

BLUE MOUNTAINS HISTORY JOURNAL

Blue Mountains Association of Cultural Heritage Organisations



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Blue Mountains History Journal

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EDITORIAL

Issue 7 of **The Blue Mountains History Journal** contains six papers.

The first concerns the relationship between some of the indigenous and white people in the Burratorang Valley in the 19th Century. In it Diana Levy reveals some previously unpublished documents that relate to the iniquitous practice of ‘dummy purchasing’.

Then come two papers about still extant buildings that have very different origins. Unravelling the history of *Verna*, a Wentworth Falls house that had once been owned by a family member early in the 20th century, has been a remarkable piece of investigative research undertaken by Louise Wilson. About the mid-20th century, the architect H.P. Oser designed a group of houses in Blackheath and Chris Betteridge, the descendant of the owner of one of those houses, *Whispering Pines*, has documented their features, construction and former owners.

Finally a group of three papers have been included that discuss various natural and artificial features in the Blue Mountains. Soldiers Pinch between Blackheath and Mount Victoria has posed a traffic problem for two centuries and the sequence of attempts to fix that problem has been documented. That is followed by John Low’s promised Part 2 of his account of the horse troughs existing in the Blue Mountains - mostly are concrete artefacts but this time he has discussed three in the Upper Blue Mountains that were hewn out of sandstone. The final paper is an ‘essay’ by John Dunkley on some of the sandstone caves of the Blue Mountains, in part a description and documentation of the caves but also evaluating their ‘aesthetic, historic, scientific, social and spiritual values’.

For the convenience of readers, at the end of this issue there is a cumulative list of the papers that were published in Issues 1 to 6.

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Dr Peter C. Rickwood,
Editor



JOHN JINGERY, GUNDUNGURRA MAN, AND ROBERT J. O'REILLY, GRAZIER, IN THE BURRAGORANG VALLEY.

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Abstract

In the settling of the Burragorang Valley, the Gundungurra inhabitants were displaced. Most of the farmers who settled there were Irish, and Catholic. There was a degree of cooperation between these two groups, and it was thought that Robert J. O'Reilly assisted Aboriginal man, John Jingery, to purchase a 40 acre selection, Portion 20, in 1875. Jingery forfeited this land in 1877 - it had in fact been a dummy purchase for his boss, O'Reilly. The thread of John Jingery's life is traced from primary sources and give some idea of how he adapted to Europeans.

Key Words: Gundungurra, Aborigine, Conditional Purchase, Dummy Purchase, Burragorang, Blue Mountains.

INTRODUCTION

The records for Aboriginal people in the nineteenth century are far fewer than for settlers like Robert J. O'Reilly. What follows is but a small window into the adaptation by 'John Jingery, Aboriginal' (all the documentation identifies him in this way) to European settlement of his traditional Gundungurra lands. [Other spellings include Gandangara and Gandanguurra.] These two men lived and worked in the environs of the Burragorang Valley, which is formed by the Coxs and the Wollondilly Rivers ([Figure 1](#)).

The traditional country of the Gundungurra is vast ([Figure 2](#)) and extends to the southern Blue Mountains, The Oaks, Goulburn, the Abercrombie River, Jenolan Caves, Rydal, Lithgow, the Wolgan

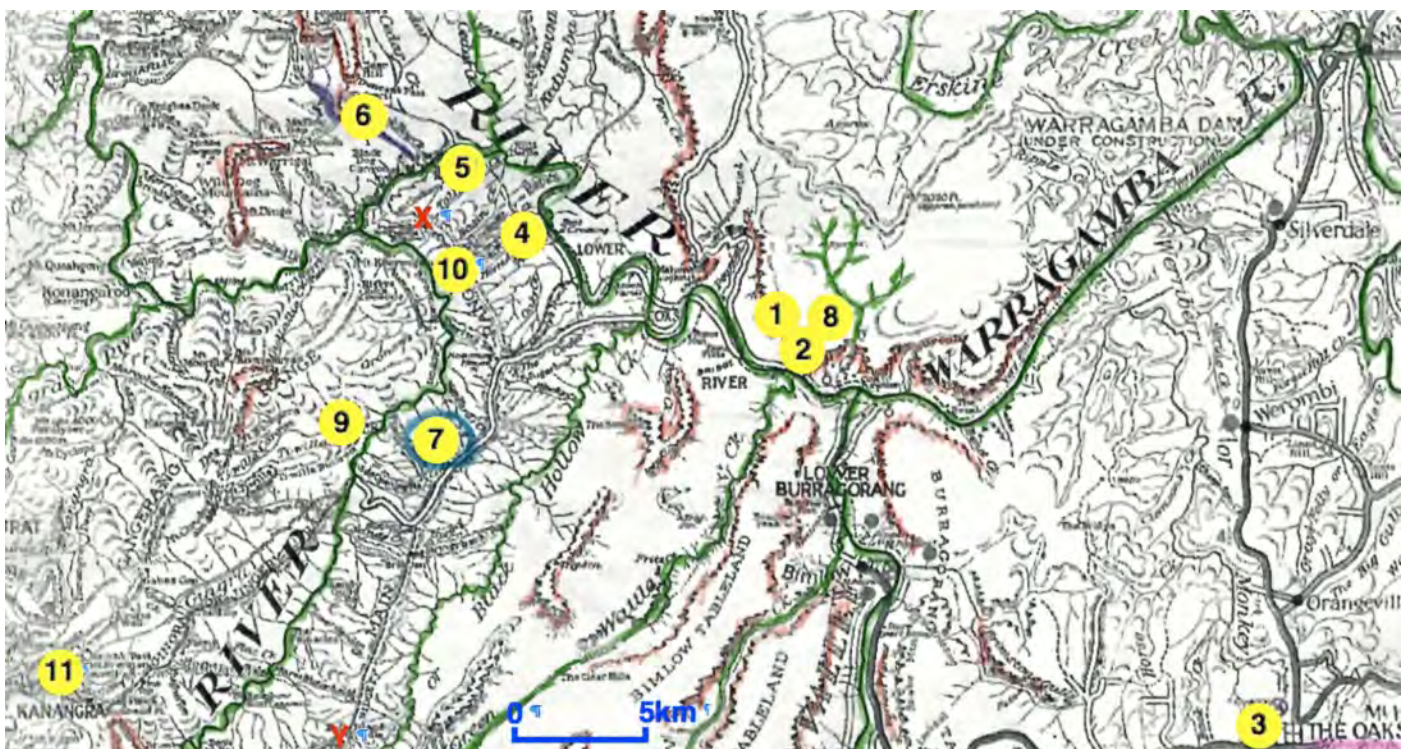
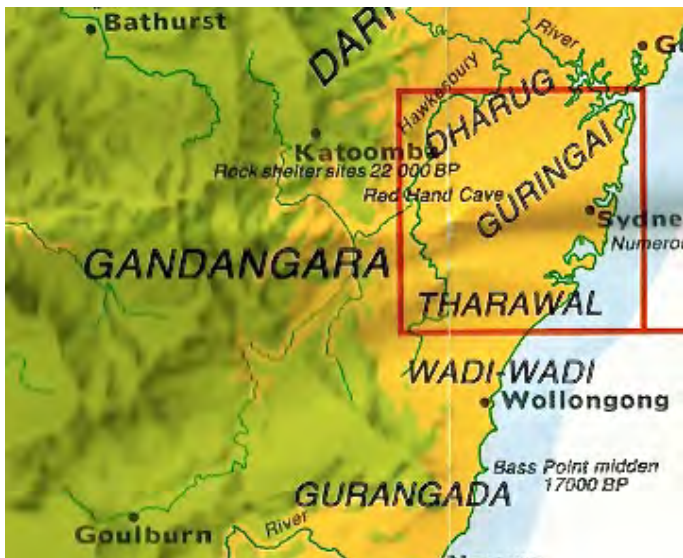


Figure 1. Map of part of the Burragorang Valley (after Cooke 1955).

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|
| 1 Dallawang Ridge | 2 Robert O'Reilly dwelling | 3 The Oaks |
| 4 Grundy family holdings | 5 Appletree Flat | 6 Black Dog Ridge |
| 7 New Yards & Portion 20 & The Shack | 8 Pocket Creek | 9 Kowmung River |
| 10 Kowmung Lookout | 11 Kanangra | |
- X to Y Scott's Main Range

[‘Burra’ means kangaroo in the Gundungurra language (Russell 1914, p.14); ‘gurrang’ means ‘place of’ or ‘plenty of’ (Barrett 2015 p.22)].

Valley and the western Blue Mountains. It borders Tharawal, Darug, Wiradgiri, and Darkinjung country. The Burragarang Valley is in the eastern part of those lands, bordering Tharawal country. With its steep inaccessible sides this valley is now the repository for much of Sydney's water supply (Figure 3).



© Central Mapping Authority 1987

Figure 2. Aboriginal Lands (CMA 1987).

[Boundaries between these different Aboriginal nations are extremely contentious so although this map is now old it does give a general idea of the terrain, the rivers and the neighbouring nations].

At the time of English colonization in 1788 all land was presumed to be owned by the Crown. Conditional purchase was introduced by the Government in 1861 (State Records 2016) and it was a way of distributing Crown land before it was surveyed. Certain conditions had to be met: the settlers had to pay a deposit, they had to show that they intended to 'improve' the land, and that they intended to live on it. They had three years in which to demonstrate their occupation of the land. Sometimes people would build a shack and string up a washing line, then hang clothing on this line to fool the inspectors into thinking that a little family did live there.

"The (*Lands*) Department's work was further complicated with the practices of 'dummying', where a person would select an area only to sell by pre-arrangement to another party, ..." (State Records 2016).

The Burragarang Valley

The first encroachment on traditional life in the Burragarang Valley was probably the cattle which escaped from the First Fleet settlers and found their way to Cowpastures - out Camden way. Next the cattle duffers found the Burragarang to be a very suitable hideaway. More respectable settlers began



Photo: Noel Rath, 2014

Figure 3. Cocks River dammed (Lake Burragarang) from Dallawang Ridge (1 on Figure 1).

taking up tickets of occupation from the 1820s. One such was Robert Bernard O'Reilly (Robert Joseph's father - b. unknown; d. 24/7/1873) who had been transported in 1820 from County Cavan when Ireland was under military occupation by the British, and he and Brian Carolan were convicted of conspiracy to murder. Brian Carolan (family name was shortened to Carlon later on) and Robert B. O'Reilly were in servitude to John Jamison for fifteen years and then their families began the settling process in the Burragarang, as did other Irish Catholic settlers. Later R.B. O'Reilly selected land at the junction of Green Wattle creek and Cocks River (2 on Figure 1) where there were large flats of good loamy soil. Local historian Jim Barrett stated,

"Bearing in mind the friction which arose between white man and black man as settlement of the Colony expanded, it is pleasing to record that relationships within the Burragarang Valley were in general quite harmonious." (Barrett 1995, p.112).

The idea that O'Reilly helped Jingery buy land supports this notion.

John Jingery's birth date is not known, so his story as established from primary sources began in 1871 with an English settler, John Grundy, and an Irishman, John Fitzgerald. John Grundy was an English free settler who came out from Yorkshire in 1840 at the age of 15 and worked in Campbelltown for a time. Then he "purchased farming and grazing properties at The Oaks (3 on Figure 1) and Burragarang, and went to live on the former property some 40 years ago." - i.e. 1870 (Anonymous 1910).

He was buried in the Church of England section of The Oaks Cemetery. It is likely that John Jingery was Grundy's stockman. Fitzgerald was charged with

stealing flour, pork and horseshoes from Grundy's house at Coxs River. At the time of the trial the Grundy family was in residence at The Oaks (2 on Figure 1), so the Burratorang 'dwelling' was vacant or used by employees. At the trial, which took place at the Police Office in Picton, 'Jingray' gave evidence in support of the Grundys and against Fitzpatrick, who had been before the Bench quite often. But the case was dismissed for lack of evidence supporting "the Aboriginal's" testimony.

[See Appendix 1 for an exact transcription of the court record.]

Like most settlers, Grundy's holdings expanded and in the book *Cullenbenbong*, Bernard O'Reilly (1940) (R.J.'s nephew) mentioned that Grundy owned land in the middle section of Coxs River, on the north side of Scott's Main Range (4 on Figure 1). The 1918 Parish of Speedwell map (Department of Lands 1918) shows substantial holdings by Grundy family members adjacent to the Coxs River. [John Grundy jnr. held Portions 6, 10 & 46 and James Grundy held Portions 18 & 101. Adjoining but away from the river James Grundy also held Portions 59, 68, 71 & 100 (4 on Figure 1)] Significantly, W.H. Grundy held Portion 47 on Appletree Flat (5 on Figure 1) which was a Gundungurra campsite for the very good reason that it is nice macropod grazing country (Barrett 1993, p.87). Appletree Flat is close to the travel route up Black Dog ridge (6 on Figure 1) and less than half a day's walk from Portion 20 (7 on Figure 1) of which more is to come.

For Aboriginal people being torn from land was akin to being torn from one's relatives.

"To Aboriginal people, their land is full of their ancestors and when they roam about in it, they are encountering ancestral beings" (pers. comm. Will Moon M.A. archaeologist April 2016).

Prior to 1875 the Catholic Church in NSW had been concerned by the ongoing tragedy of dispossession of Aboriginal lands. [Other local historians such as Jim Barrett (1990) and Jim Smith (1991) have amply documented efforts made by the clergy to find solutions - especially Smith]. The Aborigines lobbied the Government to find them some land and in 1870 Father George Dillon established St. Joseph's farm at the junction of Pocket Creek and Coxs River (8 on Figure 1) to provide a base. Robert J. O'Reilly (b. 1841 d. 28/8/1915) lived directly opposite this (2 on Figure 1), so had plenty of opportunity to interact with that community.

"Robert was a good friend of the Aborigines who showed him the route from the Burratorang to Megalong via Black Dog." (Barrett 1993, p.82).

In the 1870s Gundungurra men George Riley, Sammy Hassell, Charley Jellick and Billy Russell (Werriberri) attempted to regain their lands by applying to the Government and in 1875 the lands applied for became Aboriginal Reserves 26 and 27 under a group of trustees (Farnell 1878). It might seem that John Jingery was a part of this reclaiming movement. Not so.

It is documented (Barrett 1990, p.68) that in 1875 John Jingery applied for 40 acres (16.2 ha; Portion 20), on Scotts Main Range (X to Y on Figure 1), Parish of Speedwell, County of Westmoreland, through "his agent, Robert O'Reilly" and subsequently made a Conditional Purchase. The deposit was paid, the application was dated 1 July 1875 and it was signed by R. O'Reilly, who was by this stage a postmaster for the lower Coxs River. But Jim Barrett posed the questions:

"Who was John Jingery, Aboriginal? What were the circumstances of his bid for the land? For what was he going to use it? It should be borne in mind that the blocks around portion 20 had already been acquired by the cattle men." (Barrett 1990, p.70).

In fact, John Jingery was Robert Joseph O'Reilly's stockman, and it was a dummy purchase. As we shall see, it was never intended that Jingery purchase the land for himself, though he put his name to it; the purchase was forfeited and bought at auction by Charles Dunn in 1877 (Department of Lands 1877?). The Shack (Figure 4) stands on Portion 20 (7 on Figure 1) - a rocky bit of ground on a ridge top above the Kowmung river (9 on Figure 1), on the old cedar road. Archaeologist Michael Jackson has found a marked tree and many artefacts there, evidence of traditional occupation (pers. comm. 20 November 2016). A side ridge, now called New Yards Ridge (7



Photo D. Noble 2015

Figure 4. The Shack (owned by the Guntawang Catholic Bushwalkers) (7 on Figure 1).



Photo D. Noble 2015

Figure 5. Kowmung River below the Shack (9 on Figure 1).

on Figure 1) runs down to the river (Figure 5), where trout hide in granite pools.

The sequence of events from conditional purchase to re-sale to Charles Dunn has been traced through primary sources. It is summarised in Table 1.

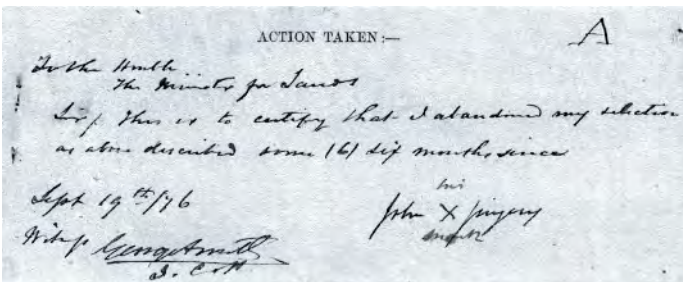


Figure 6. John Jingery's signed abandonment of Portion 20 (Jingery 1876).

So it was a dummy purchase, a stratagem Robert O'Reilly used against his rival Charles Dunn.

Unlike other Aboriginal men (Smith 2012), John Jingery is not on any electoral roll and nor is he on the blanket lists (as the last one was in 1842) nor in death notices. After 1875 he disappears from the record, who knows where to.

Anecdote

There is a story about R.B. O'Reilly (Robert Joseph's father) told by Owen Pearce (1991) who grew up in the Burragorang. Owen Pearce's great-grandfather was convict George Pearce, who served out his sentence as a stonemason - hard and heavy work in leg irons. At the age of 30 he went to the Burragorang and joined the cattle-duffers. Using stolen cattle to clear some land, he changed occupations again and took up farming, cultivating the river flats and then

selecting it. This was his *modus operandi* and like Patrick Carlon, his holdings grew. [Carlon's grew from 40 acres to 3,000 acres – pers. comm., Carlon descendant 2015] O'Reilly senior was selecting nearby and eventually there was only one parcel of 100 acres between the two of them. The difference though, was that the Irishman always selected first, then cleared, then cultivated.

Pearce was worried that another English settler, Henry Dunn (Charles' father) had his eye on this block and he discussed his fears with O'Reilly, who did not mention that he had already selected it. George Pearce was a man of violent temper who when he found out, stormed over to the O'Reilly place. Robert B. was spading the garden but fled inside. Pearce got the spade and attacked the front door. When that didn't work he climbed on the roof of the house and tried to climb down the chimney. Next he tried to pull a sheet of bark from the roof. Finally he climbed down and sat on the front verandah with the lethal spade. After an hour he gave up and went home.

“Thankfully the feud ended with their passing and was not continued by succeeding generations” (Pearce 1991, p.302).

It was also said about Pearce, that when an Aborigine speared him in the leg, he and a mate found the man and hanged him.

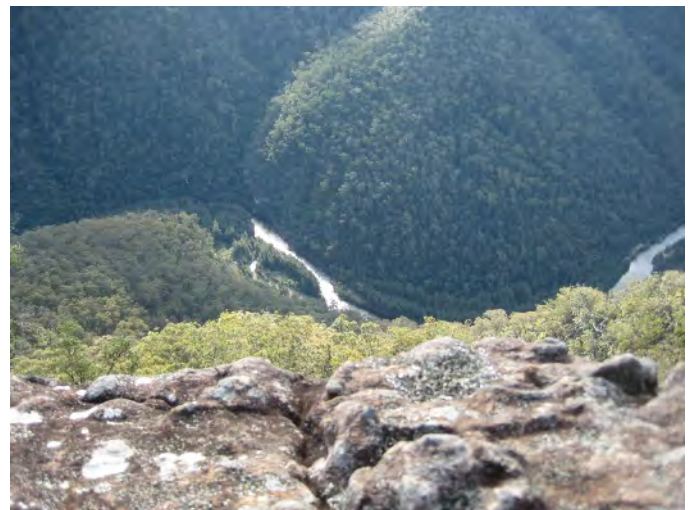


Photo D. Levy 2011

Figure 7. Kowmung River below the Shack (10 on Figure 1).

Who then was Charles Dunn? He was the son of Henry Dunn, an English free settler, and he was born at The Oaks in 1843 (d. 1917). Dunn ran cattle with a man called Lakeman and they became known as “the cattle kings” (Barrett 1990, p.52). Charles Dunn, like Grundy, lived in the more convenient location of TheOaks, so maybe the English lived at The Oaks and the Irish in the Burragorang.

Table 1. Timeline for Jacky Jacky /John Jingery

Born or spirit conception at 'Jingery'		
1871	14 April	He gives evidence at Police Office, Picton, in break and enter case Fitzpatrick v. Grundy (Appendix 1).
1875	1 July	He is working for Robert O'Reilly as a stockman and agrees to his name being used in conditional purchase of 40 acres, Portion 20, Parish of Speedwell, County of Westmoreland (Smith 1876 Appendix 2).
	7 August	Portion 20 is surveyed "Applicant was on the ground but residence doubtful. No improvements". Resides on it for a short period while minding cattle for O'Reilly (Inquiry evidence; State Records 1876).
1876	March	He abandons selection (Figure 6) when Dunn and O'Reilly have a 'law suit' and decide that Dunn will take possession (Appendix 2; LTO 1875).
	19 September	Inspector Smith finds Jingery in search of cattle and hears this news. He gets him to 'sign' (put his mark) on a paper (Figure 6) that agrees to relinquish ownership due to having abandoned it (Appendix 2; LTO 1875).
	23 September	Smith's letter to Lands Department setting all this out (Appendix 2) (LTO 1875).
1877	23 April	A letter is written from Whittingdale Johnson, Commissioner of Lands for the Western District, notifying that there will be a court of enquiry into the abandonment (State Records 1876).
	14 May	Senior Constable Moesch serves this notice on Jingery at Courthouse in Picton (State Records 1876).
	29 May	Inquiry held at court House at Camden. Claimant not present. Decides on forfeit (State Records 1876).
	7 August	Portion 20 (in the name of John Jingory) gazetted for auction as a Forfeited Conditional Purchase (Driver 1877).
	14 November	Portion 20 purchased by Charles Dunn at Camden auction (State Records 1877).

Features named Jingery

There are a number of place names around Portion 20 (7 on [Figure 1](#)) that relate to this story, and they are all near the Kowmung River ([Figure 7](#)). On Myles Dunphy's 'Gangerang' map (1979) the range running beside the river and up towards Kanangra (11 on [Figure 1](#)) is the 'Gingra (Jingera, Jingery) range' whereas the current topographical map (LPI 2002) has settled on 'Gingra Range'. Both maps show 'Gingra creek', but only 'Little Gingra creek', can be found on the website of the Geographical Names Board of NSW (2016), yet those names are on some 1930s maps (pers. comm. Jim Barrett, 20 November 2016). Did these names apply before 1875? In his latest book Jim Barrett's phonetic spelling of the pre-1788 name is Dyingarii Creek (Barrett 2015, p.20). Barrett shows in this book that there has been considerable slippage between the original Gundungurra naming of places, and what has been sieved out by European ears and inclinations - in spite of best intentions. In addition, both maps show 'Mt. Jingery', which is near Brennan Top at Kanangra. It is an unremarkable hillock that bushwalker Dave Noble observed to be nothing special. However Kanangra has some remarkable ochre drawings.

It is possible that there was a deep connection in the traditional sense, between these places and John Jingery. Certainly it would be better for a mother to give birth by a pool where water is available, than on a rocky ridge. Gundungurra descendant Ivy Brookman recollected that her ancestor Dennis Riley "married or had children with a wild Aboriginal lady of the Gingara tribe" (Bookman & Smith 2010, p.1).

Probably a sub-group or clan is what was meant.

Conclusion

Much of the good land in the Burraborang had been selected by the 1870s and there were very many obstacles for the traditional owners as they adapted to this fact. The primary sources are a rich vein to tap, in getting at the true story of how this adaptation took place. Both the Grundy and O'Reilly accounts show

an association with the area around Scott's Main Range, the Coxs River and the Kowmung river. In many cases working as a stockman was a great way to continue traditional connections with country while also working for a white boss – a compliant attitude would smooth the way to manage both sets of obligations. This choice of occupation has continued into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

The sources cited herein also reveal the attitudes prevailing at the time towards Aboriginal people. Jingery's evidence was only that of a 'native', therefore of lesser value, yet Jingery was judged intelligent by Inspector George Smith – and speaking a second language, English, he understood what was going on between the two graziers. [There is another document from Charles Dunn showing his attitude to the young Aboriginal girls growing up at St. Joseph's farm.]

Like Werriberri, Jingery was a stockman and both would have known that country like the 'back of their hands', and the intimacy of that expression contains within it, a glimmer of what the relationship between country and indigenous people would have been.

There was indeed a level of cooperation between poor Irish settlers in the Burraborang and the Aborigines. But it only went so far.

Acknowledgments

My thanks for help in researching this article go to: Trish Hill of The Wollondilly Heritage Centre; Guntawang Catholic Youth Centres, especially Maureen and Bob Anderson; Dave W. Noble (some photos and bushwalking companionship); the helpful staff at State Records, Kingswood and at the Mitchell Library; John Merriman, Local History librarian, Blue Mountains City Library, Springwood.

Abbreviations

CMA Central Mapping Authority
LPI Land and Property Information.
LTO Land Titles Office

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APPENDIX 1

Record of case involving John Jingray (*sic*) (State Records 1871).

Police Office Picton
Friday 14th April 1871
Before John M. Antill Esq. JP
and
R.A. McInnis Esq. JP

separate paper

The Queen
v
John Fitzpatrick

Charged with feloniously breaking and entering the dwelling house of John Grundy at Coxs river on the 7 February 1871 and stealing a quantity of flour pork & horseshoes

Evidence of John Grundy
Edward Grundy
and John Jingray (an Aboriginal)

Case dismissed - No corroborative testimony to that of the Aboriginal (my underlining)

APPENDIX 2

Letter from Inspector Smith after he met John Jingery (Smith 1876; exactly transcribed):

Lands Office
Sydney Sept 23rd. / 76

To The Honorable
The Minister for Lands

Sir /.

I have the honor to report in the matter of enquiry into the Selection of “John Jingery” alias “Jacky Jacky” of Speedwell, Cox’s River.

That I was prevented crossing the River any more times on account of the fresh coming down, but that I succeeded in finding the Selector.

“Jingery” (a name after the place where he was born) I found in the mountains, in search of Cattle, and seeing that he was rather intelligent, I got the following information.

That Robert O’Reilly, a Selector and Grazier on Cox’s River, employs “Jingery” as Stockman, that O’Reilly took up this Selection in “Jingery’s” name on Chas. Dunn’s run, solely to “block” him, being jealous of him in the same avocation -

//Which means buying up poor farmers’ calves, and planting them in every available spot in the mountains, until they are fit as store cattle for the market // Eventually O’Reilly & Dunn had a law suit and the price of the settlement of the same, was making “Jingery” abandon the Selection / which was done some months since / leaving Dunn in possession of this secluded spot.

Having received this statement I asked for the..?? attached marked A.

Knowing therefore that a notice to show cause would follow I deemed it more prudent to(pursue? hasten?) my inspection of other spots, than run a risk in crossing the river at this particular period.

I have the honor to be Sir
Your most obedient Servt.
George Smith

Inspector of Purchases
Metropolitan District

There are a number of things in Smith’s letter to explain and notice. What Smith meant by a “fresh” is that the river was up, a frequent and dangerous occurrence for the valley residents. How fortunate for the prudent inspector that the Aboriginal was “rather intelligent” – the evolutionary social theory of the time would have had it that Aborigines were mentally inferior and doomed to die out. “My name is Jacky Jacky,” he corrected Smith - a generic name for Aboriginal men in those times. “Jingery” is where he was born - or is that “born”? i.e. the place where he was spiritually “born” - where the spirit baby entered his mother’s body? Eugene Stockton explains it thus:

“The land is his mother, common to all other living beings, who are real brothers and sisters to him. Certainly he is born of a natural mother with a father’s collaboration, but his origins are deeper still. He has pre-existed as a spirit child since the creative time of the Dreaming when his ancestral hero left him and the spiritual seed of others who share his totem (both human and non-human) in a certain place, the life centre of the totem, until such time as his natural mother passing by allowed him to be incarnated in her womb” (Stockton 2015, p.14).

THE BOULTON FAMILY OF *VERNA*, WENTWORTH FALLS.

Louise Wilson,
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Abstract

Piecing together the implications of several unaddressed letters, a pencil sketch, a watercolour and a few undated photos of Dora Boulton's family in the years 1895-1906 unexpectedly unravels more of the history of *Verna*, a house at Wentworth Falls that is listed in the NSW State Heritage Inventory.

Key words: *Verna*, *Clunes*, Dora Boulton, Wentworth Falls, Blue Mountains

INTRODUCTION

Philip Boulton left England in 1878 for lack-of-health reasons (ANZ Group Archives 1999) and Dora Mary (Dolly) Flockton left England in 1882 for lack-of-wealth reasons (Wilson 2016, p.41). They met and married in Queensland where their son Nigel Boulton was born in 1888, in the sugar-milling town of Bundaberg (Anonymous 1888).

Bank manager Philip Boulton was promoted in 1889 to a new posting in the gold-mining town of Clunes in Victoria, where Nigel's younger brother Stephen was born in 1890 (Anonymous 1890). A further promotion saw the family move to Brunswick in Melbourne. There, in the manager's residence of the Union Bank of Australia, my grandmother Dorothea (Thea) was born (Anonymous 1895a), five months before her father died there in June 1895 (Anonymous 1895b). Philip Boulton was buried at Melbourne General Cemetery on his 43rd birthday.

A new manager moved into the bank's residence. Where did the Boultons go? The answer has heritage interest.

Clunes 1895 - 1900

A few scraps of family memorabilia marked the Boulton trail. Young Stephen's sketch book contains a pencil outline of a Wentworth Falls landscape dated 26 December 1895. His grandfather Frank Flockton also painted several watercolours of the Blue Mountains (see [Figure 1](#)). Why? Because his widowed mother moved with her three young children to New South Wales, closer to her Flockton parents



Photo courtesy Stephanie Arbuthnot.

Figure 1. Blue Mountains, by Frank Flockton (pre 1901).

and her sister. She stayed with them in Sydney for a short while before opting to settle in the Blue Mountains at Wentworth Falls, about 100km west of Sydney. Famed for its fresh, cool air and brisk walks, this was a popular holiday destination easily accessible by train from Sydney.

Dolly had inherited £451 from her husband's Australian assets, enough to purchase a home in New South Wales (Anonymous 1895c). Strangely, there is no record of this purchase in Land Titles records, but read on ... all will be explained. Dolly also needed to generate some income to support her children. Her new abode suited as a private guest house, but it was well over a year before the enterprising young mother made her first recorded appearance in this business, in 1897:

“Mr. and Mrs. Henderson and family, who have been staying for some weeks with Mrs. Boulton, The Clunes, Wentworth Falls, New South Wales, have returned to Marchmont station, near Barcaldine.” (Anonymous 1897, col.e).

Nostalgically, she had named her guest house *Clunes* after happy years spent with her husband in that Victorian town. Her early married life in Queensland had taught her that people with money, from places like Barcaldine, were willing to pay for a holiday in a cool climate. She targeted that Queensland market,

helped by her former contacts as a bank manager's wife in that State.

A year later, with Thea past babyhood, Dolly was freer to take on the burdens of caring for children additional to her own three, so she advertised:

“BLUE MOUNTAINS.—Widow Lady wishes care of Children requiring change to cooler climate, comforts of a happy home, motherly care, and educational advantages. Liberal diet. Cow. References to parents in Queensland and elsewhere. Terms moderate. Mrs. D. M. Boulton, Wentworth Falls, Blue Mountains, N.S.W.” (Anonymous 1898a).

Her own children did well at the local public school. In 1898, Nigel and Stephen both won academic and sporting prizes at the annual prize-giving ceremony and school picnic: N. Boulton came second in 3rd class & won second place in the sack race, and S. Boulton came second in 2nd class & earned second prize for sports in 2nd class (Anonymous 1898b). But the extended family felt they had to ‘do something’ about educating the two boys ‘properly’. Schools in England were deemed to be better and English relatives used their influence to get the boys into the British Orphan Asylum at Slough, a school offering free tuition and board to the children of ‘gentlemen’ where the father had died leaving the family to suffer a declining standard of living (Wilson 2005, p 61). Entry to the school required a student to obtain sufficient ‘votes’ from the school’s financial supporters. The cause of the Boulton boys (see [Figures 2 & 3](#)) was promoted well, because both were accepted into the school.



Figure 2.
Nigel Boulton, c 1899.



Photos Julia Woodhouse Collection
Figure 3.
Stephen Boulton, c 1899.

It might have seemed that Dolly too planned to leave Wentworth Falls, because advertisements like the following ran for several weeks in August and September 1899:

“BLUE Mountains.—To Let for six months, large comfortably furnished Cottage ; dining and drawing rooms, six bedrooms, kitchen, bath, piano, garden; near station, church, school ; rent, £2 10s. Apply Clunes, Wentworth Falls.” (Anonymous 1899).

As will be seen, she had simply moved a short distance. However, that description of the location for *Clunes* proved useful. Local historians up until 2016 were mystified as to how such a substantial building as *Clunes*, clearly much larger than the word ‘cottage’ implies today, had hitherto escaped their attention. If it was near the station, the church (which stood on the one acre one rood 36 perches block of land donated by Miss Helen Campbell (Anonymous



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Figure 4. Map of the southern part of the Village of Wentworth Falls (LPI 1916).

1889) and the school (in Falls Road), all marked on [Figure 4](#), then where was it?

More clues emerged from some letters. Although the entire family eventually sailed to England, Dolly arranged for her ten-year-old son Nigel to travel ahead on his own, by ship from Sydney to London, departing Sydney on 9 September 1899 aboard the *Australia*. Three ‘brave’ letters written by young Nigel on that journey survive (Boulton 1899a,b,c). Whoever stood *in loco parentis* was not mentioned in his letters, the first of which asked after his friends and family:

“How are the Cales and Steve and babs, how is Steve getting on with his schooling, does he miss me much. Has Miss Tick left yet, hope not, give my love to her if she has not. Mr Wormley wrote me a Post Card and I wrote to Is and he wrote a Post Card back to me.” (Boulton 1899a).

Nigel’s references to these people, hitherto mysterious because the three envelopes were discarded, taking with them his mother’s address, made sense with the knowledge that she still lived at Wentworth Falls. Thomas Cale has significant heritage interest as a storekeeper at Wentworth Falls (NSWOoEH 2000a); his store was located in the block on the corner of Cascade Street and the main western road to Bathurst. Steve, of course, was his nine-year-old brother and ‘babs’ was his four-year-old sister Thea (my grandmother). It is possible that Miss Tick (Miss Thickner in the next letter) was a paying guest in the Boulton cottage. Mr. Wormley worked at the Wentworth Falls Railway Station. The identity of ‘Is’ remains unknown.

His second letter queried the progress on some building works underway at home:

“Has Denis been yet, has he sold the pie-bald; how is Bill getting on with the painting, has he painted a side yet, and did you get enough paint? How is everybody, all well I suppose. ... Does Babs miss me, does she ever ask of me. Give my love to Miss Thickner.” (Boulton 1899b).

The *Australia* docked in London several days before Nigel's 11th birthday on 29 October 1899, a milestone which he celebrated with his English relatives, all strangers to him. After Christmas he wrote from the home of his Doherty cousins to his younger brother Steve, making reference to his school days, past and present:

“I was so glad to get your letter that you wrote on December the 3rd. You must have been sharp to be top in the Lower Third. You will have your prize when this letter gets to you.

Do I like the English School, I like it pretty well, it is not as nice as Mr Chiplin’s. I have to go to School on Saturday. But we have a half-holiday, on Wednesdays, and Saturdays, but I do not come home to Aunties I have to stop and play football. I am doing Fractions now, and Practise with Fractions in them not like Mr Chiplin taught me with Decimals. And I am getting on in French, and Latin. Tell Mr Chiplin I will write soon. Auntie wants to say something on the other side.” (Boulton 1900).

Mr. Chiplin was Walter James Chiplin, a gifted teacher at Wentworth Falls who deserved Nigel’s praise. Prior to his arrival at Wentworth Falls in 1896, Chiplin had worked for four and a half years as the assistant at the Model School, Fort Street, the leading public school in Australia, and in addition he had university training (Anonymous 1896). Parents at Wentworth Falls appreciated having a teacher of such ability to train their children, before Chiplin was promoted to a new school early in 1900.

A few weeks after Nigel reached London, and four years after the family’s arrival at Wentworth Falls, his mother’s purchase of a property at Wentworth Falls entered the official records. For £300, on 20 November 1899 Dora Boulton purchased Lot 3 of Brasfort North Subdivision, an area of one acre seven perches bounded on the north by the Western Road (a.k.a. Bathurst Road) (LPI 1899). The property contained a dwelling house and outbuildings. The sellers were two widowed sisters living in Manly, Hannah Martha Malcolm and Mary Jane Malcolm, who had married two brothers.

Dolly’s legal documentation of 1899 formalized an existing and perhaps troubled arrangement which had been in place for some time. A later legal battle over another property inherited from their father (John Farrell of Manly, who had died late in 1888 (NSWBDM 1888) alluded to the sisters having fallen out (Anonymous 1903a). The sale of Lot 3 at Wentworth Falls in 1899 hints that Hannah had earlier tried to sell this property, without her younger sister’s agreement. Its conveyance document states that notwithstanding anything ‘done, omitted or knowingly suffered’ by Hannah Martha Malcolm, she now had full power to grant and release this property, ‘now or heretofore used, occupied and enjoyed’ by Dora Boulton, with no claim being made for the rents and profits received by Dora Boulton.

In the Yewen’s Directory of 1900 (Yewen 1900, p.400), Dolly is listed as the proprietor of *Clunes*, using her land for grazing (previously she had owned a horse and a cow), with an orchard. But early in 1900 it was a Mrs. Edwards, who must have responded to Dolly’s earlier advertisement offering *Clunes* ‘to let for six months’, who briefly ran the residence as a boarding house, charging 25 shillings per week (Anonymous 1900a). We shall see that Dolly had subdivided Lot 3 and had built a new cottage on the back portion behind *Clunes*, where she now lived with Stephen and Thea.



Photo Julia Woodhouse Collection

Figure 5. Nigel & Stephen Boulton, England, Dec.1900.



Photo Julia Woodhouse Collection

Figure 6. *Verna*, Wentworth Falls (Anonymous 1955).

After 1900 the name *Clunes* disappeared from the records of Wentworth Falls as the house was about to acquire a new and much more famous identity.

Clunes* becomes *Verna

In the middle of 1900 ten-year-old Stephen was despatched alone (again under an unknown person's watchful eye) on the long sea voyage to join his brother at school in England. (See [Figure 5](#).) Master Stephen Boulton was booked to travel on the P&O vessel *Britannia*, leaving Sydney on 14 July 1900 for London (Anonymous 1900b).

It is known that his mother and sister farewelled him and returned home to their newly-built cottage, because Dolly was one of 33 Wentworth Falls

residents contributing to a charity cause around August 1900 (Anonymous 1900c).

Being a keen Anglican churchgoer Dolly had become friendly with the new Rector, Rev Claydon, and in September 1900 she and Claydon did a deal:

“The Rev. E. Claydon, the rector of Springwood, has arranged to purchase a cottage and furniture at Wentworth Falls, to be called “Holy Trinity Parsonage,” for the use of any of the clergy who may officiate there.” (Anonymous 1900d, col.c).

The deal was sealed a few weeks later when ‘Dora Boulton, widow’, sold the front portion of Lot 3 containing a house to ‘Ernest Henry Beales Claydon of Springwood, a clerk in holy orders’, for £535 (LPI 1900). This house was then used temporarily as the Holy Trinity Parsonage until the foundation stone for



Photo Julia Woodhouse Collection

Figure 7A. Stephen, Thea & Nigel Boulton at Wentworth Falls, c.mid 1899.

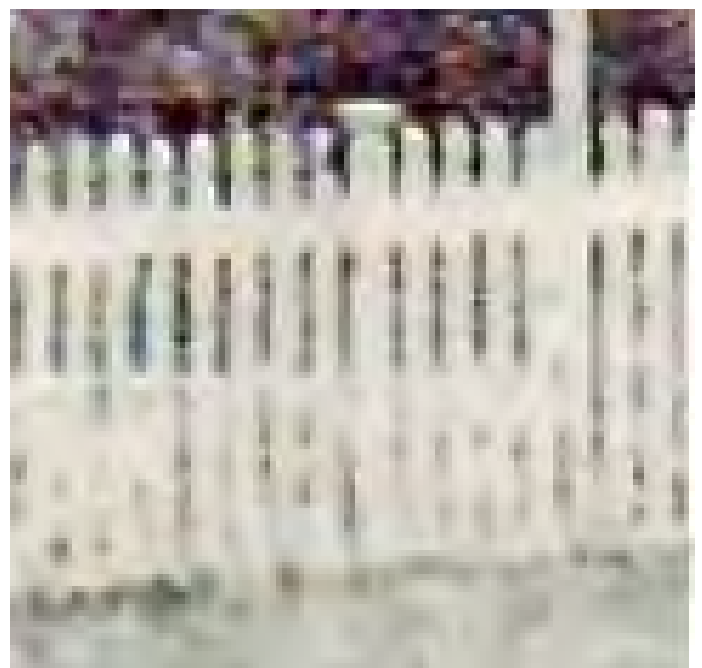
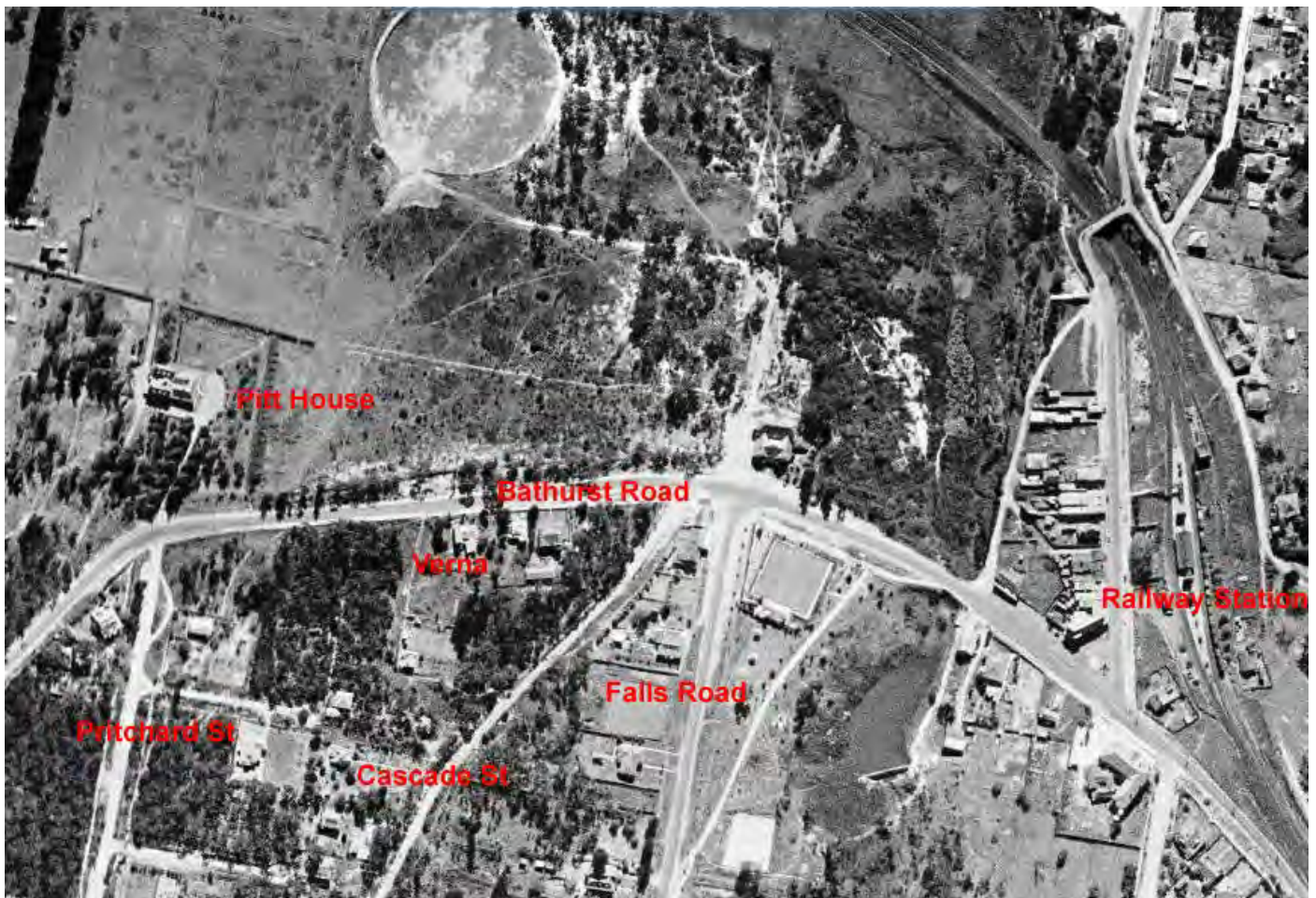


Figure 7B. The fence at *Verna*, (Anonymous 1955).



1943 AUSIMAGE © Sinclair Knight Merz Pty Ltd

Figure 8. 1943 Aerial Photograph of Wentworth Falls.

a new parsonage was laid in August 1906. It was after this that the temporary parsonage (Figure 6) was renamed *Verna* by Rev. Claydon and it was first mentioned by that name in 1907 when his tenth child, a son, was born there (Anonymous 1907).

The ages of the Boulton children in Figure 7A indicate that the photograph was taken before Nigel left for England in September 1899; significantly it shows a very distinctive fence, the shape of the palings and the

toppings of the fence posts being the same as for the original fence at *Verna* (Figure 7B). It follows, then, that *Clunes* and *Verna* were one and the same cottage.

After selling *Clunes*, Dolly continued to live in the back portion of Lot 3. This property was named *Cosy Camp*, recognised by her descendants as the quirky kind of name she would give to a house. Later documentation refers to it having a right-of-way and to Dolly's address as Cascade St, consistent with the



Photo Julia Woodhouse Collection

Figure 9. *Verna* c.1900.



Photo Julia Woodhouse Collection

Figure 10. Probably *Cosy Camp* c.1900.

1943 aerial map (Figure 8) which shows a winding driveway passing through other vacant allotments and leading to Cascade Street.

These conclusions now make perfect sense of several unidentified photos in an old family album recently re-examined by the author. Two old photos are clearly images of *Clunes* a.k.a. *Verna*, taken around 1900 when the house was well set back from the highway (Figure 9) before it was realigned prior to 1943 (Figure 8). On the preceding page is a photo of a small weatherboard cottage which could well be *Cosy Camp* (Figure 10).

Dolly's property ventures at Wentworth Falls had not gone smoothly because by March 1901 a court dispute was underway with the builder of *Cosy Camp*:

“NO. 2 JURY COURT (Before Mr. Justice Cohen and a jury of four.)

CLAIM FOR ERECTING A COTTAGE.

Knox v. Boulton (part heard).

Mr. Shand and Mr. Teece, instructed by Mr J.W. Abigail, appeared for the plaintiff ; and Dr. Brissendon, instructed by Mr. T.M. Slattery, for the defendant. This was an action brought by Robert William Knox, carpenter and builder, against Dora Boulton, to recover the sum of £65, being balance of account claimed to be due to plaintiff for the building of a weatherboard cottage at Wentworth Falls for the defendant. The original contract was for £95, but extras increased the amount to £135, and £70 had been paid on account, leaving the sum now sued for. Defendant paid into court the sum of £23 15s 6d as being sufficient to satisfy the plaintiff's claim ; and as to the remainder she pleaded, by way of cross action, that the plaintiff did not carry out the work in a skilful, workmanlike, or proper manner, or within a reasonable time. The result was that she was deprived of the use of the premises for a long time and lost the profits which she would otherwise have derived, and this she was willing to set off against the plaintiff's claim. The evidence on both sides having closed, and counsel having addressed the jury, the latter returned a verdict for £37 18s 6d in addition to the amount paid into court.” (Anonymous 1901).

Dolly's stance against the builder proved to be inadvisable: she had to pay £61 14s 0d, most of his claim, plus legal fees.

By October 1901 Dolly and her daughter had departed from Wentworth Falls to share a house with Dolly's widowed sister Phoebe Clarke and her two children,

then living at Mosman in Sydney (UK Probate 1901). Philip Boulton's probate in England had at last been granted to her and Dolly began to plan her return to her homeland for the first time in 20 years. First, something had to be done with *Cosy Camp* and its furnishings:

“ “THE COTTAGE”, adjoining the Parsonage, on the Bathurst-road 5 minutes from WENTWORTH FALLS Station, and nearly opposite Mr. Pitt's property.

This is for Immediate SALE in consequence of the early departure of the vendor, Mrs. D. Boulton, for England.

Only £300, INCLUDING FURNITURE.

To inspect, keys with Mr. Cale, storekeeper

. PIERCY ETHELL and CO.,

3 Moore-street.” (Anonymous 1902a).

The interpretation of this advertisement of March 1902 depends entirely on its second comma, a punctuation mark often used sloppily. With that comma, only two cottages adjoined the Parsonage on the Bathurst Road, these being Lots 2 and 4. But without the second comma, the meaning of the sentence was very different, and the cottage would have been *Cosy Camp*, also adjoining the Parsonage but at its rear. As for being ‘nearly opposite Mr. Pitt's property’, as late as 1943 the land opposite the Parsonage (*Verna*) still was mostly vacant and Mr. Pitt's house was the only structure for some distance. It remained a meaningful landmark in 1943 and back in 1902 would have been an easy way to describe a house anywhere on that section of the Bathurst Road (today's Great Western Highway) at Wentworth Falls.

Dolly (Figure 11) and Thea (Figure 12) Boulton boarded the *Runic* and sailed for London on 24 June 1902 to enjoy a lengthy stay in England as guests of various family members (Figure 13) (Anonymous 1902b). It appears that Dolly's cottage and furniture did not sell before her departure and the property was let out by Mr. Cale during her absence (Anonymous 1903b).

She and Thea returned home to Australia aboard the *Medic* on 28 February 1904, bringing Nigel with them and leaving 13-year-old Stephen behind at school in England (Anonymous 1904). Nigel finished his schooling at The King's School at Parramatta, a school his mother deemed of suitable status, and went on to study medicine at the University of Sydney. When aged 15, Stephen returned alone to Sydney on 22 September 1905, also aboard the *Medic* (Anonymous 1905a). He joined his brother at The King's School



Photo Julia Woodhouse Collection

Figure 11. Dora Boulton, c.1902.



Photo Julia Woodhouse Collection

Figure 12. Thea Boulton c. 1902.

to complete his matriculation studies and went on to work for the Union Bank of Australia and then the new Commonwealth Bank.

In July 1905 Dolly started to dispose of her remaining property at Wentworth Falls, preparatory to buying in Sydney. The transaction commenced with a notice by Thomas James Cale to bring the following land under the Real Property Act:

“No. 13807. County of Cook and Parish of Jamieson, 3 roods 33 1/3 perches, situated on the Main Western or Bathurst road, near Wentworth Falls Station, is lot No. 2 of Brasfort North subdivision, and is part of 31 acres 2 roods (portion No. 3 of parish) granted to Edward Dougherty; adjoining the properties of Revd. E. Claydon, Mrs. Dora Boulton, G. M. Hayward, and Louisa Cale.” (Anonymous 1905b).

Five months later:

“Property Sales. — Mr E. H. Green, house and Land agent, of Wentworth Falls, reports having sold that cottage in Pritchard street known as "Littleton Cottage," with two acres of ground, and also in conjunction with Mr T. Cale the cottage lately owned by Mrs Boulton, in Cascade street, both at satisfactory figures.” (Anonymous 1905c).



Photo Julia Woodhouse Collection

Figure 13. Family Group in England, c.1902.
Rear: Two relatives & Dolly Boulton.
Front: Stephen, Thea & Nigel Boulton.



Photo Courtesy Wentworth Falls Realty.

Figure 14. *Verna*, Wentworth Falls, 2016.

The legalities took a few more months to process. Dora Boulton, a widow of Parramatta, sold her house and land with its right-of-way to John J. Shipley on 12 March 1906 for the sum of £170 (LPI 1906). Financially she appeared to come out ahead over the ten year period of her connection with Wentworth Falls. For her original investment of £435 (£300 for *Clunes* (LPI 1899) plus the £135 cost of building the *Cosy Camp* cottage (Anonymous 1901)) she had sold both properties for a total of £705 (£535 for *Verna* plus £170 for *Cosy Camp* cottage). That was the Boulton family's last recorded connection with Wentworth Falls.

However Dolly and her children retained a long-term link with the Blue Mountains via their close friends the Bryant sisters, Judy and Erica, who later lived for many years at *Glenshiel*, Gladstone Road, Leura, a house backing on to the golf course. The author spent several happy holidays at *Glenshiel* as a child.

Verna, at 230-232 Great Western Highway, today is one of a number of sites at Wentworth Falls included on the NSW State Heritage Inventory. The entry for *Verna*, (Wf082), reads as follows:

“Verna was ... built by Mrs. Dora Boulton on the Highway frontage around 1890. In 1900, Mrs. Boulton sold the house and its land to the new Anglican rector of the lower Blue Mountains, whose

parish ran from Glenbrook to Wentworth Falls. The Reverend E. H. B. Claydon was rector there from 1899 until 1903 ... Claydon clearly did not use Verna as a residence while he was rector, ... The Claydon family used Verna as a mountain holiday home when it was not occupied by catechists.” (NSWOoEH 2000b).

In truth, *Verna* was most likely built in the late 1880s by John Farrell of Manly or in the early 1890s by his two daughters. After its occupation by Dora Boulton in 1895, the cottage was known as *Clunes* until its sale to Rev Claydon in 1900, then as the Holy Trinity's 'Parsonage' until 1906 and afterwards as *Verna*, the name chosen by Claydon.

The dynamics of kinship become evident, aligning the work of family historians and historical societies to generate a story with a satisfying outcome for both parties! The restored, refurbished and re-fenced *Verna* (Figure 14) is now described as the original landmark cottage in an 'Over 55s' development accessed via Cascade Street, its new address given as 12/11 Cale Lane (Wentworth Falls Realty 2016). *Cosy Camp* appears to have been demolished as part of the re-development of the site.

Postscript

Much more about Dolly Boulton and her sons and daughter is in my book *'Brothers in Arms: The Great War Letters of Captain Nigel Boulton, R.A.M.C., and Lieut Stephen Boulton, A.I.F.'* (Wilson 2005).

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***Whispering Pines* – AN H.P. OSER HOUSE WITH A PAUL SORENSEN GARDEN AT BLACKHEATH.**

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Abstract

In 1953 the author's parents purchased land in Blackheath and commissioned Austrian-born modernist architect H.P. Oser to design a timber and stone weekender, which they named *Whispering Pines*. The Danish-born landscape designer Paul Sorensen was engaged to design the garden around the house, including a rear lawn bordered with a variety of ornamental conifers and silver birches, a rockery planted with alpine plants and a front garden of azaleas, Japanese maples and a long planter box of daffodils on the terrace. The house is part of a small enclave of mountain retreat weekenders designed by Oser in Blackheath and has one of many Blue Mountains gardens designed or part-designed by Sorensen, widely regarded as one of the foremost landscape designers in NSW in the 20th century.

Key words: Houses, gardens, Oser, Sorensen, Blackheath, Blue Mountains

INTRODUCTION

Both the author's maternal great grandfathers had strong associations with the Blue Mountains. Samuel Edward Lees, a prominent layman in the Wesleyan Methodist Church, was twice elected Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) for Nepean, an electorate which included the lower Blue Mountains. He was Mayor of Sydney in 1895 and later, Lord Mayor, when that office was instituted in the early twentieth century. One of Lees' four daughters, the author's grandmother, was Elma Carine Lees. In 1904 she married Congregational minister Reginald Blair Reynolds (1881-1959), a son of Robert Henry Reynolds (1834-1913) who at various times had extensive land holdings at Katoomba and Blackheath and was a one-time partner of John Britty North in mining ventures in the Jamison and Megalong valleys. Welsh-born R.H. Reynolds, a veteran of the Crimean War and one of the Maori Wars, finished his military career as Sergeant Instructor of Musketry at Sydney's Victoria Barracks. Known popularly as "Captain" Reynolds, an honorary rank conferred on him on his retirement from the army, R.H. Reynolds dabbled in many different business activities including coastal

shipping, merchandising and mining. He built a semi-detached house *Glen Ayr* (later incorporated with the adjoining *Boronia* and renamed *Braemar* (NSWOoEH 2002)) in Station Street, Blackheath and a row of cottages in Haviland Avenue, one of a number of streets in the town named after Reynolds family members (Yeaman 1976, pp.356-357).

The author's mother, Olive Roberta 'Bobbie' Lees Betteridge (née Reynolds) (1907-1990), started holidaying at Blackheath from the time she was six months old. Until 1916 members of both the Reynolds and Lees families took every opportunity to take holiday breaks at Blackheath and the Reynolds children often spoke of these times with great affection. In 1911 the family was apparently at Blackheath for Elma's birthday. A postcard of a young girl in a flimsy dress with a bunch of flowers titled 'Hearty Birthday Greetings' was addressed to Mrs. R.B. Reynolds, *Beaconsfield*, Blackheath, Blue Mts, with the message:

"We all wish the dear Elma a happy birthday & many, many more to come. 13/10/1911"

[*Beaconsfield* was a "boarding establishment" at what is now 3 Haviland Street.]

After her marriage in 1931 to Albert Robert 'Bob' Betteridge (1905-1995), Bobbie continued the family tradition of holidaying at Blackheath. Their honeymoon was at *The Carrington Hotel* in Katoomba and included the almost obligatory rail and road trip to Jenolan Caves. For many years the family stayed with their friends, the Partington family in a large house [No. 160] on the Great Western Highway at the Medlow Bath end of Blackheath. The author remembers his own childhood school holidays at rented cottages including *Deloraine* in Station Street [No.163], Miss Pittendrigh's in Clanwilliam Street [No. 80] and at *Castleford*, on the corner of Wentworth Street [No.63], and Prince George Street, Blackheath.

When the author's parents decided to buy a mountain property and build a weekend retreat in the early 1950s, they naturally selected Blackheath and chose a sheltered site on the edge of a pine plantation known

as ‘Foy’s Paddock’ on the eastern side of the village, between the former bowling club and the golf course. Like many streets in Blackheath, Prince Edward Street was continuous on paper but in reality was fragmented into a number of sections, truncated by the steep local topography. ‘Bobbie’ Betteridge had fallen in love with a group of three houses, *La Cabana* [Lot A DP 354930; was No.9 but now 13 Prince Edward Street], *Lilly Pilly* [Lot B DP 354930; was No.7 but now 9 Prince Edward Street], and *Suvretta* [Lot 1 DP 19071; was No.1 but now 52-54 Hargraves Street], all on the eastern side of Prince Edward Street, between Reynolds Lane and Hargraves Street. These three houses had been designed by Vienna-born Hans Peter Oser (1913-1967), a modernist architect who had fled the Nazi regime in Austria and settled in Sydney. The fear of nuclear conflict at the height of the Cold War led many European migrants to build retreats on the Blue Mountains where they thought they would be safer in the event of a new war and where the climate, conifers and other cool climate plants reminded them of their homelands.

Hans Peter Oser

Born in Vienna on New Year’s Day 1913 into a middle-class Jewish family, Hans Peter Oser studied architecture at the University of Vienna although his father wanted him to study interior decorating to continue the family business (Quinton 1997, p.80). Growing up in Austria’s capital city, the young Oser was initially influenced by the Secessionist Jugendstil (Art Nouveau) architecture of Josef Maria Olbrich, Josef Hoffmann and Otto Wagner who rebelled against the pomposities of classical architectural design. Another major influence was Adolf Loos and his drastic changes to “simplification and purer rectilinear forms” (Curtis 1996 in Quinton 1997, p.67). Quinton (1997, p.80) argued that “the seeds of modernism were firmly planted in the young Oser”. Oser supplemented his university studies with vacation work in architectural practices including that of Josef Hoffmann and Oswald Haerdtl who were both professors at Vienna’s equivalent of Sydney’s College of Fine Arts. With his family background in interior design, Oser also nurtured his long-standing appreciation of art with regular visits to Vienna’s many museums.

In 1937 Oser accompanied Professor Haerdtl to Paris to assist with the design and construction of the Austrian pavilion for the Paris Exposition of 1938. This trip had a profound impact on Oser who developed a desire to move to the French capital. With his increased experience and authority Oser was

commissioned to design additions to Vienna’s iconic Imperial Hotel which had been an important gathering place for Kaiser Wilhelm II and other dignitaries. Oser’s appointment as supervisor for this project ended abruptly in March 1938 with the rise of Nazism in Germany and Austria. Sensing the dangers for Jews staying in Vienna, Oser married and he and his new bride applied for an Australian visa and work permit. Just why they decided to migrate to Australia is not known but perhaps they thought it was a place furthest removed from the impending conflict about to engulf Europe. Oser went back to France briefly but found there were no architectural work opportunities there in the changed environment and uncertain future. He joined his wife in England and in November 1938 the pair sailed for Sydney, arriving the following month and settling into a small apartment in Kirribilli, on the northern shore of Sydney Harbour.

In January 1939 Oser was fortunate to join a large Sydney architectural firm where he mixed with other European émigré architects and was guided by Professor Alfred Hook (1886-1963) who had contributed to the foundation of the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Sydney and the Royal Australian Institute of Architects (Broomham 1996). Oser learned Australian construction techniques and his skills increased rapidly. A director of the firm was a benefactor of the Red Cross and was well connected in the Sydney social scene. Oser was invited to parties and the opera, pleasures denied him in his later years in Europe. During the Second World War, Oser’s fortunes varied, including two years working in a Labour Corps torch factory but improving in 1944 when he was appointed chief architect for the Housing Commission of New South Wales, with a good salary and a car. In both his work in the torch factory and at the Housing Commission, Oser also designed furniture for private clients, working from his small apartment (Quinton 1997, p.84).

By 1946, with his growing client list and “firmly entrenched in the social, cultural and architectural scene in Sydney” (Quinton 1997, p.85), the demand for Oser’s work was increasing. Designing from his apartment, with his wife doing the office work, soon became impossible and they set up practice in Hosking Place, a narrow laneway between Castlereagh Street and Pitt Street. Oser became a close friend of modernist architect Sydney ‘Syd’ Ancher (1904-1979) and, like Ancher, tried his hand at the design of project homes. Oser’s were two and three-bedroom houses in a residential estate on a hill near Manly golf course which he had purchased with friend Joseph Gervich.

This development proved to be very successful but came to a sudden end with the untimely death of Gervich in 1956. Oser's impressive client list by now included real estate developer L.J. (later Sir Leslie) Hooker (1903-1976) (Spearritt 1996), Vienna-born clothing manufacturer and developer Frank Theeman (1913-1989) (Hawker 2012), as well as the Benjamin family and the German-born Jewish restaurateur Walter Magnus (1903-1954).

In his domestic architectural work, Oser was a champion of the use of timber for house construction, arguing against a prevailing post-World War II view in many local government authorities that houses should be of solid masonry construction and that the use of timber and asbestos would lead to a proliferation of shacks, thereby depreciating property values. Oser challenged the validity of this view in an article in the *Sunday Herald* in July 1950, saying:

"Councils have wide powers to control design, so why should they not declare 'selective areas,' where timber homes could be built when the design was approved by qualified people? Probably the most workable method would be to refer the applications to a committee composed of councillors, architects nominated by the Royal Australian Institute of Architects, and real estate men." (Newman 1950).

All of Oser's houses in Prince Edward Street, Blackheath are of timber construction, with brick or stone chimneys and terraces.

Walter Magnus & *La Cabana*

Born in Dortmund, Germany, Walter Magnus studied dentistry and practised in his home city and in Berlin (Cunneen 2000, p.284), before escaping the Nazis in 1933 by travelling to Switzerland, Italy and France before setting up as a dentist in Barcelona, Spain. In 1934 he married German-born Hedwig Lisser Zinner and within two years they were driven out by the Spanish Civil War, escaping first to Czechoslovakia, then to Holland and finally to England. With Walter's sister and Hedy's brother the couple sailed for Australia, reaching Sydney on 8 April 1937.

Denied the right to practise dentistry in his new country, Walter Magnus decided to turn his love of food and cooking into a new profession. He had certainly been exposed to a variety of European cuisines in the previous decades. He bought the *Claremont Café* in Kings Cross, then *La Palette*, Double Bay (1940), the catering rights for the Journalists' Club (1941), *Le Coq d'Or* in Sydney's Ash Street (1943), the *Savarin* in George Street, Sydney (1946) and *The Pier*, Rose Bay (1951).



Figure 1. *La Cabana* - front elevation (Norman 1951, p.42). [Chris Betteridge collection].

It is reported (Norman 1951, p.43) that Magnus was riding with friends through the bush at Blackheath when he first saw the land known as 'Foy's Paddock', a clearing in a dense plantation of *Pinus radiata* (Radiata Pine, Monterey Pine), land that had once belonged to Mark Foy, the Sydney retailer who developed the Hydro Majestic Hotel at Medlow Bath. The house that had been on the land had burnt down. Magnus purchased three and half acres (*approx. 1.4 hectares*) of this land and commissioned H.P. Oser to design a three-bedroom holiday home which Magnus named *La Cabana* (Figure 1), the name-board being fixed to a giant pine tree beside the red-painted gates at the western end of the long entrance drive that wound down through the pines.

Oser's aim in designing *La Cabana* was to achieve a rustic retreat in keeping with the forest setting. Sited in a clearing, with a backdrop of tall pines, the house has an easterly aspect, with views over dense bushland near the headwaters of Govetts Leap Brook, including stands of *Grevillea acanthifolia* ssp. *acanthifolia*, a prickly shrub found in wet places in the upper Blue Mountains. The author remembers as a teenager how difficult it was moving through this bush which was also infested with blackberries and gorse. The open plan living / dining area and the two front bedrooms of *La Cabana* were under a skillion roof while the rear rooms comprising a third bedroom, WC, bathroom, laundry and kitchen were under a flat roof. There were wide overhanging eaves all round and a carport at the southern end with its roof supported on slanted cypress beams. The layout of the house is shown in the plan at Figure 2.

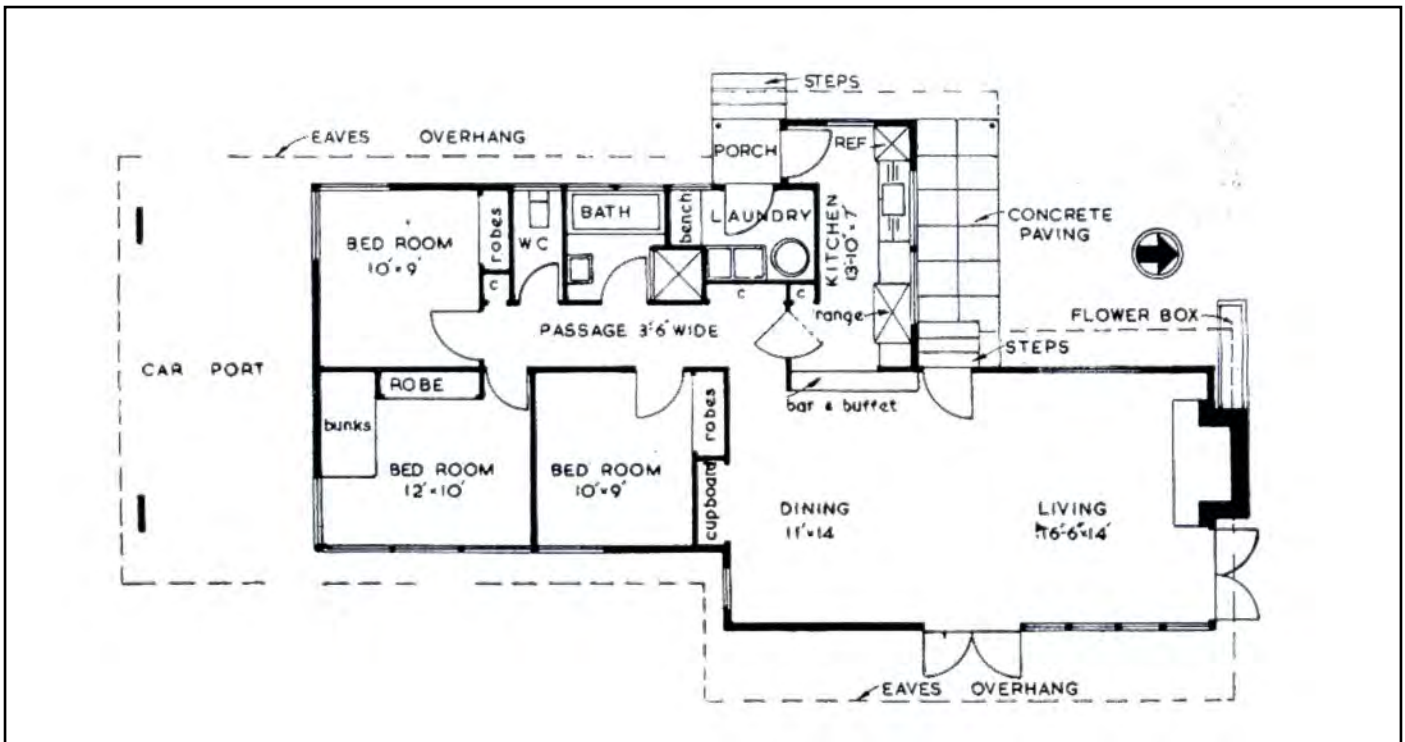


Figure 2. The plan of *La Cabana* (Norman 1951, p.43). [Chris Betteridge collection]

The external walls were clad in oiled and varnished horizontal cypress weatherboards. For the time, the house had extensive glazed areas, with a series of multi-paned timber framed French doors with fixed highlights giving onto the stone-paved front terrace which returns around to the northern and western sides. The living area has windows on three sides, maximising the solar access, and there is a fireplace at the northern end, with a brick chimney. The terrace had a barbecue and painted timber outdoor furniture on wheels for ease of movement. To the east of the house was a large lawn, with flower and vegetable gardens, fruit trees and shrubs.

In the early 1950s the palette of colours that had characterised interwar houses was replaced with vibrant primary colours on external joinery and accent panels and a variety of shades on internal walls, often with different colours on walls in the same room. The roof and entrance doors of *La Cabana* were painted pillar box red, as were the driveway gates and the aris rail and wire boundary fence. All external architraves and glazing bars were painted frosty white. In the living room the walls were painted eggshell blue and the ceiling grey. Interior doors were painted silver grey and curtains and upholstery were vibrant 'Mexican' colours. Furniture was made of Australian cedar, with an oiled finish over the natural timber. Built onto the living room wall adjoining the kitchen was a cypress pine cocktail bar made from left-over scraps of timber from the floors. A hatch through to

the kitchen allowed for snack meals at the counter which had lacquered bar stools.



Figure 3. A corpulent but apparently happy Walter Magnus walking his dog *Amigo* at Rose Bay (Anonymous 1952).

Walter Magnus was obviously enjoying taking his pet dachshund *Amigo* for a walk at Rose Bay in the press photograph here as [Figure 3](#).

Walter Magnus unfortunately did not live long enough to spend much time at his cherished *La Cabana*. He was described in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Cunneen 2000, p.285) as:

“heroically corpulent by the 1950s – his 24½ stone (156 kg) globular frame topped by a ‘happy, smiling moon of a face’. He spoke several languages, English with a thick German accent. ... A wine connoisseur, beer quaffer and cigarette

smoker who indulged all his pleasures, he died of a cerebral haemorrhage on 5 February 1954 ... A distinctive ‘New Australian’, Magnus had helped to broaden Sydney’s culture and improve its cuisine.”

The next owners of *La Cabana* were a couple named Inkster who adopted four young children from the one family and the author remembers these children enjoying the wonderful property, with its enchanting forest setting. The property was subsequently sold to the Fairfax family. Renamed *Pine Cabin*, the house survives but has been repainted and the state of its original interior is unknown to the author.

The Benjamin Family & *Lilly Pilly*

In a clearing to the south of *La Cabana*, but not separated from that property by a boundary fence, was the weekender that Oser designed for Magnus’ friends, the Alfred J. Benjamin family. The Benjamins owned department stores at Chatswood and Top Ryde, the latter being the first regional shopping centre in New South Wales and only the second in Australia, opened by the premier J.J. Cahill in November 1957 (City of Ryde 2015). The author remembers as a child being very impressed by the cars in which the owner of this property arrived, including a two-tone blue and white 1950s Pontiac sedan. Set in just over two acres (0.8 ha) of pine forest and similar in many ways to the Magnus house, *Lilly Pilly* (Figure 4) was a house with yellow-painted window joinery and fascias and a white-painted rendered masonry chimney; it was clad in horizontal cypress weatherboards. It had three main roof planes, each a very slightly pitched skillion. The

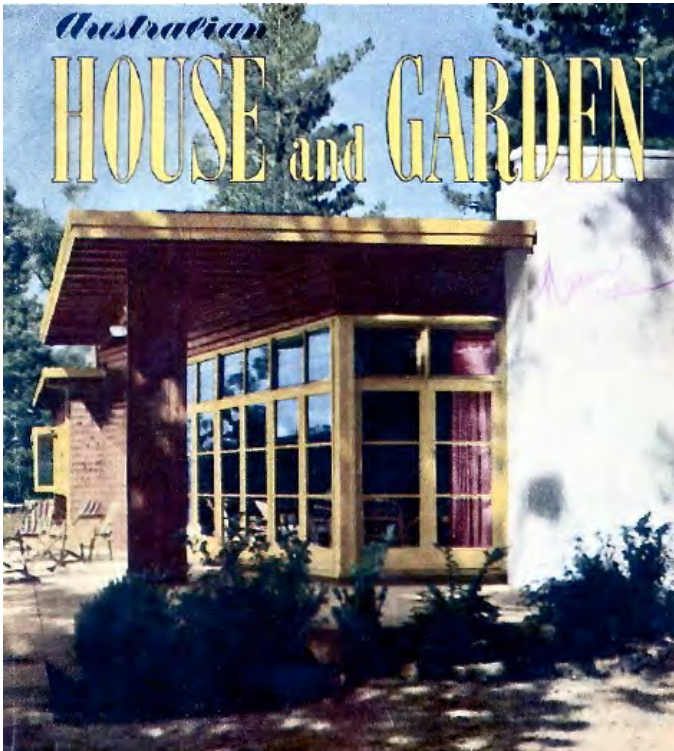


Photo M. Michaelis.

Figure 4. Side elevation of *Lilly Pilly* (Anonymous 1951). [Chris Betteridge collection].

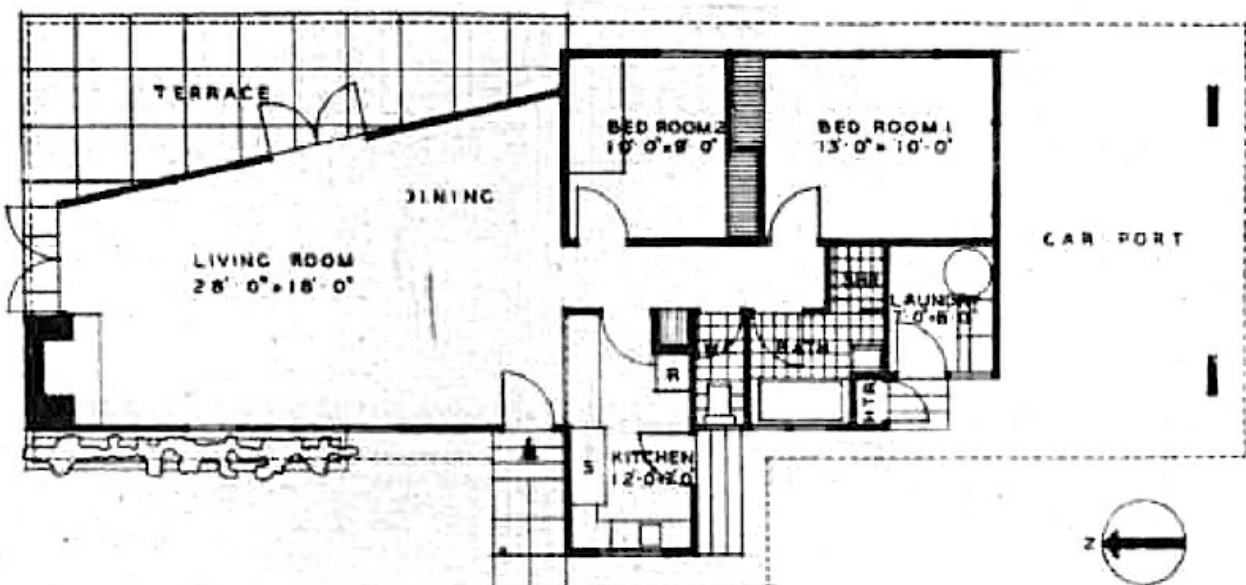


Figure 5. Plan of *Lilly Pilly*, Blackheath, as built (Anonymous n.d.).

highest roof covered the large asymmetric living / dining area, the middle roof covered the two bedrooms, kitchen, bathroom, WC and laundry, with the lowest roof over the carport at the southern end. As at *La Cabana*, a run of French doors with highlights above gave onto an elevated terrace with planter boxes and a garden bed along its eastern side. In a contemporary publication by the Timber Development Association of Australia (NSW Branch) Ltd, titled *build your home in TIMBER*, an unidentified house that was obviously *Lilly Pilly* was described in glowing terms thus:

“An outstanding example of contemporary architecture in timber. Designed for both indoor and outdoor living, this Blue Mountains home nestles against a background of pine trees which provide an excellent wind-break. Architect, H.P. Oser.”

Another article espousing the qualities and cost savings in using timber for house construction also shows *Lilly Pilly* as an example of a timber dwelling (Anonymous 1952) and the plan is shown in [Figure 5](#).



Figure 6. End elevation of the carport at *Suvretta*, Blackheath (Anonymous n.d.).

Suvretta

The third in the enclave of Oser-designed houses in Prince Edward Street, Blackheath, is a small weekender called *Suvretta*, possibly named after a famous hotel in St. Moritz, Switzerland; it is located on the eastern side of the street in the short block between Belvidere Avenue and Hargraves Street. Sited quite close to the street boundary behind a row of screening conifers, *Suvretta* is clad with dark-stained timber boards and has a low-pitched gabled roof. It presents a more European appearance, with timber shutters to the windows. The carport, shown in [Figure 6](#) is at the north-eastern end but the interior layout is not known. Originally set on a double lot with an ornamental garden of conifers and deciduous trees for autumn colour, the land has been subdivided,

leaving the house on a relatively shallow site, with a new dwelling fronting Hargraves Street on part of the original garden.

Other Oser-Designed Buildings in NSW

Quinton was unaware of the Oser houses in Prince Edward Street, Blackheath when he prepared his architectural dissertation but he referred (Quinton 1997, p.144) to two other Oser houses in Blackheath – one in Golf Links Road and another in Govetts Leap Road – and a third at Echo Point, Katoomba. In addition to the Blue Mountains houses, Quinton referred to Oser designed residential dwellings in Bellevue Hill, Beauty Point, Mosman, Roseville, Middle Cove, Avalon, Woollahra and Castle Cove. The Hersey House in Telopea Street, Mount Colah, designed by Oser in 1954 is, like *Whispering Pines*, another timber dwelling with low-pitched gabled roof (O’Callaghan & Pickett 2012, pp.63-64, 117).

Oser’s commercial output included the William Bland Centre at 229-231, Macquarie Street, Sydney, a building in which “the minimalist curtain wall reduces architecture to a grid of lines” (Jahn 1997, p.163) and the Canberra Rex Hotel (1959). Quinton (1997, p.87) stated that Oser

“was known for taking on many young Jewish architects who were having difficulty finding work at the time”.

In 1952 Oser employed the highly-skilled French émigré draftsman / architect Jean Fombertaux and the firm eventually became Oser, Fombertaux & Associates. In 1963 the practice designed the Sydney booking offices for the airline British Overseas Airways Corporation (BOAC) (now British Airways). Located at 64 Castlereagh Street, these offices, with a marble-sheathed beam across the façade allowed for an impressively wide front window of 11 metres, creating an ‘open’ ground floor (Apperly & Lind 1971, p.25). In 1966, the year before Oser’s death, the firm designed the *Glenmore Apartments* at 176, Glenmore Road, Paddington, a slab block with extensive views of Sydney Harbour (Apperly & Lind 1971, p.46). In that same year the firm designed the cosmetic production complex for Helena Rubinstein Pty. Ltd. at 12-26, Wharf Road, Ermington (Apperly & Lind 1971, p.88).

Oser’s domestic and commercial work has been described as

“marked by a sophistication of form and composition within an informed modernist style.” (Goad & Willis c.2012, p.520)

The Betteridge Family & *Whispering Pines*

When the author's parents were contemplating the purchase of land at Blackheath, their favourite holiday haunt, they were impressed with the three Oser-designed houses and they decided to commission the same architect for their weekender. They had purchased three adjoining lots fronting the western side of Prince Edward Street, directly opposite *La Cabana* and Blue Mountains City Council records indicate that the transfer of ownership had been completed by 14 May 1953. This land, of area 147 feet x 150 feet, sloped quite steeply up from the road which in the early 1950s was a narrow unsealed track leading down to the old dairy beside Prince George Street. The land also had many pine trees self-propagated from those on 'Foy's Paddock', as well as remnant eucalypts such as *Eucalyptus sieberi* (Silvertop Ash) and native shrubs such as *Telopea speciosissima* (Waratah), *Persoonia levis* (Geebung), *Lambertia formosa* (Mountain Devil), *Hakea dactyloides*, *Lomatia silaifolia* (Crinkle Bush) and the prostrate spider flower, *Grevillea laurina*. At the time Radiata Pine did not have quite the bad reputation as an invasive species as it does today and the author's parents loved the smell of the pine needles and the sound the branches made in the wind. They named the property *Whispering Pines* [Lots 15-17 DP19856; 4-8 Prince Edward Street].

The family decided to site the house well-back from the street and straddling the three narrow lots to maximise the space around the dwelling. For at least two years they camped (Figure 7) on the property on weekends while they prepared the land, grubbing out large tree roots (Figure 8) and levelling the house site, being careful to retain as much as possible of the native vegetation. Transport from the family home in



Photo: Bob Betteridge c.1954

Figure 7. Camping on the land at weekends and during school holidays was great fun for a seven-year old boy; the author is next to the family tent.



Photo: Bob Betteridge c.1954

Figure 8. The author, clothed in 'Jackie Coogan' overalls and wielding a tomahawk, helping his mother, with axe and spade, to clear timber from the house site at *Whispering Pines*.

Parramatta was in the Ford V8 sedan which Bob Betteridge had bought new in December 1935 from a Strathfield dealer. Accommodation on these weekend excursions was a canvas tent strung between two pine trees. Cooking was done over an open fire or on a kerosene stove and food was kept away from marauding ants and possums in a meat safe hanging from a tree. All of the family helped to clear the land, gaining great satisfaction as each milestone was achieved.

It would have been quite a leap of faith for Bob and Bobbie Betteridge to commission Oser to design their house and the author suspects they took the plunge to engage an architect because they realised it was probably the only way they could get the house of their dreams. Roberta Betteridge had always had an interest in art, architecture and design. As a young woman she had wanted to study art but it was not considered an appropriate choice for the daughter of a Congregational minister. She did however dabble in sketching for many years and enjoyed hand colouring the black and white photographs which Bob took on his Kodak vest pocket folding camera. Bobbie threw herself into the house design process with considerable enthusiasm. Although she was a very shy person, she enjoyed the visits to Oser's offices in Hosking Place and to suppliers of kitchen appliances, bathroom fittings and furnishing fabrics. The author fondly remembers accompanying his mother on these outings to the city and playing on the floor of Oser's office, constructing buildings with the architect's books which probably included tomes on the works of Le Corbusier (1887-1965) and Mies Van Der Rohe (1886-1969). The earliest record of this project that the author has been able to locate to date is a note

about a working drawing dated 12 October 1953 (Oser 1953) which shows the house sited towards the eastern side of the land, close to Prince Edward Street, with a rotary clothes line to the rear, but the working drawing is marked 'Positions to be adjusted on site'.

In the early 1950s building materials were still in limited supply after World War II and there was a shortage of builders, particularly those who had worked under the supervision of an architect. On the Blue Mountains in 1953/4 such builders would have been a rarity and the author believes his parents and Oser had some difficulty finding someone who could take on the task of constructing the house, especially to Oser's exacting standards. The author remembers the builder's surname was Cadwallader but he has no further information on him apart from the fact that the house took much longer to be completed than his parents had expected. This was probably due to a number of factors including delays in obtaining supplies, Oser's Sydney base and likely arguments between the architect and the builder. Once the house was partially completed, the family would camp in the structure ([Figure 9](#)) in preference to the old canvas tent.

H.P. Oser had recently visited the United States and had come back impressed by the way in which American women had much greater choice when it came to fitting out their homes with colour-matched appliances, fitted wardrobes and labour-saving devices. Although the Betteridge house was only going to be a weekender, it was designed to make maximum use of available space. The refrigerator, kitchen bench and stove were all the same height and

the fridge top could be used as extra bench space. The kitchen sink had wide draining boards either side, allowing for additional bench space and a generous cupboard underneath. There was a pair of casement windows above the sink offering views out to the garden during washing up. The L-shaped dining bench served both the kitchen and the large living area, with cupboards above the bench suspended on steel poles from the ceiling. You could reach just about everything you needed without leaving your chair. The kitchen cupboards were grey on the kitchen side and a coffee colour on the living room side. The kitchen wall above the stove and refrigerator was a deep turquoise colour and the 'lino' floor tiles were a random pattern of grey and yellow squares. Kitchen benches had Formica tops in a faintly patterned turquoise colour. The six dining chairs were Eames DCM and the lounge suite comprised a two-seater sofa and two chairs, upholstered in brown and yellow mottled woollen fabric

One long side and part of the end of the living room were fitted with wide divans which doubled as beds for extra guests on weekends. These were upholstered in a dark brown woollen fabric. The bedrooms had generous floor to ceiling fitted wardrobes. Long fitted dressing tables had compartments with lids that hinged up to reveal make-up mirrors. Oser had an aversion to traditional central ceiling-mounted pendant light fittings. Ceiling lights in the living area, kitchen and hall were translucent glass mushroom type but much of the lighting in the house was in the form of wall-mounted fittings and the coachwood double bunks had anodised aluminium bed lamps. At the northern end of the house a huge sandstone fireplace



Photo: Bob Betteridge c.1954

Figure 9. The author and his mother Bobbie Betteridge in the partially completed house circa 1954. The scaffolding for the stone work looks decidedly dodgy and would certainly not meet today's Workplace Safety requirements.

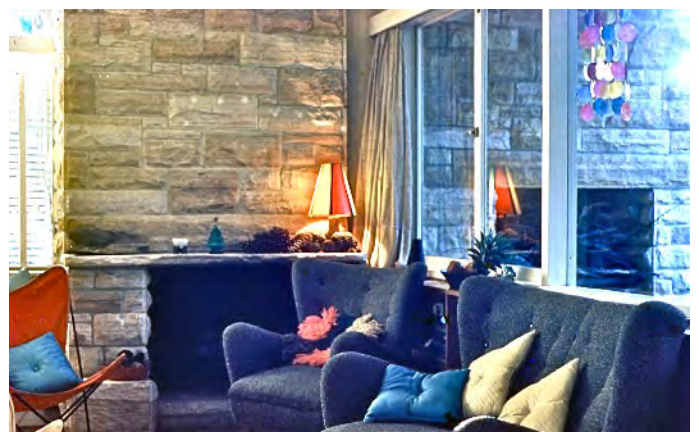


Photo: Bob Betteridge c.1960s

Figure 10. The northern end of the living area circa 1960s, showing the sandstone fireplace inside and barbecue outside on the terrace. The original red and yellow butterfly chairs were usually on the terrace. The lamp on the mantelpiece was fashioned by a family friend from a section of pine branch complete with four cones.

(Figure 10) continued through to the front terrace where it became a wood-fired barbecue. As with the previous Oser houses *La Cabana* and *Lilly Pilly* the house had large glazed areas but at *Whispering Pines* the windows are not multi-paned but large sheets of plate glass. There are large fixed picture windows and equally large casement windows, all with large fixed highlights above to ceiling height. When the Venetian blinds were open it was not uncommon for birds to knock themselves out on the windows, thinking that they could fly straight through the house.

The living area had light grey raked ceilings and pale yellow walls, contrasting with the dark brown upholstered divans. Floors throughout the living area, hall and bedrooms were oiled and polished 100mm cypress pine tongue and groove boards. Internal doors and architraves and the fitted wardrobes were painted glossy white. The ceiling and two walls in the main bedroom were painted off-white while the accent wall behind the fitted double bed was a mid-blue. The second bedroom featured fitted double bunks in coachwood, with alcoves at the head ends for book storage and further shelving at the head end of the lower bunk. Walls were painted pale yellow with a pale grey ceiling. A large storage box with hinged lid upholstered in studded red leather was fitted under the window. The riot of colour was continued in the bathroom, with pale blue toilet suite, wash basin and fitted bath. Wall tiles were pale pink and the floor and shower recess had small hexagonal tiles in a random pattern of pink and light grey.

The front elevation of the house under the bedroom windows, and the rear elevation under the kitchen windows and between the bathroom and laundry windows, featured yellow-painted panels of asbestos cement in white painted timber frames, providing a strong contrast with the glossy cypress weatherboards which were originally finished with Brolite yacht enamel. Oser would have been aware of this company's products because he had designed a second storey addition to their factory at Alexandria (Anonymous 1954). The front door was a solid core type painted turquoise blue while the kitchen door was a white-painted stable type which, with the top half open, allowed for good views out to the back garden. A concrete terrace extended along the rear of the house from the kitchen to the carport, with a step down to a wide crazy-paved path (Figures 11 & 12). The laundry, with external access from the rear terrace, featured a large off-peak Braemar hot water service and two concrete laundry tubs. A timber clothes drying rack suspended from the ceiling could be raised



Photo: Chris Betteridge 1965

Figure 11. The southern elevation of the house after the record snow storm in June 1965, showing the low pitched main roof and the similarly pitched but lower carport roof.



Photo: Chris Betteridge 1965

Figure 12. The rear of the house after the record June 1965 snow fall. Note the amount of snow on the low-pitched roof.

and lowered with ropes. A Hoovermatic™ twin-tub washing machine was a later addition.

The low pitched main roof and the lower carport roof were both clad in 'super-six' corrugated asbestos cement sheeting with matching ridge cappings. The huge sandstone chimney which served both the internal fireplace and the external barbecue was topped with a rectangular steel plate supported on steel posts. In the author's opinion the low-pitched roof was not particularly well-suited to the heavily treed environment and sweeping pine needles off the roof and cleaning out the deep guttering hidden behind wide timber fascias was a constant chore. That roof also was unable to cope with heavy hail or snow but perhaps the architect did not anticipate events such as the record snow fall of June 1965 which also caused considerable damage to the garden (Figures 11, 12 & 13). The sandstone flagged front terrace, partly



Photo: Chris Betteridge 1965

Figure 13. The view up the drive from Prince Edward Street during the record June 1965 snow fall. The garden could not cope with such heavy snow and over two hundred pines, other trees and shrubs were broken by the weight of snow.

protected under the roof, featured a fitted cypress pine bench seat with a Formica topped bench next to the barbecue for preparation of meals. Extending along the front of the terrace to the steps leading up to the front door was a sandstone edged window box which was traditionally planted with daffodils for a great splash of spring colour.

In the late 1960s the author's parents commissioned Oser, Fombertaux and Associates to design a large rumpus room in the same style as the house, to be connected to the carport by a timber pergola. This structure provided support for climbers such as Clematis 'Montana' hybrids and shelter for the Mollis azaleas planted by Sorensen.

Sorensen and the garden at *Whispering Pines*

In his seminal 1990 work on the gardens of Danish-born landscape designer Paul Sorensen, the late Richard Ratcliffe (p.138) described the garden at *Whispering Pines* thus:

“While Blue Mist [at Leura] shows Sorensen's virtuosity in the use of contrasting scale and dramatic surprise, *Whispering Pines* at Blackheath shows him in a simpler mood. When the Betteridge family built their house, designed by Sydney architect H.P. Oser in 1955, they chose to site it towards the rear of their largeish block because of the pleasure they gained from the mature pines which covered the major portion of the site towards the street. Sorensen built stone walls and paving which link the house to the garden and carried out some limited planting to the rear of the house. All other planting was completed by the owners but is so typically Sorensen in selection and style that it

is plain that he provided much advice and inspiration. All of the pines were retained and simply underplanted with azaleas, maples, camellias and rhododendrons. In some areas these in turn are underplanted with ivy which makes its presence more visible as it climbs the occasional pine, adding to the lush verdure of contrasting foliage textures and forms. Paths in this garden are reduced to narrow ones of natural earth meandering among the trees and shrubs in an environment of overwhelming restfulness. The Betteridges have added subtle lighting among the trees to expand the available experiences into the darker hours.”

The author is not sure how his parents came to choose Sorensen to design the garden around the house. They were probably aware of his work at *Everglades*, Leura, and possibly other gardens in the upper Blue Mountains – he is known to have designed more than forty gardens in the Blue Mountains (Aitken & Looker 2002, p.559). Sorensen's Nursery at Leura was also one of the main sources of cool climate trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants in the area and the author remembers many happy visits to the nursery with his parents who maintained a long friendship with Sorensen, exchanging cards at Christmas time for many years after their garden was finished. The author's friend, Sydney architect and garden historian Howard Tanner recounts a story of similar visits with his own parents to Sorensen's Nursery. On one occasion his parents were discussing plants with the great nurseryman when another customer came up to them and asked Sorensen how much a particular plant cost. Sorensen later turned to Howard's parents and said “if he has to ask the price, he probably can't afford it!” Judging from the receipts for the author's parents' plant purchases, Sorensen's prices were certainly not cheap but the quality of the plants was high and keen gardeners will often pay to get the plants they want.

As Ratcliffe suggested, Sorensen's main input at *Whispering Pines* was to the rear of the house but he also had some input to the area immediately in front of the house and at its northern end, as evidenced in his letter dated 1 May 1956 in which he styles himself as ‘Consulting, Visualing, Landscape Artist’ (Figure 14). Garden historians find it extremely frustrating that Sorensen never committed his plans to paper but his invoices and letters to clients do give clues to his design intent which must be supplemented by analysis of surviving gardens.

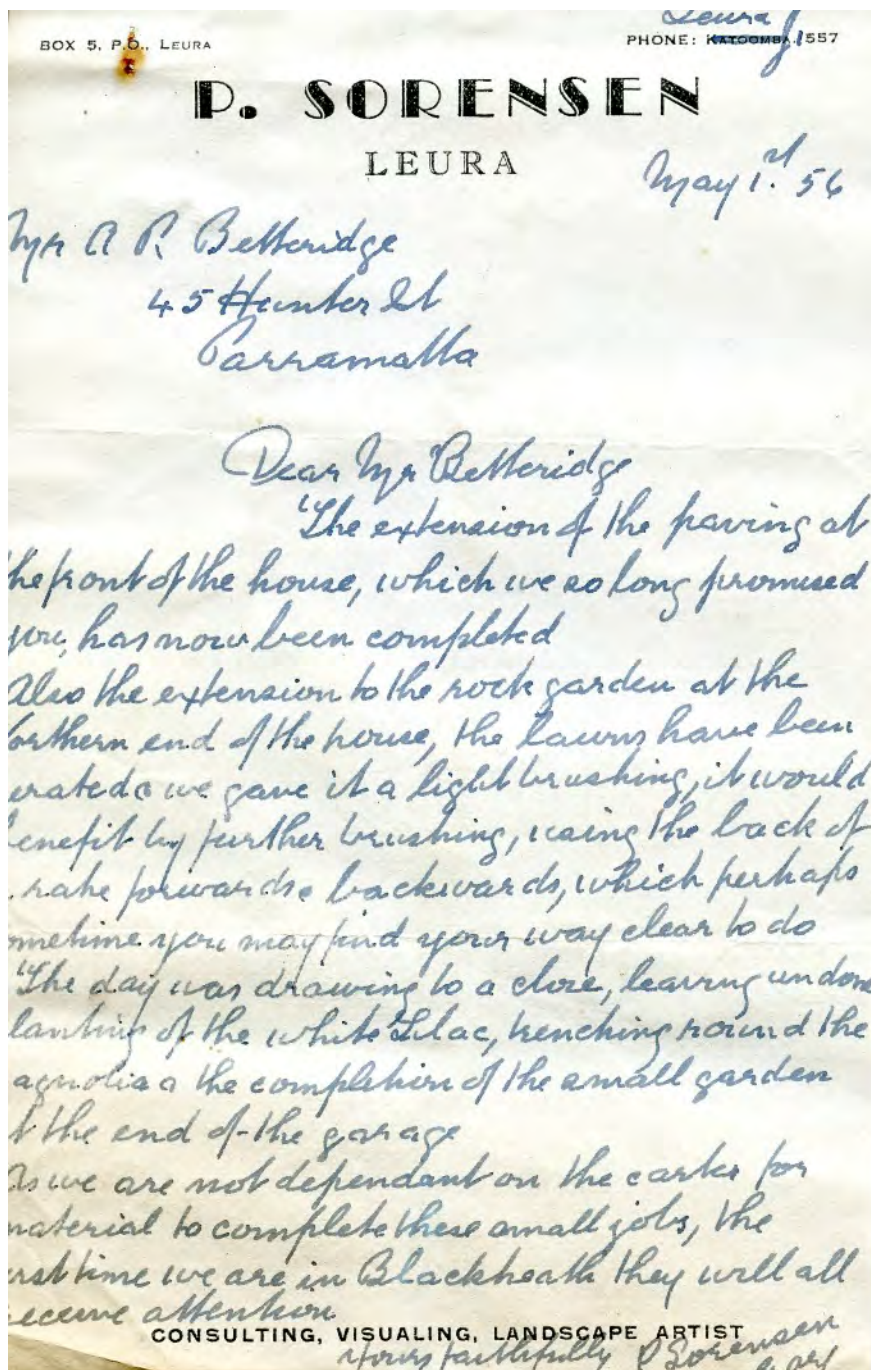


Figure 14. A letter dated 1 May 1956 from P. Sorensen, Leura 'Consulting, Visualing, Landscape Artist' to Mr. A.R. Betteridge, the author's father, advising completion of the paving along the front of the house, the extension of the rockery and completion of the small garden at the end of the garage. [Betteridge Family Collection]

The rear (west) boundary adjoining the lawn, with a return along part of the southern boundary, was planted with a row of mixed conifers, supplied in June 1955, predominantly *Pseudotsuga menziesii* (Douglas Fir) but also including golden cultivars of *Chamaecyparis* spp. including *C. obtusa* 'Crippsii'. At the narrow end of the triangular lawn was a specimen of Blue Spruce, most likely a cultivar of *Picea pungens*. This tree flourished initially but never achieved its expected growth, possibly due to

restrictions on its root system from one of the many stone 'floaters' in the garden. It eventually succumbed to insect attack.

Overhanging the steps from the back of the house up to the lawn was a pink flowering cherry. Along the eastern edge of the lawn was a row of three specimens of *Betula pendula* (Silver Birch) but these suffered from ongoing attack by borers. Specimens planted on the lawn included two dogwoods, *Cornus* 'Kousa' and *C. florida* 'Rubra' as well as a *Viburnum x burkwoodii* 'Chenault'. Two old grassrees *Xanthorrhoea* sp. were retained on the lawn. The garden bed along the eastern edge of the lawn was planted with yellow, mauve, blue and pink flowers including varieties of primulas, phlox, rosemary, carnations and irises (Figure 15).

Along the western end of the house and extending around the northern side of the house was a rockery made of the eroded ironstone rocks common on the more exposed parts of the upper Blue Mountains. Bobbie Betteridge was very fond of alpine plants and Sorensen's Nursery supplied plants such as primroses, gentians, alpine phlox and aubretia. Sorensen planted specimens of an ornamental dwarf conifer, probably a juniper cultivar, beside the front steps up to the terrace and at the northern end of the planter box. In front of the terrace and on the eastern side of the path paved with sandstone stepping stones which extended along the length of the front of the house were massed plantings of azaleas, particularly the hardy pink Kurume types. At the

northern and southern ends of the house were specimens of Mollis and Ghent azaleas in shades of orange, white and yellows.

Surviving records show that Sorensen's Nursery supplied considerable plant material for the garden until at least the middle of 1957 and probably the odd specimen after that. The author's parents also sourced plants from other mountain nurseries including Yamba Nursery, Leura (T. Shucksmith), The Pottery Patch



Photo: Bob Betteridge c.1950s

Figure 15. The author photographed circa late 1950s on the rear garden wall built to Sorensen's design. The vast majority of plants in the bed along the wall and in the rockery at far right were supplied by Sorensen's Nursery.

Nursery, Wentworth Falls (Dorothy H. Commins and Valerie T. Murray), Scrivener's Nursery at the bottom of Boddington Hill, Wentworth Falls and the Hollandia Nursery, Mt. Boyce (W.R. & P. Harris) as well as Rumseys in Church Street, Parramatta where Bob Betteridge worked as a pharmacist for over forty years. In later years Bob and Bobbie Betteridge continued to supplement the plantings at *Whispering Pines* with material from sources as varied as Coles at Katoomba to Libby Raines' nursery at Mt. Wilson.

In the early 1980s, Sorensen had been engaged by property developer Warren Anderson to make further changes to the garden which Sorensen had earlier designed for the Darling family at *Fernhill*, Mulgoa, the State significant property developed by Edward Cox as part of the Cox family's extensive pastoral holdings in the Mulgoa Valley. By then Sorensen was close to the end of his life but still a "man of impressive stamina" (Morris, 2012). At this time the author was working for the Heritage and Conservation Branch, NSW Department of Environment and Planning and met Sorensen again at *Fernhill* and remembers him dressed in jeans and jungle green army surplus shirt, up a ladder, waving his arms about and stating in his still broad Danish accent "We must seek to capture the Australian light!" Morris (2012) wrote "Sorensen excelled at pruning trees and, with theatrical gestures, extolled the virtues of bringing

out the 'spirit' of a tree. Stone walls and paving were features of his work; keeping within budget was not."

Aitken & Looker (2002, p.559) described Sorensen gardens as

"based on the idea of creating outdoor rooms defined by the use of large trees and shrubs or with walls and changes of level."

At *Whispering Pines* the house was quite close to the rear boundary and Sorensen created a secluded lawn area for display of specimen shrubs and took advantage of the change in level between the rear boundary and the back of the house to introduce the fine stone walling and paving that were trademarks of his work. *Whispering Pines* is an introspective garden, with many sheltered spaces and surprises as one moves through the landscape. Bob and Bobbie Betteridge and their children all helped to develop and maintain the garden over the years, with the construction of features such as ornamental pools, low stone walls and other landscape features. The author's brother, the late Warwick Betteridge, put in an enormous effort after his parents' deaths to maintain the garden. Over the past twenty years or so, the author's sister Roslyn Scribner has resided at *Whispering Pines* with her husband Ted Scribner and they have continued to care for the house and garden, regularly winning prizes at the local horticultural show for blooms from the garden.

The Future

The author's sister has retained the original exterior and interior colour schemes and most of the original fittings apart from replacement of items such as the original refrigerator. The recent replacement of the roofs on the house, carport and rumpus room has ensured the integrity of the interiors. The garden at *Whispering Pines* has suffered from a number of severe storms which have hit the upper Blue Mountains in recent years. A number of old pines have either come down in these storms or have been removed for safety reasons. Many of the surviving pines are over-mature and some paths are overgrown. When the house was built and the garden commenced, there was only one other house adjoining, and that only touching at the south western corner. The garden is now surrounded on three sides by residential dwellings squeezed onto the long narrow lots resulting from historic subdivisions. It is fortunate that Bob and Bobbie Betteridge had the ability and foresight to

acquire three lots and to site the house so that it still has an adequate curtilage around it. The author and his sister are discussing the conservation of the garden in ways that respect the original design intent but take into account the changes that have taken place both within the site and in its local context. The author is carrying out further research of the family archives, particularly in regard to the plant species used in the garden as many of the names have changed since the 1950s.

Pine Cabin (formerly *La Cabana*), *Lilly Pilly* and *Whispering Pines* are all included on the Australian Institute of Architects Register of Significant Architecture in NSW although there are some inaccuracies in the description of the properties which need to be corrected. *Whispering Pines* is private property and should be respected as such.

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SOLDIERS PINCH, BLACKHEATH: THE HISTORY OF ITS NAMING AND DEVELOPMENT.

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Abstract

Various versions of the highway across the Blue Mountains have been formed over a steeply sloping ridge between Blackheath and Mount Victoria, all with a severe bend known as Soldiers Pinch. The supposed alternative origins of that name are discussed as are the experiences of some 19th Century travellers heading west and down the slope. The various routes taken by successive road builders are shown on maps and aerial photographs but the exact route taken on the pioneer journey in 1813 remains uncertain.

Key Words: Soldiers Pinch, steep bend, Blackheath, Bathurst Road, Blue Mountains

INTRODUCTION

Under contract to The Roads and Transport Authority of NSW, Thiess Pty Ltd. completed the construction of a new segment of the Great Western Highway between Blackheath and Mount Victoria in June 2002 (RTA 2012) (Figure 1B) in order to avoid a notorious accident 'blackspot', a big bow in the road, which the

RTA called Soldiers Pinch (RTA 2005) (at c.MGA 468 785; LIC 2000).

[The use of the apostrophe (as in Soldier's) is no longer favoured by the NSW Geographic Names Board.]

Prior to that (Figure 1A), the descent to the north was a moderately steep curving section of a three lane highway that had an adverse camber which had been the downfall (literally) of several well loaded trucks heading towards Sydney. However, the section at the Blackheath end had also been problematical with several accidents occurring due to a surface that was particularly slippery when wet (in the vicinity of the sign that forewarns Sydney bound travellers of the approaching truck checking station).

Myth ?

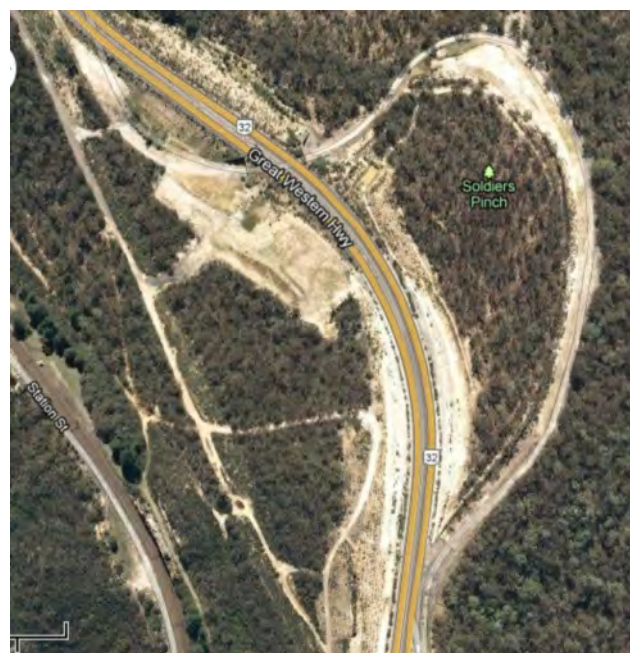
The origin of the name 'Soldier's Pinch' is probably the result of an apocryphal story that was repeated by several early travellers and circulated shortly after the road over the Blue Mountains road was first constructed. Thus in 1839 Louisa Anne Meredith (1844, p.54) wrote of her journey that



1943 AUSIMAGE © Sinclair Knight Merz Pty. Ltd.

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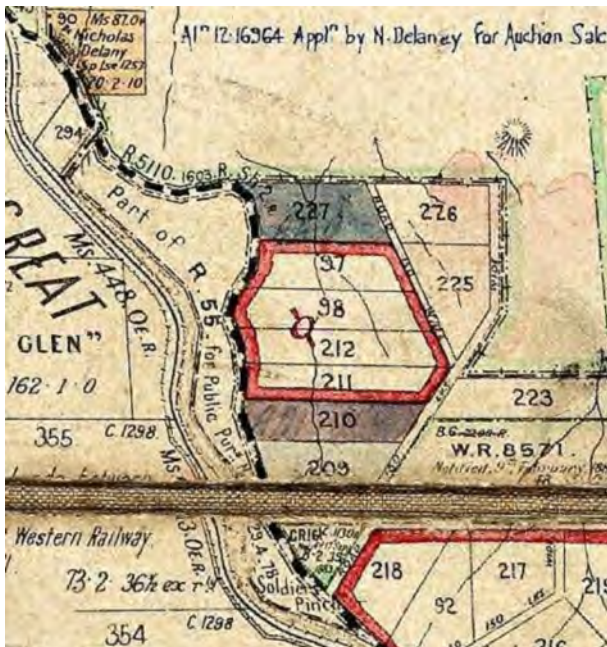


Map data ©2012 Google

Google Maps

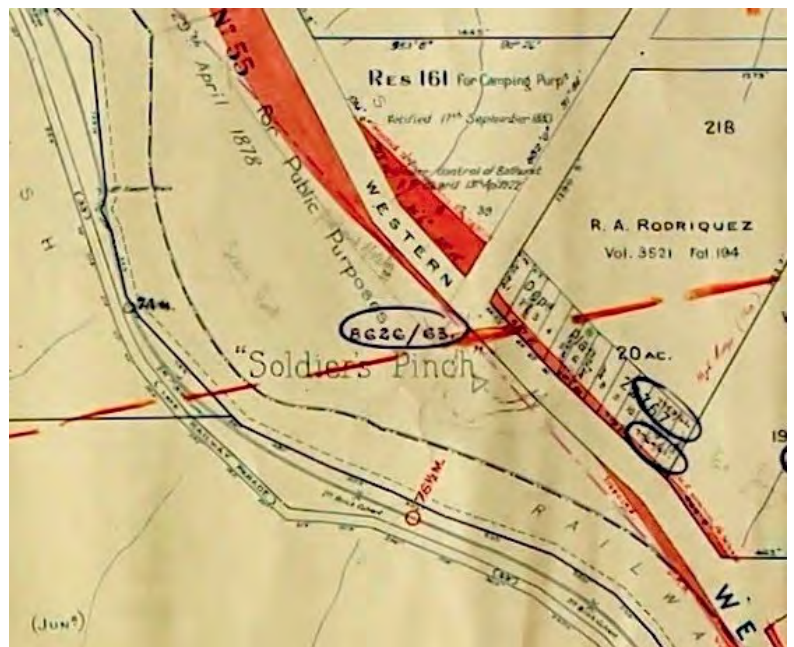
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Figure 1. A: 20th Century Road and **B:** Realignment in 2002.



© Land and Property Information (2012)

A: Parish of Blackheath Map 1909.



B: Robinson's Sheet 47 c.1915.

Figure 2. Early 20th Century Maps of Soldiers Pinch.

"In one place we came to an almost precipitous descent in the road, called 'Soldier's Pinch' or 'Pitch', most probably from some accident which has happened there."

However, Mrs. Sophia Stanger (1882, p.68) was more forthcoming by stating in July 1841

".. Soldier's Pinch which owes its name to the folly of a soldier, who, being called on to block the wheel, unwittingly placed his foot instead of a stone, which was, of course crushed to atoms."

In 1848 the writer of a travel description stated that the explanation current at that time was:

"A soldier – more probably some one known by the nick-name of The Soldier – was travelling with a heavily laden dray: in going up that *pinch* – an ugly one it is too – the driver requested him "to block up;" the poor man having no block to *block up* with, he put his foot behind the wheel, which immediately pinched it clean off; that is the reason why it has got such a strange name." (Anonymous 1848).

By 1860 the story had 'developed' for James Mudge wrote of the state of road from Bathurst in that year and stated:

"Then there is 'Soldiers Pinch' which derives its name from the fact that an unfortunate soldier was killed there while the road was being formed." (Mudge 1905; Low & Smith, 1993, p.10)

If Meredith's 1839 account is correct then at that time Soldiers Pinch was a very steep descent, and that corresponds to the explanation of Harry Peckman, the

renowned Blue Mountains horseman (started in 1863) who once related "We called a hill a 'pinch' in those days" (Low & Smith, 1993, p.11). That interpretation still exists for Woods (1999, p.149) gave the meaning as "a short but steep section of road".

But on the Parish of Blackheath Maps (7th to 10th editions inclusive (1909 (Figure 2A) - 1926), Robinson's "4 chains to an inch" map Sheet 47 (undated, c.1915; Figure 2B) and Coleman's 1946 map (Figure 3), 'Soldiers Pinch' is printed opposite Portion 218 and Carawatha Road at Mount Boyce c.MGA 469 771 (LIC 2000) in a relatively flat location. One definition is that

"the word 'pinch' is a geographical term describing a narrow passage." (Fox 1999, p.124; 2001, p.151) which tends to suggest that these maps are indicating such a feature at Mount Boyce - yet nothing there seems to warrant that term.

[Those placements of the name "Soldiers Pinch" have to have been deliberate for there is adequate space on the inside of the prominent bend that is on Figures 2A and 3 and which is to the north of Figure 2B on the adjacent Sheet 36.]

The location of Soldier's Pinch was the main topic of an unpublished paper by Cecil L. Atwell at the end of which he concluded;

"... I would say that the "Soldier's Pinch" never existed on any part of the Cox's Road, and was originally the name bestowed about 1830, along part of the new line of Bathurst Road, somewhere

between Mt. Boyce and Black Heath (*sic*).” (Atwell 1995, p.11).

But that is even further south towards Blackheath and between those two localities the ridge has very limited undulation and no "narrow passage" so nothing warranting a special name.

Clearly these three locations cannot all be correct and the balance of evidence is for the most northerly of them. Whilst the exact location of Soldiers Pinch, as so-called in early 19th Century, is uncertain (Karskens, 1988, p.142) there seems little doubt that it was on a very steep slope (base c.MGA 465 782 and high point c.MGA 466 781 (LIC 2000) - pers. comm. Brian Fox, 25 October 2012) so somewhere between the small track (at c.MGA 4649 7820) and the power transmission line track (at c.MGA 4660 7820), both of which are clearly visible on the orthophoto maps (CMA 1980). At most this is a slope 150m long. However it could originally have been slightly further west in the present position of the railway lines (indicated by the YELLOW line in Figure 4) and once (21.5.1897) termed “Soldiers Pinch Ballast Siding” (Wylie & Singleton, 1958).

This deduction accords with the statement made by Mrs. Sophia Stanger (1882, p.68) that in July 1841

"At the bottom of Soldier's Pinch is another cluster of huts belonging to the Iron-gang station."

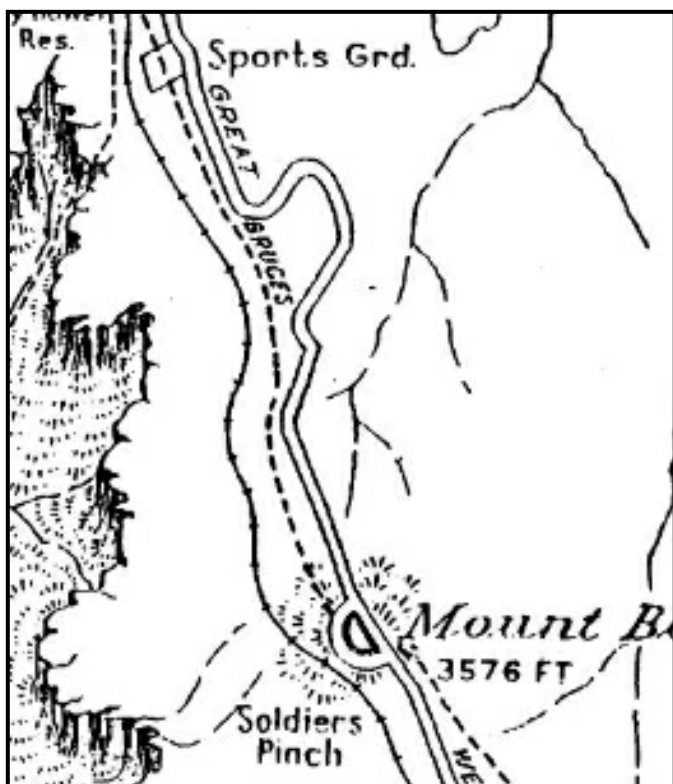


Figure 3. Part of Coleman's 1946 *Tourist map of Blackheath and Mount Victoria*.

Possibly that is Browntown Oval (opposite the label 'Sports Grd.' on Figure 3) or thereabouts and consistent with the location of the descent conjectured. A concrete marker post was installed at the western end of the oval in 1988 (a Bicentennial project), one of many placed as close as possible to the mile marks along the route surveyed by G.W. Evans in 1813 (Yeaman et al. 2009).

Routes down the ridge

The three explorers passed Soldiers Pinch on 28 May 1813 (Blaxland, 1823, p.17; Yeaman, 1976, p.17) and, although the exact route of the descent taken by them is not known, it is likely to have been very direct for time was pressing so possibly it was that shown in Figure 4 by the GREEN line. The track shown in Figure 5 was not cleared in 1813, but it indicates the kind of conditions that Blaxland, Lawson and Wentworth might have encountered.

[Atwell (1995, p.2) wrote about the accuracy of the type of compass that this party carried and stated: "From this I conclude that the true route taken by the Blaxland Expedition can not be plotted."]

Blaxland, Lawson and Wentworth were quickly followed on 24 November 1813 by G.W. Evans who had been sent to check their route and to survey a line for road construction (Evans, 1814, p.28). Most probably Evans would have deemed that direct route down the ridge too steep for horses to negotiate so he surveyed a curving but steep descent, close to the line taken by the Great Western Highway prior to the 2002 realignment but tighter (Karskens, 1988, Fig. 53; Figure 6; the BLUE line in Figure 4).

In the next year Cox built the first 'cart road' (Karskens 1988, p.22) and his gang got to the vicinity of Soldiers Pinch on 28 October 1814 (Cox 1815, p.52; Yeaman, 1976, p.17) but Evans' proposed route was not followed exactly (Karskens 1988, p.21) as Macquarie had given Cox permission to

"make any occasional deviation therefrom" (Karskens 1988, p.17)

and he tried

"to cut off over long or steep sections (for example at Caley's Repulse and Soldiers Pinch)." (Karskens 1988, p.19).

There are some who think Cox constructed his road along the route which was subsequently surveyed by McBrien in 1823; this was re-computed and plotted in 1986 (Karskens, 1988, p.55) and shown to be essentially the present dirt track with a left hand hairpin bend (Figure 6; Karskens, 1988, p.79, Fig. 53; the RED line in Figure 4) that is considerably tighter than Evans' line of descent but less steep. However

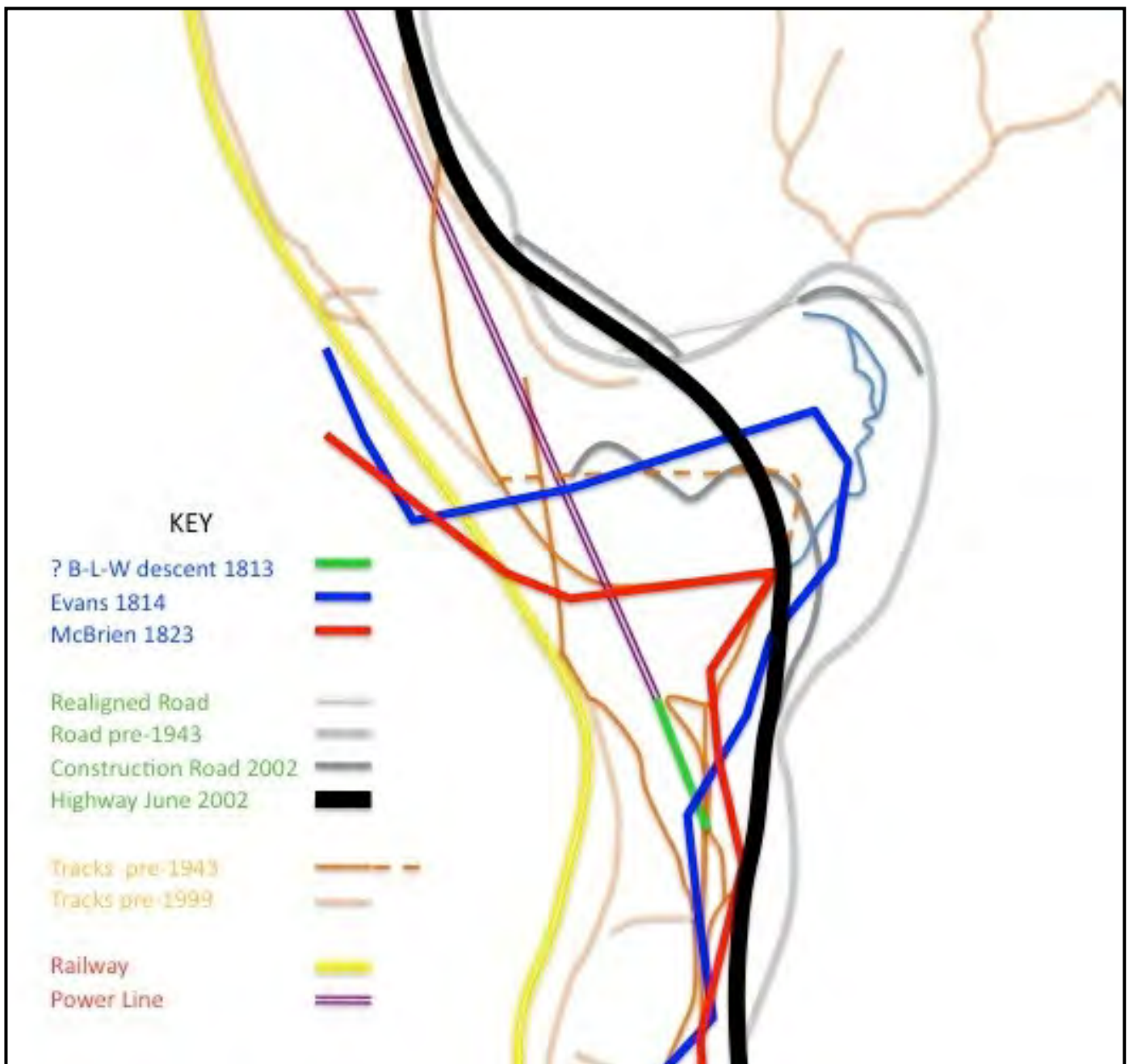


Figure 4. Composite map of tracings from 1943, 1999 (infra-red) and 2011 aerial photographs. Lines surveyed by Evans and McBrien were traced from Karskens (1988, Fig.53). The pale blue lines are rough tracks most clearly seen on the 1999 infra-red aerial photograph (Figure 15).

the road made by Cox was an evolving route, and Atwell (1995, p.3) wrote:

"By the time McBrien did his survey ... Lieutenant Lawson ... had had many changes made to the route of the original Cox's Road."

But no record is known of any changes supposedly ordered by Lawson in the vicinity of Soldier's Pinch. Atwell deduced that McBrien used a prismatic circumferenter readable to fractions of a degree but the accuracy would not have been comparable to that of modern day instruments. However the plotted route is likely to have been close to, but not necessarily exactly the same as, the road that McBrien surveyed.

The road work done by Cox and his team was checked by Governor Macquarie (Antill, 1815, pp.87 & 97; Yeaman, 1976, p.17) who came through the area of Soldiers Pinch on 29 April and 18 May 1815, but neither he, nor his companions, made specific reference to any difficulties with the road at this point.

When in 1839 Louisa Anne Meredith (1844, p.41) described Soldier's Pinch

"It was a mass of loose stones, continually rolling from under the horses' feet, and so steep as to be very fatiguing even to walk down, ..."

and Mrs. Sophia Stanger (1882, p.68) wrote of her 1841 encounter



Photo: Peter Rickwood, 2007.

Figure 5. Soldiers Pinch 2001 c.MGA 4655 7815.

"It was late one evening when we began to descend Mount Victoria. At its top there is a very sudden and awkward hill, called Soldier's Pinch, ...".

The only known contemporary image of this location is a rather faint pencil sketch by Conrad Martens (1840) (Figure 7); it appears to depict two men seated at the crest of a bend in the road so that would correspond to the route that Louisa Anne Meredith had taken in 1839. The caption (oblique in the lower left corner) to this may be the first use of 'Soldiers Pinch' in print, but it seems to be directionally inaccurate for the view is to the west with Mount Piddington being on the right hand side.

The very angular bend at Soldiers Pinch was surveyed by William Romaine Govett in 1831 and plotted on his map (Figure 8), so probably it was created in the 1820s yet it is not shown on Mitchell's 1827 map although the scale used in the latter might have prevented the inclusion of such detail.

Matters were complicated by the visit of Thomas Mitchell in 1845 following which he ordered a

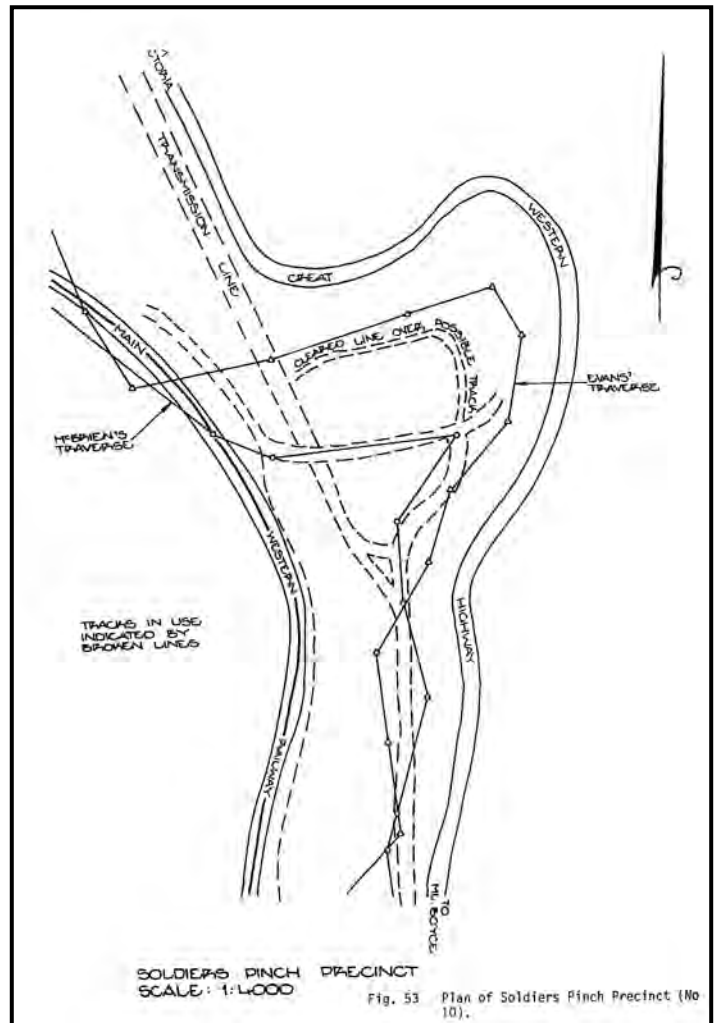


Figure 6. Soldiers Pinch (Karskens 1988, Fig.53).

realignment (Karskens 1988, pp.51, 78); on his map (Figure 9) the bend has the same angularity as Govett surveyed but in addition there is a broken line for the desired detour which would have been a direct descent. Atwell (1995, Fig.7) showed part of Mitchell's bypass as being equivalent to the southern solid BROWN line in Figure 4 labelled 'Tracks pre-1943'. On 20 December 1847 Captain Bull reported that his team was building that section of road (Karskens, 1988, p.51) and later it was confirmed that "Captain BULL turned the road to avoid the Soldier's Pinch between Blackheath and Hartley, ..." (Anonymous 1851).

However the exact location of Bull's construction is not known; perhaps it was that which Melville (1939) marked as 'Original Road' (Figure 11) although that would seem to be too straight and does not correspond to any known track and is at a different angle to that shown on the Parish of Blackheath map, 13th edition (1984) (Figure 15). One existing track crosses about a third of the way across the loop, and Karskens (1988, Fig.53) indicated that it might extend to two thirds of the distance, but not the whole way to the north side.



Figure 7. Conrad Martens' pencil sketch "Bathurst Road from Soldiers Pinch looking South".



State Records plan 3685

Figure 8. Soldiers Pinch (Govett 1831).



Figure 9. Mitchell's 1845 realignment proposal.



Figure 10. Part of the survey made by Horace Charlton (1849).

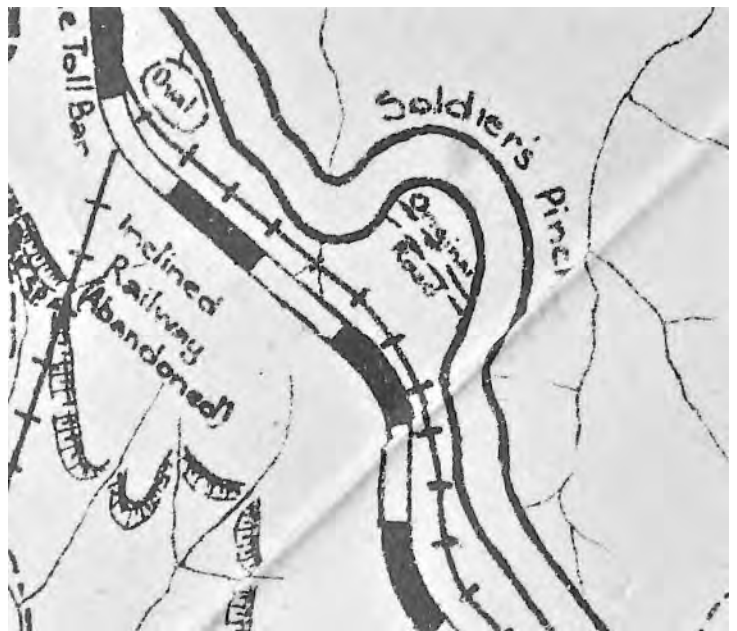


Figure 11. Part of a map by Nin Melville (1939).

The part of the Bathurst Road near Soldiers Pinch was surveyed again in 1849 (Charlton 1849; [Figure 10](#)) and on his plan Horace Charlton marked the 'Soldiers Pinch Bridge' in a position that today is close to the entrance to Browntown Oval and about 30 metres on the eastern side of the present Great Western Highway. That corresponds to about the north western end of the straight section of road shown in DARK GREY on [Figure 4](#). During a site inspection remnants of old road surfaces were found and the narrow stream channel that had to be bridged; the slopes on the road leading to that bridge would have been fairly steep. Today the Great Western Highway is on an embankment that towers over that channel.

"By 1862 very little of the original Cox's Road was still in use, ..." (Karskens, 1988, p.51)

and

"Cox's Road ... in the Soldiers Pinch section ... was cut off by the new highway by 1862" (Karskens, 1988, p.57).

That date is curious for only two years later, on 1 September 1864, the Department of Public Works issued an advertisement for tenders for two contracts for work to be done on the Great Western Road (Holroyd 1864a). Seemingly that advertisement was only partly successful for a month later one of those contracts was re-advertised as

"Contract on the 2nd District, Great Western Road, viz.:— No. 8-64.—Soldier's Pinch." (Holroyd 1894b).

Neither the plan nor specification of what was to be done have been found, and the outcome is unknown,

but that work may have been completed late in 1864 or early 1865.

A bend at that location is marked on Du Faur's (1877) map which is hardly surprising for it has in its title:

"The Natural Features have been taken mainly from Plans and Sketches made by M^r Surveyor Govett in and about the Years 1831-2."

However the shape of the bend that Du Faur drew ([Figure 12](#)) is less angular than on Govett's map so in that interval of nearly half a century the road seems to have been modified - indeed it would be remarkable if it had not.

Road changes are well recorded on Parish maps but unfortunately a complete set of the Parish of Blackheath maps has not been located, the first and second editions being amongst those missing. However, the 3rd Edition (1890) ([Figure 13A](#)) (thin LIGHT GREY line in [Figure 4](#)) displays a further reduction in the angularity of the bend shown in [Figure 12](#). The 4th Edition (1892) and the 5th Edition (189?) have not been located but the 6th Edition (1899) reveals another change in shape of that road bend that is essentially the same as shown in the 7th Edition (1909) ([Figure 13B](#)) so it was effected in the last decade of the 19th century. That 1909 shape was retained in the 8th Edition (1915) and 9th Edition (1920) maps but in the 10th Edition (1926) ([Figure 13C](#)) the road was plotted as looping more tightly at its NW corner (thick LIGHT GREY line in [Figure 4](#)). That tighter shape is puzzling for it seems retrograde and the dating of that 10th edition Parish Map is also curious for the plan for that realignment was not

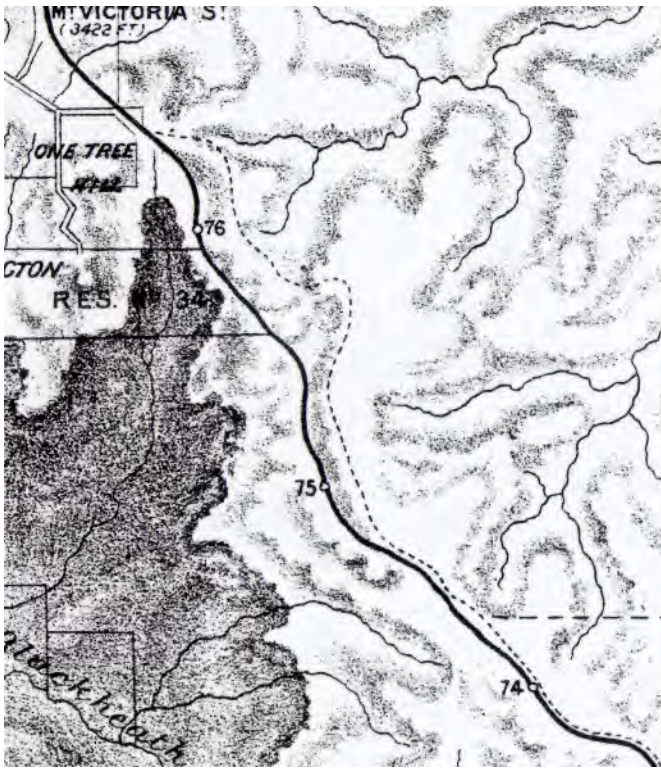


Figure 12. Soldiers Pinch (Du Faur 1877).

approved until 27 May 1927 (Hansen 1927), then notified on 3 June 1927 (Horsington 1927, p.2711), and dedicated and gazetted on 13th January 1928 (Bruxner 1928, p.133) so the work was most probably done late in 1927.

It is known that an adjustment to the Soldiers Pinch bend was made in mid-1900 (Anonymous 1900) and it may well have caused the undated realignment shown by a DARK GREY line in Figure 4 that became a construction road in 2002.

Thereafter that alignment of that bend appears to have been kept until the highway bypass (Figure 14) was constructed in 2002 (BLACK line in Figure 4).

But note that on the coloured version of the 13th edition (1984) (Figure 15) there are two nested bends and part of a third; those extra roads are not on the 12th edition (1971) map. Also sketched across the innermost loop on the 13th edition (1984) is a NW-SE track that is not seen in an aerial photograph (Figure 16).

Road Naming

From 1876 this major route to the west was known as the Main Western Road (Deering 1876) and later as the Main Bathurst Road (Batt, Rodd & Purves 1890) although often it was referred to as the Great Western Road (Macquarie 1822, p.696) or the Bathurst Road (Darling 1829a,b).

Summary

Figure 4 brings together these various surveyed routes, roads, tracks, railway and power lines. It is suggested that in 1813 Blaxland, Lawson & Wentworth would have taken a direct descent down the ridge such as is now beneath the power line (Figure 5 and shown by the GREEN line in Figure 4); if not there then it is likely to have been a short distance to the west but it would have had a similar character. The route planned by Evans in 1814 (BLUE line in Figure 4) was often eschewed by Cox and he made his road along the route confirmed by McBrien (RED line in Figure 4); it made a tight turn to the west part way down the slope.



© Land and Property Information (2012)

A

1890 3rd Edn.



© Land and Property Information (2012)

B

1909 7th Edn.



© Land and Property Information (2012)

C

1926 10th Edn.

Figure 13. Parts of Maps of the Parish of Blackheath.



© Land and Property Information (2012)

Figure 14. Aerial Photograph 2012, ex SIXMaps.



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Figure 15. Parish of Blackheath 1984 13th Edn.



LEP 2002

Blue Mountains City Council © 2009

Figure 16. Infra-Red Image December 1999.

Soldiers Pinch sequence of routes (refer to [Figure 4](#)).

No.	Date	Notes
1	1813	Blaxland - Lawson - Wentworth (inferred route - GREEN line)
2	1814	G.W. Evans surveyed route (BLUE line).
3	1823	McBrien's surveyed route which is that inferred to have been made by Cox (RED line).
4	pre-1831	a very angular bend was surveyed by Govett so it must have been made in the late 1820s (? broken BROWN line).
5	post-1845	easing of the gradient instructed by Mitchell (1827). Atwell (1995, Fig. 3) plotted this as a very straight route being roughly equivalent to the southern BROWN and GREEN lines and the parallel PURPLE lines.
6	1849	Charlton (1849; Figure 10) surveyed a 'smooth' bend, the southern and eastern parts of which are similar to those of the thick LIGHT GREY line. Note that on his plan he also marked a bridge across a gully at a position that is to the SE of the entrance to Browntown Oval and near the NW end of the straight section of the 2002 construction road (DARK GREY line).

Hereabouts in the time line the history becomes murky for, as has been explained above, it has been stated that by 1862 Coxs Road had been cut off (Karskens, 1988, p.57) yet in September 1864 the Department of Public Works (Holroyd 1894a) advertised for tenders for a contract to do work there.

7	pre-1890	a gentle curved route is recorded on the 3rd Edition Parish of Blackheath Map (thin LIGHT GREY line).
8	1900	In 1900 the curve was made tighter on the northern side as plotted on the 7th Edition (1909) Parish Map (DARK GREY line) and it is similarly shown on the 8th (1915) and 9th (1920) Editions of the Parish Map.
9	pre-1926	the curve was adjusted again as shown on the 10th Edition of the Parish Map (thick LIGHT GREY line) and maybe that is what was recorded on the 1943 air photo and is regarded as the old Great Western Highway. But the construction date has not been established more precisely than between 1920 and 1926 when the plan was sent by the Main Roads Board to the Blackheath Municipal Council (Anonymous 1926).
10	2002	Forewarning of an intended major upgrade was given in May 2000 (RTA 2000), it was followed by notification that work would commence in April 2001 (RTA 2001) and the realignment was completed by June 2002 (RTA 2008, p.3) to provide the current divided three lane section of road (BLACK line).

Three railway routes are known:

a	1867	Opened on 1 May 1868 (? the southern PINK line labelled 'Tracks pre 1999')
b	1897	Re-grading deviation on S side; opened 16 September 1897.
c	1902	Line duplication yielding the route taken today (YELLOW line); the high level line on the eastern side was closed on 16 October 1902.

Abbreviations

AO	Archives Office - now NSW State Records
CMA	Central Mapping Authority of New South Wales
LEP	Local Environmental Plans
LIC	Land Information Centre
MGA	Map Grid of Australia
RTA	Roads and Traffic Authority (<i>NSW</i>)

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WATERING THE GEE-GEES: A SURVEY OF BLUE MOUNTAINS HORSE TROUGHS, PART 2.

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Abstract

In Part 1 of this article (Low, 2015) I began a survey of the old horse troughs still surviving in the Blue Mountains City Council area arguing that, though generally now redundant and disregarded, they are valuable reminders of a time when the horse was central to community life and of the rise in consciousness that has led to the modern animal welfare movement. Part 1 covered the geographic area between Glenbrook and Wentworth Falls, Part 2 continues the survey onwards from Wentworth Falls to Mount Victoria and Bell. As before, each entry includes the trough's location and present condition, historical context and, where appropriate, any significant associations it has to specific people.

Key Words: horse troughs, water, animal welfare, wayside features, Bills, Goyder, Marr, Blue Mountains

Introductory Note

Readers are referred to the initial paragraphs of Part 1 (Low 2015) for the rationale and organisation of this two part paper. Here it suffices to explain that Troughs No.1 to No.5 were described previously and to avoid confusion the numbering has been continued so here it commences with No.6. Figures 1 to 17 were the numbers used for illustrations in Part 1 - here they have been started at Figure 21 to signify that they relate to part 2.

Trough No. 6: Leura (Figures 21 & 22).

Location: At the *Meeting of the Waters* on the north side of the old Chelmsford Drive, west of the arch bridge and opposite the lower park (formerly the men's section of the old Katoomba Swimming Baths).

Description & Condition: This small water trough has been hewn from the natural sandstone and was designed to tap the natural water flow before it channels under the road. The main bowl (Figure 21), measuring approximately 175 x 60 x 20 cm, is at ground level while, in a grotto-like cavity above there is a smaller bowl (Figure 22), measuring approximately 70 x 30 x 5 cm, probably intended for

human use. On last inspection (16 August 2016) both continue to fill with water and, despite some sediment and obscuring vegetation, are accessible.

History: In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century the *Meeting of the Waters*, with its cascades, waterfalls, walking tracks and picnic area, attracted hundreds of visitors, especially during the summer season. As early as 1902 there were complaints from holiday makers about the lack of good drinking water



Photo J. Low 2016

Figure 21. *Meeting of the Waters* trough, Leura (lower bowl).



Photo J. Low 2016

Figure 22. *Meeting of the Waters* Trough, Leura (upper bowl).

and calls from local carriage drivers for the provision of “a drinking-trough for horses”. In support, *The Mountaineer* newspaper declared that:

“We would like to see a natural spring tapped at the top of the falls.”. (Anonymous 1902b).

While the small trough at the *Meeting of the Waters* may have been constructed in response to this demand, its appearance could have waited until work on the Chelmsford Drive and the ladies and men’s swimming baths took place some ten years later; these were officially opened in December 1913 (Anonymous 1913b). The improvements of drive, bridge and baths incorporated sweeping curves into a design that accentuated the natural beauty of the place and into which the small drinking trough fitted snugly. The trough is not on any heritage listing.

Trough No. 7: Park & Main Streets, Katoomba (Figures 23 & 24).

Location: This trough, now in the Mount Victoria & District Historical Society Museum (Accession No. 0217) (Figure 23), was originally located at the intersection of Park and Main Streets in Katoomba.

Description & Condition: A covered, cast iron trough (184 x 39 x 37cm) with two drinking holes and the mark of the maker, Gordon Marr & Sons Ltd., Pyrmont, stamped on top. While there are signs of deterioration (rust, missing bolts etc.) it appears to be in generally good, though inoperative, condition.



Photo Keith Painter 2016

Figure 23. Katoomba Trough now in the Museum at Mt. Victoria.

History: This cast iron trough, installed at the corner of Park Street and Bathurst Road sometime between 1904 and 1910 (Figure 24), appears to have been the first Council sponsored trough in the town. As Katoomba grew in the latter part of the nineteenth century the proximity of this section of Bathurst Road (soon to be known as Main Street) to the railway station made it the early focus of the town’s commercial life. It was full of horse-related activity, with carriages and carts of all kinds coming and going

throughout the day, loading and delivering goods and collecting visitors off the trains. It is not surprising that a horse trough was considered necessary in this vicinity or that it’s siting and condition remained an issue of public debate.

Before the trough was installed sources of drinking water in the vicinity were limited. In early 1899 the licensee of the Railway Hotel had placed a trough in front of his premises opposite the station (Anonymous 1899), though how long it survived is unknown and, anyway, on its own it would not have been enough to cope with the increasing demand. The only alternative seems to have been a water hole in Railway Park (later known as Russell Hawke Park and destroyed during construction of the highway by-pass in the 1980s), a remnant of the earlier stone quarry. It, too, found the increasing demand difficult and suffered from over use and resultant issues of cleanliness. In 1902 it dried up and the press suggested that the town’s horse owners band together to get it “thoroughly cleaned out” (Anonymous 1902a). As a permanent source, it was unreliable and problems with it persisted even as a supplementary supply after the Bathurst Road trough had been installed.

When Frederick Charles Goyder, Katoomba’s first Mayor, died in January 1900 a committee was established to raise money for an appropriate public memorial and by the end of the year had announced its judgement that

“a horse trough of freestone and trachyte and lamp at the intersection of the Bathurst road and Katoomba street would be most suitable, and would be in accordance with the views of the late highly respected gentleman.” (Anonymous 1900b).

By the time the memorial lamp was unveiled in June 1901, however, the horse trough component had been dropped (Anonymous 1901b).

It was, nevertheless, clearly picked up again following a suggestion two years later for a similar lamp to be installed at the corner of Park Street and Bathurst Road (Anonymous 1902c, col.4) for, by 1910, both lamp and horse trough were *in situ* at the second intersection. The horse trough, however, was not the stone one of earlier conception but rather a cast iron model sourced from a Sydney manufacturer.

Though gaps in the contemporary newspaper record and in the KMC minutes make it difficult to determine the precise date of the trough’s (or indeed the lamp’s) installation, the fact that the trough’s manufacturer, Gordon Marr & Sons Ltd., was registered under that

name in 1904 and that the trough was referred to in a newspaper account of a runaway coach in December 1910 (Anonymous 1910), place its installation sometime between those two dates. It is also possible that the lamp was erected soon after the proposal was accepted by Council and that the trough was a later addition, possibly added following the establishment of a town water supply in 1907. Though the memorial was originally intended to mark the coronation of Edward VII (Anonymous 1902c), it soon came to be seen as a second memorial to F.C. Goyder. Both lamp and cast iron trough appear in a photograph by Harry Phillips dated ca.1910 (Figure 24).



Photo H. Phillips c.1910 [BMHS P566]

Figure 24. Trough at Intersection of Park & Main

Goyder's trough did not have an altogether happy life, its location becoming increasingly problematic. While the coach mentioned above narrowly averted a collision with the horse trough, a few months later another carriage was not so lucky. In April 1911 a

“coach was dashed into the water-trough ... upsetting the trough and severing the connecting water pipe”. (Anonymous 1911).

The trough again figured in a ‘traffic’ incident at the end of 1912 when a groom employed by local businessman Patrick Mullany lost control while exercising a racehorse and was thrown heavily as his mount “swerved to avoid collision with the watertrough (*sic*).” (Anonymous 1912).

Though, once again, the absence of KMC minutes for this period hinders specific dating, sometime during the next two years the cast iron trough appears to have been removed. In August 1914, a report appeared in the press of a proposal by Council for the

“removal of the lamp post, [no mention of the trough] and the provision of a water trough at the intersection of Main and Park streets.”

and tenders were called

“for the construction of a trough in accordance with a plan submitted by the Town Clerk. The new trough is to be circular and uncovered and the cost is estimated at about £25.” (Anonymous 1914).

When the new stone trough was installed the lamp was again incorporated into the design.

By the early 1920s, however, this replacement trough was also experiencing problems. Its “dirty state” was raised during a Council meeting in September 1923 and its contents described as more like

“a concoction of chop suey and billagong (*sic*) juice” (Anonymous 1923d).

When a columnist in the local press remarked in February 1924 that the trough

“looks as if it is only cleaned by Council’s officers on February 29 of each Leap Year.” (Anonymous 1924, col.4)

it was clear that little had changed during the intervening months. And, not only was the trough becoming an oft remarked upon public eyesore and a health risk to the horses that used it, but its pump was also malfunctioning.

“The flow is too slow to meet requirements and half the time the convenience is useless for thirsty horses” (Anonymous 1925a).

While these problems persisted, motor traffic, too, was increasing and it soon became obvious that public unsightliness, mechanical failures and equine health were not the only problems posed by the ‘new’ Goyder trough. It was, to put it mildly, awkwardly located and its fate was finally sealed in early January 1927 when a traffic accident involving the trough resulted in a cyclist breaking his thigh (Anonymous 1927a). Promptly, the Council moved in and demolished the old trough. Its stonework was crushed and sent for use in road-making, the site was tarred over and the lamp “which sat so proudly on its crest,” set aside to be erected elsewhere (Anonymous 1927b).

But that was not the end of the matter, for the removal of the trough and the subsequent tardiness of Council to honour its promise to erect another at the Cascade Street corner nearby upset the carters and carriage operators. Finding the Main Street trough had been removed, a local identity wrote an angry letter to the local press arguing that the cavalier manner in which the memory of the town’s first Mayor was discarded was bad enough but with his memory

“went the only small trough in this Municipality where Dobbin and his co-workers could get a drink.”

He further recounted how he had approached a Council employee about the matter and was told to “Let ‘em go to the pond” – meaning the dirty slush pool at the foot of the small park near the Court House. This has been tried but horses used to good treatment and clean water will not tackle the semi-stagnant slush, and, when they do, are sick for days after.” (Vanman 1927).

[When, a year or so later, the park was ‘renovated’ and became Russell Hawke Park the “slush pool” became an ornamental pond and probably off-limits to horses completely.]

Percy Tabrett, owner of a large coaching business in the town, urged the Katoomba Chamber of Commerce to lobby Council, “in the interests of humanity”, to expedite a replacement for

“the only available drinking trough [that] had vanished”. (Anonymous 1927c).

Again, when put on the spot, Council moved swiftly and as quickly as its predecessor had vanished a replacement appeared at the intersection of Main and Cascade Streets (Anonymous 1927d). A week or so later the *Echo*’s satirist, casting his eye over the whole saga, summed it up in a long piece of humorous verse (Double-Yew 1927).

The original cast iron horse trough that stood at the intersection of Park and Main Streets until ca.1914 had apparently been placed in storage by the KMC for, many years later, it was donated to the Mount Victoria & District Historical Society (est. 1966) by the Blue Mountains City Council. There are similar cast iron troughs, though by a different maker, at the Lithgow Showground and in the Bathurst District Historical Society. This Katoomba trough is not on any heritage listing.

Association with Particular People: Frederick Charles Goyder (1827-1900) (Figure 25) was born in Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire, England in 1827.

In 1856 he migrated to Australia where he settled in Melbourne, becoming a prominent and successful businessman in the hotel and sporting community, interests he had brought with him from England. For many years he ran the Victoria Hotel in Bourke Street where he ‘practiced’ as one of Melbourne’s early bookmaking identities and where a small rear bar of the hotel, known as ‘Goyder’s Lounge’, became a regular meeting place for the city’s racing men. In the early 1870s buying and selling horses became another of his business concerns when, for several years, he and a partner managed sales in Kirk’s Bazaar, the famous centre of Melbourne horse trading located

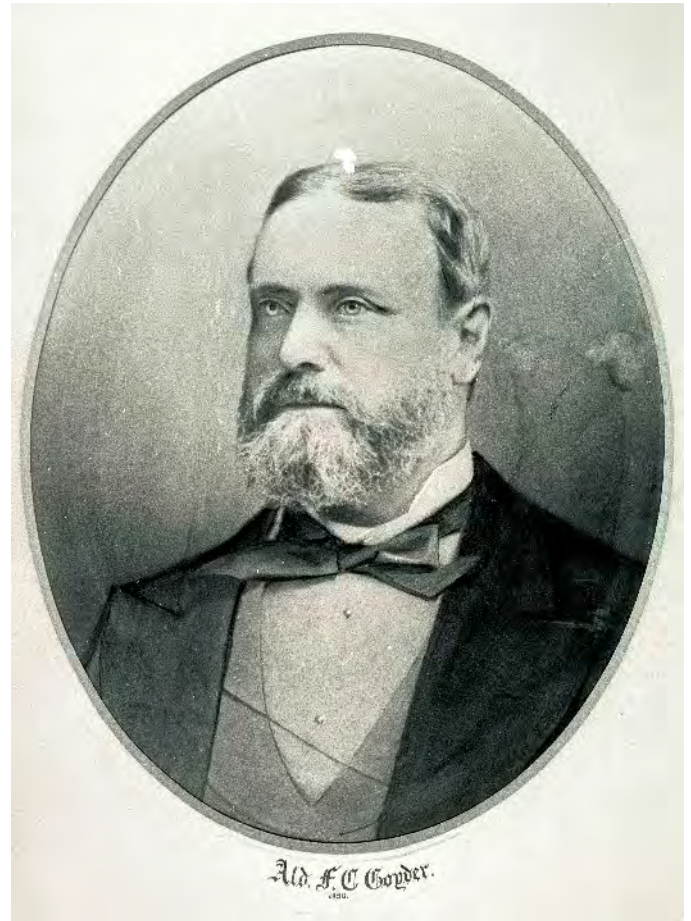


Photo BMHS P632.

Figure 25. Frederick Charles Goyder.

adjacent to his hotel (Anonymous 1871). Even as late as 1882, he was advertising to buy and sell

“by public or private contract all kinds of horse stock.” (Augur 1882, col.5)

at the Tattersall’s Horse Bazaar in Stephen Street, Melbourne. During his time in Victoria Goyder, himself, owned numerous racehorses, his most successful being *Sussex*, winner of the inaugural Grand National Steeplechase at Flemington in 1881 (Anonymous 1881a, col.4) and rated by many as one of the greats of the Australian turf.

Goyder’s career during this time, however, was not without controversy and his involvement in a number of racing-related ‘scandals’ landed him in court. Among these was an accusation of falsely and publically accusing a fellow owner of ‘pulling’ his horse in the Victoria Derby of 1859 (Anonymous 1859) and a charge of organising an illegal sweep on the 1881 Melbourne Cup (Anonymous 1881b). Each of these cases captured wide media attention, though in both instances the charges were dismissed.

In the early 1880s Goyder, now in his mid-fifties, sold his business and sporting interests in Melbourne and

cast his gaze north, investing in a sheep station in western NSW, on the Warrego River near Bourke (Anonymous 1890, col.1.). Though the railway was due to reach Bourke in 1885 and the future of the area seemed bright, the venture ended badly, his pastoral hopes killed off by drought. Again he looked elsewhere, this time to the Blue Mountains and a profession he knew, purchasing the Great Western Hotel at Katoomba in the latter half of 1885. With an eye to its image and with the permission of the Governor (one of the hotel's most prominent visitors), he re-named the hotel *The Carrington* and set about extensive additions and improvements, soon turning it into one of the most grand hotels in NSW. While its profitability was tempered by the depression of the early 1890s, its prestige remained high.

In Katoomba, Goyder quickly involved himself in community affairs. By December 1885 he was on the Katoomba Progress Committee (Anonymous 1885) and, during the next fifteen years, interested himself in a wide spectrum of town and district activities, including membership of the Cricket & Athletic Club, Recreation Reserves Trust, School of Arts and even a Katoomba Jockey Club, formed to establish a racecourse for the town. In 1890 he was elected to the new Katoomba Municipal Council and, as well as serving several terms as an alderman, was briefly the municipality's first Mayor. Following several years of debilitating ill-health, he died in January 1900 (Anonymous 1900a), in his seventy-second year, and was buried in Katoomba Cemetery. Goyder was survived by his second wife, Emily, three daughters and three sons. Of the various memorials erected in the years after his death only the small cast iron horse trough in the Mount Victoria museum survives. A small avenue in South Katoomba also bears his name.

Gordon Marr & Sons Ltd. was a Sydney firm of engineers and iron founders which operated from a factory on the corner of Jones and Miller Streets, Pyrmont up to the early 1920s when it relocated to Bourke Street, Waterloo. It was still in business there in the 1960s. The founder, Gordon Marr, was born ca.1840 at Fyvie in the North of Scotland and arrived in Sydney on the *Rifleman* in 1863 where he entered into a partnership in an engineering works. Originally in Clarence Street, the successful business soon outgrew its premises and moved to a larger site in Pyrmont. By the early years of the twentieth century, with his partners both departed, the firm was operating under his own name. Marr had married in 1867 and

in 1904 several of his sons entered the business necessitating a further (and final) re-registration as Gordon Marr & Sons Ltd. In private life Gordon Marr was an active member of the Highland Society and the Masonic Lodge. He died at his Woollahra residence in 1915 and was buried in Waverley Cemetery, his wife Sarah predeceasing him by a couple of years. He was survived by six sons and three daughters (Anonymous 1915; Marr 1862-1972).

Trough No. 8: Katoomba Showground (Figure 26).

Location: This trough can be found on the north-west (Orient Street) side of the Katoomba Showground, 183-187 Great Western Highway, across from the grandstand and near what is now the Men's Shed and separated from the Orient Street fence by a wooden storage 'container' (against which it sits).



Photo J. Low 2016

Figure 26. Katoomba Showground Trough.

Description & Condition: This is a basic, unembellished, uncovered concrete trough, measuring approximately 200 x 65 x 40 cm and supported on sloping ground by bricks at one end. It is no longer operational, the cistern having been removed, and on last inspection (16 August 2016), except for some dirt and leaf litter, was empty. Signs of neglect and 'wear and tear' to the concrete are apparent, with the corners especially badly chipped. A distinguishing feature is its body's beveled edges.

History: The creation of a Katoomba Showground with an accompanying trotting track occurred during the decade following World War I and, while rugby league was played on it from 1925 (Anonymous 1925b), it was not for another two years that the

grandstand and other associated improvements were completed (Anonymous 1928b). Horse-related activities – gymkhanas, trotting club meetings etc. – were to feature prominently in the ground’s use in subsequent years and when the first District Show on the new grounds took place in January 1928, impressive equine accommodation had already been provided in the form of twenty stalls

“constructed of magnificent posts of mountain ash ... with iron roof supported on sawn scantlings.” (Anonymous 1928a, col.5).

No mention was made of a horse trough, however, and while it is possible that its installation at the showground could have coincided with (or come soon after) these developments, the trough could equally have been an addition made any time during the next two decades. The mounted division of the Volunteer Defense Corps, for example, were using the ground during World War II (Anonymous 1944c) while, at the end of the war, a new Blue Mountains Trotting Club was established that initiated considerable improvements and began to organize successful meetings which drew people and horses from all over NSW (Anonymous 1945a,b). The trough may well date from this period. It should be noted, too, that its present location may not be its original one; it could well have come even from somewhere beyond the perimeters of the showground. Though the trough does not have an individual heritage listing, the Showground (and its accompanying amenities) is listed in the Blue Mountains City Council’s Local Environment Plan (LEP) as having local heritage significance (NSWOoEH 1999).

Trough No. 9: Victoria Street, North Katoomba (Figure 27).

Location: This trough is outside what used to be a small corner store, on the eastern side of Victoria Street near its intersection with Camp Street, North Katoomba.

Description & Condition: This is a basic, unembellished, uncovered concrete trough, measuring approximately 200 x 65 x 40 cm and supported level on a sloping street by a concrete slab. On last inspection (16 August 2016) there were signs of general distress and neglect – the rim especially is badly chipped - and the trough is no longer operational. It was filled with dirt, weeds and several hardy flowers perhaps surviving from its use as a ‘garden’ pot. Some remnant piping was still attached to the section once housing the cistern.



Photo J. Low 2016

Figure 27. Victoria Street Trough, North Katoomba.

History: The trough was clearly in existence by 1944 when the local newspaper reported it becoming the subject of a brief exchange at a KMC meeting in August of that year. Alderman Hodgson claimed that it was too high, provoking a response from the Mayor (Alderman Frelander) that he would instruct Council to make it lower “or raise the ground up a bit,” (Anonymous 1944b). One might conclude from this exchange that the trough had not long been in operation and the fact that the RSPCA had donated a concrete trough to the Blackheath Municipal Council (BMC) earlier in 1944 (State Records NSW 1944) suggests that KMC may also have been the beneficiary of that organization.

Sometime after it ceased to operate as a water trough it was converted into a “flower garden” and was still functioning as such in 2006 (pers. comm. Mrs. Evelyn Harvey 2006). The small general store appears to have closed around this time and when I visited the trough in 2007 the weeds had already taken over. The trough is not on any heritage listing.

Trough No.10: Railway Parade, Medlow Bath (Figure 28).

Location: This ‘Annis & George Bills’ trough is situated in Railway Parade, backing on to the railway fence opposite the entrance to Somerset Street, Medlow Bath.

Description & Condition: The trough is similar in size, structure and design to those at Glenbrook, Warrimoo and Wentworth Falls (Low 2015). It is made of concrete, measures approximately 240 x 40 x 40 cm, is supported on three concrete blocks and possesses the usual pediment section that includes the

inscription “Donated by Annis and George Bills Australia”. Like the trough at Wentworth Falls the concrete does not appear to have been painted and, on its right-hand side, it is accompanied by a small dog and cat trough, approximately 60 x 30 x 14 cm. A major difference with the other three Blue Mountains ‘Bills’ troughs, however, is the use of a terrazzo panel rather than a plain concrete one to carry the inscription. On last inspection (16 August 2016) there was water in the trough (though not in the dog/cat trough), the wall dividing off the uncovered cistern was still in place and the trough appeared to be in good condition and its surrounds clear of vegetation. The inscription to Annis and George Bills, however, was almost illegible.

History: Funded through the estate of businessman and animal welfare activist George Bills (Low 2015), it has not been possible to determine the date of this trough’s arrival in Medlow Bath nor if it’s present (seemingly ‘out of the way’) site is its original location. Long-time local resident John Pike remembers it being in its present position “by the mid-1940s” (pers. comm. J. Pike 27 July 2016) and while it is possible that it was received and installed around the same time as the three Blue Mountains Shire Council ones, the small embellishment of the terrazzo inscription panel does suggest that this is a distinct and, perhaps, earlier model. The trough is listed in the Blue Mountains City Council’s LEP as having local heritage significance (NSWOOEH 2000b).

Associations with Particular People: George and Annis Bills. For information on the Bills see Part 1 of this article (Low 2015).



Photo Peter Rickwood April 2016

Figure 28. Annis & George Bills Trough,
Medlow Bath.



Photo J. Low 2016

Figure 29. Neate Park Trough, Blackheath.

Trough No.11: Neate Park, Blackheath (Figure 29).

Location: This trough can be found against the railway fence in Neate Park, Great Western Highway (opposite 211 Great Western Highway) and near the statue of the bushranger and his horse.

Description & Condition: This is a basic, unembellished, uncovered concrete trough measuring approximately 200 x 65 x 40 cm and supported on two concrete blocks. At last inspection (16 August 2016) it was empty of water and no longer operational (cistern and connections removed) but was in good condition with minimal chipping. The area around the trough is kept mown and tidy.

History: The landscape through which the Western Road passes in the vicinity of Blackheath features a number of natural aquifers, making this one of the few spots on the upper ridge possessing permanent, accessible water. When Governor Macquarie travelled through the area in 1815 he noted “plenty of good water for Man and Beast” (Macquarie 1815) and later travelers would make good use of “several stock watering pounds” (Rickwood & West 2005, p.127) located along the road here. No doubt, too, there were early water troughs associated with the inn built in 1831 by Andrew Gardiner, the military stockade that operated during the 1840s and possibly others erected as the fledgling village of Blackheath evolved following the arrival of the railway in 1868.

The earliest horse trough I have been able to find any specific reference to, however, did not appear until after the establishment of the Blackheath Municipal Council (BMC) in 1919. Following a recommendation from the BMC Engineer in June 1922, a concrete horse trough was purchased from the

State Monier Pipe and Reinforced Concrete Works and erected “in front of the gardens on the main western road” in early 1923 (Anonymous 1923a; State Records NSW 1920-1925, Minute No.154, 6 February 1923, p.2). Its purchase appears to have been the culmination of advocacy led by Ald. Peter Sutton and proved to be

“a great boon during the hot spell, not only horses, but house-keepers availing themselves of its cooling waters. It seems likely to develop into the village pump.” (Anonymous 1923b).

Peter Sutton (1891-1970) had a long aldermanic career on the Blackheath Council, spanning the years 1922 to 1947 and serving as Mayor during 1930-1931. His interest in animal welfare was acknowledged in June 1923 when he was appointed an RSPCA Inspector (State Records NSW 1920-1925; Minute 29 June 1923, p.1.).

The trough’s location “opposite The Gardens” was soon considered unsuitable for, in early August 1928, Council resolved that it be “removed to another position” and a committee was formed to meet at the Gardens the following day to decide on its new home (State Records NSW 1925-1928). This decision to move the trough may have had something to do with the imminent erection of a “Soldiers Memorial Arch” at the entrance to the Gardens, though I have not been able to determine what resulted from the committee’s deliberations. If indeed the trough was shifted at this time it was certainly to another spot nearby on the Main Western Road for Ald. Sutton had to remind Council several times in the early 1930s

“to have the horse trough in the main highway cleaned and kept in good condition.” (Anonymous 1932, col.4; also see Anonymous 1934).

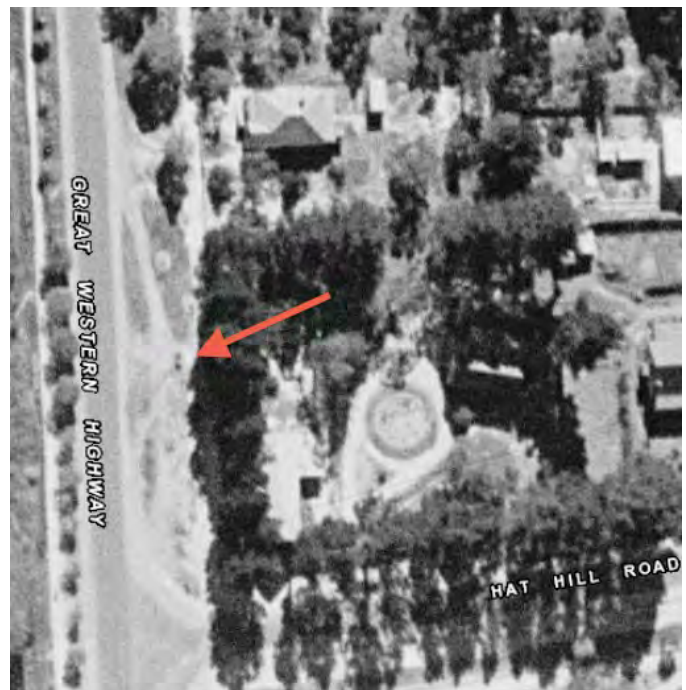
By the mid-1930s further difficulties emerged with the increasing motor traffic along the highway. When “Mr. George Bentley’s well-known grey saddle horse” (Anonymous 1936) was frightened while drinking at the trough and bolted into the path of an on-coming car, the dangers associated with the trough’s siting on the main highway became clear. The horse was so seriously injured that he had to be put down. However, when the trough was moved again (or ultimately disposed of) I have been unable to discover. Could it be the one now in Neate Park?

While this seems to have been the earliest concrete trough erected in Blackheath, the installation of others eventually followed. In April 1944, for example, BMC accepted an offer from the RSPCA to provide a

“suitable water trough ... complete with concrete stand and stop cock and valve”

on condition that the Council accept responsibility for its freight, installation and on-going maintenance (State Records NSW 1944). It was decided, reported the local newspaper, to locate it “at the top of Hill 33, near Whitley Park,” (Anonymous 1944a). Could this trough have found its way to Neate Park!

There is, also, photographic evidence of a horse trough outside St. Aidan’s church in 1943 (Figure 30) and a Heritage Inventory Sheet (NSWOoEH 2000a) records that in 1998 it was moved to its present site in Neate Park. But there is, in fact, conflicting information regarding this.. Local historian Geoff Bates, explained that its relocation from St. Aidan’s was the result of impending roadwork, but he said it took place around the time of the erection of the ‘Govett’ bushranger statue in 1974, a re-siting that was thought would enhance that sculpture’s equine associations (pers. comm. G. Bates 23 February 2008). Both of these accounts contrast with a further recollection that the trough had already been in Neate Park for some time before the bushranger statue arrived (pers. comm. W. Hanley 2016 in which he relayed the opinion of Dick Harris who with his brother Phil had installed the bushranger statue in 1974). Nevertheless, irrespective of which account is correct the question of whether any agreed former site was in fact the trough’s *original* site still remains. It seems an element of mystery will



1943 AUSIMAGE © Sinclair Knight Merz Pty. Ltd.
Figure 30. 1943 Aerial photograph of Blackheath. A horse trough (arrowed) is outside of St. Aidan’s Church with tracks to it from both directions along the Great Western Highway (SixMaps 2016).

continue to surround the origin of the Neate Park trough.

As a footnote to this, in 1989 the Blackheath District Progress Association made a recommendation to BMCC that the Neate Park trough

“be repositioned to Bundarra Street, Blackheath, near the RSL Hall and have a water service connected” (BMCC 1989).

This was, clearly, not taken up. The trough is listed in the Blue Mountains City Council’s LEP as having local heritage significance (NSWOoEH 2000a).

Associations with Particular People: While there is no evidence that the Neate Park trough was the original council-installed trough initiated by Ald. Peter Sutton in the early 1920s, it could still be appropriate to see it as bearing a memory of the man whose concern led to BMC supplying accessible, public water troughs for the local working animals.



Photo Marika Low 2008

Figure 31. Shipley Road Trough, Blackheath.

Trough No. 12: Shipley Road, Blackheath (Figure 31).

Location: Travelling out from Blackheath this trough can be found on the section of Shipley Road between its intersection with the Megalong Road and its meeting with the Old Shipley Road at the bottom of Glen Esk Hill. The trough is on the right-hand side of the road and, because of its tendency now to be concealed by vegetation, the best guides to its location are the numbered electricity poles – it is between poles 627 and 628.

Description & Condition: This trough, measuring approximately 125 x 35 x 17 cm, has been hewn out of the solid sandstone and is fed by a natural spring. It is not easily visible because of the vegetation growth

but, on last inspection (16 August 2016), was filled with clear water and in good, usable condition. It should be noted that, because of traffic on the narrow road, access can be dangerous.

History: The Shipley Road deviation on which the trough is located was opened to traffic in the first half of 1902, eliminating several steep sections that travelers were forced to navigate when using the old road. Though narrow, the road accommodated considerable and varied traffic, everything from pedestrians and riders to all manner of horse-drawn vehicles and bullock teams (Rickwood & West 2005, p.108). The ‘Drinking Trough’, hewn from the natural sandstone and

“utilising the water from the permanent spring, which, hitherto, had been running to waste.” (Anonymous 1922)

was an improvement proposed by the Shipley Progress Association in January 1922, along with a number of seats to be placed along the road for the benefit of walkers (Anonymous 1922; Rickwood & West 2005, p.110). The trough is not on any heritage listing.

Trough No. 13: Kanimbla Drive, Shipley (Figure 32).

Location: This trough is located on Kanimbla Drive (formerly Kanimbla Valley Road), on the left-hand side approximately 0.9 km from the junction with Mount Blackheath Road.

Description & Condition: Like the trough on Shipley Road (No.12), this too has been hewn out of the solid sandstone and is fed by a natural spring that continues to fill it with clear water. It measures approximately 200 x 120 x 65 cm and on last inspection (16 August



Photo Marika Low 2008

Figure 32. Kanimbla Drive Trough, Shipley.

2016) remains accessible and in usable and excellent condition.

History: Kanimbla Valley Road was constructed under the Unemployment Relief Scheme during the Great Depression. Work on the road began in October 1937 and the section on which the trough is located was completed by September the following year (Anonymous 1938). Workers were accommodated in camps and the trough was most likely constructed to provide them with a water supply in the first instance and then later to service those using the road when completed (Rickwood & West 2005, p.115). The trough is not on any heritage listing.



Photo Petah Low 2010

Figure 33. Former Mt. Victoria trough now at the Kanimbla Valley farm.

Trough No. 14: Mount Victoria Railway Station (Figure 33).

Location: Though originally located in the goods yard at Mount Victoria Railway Station, this trough is now operating on a sheep property in the Kanimbla Valley. It is not accessible to the public.

Description & Condition: This is a concrete trough of plain and functional design, manufactured by the Concrete Pipe Works of Richard Taylor Ltd. at Marrickville. It is approximately 240cm long, 65cm wide and 40cm deep, was in good condition and working order when I inspected it some years ago and, I understand, remains so.

History: With the arrival of the railway in 1868, Mount Victoria emerged briefly as a busy rail and road interchange where people, livestock and wagons interrupted their journeys to elsewhere. Outside the One Tree Inn, wrote one traveler in 1868,

“were congregated some thirty wagons ... Some were empty waiting the arrival of their loading by the train; some were loaded up with the goods which were about to be taken into the interior, and others still had their loads of wool and produce from the bush which they were waiting to discharge into the railway goods trucks. Around and about the wagons was a regular troop of horses.” (Anonymous 1868, col.2).

All these horses, like their handlers, required feeding and watering, accomplished with the help of a large timber trough outside the inn and makeshift canvas ‘mangers’ hung between the shafts of the wagons. What additional feed and water facilities, permanent or impermanent, existed to cater for the multitude of other transiting livestock (cattle, sheep etc.) in these early years remain un-recorded. And, even when the railway extended beyond Mount Victoria, travelling stock continued for many years to be a significant part of local station activity. For the period June 1903-June 1904, for example, three thousand, nine hundred and thirty two sheep, among lesser numbers of other livestock, were loaded at the Mount Victoria Railway Station (Anonymous 1904).

The early animal welfare legislation was generally weak on affirming a positive duty of care to ensure that an animal’s basic needs were satisfied (MacCulloch, 1994). That meant that, from the time animal welfare groups were established in the 1870s, the treatment of stock in transit was an issue that occupied much of their time and attention. As late as 1923 the Department of Railways was still being taken to task over the appalling conditions endured by animals being “cooped up, bumped, and waterless for days,” (Anonymous 1923c) during their journey to market. The resultant lobbying of authorities responsible for the work areas where such animals congregated – railway stations, wharves, markets etc. - and the gradual improvements to legal protection, created an increasing demand for water troughs to accommodate these areas, to which companies in the business of manufacturing cement products responded.

The date of its installation in the railway goods yard at Mount Victoria is not known, though it could have been as early as the 1920s. By the 1970s the trough had become redundant and was marked for removal. When he heard that it “was to be broken up and taken to the tip” a farmer, Ross Fragar, approached the station master and purchased it for the nominal sum of one dollar. He transferred the trough (which had been “mounted on 2 stands, each 2ft. high”) to his sheep property in the Kanimbla Valley on,

appropriately, ‘the horse’s birthday’, 1 August 1975 (pers. comm R. Fragar July 2016). The trough is not on any heritage list.

Association with Particular People: Little is known of the manufacturer, Richard Taylor, though he appears to have played something of a pioneering role in the cement and concrete industry in Australia. Indeed, in 1936, his Marrickville firm claimed the distinction of being

“the oldest and largest private concrete pipe and culvert works in New South Wales” (Marrickville Council 1936, p.179).

Apparently “English-trained” and with some experience in New Zealand, he arrived in Victoria in the 1880s and during the following decade, in association with Peter McCann, was involved in cement manufacture in Geelong and the nearby town of Fyansford (McKay 1986). By the early 1900s he had also become the Melbourne representative of the NSW-based Commonwealth Portland Cement Company (Taylor 1907; Anonymous 1920).

In January 1913 it was reported in the press that:

“Richard Taylor, Ltd. has been registered with a capital of £10,000 in shares of £1 each, and will acquire the New South Wales rights for the Kielberg Patent, as well as certain lands at Marrickville for the manufacture of concrete pipes.” (Anonymous 1913a).

Those “certain lands” were located at 46-72 Edinburgh Street, Marrickville and, by 1927, as well as pipes Taylor’s works were turning out box culverts, gutter bridges, culvert covers, tanks, slabs and, of course, horse and cattle troughs and were advertising their role as

“Contractors and Suppliers to Leading Municipalities, Shires, Surveyors, Estate Agents and Contractors” (Marrickville District Hospital 1927, p.48).

The company operated at the Marrickville site until its closure in the early 1940s (pers. com. C. Meader, Marrickville Council’s historian, 26 April 2010).

Today, few troughs manufactured by Richard Taylor’s company seem to have survived and even in the suburb where the business was located none now exist. Though there may be more, I know of only two other Taylor troughs: one on Clark Road at Anderson Park, North Sydney & one in the tip at the Royal National Park in Sydney’s south.

Trough No. 15: Berghofer’s Pass, Mount York (Figures 34 & 35).

Location: This trough is located on the old Berghofer’s Pass (now a walking track), access to which is on the left hand side of Mount York Road about 1km from its intersection with the Great Western Highway. Proceeding down the Pass, the water trough can be found on the left of a sharp bend not long before arriving at the boundary marker between the Blue Mountains and Lithgow Council areas. A clear wooden signpost marks its presence.

Description & Condition: This is another water trough hewn out of the solid sandstone and fed by a natural spring that keeps it filled with clear water. It measures approximately 97 x 42 x 25 cm and, on my last inspection (16 August 2016), remains usable, with clear access and in excellent condition. There is also a smaller cup-like bowl (approximately 20 x 20 x 10 cm) hewn at the front right.



Photo J. Low 2007

Figure 34. Trough on Berghofer’s Pass, Mount Victoria.

History: Berghofer’s Pass was constructed as a direct result of the arrival of the motor car, early models of which found difficulty with the steep grades of Victoria Pass. Its construction was largely at the instigation of the remarkable early Blue Mountains resident and community leader, John William Berghofer (1840-1927), first President of the Blaxland Shire Council and owner of *Rosedale* at the foot of Victoria Pass. His pass was begun in 1907 and opened in 1912 and its easier grades made it the preferred route on and off the western escarpment until motor cars became more powerful and improvements to Victoria Pass were effected in the 1920s. It finally closed in 1934 and was re-opened in more recent times as a walking track. The stone trough would not only

have satisfied the thirst of human and animal traffic using the pass but, most probably, also the demands of many passing motor vehicles. Individually, the trough is not on any heritage list though Berghofer's Pass as a whole is listed in the Blue Mountains City Council's Local Environment Plan (LEP) as having local heritage significance (NSWOoEH 2008b).

Association with Particular People: Though not (as far as is known) specifically associated with John William Berghofer, the trough is an integral part of the pass that he initiated and that bears his name. Indeed, members of his family regard it as significant for on the rock wall to the right of the trough is a small memorial plaque to the memory of his great grandson, Cyril 'Bruce' Parker (1922-2004) who claimed this as "His Chosen Resting Place" (Figure 35).



Photo J. Low 2016

Figure 35. Plaque accompanying the trough on Berghofer's Pass, Mount Victoria.

Trough No. 16: Water Trough Hill, Bell (Figure 36).

Location: This trough can be found by travelling for about 3km east along the Bells Line of Road from its intersection with the Darling Causeway (or, alternatively, 4.5km west from the Mount Wilson turn-off) to the eastern base of Water Trough Hill (WTH). Here a remnant section of an earlier road veers off on the southern side of the current road and passes along the southern edge of WTH before rejoining the present road a kilometre or so further west. By walking west along the old road (in process of being reclaimed by nature and damp in parts) the trough can be found about 150m in on the right hand side. It is easily missed, however, being somewhat hidden by growth and the site can be a bit wet and boggy.



Photo Peter Rickwood 2016

Figure 36. The Bell Trough, Water Trough Hill, Bells Line of Road.

Description & Condition: The trough has been cut out of a natural sandstone shelf about 60cm above the ground, is fed by a permanent spring and is approximately 85cm in length, 52cm wide and 9cm deep. The date 1894 is carved into the rock face beneath the pool. At my last inspection on 12 April 2016 it was in good, serviceable condition, filled with cool clear water.

History: Bells Line across the Blue Mountains into the Vale of Clwydd, though following the route of an already established Aboriginal pathway, was 'discovered' in 1823 by Archibald Bell Jnr. and provided access to the west for travelers and stock from the Windsor and Richmond districts. Crossing to the north of the Grose Valley, it offered an alternative to the older line (the Western Road from Penrith) that followed the more southerly ridge. The earlier section of Bells Line on which the trough is located (also possessing good examples of dry stone walls, rock surfaces etc.) was by-passed, probably during the later major road improvements that began in 1939 under an unemployment relief scheme and continued during World War II and into the post-war

period (Anonymous 1950). The origins of the trough, though dating from 1894, are unknown. It is possibly the

"pool by the roadside, much patronized by horses and dogs"

mentioned in the account of a trip from Blackheath to Mount Banks published in the *Mountaineer* in 1901 (Anonymous 1901a). The trough is listed in the Blue Mountains City Council's Local Environment Plan (LEP) as having local heritage significance (NSWOoEH 2008a).

Conclusion:

If nothing else, I hope this survey of the surviving horse/water troughs in the Blue Mountains, an on-going project, has demonstrated the importance these unassuming relics of an earlier age can have in enhancing our experience of community. They are the bearers of memories and lost histories, they speak of the changes in our work-a-day world and of enduring values of respect and compassion, and as such are worthy of our attention and preservation.

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Abbreviations:

BMC	Blackheath Municipal Council
BMCC	Blue Mountains City Council
BMHS	Blue Mountains Historical Society Inc.
KMC	Katoomba Municipal Council
LEP	Local Environment Plan
n.d.	no date
NSWOoEH	NSW Office of Environment and Heritage
pers. comm.	personal communication
RSPCA	Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
WTH	Water Trough Hill

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SANDSTONE CAVES IN THE BLUE MOUNTAINS: THEIR EUROPEAN CULTURAL HERITAGE

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Abstract

The concepts of place, space and landscape are discussed in constructing European cultural perspectives of sandstone caves in the Blue Mountains, of which nearly 400 are known, mostly named historically. Of minor significance individually but noteworthy in their totality, examples of their aesthetic, historic, scientific, social and spiritual values are described. The tangible European historical heritage is scattered among numerous sources, but much remains intangible. The caves are worth celebrating and their history recorded, not merely as natural features, but primarily as places and spaces connecting with human life, enlightenment and endeavour.

Key Words: caves; sandstone; cultural; place; European, Blue Mountains

INTRODUCTION

"... although we are accustomed to separate nature and human perception into two realms, they are in fact indivisible. Before it can ever be a repose for the senses, landscape is the work of the mind. Its scenery is built as much from strata of memory as from layers of rock. . . .(it is) a way of looking; of rediscovering what we already have, but which somehow eludes our recognition and our appreciation." (Simon Schama 1995, pp.6-7, 14)

This essay will focus on sandstone caves in the Blue Mountains, in particular the cultural interests of Europeans, and will touch on their aesthetic, historic, scientific, social and spiritual values.

Until late in the nineteenth century, limestone and sandstone caves were both regarded as important more for their exploitation and contents than for any consideration of genesis or aesthetics. No significant distinction was drawn between what we now refer to as karst caves in limestone, and artificial grottos, rock shelters and shallow sandstone caves. Sandstone caves are found throughout the onshore 36,000 km² of the Sydney Basin (Anonymous n.d.), including World Heritage Areas which, however, gained that status primarily for their natural biological values.

Scattered in the 30% of the Basin which is sandstone and varying widely in their areal density, most are small but over 1,000 are recorded in the database of the Australian Speleological Federation Inc. (see Postscript Note below), the longest being 263 m (Dunkley 2013a, 2013c). About 395 are documented in the Blue Mountains greater than 3 m depth, most possessing greater cultural than natural associations. Of these, 31 have aboriginal significance, 49 are bushwalkers' camping sites, another 46 carry personal names evenly split between male and female, 17 have interior constructions, and a dozen or so were used as spiritual or family retreats and for a period by the homeless or destitute. It is likely that a significantly larger number were used by Aboriginal people, either seasonally or semi-permanently, especially those with sunny aspects and close to streams. First Fleet settlers recorded Aboriginal life in caves around Sydney Harbour not long after they arrived in January 1788 (Bradley 1788, pp.67-68) interpreting it through a European prism, not by scientific training or study. The result was that little serious academic research was undertaken for most of a century, and only then did enquiry into the Aboriginal occupation of the country arise and serious scientific investigations begin. See for example the catalogue of works relating to the surveyor and self-taught amateur anthropologist Robert H. Mathews, who produced 29 anthropological papers in NSW alone and over 170 in Australia at large (Thomas n.d., pp.435-450). It would take most of another century before the real antiquity of both the land and its original inhabitants' culture was recognised and eventually widely accepted (e.g. Stockton 1993).

Aboriginal sites have been studied for a century on the lower Blue Mountains (e.g. Stockton & Holland 1974), indicating a local community of about 2,000 people. At low elevations cave occupation was continuous for 20,000 to possibly 50,000 years. The central Blue Mountains attracted religious activity as evidenced by rock engravings, cave paintings and drawings, and stone arrangements, while the upper Blue Mountains (e.g. Walls Cave) proved favourable for good shelter, water and foraging for resources, despite climatic variations (Figure 1).

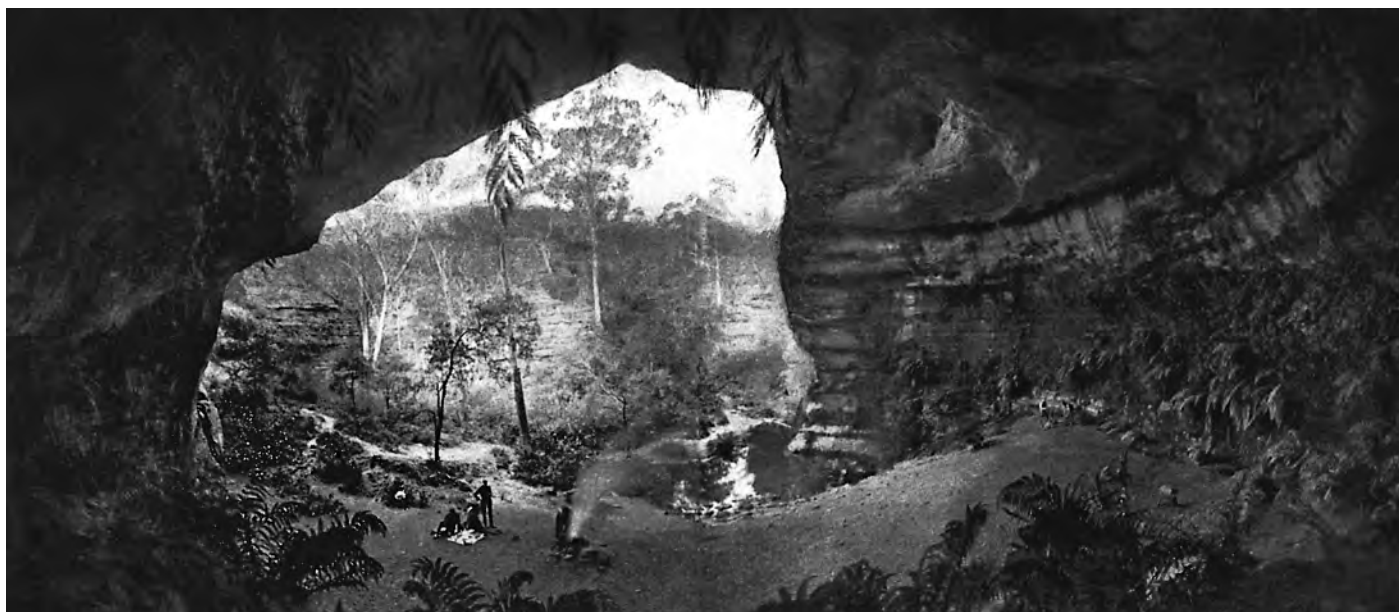


Figure 1. Walls Cave, Blackheath (Phillips n.d., p.13).

View facing north on a stream, significant for both Aboriginal and European heritage and now protected with a viewing platform, it has inspired poems, music and innumerable photographs.

[Photo taken with a panoramic lens by renowned Blue Mountains photographer Harry Phillips.]

This review thus concentrates on the webs of significance woven by European cultural perspectives, with examples of how individuals reacted, with caves as a common characteristic. Overall, quartz sand and sandstone provided a smaller lens through which scientists and managers tended to overlook the natural values of sandstone caves (e.g. Wray 1993,1995). West (2014-2016) described artificial ‘grottos’ in the Blue Mountains of the kind seen in parts of Europe and Asia, which in an Australian context appear out of place but may have some cultural significance.

European perspectives and perceptions: place, space, landscape, culture and caves.

It is well established that for more than a century most white settlers in Australia underestimated the differences between Australia and the lands that they left (Britain and Ireland) or that they had lost (America) (see, for example, Griffiths 1996, p.152; Horne 2005, pp.25-59). Initially regarded as an impassable barrier, and for long afterwards simply marvelled or despaired over - e.g. “wasteland, wilderness, wonderland” (Jones 2013), “production of imperial landscape” (Mitchell 2002, especially Chapter 1) and “pursuit of wonder” (Horne 2005) - a century after white settlement the encircling sandstone landscapes still served mainly as places to hurry through.

Immediately after 1813, the main agenda was building a road, and later a railway, to productive land on the other side. There were no old buildings to visit or

study in Australia, no written history, no culture that Europeans understood. The Blue Mountains were thus the first Australian mountains to capture the colonial imagination, early accounts emphasising - often with a florid flourish - the cliffs and canyons, endless ridges, lack of reference points, and lack of water or of land suitable for agriculture. British imperial expansion informed travellers’ accounts and drawings even as they ventured through landscapes bereft of a familiar past and barren of recognisable history and culture. Some Europeans took comfort that an uncertain past owed nothing to the present, and in time obtained temporal depth by turning to the sublime, to the natural environment. Fear can still descend quickly when, for example, someone becomes lost or disoriented in the trackless labyrinth of heavily vegetated hills and valleys below or distant from the escarpments. It is only in the last 130 years or so that we find mountains and caves influencing people’s imaginations and lives more directly. Macqueen (2012, pp.1-15) reviewed the concept of the Blue Mountains as “space”, effectively demonstrating that even the term ‘Blue Mountains’ is still not well defined.

Mitchell (2002) is admittedly difficult to read. At the outset (pp.x, 1) he distinguished between place, space and landscape as a dialectical triad: if a place is a specific location, a space is a ‘practised’ location, and a landscape is that encountered as image or ‘sight’. He argued that landscape needs to move from noun to a verb, so that it becomes a process by which social and subjective identities are formed, he saw landscape

as a marketable commodity to be purchased, consumed and souvenired as postcards and, no doubt, 'Facebooked'; the object of fetishistic practices involving limitless repetition of identical photographs taken on identical spots by tourists with interchangeable emotions is discussed:

"... but how many photographs, postcards, paintings and awestruck "sightings" of the Grand Canyon will it take to exhaust its value as landscape? Could we fill up Grand Canyon with its representations? How do we exhaust the value of a medium like landscape?" (Mitchell 2002, p.15).

On the other hand, he accepted that landscape expresses meaning as well as value (and indeed spiritual value), thus mediating the cultural and the natural.

Horne (1991) discussed ideas that *cultural* acquisition of land, meaning the ways in which cultures define or imagine spaces, is extremely important when claiming land. From the time we started describing the Blue Mountains as mountains, the link between European civilisation in Australia and that in Europe became more firmly established. She concluded that Australian colonists gained confidence in the *idea* of the Blue Mountains both as a refutation of our convict inheritance, and a promise of a brighter future, concluding that the Blue Mountains became an important cultural acquisition for white settlers in nineteenth century Australia.

Vanclay et al. (2008, p.3) also dealt with places and spaces:

"'Place' is generally conceived as 'space' imbued with meaning"

where an individual can tell a story about a specific location, with personal meaning. More than geographically unidimensional, it's the coming together of an atmosphere and a sense of narrative, symbolic meanings and emotional attachment, of exploring perspectives through different senses and lenses. A sense of place develops early, from childhood experiences, educational opportunities and learning from elders, then sustained and mediated by dozens of competing social factors: age, familiarity, ability or spirituality. A particular place in the landscape, such as a cave, thus becomes significant when we give meaning to its part in the larger, undifferentiated space.

Until humans arrived the Blue Mountains lacked cultural meaning: they were spaces without places. Millennia of corporate memory then followed and in time mostly vanished as new groups and individuals added new layers of meaning over time, thereby

altering the perception of a place and its surrounding space. In other words, older layers of meaning are displaced, decay and vanish, as undoubtedly occurred, for example, even over two centuries of recorded visitors' perceptions of the sandstone caves. Now a recurring theme of conservation and management debate, the relationship between people and nature raises cultural questions about the knowing and experiencing of places, the power of both the familiar place and the newly discovered or rediscovered place, and the many different ways of seeing and knowing that each person brings to a landscape feature or place, including what we can divine about the first human visitors.

Place is thus our legacy on the land. Drilling down, a cave is three places: the one imagined, the one experienced, and the one remembered, each changed by its predecessor. It's a fuzzy concept: abstract, difficult to quantify, defined by local knowledge rather than broader principles, and perhaps embodied in folklore, music or literature.

Perception is the key: middle class conventions and values informed and pervaded the writings of nineteenth century travellers to caves (see, *inter alia*, Horne 2005, pp.227-251), passing on their 'discoveries' to others who in turn found their own. We can visit them, perhaps experience what to us is a new cave or other place and, like visiting a new city, we discover how much easier it is to understand and appreciate a memorable place if one has visited and can place it in context.

But we still return to how we look at the land: as artists and photographers, story tellers, writers and poets, historians, musicians, tourists, speleologists and, in a few cases, people who lived or died in caves. They all discovered, were inspired (or occasionally repelled), and drew on their experiences albeit fleetingly to enhance our appreciation of them, as discussed below. The idea of cultural landscape is a human concept: it is we who give place, space and landscape a context.

Caves as historical places

For thousands of years natural clifflines and gorges confined human movement throughout the area, early settlers observed Aboriginal groups moving through the few natural passes between the valleys and ridges (Smith et al. 2006). Escaped convicts undoubtedly stumbled into caves on the outskirts of Sydney in the 1790s, probably including sites beyond the Cumberland Plain. An early record of a cave beyond the Nepean came on 25 November 1802 when, during



Photo John Dunkley 1999

Figure 2. Barralliers Cave, near Yerranderie. It overlooks a view unchanged for two centuries since Francis Barrallier almost succeeded in crossing the Blue Mountains, possibly visited by only a dozen or so Europeans since.

his second expedition in search of a route across the Blue Mountains, Francis Barrallier recorded that

“The rain compelled me to seek a shelter for myself and my men in the cave which, the natives assured me, was the home of wombats. I waited till 7 o’clock in the cave for my two men ...” (Barrallier 1802, p.795).

This description aided relocation of the cave in the 1990s (Figure 2), settling a long debate about the route taken by Barrallier’s expedition (Andrews 1998; Dunkley 2002). Almost two years later a similar cave (possibly WL879*) sheltered George Caley from a wild thunderstorm in November 1804 (see map in Macqueen 2013, p.22) but that one has not been unequivocally identified among candidates above the upper Grose Valley.

[* Caves, including some unnamed, are listed in the state-by-state cave and karst database of the Australian Speleological Federation Inc. and may be referred to by their catalogue number.]

As early as June 1830 Thomas Mitchell was guided to “the Cataract near the Weatherboard hut at Wentworth Falls”, where he stayed two nights en route to Bathurst (Dunkley in press), and by mid century travellers began making their own paths to nearby sites. Akin to crossing the Appalachian Mountains, within a few years waves of settlers were moving westwards across the Blue Mountains. The moving frontier continued for much of the remaining

nineteenth century and into the twentieth. European use of Kings Cave at Linden dates may date as early as 1821 (Searle 1985, part 2, pp.13-15), as the base for the Kings Own Regiment whose task was to guard convicts and ensure that only authorised persons were allowed access across the Blue Mountains (although some sources attribute it – almost certainly incorrectly - to a bushranger named King, e.g. Russell 1882, p.28; 1885, pp.24-25.). Road builders, overseers and convict gangs laboured along the line of the now Great Western Highway, using small caves as shelters or depots. At Mount York evidence of past technologies from 1815 can still be discerned beside several caves alongside the steep Coxs Descent, before it was bypassed by Mitchell’s route down Victoria Pass. Other examples include Store Cave at Linden and the

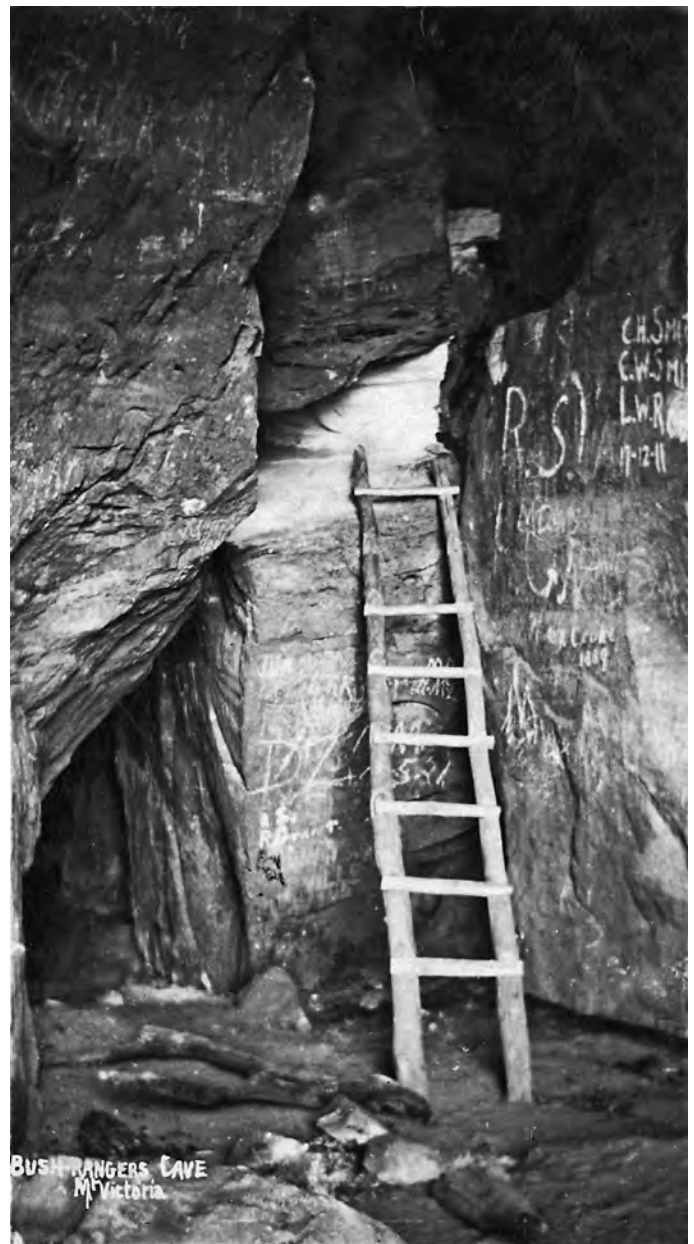


Figure 3. Bushrangers (Cunimbla, Kanimbla) Cave, Mount Victoria, one of the few carrying graffiti and debatable legends of European origin.

partly excavated Bulls Camp Cave at Woodford (ca. 1835-1844), both apparently used by the military to protect gold shipments in the 1850s, during the railway construction and workers in 1866 (Coleborn 1989a; Lavelle 1996) and again in 1896. By the 1880s Australia was a wealthy country. Caves housed itinerant workers in the lower Blue Mountains and as the railway edged up the ramp towards the Great Zig Zag and Lithgow from 1867 to 1869 it carried new waves of people: hotel, real estate and business entrepreneurs, tourists and recreationists.

Entrepreneurs, Walking Tracks, Tourist Authorities, Lovers, Fairies and Caves

The first wave of leisured travellers arrived in the lower Blue Mountains in the 1870s, even as the railway grew and long before Australia's beach culture was born, seeking retreat to pleasant climes and attractions on their mountain holiday properties. Beginning with wealthy landowners and hotel entrepreneurs, local councils, progress associations and enthusiastic volunteers later began cutting tracks to local lookouts, glens, waterfalls and caves. An early example was Sir Henry Parkes whose private 600-acre network at Faulconbridge formed, 80 years later, the heart of Blue Mountains National Park. As early as 1879 the authors of *The Railway Guide of NSW* described many tracks, including those to Rocklily Cave at Faulconbridge (p.38), and Cunimbla (Bushrangers) Cave at Mount Victoria (p.55) (Figure 3) where

“These extend into the mountain for some considerable depth, and should not be explored without a light or guide.” (*Railway Guide of NSW* 1879, p.55).

At the time there was no accommodation available between Mt. Victoria and Wentworth Falls - neither

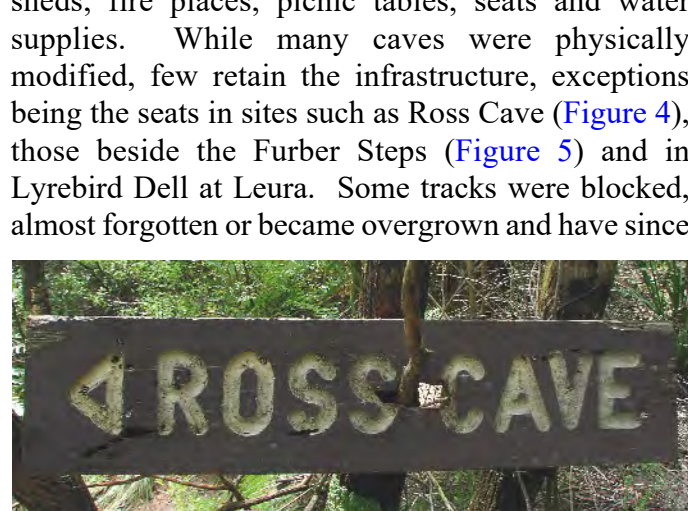
Leura nor Katoomba were even mentioned in the extensive guide. By the time of the second edition (1884), Mermaids Cave in the glen below Blackheath had been added along with a direction sign, the Trustees of Mount Piddington had built several trails and installed seats at intervals, including to Coxs Cave with its ladder leading upwards to a fine view,

“the floor being covered with a luxuriant growth of large ferns.” (*Railway Guide* 1884, p.53) to Engineers Cascade (cave) and lower down the Little Zigzag to Cunimbla Cave (now obsolete) i.e. Bushrangers Cave.

From the early 1900s and peaking in the 1930s, local Councils and tourist authorities named and vigorously promoted many sandstone caves in the district (e.g. Walford 1928, pp.32, 44-45, 47), as did the Government Tourist Bureau (see, for example, Anonymous 1920). Every village on the Blue Mountains swiftly annexed a signature waterfall or cave, although a number of the latter were little more than overhangs with alluring names. Paths snaked down the escarpment to knit other waterfalls, caves and attractions into a network

“Of more than 300 tracks and track sections studied for the 1999 Walking Track Heritage Study. ...” (Smith et al. 2006, Introduction p.3, Section 1.3).

Until the various small reserves began consolidation from 25 September 1959 into the Blue Mountains National Park, the Lands Department made modest annual grants (upon formal application) of a few hundred dollars to trustees of most towns on the Blue Mountains, typically local businessmen, who supplemented this with volunteer labour and with cash from fellow businessmen to promote local attractions and build walkways. Trustees placed very high priority on providing picnic facilities such as shelter sheds, fire places, picnic tables, seats and water supplies. While many caves were physically modified, few retain the infrastructure, exceptions being the seats in sites such as Ross Cave (Figure 4), those beside the Furber Steps (Figure 5) and in Lyrebird Dell at Leura. Some tracks were blocked, almost forgotten or became overgrown and have since



Photos John Dunkley 2010

A **B**
Figure 4. Only 10 minutes easy walk from suburbia, Ross Cave (Mount Victoria) appears just as it did a century ago.



Photo John Dunkley 2011

Figure 5. Hundreds of visitors each day pass or pause at caves on Furbers Steps below Scenic World at Katoomba.

been reopened and abandoned sections added, such as Bruces Walk (Blackheath to Lawson) in 1986 onwards (Smith 2015) during which a minor long forgotten cave was relocated (Shelter Cave).

Thus over the 50 years or more from the 1930s a complex network of tracks grew, linking numerous attractive places, bequeathing romantic or fanciful names to caves, promoting a flourishing industry of postcards and souvenir books, and in turn encouraging extensive outdoor recreation activities. Much was touted about the desirable, restorative and curative properties of the climate, of a 'change of air'. But walks demanded a focal attraction, one reason for the promotion of caves as resting points or destinations as well as waterfalls and lookouts.

Medlow Bath hosted the most extensive private tracks (Smith 1999, pp.12 & 145) and almost all survived virtually intact (Smith 1999, p.14). Between about 1893 and 1907, and possibly later, Murdo McLennan, a gardener on William Hargreaves' property, built many tracks along and down the escarpment, to and past several caves (Smith 1999). His achievements celebrate the skills of a master stonemason and the most extensive dry stone walls in the district (Figure 6). In 1903 Sydney businessman Mark Foy bought the land, built the *Hydro Majestic Hotel*, and to attract guests retained McLennan to extend the network to 18-20 km (Smith (1999, p.144) wrote that all the new tracks were constructed for Mark Foy). Although overgrown in places and occasionally eroded, the present author had few problems walking along them or locating the caves, at least two of which retain old

signposts. Maxines Grotto retains some original pathways inside the cave. Foy's will provided for a large mausoleum to be built to accommodate both him and some of his family, about 850 m to the NNW of the *Hydro Majestic Hotel* at or near where Marks Tomb Cave is now located (Figure 7). This did not eventuate: he was buried at South Head Cemetery, the will was contested strongly by the beneficiaries, none of whom wished it to be built, and the presiding judge empowered them to determine the future use of the money including sale of the land (Anonymous 1951).

Similar tracks were built around Wentworth Falls by Peter Mulheran (Smith 2012a) and Halbert & Ellis (2011) wrote about the tracks and caves around Mount Victoria.

After 1935 many such caves and trails were forgotten or neglected, but most survived because the rugged escarpment in particular became incorporated into public reserves and later national parks. Forming probably the most remarkable network in Australia,



Blue Mountains City Library PF000/000817.

Figure 6. "Mr Hargreaves (*sic*) in the cave near main Baths (Hydro)"

(M. Shaw: written on the back of the print.).

Note the dry stone construction below, and attractive honeycombing (tafoni) (Young et al. 2009) in bedrock above.



Photo John Dunkley 2011

Figure 7. Mark Foy wanted to be buried in or near the attractive Marks Tomb Cave.

the trails are of heritage significance at the national level, although authorities appear to be slow in recognising this (Smith et al. 2006, 2-E-1).

Bushwalkers, Tourists and Campers

In the nineteenth century most travellers walked; time was cheaper than income and horses and coaches were both expensive. Increasing middle class affluence, the gradual demise of Saturday work, and the initiation



Photo John Dunkley 2011

Figure 8. Pumping Station Cave on Narrow Neck retains its artificial windbreak for campers, who enjoy stunning views across Megalong Valley.

of paid annual leave provided opportunities for recreational bushwalking. The Government Tourist Bureau encouraged weekend and longer walking trips by train (Anonymous 1920) and although omitting mention of caves, the delightful route guide *With Swag and Billy* (Tompkins 1914) must have whetted

appetites; it certainly recalls a fitter, determined brand of long-distance walker to rival any seen today.

Nearly 50 caves are now known to have been pressed into service for a century or more for bush camping by walkers and climbers, occasionally by wanderers and more recently by boulderers and canyoners. Most still are, especially in rugged country, more than a day's walk from roads. Many more would have been utilised for centuries by Aboriginal groups. In the early years limited time and release from work often confined walkers to areas such as the Blue Labyrinth south of Glenbrook, accessible by train or car followed by a short walk, sometimes on a Friday night; there are four such camping caves known just in that area (Cameron 2014). The greatest concentration of caves is in the rugged wilderness stretching south from Narrow Neck and Mount Solitary, where there are ten (Figure 8), and on to the Gangerang Range, Wild Dog Mountains, Kanangra Walls, Kowmung River and Yerranderie, in some of the wildest country in eastern Australia where any overhang is a shelter from bad weather. Some caves were appropriated as weekend and holiday retreats by walkers and others, and partly as a result inspired works by writers, poets, artists and musicians. A number served as permanent homes for recluses and the indigent, especially in the early 20th century and during depression years. A camp fire cultural memory attaches to all these communal places, promoting shared ownership, common experiences and yarns as it probably did for thousands of years.

Evidence from a variety of sources (e.g. Horne (2005, pp.100-139), and Smith (1999, pp.105-107) who also referred to Government publications listing accommodation) indicates that in the 1920s and 1930s the typical visitor holidaying on the Blue Mountains did a bushwalk nearly every day of their stay; it was a largely middle class pursuit. Possibly to emphasise their ease of access, several caves received female names such as Annies Rest, and one each for Eveline, Lorna, Louisa, Marguerite, Marie and a Mermaid, along with Maxines Bower and Hildas, Minnies (Figure 9), Veras and Gwennies Grottos.

“Most probably this ‘grotto’ was named for Guinevere Goyder, born in Katoomba in 1890 and granddaughter of Frederick Charles Goyder, owner of the Carrington Hotel, Mayor of Katoomba and early trustee on the Katoomba, Leura, Echo & Banksia Parks Trust. It was common for such attractions to be named for female relatives of trust members ...

... I set out earlier this year to find this special place. Just below Weeping Rock we climbed down from the present track to where an earlier path followed more closely the edge of the creek and made an exciting discovery - evidence of an old bridge and the buttresses that had supported it. I recalled a lovely old photograph by Harry Phillips of two young girls standing on this bridge with Weeping Rock and the Bridal Veil in the background. But where had the girls been going to (or coming from)?

A scramble across the creek and up the opposite bank provided the answer, leading us to a series of steps and into a hidden recess of moss and fern that must surely, we thought, be Gwennies Grotto. Two overhangs, a levelled and stone wall supported floor, a fireplace, metal spikes (to hang picnic gear?) and an abundance of old graffiti spoke clearly of a place once buzzing with activity. A further path and steps wandered on to a ravine, the remains of another bridge visible in its depths, hinting at even more secrets to discover!

We had stumbled into a place long hidden from the world, closed up like a room in an old house. Changing times had shut the door on Gwennies Grotto and now only the ghosts of memory remained to shape and shift the shadows of its present disuse. William Goyder, his wife Phoebe and daughter Guinevere moved to Sydney ca.1904 where they settled in Mosman. 'Gwennie' never married and died there in 1933. Did she, I wonder, ever revisit her grotto? I'd love to know." (Low 2011).



Figure 10. Bride & Bridegroom's Cave: the ladder, the sign and the Edwardian era tourists have long vanished, leaving only a postcard memory.

An assortment of Ferns and Fairies of indeterminate gender and genera also became the names of caves. Several (particularly in the Leura - Katoomba area) alluded to romantic spots such as Bride and Bridegroom (Figure 10), and Honeymoon Cave (not forgetting Lovers Nook and Honeymoon Point - neither being a real cave), although no Breakup or Divorce Caves are known.

Women numbered among the early walkers as long ago as the 1880s on the Six Foot Track to Jenolan Caves (e.g. Allen 1886). In the 1920s and 1930s Marie Byles was a pioneer who regarded nature as a living being, responding to our love and interest, just like human beings, and that we get more from it by co-operation than by exploitation. Conservationist & feminist, the first practising female solicitor in New South Wales, mountaineer, explorer and avid bushwalker. In this extract she was following the first practicable route from the plateau established by



Photo John Dunkley 2011

Figure 9. Minnies Grotto, an attractive historic resting point on the Prince Henry Cliff Walk, Leura.

Frank Walford to the Grose River, camping in Hemispherical Cave at Butterbox Point, recording in her writings:

“Marj said we would travel light, take no tent and camp in a cave. (Byles & Shaw 1935, p.24)

...

But who would camp down below when there is a perfectly good cave on the heights above? Below our cave the plateau dipped away in tier below tier till it reached the coastal plain, beyond which the lights of Sydney glimmered on the eastern horizon, with Pennant Hills Wireless Station conspicuous among them. But that was the only sign of civilisation: for the rest there were the silent hills and no light . . . (*op. cit.*, p.25)

...

. . . We camped near Butterbox Point, where there was both a cave and a stream and no necessity to spoon water from rocky pools. From there we followed the course of the stream towards its source, finding that every tributary ended in a waterfall, and that the seemingly gently sloping wooded spurs turned into caverned cliffs at the bottom. Still we went on hopefully, and eventually succeeded in making our way to what seemed a gentle slope right to the creek bed. But when we came to go down, we found the same cliffs as before, a little more broken, that was all. We were able to climb down till we stood on the verge of the final gorge. Fifty feet below ran the dark mysterious waters of a stream hemmed in by caverned cliffs, a stream whose waters had never seen the sunlight, and whose boulders had never known the foot of man, and Ernestine quoted:

“Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea”. (*op. cit.*, P.25)

Up and down the valley the cliffs rose higher than ever, and deep beneath their many caverns flowed the Many Caverned Creek”. (*op. cit.*, p.25)

For some years from the 1930s a few caves served as free holiday or weekend sanctums, or semi-permanent shelters for depression era indigents. Darks Cave near Wentworth Falls was for many years occupied regularly by the family of Eric and Eleanor Dark (see below) and a few artefacts remain. The Knowing family apparently used Lyrebird Cave at Blackheath (Figure 11), Frank Walford Cave hosted the sometime Mayor of Katoomba in a cave above Carne Creek and Arethusa Canyon (Fox 2006, p.119), and Eric Lowe in Rookery Nook (Fox 2006, p.256) while Little Switzerland Cave (Figure 12) on Kings Tableland was

a hideout for indigents in the 1930s, a German speaker in World War 2 (an unlikely story!), and by bushwalkers, depending on which local legend is accepted (Coleborn 1989b, Fox 2006, p.184).

The removal of wartime restrictions and shortages, increasing real incomes and the rise of private motor vehicles spelt doom for older forms of holidays, and the wonder is that so much land in the Sydney Basin remained in public hands. Three reasons:

- first, unlike America, on settlement the Australian colonies began as Crown Land.
- second, the mountain region did not attract squatters: demand for agricultural land in the nineteenth century came from free immigrants and a rising number of emancipists who could not make a living on the Cumberland Plain, or the sandstone mountains, and merely moved through to greener pastures beyond.
- third, in the twentieth century, and beyond, demand rose for urban retreats and commuter suburbs, but the sandstone caves, located as they are on or near the escarpment, escaped depredation by developers and land clearance.

Recently one or two private caves began providing retreats for a much more moneyed clientele in search of troglodytic travel somewhere different e.g. Hatters Hideaway at Clarence (Hatters Hideaway 2016) or even ‘romance-with-jacuzzi-and-view’ as at the Clifftop Cave (Blain 2015) or Enchanted Cave (Anonymous 2016) near Berambing which, while artificial, is architecturally designed inside and out to mimic a sandstone cave in its natural setting.



Photo John Dunkley 2011

Figure 11. Lyrebird Cave, Blackheath, still with traces of camping and believed to be the retreat of the Knowing Family.



Photo John Dunkley 2010

Figure 12. Directly below Lincoln Lookout (formerly called Flat Rock), Wentworth Falls, Little Switzerland Cave retains its old masonry walls & a view of Jamison Valley.

The Artists - writers, musicians, poets and the spiritual dimension of the caves

Lower prices and peaceful surrounds attracted authors, artists, poets and even musicians to the mountains, the solitude of caves inspiring a number. The forbidding landscape, frequent swirling mists and secret caves backdropped yarns of adventure and romance. One example is Smeaton's fictional *'The Treasure Cave of the Blue Mountains'* (1898). Other writers found early escape after defining experiences in the bush suburbs of Sydney and the Blue Mountains, in the many small caves almost in their backyards, especially before suburbia tentacled and oozed across every rocky peninsula between the creeks. The mountains increasingly attract such escapees, recalling earlier innocence.

Grace Bayley wrote without pretension, evocatively and passionately about the magic:

"On that holiday (*in 1932*) I fell in love with the Blue Mountains." (Bayley 1993, p.4).

Over 80 years she visited and revisited numerous caves, helping offspring as well: ferns, rocks, pools and picnics at Mermaids; Dad wriggling into Harpers

and helping her grandson do it as his granddad did 50 years earlier; grilling sausages at Walls Cave; the tunnel in Grand Canyon; swooping bats in Coxs; the third zag to Bushrangers, tables and chairs set out for a picnic at Flat Rock, Wentworth Falls, and the cave beneath; the huge overhanging rock at Lourdes Grotto; a room with three doors, a window and a story teller to talk about Marks Tomb Cave; the Keyhole Slot in Deep Pass and Wollangambe Canyons; lyrebird tracks, red mud, stalagmites and stalactites in Goochs Crater. Wind-eroded Cave. The Cave Church. Oxley Cave at Rocket Point.

Similarly without affectation, Jim Low wrote (2008): "The large rocks look like they straggled slowly up the ridge, countless years ago. Some of them apparently stopped to rest forever along the way. Some arrived pocked with caves and inaccessible crevices; some continue performing incredible balancing acts, as if defying gravity. I crouch at the rear of one of these large caves and regard the valley, crudely framed by this cave.

My valley view is serenely smothered in greens. Scattered, black tooth picks of trees protrude from the fresh greens, their crusty, black coats a testament to the intensity of previous, bushfire battles. Many are dead, cruelly transformed into their own monuments. They await the strength of the late winter/early spring wind gusts to see if they can last another year upright. Yellow flashes of 'egg-and-bacon' plants and the orange glow from intricate shaped bottle-brushes are splattered about the ridge.

The cave floor is steep and uneven, dusted with sand from the stone that forms it. Part of the floor is stained with cement grey seepage, long dry. Other parts are variegated shades of browns and yellows. Directly above me is the cave's rough, coral textured, rust coloured ceiling. A closer inspection reveals the small, scattered, crystal pieces which softly reflect, like fragments of a shattered, dirty mirror. From my raised vantage, the cave has the feel of being in the 'gods' at a theatre. Its stage is a stone platform resting askew at the centre and its backdrop is the bushland, plummeting to the valley floor and up the other side.

On some days, like today, the cave traps the exhilarating, subtle smell of the bushland, a mixture of eucalypt and wild flowers. You could almost bottle this essence. I am reminded of the elevated Queensland country city of Toowoomba, first visited many years ago as a youth. At the

information centre, I purchased ‘a tin of Toowoomba fresh air’ and sent it to my family back in Sydney. I guess they saw me coming!

Here in the cave, the powerful, deafening, jet engines of an aeroplane, distantly high in another world, are just a gentle rumble. A more audible impact comes from another source, a natural one. The sudden, jarring shrieks from a white cockatoo cascade from above, their echoes resounding raucously through the valley.

This is definitely another world here. I sing some words of a song and they surround me, resonating with intensity. Here no one can hear you. I could deliver a passionate address, expounding upon my inner most beliefs and no one would be any the wiser.” (Quoted with permission, October 2016).

Perhaps the most widely circulated was Frederick Meyer’s *Pearls of the Blue Mountains of Australia* (1929), 217 single page dollops of doggerel including 13 caves in NSW, three in Victoria and two in Western Australia. Paeans of praise were heaped on Hildas Grotto, Engineers Cascade, Lyrebird Dell (though

curiously omitting mention of the large cave), and York, Walls, Ross (Figure 13) and Bushrangers Caves.

First used in 1937, Darks Cave, the weekend retreat of the family of Eric and Eleanor Dark, inspired books and music. A decorated World War 1 veteran, Eric was a sergeant in the Blue Mountains Volunteer Defence Corps in World War 2 (Merriman 2011) when (according to local folklore, anyway) he was ordered to find caves to use as guerrilla bases in case of Japanese invasion, leading his wife to write to a friend that the latest rumour she’d heard was that “we have a year’s supply of food hidden in our cave”! Eleanor authored well received novels such as the much reprinted ‘The Timeless Land’ trilogy (Dark 1941, 1948, 1954), said to have been partly written in the cave. In an essay Barbara Brooks (2000) wrote that Dark dealt with our history of black custodianship and white occupation, about the human need for wilderness, about what it does for the spirit. The country wasn’t a passive backdrop to a human landscape; she (Dark) believed that the country had moulded people as well as people moulding, sometimes exploiting, the country. All that time in the bush meant she knew it in her body as well as her mind. We are part of the country, she said, concluding with a quote:

“... this conception of ourselves as eternal antagonists of nature instead of harmoniously co-operating parts of it has made us strangers in our own world. (*Unpublished essay, Conquest of Nature*)”.

Eleanor did much of her research in the Mitchell Library, Sydney, but apparently Darks Cave provided opportunities for reflection according to colleague Dr Willam Holland (pers. comm. 2012). Her novels share some worthy intentions - to educate in an entertaining manner and to remind Australians of where they came from. The main theme, of course, is the clash of two very different cultures, each obeying their own tribal law.

In 1999 Dr Holland, a musically inclined younger colleague of Eric Dark in the Volunteer Defence Force, was inspired by the company, by Dark’s love of the outdoors, the writings of Eleanor Dark, and by an affinity with Aboriginal people derived from his archaeological cave work with Eugene Stockton (Dunkley 2013b). Composing ‘Darks Cave’ in three movements entitled ‘Nature and the Aborigines’, ‘Katoomba’ and ‘The Cave’, scored for soprano, bass baritone, piano, choir and orchestra (Figure 14) was followed by ‘Walls Cave’, for piano and orchestra,

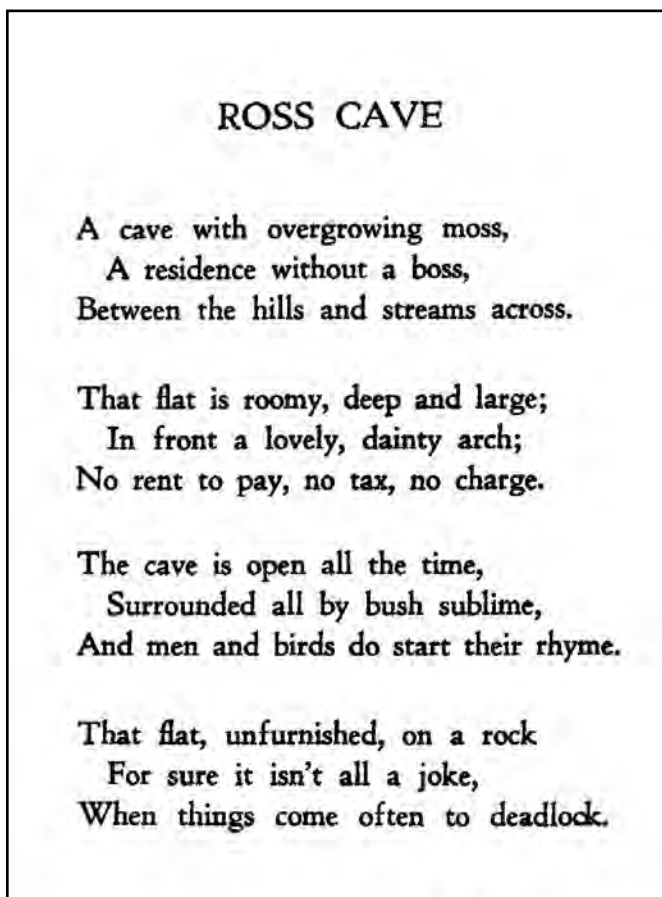


Figure 13. One of Frederick Meyer’s ‘masterpieces’ of meditative musing! (Meyer 1929, p.86).



Figure 14. Music written in 1999 to celebrate the memory of Darks Cave (with permission from Dr William Holland, 26 September 2016).

and 'Lyre Bird Dell Cave' for piano quintet (Holland 2016).

Scenes from *Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome* were filmed in Mermaids Cave, Blackheath with sets inhabited by a tribe of feral kids at the 'crack in the earth' site; only photographs of this exploit remain (Barton n.d).

Spiritual and Religious Connections and Retreats

While Darks, Frank Walfords, Professor Eds, Rookery Nook and several other caves were appropriated from time to time as family seclusion from civilisation, surprisingly few have been used for religious retreats or observance, and only one or two carry any solid association. Known since the earliest days of European settlement and appearing on an 1837 map (Jack 2010, p.2) as Kables Spring, Lourdes Grotto is beside and behind a waterfall on Springwood Creek (Figure 15). In 1952 Catholic Bushwalking Club members placed a statue of Mary



Figure 15. Lourdes Grotto, Springwood (W.G. 1934, p.179; also see Jack 2010 Fig. 3, p.2).

in the cave, officially blessed by Mgr. Duane on 27th September 1953. Mass was then said at the site every September until 1983, when the statue was removed to The Oaks as the Club was spending very little time visiting it. An easy, well constructed path leads down to the cave which has since become somewhat overgrown compared with the photograph.

Only a few caves retain tangible religious associations, compared with numerous sandstone caves in Europe and Asia of spiritual significance.

Cave Church below the *Hydro Majestic Hotel* at Medlow Bath hosted Anglican worship between 1894 and 1902 (Isbister et al. 2011, p.16), remaining in use until Mark Foy, a prominent Catholic, bought the site in 1903. Up to 70 adherents attended, although it's difficult to see how they could all have fitted into the available space. In the early 20th century it housed a Chinese market gardener employed by Foy, becoming known as Chinamans or simply Medlow Cave (Fox 2006, pp.75 & 198). Most of the masonry infrastructure remains (Figure 16).

From the writings of bushwalkers, in particular, several caves hold spiritual significance. The Word Cave was supposedly named before World War 1 by the devout Hall brothers for the first few words of Genesis (Cameron 2014, pp.214-216; Fox 2006, p.310). Sites closer to Sydney such as Father Guris Cave at Kentlyn (Campbelltown), and Santi Cave near Bundanoon (near Moss Vale) continue to serve similar purposes, but unlike long settled places few Australian caves evoke that kind of spiritualism.



Photo John Dunkley 2011

Figure 16. Cave Church, beside one of Murdo McLennan's wonderful tracks below the *Hydro Majestic Hotel*, was used for early church services, and later occupied by a Chinese market gardener.

The homeless, destitute or deceased

There are numerous accounts of homeless or destitute people living in caves in Sydney and a number in the Blue Mountains, in addition to several recorded deaths. A death in Chinamans Cave at Lapstone was recorded 1850, while Billy Toms Cave at Kurrajong (Anonymous 2010), and Chinamans Cave (i.e. Cave Church) at Medlow Bath were used for long term habitation in the twentieth century. Widely reported in Sydney newspapers, as recently as May 2011, the National Parks and Wildlife Service and Centrelink identified (from a police helicopter) 40 temporary shelters in Royal National Park, 30 of them inhabited by mostly middle-aged men with drug and alcohol, family and mental health issues (Wilkes 2011). This exercise highlighted the fact that occupation of caves by the homeless or indigent continues long after the 1930s Depression.

Behind Hazelbrook Bowling Club is a large cave believed to have been used by Aborigines on their way across the Blue Mountains, and by travelling 'swaggies'; it became the 'home' for Tom Hicks, alias 'Old Tom' or 'cappie' (Campbell 1989, p.119). However many residents were not so much destitute as mentally ill or, sadly, suicidal. Henry Snedden Grant, a former taxidermist at the Australian Museum, starved to death in a cave at Glenbrook (Anonymous 1944) and several others died in similar places. Patrick Molloy, a swagman aged about 60, was found on 17 March 1892 in Kings Cave, Linden (Anonymous 1892) and had apparently taken his own life. Audrey Mountford lived in an unnamed cave on the Blue Mountains for several years before dying in 1971 and the body and possessions lay undisturbed until a decade later when a bushwalker alerted police, but not until 2009 did a coronial inquest determine whose remains these were (Malkin 2009; Kontominas 2009).

Rockclimbers, Boulderers and Canyoners

Carter et al. (2010, pp.10-16) included a useful potted history of the growth of rock climbing, along with several hundred pages of route descriptions. Rockclimbing in the Blue Mountains appears to have been born in the 1920s around Malaita Point in Katoomba, by intrepid boys from Katoomba High School. There was a climbing accident in the area attended by the local GP who happened to be Dr Eric Dark, who had climbed in the Southern Highlands and southern Queensland before moving to Katoomba. Some of the boys continued to climb with him for some time after the accident and this small

band became known as the Blue Mountaineers, notching up first ascents there and in the Warrumbungles. In the 1930s Dark and friends joined a group from the Sydney Bushwalking Club, making further first ascents.

The term 'cave' in rock climbing parlance means a roof (a horizontal or very steep overhang enclosed on two sides, so only a few will meet established criteria for a cave; certainly a number of major climbing sites house seriously impressive sandstone caves including some at Mount York and Blackheath in particular where there are spectacular overhanging cliffs.

The Sydney Rockclimbing Club set standards for the anarchy and disdain for rules for which some modern climbers pride themselves. One of their members started the practice of painting white squares at the base of routes to make them easier to find, analogous to cave tagging but more visually intrusive, though it seems to have decreased in recent years with the advent of detailed illustrated guidebooks such as Carter et al. (2010).

The sport expanded rapidly in the 1960s (Smith 2012b) and now attracts a wide range of enthusiasts, from traditional anarchists and iconoclasts to professional guides. There are several thousand 'routes' known and well documented in the Blue Mountains alone and of these at least 20 are 'caves'. On any good weekend there will be several small groups of climbers in places such as Centennial Glen (Blackheath), and especially around the crags and caves between Leura and Mount York, where scarcely a virgin stretch of cliff remains, with a few on outliers beyond to the Bell Road. Rockclimbers opened and maintained negotiable tracks to previously unknown and/or very inaccessible cave locations, including some reached only by difficult climbing or abseiling. Several sites, especially those with challenging 'roofs' such as WL847 and WL853 below Bardens Lookout at Mount York ([Figure 17](#)) and a cliff a short distance before WL763 at Blackheath are especially popular, being festooned with bolts, hangers, tags and an occasional old-fashioned piton, sometimes to excess.

Climbing can impact on the often fragile environment of the mountains: from foot traffic, vegetation trampling and erosion. However certain practices are now largely eschewed: chipping, drilling or gluing holds, and 'tagging' certain sites with painted initials of the kind seen at Little Zig Zag (Mount Victoria), parts of Mount York and on a cliff a small distance



Photo John Dunkley 2011

Figure 17. Bardens climbing site at Mount York.

before Centennial Glen Cave at Blackheath. A few sites have been closed to climbing for safety and environmental reasons: Jamison Valley around Wentworth Falls, areas near Katoomba including the Three Sisters, and Govetts Leap. To minimise foot traffic on Mount York, access pathways to most of the known caves have been sympathetically hardened with support from Blue Mountains City Council, sponsors, volunteer groups and an occasional helicopter.

With much less publicity, canyoning and bouldering flourish throughout the region, especially in the upper Blue Mountains and beyond. Mostly far from tourist centres, often with both difficult entry and exit points, world class spectacular caves (with little or no light) in the splendid deep, narrow and often dark canyons are generally robust because of regular flooding (see, for example Jenkins 2011). Over 80 such canyons are known: as with limestone caves, the National Parks and Wildlife Service cautions against publicity for “new” canyons and/or in wilderness areas to preserve opportunities for discovery and minimal impact. Specialised pursuits with small but enthusiastic adherents still find new canyons in some of the wildest country in Australia, but rely primarily on ‘webliographies’ and similar social media for exchange of views. As Brennan (2016) related:

“For most people the word “canyon” evokes images of the Grand Canyon in the USA, a massive open gorge many kilometres wide and hundreds of kilometres long. The slot canyons of the Blue Mountains are quite different. Deep, dark, narrow and twisting, they are places forgotten by time, forsaken by light. Carved by water over many thousands of years, their sandstone walls and waterfalls make them a challenge to visit.”

Bouldering is a more pure style of free rock climbing undertaken without a rope, less invasive than most rock climbing, traditionally carried out on ‘boulders’ rather than high cliff faces and normally limited to very short climbs. Assistants may stand poised beside or below to direct the climber’s body toward the crash pad during a fall, while protecting the head from hazards. It is a relatively recent sport in New South Wales although practised for over a century in Europe, its popularity has increased because of the number of small sandstone overhangs with platy protrusions and because of the minimal cost. Numerous climbing and bouldering sites are recorded in the Blue Mountains (although based in Finland, Muittari (2016) and similar enthusiasts appear to be aiming to document all 100,000 crags and boulders

in the world! There are, for example, 14 listed just in Centennial Glen, Blackheath).

Environmental Pressures and Management

Sandstone caves are generally robust: in the Blue Mountains traffic is concentrated on a relatively small number alongside walking tracks or roads, especially between Wentworth Falls and Mount Victoria. The author has inspected well over 100 known or probable Sydney Basin Aboriginal sites including a number containing art work which are of course more sensitive, but they have also generally survived rather well, mostly through education and judicious non-disclosure. Aboriginal occupation itself did hasten deterioration of caves and art sites, and so do present-day visitors, but graffiti is almost absent. Most sites of Aboriginal significance are restricted, with visits to those open to the public confined to viewing platforms outside the cave, such as at Walls Cave at Blackheath. Inexcusable vandalism occurred at a very few sites, notably Red Hands Cave at Glenbrook, but protective measures are now in place. When visiting sites not physically protected, it is better to view and photograph from outside the dripline.

Mining subsidence and landslides recently forced closure of the area around Hassans Walls at Lithgow: the path had greatly deteriorated and the caves more difficult to locate. Adjacent to the area forming the main focus of this work, some sites could be impacted by coal extraction in the Gardens of Stone National Park and by the Moolarben Coal Project in the upper reaches of the Goulburn River. In some mountain areas urban encroachment has exacerbated run off, sedimentation, pollution and infiltration of garden and other chemicals but not to the extent readily apparent in Sydney metropolitan areas.

Conclusion

Visitors to the readily accessible sandstone caves came and went over the millennia. Aboriginal and later walkers, travellers, recreationalists and others built spiritual, emotional and psychological attachments to the sandstone caves, contributing to the proposition that it is culture that determines perceptions of scenery, and the converse. None of the sites is of great significance, and examples discussed evoke an everyday appeal to the senses.

Cultural significance is embodied in such places: the fabric, setting, use, associations, meanings, records, related places and related objects. As historian John Low (2011) concluded of one evocative cave place,

“Now only the ghosts of memory remained to shape and shift the shadows ...”.

The caves witness this intangible cultural and spiritual heritage along with their somewhat lesser scientific significance. They broaden and deepen our understanding of Blue Mountains social history. While minor features, they are worth celebrating and their history recorded, not primarily as natural features, but as places and spaces connecting with human life, enlightenment and endeavour.

Postscript Note

All the caves cited herein are documented in the state-by-state cave and karst database of the Australian Speleological Federation Inc, totalling more than 5,300 sites in New South Wales alone and over 20,000 nationally. General information on the NSW catalogue can be obtained from the state coordinator Mr. P. Dykes [ngalina@activ8.net.au, ph. 02-63355247]. The present work is based on a catalogue constructed by the author, dealing only with features in the Sydney Basin, during which nearly 1,000 sandstone sites were recorded (Dunkley 2013a), 395 of these being in the Blue Mountains region. However only recently has the database held more than a handful of sandstone caves, primarily because (having been constructed on a volunteer basis by speleologists), they received much less attention and documentation than traditional limestone caves. At the time of publication all are being transferred to a new database more accessible to researchers and others. In accordance with established practice of the Australian Speleological Federation Inc, detailed location information is not published. However the outlines below should entice visitors to a variety of readily accessible sites.

Cave Information

Organised **geographically westwards**, and except for Lourdes Grotto and Cave Church, all the following are on public land and readily accessible. Some appear on street directories and GPS assistance may be required.

Red Hands Cave (WL84) is one of the few Aboriginal sites to which tourist visits are encouraged and it is readily accessible from the Glenbrook entrance to the Blue Mountains National Park.

Lourdes Grotto (WL594) is on the property of St. Columbas College, Springwood, and requires access permission. The walk is easy, but the cave no longer carries the religious infrastructure and atmosphere.

Kings Cave (WL61), Burke Road, Linden. From Sydney turn left, cross back over the highway down

Burke Road. Not signposted but well known, a short walking track leads down to the cave which was almost certainly an Aboriginal camping cave with northerly aspect and permanent water supply from a shallow spring. It suffered some vandalism and extensive modification for nearly two centuries. Historical items nearby include Donohue's Grave, Caleys Repulse and Bulls Cave.

Bulls Cave Campsite (WL62) on the northern side of the highway at Woodford began as a convict stockade in 1835. To the left of the picnic ground a small sandstone cell was probably of convict origin, used for storing tools and (by legend) for punishment and known as The Dungeon. During the 1850s a Military Police Post was based there to protect travellers and gold shipments. Railway gangers occupied the camp during the 1860s construction period, again in the 1890s, and in the 1930s it was a transitory home for 'swaggies' heading across the Blue Mountains. Store Cave (WL63) across the highway next to Hepburn Road, Linden (beside remnants of the old road), is sometimes referred to as Powder Cell Cave as it may have stored gunpowder. It bears numerous pick marks, similar to such facilities on the convict roads to the north and south of Sydney in the 1830s.

Horseshoe Falls, Hazelbrook (WL612). Turn right from the highway along Oaklands Road. At the bottom of a hill, just before turning left, a walking track leads off to the right for about 1 km. Shaped like a horseshoe with a waterfall over the front, the cave is dank from spray but particularly photogenic after rain. An occupation site was radiocarbon dated by Eugene Stockton to 7280±230 years ago. Glow worms are sometimes to be seen.

Little Switzerland Cave (WL60). Drive to south end of Little Switzerland Drive, Wentworth Falls and then walk to Lincoln Rock for a spectacular view. The cave is immediately below the rock, with parts of a stone wall remaining.

Butterbox Point (Hemi-Spherical) Cave (WL650) overlooks a hanging swamp above Butterbox Canyon

(also known as Mount Hay Canyon) near Mount Hay (access is restricted to preserve the swamp but the cave is close to the track), and is probably the one used by Marie Byles and Marjorie Shaw in the 1930s. From the corner of Britain Road, Leura, turn onto Mount Hay Road which progressively becomes a dusty 2WD track. From the car park, walk about 2.5 km to the cave, on the left and unposted. Beyond this a fair track continues to great views into the Grose River.

Minnies Grotto (WL644) is near the head of the first gully east of the Solitary Café (90 Cliff Drive, Leura). At the U-bend on the road descend a short stairway to Prince Henry Walkway, turning left on a level track for 400 m. Facing southwest, its walls are covered with moss and ferns and a seat has been installed, echoing the small scale infrastructure supplied by local trustees and Councillors before the area was incorporated into the National Park.

Hundred Man Cave (WL697) is a remote overhang 100 m long, east of Mount Cloudmaker, hard of access but well known to bushwalkers, hence the name. Even larger is Thousand Man Cave (WL698).

Cave Church (Chinamans Cave) (WL722) An easy, wide and well graded walk leads from behind the *Hydro Majestic Hotel* at Medlow Bath past the remains of the cave in the side of a cliff with a cement floor, masonry wall and shelving. From 1894 to 1902 it was used for Church of England services before a permanent structure was built nearby, with as many as 70 attending (there must have been quite an overflow of numbers!). Later it became the home of a Chinese gardener who supplied fresh food for the hotel. Compare this with another almost identical cave (WL721) which shows what the Cave Church cavity might have looked like before development.

Marks Tomb Cave (WL727) From the end of Belgravia Street, Medlow Bath, a short steep descent leads to the Wonderland Track. Turn right for about 400 m of easy level walking to an old sign pointing to "Marks Tomb". A less well defined downhill side track leads to the cave. The cave resembles a mausoleum but is well lit from three small entrances and is attractive to photograph.

Mermaids Cave (WL776) Marked on many street directories and GoogleEarth. From Blackheath drive south alongside the western side of the railway line, and turn right down Shipley Road. At the Crossroads, turn sharp left into Megalong Road and park on the inside of the first sharp U-bend. Cross the road to a path leading to the cave which features an attractive waterfall.

Walls Cave (WL51) and Underground River (WL55). Once a popular tourist spot then closed for many years, this wonderful site was improved by National Parks and restored with a good timber walking track. Follow Evans Lookout Road and turn right into Walls Cave Road, then walk the 800 m path down to Greaves Creek. Cross the little bridge, from which an underground river tunnel section passes through an unusual short entrenched meander to the right. The shortcut was caused by mass movement blocking the stream, causing it to pass underground. Continue downstream to the next curve of the creek, from which an access platform overlooks the cave. The cave is an aboriginal site - please do not cross the fence.

Bushrangers (Cunimbla) Cave (WL53). From Innes and Kanimbla Valley Roads, Mount Victoria, descend the Little Zigzag to its 7th turning, then scramble to the left for 60m. Long abandoned, the walk illustrates the difficulty and expense of providing access to Kanimbla Valley. Probably the longest cave in the area, it may have been formed by a process of mass movement.

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