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Cover Photo

Driving bullock outside The Post Office in *Beowang* before the telephone was
installed in 1916 (MW&MIHS, Shaw Collection, photo 95/125; Field 1995)

EDITORIAL

The inaugural issue of **The Blue Mountains History Journal** was favourably received by historians and local librarians, and subsequently the National Library has issued an ISSN number which is shown in our banner above. This accords a welcome degree of scholarly recognition of our journal. From the first issue of the journal we learned a number of lessons in respect to layout and typography, so for this second issue various improvements have been made which we trust will meet with the approval of readers.

The four articles in Issue 2 cover a spread of villages from Mount Wilson to Springwood and range in topic from the travels of the Martindale Family to an account of the New Guard. Between those subjects are histories of religious worship in Medlow Bath and of Postal and Telephone services in Mount Wilson.

Our eminent local historian, John Low, has contributed a fascinating paper about the sketches that Mrs Martindale made in 1860 whilst accompanying her husband on a tour of inspection of the road over the Blue Mountains. This paper also includes a long-needed account of the activities of the Martindale family in NSW.

Some ten years ago, the late Dr. Clair Isbister prepared, with assistance from Robert King, a manuscript on St Luke's Church, Medlow Bath and Helen Plummer Phillips, a significant benefactor to the church. As junior authors, Robert and I have brought the first of these topics to completion. But we have expanded the scope of the paper beyond Clair's main interest, St Luke's Church, to all places of religious worship in Medlow Bath, by adding sections on the little known histories of the Cave Church and Roman Catholic worship in the village.

Mary Reynolds, the indefatigable Research Officer of the Mount Wilson & Mount Irvine Historical Society, has published extensively on various aspects of the histories of the families and properties of those hill

stations. The topic of her paper in this Issue is the history of the Postal and Telephone Services and she details some of the intrigue associated with their establishment.

Finally, the current President of BMACHO, Pamela Smith of the Springwood Historians, has provided a brief account of the Old Guard, a paramilitary group that operated in the Blue Mountains in the 1930s. This is still a topic that is difficult to tackle because of the secrecy that surrounds the history of this group, the restricted access that still applies to key documentation, and the sensitivities of surviving relatives of the members of that group. However Pamela has managed to convey the extent of the planned activities while protecting the identities of most of those involved.

Dr Peter C. Rickwood,
Editor

THE MARTINDALE FAMILY AND THE SKETCHBOOK OF MARY ELIZABETH MARTINDALE

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Abstract

In 1860, during a journey along the Western Road across the Blue Mountains, Mary Martindale created a series of watercolour sketches as a memento of her trip. In their modest way they depict road conditions, people and vehicles, buildings and landscape scenery. Mary was the wife of Captain Ben Hay Martindale who spent three difficult years in NSW responsible for roads, railways and the electric telegraph. Soon after this excursion Ben resigned and the family returned to England where Mary died in 1902. In 1930 her daughter donated the sketchbook to the Mitchell Library. Largely ignored, it provides a valuable impression of travel in the years before the railway.

Keywords: Martindale; Western Road; travel; art; women; Blue Mountains

Introduction

In the Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW, there are 19 small watercolour sketches (the largest measuring 22 x 30.5 cm), collected, in no apparent order, under the title *Our Trip to the Blue Mountains NSW 1860* (Martindale 1860b). In their modest way they record the impressions of a young English gentlewoman, Mrs. Mary Elizabeth Martindale, who travelled along the Western Road across the Blue Mountains in the mid-nineteenth century. While other nineteenth century women, including Elizabeth Hawkins (Mackaness 1965, pp.102-117), Louisa Meredith (Meredith 1973), Sophia Stanger (Mackaness 1965, pp.255-266) and Rachel Henning (Adams 1985) have all left letters and journals that vividly record the difficulties and drama of early road travel in the Blue Mountains, the sketches of Mary Martindale provide a visual account, a travel journal without words.

Colonel B. H. Martindale.

Figure 1. Ben Hay Martindale (Anonymous

Both sketching and painting were common accomplishments among educated women of the nineteenth century (Hammond 1993; Jordan 2005; Kerr & Broadbent 1980; Sayers 1989). Indeed, drawing was "unstoppably popular and widely taught" as an appropriately moral and innocent component of a middle to upper class woman's "ornamental education" (Jordan 2005, p.18). Such work was generally limited and conventional in its artistic ambitions, and was almost always pursued as recreation and for consumption within the domestic circle of family and friends. Uninhibited by expectations of a public audience, however, it often revealed a greater honesty in its depiction of subject matter, a quality prized by social historians. A sketchbook was an indispensible companion on any special journey at that time, and the sketches of Mary Martindale have all the above characteristics. Nevertheless, though made reference to by art historian Joan Kerr (1980; 1992), they have been largely ignored, even by Blue Mountains historians.

Background and Arrival in Australia

While the details of Mary Martindale's early life are minimal (IGI Family Search website; Ancestry website), it is clear that she came from a family of some social standing. Born in 1824 at Dover, Kent, she was the third daughter of Mercy (née Hollams) and Thomas Knocker and was the granddaughter of Sir John Hollams, five times Mayor of Upper Deal, Kent. Her cousin, also Sir John Hollams (1820-1910), became a well-known nineteenth century solicitor and author of a popular book of legal reminiscences.

On 12 September 1848 Mary married Ben Hay Martindale (Anonymous 1848), a young engineer born in London on 1 October 1824 (Abbott 1974), the son of Benjamin & Sophia Martindale of Martindale, Westmorland (now Cumbria). Educated at Rugby School and the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich, he was commissioned as second lieutenant in the Royal Engineers in 1843 and posted to Gibraltar the following year and then, in 1846, to the Ionian island of Corfu which had been under British authority since the defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo. The marriage took place on Corfu in the Palace of St. Michael & St. George, the seat of government and the residence of the British Lord High Commissioner (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Palace of St. Michael & St. George, Corfu
(Anonymous n.d. a)

Two of their children were born on the island, Mary dying there and Frederick surviving for only a short time after their return to England in the early 1850s.

In September 1856 Ben joined the staff of the Inspector-General of Fortifications in London; by then he had the rank of Captain and eventually rose to Colonel (Figure 1). After some initial hesitation, and on the urgings of another Royal Engineer, his old teacher and at that time the Governor of New South Wales, Sir William Denison, he accepted an offer from the colonial Government of New South Wales to become Chief Commissioner of Railways, a position that also carried with it responsibilities for Roads and the Electric Telegraph.

In 1857 the Martindale family, Ben, Mary, and Alice, Arthur and Katherine, their three young children all born since their return to England, accompanied by a servant, Miss Smith, sailed from the Port of Plymouth aboard the *Centurion,* "a fine clipper vessel" with comfortable first class cabins that were "carpeted, and lockers with morocco cushions all round." (Mitchell 1980, p.221).

Following their arrival in Sydney on Sunday 28 June 1857 (Anonymous 1857), the family took up residence among the Sydney gentry at 30 Upper William Street North (now Bayswater Road) on Woolloomooloo Hill (Sands & Kenny 1858-1859, pp.95, 180, 272). Described by Sir Thomas Mitchell as "the most picturesque hill around Sydney" (Mitchell 1980, p.11), this location had begun to attract the growing elite of Sydney's government officials, professional men and their families. Though subdivision of some of the original grants had begun, Woolloomooloo Hill was not yet densely settled and was favoured with broad views of both the harbour (Figure 3) and the city skyline.

Writing in her diary on a warm October evening in 1859, Blanche Mitchell, the youngest daughter of Sir Thomas Mitchell, captured something of its character at the time:

Figure 3. Sydney Harbour 1858 (Blackwood 1858; *Mitchell Library, SLNSW*).

"The sun just sinking casts a shadowy light over Sydney, which is fast becoming enveloped in a dark bluish cloud. No sound disturbs one's reverie save the rolling of carriage wheels and the bleating of kids [goats] calling their mothers for their evening food. All is quiet, the flies float lazily in the last rays of the sun … Oh! the hill it is worthy of a painter's brush!" (Mitchell 1980, p.224).

Blanche Mitchell was fifteen and living with her widowed mother, two sisters and a brother at No.3 Upper William Street South when the Martindale family arrived, and in a brief diary entry for Friday 26 February 1858 she records that

"Mrs. Martindale, accompanied by Miss Smith, called." (Mitchell 1980, p.46).

Her diary entries for the years 1858 to 1861 depict a lively portrait of fashionable Sydney in the mid-nineteenth century, being full of balls and parties (both official and private), social visits, picnics, concerts and soirées. As the wife of an important colonial administrator, Mary Martindale would have been swept quickly into this world, but charity work also played a prominent role and, among other probable involvements, Mrs. Martindale became a regular visitor to the Destitute Children's Asylum (Anonymous 1858a).

Captain Ben Hay Martindale

Captain Martindale began his duties in the city at the Internal Communications Department, 124-128 Phillip Street, in July 1857 and in the three-and-a-bit years he spent in Australia carried out his considerable responsibilities under difficult circumstances. He was head of the department responsible for roads, railways and the electric telegraph, but he inherited a neglected and deteriorating road system and an infant rail network. His relationship with parliamentarians and the press was not a smooth one, even though he was said to have been "intelligent and conscientious" (Lee 2000, p.127) and "far-sighted and capable" (McMartin 1989, p.399). Despite paltry budget allocations and unpredictable weather conditions that hampered and even prevented new work - 1860 was a particularly difficult year with "a succession of heavy rains" (Anonymous 1860c) - he was regularly blamed for the numerous failings and inadequacies of the transport systems.

His difficulties were not made easier by his own military temperament and consequent inability to adapt to the more 'relaxed' realities of colonial society and to what one historian has called the "rambunctious colonial politics" of NSW (Lee 2000, p.127). Self-confident and impatient with those who questioned his authority, his relationship with the Secretary for Lands & Public Works, John Robertson, was "combustible" and Henry Parkes compared him to the French dictator Louis Napoleon (Golder 2005, p.129). His over-reaction on one occasion to the criticism of a subordinate, resulting in the court-martial and imprisonment of that officer, was indicative of his character. He was subjected to public scorn and was attacked both in parliament and by the press.

Governmental reorganization of his department in 1859 further challenged the independence of his authority and increased his frustration (Golder 2005, p.132). As his energy and enthusiasm for the job diminished, Martindale became convinced that he could not fulfill the responsibilities for which he had been employed and officially resigned his position in November 1860. It was a decision that has relegated him to a footnote in the history of NSW communications while his subordinate, John Whitton, went on to achieve fame as the architect of the NSW rail system. This does not do Martindale justice, for his administration was not without achievement. He produced four significant reports on the 'Internal Communications of New South Wales', described as

"the first serious attempt by the Government to bring order into the communications system" (Thomas 1967, p.59).

Plans for locating the principal railway lines in NSW, though implemented after his departure, were agreed upon and his tenure also saw an extension of both the electric telegraph and public road systems with considerable improvements in the bridging of rivers and creeks. However, as he himself conceded in his final report, the Blue Mountains section of the Western Road remained largely untouched.

The Western Road

When Rachel Henning travelled to Bathurst in April 1856 she described the roads as being "in a most awful state" and commented that her driver "said he had never seen them so bad". Her coach ascended the Mountains with its axle "buried in mud" and at one point passed another carriage completely stuck and in the process of having bullocks replace the horses to pull it out. Her own driver resorted at times to detours into the bush to avoid "the sea of mud" (Adams 1985, p.39). A year later, and only a month before Captain Martindale arrived at his desk, the road to the Western gold fields was described by another writer as:

"... a succession of ponds and bogs over which a Galway steeplechaser would only wish to go once; and over which her Majesty's mails are by the greatest of modern miracles carried daily." (Delta 1857).

When composing his first report in October the same year, Captain Martindale reflected ruefully that:

"… on every side I learn that the roads of the country are deficient in everything that constitutes good roads. … , in winter they are impassable sloughs, and in summer the rudest common earth roads. … , ... he esteems himself fortunate whose bullock-drays accomplish when the weather is bad three or four miles a-day …" (Martindale 1857, p.8).

Three years later, in his final report of September 1860, he had to concede that little had changed:

"The Western Road to Bathurst presents at all times great difficulties, from its mountainous character, and the absence throughout a great part of its length of good road material. These difficulties have been enhanced by the heavy and continued rains, which have not only prevented the progress of the works, but even destroyed that which the contractors had partially done.".

While allowing himself some small credit for

"... a manifest improvement … between Hartley and Bathurst ..."

he admitted that

"... only very partial improvements [had been made] upon the mountain road." (Martindale 1860a, pp.9-10).

Even though she travelled in one of the new American designed Cobb & Co. coaches that were introduced to NSW roads in the very month (January 1861) that the Martindale family sailed again for England, Rachel Henning, after several years in England, confirmed this assessment when she returned again to Bathurst in May 1861:

"The Bathurst road was bad when I was here before, but now there is no word that I should like to use that would the least express its state. … We had a capital driver, fearless and yet careful, and he took us safe over rocks and ruts and deep holes and fallen trees. Once we certainly took off the head of a sapling and then got aground on the stump, but the united exertions of the gentlemen lifted the coach off and we got underway again. … We took six hours to do the last twenty miles that night, and we arrived at Black Heath, a solitary inn among the mountains, where we were to sleep, about eleven o'clock at night." (Adams 1985, pp.65-66).

The Excursion and the Sketchbook

In 1860, possibly in order to make a final inspection of the Mountains section of the Western Road, Captain Martindale and his 36-year-old wife embarked on a tour of the Blue Mountains. The precise time of the excursion is uncertain, though it is unlikely that it would have been made during the winter months. Ben Martindale did apparently return to Sydney via the Mountain road in January 1860 after inspecting the soon to be abandoned rail route through the Grose Valley to Hartley (Anonymous 1860a) and it is possible that Mary accompanied him at this time. However, I think it more likely that her

sketchbook records a trip taken during the early spring at the time that her husband would have been preparing the final report, which he issued in September. With her husband's impending resignation and the family's imminent return to England in mind, it offered a final opportunity for Mary to visit the region. With sketchbook in hand she appears to have travelled in a mixed party, possibly made up of other officers of her husband's department and their wives.

The uninhibited honesty that characterizes several of her sketches is apparent on the title page (Figure 4).

Figure 4. *Our Trip to the Blue Mountains 1860*, Title Page (Martindale 1860b; *Mitchell Library, SLNSW*).

The dramatic images of broken wheel and bullock skeleton make an immediate visual comment on the condition of the Western Road, the difficulties of travel, and the heavy toll the road took on vehicles and animals. Though Mary must have sympathized with her husband over some of the stinging attacks he suffered from politicians and the press, she was not going to falsely exaggerate his achievements as Commissioner of Roads!

In her sketchbook, Mary Martindale drew two sketches of coaches, one of an old-style, pre-Cobb & Co. 'Royal Mail' (Figure 5) that she probably encountered changing horses at an inn along the way, and one of a coach (presumably her own) emerging from a bog, with the horse's backside in the air as it begins to negotiate another deep pothole in the road (Figure 6). As well as honesty, there is also in this latter sketch a touch of humour at her husband's expense, a further insight into the artist's personality and perhaps the strength of her domestic relationship.

Figure 5. Royal Mail Coach(Martindale 1860b; *Mitchell Library SLNSW*).

Figure 6. Negotiating the Western Road (Martindale 1860b; *Mitchell Library,SLNSW*)

Landscape scenes, buildings, and people she travelled with or met along the way feature prominently among her sketches. Some sketches have penciled notes on the reverse but these are often inconclusive and are probably later attempts at identification, perhaps by the artist herself in old age or by other family members.

Two sketches 'book-end' the journey, depicting her probable starting and finishing points. The first, an un-titled town scene with buildings, pedestrians and a horse-drawn cart is almost certainly of Church Street, Parramatta, drawn from its intersection with George Street, looking north (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Church Street, Parramatta with St. Andrews Scots Presbyterian Church (Martindale 1860b; *Mitchell Library, SLNSW*).

The railway was extended from the 1858 terminus into Parramatta proper in April 1860 and the Martindale party would have begun their road journey from here. In her sketch the square tower of St. Andrew's Scots Presbyterian Church is visible on the western side of Church Street. Opened in 1849, it is no longer a part of the Parramatta streetscape, having been dismantled in 1925 and re-erected in Wentworthville (Brown & Brown 1995, p.28).

The second of the 'book-end' pictures shows two ladies sketching in the grounds of *Esk Bank House* (sic) (later known as *The Grange*), at what is now Lithgow (Figure 8).

Figure 8. *Esk Bank House* (*sic*) (Martindale 1860b; *Mitchell Library, SLNSW*).

Eskbank was the home of Thomas Brown (Anonymous n.d. b), a Scots immigrant and landholder on the western side of the Mountains, who with the coal resources of the valley firmly in mind became a prominent lobbyist for the extension of the railway. He played host to Martindale's railway surveyors on a number of occasions and his home would have offered welcome comfort and hospitality at the conclusion of their outward journey.

Other architectural sketches feature several roadside inns passed along the way or at which the party paused for refreshment or accommodation. The external features of the buildings are clearly drawn and out-buildings, wooden fences and long, dug-out log water troughs are shown, hinting at the way such inns often developed into oases in the wilderness, substantial self-sufficient complexes that encompassed stabling and agistment for stock, blacksmithing, dairies, butcheries, orchards etc. as well as traveler accommodation. Two of the inns are identified tentatively as the Pilgrim Inn at the top of Lapstone Hill (Figure 9) and the Blue Mountain Inn at what is now Lawson (Figure 10).

Among her landscape paintings there are two interesting picturesque impressions of the Grose Valley at Blackheath. In one of these (Figure 11) Mary places (I assume) herself and her husband in the

Figure 9. Pilgrim Inn, Lapstone Hill
(Martindale 1860b; *Mitchell Library, SLNSW).*

Figure 10. Blue Mountain Inn
(Martindale 1860b; Mitchell Library
SLNSW)

foreground at the very edge of the precipice, Govetts Leap waterfall to one side and the vastness of the valley receding in a misty haze. Two tiny figures, they look out upon the grandeur of the scene, embracing the 'sublime' power and beauty of Nature. The Captain may well have had other less poetic thoughts in mind, however, considering his recent experience attempting to implement the Government's decision to survey a rail route through the Grose Valley, an undertaking that one historian has dismissed as a typically "unsupervised project which gets out of hand" (Macqueen 1997, p.62).

Figure 11. Govetts Leap and the Grose Valley (Martindale 1860b; *Mitchell Library, SLNSW*).

It is surprising that Martindale, when new to the colony and unfamiliar with the Blue Mountains landscape, allowed the situation in the Grose to develop as it did and did not personally inspect the site in the early stages of the project. Had he done so, the environmental impracticalities would surely have been apparent to an engineer of his experience and ability. As scenically stunning as a line through the valley must have seemed, the sharp bends, deep gullies, cliffs, flood and landslide prone areas and the impossible gradient encountered where the line was intended to enter the proposed tunnel through the Darling Causeway would all have warned him of the unsuitability of the terrain. Nevertheless, for whatever reason, he and his Engineer-in-Chief John Whitton did not visit the valley until work was well underway, relying instead upon the overly optimistic reports of the engineer in charge of the survey team. As delay followed delay and the cost mounted, public pressure grew. Within a few months of Martindale's final site inspection in January 1860 the truth was admitted and the survey team withdrawn from the valley. Ironically, Martindale Hill in the lower Grose Valley, originally named in 1961 by Myles Dunphy as 'Mt. Martindale' but changed by the Geographical Names Board in 1969 (Fox 2006, item 1297), remains the only public reminder of Ben Hay Martindale's time in Australia.

Of the other landscape sketches there are a number that appear to be of the Hartley Valley and the western escarpment. Among these are a group of suited men (possibly employees of her husband's department) enjoying a first glimpse of the valley through a break in the trees (Figure 12); a view of a roughly fenced road, probably Victoria Pass, descending the escarpment (Figure 13) and painted from a position that suggests the party made a detour along the old road to Mt. York;

and a view looking back on the road winding west from the escarpment with a bullock dray making its slow progress in the middle distance (Figure 14). This group of sketches also includes a delightfully

Figure 12. Enjoying a View (Martindale 1860b; *Mitchell Library SLNSW*).

Figure 13. Victoria Pass, Mt. Victoria (Martindale 1860b; *Mitchell Library, SLNSW*).

composed drawing of the little bridge over the River Lett at Hartley, across which a woman (perhaps the artist herself) makes her way, framed by two trees growing on either side of the stream (Figure 15). Possibly the most interesting drawing of all, however, is one that illustrates well how the private sketch book can throw up atypical but historically important subjects. Against the background of a rough timber hut, fenced land and bush, Mary depicted a group of Chinese travellers, making their way either to or from the goldfields (Figure 16).

Figure 14. Hartley Valley with Bullock Team (Martindale 1860b;*Mitchell Library, SLNSW).*

Figure 15. Bridge over the River Lett,Hartley (Martindale 1860b; *Mitchell Library SLNSW*).

The Chinese would have been a regular sight on the Western Road and Rachel Henning also encountered them. In July 1861 she described in words what Mary Martindale recorded visually:

"We met some the other day, evidently newly arrived from China, with broad flat hats with a little point in the middle, like ancient shields, and carrying their property slung at each end of a stick and balanced over their shoulders, exactly like the little men crossing the bridge on the willow-pattern plates." (Adams 1985, p.72)

Though a very visible presence after the discovery of gold in NSW and Victoria, the Chinese were not a common subject in the art of the time.

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Figure 16. Chinese Travelers on the Western Road (Martindale 1860b; *Mitchell Library, SLNSW*).

Departure from Australia and Later Life in England

On their return to Sydney, the ensuing months for Mary Martindale would have been busy with farewells and preparations for departure. At 6pm on Monday 14 January 1861 "... a large party of gentlemen" assembled at Circular Quay and many accompanied the Martindales out to the *La Hogue* (Figure 17) in a specially chartered steamer (Anonymous 1861b). On board the *La Hogue* which had been cleared earlier (Anonymous 1861a), Captain Martindale was presented with an 'address' and his successor, John Rae,
"... in a neat speech, proposed the health of Mrs. Martindale and her family" (Anonymous 1861b).

At first light the following morning the Martindale family, grown by one during its time in Sydney, sailed for England (Anonymous 1861c). Mary had given birth to a stillborn son in 1858 (Anonymous 1858b) and a year later, almost to the day, a healthy daughter Maude, born on 15 October 1859 (Anonymous 1859).

Following a voyage
   "... lengthened by heavy weather and constant headwinds." (Anonymous 1861d),
the family arrived home in London towards the end of April 1861 and Captain Martindale resumed his career in military administration. During the period 1862-1868 he held the position of Superintendent of the Barrack Department in the War Office in London and from 1866 to 1868 was also a member of the Army Sanitary Committee. In the early 1870s he spent some time in a consultative role in Canada and co-published an account of his visit (Carlisle & Martindale 1873). It is not known if Mary accompanied him.

In 1871, having risen to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, he was made a Companion of the Order of the Bath (CB), one of the highest orders of chivalry in the British Honours System. He left the army as a Colonel (Figure 1) in 1873 and took up a position as General Manager of the London & St. Katherine Docks Company being appointed a Director in 1889. He also held directorships of several other companies including the London Electric Lighting Company.

Figure 17. *La Hogue* Outside Sydney Heads ca.1860 (Garling 1860-1865; *Mitchell Library, SLNSW*).

For many years the Martindale family lived in London, at 21 Kensington Garden Square, Paddington, where three more children were born - Cecil 1861, Wariene 1862 and Mary 1864.

Their eldest son Arthur, who had accompanied them to Australia in 1857, later became a distinguished civil servant in British India and received a knighthood in 1904 (Anonymous 1942). Arthur's son, Cyril Charlie, was born (1879) in the London home of his grandparents and, following his mother's

death soon after, was brought up by his aunts and grandparents. He later converted to Roman Catholicism, became a priest and forged a career as a popular Catholic scholar and writer (Anonymous 1963). During a trip to Australia in 1928 he made an abortive attempt to visit the Blue Mountains.

> "I had so much wanted to see those mountains," ... "in building the first railway over which my grandfather, then a very young officer in the engineers, had, I understand, his share." (Martindale 1929, p.125).

His wish, however, was thwarted by a serious bout of 'flu and a tight schedule.

When Ben retired as General Manager of the London & St. Katherine Docks Company, the family moved away from London and settled in rural Surrey in the village of Albury, near Guildford. Their house *Weston Lodge* (Figure 18) is still extant (Mirylees 2007).

The UK Census of 1901 shows that the household at that time consisted of Mary, Ben, their two unmarried daughters, Maude and Mary, and five servants. Mary Elizabeth Martindale (a photograph of whom I regret not being able to find) died there in August 1902, survived by her husband and seven of her 10 children. Her husband, Ben Hay Martindale, died two years later on 26 May 1904. They are buried together in the local churchyard of the Church of St. Peter & St. Paul in Albury, Surrey (Figure 19).

(photo - Kelly Neale).

Figure 18. *Weston Lodge*, Albury, Surrey UK, 2007

The Return of the Sketchbook to Australia

How did the sketches return to Australia? The provenance record at the Mitchell Library is brief, stating that they were donated in September 1930 by a 'Miss Martindale' via a third party, a Miss Frances Bennett of Neutral Bay. The acquisition by the library was also thought significant enough to warrant a small piece in the *Sydney Morning Herald* in which the donor is recorded as "the artist's daughter" and the sketches are described as showing "considerable ability and are very well preserved" (Anonymous 1930).

Two of Ben and Mary's daughters remained unmarried at the time that the library received the sketchbook (Anonymous 1942) and, in my view, the most likely of these to have been the donor 'Miss

Figure 19. Grave of Mary & Ben Martindale, Church of St. Peter & St. Paul, Albury (photo - Kelly Neale).

Martindale' was the Australian-born daughter Maude. It would seem reasonable that, because of her Australian birth, the sketchbook should pass to her as the other unmarried daughter, Mary, was not born until after the family's return to England so the sketches would have held little of the same sentiment or interest for her.

Frances Bennett, the agent via whom the watercolours arrived at the Mitchell Library, was the second daughter (born 1864) of Irish-born engineer and surveyor William Christopher Bennett (1824-1889) who joined the NSW Survey Department in 1855 and was later appointed engineer to the Department of Roads by Captain Martindale in 1859 (Johnson 1969, pp.142-144). Bennett and Martindale, being the same age, seem to have established a friendship and Bennett was most likely a part of the Blue Mountains excursion depicted in Mary's sketches. When Martindale resigned it was Bennett he preferred as his successor, but Bennett too resigned in December 1860 and then, like his superior, left for England in January 1861, sailing on the same ship (Anonymous 1860b, p.5). Bennett remained there only briefly, however, returning in early 1862 and becoming by the end of that year Commissioner for Main Roads, a position he held until his retirement. He married Agnes Hays in 1862 and in 1864 moved across the harbour to a home (*Honda*) in Neutral Bay. He and Agnes had four sons and three daughters.

When Agnes Bennett took her children to England in 1878 to be educated she was met on her arrival in London by Colonel and Mrs. Martindale who's

"hospitality and advice smoothed out the first bewildering weeks" (Manson & Manson 1960, p.15),

assisting her to find a home and advising on preferred educational options. In 1881, however, Agnes died of smallpox and the Bennett children were immediately brought back to Sydney by their father. Despite this, it would seem that the two families remained in touch during the following years. Francis trained as a nurse but never married and in her fifties, following her retirement, settled in England where she spent the remainder of her life living in that congenial

"subculture of single women and widows" (Hughes 1989, p.108)

in boarding houses and private hotels. It is possible, perhaps, that she and Maude Martindale even shared lodgings at some time.

Maude Martindale was slightly older than Frances Bennett and they would have been 71 and 66 years of age, respectively, in 1930 when the sketchbook was donated to the Mitchell Library. It is possible that Maude had made the trip back to her birthplace with her friend, bringing the sketches with her, though the provenance statement suggests they were given to Frances, perhaps before she embarked on a visit home, with instructions to pass them on to the library. Without further evidence such conclusions will, however, remain conjecture.

Conclusion

In the years following 1815, the Western Road was central to the history of the Blue Mountains, slotting into a conduit rôle connecting the coastal settlement with the new country to the west. While thousands passed through the Mountains during the next 50 years, few chose to remain for any length of time and the minimal settlement that occurred was all in close association with the road. Inns, military depots, convict stockades, tollhouses and mounted police stations grew barnacle-like along its edges, while settlers, gold seekers, teamsters and all the other restless flotsam and jetsam of a growing colony drifted past.

The Western Road has a rich social history and Mary Martindale's sketchbook, created over 150 years ago, is a part of that story. It has been in the Mitchell Library's possession now for more than 80 years and when I was given the opportunity some time ago to leaf through its contents I felt a real sense of traversing time. These modest watercolour sketches form part of the surviving first-hand documentary evidence, both official and private, that reveals to us something of the experience of life and travel in the years before the railway, and later the motor car, changed forever both the nature of travel and the Blue Mountains region itself. Among the Mitchell Library's many small 'treasures' they deserve to be celebrated.

Abbreviations

n.d.   no date

SLNSW   **State Library of New South Wales**

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OVER A CENTURY OF WORSHIP AT MEDLOW BATH

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Abstract

Religious observance in Medlow commenced at least as early as September 1894 when Church of England services were held in a cave on W.H. Hargrave's land just below the present Hydro Majestic Hotel. Services were held there, and also in private homes, until St. Luke's Church was opened in 1902 and that continued to be the venue for the Anglican congregation until closure was enforced at the end of 2004. Roman Catholic worshippers met, sporadically, in the local hall, originally the Post & Telegraph Office then named Flanagan's Hall and later, from November 1912, Rice's Hall and they bought it in 1952 and held services therein until 1967. This paper deals with the history of these venues as used for religious observance.

Key Words: St. Luke's, Medlow, Cave Church, Anglican, Post Office, Catholic, Blue Mountains

Introduction

Whilst the Hydro Majestic Hotel is certainly the most prominent building in Medlow Bath, across the railway line at 40a Railway Parade, midway between Sheila and Somerset Streets, is a much smaller historic building that from 1902 until 2004 was St. Luke's Anglican Church (Figures 1 & 2). From its inception it was part of the Church of England district of Blackheath which eventually became a six church parish centred on St. Aidan's at Blackheath (1884); the other congregations being at Hampton (St. Thomas's, 1897 - Braga 1997, p.4) and Hartley (St. John the Evangelist, 1859) and Mount Victoria (St. Peter's, 1875) and Mount Wilson (St. George's, 1915) – Woodland (1999, p.8). Blackheath Parish is regarded as being strongly ecumenical and since 1969 has come under the Western Region of the Anglican Diocese of Sydney which is based at Parramatta.

St. Aidan's Church in Blackheath provided the clergy for worshippers at St. Luke's which, being 5.3 km (*c.3.3 miles*) to the south in the adjoining village of Medlow Bath, was regarded by the Church of England as a border community. Being, for many years, the only venue for religious observance in Medlow Bath it was attended by members of other faiths and was locally known as a community church. As such it was supported by Mark Foy, a prominent Catholic who nonetheless saw fit to support community activities of various sorts.

A   (photo – N. & E. Kirkland - 1990s)   B   (photo – Jack et al. 2000)
(BMHS photo 3875)

Figure 1. Exterior of St. Luke's Church 1990s

(photo – Peter Rickwood)

Figure 2. Exterior of St. Luke's Church - 10 March 2003.

The account that follows is based on an edited version of Chapter 5 of the book planned by Dr Jean Sinclair Isbister (Clair as she preferred to be called) with a provisional title 'Helen Plummer Phillips and St. Luke's Church, Medlow Bath'. Unfortunately, this only reached draft manuscript form. The second and third authors have enlarged the scope of that Chapter for this paper; all of the authors have been members of the Blue Mountains Historical Society Inc. The descendants of the late Dr Jean Sinclair Isbister (12.9.1915-20.8.2008) handed the entire set of papers relating to that book to the Blue Mountains Historical Society Inc. where they are archived.
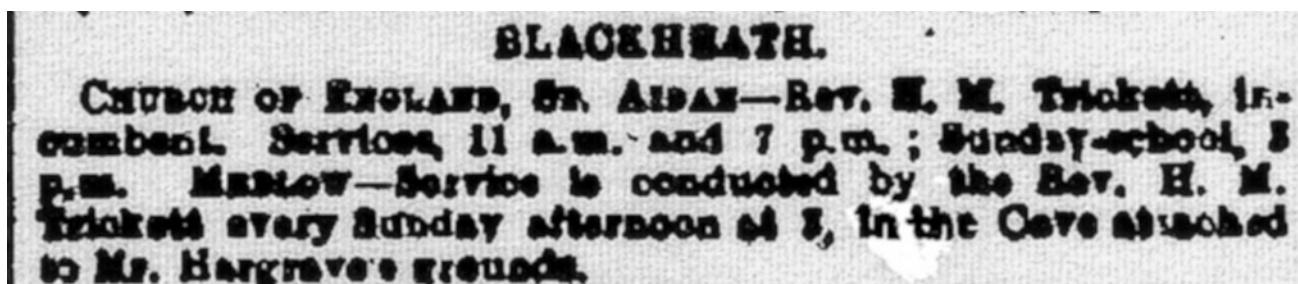
ANGLICAN OBSERVANCES
Medlow Cave 'Church' 1894-1902

".... passing through Medlow by rail-road one's attention is irresistibly attracted to the handsome new cottage villa... Mr. W.H. Hargraves purchased ... about 107 acres near the Medlow station, and about 18 months ago (*c. May 1893*) began the erection of the house.... completed on a plan of Mr. Hargrave's own, ..." (Anonymous 1894c).

William Henry Hargraves, son of Edward Hargraves the discoverer of the first mineable gold in Australia, had, on his property at Medlow, a cave in which he used to entertain guests (Anonymous 1896) as it had a splendid view of the Megalong Valley and Shipley Plateau. This cave is due west of the boundary of Lots 12 & 13 of the Belgravia Estate No.2 (Pollitzer 1891) and is in Lot 1 of DP 133407 on land acquired by W.H. Hargraves when the transfer was witnessed and signed on 13 September 1892 (pers. comm. Brian Fox 8 November 2010). Note that the cave has also been called 'Chinamans Cave', and also just plain 'Medlow Cave' (Fox 2006, Items 377 & 1319 respectively).

Hargraves gave permission for a small group to hold Church of England services in this cave and they were meeting there from at least early September 1894 when notification was published in the first

issue of *The Mountaineer* (Anonymous 1894a; Figure 3).

Figure 3. Church Notices. *The Mountaineer* 7 September 1894, p.1, col.3.

That wording appears to indicate that church services in the cave were an established practice, both before that September publication date and hence also before Hargraves' villa was completed late in 1894*. But how soon meetings started after Hargraves purchased that block of land in September 1892 is not known for Church Notices were not a feature of the preceding newspaper, *The Katoomba Times,* the last issue of which was on 15 June 1894.

One description of the cave is:

"...near the top of the valley is a cave church – a tiny mountain sanctuary, adapted for Divine worship by the walling in of the front of a small cave." (Oreinos 1898, p.28, col.1).

Previously in November 1894 it had been reported:

"The cave at the rear of Mr. Hargrave's residence, where Church of England services are held every Sunday afternoon by the Rev. H.M. Trickett (of Blackheath), has recently been improved, thus making it much more comfortable." (Anonymous 1894b).

Then in 1895 a fireplace was added and later

"... among the congregation were Mr. John See, and three other members of Parliament. We believe sufficient money had been collected by residents to purchase an organ so that the services may be somewhat brighter by the infusion of music." (Anonymous 1895).

A year later it was stated:

"This is a charming spot overlooking the beautiful Kanimbla Valley (*actually the Megalong Valley - Editor*), and forms a unique cave house, a front wall being built up, and doors and windows put in and these with other improvements such as a fireplace making it as comfortable a place as could be desired. Nearly all the natural beauty is retained, and the cave forms a splendid arbor for Mr. Hargraves to entertain any friends. Services are conducted every Sunday afternoon in the cave by Rev. P.W. Dowe, of St. Aidan's Blackheath and on Easter Sunday the cave was beautifully decorated. This was the occasion of a visit from our representative by special invitation, and he was delighted with what he saw." (Anonymous 1896).

As many as 70 have been known to attend services (J.A.X.M. 1895) which, for the longest span of time, were conducted by the Rev Philip William Dowe, Curate-in-Charge of St. Aidan's Church of England in the Parish of Blackheath from 1895 until 1901 (Finney 2005, p.592). Usually they were held at 4.00 p.m. except when it was wet (as on 30 May 1897 - Hodgkinson post 1984), due to the fact that the minister had to travel by horse and buggy. The last set of 'Church Notices' to mention the cave church was in *The Mountaineer* 18 June 1897 (Anonymous 1897) for none of the surviving later issues of that newspaper had such a section. Special functions have been recorded too:

"More than one pretty marriage was also solemnised in that cave." (Has-been 1915).

The earliest known image of the Cave Church dates from 1898 and it is also the only one known to have been published (Figure 4); it shows the exterior complete with the chimney that was installed about three years earlier but which no longer exists (Figure 5).

Figure 4. "6. Church Caves (*sic*), with Seating Accommodation for 80." - Anonymous (1898).

A   (photo – Margaret Edwards 1997)   B   (photo – Jack Austin 2004)

C   (photo – Brian Fox 2006)   D   (photo – Brian Fox 2006)

Figure 5. The Cave Church, Hydro Majestic grounds.

It is not known when the cave ceased to be used as a church, but the caption to Figure 4 indicates that it was still regarded as such at the end of 1898 despite the concomitant announcement following a spate of vandalism on his land, that

"... Mr. Hargraves has felt it necessary, for the protection of his property, to close it to the public and to only admit visitors who have previously obtained his written permission." (Anonymous 1898).

An unconfirmed statement is that by 1898 Sunday School was being held in the cave, and it is clear that the cave was in splendid condition in 1900:

"The cave which has been closed in was tastefully festooned with multifarious kinds of flowers and afternoon tea was therein served to those who wished for refreshment and assistance to the Patriotic Fund." (Anonymous 1900).

In 1901 it was recorded:

"On Saturday (*i.e. 7 July*) a pleasant afternoon was spent at Medlow, the occasion being the presentation of prizes to scholars of the Sunday school connected with the branch church of St. Aidan's, Blackheath." (Anonymous 1901).

That 'branch' seems to relate to the church at Medlow. The Pain family have a Prayer Book prize with an inscription which the senior author copied as:

"Medlow Sunday School.

To Master Osmund Pain.

Teachers E. Wade Brown and L. Birkenhead.

Curate-in-Charge E. Lampard.

Sept. 7th. 1902"

Hence Sunday school was still active after the turn of the century, but it is not clear when it ceased to be conducted in the cave. However, it is unlikely that the cave was used for church services after Hargraves leased that block of land to Mark Foy on 12 April 1902 and which he later transferred to Foy on 4 May 1903 (Land Titles Office 1903; pers. comm. Brian Fox 8 November 2010).

Details of some of the services held at Medlow are within St. Aidan's 'Service Register Book' which was searched by the late Lewis Hodgkinson. In his notes Hodgkinson (post 1984) stated:

"The Wardens Minutes have very few references to Medlow."

yet there are details of some services held between 1897 and 1906. Thus it is known that prior to mid 1897 (see above) the services were usually held in the cave and for the meeting due on 30 May 1897 the note by Hodgkinson is

" 'No Service at Medlow.' Apparently due to 'wet'."

There are details of only two of the 1898 services, both of which were held in homes, one in the home of Mrs. Smith (26 June 1898 - Hodgkinson post 1984) and one in the home of Captain Paine (*sic*) (6 November 1898 - Hodgkinson post 1984). No details of any of the 1899 services were listed; there are brief notes on only two of the 1900 services, and on only two of the 1901 services, but the location of none of these was stated. The 22 June 1902 service was again at an unspecified location but that on 7 September 1902 was the

"Opening service in the new Church at Medlow."

Accordingly it is only possible to speculate that many of the 1898 to mid 1902 services were held in private homes but at least one was held elsewhere for Hodgkinson noted:

"There is one stray reference in the Church Balance Sheet for the year ending March 03 to 'Rent of Room Medlow £2-12-6'."

Most services were conducted by the incumbent of St. Aidan's, Blackheath, but sometimes they were led by lay preachers such as Mr. Cornwallis Wade-Browne (as on 17 June 1900, 22 June 1902 etc. - Hodgkinson post 1984) and Mr. Alfred Tucker (as on 26 August 1900, 25 August 1901 - Hodgkinson post 1984).

The reminiscences of only one minister are known. Rev. Lampard recorded in his letter of 13 June 1945:

"The service on Sundays here was, before my arrival, held in a cave; then in a private house, not far from the overhead railway bridge. Amongst those living at Medlow was a Captain Wade-Brown, and he together with Mrs. Wade-Brown and other keen Church people in the district, became interested in the plan for providing Medlow with a Church, which was erected and dedicated in the name of St. Luke somewhere about 1903, if my memory serves me right." (Hillier 1945 Frame 183 p.109; 1962 Frame 528 p.144; see also Hillier 1976, p.178).

Building in 1902

In June 1902 it was announced that:

"A new school-church is in course of erection at Medlow, and it is expected that it will be ready for service within the next two months." (Anonymous 1902a).

St Luke's opening service in the new church was held on Sunday 7 September 1902 at 3.45 p.m. when the Rev. Lampard (Curate-in-Charge 1901-1907 - Hodgkinson 1984 p.19; Finney 2005) preached to a large congregation at a Divine service (Anonymous 1902b; Hodgkinson post 1984). Thereafter services commenced to be held weekly. When St Luke's opened it was designated as a 'Chapel of Ease' viz.

"a church building other than the parish church, built within the bounds of a parish for the attendance of those who cannot reach the parish church conveniently" – (Wikipedia 2011).

Prior to 1902, travel from Medlow to the nearest church at Blackheath would have been by horse, by horse and cart, or by walking as there were no cars and rail travel was impractical, there being only three down trains per day on which to travel to Blackheath and one of those was in the evening.

[A year after the church opened, the village was renamed Medlow Bath (from 1 October 1903, Kaldy 1983, p.6) and the Railway Station was given that name from 1 November 1903 (Anonymous 1903) following a request by Mark Foy (Wylie & Singleton 1958, p.52).]

The historical record at this time is confused for a newspaper report in 1904 stated:
"At the Parramatta Synod the attention of the executive committee was directed to securing a site for a church at Medlow Bath." (Anonymous 1904a).
Yet St. Luke's had already been constructed!

A loan had been acquired in order to build the church and the Rev. Edward Lampard was instrumental in organising a building fund so that by the end of May 1906 the outstanding debt had been paid off. But in 1907 the congregation, then about 12, were handed a new, and significant, financial burden when they were asked to start contributing to the stipend of Lampard's successor! (Hodgkinson post 1984).

Land Title
Captain Tom Pain (1849-1912), master mariner of the merchant ship *Lady Bowen* that traded across

Figure 6. Advertisement for the Land Sale on 28 December 1912 (Robb & Robb 1912) showing the residence of Captain Paine (*sic*) and St Luke's in its original configuration (the building in Railway Parade furthest south of St Alban's Road).
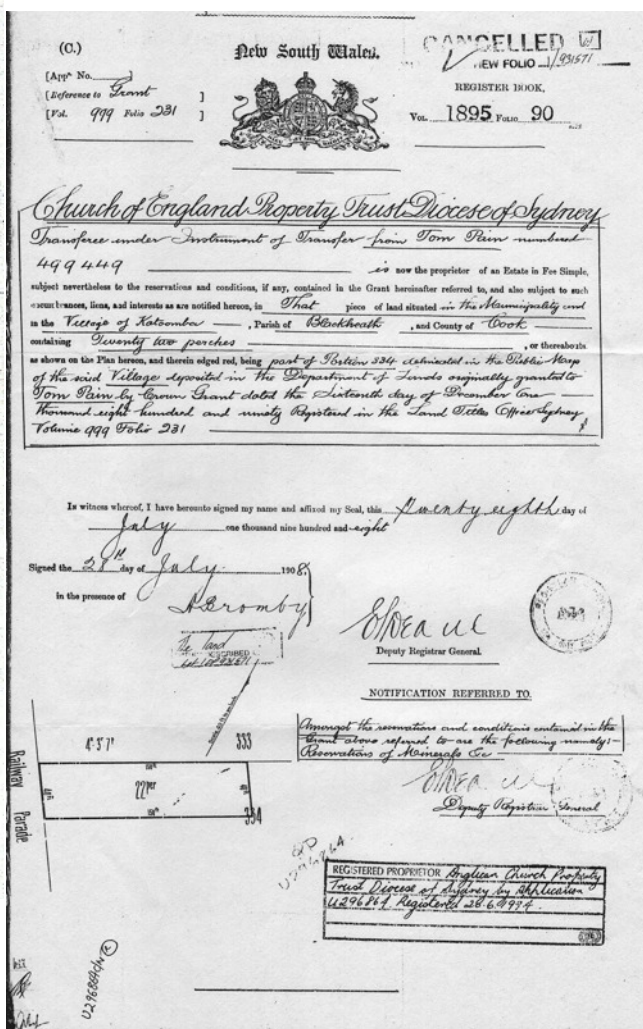
Figure 7. Certificate of Land Title 1908.

the Pacific Ocean, had received a land grant at Medlow in 1890. He built homes of which *Llanover* in St Albans Road (Figure 6) (now regarded by the Blue Mountains City Council (2011) as being at 56 Beaufort Avenue -) and *Medlow House* at 4 Somerset Street (Figure 10 - shown as owned by T. Alcock in 1914), still exist.

Figure 8. 1943 Aerial Photograph (Department of Lands 2011)

By subdivision on 28 July 1908, Pain transferred 22 perches (c.562 sq. m) of his land (for £30) to the "Church of England Property Trust Diocese of Sydney" (Land Titles Office 1908; Figure 7) on which to build a church. Unexplained is why that 1908 land sale post-dates the 1902 construction date as that cannot happen nowadays! The close physical link between St. Luke's Church and Pain's *Medlow House* is revealed by the path between them so clearly shown in the 1943 aerial photograph (Figure 8).

In 1994 ownership of the land changed from the Church of England Property Trust Diocese of Sydney to the Anglican Church Property Trust Diocese of Sydney and it is now designated as Lot 1, DP 931571 (Blue Mountains City Council 2011).

St. Luke's Building

The postal address of St. Luke's is 40a Railway Parade, Medlow Bath, NSW 2780. It was the only church ever to be built in Medlow Bath; a neat white weatherboard building behind a picket fence - a single room chapel surrounded by houses. The building has been described as

"a Federation carpenter gothic church" (Jack et al. 2000, p.1)

with two bay gables that were completed in 1913; the dimensions are 12m x 44m (*c.39 x 144 feet*). It became heritage listed (Blue Mountains Heritage Inventory 2000; Council of the City of Blue Mountain n.d.).

(photo –N. & E. Kirkland - 1990s; BMHS photo 3876)

Figure 9. Ship's Bell from the *Princess Alexandra*.

Inside, it was

"... a miniature wooden cathedral, ..." (Woolston 1999, p.36) and

"one of the prettiest in the Blue Mountains" (Anonymous 1926)

which had an atmosphere of peace and meditation.

Outside, mounted high up on a pole located on the north side of the entrance porch, there is a bell (Figure 9) which was tolled to call the congregation to each service; it came from the ship *Princess Alexandra* which sank off the north coast of NSW in 1874. ** At one time the bell was located on the south side of the porch where the original hardwood supports remain.

After the opening of the building (Anonymous 1902b), the earliest known notice of a forthcoming service at St. Luke's was published on 27 August 1910, viz:

"St. Luke's, Medlow Bath: Divine Service every Sunday at 4 p.m. Holy Communion on the first Sunday in each month." (Anonymous 1910).

That delay is accountable for the parent community at St. Aidan's, Blackheath, only began to advertise on 20 August 1910 and for several years thereafter both churches advertised in many succeeding issues of that newspaper.

Additions

After ten years the size of the building caused concern and

"A meeting was held at St. Luke's Church of England on Saturday for the purpose of deciding what steps should be taken towards the building of a new sanctuary and additions to the church. Already about £40 has been collected." ... "Mr. P.V. Tabrett, of Katoomba, is the architect for the additions to St. Luke's Church. The plans were adopted at the last committee meeting and tenders will be called at an early date." (Anonymous 1912a).

"A new transept and sanctuary are to be erected in St. Luke's Church of England. The work is expected to be finished in October. The Rector and Churchwardens have also received a generous offer from Mr. Alcock to paint the whole of the outside of the Church gratuitously when finished." (Anonymous 1912b).

Fund raising was still in progress early in 1913 with

"... the sale of work, in aid of the new additions to St. Luke's Church of England ..." (Anonymous 1913a)

being recorded, whilst construction was under way:

"Messrs Whiting Bros. (contractors) are making good headway with St. Luke's Church. It should be finished by the end of the month (*i.e. January*)." (Anonymous 1913b).

It wasn't !

But by mid-year it was finished and

"The church was originally (*actually in the expanded form - Editor*) a cruciform shape with the transept eight feet (*2.4 m*) wider than the nave and was built on wooden piles." (Kaldy 1983, p.45; also see Figure 10 below).

Dedication 1913

"His Grace, the Archbishop had promised to dedicate the new part" (Anonymous 1913e)

and it was announced that the Archbishop of Sydney would do that on 21 August 1913 at 3.00 p.m. and the dedication would be followed by refreshments provided by Mark Foy at the Hydro Majestic (Anonymous 1913f).

"... at 2.30 left by motor car to St. Luke's Medlow Bath, to dedicate the new extension lately added to the building. There was a large congregation and the Service was most impressive." (Anonymous 1913g).

Prior to leaving in 1907, Rev. Lampard had sought to have the status of St. Luke's raised from a 'Chapel of Ease' to that of a consecrated church, and at this ceremony that elevation of status was approved:

"The Episcopal Seal was this day issued authorising the celebration of Divine Worship, the Administration of the Holy Sacrament and Solemnization of Matrimony in the Chapel of Ease of St. Luke in the Parish of Blackheath and Medlow. 30th Day of September, nineteen hundred and thirteen." (St. Andrew's Cathedral Records 1913; cited by Kaldy 1983, p.43).
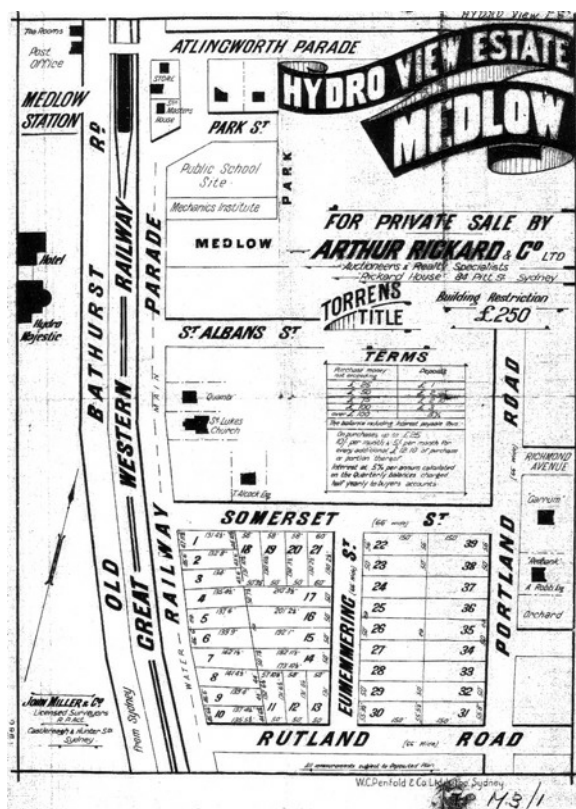

Figure 10. Advertisement (Miller & Co., n.d.), for the Land Sale on 14 February 1914 (Anonymous 1914d), showing St Luke's with the addition of transepts (in Railway Parade north of Somerset Street).

Archbishop Sydney wrote:

"... I have opened the extension of the church at Medlow, ..." (Sydney 1913, p.3).

"At the dinner tendered by Mr. Mark Foy to His Grace, the Archbishop, Mrs. A.W. Tucker acted as hostess in the unavoidable absence of Mrs. Mark Foy. The Primate was greatly impressed and interested in Mr. Foy's art and curio collection." (Anonymous 1913h). [That collection was lost in a fire (Anonymous 1922c)].

Benefactors to the Interior
The interior of St. Luke's was most impressive and many of the contents had been donated.

1912-1913.
The principal benefactor was Miss Helen Plummer Phillips who, from 1884 to 1890 was headmistress of St. Catherine's Girls School at Waverley (also known as The Clergy Daughters' School) and from 1891-1892 was Tutor to female students at Sydney University having postponed an intention to become a missionary in India (Phillips 1914, pp.74-76). Subsequently (1892-1905) she spent 13 years in Ceylon (Phillips 1914, p.2) as a missionary, in the process of which she founded four Christian Industrial schools - the significance of which is explained below.

In 1885 Miss Phillips bought land in Hat Hill Road, Blackheath (Woolston 1999, p.39), and built a house (*The Chalet*, Hat Hill Road now owned by one of the authors) which she retained as a holiday home until 1893. On returning in 1913 she purchased a house called *Lustleigh Cleave* (Phillips 1914, Preface), in Lot 8, DP 1727, then no.30 and now no.109 Station Street, Blackheath, so she had a connection with the area stretching over nearly three decades.

Helen Plummer Phillips is likely to have been the instigator of donations in 1912 and 1913, viz:

(photo – Mrs. Elsa Courts)
Figure 11. Remaining fragment of an elaborately carved teak Communion Rail [Also see Figure 19 - adjacent to Dr Isbister's right

"A handsome gift of well carved teak wood Communion rails has been presented to Medlow Church, Blue Mountains, Australia, by Mrs. J. Henry Perera of Kuruwe Walauwa, Colombo. They are the work of the C.M.S. Industrial School boys, Dodanduwa." .... "A carved teak wood Lectern, Prayer desk and Litany desk, also the work of the Dodanduwa Industrial boys, were presented last year to the same Church (*sic*) at Medlow, Blue Mountains." (*Ceylon Gleaner*, March 1913 cited by Phillips 1914, p.36) - see Figures 11, 12 & 18.

Figure 12. (photos – Mrs. Elsa Courts)

A Lectern   **B** Prayer Desk   **C** Litany Desk   **D** Font

But, in 1913, Miss Phillips, herself, made major donations to St. Luke's church of a baptismal font (Figure 12D), and a stained glass window with a crown (Figure 13C; also see Woolston 1999, p.37) which is behind, and on the southern side of, the communion table.

A Miss Board is reputed to have donated the matching stained glass window with a cross which is inscribed "Presented by a visitor to Medlow" (Figure 13A); it is behind and on the northern side of the communion table. It may be significant that the stained glass west window of St. Aidan's, Blackheath, was given by Mrs. Board (Hodgkinson 1984 p.28).

(photos – Mrs. Elsa Courts)

Figure 13. Windows and Donors

A North window	**B** East window	**C** South window
Miss Board	Miss Strafford	Miss H.P. Phillips

Also in 1913, Miss Strafford, a Medlow parishioner, gave the stained glass window that is behind the communion table on the eastern side of the church (Figure 13B); the image is a copy of the painting of Christ knocking at the door:

"... , representing Holman Hunt's famous picture, 'The Light of the World' and faithfully rendered by Messrs. J. Ashuin (*sic*) and Son, of Sydney, ..." (Anonymous 1913i).

[The manufacturer of the central window was actually John Ashwin & Co., Stained Glass Works, 31 Dixon Street, Sydney (Sands 1913, pp.45, 894).]

It was donated by Miss Strafford in memory of her brother-in-law,Rev. Richard James Read, and her sister, Mrs. Sarah Elizabeth Read, who joined the congregation of St. Luke's in 1903 when they retired to Medlow.

Two of these donors were not exactly identified but were probably:

1. Miss Lucy Board (? 1929) of 36 Gordon St, Paddington (Sands 1913, p.937) who had a connection with the area because her brother was Edgar Board, an Alderman of Blackheath Municipal Council (December 1925 – May 1937) and Mayor (April 1926 – December 1929), an affluent Draper owning many properties in Blackheath.

and

2. Miss Wilhelmina H.M.A.S. Strafford (1849-1918) of *Allowah*, 46 Redan Street, Mosman (Sands 1913, pp.546 & 1572) whose sister (1843-1907) had retired to Medlow. From at least 1914, Wilhelmina owned Lots 27/28 and part Lot 29 of DP 2873 on which was the house *Kanimbla* in Belgravia Street,
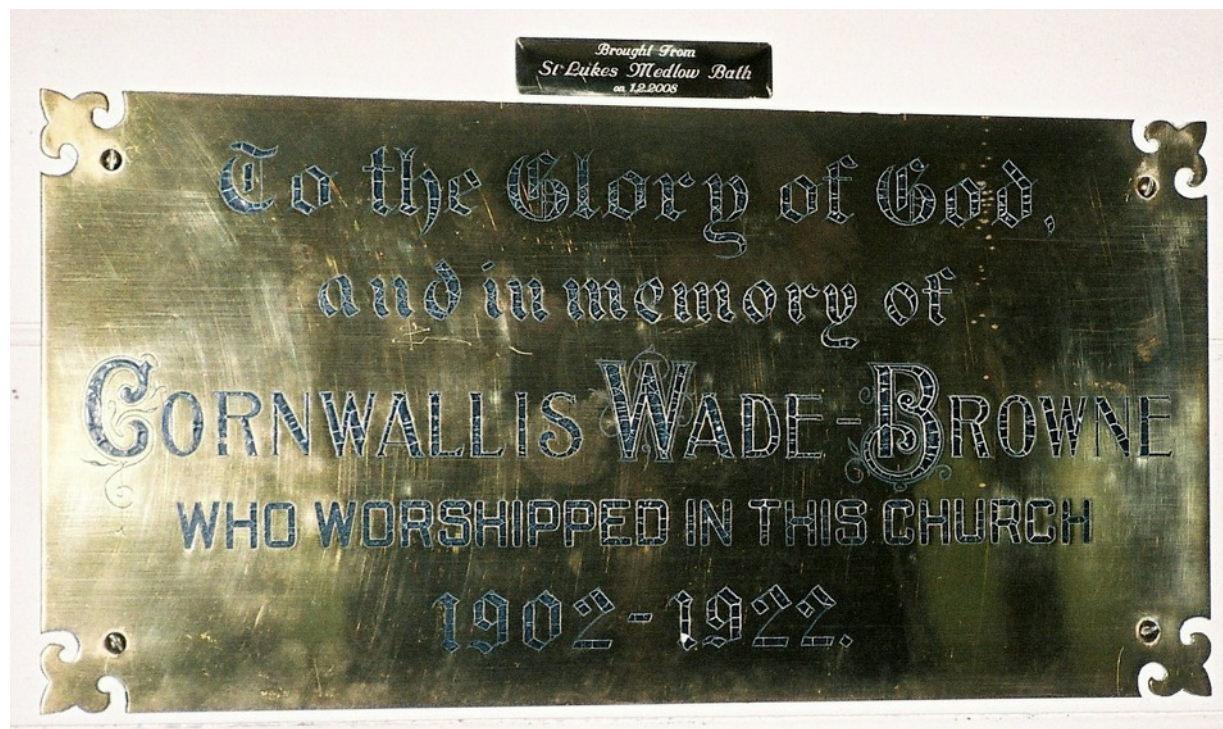
Medlow Bath (Blue Mountains Shire Council Rate Books 1914 to Blue Mountains Shire Council Rate Books 1919).

1926

Captain Cornwallis Wade-Browne, was an Army officer formerly of the 11th and 48th Foot Regiments (1855-1866), whose step-grandfather Sir John Eardley-Wilmot had been Governor of Van Diemen's Land (1843-46). Wade-Browne owned several plots of land at Medlow, one of which was a farm of 50 acres named *Oriel* (Pors.328-331, Blue Mountains Shire Council Rate Books 1918) that lay beyond the eastern end of St. Albans Road and is now in the Sydney Water Catchment Area. He was a regular worshipper, as was his first wife Eudora Mary Anne who predeceased him in 1893; both are buried in Blackheath Cemetery, Church of England, Row 1, No.11 (Blue Mountains Family History Society 1989, p.95). His son's benefaction is recorded:

"... the Rev H.A.C. Rowell (*sic*) dedicated a magnificent oil painting and tablet to the memory of the late Mr. Cornwallis Wade-Brown, a devout churchman and a staunch supporter of St. Luke's. Mr. John Wade-Brown, only son of the deceased gentleman, unveiled the painting, which he purchased in Italy. The subject was "The Shell" portraying Our Lord and St. John the Baptist, after the famous painting by Murillo. The brass tablet was engraved "To the Glory of God and in memory of Cornwallis Wade-Brown, who worshipped in this church from 1902-1923." ... St. Luke's is perhaps the prettiest of the small churches in the Blue Mountains." (Anonymous 1926).

The latter date is inaccurately reported as Cornwallis Wade-Browne died on 8 July 1922 and that is the year engraved on the plaque (Figure 14)!

(photo Peter Rickwood 2011)

Figure 14. Cornwallis Wade-Browne memorial plaques, now in St Aidan's Church, Blackheath.

post 1934

There were two brass vases inscribed 'H.A.C.R.' (Figure 15A), these being the initials of the Rev. Harold Arthur Campbell Rowsell (18?? - 1941), Rector at St. Aidan's 1922-1934 (Hodgkinson 1984, p.20; Finney 2005; NSW BDM 1941). Whether he donated the vases, or whether another donated them in his memory, is not known but as they are engraved with his term of office they have to postdate 1934.

(photos – Mrs. Elsa Courts)

Figure 15. A Vases Inscribed H.A.C.R. 1922-1934   **B** Cross
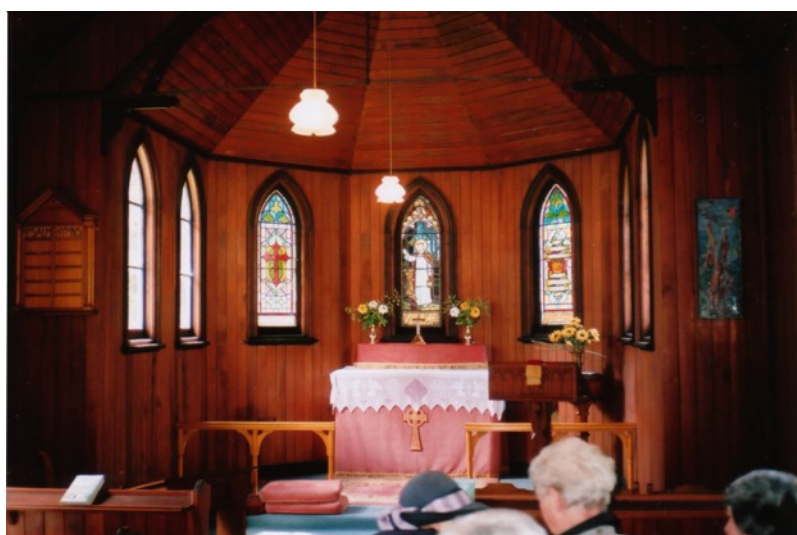
post 1948

An unknown benefactor donated a cross (Figure 15B) in memory of Mrs. Lily Florence Murren (1885-1948), of Medlow Bath and Randwick, who died 22 April 1948 (Hall 1950) aged 63 years (Anonymous 1948).

1950s

Intricately crocheted linen communion table cloths (Figure 16) were made and donated by Matron Clark of the Blue Mountains Hospital, Katoomba.

1960s & 1970s

From 1965 until 1977, Mrs. Pearl Dean was in charge of the Sunday School of up to 20 children and during this time the Sunday School collection raised the money to pay for the installation of heaters in the church (Dean 1997).

(photo – Peter Rickwood 2003)

Figure 16. Communion table & stained glass windows in the chancel.

Storm Damage 1928

During a violent storm in October 1928 (Anonymous 1928; Anonymous 2002a, p.8) St Luke's church was blown off its foundations and over onto its side, too seriously damaging the transept for it to be reused. With the assistance of Mr. L.W. Hodgkinson, architect, and Mr. F.J. Peatfield, builder, the central section and chancel of the church were placed back in their original positions, so what remained was essentially the original building but it is somewhat shorter (16 ft [*4.9 m*] - Kaldy 1983, p.45) and narrower than the 1913 building. Receipts found by the principal author in the back of a framed photograph are dated 29 May and 22 June 1929 and indicate that Mr. Peatfield charged a total of £120 for that work. [Note: erroneously, this storm has been reported as having occurred in 1920 **(**Kaldy 1983, p.45) and unfortunately that error has been repeated in several documents etc. e.g. Jack et al. (2000, p.1)].

Except that the church continued to be used for services (e.g. Anonymous 1924b, 1943), little is known of St. Luke's for nearly the next four decades. But congregations were never large and, inevitably, the poor attendances, shortage of available cash and personnel, and a single Rector for six churches, led to the parent church seeking the closure of St. Luke's.

Saving from Closure - 1987
A campaign waged in 1987 to save the church was led by Dr Clair Isbister. On-going maintenance was provided by local residents, e.g.
   "Janet Ackeman gave us the carpet & also the runner & Dawn Moody was a great help." (Dean 1997).
Rosa and Cedric Langbein rallied the church members, and thanks to them, Joan Dempsey the organist, and other loyal wardens, the church was cared for and kept out of debt.

Then it was learned that
   "Members of the church-going community of Medlow Bath are rejoicing that their picturesque old timber church, St. Lukes, (*sic*) will be saved.
   The church was facing closure because it was not drawing big numbers to its Sunday service, but the local community has rallied and proved the critics wrong.
   At a special August meeting of the Blackheath Anglican Parish, the Reverend Neil Macken, reviewed the situation. This followed a six-month experiment during which the congregation proved there was sufficient interest in the border community to keep the church going.
   The Reverend Keith (*actually Ken - Editor*) MacIntyre conducted the services during the six months and in his report to the parish highlighted the fact that St. Lukes (*sic*) was the only church in Medlow Bath and that people of different denominations attended it.
   From now on, the regular weekly Sunday service will begin at 9am
   • St. Lukes (*sic*): Improved attendance mean it will not be closed." (Anonymous 1987b).

Trials over a Toilet
The issue of a toilet may seem mundane but it became a key factor in the argument for the closure of the church. In the 1980s, the wardens of St. Luke's tried to get financial support from the Parish Council in order to maintain the building and to provide a toilet which was much needed by the elderly congregation. [In the interim, the churchwarden who lived in the adjacent property kindly allowed worshippers to use her toilet facilities.] But support was not forthcoming and the lack of a toilet gave the Parish Council another excuse to close the church.

A donation of $500
   "... toward the building of a Church Hall and Toilet."
was made by the Drs. John and Clair Isbister (Balfour et al. 1996) but it seems that in the Anglican Church even the desire to install a toilet required approval from the Bishop! Eventually the Parish Council agreed to build a hall with a toilet so plans for "the addition of a toilet and utility room" were submitted to the Diocese of Sydney but these were deemed to lack sufficient detail for approval to be granted (Donohoo 1998) and the design was also questioned:
   "... you need to be sure the final result does not suffer from a lack of foresight because you restricted your outlay."

Centenary Celebrations 2002
However, despite the lack of plumbing, the church continued to exist and eventually a very successful Centenary celebration was held on 20 October 2002 at 8.45 a.m. (Anonymous 2002a,b). 70 people packed the church which had seating for only 50 and that with a squeeze!

For a while, the retired Canon Langdon preached on one Sunday each month (usually the third) and Frances Connon, a lay preacher, acted on the fourth Sunday of each month. This was a happy arrangement during which donations came in for the construction of a hall but the recurring suggestion was that the church should be sold and so donations dried up and the plan was abandoned. At this time

an application was made to the The Heritage Council of NSW for a grant to preserve the church but, reputedly, there was no support from the Parish.

But, although the congregation increased temporarily after the Centenary celebrations, the growth did not persist. An attempt to resume a Sunday School failed as there was no hall in which to hold it.

Closure in 2004

For a long period, every few years the small congregation of St. Luke's successfully resisted attempts by the Blackheath Parish Council to have the church closed. In the new century yet another campaign was waged, and again it was led by Dr Clair Isbister, but despite her efforts aided by those of several parishioners, the inevitable happened. The Anglican Diocese of Sydney, the Archbishop, and the rector of the Parish of Blackheath, Rev. Ian Mears, decided that St. Luke's should be sold (Desiatnik 2004) and St. Thomas' at Hampton was to be closed as well (Gregory 2004). The motion recommending the closure of both churches was carried at the meeting of the Council of the Anglican Parish of Blackheath on 20 April 2004. Attempts to retain St Luke's by suggesting that services be conducted by retired clerics were rejected as impractical (Smith 2004a,b).

The last service in St. Luke's was to have been held on Sunday 26 December 2004 (Anonymous 2004) but Isbister (2005) reported that it was actually conducted on 19 December 2004. The churchwardens of St. Luke's were sent a letter bluntly informing them

"... that as the church has now been delicensed you cease to hold office" (Selden 2005).

Eventually the church of St. Luke at Medlow Bath was locked but the whole lengthy process of closure appears to have caused great distress to the wardens, parishioners and community. St. Thomas' church at Hampton survived by being "seconded to the nearby parish of Oberon." in 2004 (Blackheath Anglican Parish 2011), and it now comes under the Diocese of Bathurst which is considered as more strongly relying on pastoral care.

On record is a letter from St. Catherine's School, Waverley (Galettis 2004) asking for the School to be given some of the donated items. On behalf of the School, the Archivist was keen to recover gifts made by their former headmistress, Helen Plummer Phillips (1884-1890), specifically communion rails, a lectern, a prayer desk and a liturgy desk (*correctly a Litany Desk - Bumpus 1910, p.176*); acquisition of these items had been arranged by Miss Phillips not donated by her (Phillips 1914, p.36). Concern was also expressed about the fate of the stained glass window that she had donated.

The fate of the contents of St. Luke's church has only recently been discovered (pers. comm. Mrs. Frances Connon, 31 May 2011). Of the items mentioned in this account:

two communion rails (Figures 11 & 18) were given to a parishioner;

the lectern (Figure 12A) was relocated to St. Aidan's hall, Blackheath;

the prayer desk and chair (Figure 12B) went to St. John the Evangelist's, Hartley;

the font (Figure 12D) was given to St. Peter's, Mt. Victoria;

the vases (Figure 15A) and the cross (Figure 15C) were taken to St. Aidan's, Blackheath, for safe keeping;

one set of crocheted linen communion table cloths (Figure 16) was taken to St. Aidan's, Blackheath, for safe keeping and two sets were given to St. Peter's, Mt. Victoria;

the painting "Children of the Shell" was given to the former Church Warden and Organist, Mrs. Joan Dempsey;

the plaque, or 'brass tablet', commemorating the service of Cornwallis Wade-Brown, was relocated to the southern wall of St. Aidan's Church, Blackheath, and above it has been added a small plate specifying that the plaque had originally been installed in St. Luke's at Medlow Bath.

the ship's bell (Figure 9) remains outside the former church;

and the splendid stained glass windows (Figure 13) remain within the building and can be seen (partially) from the road.

Use of the Building Post Closure & Restrictions

The Blue Mountains City Council resolved on 8 March 2005 to support:

"in principle, negotiations by the Medlow Bath Resident's Association Inc. to be granted the use of the Anglican Community Church of St. Lukes (*sic*), Medlow Bath, under licence for a period of five years, given its local heritage significance." (Menday 2005).

But nothing appears to have followed! Concerns for the future of the building were still being raised in December 2006 but the final decision of the Anglican Church Diocese of Sydney in relation to the building was to put it on the market. The signage was removed (Figure 17) and the building, including the stained glass windows and the bell, was sold on 10 September 2008 to De.Zign Pty. Ltd. for $190,000. In 2011 the building appears to be neglected; it is locked, unused, and the exterior has peeling paint!

(photo – Anne E. Rickwood)

Figure 17. Exterior of the former church building - 17 November 2010.

ROMAN CATHOLIC OBSERVANCES

Advertisements for church services in Medlow Bath appeared sporadically in *The Mountaineer* and *The Blue Mountain Echo* newspapers and most were under a heading of "Church of England". Much rarer were those for Catholic masses, the earliest known having been published in 1904 in *The Blue Mountain Gazette*:

"R.C. Services. Sunday, December 18. – At .... Medlow Bath, St. Patrick's Oratory, mass 9 a.m.; ..." (Anonymous 1904b) [Note the name].

and that was followed by one advertised in *The Mountaineer* on 12 May 1905:

"St. Canice's Presbytery. Church Arrangements. Sunday, May 14th. ... Mass will be celebrated at Medlow Bath on Sunday next at 8 a.m." (Anonymous 1905).

The venue was possibly within the Hydro Majestic Hotel for the hall later used for masses had not been built (see below).

There was an advertising hiatus from 1905 until 29 November 1912 when:

"Church Services. Catholic Church. Medlow Bath. Holy Mass at 8.00 a.m." (Considine 1912).

No date was specified but presumably the following Sunday was implied, i.e. 1 December 1912. These brief advertisements did not specify a location, and most subsequent notices for Catholic masses being held in Medlow Bath were equally vague in respect to location, so presumably, the Catholic

congregation were expected to know where to go - but pity the visitor! From the end of March 1913 (Anonymous 1913c) again there was an advertising hiatus (for twenty months) until it was announced that for Sunday 29 November 1914:

"Medlow Bath. Holy Mass, 8 a.m., in the local hall." (Anonymous 1914a; also see Anonymous 1914c).

and another entry in that same newspaper issue signified that the unnamed building was most probably "Flannigan's Hall" (Anonymous 1914b) which is more correctly spelled "Flanagan's hall" (Anonymous 1913a). That is now a castellated building at 1 Railway Parade - to the north of the Railway platform (Kaldy 1983, p.65). Originally that was the site of a store run by Isabella Smith in 1904 and 1905; it was purchased by Mark Foy in 1905 to extend and create a hall but when that work was completed has not been established (Heritage Office of NSW 2002, SHI 1170284). However the first store building would not have been suitable for holding a mass so the earliest observances were probably held in a part of what became the Hydro Majestic Hotel. Masses from 1906 until 1914 may well have been held in the Hall but proof is lacking at present. The building was again extended by Mark Foy in 1910 to become the Post & Telegraph Office (Figure 18A - lettering indistinct) for a few years; note that the style is the same as he used for a northern wing of his Hydro Majestic Hotel. In 1916 the Post & Telegraph Office became known as Rice's Hall but subsequently has been rebadged several times e.g. Figure 18B.

A   (photo – N. & E. Kirkland 1990s)   **B**   (photo – Peter Rickwood 2011)
(BMHS photo 3872)

Figure 18. The former Post & Telegraph Office building at one time used by the Catholic Church.

A dance was held in March 1913 resulting in

"... a fair cheque going to the Catholic church ..."

for an unspecified purpose (Anonymous 1913d). Much of this activity took place whilst J. Considine was Administrator 1912-1915 (Baker 1990, p.149) and it continued for a short time whilst Father St. Clair Joseph Bridge was in charge of the Parish. Not having a permanent meeting place was not a situation that the worshippers of Medlow Bath liked for early in January 1916 the Catholic congregation decided

"to make vigorous efforts to secure a church"

and so again started to raise money. First they organised a fund raising evening on 1 February (Anonymous 1916a,c), then a bazaar in Easter Week

"... for the Medlow R.C. Church building fund." (Anonymous 1916b)

and next a Euchre Party and Dance late in April 1916 (Anonymous 1916d). In 1917 there was held in Medlow Bath a:

".. social in aid of the R.C. Church building fund ..." (Anonymous 1917)

However, no further notices in relation to the building fund have been located and that building did not eventuate. Nevertheless, after an interval of 18 years the 'Church' re-acquired the name of St. Patrick's (Anonymous 1922a,b) but that appellation was not used in the same publication in the following year (Anonymous 1923a) and thereafter. Unfortunately the known copies of these publications are few and all have been scrutinised so this is the limit of our knowledge concerning that name.

It is hardly surprising that a Catholic church was not built in Medlow Bath, as Censuses organised by the Church in May and June 1923 showed that there were only 36 Catholics resident there (Anonymous 1923b; Baker 1990, p.166) and only 40 in January 1924 (Anonymous 1924a).

Over three decades later, 1 Railway Parade was again used by the Catholic Church after it bought the hall in 1952 for £1800; the last service was held therein in 1967 (Anonymous 1987a). It then became disused for many years and was so ramshackle that it was under a Council demolition order when it was sold to Bill Boldiston in 1981 (Kaldy 1983, p.49) or 1980 (Anonymous 1987a) but after extensive restoration it was used for some time as a vintage car museum.

Postscript

(photo – Peter Rickwood 2003)

Figure 19. The senior author, Dr Jean Sinclair (Clair as she preferred to be called) Isbister (née Paton) CBE, MB, BS, FARACP, DCH who died on 20 August 2008

Abbreviations
BMHS   Blue Mountains Historical Society Inc., Wentworth Falls
n.d.   no date.

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* Hargraves' house *Tullumbar* (Anonymous 1898, Fig. 2) is the subject of Photograph 469, Local Studies Library, Blue Mountains City Council Springwood; reproduced by Edds & Associates (1997, Illustration 3.5, p.3-8) and there are other photographs (Illustration 6.2, p.6-3; Illustration 6.17, p.6-35). During alterations and extensions to the Hydro Majestic, Hargraves' house was incorporated into the existing building at the rear, or western part, of the large wing at the southern end of Cats Alley (Edds & Associate, 1997, Fig. 4.1, p.4-74; pp.6-1 & 6-4). It had been built mostly on Lot 16 which Hargraves bought on 3 March 1893 (Edds & Associates, 1997, p.A-3 - Land Titles Office (1893) but a small part was on Lot 17 which Hargraves had acquired six months previously on 13 September 1892 (Land Titles Office 1903).

** "The schooner Princess Alexandra is reported to be a total wreck on South Beach, Port Macquarie. No lives lost." - Anonymous (1874).

Princess Alexandra. Schooner, 51 tons. Built NSW, 1863; reg. Sydney, 49/1867. Length 76.5 ft.
Wrecked near the Bellinger (*sic*) River, Port Macquarie south beach, NSW, 10 April 1874.
(Encyclopedia of Australian Shipwrecks 2011)

A photocopy of the report by the Board of Inquiry was reproduced by Kaldy (1983, p.46) and indicated that the accident occurred whilst the vessel was attempting to cross the "Bellenger (*sic*) Bar" to enter the Bellinger River.

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A HISTORY OF THE POSTAL AND TELEPHONE SERVICES TO MOUNT WILSON

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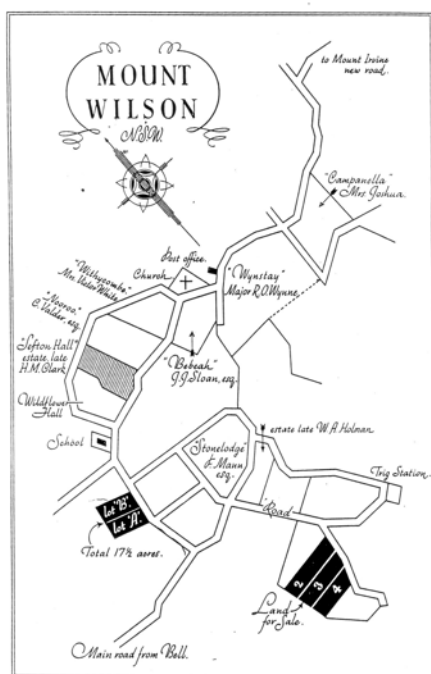mary_reynolds@internode.on.net

Abstract

Mt. Wilson was settled in 1875 but not until 1879 was a Receiving Officer for mail appointed at the nearest railway platform at Bell, from whom Mt. Wilson residents had to collect their mail. From the start of 1889 a contractor carried the mail from Bell to Mt. Wilson and in 1890 delivery commenced to a Post Office in the grounds of *Beowang* where a Telephone Exchange was installed in 1916. Eventually a dedicated Post Office building was erected adjacent to St George's Church in 1922 and it functioned until 1986 with only a manual telephone exchange. Then all services were transferred to Mt. Victoria from which mail had to be delivered to individual properties in Mt. Wilson and Mt. Irvine.

Key Words: Mt. Wilson, Post Office, Telephone, *Beowang,* Blue Mountains.

Introduction

Even in the twenty-first century, Mt. Wilson and Mt. Irvine remain rather isolated, yet separate, settlements in the northern Blue Mountains or the Carmarthen Hills as Governor Arthur Phillip described them (on 5 July 1789 when exploring the Hawkesbury; Valder 1988, p.65). Both mountains are on the same ridge and are surrounded by The World Heritage Blue Mountains National Park and the Wollemi National Park. They are capped by basalt which produces a rich dark soil and in the times of the indigenous occupants it carried a temperate rain forest of coachwood, sassafras and an understorey of magnificent tree ferns. Mt. Wilson, which lies above 1000 metres, today has fine gardens, shaded avenues and reserves on that rich soil and experiences a moist, cool climate; Mt. Irvine is lower, but still above 800 metres, and it too has its share of splendid gardens along with its traditional rural heritage.

Figure 1. Map of Mount Wilson showing most of the houses in this paper (Stanton & Sons Ltd 1935a).

In 1875-1876 when Mt. Wilson was first settled by Europeans they created rough tracks, so an effective means of communication would have seemed to us impossible. Mt. Wilson was a '*Hill Station*' providing a cool summer, due to its 1000 metre altitude, and a healthy isolated environment of rich volcanic soil and vegetation. Such features attracted a small number of wealthy members of NSW Society to build a summer home on this mountain. In 1999 I was fortunate to be able to access the records of postal service to Mt. Wilson and Bell and discovered a detailed, if at times laboured, story of persistent efforts to establish a permanent postal service for Mt. Wilson. Being settled 20 years later in 1897, Mt. Irvine was not involved (Naylor & Scrivener 1997, pp.1, 7, 13-14).

E.S. Wyndham surveyed north from Mt. Victoria along the Darling Causeway, then southeast to the Mt. Wilson turnoff, along what we now know as Bells Line of Road, and finally the eight km (*5 miles*) into Mt. Wilson. He made clear to Surveyor General Phillip Francis Adams, that a railway platform should be built alongside the existing line to Lithgow to provide reasonable access to the land that he had surveyed at Mt. Wilson 16 km away (*10 miles* - Currey 1968, p.75). His plea was successful and the Mt. Wilson Platform was opened on 5 May 1875 (Currey 1968, p.30), but following the suggestion of G.H. Cox (Cox 1888) it was renamed Bell on 1 May 1889 (Wylie & Singleton 1958, p.93; note that letter B89/852 in NAA (1876-1917) records the change of name date as 30 May 1889).

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Figure 2. Richard and Mary Ann Wynne c.1874, the year Richard Wynne was the first Mayor of Burwood. (MW&MIHS, Settlement Collection, photo 98/187; also in James et al. 1969, Figure 3.1)

A letter dated 7 February 1876 was written by Richard Wynne (Figure 2), the founder of *Yarrawa (*now *Wynstay*) in Mt. Wilson, which provides a clear and lively picture of the first year of European settlement of Mt. Wilson and the concerns over the failed delivery of letters. It was directed to the Post Master-General of NSW, the Honourable J.F. Burns, and, amazingly, it was received next day on 8 February 1876. The Post Master-General was sympathetic about Wynne's complaints but he explained that there were difficulties as the postal service was dependent on the cooperation of the Railway Department! Unfortunately, passenger train drivers refused to stop at Mt. Wilson Platform, so it was suggested that the Post Master at One Tree Hill (now Mt. Victoria) could make up a 'bag' which could be transported by goods train on the following morning, and this proposal was to have been adopted on 10 February 1876. Yet on 18 February 1876 Richard Wynne was moved to write again ending his letter curtly with the words

   "Be so good as to have the matter attended to without delay and oblige. Yours Truly, R Wynne". Swift action followed and on 24 February 1876 the Secretary for the Post Master-General issued orders both to comply with Mr. Wynne's request and to inform him. Even so, problems emerged for the box provided by Mr. Wynne at Mt. Wilson Platform proved to be too small for its purpose, and, to make matters worse, the key broke whilst the guard was trying to open the box !

By 11 March 1876 the Commissioner for Railways, John Rae was involved-
   "that in order to remedy the inconvenience the residents of Mt. Wilson are subjected to in consequence of the '*want of proper postal arrangements',* a private bag for Mt. Wilson be made up at One Tree Hill Post Office and conveyed thence by the Goods Train in the morning and that the Guard of such train be instructed at the same time to take on any mail that might be in the box at Mt. Wilson Platform."
   "I have the honour to inform you that as the traffic manager has no objection to offer to the carrying out of this arrangement-----------instructions have been given to put it into force at once. Copies to go to One Tree Hill, Mr. R Wynne and the Secretary General Post Office." (Rae 1876).
That statement surely demonstrates the influence of Richard Wynne within the NSW Government. On 24 March 1876 Wynne replied appreciatively and added that he now had two extra keys for the letter box at Mt. Wilson Platform but also mentioning the need both to provide a post bag for the out-going mail and to pick up the bag from the platform. But the residents were 16 km (*10 miles*) from the

platform, so someone had to ride 32 km (*20 miles*) each day to deliver out-going mail and collect the in-coming mail, especially in the months from November to April when most of the property owners were in residence. Between May and October caretakers and workers had to survive as best they could.

A letter from Mr. F.G. Davies, the store keeper at One Tree Hill, written to the Post Master-General in January 1877 provides valuable information about those first years of European settlement at Mt. Wilson (Davies 1877). In January 1877 only three families were residing there: Wynne, Merewether and Du Faur. There is no reference to the other families who came to settle – Cox, Gregson and Stephen. It reinforces the fact that Richard Wynne was the first to settle and it demonstrates a connection between him and Eccleston Du Faur. There does not seem to be any doubt as to the Commissioner's support for Mr. Wynne's scheme, yet his word did not always reach the lower ranks. Mr. Davies' letter reveals that the system of receiving letters proposed by Mr. Wynne was not proceeding at all smoothly owing to the lack of cooperation the Railways staff and the lack of security for the mail. In other words the Commissioner of Railways' instructions in 1876 were not being followed. On 29 January 1877 the Secretary to the Post Master General commented:

> "the key may be sent to Mr. Wynne with a letter and he had better be informed of the 'uncertainty of the train stopping'! He can then see the Railway Authorities of he wishes."

Here is a subtle change! The Secretary is saying –' I have done all I can, and after all, the Railway Commissioner had assured everyone that all would be well in 1876. Now it is up to Mr. Wynne to tackle the Railway Authorities!' For much of 1877 this system, with the uncertainty of the train stopping and lack of security for letters staggered on. Whether Richard Wynne approached the Railway Commissioner is not clear.

On 23 March 1878 our sources tell us that a remarkable event had taken place. Michael Hogan had been appointed to operate at the Mt. Wilson Platform as it had become a Crossing Station (Wynne 1878).

At Mt. Wilson Platform

> "A crossing loop, with telegraph office, were added in 1877." (Wylie & Singleton 1958, p.93)

on the western side allowing trains travelling in opposite directions along the single-line track to pass after one had pulled into the loop line. More significantly, Mr. Hogan was diligently looking after the Box for the residents of Mt. Wilson, and they were most pleased. A letter signed by Mr. Wynne on 23 March 1878 began with the words:

> "We require a Post Office at Mt Wilson Platform."

The following points were listed

(a.) his letters delivered to Mt. Victoria were often delayed by 12-14 hours,

(b.) 60-70 persons were now residing at Mt. Wilson,

(c.) Mr. Hogan was conversant with telegraphy and would gladly take charge of a Post Office at the Platform, and

(d.) 77 letters were received and 69 despatched in the week ending 21 March 1878.

The authorities took some convincing to appoint Mr. Hogan. In April 1878 Richard Wynne wrote again stating these reasons for a Post Office:

(1.) being unable to liquidate debts through your office as is the custom where a Post Office is available for registering letters or granting Post Office orders,

(2.) we are 9 miles [15 km] by road from the Platform and 6 miles [9 km] by rail from Mt Victoria,

(3.) the population is increasing and we seriously feel the want of postal accommodation.

While the Railway Department agreed that Mr. Hogan could undertake those extra duties the General Post Office hesitated but in February 1879 agreed that Mr. Hogan could become "A Receiving Officer" which meant that he only received mail and forwarded it on. While arguments continued over the number of letters passing through Mt. Wilson Platform, on 26 February 1879 the Post Master-General appointed Mr. Hogan as Post Master at Mt. Wilson Platform, guaranteed by Richard Wynne, a gentleman, and Mr. George Brown, a blacksmith from Darlinghurst Road, and at the sum of £11 per year.

This arrangement continued for some years until 30 March 1888 when the NSW Post Master-General was sent an important assertive communication by George Henry Cox M.L.C. of *Beowang*; James D. Cox J.P. of *Balangra*; Richard Wynne of *Yarrawa* and Matthew H. Stephen of *Campanella* seeking "the provision of a Post Office at Mt. Wilson" (Figure 3) (Cox et al. 1888).
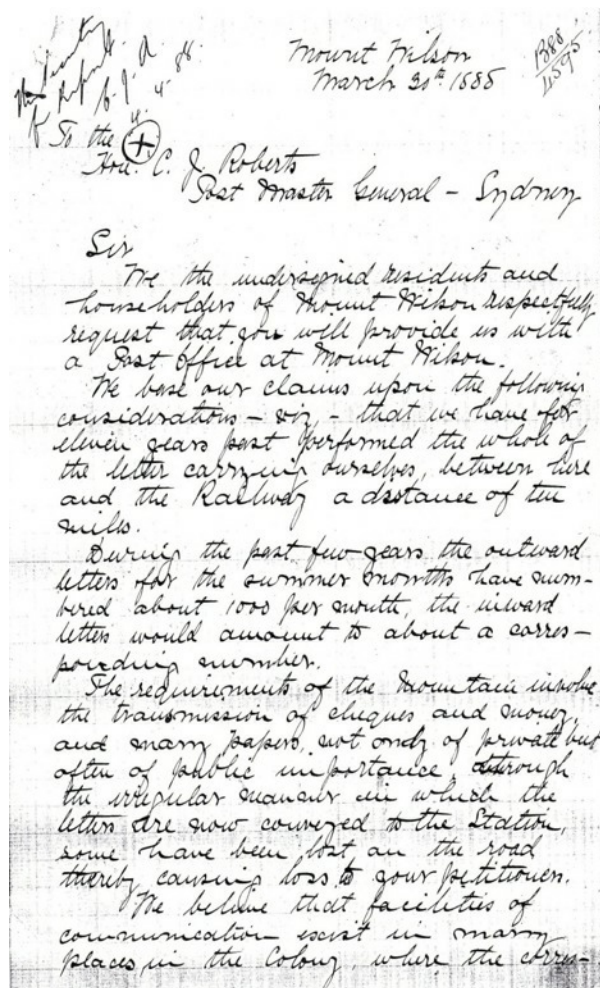

Figure 3. Letter of 30 March 1888 to the Post Master-General re a Mt. Wilson Post Office. (Cox et al, 1888)

This letter had an immediate effect. In April 1888 a questionaire was sent to Mr. Hogan, the Post Master at Mt. Wilson Platform, requesting information about the number of residents at Mt. Wilson and the distance they travelled from Mt. Wilson. Hogan commented that it was most unsatisfactory that these people had to travel every day to the Railway station to deal with mail. He noted that the road to Mt. Wilson was good and was the shortest route and during the summer months there were c.350 letters per week. To explain, Mt. Wilson was a 'Hill Station' and its first European settlers came in the summer months from Sydney, Mudgee, Mulgoa or Newcastle to enjoy the cooler temperatures at over 3000 feet (over 900 m) as well as the rich soil and rainforest vegetation (Inglis 2007, pp.144, 135 & 162; also pp. 78 &187).

Naturally, there was much discussion during the following months concerning the costs to provide and run a post office !

Richard Wynne was asked to nominate a person to run the post office and to suggest a new name for it. This seemed a hopeful sign, so in May 1888 he recommended the name Irvine, a name originally given to the Parish of Irvine and shown on the early maps. From various documents held in the Postal Archives (MW&MIHS 1876+), it seems that for a few months in 1888 the village of Mt. Wilson was referred to as Irvine but it is unlikely that the residents called it that.

Richard Wynne's only surviving son, Henry John Wynne, wrote in June 1888 from *Yarrawa* suggesting that a Mrs. James Mahoney (Aida Elizabeth), wife of a young man in the employ of Mr. E.C. Merewether of *Dennarque,* would be a possible candidate for the position and she had expressed a willingness to undertake the responsibilities involved. At that time, she was living in a 'cottage rent free' which had been built for Mr. Merewether in Merewether's Paddock, now part of *Silva Plana* (Wynne 1888), before he had the impressive stone house *Dennarque* constructed at the top of Church Lane. The intention was that the mail would be received by Mrs. Mahoney at her cottage.

Meanwhile on 15 May 1888 John Hall, a quarryman who lived a mile (c.*1.6 km*) east of the Mt. Wilson Platform in *Holly Lodge* (which still stands today on the Bells Line of Road) expressed interest in obtaining the contract to carry the mail to Mt. Wilson. The timetable first proposed was:
    Depart Mt. Wilson Platform 6.30a.m.on Mondays,Wednesdays and Saturdays; Depart Mt. Wilson
    4.00p.m. Sundays, Thursdays and Fridays.
but the tender price initially quoted at £70 p.a. was considered too high so negotiations continued for months. Two other tenders were submitted.

Curiously, on 20 June 1888 George Henry Cox (Figure 4) of *Beowang*, grandson of William Cox the road builder, wrote to S.H. Lambton Esq., Secretary to the Post Master-General, stressing that between May and October one mail per week was sufficient but between November and April there should be a daily service. Mr. Cox then added:

> "Hitherto we have done very well without a post office. We have a Box centrally situated [*probably near the present day War Memorial*] at which all the residents have their letters for posting and to which all 'send' when the mail has arrived to sort their own. Thirty pounds per year is a sufficient charge!"

This seems somewhat of a contradiction as Mr. Cox was a signatory to the original letter requesting that a post office be established. The figure of £30 suggests that cost was a factor as John Hall reduced his tender price to £65 p.a. - but his bid was rejected again!

Figure 4. George Henry Cox 1824-1901 (MW&MIHS, Settlement Collection, photo 98/351; also in James et al. 1969, Figure 6.15b).

In October 1888 Mr. Richard Wynne and Mr. George Cox visited the Postal Secretary at the G.P.O. to urge that tenders be advertised for a daily sevice between November and April and once a week between May and October (Anonymous 1888). So again tenders were called and three were submitted, for £71, for £55 pounds and for £53 Pounds and on 5 December 1888 the last of these from John Hall was accepted and the contract was to commence from 1 January 1889. On 4 December 1888 Mrs. Mahoney was duly appointed as the Receiving Officer.

'Irvine'

This new name of Irvine, instead of Mt. Wilson, created some concern. On 10 December 1888 George Henry Cox wrote a strong letter objecting to the change claiming it was not in accordance with the wishes of the residents whom he named as Jesse Gregson, Edward Merewether and other members of the Cox family. In the same letter Cox proposed that Mt. Wilson Platform be named 'Bell', after Archibald Bell, the explorer who with the guidance of indigenous people had found a way from Kurrajong to Hartley along what came to be known as Bells Line of Road (Cox 1888). On 20 December 1888 he wrote again urging retention of Mt. Wilson as the name for the village. Inevitably there were a few ripples among the bureaucrats but an Inspector Unwin could not see any objection, recommending '*a change in name be made at once*'. (Unwin 1888)

Postal Service Commences 1889

John Halls' proposed timetable for delivery of the mail was modified to:

Departure from Bell at 6.30a.m. and from Mt. Wilson at 6.30p.m.

The Hall family of *Holly Lodge*, Bells Line of Road, played a very active role in Mount Wilson undertaking repairs, maintenance, building, clearing land and gardening so John easily utilised the time between these postal duties. Matthew Henry Stephen was instrumental in having the delivery on Sundays moved to Mondays to suit residents and to allow John Hall his day of rest. The Receiving Officer, Mrs. Aida Mahoney, was handicapped by lack of essential equipment for, although such

Officers had few other duties than receiving the mail but, if conscientious, they functioned well beyond their official duties. Throughout 1889 these new postal arrangements seemed to work smoothly.

Then on 12 January 1890 Mrs. Mahoney wrote to the Mr. Lambton, Secretary for the Post Master-General at the G.P.O. advising:

> "I don't wish to have anything to do with letters after Wednesday as business is taking me to Sydney."

and she departed for Sydney. Richard Wynne advised the Secretary that he had been informed by Mr. James Mahoney that Mrs. Mahoney had left '*without his leave,*' so Wynne proposed that the Mail Man John Hall be instructed to deliver mail to *Yarrawa*. Hall, however, had his own ideas as to where he would deliver the mail for, in his letter of 19 January 1890 Hall (1890) indicated that

> "Mr. George Cox had taken charge of the mail"

John was willing to take the mail to Mr. Cox's House, *Beowang* "as it is about the centre of the place" but not to Mr. Wynne's as it is "the farthest out of the way place on the mountain".

In terms of distance the suggested change would have added 24 km (*18 mile*s) per week additional distance to be ridden on a horse. To add to the confusion, on 21 January 1890 Mrs. Mahoney contacted the Postal Authorities again to advise that she was returning to Mt. Wilson and wished to resume her former duties. However, she was too late for in the meantime, at the request of all the residents, Cox had moved the Post Office to *Beowang* with his daughter Lucy undertaking the duties of Receiving Officer until 31 March 1890. Cox added in his correspondence of 3 February 1890 that

> "... it is very much more convenient than the old place which was 1 mile (*1.6 km*) distant from all the residents except Mr. Gregson. At the expiration of that time [1 April] when most of us will have left the mountain. We do not care who has it but I shall endeavour to get a more convenient place for the future. Mrs. Mahoney has never asked for the bag [i.e. letter bag] and does not deserve any consideration as she left without warning."

By the middle of February 1890, John Hall had managed to gain an increase in allowance because of the extra distance he had to travel to *Beowang*, and his schedule was adjusted to:

> Departing Bell at 7.00a.m. reaching Mt. Wilson at 9.00a.m.; leaving Mt. Wilson at 5.00p.m. to reach Bell at 7.00p.m.

As promised, Lucy Cox offered her resignation as Receiving Officer on 24 March 1890. In the interim George and Ettie Cox had employed Mr. Charles Sharp and Mrs. Eliza Sharp as caretakers at *Beowang*, and Mrs. Sharp had been persuaded to replace Lucy Cox as Receiving Officer. On the same day as Miss Cox sent her resignation, Mrs. Sharp also wrote to the Secretary G.P.O. stating:

> "... having been preposed by the gentlemen of Mount Wilson to take the post office in the place of Miss Cox resigned I herewith send in an application for the same and if eccepted will undertake the duties of the same to the best of my ability. I remain yours Obeadiently Mrs. Charles Sharp" (*sic*) (Sharp 1890).

On 19 May 1896 Mrs. Sharp drew to the attention of the GPO's Appointment Branch of the Postal, Electrical and Telephone Department the fact that the mail deliveries had increased to six times a week and politely asked for an increase in salary. The Postal Inspector came from Mudgee and found that there were 70 to 100 letters per week from Mt. Wilson and conceded that Mrs. Sharp should have the full status of a Post Mistress with a salary of £10 p.a., and on 16 July 1896 this promotion was made official. In 1909 her daughter was appointed as her assistant.

George Henry Cox left Mt. Wilson in 1899, and died in 1901, but the Post Office remained in the grounds of *Beowang* (Figure 5) from 1890 until 1921-1922 during which time the property was controlled by the Executors of Cox's will.

Figure 5. Driving bullock outside The Post Office in *Beowang* before the telephone was installed in 1916 (MW&MIHS, Shaw Collection, photo 95/125; Field 1995)

In 1913 Mrs. Eliza Sharp asked for a rise in salary as

" ... business in the summer months is very brisk and I do not consider £17 pounds per annum sufficient"

She was told that she was receiving more than she was entitled to, yet again in 1915 Sharp renewed her request, arguing that the proposed installation of the telephone entitled her to an increase and she could not continue under the same conditions (Sharp 1915). The reply from the Accident Branch on 2 July 1915 (GPO Accounts Branch 1915) was:

"Consideration for telephone duties cannot be given until the date of establishment".

But the Post Office was not going to be the first place in Mt. Wilson to have a telephone!

Figure 6. Henry Marcus Clark 1859-1913 (MW&MIHS, Settlement Collection, photo 98/380).

The arrival of the Telephone c.1912

Henry Marcus Clark (Figure 6), the well-known Sydney Retailer, had purchased a number of portions of land in Mt. Wilson c.1910-1912 including *Beowang*. However for his residence he built *Sefton Hall* (Figure 7) where *Balangra* (the home of James Dalrymple Cox, the brother of George Henry Cox) had stood, the original building having been moved in two parts one of which became a Billiard Room and the other was later called *Sefton Cottage*. Significantly, Henry Marcus Clark pioneered the introduction of the telephone to Mt. Wilson by having a line laid from Mt. Victoria to *Sefton Hall* c.1912;

"... the necessary poles were then only *in situ* as far as Bell, his initial outlay ... was substantial" (Currey 1968, p.93).

It is interesting to note that not all of the residents of Mt. Wilson were keen to have this advanced technology, fearing that it would detract from the peace and tranquillity of life in the village and would result in intrusion and disturbance. In 1913 Clark died at *Sefton Hall* from complications following surgery carried out on the premises (pers. comm. Miss Marcia Clark; MW&MIHS 19??a).

Figure 7. *Sefton Hall 1910* viewed from Church Lane (MW&MIHS photo 97/196; also in James et al. 1969, Figure 1.17).

The Post Office gets the Telephone

In May 1916 Mr. Ernest C. Brown purchased *Beowang* (Figure 7) from the Marcus Clark family (MW&MIHS 19??b).

The Telephone Manager reported that

"A Telephone Exchange was established at Mount Wilson on 10th February, 1916 and 5 subscribers were connected." (GPO Telephone Manager 1916) (see Figure 8).

In the months that followed Mrs. Sharp had perpetual worries over lack of proper remuneration for her extra duties with the exchange. Without satisfaction, on 1 August 1916 she submitted her resignation to take effect from 31 August 1916 but a little later it was stated, publicly, that it was the imminent departure of her daughter who was her assistant that caused her resignation.

Figure 8. The Post Office at *Beowang* after the telephone exchange had been installed.
A (BMCCL 000\00014; **B** (Reynolds 2010b)
Anonymous 1982)

When the community became aware of Mrs. Sharp's imminent departure there was considerable concern, which was reflected in a letter written on 8 August 1916 by Mr. Harold Morley, one of the founders of Mt. Irvine. Morley implied that Mrs. Sharp has resigned

"... owing to some difficulty over the telephone exchange"

and that there was nobody to take her place.

"that would be a calamity indeed to the people of Mt. Wilson and Mt. Irvine, as it would mean having to travel 18 miles (*25 km*) to Bell from Mt. Irvine for the mail and though the telephone is of little use at present to Mt. Irvine people; there is a considerable quantity of mail matter going and coming, besides what the Mt. Wilson have."

Mr. Morley suggested that the residents could contribute the difference in salary to retain Mrs. Sharp's services or to employ a returned soldier on a pension. A week later Mrs. Annie E. Joshua of *Campanella*, Mt. Wilson, wrote to the State War Council inquiring as to the value of a war pension and offering her cottage of four rooms for the Post Office (Reynolds 2010a, p.9). After investigation, the Postal Authorities rejected Mrs. Joshua's offer deeming it too costly. The District Inspector at Bathurst then wrote to Mr. Morley stating that it was unlikely that Mrs. Sharp would stay, and he described Mt. Wilson

"... as a plateau and the whole of the locality is owned by about 7 or 8 residents, most of whom are city merchants and well to do people".

He urged Mr. Morley to visit residents and quote £32 p.a. as the salary, which would include work with the telephone. Just in time, Herbert and Sarah Marshall were found to replace the Sharps as caretakers for *Beowang*. But Eliza Sharp, displaying spirit with courtesy prior to her departure at the end of August, wrote to the Postal authorities letting them know that while she was being paid £29 p.a. she had discovered that the rate had increased to £32 p.a. from 1 July 1916, and:

" I will deam (*sic*) it a favour if you will forward the difference due to me from 1st July 1916 to 30th instant [*September*] inclusive to the following address." (Sharp 1916).

The Postal Authorities sent her 15 shillings! The rise, or hill, in The Avenue beside *Beowang* was often called Sharps Hill.

On 1 October 1916, the Marshalls agreed to undertake the postal duties, in an acting capacity, along with their caretaking responsibilities. At the same time, lengthy negotiations were being conducted with Mr. and Mrs. Joshua over the possibility of moving the Post Office to *Campanella*, but on 3 November 1916 the plan was rejected (in a detailed report from the District Inspector, Bathurst) on the basis of cost and inconvenience. In early December 1916 Mr. Herbert Marshall was appointed permanent Post Master at *Beowang* and that seemed to end all negotiations. But on 19 December 1916 the Marshalls left Mt. Wilson, supposedly for a couple of days, and Miss Florence K. Smith became Acting Post Mistress. Less than a month later, on 10 January 1917, she informed the District Inspector at Bathurst that neither Mr. or Mrs. Marshall had returned and were not intending to be doing so! On 15 January 1917 Mr. S. Cambridge, the Post Master at Mt. Victoria, wrote a detailed letter to the District Inspector at Bathurst in which he described his visit to the Mt. Wilson Post Office on the previous day where he had met Miss Florence Smith and Mrs. Alethea Shaw. With their assistance he had carried out an audit and was very concerned when he found discrepancies such as 3/6 owing from telephone subscribers (Cambridge 1917)). From this we learn that Mrs. Alethea Shaw was to be the new caretaker at *Beowang* (Figure 9) and would undertake the duties of Post Mistress [*Self appointed !*] aided by Miss Florence Smith. Mr. Ernest Brown, the new owner, was fortunate to find Mr. and Mrs. Shaw so quickly after the abrupt departure of the Marshalls.

In 1921 Mr. Victor White and Mrs. Ruth White, parents of the Nobel Prize winning author Patrick White, purchased *Beowang* and Mrs. White changed the name of the property to *Withycombe* which was her maiden name.

Figure 9. Mrs. Alethea Shaw (caretaker) on the lawn of *Beowang* (MW&MIHS, Shaw Collection, photo 97/194; Field 1995).

A 'real' Post Office

The presence of the Post Office on their private property was probably not an attractive proposition to the Whites, so it was not long after their acquisition of *Beowang* that a group of residents met and determined to set up a private company to build a post office, store, and residence elsewhere. For this purpose a Trust Deed had to be prepared and the names on that Deed (Figure 10) include the majority of property owners in Mt. Wilson at that time. This Deed also reveals that the land on which the Post office was to be built came from Portion 64 owned by Richard Owen Wynne who excised and donated a small block of 2 roods and 23 perches for the Mt. Wilson Post Office. The Deed also states the amount of financial backing given by various property owners; some had 100 shares each, others 50 and 25 shares each - each share being valued at £1.

The new building was designed by John Moore, a leading architect of the time and a friend of one of the shareholders, Frederick Mann, and was to be positioned on the northern side of The Avenue opposite *Bebeah*. Three Trustees were appointed from the original shareholders to control and care for this private building. They were Richard Owen Wynne, Edward Jesse Gregson and Sydney William Kirk - the eldest of the seven Kirk Brothers. While the Mt. Wilson & Mt. Irvine Historical Society holds a copy of this document, regrettably other documents associated with the Trust, and those relating to the Post Office in the years between 1925 and 1986, have not been located. The Trust was a private organisation so there are no references to it in the National Archives of Australia. However two or three letters written in 1970s and 1980s shed

some light on its operations. The Trust rented the building to the Postal Authority, the records of which indicate changes from time to time in the employment of a Post Master or Post Mistress, but little else.

Figure 10. Mt. Wilson Post Office Trust Deed signed in 1925 (Wynne (1925).

The New Post Office was completed in 1922 (Figures 11 & 12) and contained a residence as well as limited office space. This simple

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Figure 11. Post Office being constructed in 1922 in The Avenue (MW&MIHS, Smart Collection, photo 95/157).

unadorned building became an important centre for the community of Mt. Wilson, and indeed Mt. Irvine as well. Here people could meet and chat while they transacted business, or collected their mail, or collected the newspaper brought in by the mail contractor of the day. In its very early days a store and Tearoom operated there. The Post Mistress operated both the manual telephone exchange and the Post Office, and was able to maintain close contact with the community and so gave a sense of belonging and identity. In times of crisis, notably bushfires, the Post Mistress was especially valuable in providing information and in maintaining contact with residents.

Over the years, as the original shareholders passed on, their shares were acquired by others in a rather

Figure 12. Early photo Mt. Wilson Post Office-house. (Note the Tree ferns; some are still there. - MW&MIHS PO Album).

ad hoc fashion and it seems at only face value without the payment of interest (Kirk 1973). A letter from Tom Kirk refers to 'The Little Black Book' which contained details of shareholders and their contributions, but sadly this document has never been located. By the 1980s the three trustees of the Post Office building had changed to Mr. Bill Scrivener of Mt. Irvine, and Mr. Bill Smart and Mr. Tom [S B.] Kirk of Mt. Wilson.

The photograph of the Post Office which appears in Dr C.H. Currey's book (1968, opposite p.38) was probably taken in the mid- 1960s; the building is obscured but clearly shown are the signage along the boundary fence line and the telephone and post boxes on The Avenue. It reflects, in a village style, the essential simplicity of existence at that time in Mt. Wilson and the closeness of, and intimacy of, community life. In 2011 the only feature which remains is the red mail box; it would seem that Mt. Wilson has suffered a retreat in Postal Services. [Dr Currey's book was published to coincide with the Centenary Celebrations of the original Survey of Mt. Wilson in 1868 by Edward S. Wyndham.]

Both the Post Office was closed, and the Manual Telephone Exchange ceased operations, on 17 December 1986 (Anonymous 1987) (Figures 13 & 14). This latter event was welcomed by some but deplored by those who had found the manual exchange a source of support and help.

Sally Bailey, daughter of Mount Wilson manual exchange operator, Val Bailey, seated before the decommissioned 100 line operator assisted manual exchange board. The exchange was replaced by a 200 line fully automatic rural crossbar exchange.

Figure 13. Sally Bailey (daughter of Val and Jim Bailey) seated next to the Manual Exchange which operated in Mt. Wilson from 1916 to 1986 (Anonymous 1987).

Figure 14. Val Bailey (who was Post-Mistress for 16 years) being congratulated on her contribution to the Mt. Wilson Community in 1986 at the closing of the Mt. Wilson Manual Exchange, 17 December 1986 (Anonymous 1987).

The closure of the Post Office was a blow for the small village, and it took some years for a sense of community to be restored by other means. Australia Post was adamant that a Post Office would not be re-established in Mt. Wilson, and a mail Contractor was employed to collect the mail from the closest Post Office at Mt. Victoria and to make deliveries to all of the properties in both Mt. Wilson and Mt. Irvine. The Post Office building was sold at auction and Mark and Sue Austin of *Rutherglen*, Mt. Irvine, became the initial owners, establishing the 'Post Office Café'. That facility proved to be very popular and a café remained until 2003-2004 when the new owner, Colleen Jones, decided to cease operations and revert the building to a private residence. Some of the heritage features of its original design have been retained and it is listed on the Local Environmental Plan 1991 of The Blue Mountains City Council.

Acknowledgements

Abbreviations
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MW&MIHS   Mount Wilson & Mount Irvine Historical Society Inc.
NAA   The National Archives of Australia.

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A SECRET ARMY IN THE BLUE MOUNTAINS ?

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Abstract

Very little was known about two conservative paramilitary organizations, identified now as the Old and New Guard, until the publication in 1989 of Andrew Moore's informative book *The Secret Army And The Premier.* Documentation donated to Blue Mountains City Council historical archives sometime ago confirmed that a branch of the Old Guard existed in the Blue Mountains. This brief history is taken from a major research project submitted to the University of New England in 2005 as part of the requirement for an Advanced Diploma in Local Family and Applied History.

Keywords: Old Guard; New Guard; Jack Lang; Communist; Blue Mountains

Introduction

> "Some time ago it became evident that a section of the community was becoming restless and lawless, and might try to do serious damage to public and private property and to the established social order. This unrest was being sedulously fostered by paid agitators and is part of the Communist Doctrine, which is causing so much strife and misery throughout the world. It is the old doctrine of getting something for nothing but enlarged to include the taking of that something by force" (BMCCL LS VF Old Guard).

By 1932, unemployment – globally – had been endemic since the end of the Great War. Jack Lang and the Labor Party held the reins of government in New South Wales while conservative/right wing elements, across the state, nervously feared communist infiltration into the ranks of government departments at every level. Out of this fusion emerged two distinct but different conservative paramilitary movements formed to usurp political power from the embattled Lang government, or, in the worst-case scenario, to suppress a potential blue-collar uprising.

The highly secretive, and more traditional, Old Guard was headed by W.R.J. 'Jack' Scott (Figure 1A), Sir Philip Goldfinch (Figure 1b) and Sir Robert Gillespie (Figure 2A) and Lieutenant Colonel Eric Campbell (Figure 2B) commanded the more radical New Guard (Moore 1989, p.1), which also had a presence in the Blue Mountains. The former group was variously known then as 'The Movement,' the 'Gillespie-Goldfinch Organisation,' the 'Citizens Reserve Corps,' the 'Home Defence League,' 'X Force,' the 'White Guard or White Army' but for the purpose of this paper will be referred to as the Old Guard (Moore 1989, p.1).

Establishment in the Blue Mountains

In the 1930s, the Blue Mountains had become a retreat for the middle to upper class elite. It became a veritable 'hill-station' for an enclave of politicians, wealthy businessmen, senior public servants and descendants of the old pastoral elite. In fact many of the earliest property owners shared kinship with the White, Hordern, Lawson, Cox, Gidley King, Lethbridge, Throsby and Dangar families (Inglis 2007, pp.133-135). As a consequence, the mountains developed into a diminutive version of the conservative and elite city suburbs. Not surprising a branch of the 'Old Guard' took root and flourished.

The Old Guard formed in February 1931, in concert with meetings convened by the "All For Australia League" (Moore 1989, p.92). Later, 'The League' joined forces with the National Party to

A W.R.J. 'Jack' Scott (Moore 1989, Fig. 4, between p.134 & 135; Douglas 2004, p.6)

B Sir Philip Goldfinch (Moore 1989, Fig. 7? (not numbered), between p.134 & 135)

Figure 1.

A Sir Robert Gillespie (Knox Grammar School 2011)

B Colonel Erik Campbell 1931 (Campbell 1965, opp. p.74)

Figure 2.

form what eventually became the United Australia Party (Macintyre 1999, p.179). All three organizations had a presence in the Blue Mountains and the country organizer for the 'All For Australia League' was John McManamey, principal of Woodford Academy.

Major General Sir Charles Rosenthal, another Blue Mountains resident, had links with an earlier conservative organisation known as 'The King and Empire Alliance' (Cathcart 1988, p.96). It is commonly held that the novel *Kangaroo,* written by D.H. Lawrence, was based on the formation of a secret paramilitary army in New South Wales, and the main character, Kangaroo, is said to have been based on Rosenthal, while the character Jack Callcott was based on Jack Scott (Lawrence 1923, pp.160-161). The Old Guard shared many similarities to The King and Empire Alliance because both organisations were comprised of many ex-army officers.

The Old Guard Action Headquarters in the Blue Mountains Division was located at Katoomba in the business premises of William Carey Soper (Figure 3) (BMCCL LS VF Old Guard). It is of interest to note that Soper was a member of Rotary because Stuart Mcintyre stated that the All For Australia League, one of the common denominators, originated from a Rotarians meeting held in 1931 (McIntyre 1986, pp.251-286). Soper, who operated a real estate and auctioneering business, served as a Lieutenant in the Great War and in the 1930s, he was an Alderman on Katoomba Municipal Council (BMCCL LS VF Aldermen & Councillors).

Other members of the Old Guard Blue Mountains Division with military experience were David Smith Cranston, Carlton Lyle Gill, Jack Sidaway, Arndell Neil Lewis, Norman Dickson and Lachlan Anderson. They had all served with the Australian forces during the Great War, while Colonel Richard Wynne, a significant land owner in Mount Wilson but who was living in England at the time, had served with the 3rd Battalion (1914-1915) and 2nd Battalion (1915-1918) of the Bedfordshire Regiment (Anonymous 2011), and the 18th King's Liverpool Regiment (1918-1919), being awarded a DSO and bar (Delbridge 2006, p.14; BMCCL LS VF Old Guard). Although David Mitchell Rogalsky (Figure 4), a Springwood resident, had not seen war service he is known to have served with the New South Wales Lancers and had been a Troop Leader for the 2nd Squadron of the 3rd Australian Light Horse Regiment (Australian Light Horse Studies Centre website). Military experience was not a prerequisite and was beneficial not so much for the experience but for the sustained contact between the men.

Figure 3. Soper Brothers store, Katoomba Street, Katoomba. (BMCCL LS IL 618).

Rogalsky, like Richard Wynne, was independently wealthy as a consequence of inheriting considerable capital and property on the death of his Jewish father (Smith 2002). He was educated at Sydney Boys Grammar School, as were Jack Scott, Sir Philip Goldfinch, Sir Samuel Hordern, poet Banjo Paterson and Antarctic explorer Douglas Mawson. Hordern and Rogalsky would have been contempories. Photographer Frank Hurley and artist Norman Lindsay could be counted among his friends, as could one-time Governor of New South Wales, Lord Beauchamp and politician and entrepreneur Hugh D. McIntosh.

Figure 4. David Mitchell

On his maternal side, Rogalsky was well connected. His grandfather, David Mitchell, founder of D. Mitchell & Co., was one of the richest men in New South Wales when he died in 1892, while grazier Ernest Smith of *Riverside* of Bowral, was his father-in-law (Smith 2002). It is perhaps not surprising that E.M. Mitchell K.C., his mother's cousin, appeared for the Commonwealth in proceedings against J.T. Lang when, as Premier, he challenged the validity of the *Financial Agreements Enforcement Acts* (Fisher 1986, p.528). Given his long association with the Blue Mountains and age in 1932, it is not fanciful to speculate that Rogalsky could also have been a member of the King and Empire Alliance alongside Rosenthal.

Rogalsky's second in command at Springwood was Edward Kenneth Deane, the Principal of Blue Mountains Grammar. A brief encounter with Lancelot Bavin, brother of Judge and one-time Premier of New South Wales, Thomas Rainsford Bavin, may have influenced Deane's political ideology, as Thomas Bavin had been a Naval Intelligence Officer and a member of the Round Table Movement. Moore (1989, p.15) stated that The Round Table Movement

"... was consistently anti-socialist and occasionally anti-democratic."

but there is no evidence to suggest that it

"... was anything more elaborate than the elite debating society it purported to be."

Nevertheless, it would seem that the Round Table Movement formed part of an intricate web of conservative paramilitary organizations that existed before the 1930s.

The Old Guard Blue Mountains Division, which was comprised of some three hundred and twenty-five men, was answerable to Colonel Eric Broc Hinton who styled himself Divisional Head West (BMCCL LS VF Old Guard). The oath, which was taken by every member, contained the promise to serve 'our Sovereign Lord The King' as 'Special Constables' (BMCCL LS VF Old Guard) and hence it bore a striking similarity to the 'Oath of a Peace Officer', which they were required to swear under the *Peace Officers Act* (Moore 1989, p.65). That Act was introduced initially to create a body of Peace Officers to assist the Commonwealth during the Seaman's Union case in 1925 (Moore 1989, p.51). In this respect, a correlation can be drawn between the Old Guard and earlier voluntary militia forces raised to assist local authorities to maintain law and order. Thus, in 1885 the New South Wales Lancers were raised and in 1905 Citizens or Reserve Forces were formed which became militia units supporting Commonwealth military authorities.

Although Katoomba was the central hub of the Old Guard in the Blue Mountains, branches were formed at Little Hartley, Mt. Wilson, Blackheath, Leura, Wentworth Falls, Hazelbrook, Springwood, Blaxland and Glenbrook. The rank and file of the Old Guard have not been revealed. However, business and professional men, bank managers, local councillors, real estate agents, school principals, graziers, ex-army officers, doctors and independently wealthy men, are known to have headed the branches in the Blue Mountains (BMCCL LS VF Old Guard).

Intended Activities in the Blue Mountains

Existing documents also reveal the potency of Old Guard activities. For example, the head of the Wentworth Falls branch divided his area into controllable sectors, each administered by an Old Guard member. In the event of an uprising, those men would be in charge of guarding the highway, or maintaining essential services; medical matters would be be placed in the hands of the local doctor while flying squads would be formed as an emergency measure (BMCCL LS VF Old Guard).

Similarly, in other branches, members would organize central rallying points or would be given the responsibility of guarding essential services and supplies like food and the water. (BMCCL LS VF Old Guard). There is even speculation that if a proletariat army marched on the mountains the Old Guard were prepared to blow up bridges and sections of the Western Road. There is little doubt that the preparations of the Old Guard had the semblance of well-rehearsed military manoeuvres.

Moore (1989, p.133) suggested that the Old Guard acted "under the aegis of the police" and a notebook kept by Colonel Wynne seems to confirm that notion. The main link with the Old Guard and the constabulary was forged through C.A.L. 'Aubrey' Abbott, whom Moore (1982, pp.248-249) suggested was on extremely friendly terms with Walter Childs, the New South Wales Police Commissioner.

By April 1932 the media of the day were convinced that Lang's political career was 'on borrowed time' in the words of Opposition Leader, B.S. Stevens, repeated in the *Brisbane Courier.* Stevens said
  "Mr. Lang had fought a long battle, and he has lost . . . His days are numbered." (Anonymous 1932).
Stevens implied that Lang was unfit to govern the State because his financial policy resulted in a deficit of almost £21,000,000. In the following month Lang was dismissed!

The Old Guard wound up its activities shortly after that event and each Division was ordered to destroy any records they held (Moore 1989, p.235). The final bulletin released by the Old Guard suggested however that
  "…this brotherhood will not and cannot be destroyed, ..."
and went on to imply that re-formation would take place "... if required. ..." (Moore 1989, p.236). Moore stated that in the mid 1930s several members of the Old Guard did indeed become members of the New South Wales Police Force and "... intelligence services." (Moore 1989, p.240). One such was Jack Scott who became involved in the world of "counterespionage" after joining Military Intelligence. Moore suggested that before the outbreak of World War II Scott was a specialist on "... German and Italian fascists, ..." (Moore 1989, p.240).

It would seem that the Old Guard was revived under the title of 'The Association' in the mid 1940s when a "Soviet invasion" seemed imminent and anti-communist feeling came to the fore. (Moore 1989, p.241) However, that is another story.

It conclusion, it would be fair to conclude that the Blue Mountains Division of the Old Guard was comprised of men who mobilized because they feared an uprising might alter their lifestyles and economic situations. Precedents had been set and they had witnessed what had occurred in Europe. The executive of the Old Guard Blue Mountains Division were largely related, or connected through social status, military service, or business interests. Formation of such an organization reflected the upper-class demographics and the conservative political philosophies that they held. To protect and provide a barrier to hold back the lower classes from invading their sublime world, was their *raison d'être* for mobilization. Nevertheless, when the situation was defused, those same men melted back into society waiting perhaps for their next call to action.

Acknowledgement

Abbreviations
BMCCL LS IL   Blue Mountains City Council Library, Local Studies Collection, Image Library
BMCCL LS VF   Blue Mountains City Council Library, Local Studies Collection, Vertical File

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