridge Estate <sup>13</sup>	1926 <i>Rodriguez &amp; Thompson, T.R. Rodriguez &amp; Co.</i>	SE side of Hat Hill Road, Portion 42, between Simpson & Clearview Avenues
Sunny Ridge Estate <sup>14</sup>	1928 <i>Rodriguez &amp; Co.</i>	Radiance and Sunbeam Avenues

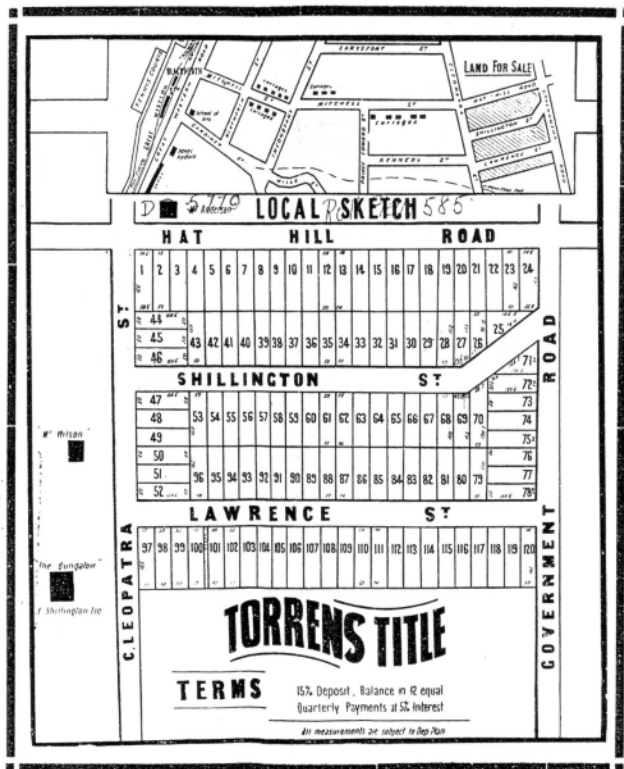
<sup>1</sup> Mitchell Library ZTP: B8/63 (Figure 10A); <sup>2</sup> Land Titles Office, Sydney (Figure 10C), Hardie & Gorman Proprietary Ltd (1919); <sup>3</sup> Mitchell Library ZTP: B8/49 (Figure 10B), Rodriguez Estate Agent (1921a); <sup>4</sup> Rodriguez Estate Agent (1921b); <sup>5</sup> Rodriguez Estate Agent (1921b); <sup>6</sup> Rodriguez & Thompson (1924a); <sup>7</sup> Rodriguez & Thompson (1924b); <sup>8</sup> Mitchell Library ZTP: B8/68; <sup>9</sup> Land Titles Office, Sydney (DP 14546) (Figure 10D), Rodriguez & Thompson (1923); <sup>10</sup> Rodriguez & Thompson (1925a); <sup>11</sup> Land Titles Office, Sydney (DP 14605), Rodriguez & Thompson (1925b); Rodriguez & Co. (1926b); <sup>12</sup> National Library of Australia: MS 3468; <sup>13</sup> Rodriguez & Thompson (1926); Rodriguez & Co. (1926b); <sup>14</sup> Phillips (post-1928, p.91), Rodriguez & Co. (1928).

Overlooking the Golf Links and the property of Parke Pope, Esq.  
**Shillington Estate** THE PINNACLE OF **BLACKHEATH**

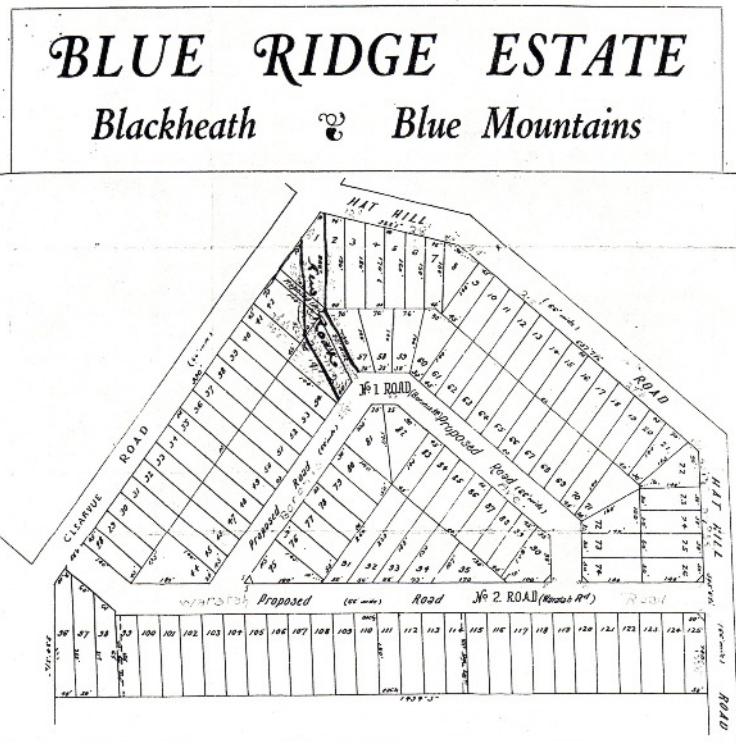
For Auction Sale on the Ground,  
**Saturday, 21st March,**  
 1914, at 3 p.m.



**HARDIE & GORMAN,**  
 PROPRIETARY, LTD.  
 Auctioneers, 133 Pitt St., Sydney.  
 T. R. RODRIGUEZ, Local Agent,  
 BLACKHEATH.  
 W. MYLECHARANE, Licensed Surveyor,  
 R.P.Ant.



A Mitchell Library ZTP: B8/63



Don't leave Blackheath without paying the Deposit on one of these Blocks. If you are away, send the Deposit to the Agent, T. R. RODRIGUEZ, and he will select one to your entire satisfaction. They are all beautiful blocks — beautifully situated amongst the best properties in Blackheath. Splendid Roads.

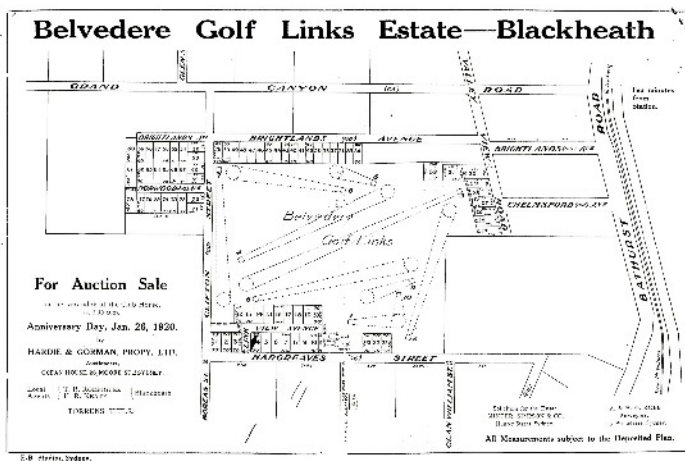
**T. R. Rodriguez** Estate Agent **Blackheath**

Phone: Blackheath 71

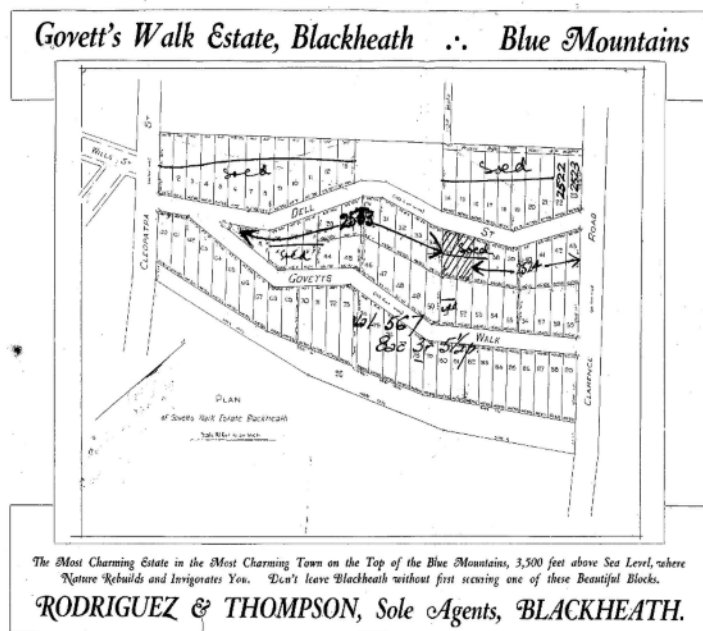
TP 88 / 49

A & N H. E. C. Robitson 1914

B Mitchell Library ZTP: B8/49



C Land Titles Office, Sydney



D Land Titles Office, Sydney DP

Figure 10. Maps of some Blackheath Estates.





BMCC Photo Library PF 1134.

**Figure 11.** Thomas Rodriguez extracted from a group photograph of Municipal Councillors and the Empire Press delegation, taken at Govetts Leap Lookout on 4 September 1925 (Yeaman 1976, p.354).

- 1923 – he was involved with the establishment of the Lookout at Mount Boyce (Lear 1967, p.8-9) which was opened on 26 January, 1929.

- 1923 – he proposed the construction of the Blackheath Soldiers' Memorial Park and Pool (Anonymous 1923b; Lear 1967, p.11-12).

- 4 July 1924 (Smith 1996, p.50) – a Swimming Basin Fund Committee (Anonymous 1924d) was formed with Thomas as secretary, he being the man behind the establishment of that facility (Anonymous 1924e).

- August 1924 – he became a Director of The Blue Mountains Starr-Bowkett Building Co-operative Society Ltd. (Anonymous 1924c).

- May 1926 – he was elected Vice-President of Blackheath Football Club (Anonymous 1926f).

- May 1926 – he resigned from Blackheath Municipal Council (Anonymous 1926d,e).

- 1 December 1928 – he was successful in the Triennial Election for Blackheath Municipal Council (Anonymous 1928c).

It is obvious that Thomas Rodriguez had little spare time for recreation but he did play competitive billiards (e.g. Anonymous 1915, 1922d, 1927, 1928a). In his early years he must have been a fit and active bushwalker in order to have been able to inspect the terrain which led to his prediction of the feasibility of creating what became known as the Rodriguez Pass. He still had stamina in July 1900 for he participated in a search party which descended at Perry's Lookdown and experienced deep snow while

searching along the Grose River in the morning, and then spent the afternoon searching and walking along the Grose River from the junction of Govetts Leap Creek to Hartley Vale Station.

“They arrived at Blackheath by 7.30 p.m., after having walked some 26 miles. This is supposed to be the first party that has done the round trip.” (Anonymous 1900d).

Note that some of those involved in the construction of the Engineers Track in 1856-1858 undoubtedly had made the journey from The Junction to the site of the Hartley Vale Station.

### 3. Demise

In 1928 a modest house was purchased in Randwick (Lot C, Gray Street; CoT 1920; [Figure 12](#)) but it was in the name of Amelia Theodora Rodriguez as was the mortgage that was taken out. However, Sands Directories (1927, p.699 to 1930, p.773) list that house in the name of T.R. Rodriguez and it was only after his death that this publication named his wife as owner (Sands 1931, p.773; 1932-3, p.750). During WWII she must have defaulted on the mortgage payments for there was a mortgagor sale of the property on 20 February 1953 (CoT 1920).

Alderman Rodriguez was still actively participating in Council meetings early in 1929 but his last attendance appears to have been on 2 July (Anonymous 1929b) when his health cannot have been too bad as on that same day his wife sailed from Sydney to Rabaul on the *Montoro* intending to stay with her brother for three months (Anonymous 1929c; Anonymous 1929a). But Thomas Rodriguez had a heart attack later in July and

“An ambulance had been brought from Lithgow to take him to his home in Coogee.” (Lear 1967, p.17).

On 3 August he was reported to be convalescing in Sydney (Anonymous 1929d) while Alderman Sutton cared for the business work in Blackheath. Sensing that his time was almost up he resigned as an Alderman of the Blackheath Municipal Council (Kay 1929).

In September there was a civic tribute to Thomas at a Blackheath Council meeting (Anonymous 1929e) following which in October Rev. Rapkins went to visit him

“at his residence at 5, Gray St., Randwick, and found him so ill, that he will not be able to leave his bed” (Anonymous 1929f).





streetview ©2015 Google

**Figure 12.** Ailsa, 5 Gray Street, Randwick.

Subsequently some councillors went to Sydney to present him with a wallet of notes. Nevertheless, his real estate business was still advertising in those months (e.g. Rodriguez & Thew 1929a,b).

In mid-October his second daughter, Rita Rodriguez, reported an improvement in his health (Rodriguez, R.A. 1929a) but it was temporary for he died on the night of Monday 18 November 1929 (NSW BDM 1929) at the family home, 5 Gray Street, Randwick (Anonymous 1929j) - he was 69 (Anonymous 1929i; Yeaman 1976, p.358) but he was also reported to have been 70 (Anonymous 1929h). The funeral was held on Wednesday 20 November (Anonymous 1929g); Mrs. Rodriguez being the principal mourner (Anonymous 1929k,l). The date on which she returned to Australia from Rabaul has not been established but the time she had with her husband in his last months cannot have been long. Thomas was buried at Botany Cemetery (then called Bunnerong Cemetery - Anonymous 1929i,j) in the Methodist (Uniting) Section A (Row 8, grave 273) and decades later his wife and his three daughters (Figure 13) were interred in the same plot. Almost a year after Thomas' death his widow thanked the School of Arts Committee for their message of Condolence (Anonymous 1930b).

Rita Aimée Rodriguez (note using her pet middle name) swore a deposition on 20 December 1929 (Rodriguez R.A. 1929b) to the effect that death notices had been placed in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 29 November 1929 (Anonymous 1929h) and the *Blackheath Bulletin* on 5 December 1929 but no extant copy of the latter has been found. In dealings with the Supreme Court, Rita acted as agent for her mother and one wonders why the senior daughter Vera did not take on those duties.



Photo: Peter Rickwood 2006

**Figure 13.** The headstone of the Rodriguez grave, Botany Cemetery.

Thomas made his will on 30 August 1929 (Rodriguez 1929c; Figure 14) just 78 days before he died. One of the witnesses was a next-door neighbour from 3, Gray Street and the other a nurse. It was a brief and simple document because everything was left to his wife Aimée.

His assets were Real Estate valued at £1,427, Shares in Blackheath Land Company £37-10-0, Office Furniture £75, Debts owing to the Estate \$712-10-0, CBA bank balance £40-13-10 so amounting to the appreciable sum of £2,292-13-10 but his net estate amounted to just £542 8s 9d. (Rodriguez, A.T. 1929). Many of the documents relating to the probate were witnessed by Aimée's youngest brother Sydney J. Shillington who being a J.P. was suitably qualified.

“Alderman Rodriguez was never naturalised because he could not gain access to the necessary papers. Amongst his documents his family found a half filled in application, but he was at a loss to gain the necessary birth certificate etc.. However, there was no question that he considered himself a true Australian and there is no doubt he proved it.” (Lear 1967, p.26).

“He came to Australia and never regretted it. He never went back.” (Lear 1967, p.29).

“He was a sensitive character who was never aggressive but liked people to see things through his wide vision. He could be fiery if too cautious and stubborn men sought to fence him in. He was unselfish in his desires, and people felt it, and responded in the way he hoped they would. He possessed some kind of magic charm which drew them to his side. He was happy, enjoyed life, loved going to the pictures and hearing good music.” (Yeaman 1976, p.359).

**Figure 14.** Signatures of T.R. Rodriguez - August 1924 and on his will August - 1929.

## Memorials

The lasting memorial to Thomas Rodriguez is undoubtedly the Rodriguez Pass through part of Govett Gorge, but an appeal was launched immediately after his death to gain finances for a more tangible item (Anonymous 1930a,c). One recommendation was that it should be a sundial (Anonymous 1930a) but a second was that it should be

“... a towering memorial lamp, facing the Western-road and which will be seen at all points of entrance to Blackheath,” (Anonymous 1932a).

Later the Rodriguez Memorial Committee suggested to Council that they agree to

“... undertake the upkeep of the proposed memorial lamp to be erected on the Great Western-road.” (Anonymous 1932b).

Cost estimates were ordered:

“Council also decided to suggest to the committee that a memorial costing less for upkeep would be preferable. In regard to this, when the proposed bowling green was under discussion, Ald. Green suggested that nothing more fitting could be created than a Rodriguez Memorial Bowling Club.” (Anonymous 1932b).

A third suggestion was for

“the erection of the “Town Attractions” Notice Board ... as a memorial to the late Mr. Rodriguez.” (Anonymous 1933c).

But the monument that eventuated, was a sundial (Anonymous 1933e) mounted on a red granite plinth (photograph - Lear, undated) designed by Mr. Rowan Lowry, which was erected in the middle of The Gardens (Figure 15) (Anonymous 1934a); sadly, the sundial is now missing. The memorial is on an octagonal three-tiered base seemingly like that originally planned for The Gardens as part of an item in memory of fallen soldiers (Anonymous 1926i).

The Rodriguez sundial was to have been unveiled on 10 March 1934 by Archdeacon Boyce but due to his frailty (Smith 1996, p.56) his son Judge Boyce presided and spoke (Anonymous 1934b) and the Shire President, Percy Wilson, performed “the opening ceremony” and duly acknowledged Mrs. Rodriguez and Mrs. Margery Lear who also were present. In a published letter Mr. Charlie Wadson complained that

“Mr. Paterson had not erected it properly” (Anonymous 1934c, p.4, col.5)

but that was denied. At one time the Sunday of the main weekend in the Blackheath Rhododendron Festival was (*unofficially?*) called Rodriguez Day e.g. 13 November (Anonymous 1988a,b) and 11 November (Anonymous 1990), but that too has disappeared.

In 1932 the Rodriguez family planted an elm tree (*Elmus picorata varigata*) on the east facing slope of Memorial Park (Figure 16) in memory of Thomas Rodriguez as is signified by the plaque beneath it (Figure 17).

“Later, [*by the context after Aimée’s death in 1950*] a beautiful Blue Spruce was imported from Finland by her family and is now thriving close beside her husband’s tree.” (Lear 1967, p.24).

The spruce is behind, and to the right of, the elm (Figure 16).

## Widow - Aimée Rodriguez (Figure 18)

In 1928, just a year before she was widowed, Aimée Rodriguez purchased a house in Randwick (Lot C, Gray Street; CoT 1920) and a mortgage was taken out in her name. The house was named *Ailsa* and became no.5 (Figure 12); Electoral Rolls list her residing there from 1928 to 1931 with Vera, Rita and Margery (from 1926 as Lear) (NSW Electoral Rolls South Sydney/Randwick 1925, 1926 & 1928; and South Sydney/Randwick East 1930; 1931) so it seems that the house was rented for about three years prior to being purchased.

Aimée Rodriguez departed for an extended visit to England on 26 March 1932 (Anonymous 1932c) on the *Moreton Bay* which arrived at Southampton on 9 May 1932 and initially she stayed at 52 Fellows Rd. N.W.3. (UK Incoming Passenger Lists 1878-1960) - the residence of Rita and Max (her daughter and son-in-law). It is likely that she rented out the house in Randwick to others so causing her daughters to make alternative living arrangements.





Photos: Peter Rickwood 2007

**Figure 15.** Rodriguez's Memorial in The Gardens, Blackheath



Photo: Peter Rickwood 2015

**Figure 16.** Rodriguez's Tree in The Memorial Gardens, Blackheath.

The arrow indicates the plaque (Figure 17).

That trip was essentially to be for Aimée to have time near her second daughter Rita but after seven months she sailed back on the *Moldavia*, embarking at London on 2 December 1932 and arriving at Sydney



Photo: Peter Rickwood 2015

**Figure 17.** Plaque beneath Rodriguez's Tree in The Memorial Gardens, Blackheath.

on 12 January 1933 (Anonymous 1933a,b) which accounts for her being in the Supplementary Electoral Roll for 1933. In that year Aimée (wrongly listed as Annie) lived at 102 Mount Street (NSW Electoral Rolls South Sydney/Randwick East 1933 Supplementary) and Vera and Margery were nearby in 106 Brook Street (NSW Electoral Rolls South Sydney/Coogee 1933).



BMCC Photo Library PF1176.

**Figure 18.**

Mrs. Aimée Rodriguez-undated.

“Aimee Rodriguez with her daughter Margery decided that business in Blackheath could not be retrieved on account of the depression. ... There was nothing left for them here.” (Lear 1967, p.22).

Vera had sailed to London on 3 February 1934 to take up a new job, leaving Aimée and Margery in Sydney but on 17 May 1934 (Maloja 1934) they too left for London sailing on the *Mongolia* which arrived on 29 June 1934 (UK Incoming Passenger Lists 1878-1960); their proposed address in the UK was the home of Rita and Max, 52 Fellows Rd., Camden, London N.W.3. (UK Incoming Passenger Lists 1878-1960). Subsequently, Aimée, Vera and Margery joined together to live at 16 Buckland Crescent, Hampstead



(UK Electoral Register Camden/Hampstead 1935), “a very roomy flat at Swiss Cottage in Hampstead” (Lear 1967, p.23), and stayed throughout World War II - for a total of 18 years.

[Both 52 Fellows Road, Hampstead and 16 Buckland Crescent, Hampstead are within a short distance of the Swiss Cottage Tube Station.]

From England Aimée wrote several letters to Blackheath Municipal Council to suggest ways to improve the village (e.g. Anonymous 1936b, col.4), they were received but sometimes bluntly dismissed (Anonymous 1936a, col.4).

After the war “Mrs. M.R. Lear, Mrs. A.T. Rodriguez and Miss V.M. Rodriguez” sailed from Tilbury on 5 April 1949 on the *Orontes* (UK Outward Passenger Lists 1890-1960) arriving at Sydney on 10 May 1949 (Anonymous 1949a,b).

[<http://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/Scripts/PassengerSearch.asp> gave 1 May which was the date of arrival at Fremantle.]

All three went to live at 9 Sully St., Randwick (NSW Electoral Roll Kingsford Smith/Randwick East 1949 Supplementary) (Figure 19; now called *San Remo*) but less than a year after returning Aimée died in that house early on 25 April 1950 (Anonymous 1950a) never having made a final visit to Blackheath (Lear 1967, p.24).

Lear (1967, p.24) wrote that those three ladies returned to Australia in 1948 (but that has to be 1949!) to discover that the situation of the real estate market was dire. Aimée had been in touch with solicitors during the war but the purchaser of the Rodriguez Real Estate business (Mr. Thew) had failed to make payments in accordance with an agreement (Lear 1967, p.23) and the situation was considered to be a write-off. The daughters tried to recoup their father’s investment properties, the documentation for which had been left in “a chest” in Australia with a solicitor but

“He calmly informed them that he did not think that they would be returning to Australia and had burnt the contents.” (Lear 1967, p.25).

In 1939 (Municipality of Blackheath 1939; Geddes 1939a,b), advertised “Land to Be Sold for Default” of payment of rates and the Public Trustee, on behalf of the Blackheath Municipal Council, and advertised was an auction that was held on 20 May 1939 (Thompson 1939) specifically for holdings by Aimée and Vera. Again in September 1942, the Municipality of Blackheath (1942) gave notice of a forthcoming sale for default and six parcels of land were auctioned on 28 November 1942 (Public Trustee 1942; Soper Bros. & Wallace & Co. 1942). In a huge 1945 advertisement Aimee Theodora Rodriguez and ‘Est.

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Photo: Peter Rickwood, 1 June 2015

**Figure 19.** *San Remo*, 9 Sully Street, Randwick.

T.R. Rodriguez’ were listed as an “Untraceable Owners” and their debts to the Council were publicly revealed (Municipality of Blackheath 1945).

Clearly these properties did not sell in wartime for in 1947 yet another attempt to sell the parcels was advertised (Municipality of Blackheath 1947) and again in 1950 (City of Blue Mountains 1950). Consequently the resultant accounting for her estate was somewhat complex with assets totalling £3,230-18-2 but debts £6,237-1-6 so it ended up in debit. Aimée deemed that her estate be split equally between her three daughters so each ended with a “debit Balance” (Figure 20; Annexure “D”, 1952) which were considerable sums sixty years ago. The executrix and trustee of Aimée’s will was Vera Rodriguez who had to handle the paperwork.

## Conclusion

Although not an Australian by birth, Thomas Rodriguez was undoubtedly the most progressive thinking resident of Blackheath in the first quarter of the twentieth century. His employment changed from Station Master to hotelier and then to real estate agent but the duties of those positions did not prevent him from engaging in work for the community. He not only proposed activities but he often made them happen, commonly by raising the necessary funding. He was an active participant in numerous organisations, usually being one of the named officers, and he became an Alderman of the Blackheath Municipal Council although he was not able to gain election to Mayor. But his material successes for the community were sometimes achieved at the expense of popularity for he was single minded and ‘difficult’. His personal life is not that well known but the fact that his wife did not live with him for his final two decades hints at an imperfect marriage.

## ANNEXURE "D."

FORM OF ANNEXURE to Affidavit lodged with application for administration, or with application under Section 117 (5), Stamp Duties Act, 1920-1949, setting out details of persons entitled to property included in the dutiable estate.

Name of Person Entitled (See note at foot)	Relationship (if any) to deceased (See note at foot)	Description of Property	How Derived (e.g., by Will, Intestacy, Disposition <i>inter vivos</i> , etc.)	Value		
				£	s.	d.
VERA MARIE RODRIGUEZ	DAUGHTER	1/3 Entire Estate	By Will	1,002	1	2
MARJORIE RODRIGUEZ LEAR	DAUGHTER	1/3 Entire Estate	By Will	1,002	1	1
RITA AIMEE LOEFFLER	DAUGHTER	1/3 Entire Estate	By Will	1,002	1	1

**Figure 20.** Distribution of the estate of Aimée Theodora Rodriguez.

### APPENDIX

#### TOMAS RAMON RODRIGUEZ

*aka* Thomas Raymond Rodriguez (note: anglicised given names are first seen in the Register entry for his 1888 Marriage.)

#### Summary of his immediate Family.

- Biography**
- b. Tomas Ramon RODRIGUEZ 1860, Porto Plato (Marriage Transcript), N coast of Santo Domingo; parents Thomas Almzo (or Alonzo) and (his first wife of three) Maria (or Mary) (née MACMACHON) Rodriguez (Anonymous 1888a).
  - three sisters (un-named) and a brother (also un-named; Lear 1967, preface p.i) who joined Tomas in South Africa.
  - two half-sisters from the second marriage to Alice (or Angelina) MERCIER.
  - b. Felicie RODRIGUEZ 1860 (death certificate) or 1863 (NSW BDM 1891) (*aka* FELICE or Felicite or Felicitie or Fée).
  - m. Felicie RODRIGUEZ to John Le Grand JACOB in Sydney (NSW BDM 1891) on 23 December 1891 (Anonymous 1892b).
  - d. Felicie JACOB 24 April 1950, Weybridge, Surrey, U.K., aged 90 (UK Index of Wills 1950)
  - b. Maria De las Nieves RODRIGUEZ (*aka* Marie de les Nieves RODRIGUEZ *aka* NEIGE), ?1868, Neuilly France (Census of England and Wales 1891) [*most probably Neuilly-sur-Seine*].
  - m. Maria D N RODRIGUEZ to Alfred ELLIOT on 20 August 1890 at St. Clements, Marrickville (NSW BDM 1890)
  - d. Maria De las Nieves ELLIOT, December quarter 1944 at Chester, Cheshire (UK Free BDM 1944).
  - father had a third family (Lear 1967, preface p.ii) "What ever money there was he felt must go to the third wife and family."
- Departed:** from Cape Town on 28 May 1883 (Anonymous 1883d,e).
- Arrived:** Sydney, Australia on 22 June 1883 on the vessel "La Precurseur", 1005 Tons; ex Bordeaux (Anonymous 1883a). Arrived with General Cargo via Cape Town (Anonymous (1883d,e).
- m. Thomas Raymond RODRIGUEZ to Amelia Theodora SHILLINGTON, 4 January 1888 at St. James Church, Ironbarks (Anonymous 1888a; NSW BDM 1888b).
  - b. Amelia Theodora SHILLINGTON 1869 (NSW BDM 1869); parents John SHILLINGTON & Maria Wilson (née OATES).
- Siblings:**
- b. Ernest Eversby SHILLINGTON 26 February 1871 at Wallerawang (NSW BDM 1871).
  - d. Ernest Eversby SHILLINGTON 9 January 1949 in St. John of God Hospital, Subiaco, WA (Roller 2015).
  - b. John Thomas SHILLINGTON 1873 (NSW BDM 1873).
  - d. John Thomas SHILLINGTON 21 November 1928 at Brisbane, Qld. (Anonymous 1928b)
  - b. Sydney J. SHILLINGTON 22 October 1875 at Obley (NSW BDM 1875).



- d. Sydney J. SHILLINGTON 6 June 1931 in Darlinghurst, registered at Sydney (Death Certificate No. 5071/1931)(Anonymous 1931d,e)
- b. Catherine J. SHILLINGTON *date unknown*.
- d. Catherine MUSGROVE 1921 (NSW BDM 1921).
- d. Aimee Theodora RODRIGUEZ 25 April 1950 (NSW Probate Index 1947-1952) at 9 Sully Street, Randwick (Anonymous 1950a; NSW BDM 1950); parents John & Maria: aged 80 (grave); parents John & Maria Wilson SHILLINGTON.  
funeral: 27 April 1950, St. Jude's Church, Randwick (Anonymous 1950b)  
buried: 27 April 1950 (Anonymous 1950b) Botany Cemetery (then called Bunnerong Cemetery), Methodist (Uniting) Section A, Row 8, grave 273; grave inscription - Aimee Theodora RODRIGUEZ ([Figure 13](#)).
- d. Thomas R. RODRIGUEZ 18 November 1929, at 5 Gray Street, Coogee (Anonymous 1929i; NSW BDM 1929) aged 69 (Anonymous 1929i,j; Yeaman 1976, p.359) or 70 (grave; Anonymous 1929h); or died 19 November 1929 (Anonymous 1929h; Gibbney & Smith (1987, p.223; NSW Probate Index 1929-1938).  
buried: 20 November 1929 (Anonymous 1929g,h), Botany Cemetery, Methodist (Uniting) Section A, Row 8, grave 273; grave inscription - Tomas Ramon RODRIGUEZ ([Figure 13](#)).

**Photographs:** BMCC Photo Library PF 1134 ([Figure 11](#)), PF 1176, PF 1762, PF 1932 ([Figure 2](#)) ; Mountaineer 1900, p.1110 [*probably the best image is that scanned from a newspaper [Figure 7](#)*]; Anonymous 1929i; Yeaman 1976, pp.96, 358 ([Figure 1](#)); Yeaman 1983, p.13, cols.3-4; Rickwood 2005a, p.213; Silvey 2000, cols.3-4 (in a group).

- Progeny:**
1. b. Vera M. RODRIGUEZ 3 September 1888, at Ironbarks (NSW BDM 1888c; Anonymous 1888c,d).  
d. Vera Marie RODRIGUEZ 28 June 1968, Manly (NSW BDM 1968) aged 80,  
buried: Botany Cemetery, Methodist (Uniting) Section A, Row 8, grave 273 - [Figure 13](#)).
  2. b. Rita T. (Theodora or Theodoria) RODRIGUEZ 26, 27 or 28 June 1893 (Lyre Bird 1893; NSW BDM 1893 but as Rodriguez (*sic*)).  
m. Rita Theodora RODRIGUEZ to Max Wilhelm Julius LOEFFLER 30 April 1931 in London, England (Anonymous 1931a,b,c)  
d. Rita T. LOEFFLER 14 July 1979, (NSW BDM 1979; NSW Probate Index 1980) aged 86; parents Tomas Ramon and Aimee Theodora (*no maiden name and no district given*)  
buried: Botany Cemetery, Methodist (Uniting) Section A, Row 8, grave 273; grave inscription - Rita LOEFFLER ([Figure 13](#)).
  3. b. Marjorie RODRIGUEZ 6 August 1901, Blackheath (NSW BDM 1901 but as Rodriguez (*sic*)) (IGI recorded birth under 'Margorie'); parents: Thomas R. & Amelia T. confinement "at her residence" (Anonymous 1901e).  
m. Marjorie RODRIGUEZ to Gerald M.L. LEAR 18 March 1926 at Randwick (Marriage Certificate No. 1793/1926)(Anonymous 1926b,c)  
d. Margery Rodriguez LEAR 17 August 1982 (NSW Probate Index 1982; Anonymous, 1982a), registered at Manly (NSW BDM 1982) (IGI recorded death as 19 August under 'Margorie') aged 81.  
buried: Monday 23 August 1982 (Anonymous, 1982b), Botany Cemetery, Methodist (Uniting) Section A, Row 8, grave 273); grave inscription - Margery LEAR ([Figure 13](#)).

**Blackheath:** Arrived: 22 April 1889.

Departed: 4 December 1907

Returned: 18 February 1914

Departed: September 1929 (see Low 2005, p.587) just prior to death.

**Occupations:** Stationmaster, Hotel Manager, Car and Bus Transport Manager, Real Estate Agent.

**Eponymy:** Rodriguez Avenue (Rickwood 2005b, p. 460);  
Rodriguez Lookout (Rickwood 2005c, p. 543; Fox 1999, Item 848; 2001, Item 1165; 2006, Item 1718) ([Figure 3](#)).  
Rodriguez Walk (Rickwood 2005d, p.579);  
Rodriguez Pass (Fox 1999, Item 849; 2001, Item 1166; 2006, Item 1719)

## Acknowledgements

We thank Brian and John Fox for their significant contributions to the information contained in this account, and Brian Fox kindly gave the encouragement necessary for PCR to persist with this research over many years. The Blue Mountains City Council Local Studies Librarian, Mr. John Merriman, is thanked for providing the image files used as Figures 2, 6, 11 and 18.

## Abbreviations

AGCI	Australasian Genealogy Computer Index
BDM	Births, Deaths and Marriages
BMCC	Blue Mountains City Council
CoT	Certificate of Title
E&H	Environment & Heritage
IGI	International Genealogical Index
NSW BDM	NSW Registry of Births, Deaths & Marriages
NSWGR	New South Wales Government Railways and Tramways



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Reprinted by the Rotary Club of Blackheath (May 1977) with an index but copies were not numbered.



## TUCK'S BLUE MOUNTAINS OILETTE POSTCARDS

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&amp;

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[cel19110@bigpond.net.au](mailto:cel19110@bigpond.net.au)**Abstract**

Raphael Tuck and Sons Ltd was one of the largest manufacturers of postcards in Europe in the early 1900s. They produced many types of postcard of which the oilettes, introduced in 1903, were one of the most famous and featured full colour reproductions of paintings of scenes created by artists of different countries. Seventeen series featured Australian scenes painted by A.H. Fullwood and two of these were of the Blue Mountains; this paper documents the twelve cards in these two series and examines the printing technique used. Scans of the cards showed that they were printed using a three-colour half tone process, that was carried out in Bavaria adding another layer to an already complex manufacturing process. A second coloured oilette postcard featuring Weeping Rock at Wentworth Falls was printed in England and is shown to have been produced by the same process.

**Keywords:** Raphael Tuck, postcard, Albert Fullwood, painting, three-colour printing, Blue Mountains.

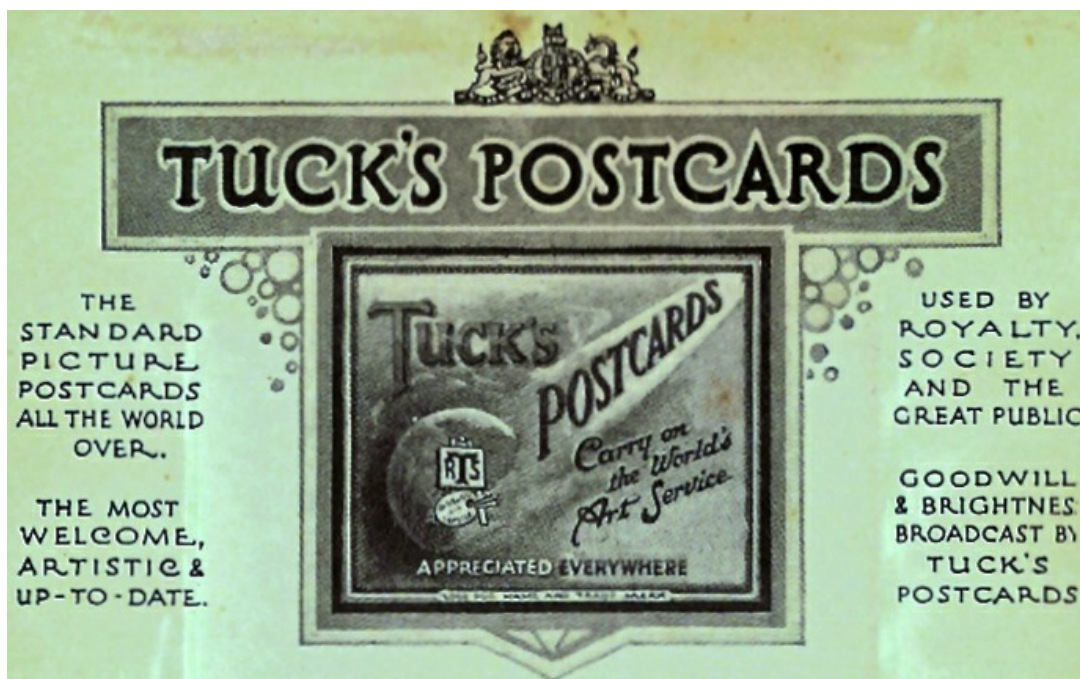
**INTRODUCTION**

One of the authors [EH] initially came across two postcards from Series 7355 of 'Blue Mountains' Oilette postcards produced by Raphael Tuck and Sons Ltd (Tuck's) and somewhat later two more were found. This prompted a serious, and successful, search for the other two in that series and those in the related Series 7400 'Blue Mountains'. Cook (1986, p.186) has listed these twelve cards which are reproductions of paintings of different scenes in the Blue Mountains, New South Wales; one card is in portrait format and eleven are in landscape format. Postcards with painted scenes of Blue Mountains locations were a rarity in the early 1900s, the vast majority of cards at that time being lithographed black and white prints, or real photographs.

These twelve Oilettes have subtle colours and form two collectible sets; a third set (Series 7478, 'Jenolan Caves') is better regarded as a member of the Greater Blue Mountains cards and is treated separately (Halbert & Ellis 2015a).

**Raphael Tuck and Sons Ltd**

In the early 1900s Raphael Tuck and Sons Ltd was one of the largest postcard manufacturers in Europe. Tuck was a German who emigrated to Britain in 1865, where he set up a furniture and picture framing business. This expanded to include children's scraps and embossed photograph publishing, and he set up his firm in London to dominate the fine art publishing scene in Britain. His sons joined him in 1870 and ultimately took over the business. A competition in 1880 for Christmas card designs created widespread public interest. In 1893 Queen Victoria granted the firm the Royal Warrant of Appointment and thereafter Tuck's cards bore the message 'Art Publishers to Their Majesties the King and Queen'. Future sovereigns continued the warrant of appointment.



<http://eph.tuckdb.org/items/6990>.  
**Figure 1.** The header of Tuck's Postcards Catalogue (Anonymous 1929).

Tuck began his gigantic postcard business in 1894 with an experimental postcard. This was followed by a series of twelve cards in 1899 and from there his postcard business expanded "to cover almost every corner of the world and every conceivable subject" (Cook 1986, p.156).

It was reported that:

"even . . . specialists could never hope to own all examples of the hundreds of thousands published by that firm" (Klamkin & Klamkin 1974, p.38).

In 1903 Tuck produced the first Oilette series postcards of painted views of Hertfordshire (Connor 2000, p.31) that are standard sized postcards approximately 90 by 140 mm (3.5 by 5.5 inches). In subsequent years Oilettes covered a very wide range of subjects including British and overseas landscapes, resorts, towns, counties, lakes and seascapes, to name just a few. Each series contained six different cards and thousands of series were produced. The cards were based on art, attempting to reproduce the apparent texture and nature of an oil painting of a scene rather than by taking a photograph of it. They were sometimes referred to as ‘The Aristocrats of Picture Postcards’ (Anonymous 1929, p.2) or as ‘veritable miniature oil paintings’ (Braun et al. 2015b). Many different artists were employed by Raphael Tuck and Sons. Ltd. to produce the paintings that in turn were the basis for the postcards. In the case of the Blue Mountains Series Oilettes (Series 7355 ‘Blue Mountains’ and Series 7400 ‘Blue Mountains’) we know he was the artist and there is evidence that Fullwood was in England when he made the paintings. A.H. Fullwood was responsible for the art work behind the Australian series of Oilettes and 17 series of Australian views are known to have been produced by him (Cook 1986, pp.111, 184-187).

The early 1900s was a period of intense development in printing techniques. Many companies in Europe and England were developing different printing methods and adapting these to deal with colour printing.

### **The artist: Albert Henry Fullwood**

A.H. Fullwood was born in England in 1863 and studied art at the Birmingham Institute. He came to Australia in 1883 and quickly gained work in Sydney as a lithographic draughtsman and designer. Fullwood was a very capable and respected artist, exhibiting with the Royal Art Society of New South Wales within a year of arriving in Australia and painting with the Heidelberg School artists at Sirius Cove on Sydney Harbour (Cook 1986, p.111).

Fullwood worked for various Sydney newspapers and journals as an illustrator and in 1885 was appointed one of the artists for the *Picturesque Atlas of Australasia* (Garran 1886; Hughes-d’Aeth 2001; Terry 2015). It was probably during this time, between 1885 and 1888, that he visited the Blue Mountains and sketched in the Upper Mountains and at Jenolan Caves.

In 1886 he left Sydney by boat for Newcastle to go on a lengthy sketching tour which encompassed many towns in New England. He did much of his work at this time from photographs as discussed by Hughes-d’Aeth (2001, pp.168-169) and spent a great deal of time travelling he got to know Australia and sketch its countryside. After the bank crash of 1893 he was forced to auction his works (in 1900; Terry 2015) and he left Australia for America in 1900 (Cook 1986, p.111) where he spent a year. In 1901 he returned to England where he stayed until 1920 before returning to Australia.

Cook (1986, p.111) wrote:

“Fullwood’s postcard work dates from his period in London, when he repainted many of the scenes which he had originally sketched for the *Picturesque Atlas*, ...”

This is probably when he created the 17 series of Australian views and 6 series of New Zealand views for Raphael Tuck and Sons Ltd. From the appearance of the cards it seems that Fullwood could have used water colour paints though we have no confirmation of this (pers. comm. Janet Zimmerman 2014). It also seems likely that a competent artist such as Fullwood would be able to produce paintings more quickly with water colour paint than with a medium such as oil paint. This may have been significant given the number of paintings that such artists produced. It is also possible, though unlikely, that the water colour effect was a by-product generated by the reproduction process, which was most likely a variety of chromolithography.

But what did he use as the basis for the scenes? Were they original paintings made on site in Australia, or did he use sketches? Did he have photos as backup, or did he use some combination of all of these?

Given that in the period 1885 to 1890 he probably visited the mountains in connection with his work for *The Picturesque Atlas of Australasia* then it is likely that he produced copious sketches at the various places he visited. However, it is known that Fullwood did use photographs on occasion and he may have had photographs taken as backup while he was travelling, and that it was those that he worked from in England in the early 1900s.

Regardless of the method of production, the scenes in the paintings are all clearly recognisable. Some show quite fine details which were probably only discernable to someone painting or sketching on site. An example is the tiny train which appears near the top left border of the card shown in [Figure 3](#). A green arrow points to the train which is in the correct position, and scaled about right for the distance and moreover is correct in showing significant smoke belching from the engine’s stack as the train would have been going uphill at this point and working hard.

### **Blue Mountains Oilette Postcard Fronts**

The most significant part of each card is the reproduction of a painting on the front face. Eleven of the cards are in landscape format and one in portrait format as the content is predominantly vertical.

The front faces do not have a border but in one of the lower corners there is a two line title painted by the artist A.H. Fullwood. The first line contains the words ‘The Blue Mts. NSW.’, sometimes written in full as ‘Blue Mountains NSW’, and can be regarded as the series title; beneath this there is an individual painting title such as ‘Mt. Piddington’. Originally these titles may simply have been a method whereby the artist could keep track of his canvases, given the considerable number that he must have had stored and underway at any onetime. The front also contains the word ‘Oilette’ with or without inverted commas and a representation of the Tuck’s double-easel trade mark.



*Tucks database (Braun et al. 2015a)*

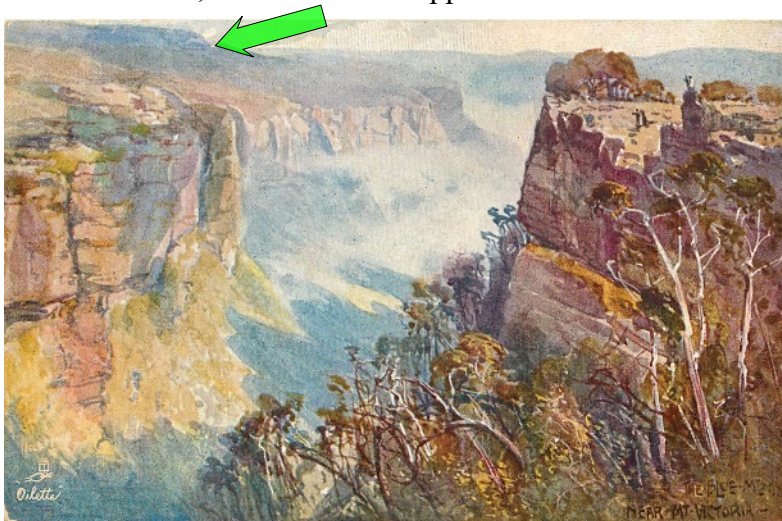
**Figure 2.** Front: “The Blue Mts. N.S.W. Bluffs Mt. Victoria.”

Rear: “Blue Mountains N.S.W. ‘Bluffs’ near Mount Victoria. Although the Blue Mountains are at present principally a pleasure resort, coal and Kerosine Shale are found there and will probably later develop into a large industry.”



**Series 7355. Blue Mountains.**

The view appears to be that seen when looking east towards Blackheath from Mount Piddington. However, the cliff line in this postcard has a prominent pinnacle that is not obvious in the present day cliff line, and the postcard in [Figure 3](#) definitely shows the present day cliff line. This cliff line is complex and while there are several rock outcrops none appear to be as pinnacle-like as portrayed on this card, though it is possible that current levels of vegetation are obscuring the rock. It is also possible that the view may be of a different location; it is somewhat similar to one seen when looking east from Govetts Leap at Blackheath to Pulpit Rock Lookout. Note that the rear description includes the word ‘near’, which does not appear in the front title.



*Tucks database (Braun et al. 2015a)*

**Figure 3.** Front: “The Blue Mts. N.S.W. Near Mt. Victoria.”

Rear: “Blue Mountains N.S.W. Near ‘Mount Victoria’. This view near Mount Victoria is very grand. Here the depth of the Valley is about two thousand feet, while Mount Victoria towers over four thousand feet above seal level.

This scene is from Mount Piddington looking east towards Blackheath. It contains quite an accurate representation of the middle cliff line. The scale and perspective of the plateau above the cliff appear quite accurate, especially with

the steam train in the upper left of the picture. The green arrow points to the train.

*Tucks database (Braun et al. 2015a)*

**Figure 4.** Front: “The Blue Mts N.S.W. Mt Piddington.”

Rear: “Blue Mountains N.S.W. ‘Mount Piddington’. Mount Piddington is near Mount Victoria and from this point it is a grand sight to view the setting sun and watch the slanting rays lighting up the grand surrounding panorama.”



This view appears to be from Mount Piddington looking west over Hourne Point.





*Tucks database (Braun et al. 2015a)*  
**Figure 5.** Front: “The Blue Mountains N.S.W. Prince’s Rock, Wentworth Falls.”  
 Rear: “Blue Mountains N.S.W. ‘Prince’s Rock’, Wentworth Falls. At Wentworth Falls are many beautiful views, and this is one of the finest - with the great bluffs standing out from King’s Tableland on the left. The group of figures on the rock in the centre of the scene gives some idea of the magnitude of these falls.”

This view is looking south-east towards the Kings Tableland and Mount Solitary, with Jamison Creek and Wentworth Falls hidden in the valley immediately to the left of the picture.

*Tucks database (Braun et al. 2015a)*  
**Figure 6.** Front: “The Blue Mts. N.S.W. Weeping Rock, Wentworth Falls.”  
 Rear: “Blue Mountains N.S.W. ‘The Weeping Rock’, Wentworth Falls. Wentworth Falls is about seventy miles from Sydney and the ‘Weeping Rock’ is one of its most popular points.”



The perspective of the postcard of Weeping Rock makes it appear that the waterfall is about 7 to 8 m high - far too high. Other sources such as Anonymous (n.d., p.63) say that it is “about 20ft.” (6 m) high, whereas personal on-site measurement (EH and pers. comm. Brian Fox, email 5 March 2015.) suggest that it is closer to 4 m high. Exaggeration of scale was not uncommon in Tuck’s postcards (Braun et al. 2015b).



*Tucks database (Braun et al. 2015a)*  
**Figure 7.** Front: “The Blue Mts. N.S.W. Katoomba Falls.”  
 Rear: “Blue Mountains N.S.W. ‘Katoomba Falls’. The Katoomba Falls are a fine sight, especially when swollen by several days rain. These Falls drop hundreds of feet into the valley below where they help to feed the Cox’ (sic) river. In this neighbourhood (sic) the Mountain Eagle may often be seen.”

Several views of this waterfall plus the Three Sisters at Katoomba may be seen from lookouts on the track round the cliff edge and leading down into the valley.

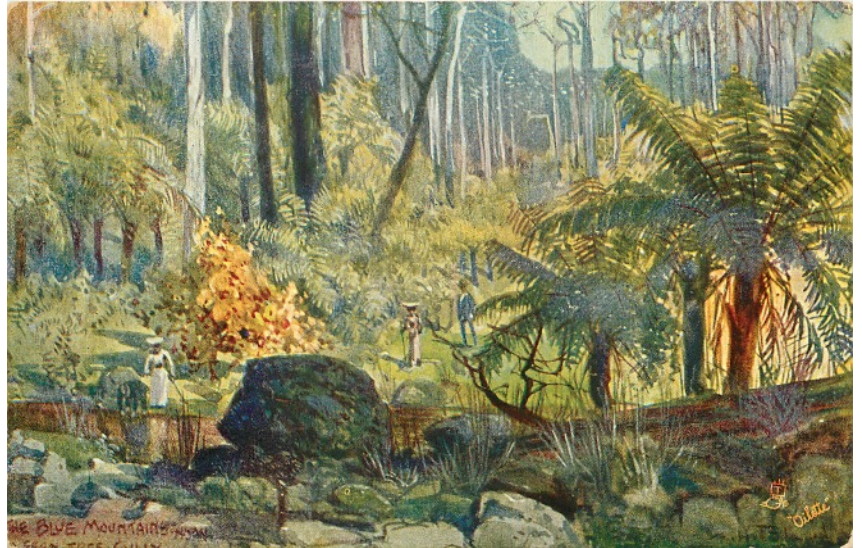


**Series 7400. Blue Mountains.**

*Tucks database (Braun et al. 2015a)*

**Figure 8.** Front: “The Blue Mountains N.S.W. A Fern Tree Gully.”

Rear: “Blue Mountains N.S.W. ‘A Fern Tree Gully’. This is a typical scene of the Blue Mountains where tree ferns often grow, with very charming effect, to a height of forty feet.”



The title for this painting is ‘A Fern Tree Gully’ which is a generic description, and as such it could apply to any of the many fern groves, glens and gullies which are in the Blue Mountains. There is a specific Fern Tree Gully, a small valley in Fairy Bower on the western side of Mount Victoria (Fox 2006, p.109). However, there is no strong evidence that Fullwood meant this location in particular.

*Blue Mountains Historical Society Collection.*

**Figure 9.** Front: “The Blue Mountains N.S.W. Echo Point, Leura.”

Rear: “Blue Mountains N.S.W. ‘Echo Point’, Leura. Echo Point at Leura near Katoomba is a favourite picnic resort. On the Blue Mountains, at various places where there are celebrated views, the Government has made Public Reserves and placed them in the hands of trustees, so assuring to the people access for all time. This point gives a fine echo which repeats itself from mountain to mountain.”



This is an accurate representation of the view from Echo Point, looking out towards Mount Solitary and the Kings Tableland.

*Blue Mountains Historical Society Collection.*

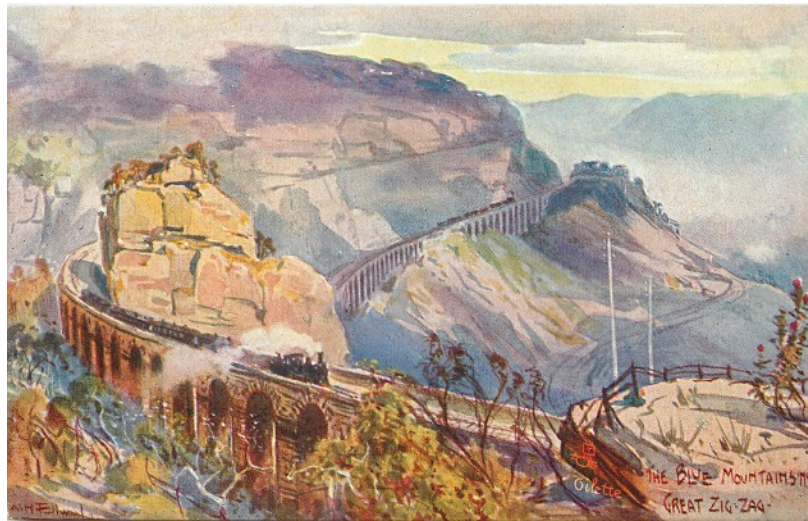
**Figure 10.** Front: “The Blue Mountains N.S.W. Govett’s Leap.”

Rear: “Blue Mountains N.S.W. ‘Govett’s Leap’. Govett’s Leap, so named after the surveyor who discovered the place, is situated about a mile from Blackheath, the nearest Railway Station. Around here are many fine views, but this is the principal one. Looking down to the Valley of the Grosse (*sic*) the landscape extends for about fifty miles, but in viewing distances in Australia one is apt, on account of the atmosphere, to be deceived as to their extent.” The view is recognisable and appears to have been taken from one of the lookouts near the present day Govett’s Leap Car Park.





*Tucks database (Braun et al. 2015a)*



**Figure 11.** Front: “The Blue Mountains N.S.W. Great Zig-Zag.” Rear: “Blue Mountains N.S.W. ‘The Great Zig-Zag’. The Great Zig-Zag is at the end of this chain of mountains. Here the Great Western Main Line Railway crosses from Sydney and has to descend several thousand feet to the Bathurst Plains, winding about down the face of the mountain. The cost of this great piece of engineering is reported to have been over one million sterling.”

The view here is from the Clarence end of the Zig-Zag looking towards Lithgow.

*Tucks database (Braun et al. 2015a)*

**Figure 12.** Front: “The Blue Mts. N.S.W. Orphan Rock, Katoomba.” Rear: “Blue Mountains N.S.W. ‘The Orphan Rock’, Katoomba. The Orphan Rock at Katoomba is a much visited spot. The Rock stands alone, hence its name. The great Kanimbula Valley stretches away to the distance. Katoomba is about seventy nine miles from Sydney.”

This view is recognisable as Orphan Rock, the large rock formation on the eastern side of the Scenic Railway at Katoomba. The walking track to the top was opened in 1934 and closed about 1958 (Fox 2006, p.225).



*Tucks database (Braun et al. 2015a)*

**Figure 13.** Front: “The Blue Mountains N.S.W. Three Sisters, Katoomba.” Rear: “Blue Mountains N.S.W. ‘Three Sisters’, Katoomba. The Three Sisters is the name given to the huge masses of rock rising over a thousand feet above the Kanimbula (*sic*) Valley which rolls away for many miles in the distance. In the picture the vast height is shown by the comparative size of the trees.”

This is a rendering of the Three Sisters. The elements and proportions of the scene are correct but the fine details are loosely drawn.



### Signatures

The name A.H. Fullwood was painted on the original art work of each card in the ‘Blue Mountains’ series of Oilettes. Sometimes it is difficult to see on the postcards due to the low contrast between the name and the background colours, and sometimes because the edges of the cards are worn.

One of the most visible of the signatures, shown below in [Figure 14](#) has been taken from an original [Figure 9](#).

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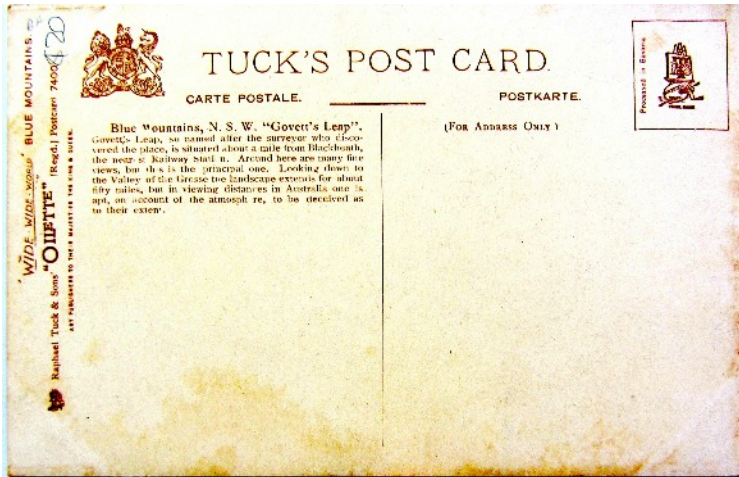
Blue Mountains Historical Society Collection.

**Figure 14.** A.H. Fullwood signature on Figure 9.



### Postcard Rear Sides

Oilette rear faces are often quite complex with a typical one being shown in Figure 15.



Blue Mountains Historical Society Collection.

**Figure 15.** Rear of an original postcard (Figure 10) without postmark.

### Descriptions

The rear of each card contains several sections. It is divided with 'TUCK'S POST CARD' written across the top. Flanking it on the left hand side is the Royal Warrant of Appointment. On the right hand side is a stamp outline containing the words 'Processed in Bavaria' and Tuck's trade mark. On the left hand side are publication details (credit lines) including the series number and a logo saying 'Wide-Wide-World'. Each rear side also contains the Tuck's description which contains the words 'Blue Mountains, N.S.W.' and then continues with the painting title (Tuck's title), which in turn runs straight into a description with four to seven lines of text. There can be minor discrepancies between the Tuck's title and the title painted by Fullwood; these include changed words such as 'Mt' to 'Mount', added quotation marks, and even added words such as 'near'. These details can be important since some of the Mount Victoria cards have quite similar titles. In this paper, we have shown the front of each card along with its Fullwood painting title and the Tuck's description.

### Postmarks

Postmarks can supply simple or more complex information. A simple postmark such as the example shown in Figure 16 shows that it was stamped in Sydney on 9 February 1907. Postmarks and other postal information relevant to the Blue Mountains are well covered by Dyer & Dyer (2004).

More complex postmarks, such as the example shown in Figure 17, provide several pieces of information. That postmark has the date 26 January 1906, which gives us an idea of when the card was sold. It also shows the letters 'VI...A', which is probably part of the word 'VICTORIA'. The term 'UPTRAIN' stands for the train going to Sydney since 'up to' and 'down from' were terms used in the early days of New South Wales railways for trains going 'to' and 'from' Sydney



Blue Mountains Historical Society Collection.

**Figure 16.** Postmark on an original postcard (Figure 12).





Ross Ellis Collection.

Figure 17. Postmark on an original postcard

respectively. This term now causes confusion in the Blue Mountains because we associate ‘up’ with elevation rather than direction. Finally, the letters ‘TPO’ stand for ‘Travelling Post Office’. These were special train carriages where mail was sorted en route (Dyer & Dyer 2004, pp.28-34). They were introduced in 1870 and ran until October 1984.

**Stamps**

It is interesting to note the stamps used in these two cards. The card in Figure 16 was addressed to Java with a green halfpenny stamp whereas the card in Figure 17, postmarked January 1906, had a red one penny stamp and was addressed to Surry Hills, a suburb of Sydney.

**Additional Tuck’s Oilette postcard of Weeping Rock, Wentworth Falls.**

In addition to the two known Blue Mountains Oilettes series described earlier, one other Tuck’s Oilette postcard featuring a Blue Mountains scene is known to the authors. This is shown as Figure 18 below. The card is coloured and appears to have been screen printed with blue, red and yellow inks. The card also has the word ‘Oilette’ and the Tuck’s trade mark on the face of the card.



Blue Mountains Historical Society Collection.

Figure 18. Front: “New South Wales. Weeping Rock Wentworth Falls Blue Mountains.”

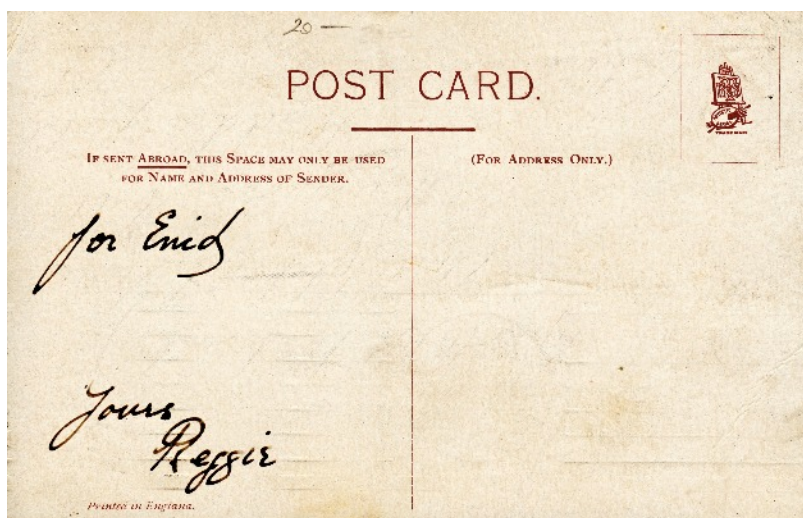


Figure 19. Rear of the postcard in Figure 18.

We have little information on this card. The artist responsible is unknown. Does it represent one of several cards published as individual cards? Was it a trial card? Does it predate or postdate the postcard in Figure 6?

The rear of this card (Figure 19) is quite different to those of the cards in the earlier series. It is a plain divided rear with ‘POST CARD’ written across the top. There is no Royal Warrant of Appointment. On the right hand side is a stamp outline containing Tuck’s trade mark. There are no publication details on the left hand side except for a line on the bottom of the card saying ‘Printed in England’. The card is discussed in more detail elsewhere (Halbert & Ellis 2015b).



### The Value of Oilette postcards

Oilette postcards first appeared in 1903 in a period of intense competition between postcard manufacturers, each one of which was trying to capture a substantial market share by using better quality printing or innovative techniques. The Oilettes were only one of many card types produced by Raphael Tuck and Sons and they had to compete with lithographed and 'Real Photo' black and white cards and with other producers of colour cards. In Australia the competition was also strong with people such as Charles Kerry and Harry Phillips being in the Blue Mountains market, and J.A. Turner producing coloured cards though mainly in Victoria. The latter cards were produced at about the same time as the Oilettes and like them, in series form. Turner's 47 known cards tend to be generic with rural and bush-life themes and do not have the specificity of location of the Oilettes series.

Most of Tuck's cards were sold in packets of six cards. This began at a time in England when small goods were usually sold by the dozen (12 items) and the currency was pounds, shillings and pence. Many postcards were sold at 3 pence to 6 pence for a packet of six cards. It is likely that Tuck's cards would have been somewhat more expensive in Australia since there would be shipping costs involved. Kerry postcards in the period around 1908 to 1913 were selling in Australia for 9 pence to 12 pence for a packet of 12 cards (Ellis 2011, p.307) with photographic cards being 3 pence each (Ellis 2012, p.112). We do not have information on the cost of Turner's coloured cards.

This minimal price comparison suggests that Tuck's cards would not have been particularly elitist but were much the same cost as Kerry's were in Australia. However, they would have had the attraction of high quality colour printing which presumably gave them a marketing edge.

In the 1980s publications were produced in which comparative card values were given. Vukovic (1983) suggested \$5 to \$15 for cards by Fullwood (p.23), \$8 to \$100 for Turner cards (p.25), and \$2 to \$5 for Kerry cards (p.54). Kornan (1986, pp. 94-95) suggested \$10 to \$30 for Tuck cards.

The present day (2015) values of these cards on eBay are quite variable and depend on condition, rarity and subject. The value of Tuck cards is of the order \$5-\$7. Typical recent examples being a copy of 'Homeward', not in great condition at \$26, a copy of 'Katoomba Falls' at \$9, 'Crystal City Jenolan' at \$20 and 'Bulli Pass' at \$12, with postage to be added to these costs.

By comparison, Turner's 'His Old Home' has been seen at \$3, 'At the Ford' at \$15, and 'Robbing the Forest' at \$15. The values of Kerry cards also range widely. Aboriginal ones vary from \$35 to \$135. Blue Mountains waterfalls go from \$2 to \$25 and an Audley Royal National Park one was \$30. One recent Jenolan card was \$8 but more usually these are \$12-15.

### Production of Oilette postcards

There is a lot that is poorly known about the production of these postcards. However, before considering the details of the printing process it is worth keeping in mind the general steps involved in the production of a coloured Oilette postcard. It would be would be a multi-step process, which may be summarised as follows:

- The artist, in this case A.H. Fullwood, prepared the paintings and delivered them to Tuck's in London.
- Tuck's prepared photos of the paintings and sent them to Bavaria, or sent the paintings to Bavaria for photographing.
- Cards were printed in Bavaria using a three or four-colour halftone printing process.
- Printed cards were sent back to London and thence distributed to selling points and the public.

Given that Tuck's had many thousands of cards being produced in the early 1900s, the logistics of distribution must have been formidable.

We know from the postcards themselves that the Blue Mountains series were printed in Bavaria but there is no indication of the printer nor of the colour printing technique used. The period around the 1900s was one of great innovation and a number of colour printing processes were under development. One of the main ones was chromolithography and this has been the process used for Oilettes. However, since all historical records of Raphael Tuck and Sons Ltd, including original paintings and lithographic stones, were destroyed during the blitz of London on 29 December 1940 (Carver 1976, p.8), the best evidence comes from the postcards themselves. Complete examination of the processes is beyond the scope of this article, however, examination of the cards strongly suggests that a three-colour halftone printing process was used.

Richard Moulton, one of the compilers of the *TuckDB* website, has provided the following information concerning the printing process used for Oilettes:

"We have often wondered about the printing process of Oilettes but have never found any useful information. Tuck (*sic*) were very proud of them and the improved quality seems to have greatly increased sales. Many reviews praise them-but no

printing details ever seem to have been revealed.”

(pers. comm. Richard Moulton, email 6 April 2015). Given that this website is the greatest source of information on Tuck postcards, this was not an auspicious start to our study. Similar communications in 2015 with Helfried Luers, author of the website *The Postcard Album* provided the following:

“I looked up some of my own Tuck's Oilette cards with ‘Processed in Bavaria’ imprint. They are typical colour halftone printings using at least 4 basic colours.” (pers. comm. Helfried Luers, email 14 April 2015).

“The halftone printing process was usually done on letter press machinery (block etchings) before WW1. There were attempts to use the 3 or 4 colour separation on litho presses, but this was perfected later. Early halftone work (after photo/painting) done by lithographic process often shows a thicker screen dot, bolder impression. Not very welcome effect, with some details being lost, too dark impression.

When speaking of 3 colour printing it just means that there were 3 different etched blocks to print an image. The printing process itself often consisted of 6 machine runs. In order to avoid a flat impression, people back then often printed an bright red, later a dark red was superimposed, and so on. The 4 colour system was much better but also required an higher investment. Black is also called contrast and that was usually the final colour printed.” (pers. comm. Helfried Luers, email 21 May 2015).

A search using Trove showed that while the first mention of Oilettes was in 1904, by 1905 there was a host of references to the arrival in Australia of Oilettes and other of Tuck's cards and postcards. However, only one article gives any information on the process used, it is entitled ‘Raphael Tuck's Academy’ and stated

“Two things are very apparent in the Raphael Tuck and Sons’ output of this year’s Christmas art work that indicate how the march of time has made its mark on the firm and its designers. One is the fertility and resourcefulness of human invention, and the other the immense advance towards perfection in printing and dealing with colour, especially in regard to the three-tone process. The idea of imposing three primary colours one on the other was discovered by a Frenchman in the early part of last century, but it could never be worked satisfactorily, as each plate had to be produced by hand. The invention of the Weisenbach (*sic*) or ‘half-tone’ mechanical process at once permitted of

the three primary colours and their host of accompanying tints being manipulated with facility and success. By means of the screen process it is possible to make an exact fac-simile (*sic*) of a painting, even to the very brushwork of the artist, and the ivory gloss that has always eluded the printer’s efforts. This marvelous process the Raphael Tuck house has utilised to the full in its production for this season. . . . at present English colour printers are supreme.” (Anonymous 1905).

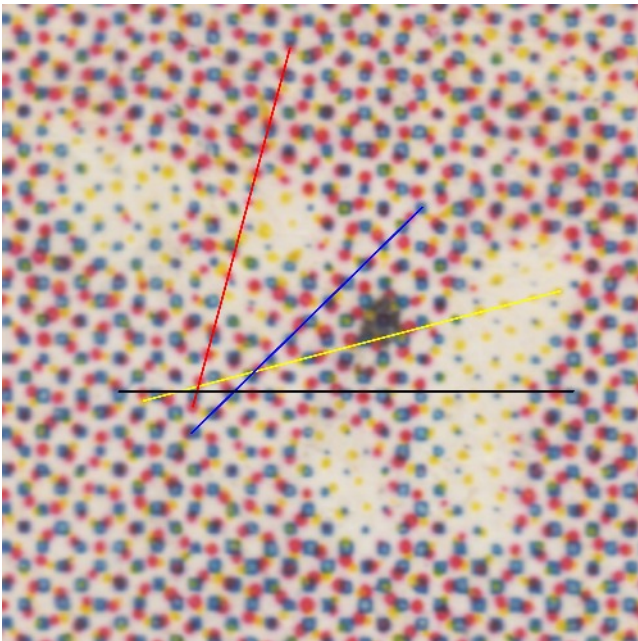
The Meisenbach Company, an English printing firm which adopted methods invented by a German of that name, was the first company to use screens for halftone printing methods. The technique was complex and it was years before successful colour halftone methods were developed. The process required the coming together of screens, photographic colour filters, and the accurate registry of printing plates whether they were metal or stone.

An article describing the various ‘modern’ processes applied to colour printing was published in *The Times* in 1912 (Anonymous 1912) and reprinted as a five-part series in issues 14 to 18 of *The Postcard Album* (Luers 2015) and is available in electronic format (five PDF files) from Helfried Luers. Although comprehensively describing several methods, not described was how to identify the various types of postcards produced by these methods. From this distance in time it seems that Britain developed and tended to maintain an expertise in metal engraving and that in Germany, and later in America the trend was to develop lithography. The terminology is confusing with some people such as Lane (2015) reserving ‘chromolithography’ for prints created from stones that were prepared by lithographic artists (who worked in reverse) and distinguished them from photolithographs which were produced using an intermediate state (photograph). They also term these latter types as ‘dot matrix prints’ or halftone prints. Photochromolithography was the process of producing three photographs of a subject, such as a painting, using colour filters and then using these photographs to produce individual stones which then were screen printed to produce the final product.

### **Experimental results with Blue Mountains Oilettes**

Halftone printing literature ranges from general to quite specific detailed articles such as ‘Halftones’ (Stulik and Kaplan 2013, pp.4-35) published in the *Atlas of Analytical Signatures of Photographic Process*. Black and white cards that have been printed by the traditional halftone process can be easily identified using a pocket magnifying glass. When





**Figure 20.** Scan of 4 mm square section of the postcard in [Figure 2](#).



**Figure 21.** Scan of 4 mm section of the postcard in [Figure 18](#).

enlarged, the pictures break up into a mass of dots, arranged in columns and rows, usually set at 45 degrees to the horizontal. The spacing of the dots is determined by the number of lines per millimeter of the halftone screen, typically about 8-10. Fine screens yield a better quality of reproduction than coarse ones. Colour printed cards often show a ‘rosette’ pattern ([Figure 20](#)) of dots under magnification (Williams

square grids for the blue, red and yellow inks used in the original printings. These images also enabled the grid and screen sizes to be calculated. Scan analyses were carried out on original copies of the postcards in [Figures 2, 6, 9, 11, and 18](#). Later work used the screen angle and distance measurement software MB-Ruler (Bader 2015). Typical scans are shown in [Figures 20 and 21](#).

Postcard Title	Series	Figure No.	Figure No.	Screen angle (°) *		
				Blue	Red	Yellow
Bluffs near Mount Victoria	7355	1	19	45	75	15
The Weeping Rock	7355	5		45	75	15
Echo Point	7400	8		15	45	75
The Great Zig Zag	7400	10		15	45	75
Weeping Rock	Non-series card	17	20	45	75	15

\* Rounded to the nearest degree.

**Table 1.** Screen angles of five Blue Mountains Oilette postcards.

2013). Such cards can be difficult to analyse since the screen patterns overlap and several scans of each card may be necessary to disentangle the layout of the three or four colours.

In the present work, the fronts and rears of Tuck Oilette cards were scanned with a Canon LiDE 110 scanner at 600 dpi for record purposes. Four-millimetre square sections of each card were then scanned at 19,000 dpi; light coloured areas gave the best dot size for analysis. Baselines and coloured lines were drawn onto the resultant images and these were then used to determine the orientation of the

Multiple 4 mm scans were carried out for five postcards. The grid angle values obtained for the screens are summarised in [Table 1](#). These angles are commonly encountered in the halftone process as seen in the following section ‘Screen alignment’. It was also found that all the screens had between 5.9 and 6.2 lines per mm, equivalent to 150-157 lines per inch.

[Figure 20](#) shows one of the 4 mm scans, of the postcard in [Figure 2](#), used to measure the blue, red and yellow screen angles and the grid spacings. The rosettes may be clearly seen. The coloured straight lines were added to the image by the authors. The black line is a

baseline and the blue, red and yellow lines are aligned on the blue, yellow and red dot grids.

Figure 21 shows a scan of a 4 mm square section of the postcard in Figure 18. This scan does not show rosettes, however the three colour nature of the print may be clearly seen.

### Screen alignment.

Screen alignment is a complex subject in which many things such as image content and predominant colours, number of screens etc. have to be taken into account. Most work has been published on four and higher number colour printing techniques but little information has been found specifically on three colour printing. Pritchard (2015) suggested that for three colour printing the screen angles should be darkest color (blue) at 45°, medium color (red) at 75° and lightest color (yellow) at 15°. It may be noted (Table 1) that the cards within Series 7355 appear to have had one set of screen angles while the cards within Series 7400 had a different set.

In these examinations we saw no evidence of black being used, supporting the view that the printing process used was basically a three-colour halftone. The rear of the cards appears to have been printed with a brown ink using a letterpress technique. This is seen in Figure 22 where the letters and full stop have ink rims and the edges are clear, typical of letterpress printing (Gascoigne 2004, section 49).

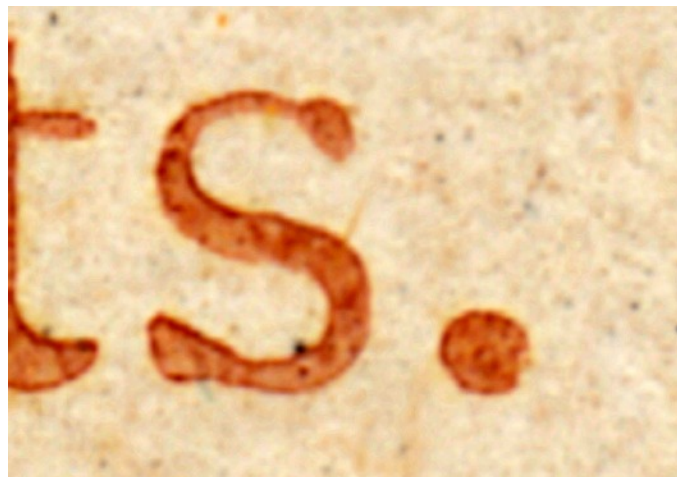


Figure 22. Scan of a full stop in a 2 mm section of text on the rear of postcard in Figure 10.

### Source Material

The Oilette face images shown in Figures 2 to 13 were obtained from the TuckDB database (Braun et al. 2015a), a free database of antique postcards published by Raphael Tuck & Sons. This data base, with its associated text, is the most comprehensive source of image material relating to Oilettes. The images shown in Figures 14 to 22 were obtained from original postcards viewed in the Blue Mountains Historical Society Collection and in the Ross Ellis Collection.

### Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank Helmfried Luers, author of the website *The Postcard Album* for allowing us to quote from his emails. Richard Moulton, an editor of the *TuckDB* website is thanked both for help and for allowing us to quote from his email.

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# WATERING THE GEE-GEES: A Survey of Blue Mountains Horse Troughs, Part 1

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*“In the shade of a gee-bung tree,  
There they water the gee-gee free.”.  
(Anonymous 1918a).*

## Abstract

There are, perhaps surprisingly, many old horse troughs still surviving in the Blue Mountains and while most are now redundant and un-regarded, in their quiet way they have the capacity to reconnect us to our past. Through their modest presence, and the stories of the people associated with them, they remind us of a time when the horse was central to community life; and of the idealism and dedication of individuals and groups who recognized the needs of animals and felt the moral imperative to advocate on their behalf. As such, these old water troughs deserve to be seen in their proper historical context, documented and preserved as important local heritage items.

**Key Words:** horse troughs, water, animal welfare, wayside features, Bills, Meagher, Schleicher, Blue Mountains.

## INTRODUCTION

Scattered around the urban and rural landscapes of the Blue Mountains, a surprising number of old horse troughs, in various states of repair and neglect, have survived the passing of the working horse. Their original purpose now generally redundant and lacking the heritage glamour of large buildings and monuments, these simple, functional structures, falling into the category of ‘wayside features’ or ‘street furniture’ (Harling 1990), can slip easily into a state of public invisibility. The Blue Mountains, nonetheless, compared with many other regions, has been fortunate in both the number and variety of those that have survived their obsolescence.

There are troughs sponsored by private individuals, community organizations, local council and state government authorities. Some bear the names of their donors, others the names of the commercial firms that manufactured them, others are anonymous. Some

combine drinking facilities for both horses and dogs. While most are made of concrete, there is one of iron and an interesting and quite distinct category of five water troughs hewn from the local sandstone and fed by natural springs (see Part 2). All of the troughs considered in this paper were originally for public use and, with one exception, are still accessible to the public today.

Despite their lack of pretension each bears a rich cultural memory of times when the horse was central to everyday experience; when wagons and drays, coaches and cabs, delivery carts and a whole array of private traps, gigs and sulkies plied our main roads and the streets of our towns. The clip and clop of hooves, the jingle of harness, the whiff of leather and manure, the crack of whips and a multitude of other sounds and smells, all provided a sensory backdrop to life that is absent today. Though most of our surviving troughs were erected in the closing years of this era, each has a story to tell and not only of the past, for every one resonates also with the quest for a more humane society and the dedication and idealism of men and women who worked to achieve this.

In this survey of the surviving horse troughs of the Blue Mountains I will provide a brief overview of the historical context that produced them and catalogue each individual trough, providing information on location, description, history and personal associations. Part 1 covers the geographical area of Glenbrook to Wentworth Falls.

## Provision of Water in the Early Years

The first horses to cross the Blue Mountains were the

“four horses loaded with provisions, ammunition and other necessities”



that accompanied Gregory Blaxland and his companions in May 1813. On the Mountains feed and water were scarce and the horses were greatly troubled by the thick scrub and rocky terrain. Until they reached the open and watered country west of the main range they went without water on occasion and survived mainly “on the coarse swamp grass or rush” (Blaxland 1813, p.5) that grew at the few watering places found along the ridge. This grass had to be cut and carried as extra load.

This supply problem persisted after the opening of the Western Road in 1815 and on the journey between the coast and the hinterland the old watering places soon became recognized camps where travelers and stock congregated. In time, a number of these sites evolved a more permanent presence in the form of inns which, with their sometimes large complexes of stables, stockyards, orchards, dairy, smithy etc., became the primary refueling stops for man and beast. Feed for horses no longer had to be carried and the inns also, of course, provided watering facilities. Early paintings and photographs (Figures 1, 2 & 3) depict the huge ‘dug out’ tree trunks employed as water troughs to accommodate the heavy animal traffic – bullocks, horses, sheep and cattle - along the road.



**Figure 1.** *Pilgrim Inn*, Lapstone Hill 1860  
(Martindale 1860; Mitchell Library).

Water for animals would normally be included in the price of a drink or a meal or covered by overnight accommodation although occasionally there were situations in which the reverse might apply. During the early 1860s at Whipcord Pinch, a section of the old Western Road (now bypassed) west of Pulpit Hill,

“a rustic hotel was erected, and also troughs for the convenience of horse teams” (Mudge 1905).



**Figure 2.** Edward Field's Hotel, Little Hartley (originally Joseph Collitts' 1846 *Rose Inn* and later *Ambermere*), 1870-1875  
(American & Australasian Photographic Company 1870-1875a; Mitchell Library).

‘Rustic’ this shanty would certainly have been and illegal too, but its keeper, remembered only as ‘Sly Grog Sam’, had his own method of getting around the legalities. The price he placed on the spring-fed water dispensed from his troughs was amply compensated for by the ‘free’ liquor that accompanied it (Peckman 1919; Bennett 1967).

When the inns closed on the Blue Mountains in the wake of the railway's arrival (1867-1868) such distinctive ‘tree-trunk’ water troughs gradually disappeared from the roadside. Animals, of course, still travelled and the provision of watering facilities for stock in transit (especially at railheads) would become a major concern of animal welfare groups in the second half of the nineteenth century. While many of the old timber troughs did hang on in rural and urban areas, by the later years of the nineteenth century their replacement was being actively sought. In 1893 the Water & Sewerage Board decided that in the city and suburbs of Sydney

“no more dug-out timber troughs should be supplied with water”

and began encouraging the replacement of those remaining with

“properly-constructed iron or stone troughs”  
(Anonymous 1893).

Smaller replicas of the early roadside dug-out timber troughs were visible until recently in front of the Farmer's Inn at Hartley (Figure 4), now occupied by the NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service Information Centre.



**Figure 3.** The Farmers' Inn, Hartley, 1870-1875 (American & Australasian Photographic Company 1870-1875b; *Mitchell Library*).



*Photo – Lois Sabine 2007*

**Figure 4.** The Farmers' Inn in recent times.

### **Animal Welfare: the Rise of a Public Conscience in Britain and Australia.**

It has been argued that the modern animal welfare movement began in England in the late eighteenth century when the philosopher Jeremy Bentham (1789) posed his question

“Why should the law refuse its protection to any sensitive being?”

and a number of humanitarian reformers (both secular and Christian) started to take seriously the inclusion of animals in their quest for a more moral society. The real question, Bentham argued, is not whether animals can reason or talk but “can they *suffer*?”

Though this question entered parliament in the form of proposed legislation in 1809 (Erskine 1824), its instigator, the eccentric Scottish Lord Thomas Erskine, was only partially successful, his bill passing through the Lords but failing in the Commons. It was not for a further twenty-three years that another

‘colourful’ parliamentarian, the Irish member for Galway (Richard ‘Humanity Dick’ Martin) successfully sponsored in 1822 an “Ill-Treatment of Cattle\* Act” that became the first piece of legislation in the world to make cruelty to horses, cattle and other farm animals subject to legal penalty (Farrell 2004). [\*: The word ‘cattle’ in its now obsolete sense covered a range of domesticated animals, including horses, sheep and cattle.]

Martin, soon known as the ‘Wilberforce of Hacks’, was also among a group of prominent reformers (including William Wilberforce) who responded to an invitation from the admirable (though unjustly neglected) Anglican clergyman Rev. Arthur Broome and gathered in 1824 in the ironically named Old Slaughter’s Coffee House to establish a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Moss 1961). Under the auspices of this society the successful passage of a further animal welfare act in 1835 extended the law’s protection to an even wider range of animals.

Some years later again, in 1859, another significant event, especially where watering facilities were concerned, took place in London in response to the city’s desperate need for clean drinking water. Initially occupied with the erection of drinking fountains for humans, the Metropolitan Free Drinking Fountain Association soon began including small bowls to accommodate dogs and erecting troughs for horses, cattle and other stock on the move through the city. Accordingly, in 1867 its name became the Metropolitan Drinking Fountain and Cattle Trough Association (**Figure 5**) and along with this adjustment came a broadening of its focus to include all of Britain and beyond, its influence extending even to the Antipodes (Anonymous n.d. a).

This emerging consciousness concerning animal welfare slowly found its way to Australia. While early protests against cruelty to animals were mainly concerned with their value as property, sporadic intimations of a growing awareness of animal suffering can be found in the early years (Anonymous 1803, 1804; Campbell 1811; Anonymous 1815). In NSW, however, it was not until 1850 that *An Act for the more effectual prevention of Cruelty to Animals* was enacted and, while imposing a broad prohibition on cruelty, was narrow and negative in its definitions and application. Unlike Acts that were subsequently passed in Victoria (1854) and South Australia (1863) the NSW Act did not include a positive duty of care to ensure an animal was supplied with food and water (Jamieson 1991, pp.239-242; MacCulloch 1994, p.44). Despite subsequent efforts to strengthen the Act and an amendment in 1899 that extended the range of

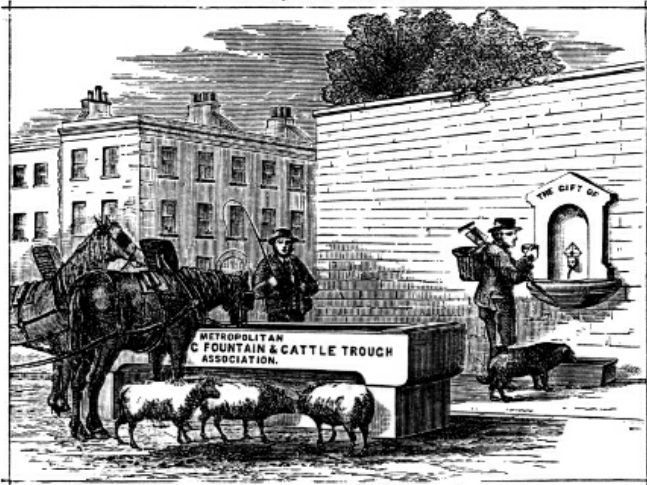


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in the STREETS of LONDON,

and the relief it affords, both to human beings and dumb animals, is incalculable.

The total number of Troughs and Fountains now erected, and at work in the Metropolis, is as follows:—597 Troughs for Animals, and 575 Fountains for Human Beings, at which multitudes of Men, Women, and Children, Horses, Oxen, Sheep, and Dogs quench their thirst daily, amounting in the aggregate to probably not less than the enormous total of 250,000,000 drinkers in a year.

All the Fountains and Troughs require constant care and supervision, and are regularly inspected, cleaned, kept in repair, and well supplied with water by the agents of the Society. Half-an-hour spent at one of them during the heat of the summer would do more to secure sympathy and support for the Association than any words which the Committee can use.

Contributions are earnestly solicited to enable the Committee to sustain and extend this simple scheme for the amelioration of animal suffering and the promotion of habits of temperance amongst our itinerant and working population. Contributions may be paid to the Bankers, Messrs. RANSOM, BOUVERIE & Co., Messrs. BARCLAY, BEVAN & Co., or at the Office, to M. W. MILTON, Secretary.

#### FORM OF BEQUEST.

"I give and bequeath the sum of \_\_\_\_\_ to be paid (free of Legacy Duty), out of such parts of my personal estate as can be lawfully applied for that purpose, unto the Treasurer for the time being of a Society called or known by the name of THE METROPOLITAN DRINKING FOUNTAIN AND CATTLE TROUGH ASSOCIATION, to be at the disposal of the Committee for the time being of the said Society."

Figure 5. MDFCTA Advertisement from *Burke's Peerage* 1879 (Anonymous n.d. b).

animals covered, such was the legislative situation in NSW for the remainder of the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth century. It was also the legal context within which an organization devoted to animal welfare on the English model was eventually established. This did not happen, however, until the early 1870s when, following moves in Victoria (1871) and Tasmania (1872), a meeting held in July 1873 in Sydney saw the formation of the NSW Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Anonymous 1873), known from 1878 as the Animal Protection Society NSW (APS)\*\*. To encourage the recognition of a 'positive duty of care' on the part of those owning and working with animals became one of its major objectives.

[\*\*: The Society was called the NSW Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) when it was founded in 1873. In 1878 it became the Animal Protection Society NSW (APS). In 1918 it again adopted its original title and in 1923 became the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA).]

As in England, working horses and livestock in transit occupied much of the new NSW society's attention. Though the APS was able to report in 1882 that,

"the general condition of the omnibus and cart horses has improved, and neglect and cruelty in working horses ... has greatly diminished" (APS 1882).

the horse remained a central focus for vigilance. Indeed, a survey of cruelty cases dealt with by the APS during the 1880s and 1890s showed that almost 90% related to the ill-treatment of horses (MacCulloch 1994, p.52), while in 1904, 195 of 199 successful prosecutions for cruelty in NSW involved horses (APS 1904).

A large portion of the APS's concern focused upon the provision of appropriate watering facilities. Not only were there insufficient numbers of street water troughs but many of those that did exist were badly designed and their maintenance neglected (APS 1878; Anonymous 1878). Nor was there sufficient provision in stockyards at railway stations and wharves or for animals awaiting slaughter, kept often for days in enclosures without water or sustenance (APS 1886). Drinking water for dogs, too, was a concern, especially in Sydney when the city authorities began to use salt water to clean the streets and dogs could no longer "assuage their thirst in the running channels" (APS 1886).

To rectify these problems the APS campaigned relentlessly, lobbying City and municipal authorities alike offering both criticism and advice and obtaining

"plans of the troughs and fountains used by the Metropolitan Drinking Fountain Association in London"

and submitting them for guidance (APS 1881). In 1903, as part of a delegation of cabmen, draymen and other horse employers, it urged Sydney's Lord Mayor to support "a better system of water troughs for both dogs and horses" and offered to donate to the City council an appropriately designed trough

"to be erected in a good place, having water at the top for the horses and water underneath for the dogs" (Anonymous 1903).

The Society also solicited subscriptions from its own supporters to finance the erection of troughs (APS 1902, 1903) and sought out and encouraged private benefactors

“who may be willing to present drinking troughs, designs of which, with all information regarding cost, may be obtained from the Society’s Secretary” (APS 1886).

In the late 1890s the campaign was made even harder when the APS found itself fighting not only apathy and budget priorities but also the threat of an ill-conceived ‘Water Troughs Tax’ proposed by the Water & Sewage Board which, if introduced, would likely have seen many of the already existing troughs disappear (APS 1899). Water would remain a principal concern for the APS well into the twentieth century and in 1919 the Society was still recording in its annual report that, with regard to the supply of troughs, “much remains to be done” (SPCA 1919).

Though horse troughs of one kind or another would have featured in the developing Blue Mountains townscapes of the nineteenth century, most of those that survive today date from the first half of the twentieth century, some quite late in that period. When, in the 1960s and 1970s, following the dominance of motorized transport over the horse, many were removed from Sydney’s city and suburbs, the more ‘rural’ location of the Blue Mountains beyond the suburban spread gave its troughs a deal more protection. It is evident, too, that the local Council exhibited a more tolerant view towards their disposal, deciding in 1969

“not to remove horse troughs unless in the interest of public health as they are still used by horses and added an atmosphere to the surroundings.” (Anonymous 1969).

While some were relocated, especially when their original sites posed an accident risk due to the increasing motor traffic, such an enlightened policy goes a long way to explain the healthy number of survivals.

### Trough Supporters and Benefactors.

Many individuals responded to the entreaties of the APS/RSPCA to lobby, raise funds and support financially the erection of water troughs. Among those whose efforts were important for the Blue Mountains region were the following.

#### George and Annis Bills.

Though George Bills (1859-1927; [Figure 6](#)) and his wife Annis (1859-1910; [Figure 7](#)) were not locals their memory, through their horse troughs, is etched into the landscape of four Blue Mountains towns (Glenbrook, Warrimoo, Wentworth Falls and Medlow Bath). In the Bills the APS found responsive supporters to their call for assistance. Their story is one of emigration, business success leading to prosperity and a desire to use their money to fund the causes in which they believed (Gibson 1996; Roche 1995; Palmer & McWilliam 1991).

George was born in the English seaside resort of Brighton on 11 March 1859 and migrated with his family first to New Zealand in the 1860s and then to Australia in 1873 while his father Richard, a naturalist and bird dealer, was engaged in supplying English and (later) Australian birds to the Acclimatisation Societies in Dunedin and Christchurch. Growing up in the Echuca-Moama district of western Victoria, George and his brothers entered the family bird



Figure 6 & 7. Portraits of George and Annis Bills (Gemmill 2010).



business as they came of age, eventually opening outlets for their father's collecting in Dunedin, Sydney and Melbourne. In the early 1880s, leaving his brother Henry to manage the Sydney shop, George travelled north to establish a short-lived branch in Brisbane and while there proposed to another English immigrant, Sheffield-born Annis Elizabeth Swann. They were married at the Brisbane Central Registry Office on 18 May 1885.

For some years George's two Melbourne brothers (Richard Jnr. and Walter) had begun experimenting with a new venture – wire working – that soon revolutionized their business as they moved from making bird cages into the manufacture of wire mattresses. By the mid 1880s the Sydney branch was also moving in this direction and when George returned from Brisbane with his new wife he and his brother Henry steered the business into a long period of growth that saw wire mattresses quickly supplant bird dealing as the firm's business priority. By the early 1900s, when substantial donations from Bills Bros. began appearing in the Annual Reports of the APS, the now prosperous firm was occupying spacious and permanent premises at 541-543 Kent Street, Sydney.

Following his retirement c.1907, George and Annis moved to Melbourne where they settled in the suburb of Hawthorn and quickly took a practical interest in the provision of water troughs in the city. Tragically, however, in 1910 Annis died suddenly during a visit to George's birthplace in the UK. She was just fifty years of age. On his return George was joined by his brother Henry (who had also retired to Melbourne) in an increasingly active involvement with the Victorian Society for the Protection of Animals (Pertzel 2006) and a funding partnership that benefited animal welfare in both Victoria and NSW. Both were appointed 'Life Governors' of the NSW APS.

When George died on 14 December 1927, aged 68, the will he had drawn up two years earlier ensured that his and his wife's ideals would continue to find expression. It stipulated that, after bequests to family, friends and employees were satisfied, a trust fund be formed from the residue of his estate (valued in total at between £70,000 and £80,000) to fund horse troughs wherever, with the consent of the appropriate authorities, they be deemed

“necessary or desirable for the relief of horses or other dumb animals” (Bills 1925, p.3)

and to assist the work of societies and organizations established for the purpose of protecting and alleviating cruelty to animals.

All troughs funded from his estate would be supplied free of charge (including freight and installation), the recipient's only requirements being the provision of a suitable location, appropriate foundations and a consistent water supply. All troughs were also to be

“suitably inscribed with the names of Annis & George Bills Australia” (Bills 1925, p.3).

The terms of his will received wide publicity and requests for troughs, especially from local councils, began immediately. To begin with troughs were designed and built individually but by the early 1930s a pre-cast concrete design with Art Deco touches was registered and soon became the standard. In the early years work was carried out solely in the factory of local (Hawthorn) concrete manufacturers J.B. Phillips but when the expanding Melbourne firm Rocla (established 1922) became involved production spread also to NSW; first to Rocla's Junee branch in 1937 and later to Sydney (Anonymous 1972).

George's estate, through the Trust administered by his sister Daisy and her husband, funded hundreds of troughs around Australia, the majority of which were dispatched to locations in NSW and Victoria and were designed to include a bowl for dogs and cats and, sometimes, even a 'fountain' for human use. A number were also funded overseas in Britain and, it is said, in places as diverse as Ireland, USA, Canada, South Africa, Japan, Romania and Switzerland. While a number of Bills troughs erected in association with the MDFCTA have survived in Britain (Anonymous n.d. c), there is no evidence of any remaining in these other countries.

Most troughs distributed in Australia were constructed during the 1930s and early 1940s, with demand and production shrinking rapidly in the years following World War II as motor vehicles replaced the working horse, especially in urban areas. However, as directed in the will, other animal welfare initiatives also benefited generously from the Bills estate (Pertzel 2006; Jack 2003) and as the demand for horse troughs lessened in the post-war years, the Trust shifted its primary concentration to the wider problems of animal welfare. In the early 1960s, for example, it contributed about \$5,000 towards construction of a fully equipped emergency animal rescue centre in the Melbourne suburb of Burwood (Pertzel 2006, p.108) and when finally wound up c.1980 the remaining funds were distributed among various animal welfare

organizations, including the RSPCA in Sydney which received a legacy of around \$17,000 (Smith 1991).

Despite the disappearance of many Bills horse troughs there are a remarkable number still in existence. George Gemmill, historian and guardian of the Bills memory, through his dedicated website/blog, has documented and photographed over three hundred Bills troughs surviving throughout Australia and overseas (Gemmill 2015). His project has garnered considerable interest and a wide network of informants.

### **Bernard and Ruth Schleicher.**

Bernard Schleicher (1885-1971) and his sister Ruth (1893-1976), the driving forces behind the Lawson-Hazelbrook-Woodford RSPCA Branch, were born in London and Sydney respectively, the son and daughter of an Oxford-educated Anglican cleric who became Principal of Sydney's Moore Theological College. With their sister Dorothy they settled in Hazelbrook at the end of the First World War on a small farm near the entrance to the Horseshoe Falls Reserve and over the next half century sunk their roots deeply into the Mountains' soil. Their home *Currawong* became a by-word in the district for home grown produce and while remembered warmly (Anonymous n.d. d; Jeavons 1971), both for their eccentricities and their commitment to humanitarian, environmental and community activities, memory of them is now fading to sporadic references in a few local history books (Campbell 1989, pp.55, 60, 121 & 123; Goodlet 2006, pp.49, 73, 75, 91 & 150; Hooke 2008, 377-380).

Bernard was scholarly and his intellectual interests ranged widely. He taught languages, mathematics and history, both privately and at a number of the local independent schools and he and Ruth were prolific letter writers whose opinions on subjects like animal welfare, bushfire prevention and the preservation of native animals and plants appeared regularly in the local and city press. But they were also 'practical' activists. In the 1930s Bernard became Secretary of the Hazelbrook Reserves Trust, a position he held for thirty eight years, and Chairman of the Hazelbrook Urban Area Committee, the organization that supported the first of the horse trough projects.

In the early 1950s he and Ruth formed a Blue Mountains Fauna & Flora Protection Society at Hazelbrook, the first of its kind in the Mountains and a strong advocate for the region to become

“a national scenic and faunal reserve for the use and enjoyment of this and future generations, and that all timber getting on public lands be entirely forbidden.” (Anonymous 1953).

As its long serving President Bernard convinced the Mayor in the early 1960s to convene a meeting in Katoomba to establish a similar group there, the result being the birth of an organisation that ultimately evolved into the present Blue Mountains Conservation Society.

For many like the Schleichers, concern for the bush and native flora and fauna went hand in hand with protecting the welfare of domestic and working animals. Accordingly, in 1935, assisted by Mrs. Claire Wilson, the wife of the Blue Mountains Shire President Percy Wilson, Ruth convened a meeting (Anonymous 1935a) that was held on the 13 September in the Methodist Church Hall at Hazelbrook to form a Lawson-Hazelbrook-Woodford branch of the RSPCA. Chaired by the Shire president, the meeting voted to establish the branch and elected Bernard President and Ruth Hon. Secretary (Anonymous 1935b). The branch was instrumental in raising funds to erect horse troughs in both Hazelbrook and Woodford.

Nurturing and strengthening these convictions and involvements was their religion. Both were devout Anglicans and closely associated with the life of that denomination's Central Mountains churches, Bernard taking on at various times both administrative and lay preaching roles. Some months before his death in 1971, the congregation of St. James church at Hazelbrook erected an ornamental rock pool and fountain in the grounds of the church to honour his long service. Sadly, St. James was destroyed by fire in April 2004 and only the brass plaque off the memorial fountain was rescued. This is now attached to the 'Memorial Wall' at the Lawson Emmanuel Anglican Church and it joins the small Woodford horse trough as the only public reminders of the deep Schleicher commitment to community.

### **Alice Meagher.**

Alice Meagher (ca.1862-1924) was born Alice Maude Osmond in New Zealand and probably crossed the Tasman to Sydney in the late 1880s. When she married the twenty-five year-old Bathurst-born solicitor Richard Denis Meagher in January 1891 she was twenty-nine years of age.

After establishing their home at Bondi, Alice soon found herself engulfed in public controversy. Life with the volatile and ambitious Meagher was never going to be easy and when he was charged with conspiracy during an 1896 legal case, struck off the roll of solicitors and lost his newly won parliamentary seat, financial ruin and public humiliation threatened.



Though she must have despaired at times of ever leading a normal life she survived her husband's public transgressions and assisted him in gradually rebuilding his career. Their marriage rested on the strong foundations of mutual devotion.

Added to the worries of her husband's flawed public life was the fragility of her health. Never robust, she nevertheless played her part in public life with enthusiasm and commitment. During her time as Sydney's Lady Mayoress (1916-1917; [Figure 8](#)), when her husband served as the city's first Labor Lord Mayor, she opened the new Anzac Parade, supported her husband's efforts to raise money and men for the war and during a major transport strike embarked upon a tireless fund-raising campaign to relieve the distress of the strikers' families.



**Figure 8.** Alice Meagher, Lady Mayoress (Anonymous 1916-1917).

In 1920, hoping his wife might benefit from the upland climate and clean air, Richard Meagher purchased *Yarrowee*, a substantial sandstone cottage on 5 acres (2ha) of land fronting the Western Road at Lawson. They renamed their new country home *Durham Lodge*

and even here, though increasingly an invalid, Alice continued her community work. Few passing swagmen, tramping the Western Road in search of work, left her door empty handed. She successfully approached the Blue Mountains Shire Council with an offer to fund a horse trough in Lawson and continued to campaign to raise money for horse troughs in Sydney (Anonymous 1923, 1924a). Too ill to attend the Lawson trough's opening ceremony in December 1921, her husband handed it over to the people of Lawson on her behalf. She died on the 9 April 1924 and was buried in Waverley Cemetery.

Both Alice and Richard Meagher were devout Catholics and, having no children, made plans to use their property for the benefit of their religion. Alice especially wanted part of their land at Lawson to become the site for a new Catholic Church and hoped that ultimately *Durham Lodge* would go to the Franciscans. While the latter was not to be, following her death her husband purchased the neighbouring property, donated both it and *Durham Lodge* to the Church, and helped finance the building of a substantial church dedicated to Our Lady of the Nativity.

The new church was consecrated on 7 April 1929 and stands as a memorial to the life of Alice Meagher,

“a good citizen, philanthropist and an ever-willing worker in all public causes” (Anonymous 1924b).

Her horse trough survives as a further, if more humble, memorial to her compassion and concern for animals.

For a slightly fuller portrait of Alice Meagher see my article “A Gift to the Horses of Lawson” published some time ago in the BMACHO newsletter (Low 2011b).

### **A ‘Catalogue’ of the Surviving Horse Troughs in the Blue Mountains**

What follows is an account of the surviving horse troughs located in the Blue Mountains. Organized geographically, taking an east-to-west route (with an occasional detour) along the Great Western Highway, the survey in Part 1 of this two part article covers the area between Glenbrook and Wentworth Falls. It includes what is known about the history of the troughs, their location and present condition and links them to the people with whom they are associated whose memory and story they hold. Their relationship (if any) to other troughs is also canvassed.

**Trough No.1: Glenbrook (Figure 9).**

**Location:** On the grass next to the footpath on the Western side of the Glenbrook Theatre (formerly the School of Arts) facing Ross Street near its intersection with the Great Western Highway.

**Description & Condition:** This is a concrete trough designed with an attractive simplicity and touches of Art Deco style; it is supported level but rests almost on the ground. The trough itself is approximately 240 cm long, 40 cm wide and 40 cm deep and includes a 40 x 40 cm cistern separated by an internal concrete wall; at its rear is a 40 cm high ornamental pediment. While the trough itself is unpainted, the pediment is cream with a green inset. Attached are two plaques, one (concrete) on the rear pediment bearing the words “Donated by Annis and George Bills Australia” and the other (brass) on the face of the trough itself (Figure 10). The cistern is uncovered and contains a tap attached to a pipe, suggesting that the water may still be connected; there is water in both the drinking section and the cistern. The small dog and cat trough that would originally have accompanied the horse trough is missing. This description is based on my last inspection (29 July 2015) and while the pediment could do with a new coat of paint, the structure remains in good condition.

**History:** The Glenbrook trough is one of four ‘Bills’ troughs surviving in the Blue Mountains, funded through the estate of businessman and animal welfare activist George Bills. While most of these troughs



*Photo: John Low, 2007*

**Figure 9.** Annis & George Bills trough, Glenbrook.

were manufactured and distributed during the 1930s, Glenbrook was rather late in benefitting from the Bills’ generosity. It was not until mid 1945 that the Blue Mountains Shire Council (BMSC) accepted an offer (probably made before World War II began) from the Bills Trust and agreed to receive three



*Photo: John Low, 2007*

**Figure 10.** Plaque on the side of the Glenbrook trough.

troughs for placement at Glenbrook, Warrimoo and Wentworth Falls (BMSC 1945).

Though the original position of the trough at Glenbrook, installed by October 1945, is uncertain it was probably aligned with the highway in front of the School of Arts. Like many other horse troughs, it would have been later removed during the 1960s or 1970s, possibly even as late as 1978 when major renovations to the School of Arts building took place. Stored by Council, it was reinstated to public life during the Glenbrook Centenary celebrations in 1985, when Mayor Peter Quirk ‘unveiled’ it on its present site on Sunday 10 November in the presence of residents, visitors and several local horses (Anonymous 1985).

It was at this time that the small brass plate and its historically inaccurate text first appeared (Figure 10). No such stipulation regarding his trough funding motivation appears in George Bills’ will. Nevertheless, in my opinion, the addition of the plaque could be seen as a serendipitous mistake for, not only is it a sentiment Annis and George Bills would have shared, but it grants the old trough a new relevance – the only (albeit unofficial) war memorial in the Blue Mountains dedicated to the service and suffering of animals in war. For a discussion of this and the as yet unrecognized possibilities it offers the local community, see my earlier article on the Glenbrook trough (Low 2011a). The trough is listed in the Blue Mountains City Council’s Local Environment Plan (LEP) as having local heritage significance (NSW Government, Office of Environment & Heritage, n.d. a).

**Association with Particular People:** George and Annis Bills.



**Trough No.2: Warrimoo (Figure 11).**

**Location:** A short pedestrian pathway, between the railway and the Great Western Highway and leading west from Warrimoo Railway Station, delivers the walker into the small oasis of Ardill Park where another ‘Annis & George Bills’ trough is now located.

**Description & Condition:** This is an identical trough to the one at Glenbrook in size, structure and design; made of concrete, it is designed simply but attractively in an Art Deco style and includes the regulation plaque bearing the words “Donated by Annis and George Bills Australia”. It is supported on three sandstone blocks and the only real distinguishing feature from its Glenbrook twin is the paint work; the pediment and front panels and sides of the trough are painted blue/grey. The trough holds some water, the cistern has no cover and appears to be unconnected and inoperative and there is no sign of the “dog fountain and bubbler” mentioned in the press at the time of its erection (see below). This description is based on my last inspection (3 September 2015) at which time the trough appeared to be in good condition.



*Photo: John Low.*

**Figure 11.** Annis & George Bills trough, Warrimoo.

**History:** The Warrimoo trough is one of three horse troughs funded through the estate of businessman and animal welfare activist George Bills (the others being at Glenbrook and Wentworth Falls) that were accepted by the Blue Mountains Shire Council in mid 1945 (BMSC 1945).

With accompanying “dog fountain and bubbler” (Anonymous 1945) the Warrimoo trough was in place at the side of the Great Western Highway by October 1945 and the brief account given in the history of Warrimoo Public School published at the time of Australia’s Bicentenary suggests that by 1988 it had

already experienced a (probably slight) relocation from its original position (Warrimoo Public School Anniversary Committee 1988, p.16). In 1999 it was moved again to its present site (NSW Government, Office of Environment & Heritage, n.d. b) when highway widening necessitated a redesign of the reserve between the highway and the railway. The trough is listed in the Blue Mountains City Council’s LEP as having local heritage significance (NSW Government, Office of Environment & Heritage n.d. b).

**Associations with Particular People:** George and Annis Bills.

**Trough No.3: Woodford (Figure 12).**

**Location:** In the village of Woodford a small water trough sits on the grass verge near the western corner of Glen Street where it intersects with the Great Western Highway.

**Description & Condition:** This is a very basic rectangular concrete horse trough, approximately 200 cm long, 65 cm wide and 40 cm deep and lacking the embellishments of the Bills design. It is supported on two concrete ‘legs’, contains no water and is unconnected and inoperative. There are, however, indentations in the internal wall of the trough suggesting the former location of a small cistern and an old plug is still present. Any facility for dogs and cats is no longer evident. This description is based on my last inspection (3 September 2015) at which time the trough was clean and its condition reasonable, though the passage of time is leaving its mark on the aging and distressed concrete. At the trough’s northern end a small interpretive plaque (Figure 13) has been placed drawing attention to its history.



*Photo: John Low, 2015*

**Figure 12.** The Woodford trough.



Photo: John Low, 2015

**Figure 13.** The Woodford trough plaque.

**History:** Erected ca.1940, this trough had its origins in the activities of the first RSPCA branch to be formed in the Blue Mountains. Like its parent organization, the Lawson-Hazelbrook-Woodford Branch, established in the mid 1930s, expressed a concern at the general lack of drinking facilities for working horses and initiated a fund to raise money for the placement of a small trough at Hazelbrook. With the assistance of the Blue Mountains Shire's local Urban Area Committee and in the face of some local opposition – whose argument that the money would have been better spent elsewhere was refuted strongly in the press by the branch's secretary (Schleicher 1937) - this occurred in early 1937. Reported also to include a drinking facility for the local dogs (Anonymous 1937c), the trough's location at Hazelbrook is somewhat uncertain. Described as "in a side street" (Anonymous 1937b) and "handy to the main road" (Anonymous 1937a), it was nevertheless clearly accessible to the Western Road.

Encouraged by the success of this project, the branch declared at a meeting the following year that

“When Woodford secured a water supply the question of erecting a similar trough would be considered.” (Anonymous 1938).

Accordingly, when residential connections to a supply began in the village in the early years of World War II, a concrete trough made its appearance. While the Hazelbrook trough has now gone, the Woodford one remains, probably (though this is unconfirmed) in its original position. Its story, hidden by the passage of time, has recently been brought back to public notice

by means of a small interpretive plaque (Hanley & Low 2015). The trough is not on any Heritage Listing.

**Associations with Particular People:** Bernard and Ruth Schleicher.

**Trough No.4: Lawson (Figure 14).**

**Location:** The Lawson trough can be found on the grass verge adjacent to the kerb at the north-eastern corner of Honour Avenue.

**Description & Condition:** This rectangular concrete horse trough, approximately 240 cm long, 65 cm wide and 25 cm deep, rests on two concrete supports between which is a shallower trough (or tray), also concrete and approximately 170 cm x 65 cm x 14 cm, for use by dogs and cats. Attached to both ends of the horse trough are two marble plaques each bearing the same text (Figure 15). The southern end of the trough includes a cistern (approx. 40 x 65 cm) covered by a padlocked metal lid, the horse trough (though not the dog and cat tray) holds water and a wooden traffic barrier protects the structure on its side fronting the road. This description is based upon my last inspection (3 September 2015) at which time, despite evidence of some concrete damage and deterioration and given its ninety-odd years, the structure appeared to be in reasonable condition. The marble plaques,



Photo: John Low, 2007

**Figure 14.** The Lawson trough.

however, are showing their age and while the lettering at the northern end is still readable, the text at the southern end has deteriorated badly.



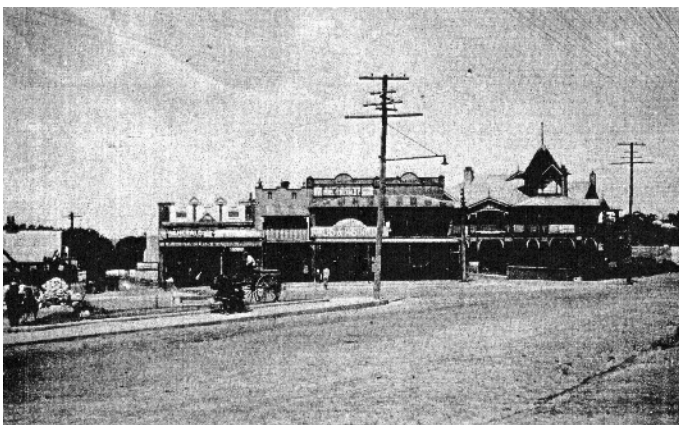


*Photo: Peter Rickwood 2015*

**Figure 15.** The Lawson trough plaque.

**History:** The trough was donated to the people and horses of Lawson by Alice Meagher, wife of controversial solicitor and politician Richard Meagher and like Annis and George Bills a committed supporter and Life Member of the SPCA. When she arrived in Lawson in 1920 she soon spotted the absence of a community horse trough and in August 1921 approached the Blue Mountains Shire Council with an offer to cover the cost of obtaining one. The Council agreed and instructed its engineer to prepare an appropriate design and carry out the work which was completed in time for an official opening in early December that same year (Anonymous 1921a, 1921b).

The trough was originally located at the edge of a grass plot in Douglass Square (Figure 16), accessible to the Western Road and facing the shops next to the Blue Mountain Hotel. It was moved to its present site during later roadwork to realign Yileena Avenue and an 'Archival Record' commissioned by the RTA during more recent highway widening (Fisher & Fallon 2008) has recommended that it be relocated



*BMCC Photo Library 005/005000*

**Figure 16.** Douglass Square, Lawson, including the horse trough on its original site.

again to a safer site where the public can enjoy it. The trough is listed in the Blue Mountains City Council's LEP as having local heritage significance (NSW Government, Office of Environment & Heritage n.d. c).

**Associations with Particular People:** Alice Meagher.

**Trough No.5: Wentworth Falls (Figure 17).**

**Location:** This Bills trough is situated in Falls Road near the south-eastern corner of its intersection with Fletcher Street. It sits in a grassy area and is back-dropped picturesquely by the white picket fence of No.140 Falls Road.

**Description & Condition:** In size, structure and Art Deco styling this is an identical trough to those at Glenbrook and Warrimoo. Made of concrete and supported on three concrete blocks, its pediment includes the regulation plaque bearing the words "Donated by Annis and George Bills Australia". Unlike those at Glenbrook and Warrimoo, the Wentworth Falls trough does not appear to have been painted and, though darkened with age, probably looks much as it did on arrival seventy years ago. It holds water, the cistern is covered and padlocked and seems to be connected and in working order; unlike those at Glenbrook and Warrimoo it is also accompanied by a small dog and cat trough (approx. 60 x 30 x 14 cm).



*Photo: John Low, 2005*

**Figure 17.** The Bills trough in Falls Road, Wentworth Falls.

This description is based on my last inspection (3 September 2015) at which time the trough appeared to be in good condition.

**History:** The Wentworth Falls trough is one of three (the others being at Glenbrook and Warrimoo) that

were accepted by the Blue Mountains Shire Council in mid 1945 (BMSC 1945) and funded through the estate of businessman and animal welfare activist George Bills. It arrived and was erected by October that same year, possibly on its present site where at least one long-time resident remembers it being in 1968 (Smith n.d.).

When the Bills trough arrived, older residents may well have recalled the controversy that accompanied the placement of an earlier trough in the town. In 1917 the Shire Council, on the recommendation of the local Progress Association, had placed a trough under a geebung tree in a grass plot at the intersection of the Western Road and Station Street. It drew criticism almost immediately, being described as

“a miserable-looking structure of galvanised iron on a skeleton stand” and “an abominable eyesore ... in a most conspicuous place” (Anonymous 1917).

To make matters worse, connection to the water supply which had been the responsibility of the Railways Department was delayed and the trough remained empty (except when it rained) until finally connected in February 1918 (Anonymous 1918b).

The trough, of course, also had its defenders who argued that “it was a humane necessity” (Rose 1918) and one city visitor writing in praise of it thought it

“just lovely to stand and watch the spirited cab horses ... stopping to drink their fill in the shade of its beautiful tree” (Anonymous 1918a).

Subsequent to the water connection, criticism shifted to the heavy use the trough attracted and the consequent destruction of the grass plot on which it stood (Anonymous 1919). Ultimately, however, the whole argument became redundant when the site was chosen for the planned war memorial and cleared (Anonymous 1920a, 1920b). The iron trough was shifted to a new location (nearby but unidentified) and seems to have been replaced in 1930 by “a good concrete horse trough” that promised to be “permanently serviceable” (Anonymous 1930; BMSC 1930). This later concrete trough may still have been in operation when the Shire Council received its three funded Bills troughs in 1945 and therefore the reason the Bills trough destined for Wentworth Falls was placed in Falls Road and not in the commercial centre of the town. The trough is listed in the Blue Mountains City Council’s LEP as having local heritage significance (NSW Government, Office of Environment & Heritage n.d. d).

**Associations with Particular People:** George and Annis Bills.

### **Conclusion:**

This paper will continue in Part 2 where troughs surviving in the Blue Mountains region west of Wentworth Falls will be surveyed.

**Acknowledgements:** I am very grateful to both the State Library of NSW and the NSW State Records Office and to all the individuals who have assisted and encouraged me in this project. I offer my special thanks to George Gemmill and Barbie Roche for sharing their knowledge and research into the Bills family and to Annalise Bentley; Margaret Edwards; Vanessa, Petah and Marika Low; John Merriman; Peter Rickwood; Lois Sabine; Jim Smith; Joan Smith and Deb Westbury who have all assisted with information, site visits, photographs etc. Further acknowledgements will appear in Part 2.

### **Abbreviations:**

APS Animal Protection Society, NSW  
 BMACHO Blue Mountains Association of Cultural Heritage Organisations.  
 BMHS Blue Mountains Historical Society  
 BMSC Blue Mountains Shire Council  
 LEP Local Environment Plan  
 MDFCTA Metropolitan Drinking Fountain and Cattle Trough Association  
 n.d. no date  
 SPCA Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, NSW  
 RSPCA Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

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