

Heritage

*Newsletter of the Blue Mountains Association of Cultural
Heritage Organisations Inc*

September-October 2019

ISSUE 64

ISSN 2203-4366

The Old Tollbar, at Mount Victoria

Tollbars were instituted in New South Wales in 1810 where tolls were collected to maintain roads and bridges. They continued until tolls on main roads were abolished in the late 1870s. An adjacent cottage for a toll-collector was a common need, but very few survive. The Mount Victoria tollhouse was erected in 1849 after the closure of the convict stockade at Blackheath. George Sheppard was lessee of the tollhouse from 1851 until 1865 and he built an inn immediately to the west.



The picket fence on the stone retaining wall.....



1951 re-enactment activities

Officially known as the Broughton's Waterhole Toll Bar, the tollhouse at Mount Victoria was established as one of a number set up along the Western Road following a proclamation of Governor Fitzroy in November 1848. As the country opened up, tolls became increasingly important as a revenue source for the development and maintenance of the major road systems. Tolls levied varied with the category of traffic, while the cost of a lease of the service depended upon the site and the volume of traffic anticipated.

In 1863 when George Sheppard, who leased the tollhouse, obtained by conditional purchase 40 acres adjacent to the tollhouse, he built the Welcome Inn. The Inn was demolished in 1947 and the entire lower storey of the present adjacent *Karawatha* residence is thought to be the second store erected by George Sheppard. Sheppard had also owned 5 acres on the opposite side of the road since 1852 and had built a store there and other huts. But the projected line of the railway ran through these 5 acres, right beside the highway, and the 40 acres granted in 1863 were in recompense for the loss of his original store. It is suggested that a stone building erected behind the weatherboard Welcome Inn was as a replacement for the original store which had been acquired by the Railway Commissioners.

George Sheppard went bankrupt after only a short period and relinquished the licence of the Welcome Inn in 1865 to William Reid. From 1866 to 1868 the lease went to Edward Creasey.



Mount Victoria Tollhouse 2011

Sheppheard and subsequent lessees encountered many an incident in the carrying out of their tasks. In late September 1862, two riders cantered through the township of Mount Victoria on their way to attend an auction in Hartley. As they approached the descent at Victoria Pass four men burst from the bush, their faces hidden beneath rough crepe masks. The bushrangers were apparently after George Sheppheard, and their informants had led them to believe he would be passing with a large sum of money collected at the toll bar. As it turned out, it was not George Sheppheard they captured but his eighteen year old son, who told them that his father was, in fact, absent from the district. With their purpose now somewhat confused, the bushrangers succumbed to a greater need than money, released their prisoner, and withdrew to the pubs of Little Hartley.

In 1868 the railway finally reached Mount Victoria and the station was situated almost a kilometre away from the Welcome Inn. The licence was not renewed after the railway arrived and the Royal Hotel (now the Victoria and Albert) opened beside the station in 1868.

In 1885 Henry Rienits, the local schoolmaster, resigned from the state education system to set up his own private school in Mount Victoria. While he was constructing his new premises in Montgomery Street, Rienits used the former Welcome Inn as The School. After Rienits left, the land was sub-divided in 1887 into thirteen allotments.



Karawatha

The stone walling buttressing the terrace on which *Karawatha* stands and the worn stone steps leading from the former inn level up to the terrace level are important signifiers of the former relationship between the two parts of the site. The upper storey of *Karawatha* was added in the late twentieth century as living accommodation while the stone section has been used as a gallery for collectibles.

Although Mount Victoria tollhouse lost its purpose, the retention of the remains of these early buildings for history sake by the community is urged today, no less strongly than it was back in 1930.

The following article makes interesting reading in regard to the old tollbar, its associated cottage and its future:

Sydney Morning Herald, Saturday 24 May 1930 (by HW Cotton)

On the Main-western-road, within a few hundred yards of the post-office at Mount Victoria, the old tollbar, with a quaint residence attached, lies snugly surrounded by huge pine trees. Erected many years ago (local residents say 1827) the tollbar residence is in a reasonable state of preservation, due doubtless to the solid sandstone walls. The design of the building is unusual, having a frontage to the Main Western-road of three walls, forming three segments of a hexagon – the centre wall has a doorway entrance, with windows in the other two walls; obviously so constructed to give the keeper of the tollbar a clear vision of both east and west approaches without leaving his comfortable seat before the log fire. Erected, perhaps, a century back, this relic has served its purpose in helping to provide revenue for the construction and maintenance of the Main Western-road, for the pioneers and early settlers, who were compelled to use this main road to the west, who were taxed for all horses, sheep, cattle and vehicles that traversed this road.

The quaint residence adjoining with its attic windows and old-time garden of lilac and roses partly obscured by a crumbling picket fence on a stone retaining wall – suggests some old rural English home. This building has in turn served as a residence, an inn and a school. Little imagination is needed to visualise the scenes that happened at this memorable spot during the gold rush to the Ophir diggings in 1851. After the discovery of payable gold at Summer Hill Creek by Edward Hargraves, the procession of pedestrians and vehicles, including bullock wagons, past this inn to the west, must have been thrilling, for the gold fever had infected thousands of Sydneysiders, and this was their only route west. Then the other picture with the return from the digging of the gold escort and troopers armed to the teeth. They would probably stay the night at the inn, and over the log fire tell many a tale of fortune and bad luck experienced by the diggers. The staples are still on the front verandah posts to which the horsemen tethered their steeds.

The New Rush of Traffic

To-day the old tollbar house is untenanted, but the residence is occupied, and one can sit at ease on the old verandah, partake of refreshments, admire the rustic garden, and make comparisons with this wonderfully changed world of motor traction – for there is incessant traffic of cars, motor lorries, motor cycles, and tourist service cars carrying, or rather rushing, tourists to the Caves and out west. What a contrast to the days of the bullock wagon and coach! As to the origin and purpose of toll bars it is interesting to learn from Historical Records, volume VII., page 514, that a proclamation issued on the 24th March 1810, read: -

“It having been reported to his Excellency the Governor (Lachlan Macquarie) that settlers at Hawkesbury and Parramatta suffer considerable difficulties for want of sufficient roads to convey produce to market, etc. and that they are anxious that toll bars should be created In order to raise funds for putting said roads into good repair. This is, therefore, to give notice that his excellency is disposed to approve of the erecting of toll bars and establish certain rates thereon for this beneficial object A lease of said tolls will be given for seven years to whoever may offer the most eligible terms of contract.”

A further proclamation, issued on March 30, 1811, stated: -

“That for the construction and preservation of safe and commodious highway It is hereby declared that all persons riding, leading, or driving any horses, cattle, sheep, swine, etc. on said roads or turnpikes now established, shall pay the gatekeeper thereof according to the following rates: - Table of charges ranges from 2d for each head of horned cattle to 3/- for four-wheeled vehicle drawn by four horses.”

Toll bars were subsequently established on the Main Western and Southern roads, but with a few exceptions were all abolished in New South Wales in 1877, after many years useful service.

An interesting item regarding rates and rentals of these toll bars is quoted from Martin's History of Australia (page 150): -

There were six toll or turnpike gates in the colony in 1836 – one at Sydney, three at Parramatta, one at Liverpool, and one at Windsor. The tolls are: - For sheep, pig or goat, ½d; cattle 1d; horse 2d; cart and one horse 3d; carriage and pair 1/-. Double tolls on Sunday. The Sydney gate is rented at several thousand pounds sterling per annum.

Menaced with Destruction

With a view to making a deviation of the existing road, the Main Roads Board propose to avoid a dangerous turn in the road, and I am informed part of the proposal is to demolish the historic Toll Bar House at Mount Victoria. To this, I think, every lover of historic buildings, and those good Australians who wish to preserve the records of our early history to hand down to prosperity must enter an emphatic protest. As there is ample room for road construction with a railway bridge built diagonally instead of at right angles to the railway, there appears to be little justification for the demolition of the toll bar. This is a matter which should have the earnest attention of the Historical Society of New South Wales in the interests of present and future generations.



The bridge in 2015 – built at an angle in 1956, tollbar house to far left

Although we can no longer sit on the verandah of the tollhouse and admire the garden, the railway bridge was built (at an angle) without demolition of the tollhouse, and the building, together with the *Karawatha residence*, remains as relics of past times, including the Governor's measures for management of traffic and roads to the west (together with a method of funding such management) along what we now know as the Great Western Highway.

Patsy Moppett

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Food for thought Editor's note

Without particular intention, the theme of this Newsletter has developed into two particular streams, the celebration of iconic heritage items, and the investigation of historic locations. Other history features and events are also included.

A number of items have aroused interest of late, particularly in regard to their preservation, conservation and protection from inappropriate development. Community perception and appreciation of heritage it would seem has not diminished over the last 100 years, spurred on by those dedicated people who take the time to investigate, to approach government for support and who celebrate memory as much as the actual buildings.

It is wonderful to hear that the Roxy Theatre, the Savoy, the Officers' Mess, the Imperial Hotel and the Palais Royale have now achieved recognition in terms of their significance. Several are now officially listed at State level to provide protection from future development, and two have now the acknowledgement and cooperation of government (and the courts) in regard to future development. The Mount Victoria tollhouse remains in safe private hands, and the Paragon lives on in the hearts of those who are about to share their experiences and memories of that special café.

Several historic locations have been investigated recently including the Hartley Vale bridge and its place in the early development of Blue Mountains Crossings, myth and mystery about the Duck Hole at Glenbrook have now been put to rest, and Bloody Cutting will now achieve recognition for what it really was.

We have such a wide and diverse range of heritage to preserve within our communities, and it is for our individuals and community organisations to continue to work towards lobbying government and developers to recognise that this heritage conservation must commence NOW, not wait until a change of government or available funding. The first step is recognising and acknowledging significance, which then sets the foundation for moving on with policy and financial assistance.

BMACHO recognises that local government and our State/Federal government representatives in the Blue Mountains are attempting to support heritage through providing community opportunities for comment and consultation, providing funding opportunities, and keeping the lines of communication open for the further preservation and conservation of our mountain cultural and natural history.

New Light on Bells Line of Road, the First Twenty Years

In 1823, ten years after Blaxland, Lawson and Wentworth had first blazed what became Cox's Road to Bathurst, young Archibald Bell of Belmont, with Aboriginal assistance, succeeded in establishing an alternative route across the Blue Mountains to the north of the Grose Valley. When Bell returned from the second of his exploratory excursions in September 1823, he was immediately encouraged to set out again with the government surveyor, Robert Hoddle, and three men, to mark out a viable route from Kurrajong to Mount Tomah and then on to the Darling Causeway and Hartley Vale.¹ The Surveyor-General instructed Hoddle in October 1823:

You will dispatch your men and Pack Horse with Provisions and Tent to Mr Bell's at Richmond on the preceding Thursday, so that you may find them in readiness to commence on Monday, Mr Cox proposing to furnish them to Mark the road. Three men will be sufficient, one to take care of the Horses and Provision and Two with the chain and Instruments.¹

Just as George William Evans had done for the Western Road in 1813-1814, Hoddle compiled a workmanlike report on what we know as Bells Line, together with field notes and an admirable map. In 1814 Governor Macquarie had immediately ordered William Cox to

organise a team of convicts to construct a road along Evans' line, but hitherto it has been unclear how the new route established by Hoddle and Bell in 1823 came to be converted into a viable road. In fact, Governor Brisbane followed Macquarie's lead in issuing a road-building contract. Brisbane, however, did not turn to an outside entrepreneur like Cox, but instead commissioned Archibald Bell himself in February 1824 to lead a team of twenty-two convicts:

..... clearing a passage twenty yards wide, by felling, rooting and burning the Trees growing along the line from Singleton's Mill [on Little Wheeny Creek] in the Curryjong [Kurrajong] District to Collets Inn at the foot of Mount York.ⁱⁱ

The first problem area on the new road was the descent from Tabaraga Ridge at Kurrajong Heights. Between 1825 and 1827 Bell's convicts expended considerable labour in constructing a Zigzag descent of the steep north-west side of Tabaraga Ridge. The approximate completion date is based on a comment in the diary of Andrew Brown of Coerwull at Bowenfels. In June 1839, when Brown chose to ride to Sydney via Bells Line, Brown described how he rode across:

..... the Tabaraga ridge over which a very steep zig-zag was cut 10 or 12 years ago.ⁱⁱⁱ

This abandoned stretch of road survives and offers a rough but interesting walk. It begins just beyond the top of the present Warks Hill Road and emerges at the foot of Cut Rock on the present main road. It was never an easy track and was easily damaged by severe rains; in 1834 Mrs Felton Mathew, a surveyor's wife, complained about her '*terrific and awful descent*' down '*a series of 6 or 7 traverses or zigzags*'.^{iv} The retaining walls for the bends were constructed of unshaped boulders without coursing (*Figure 1*). Nonetheless they are still functional after almost two centuries.



Figure 1. Stone walling on the 1820s Zigzag at Kurrajong Heights.
Source. Photograph by Ian Jack, 26 July 2003.

Thomas Mitchell, the Surveyor-General, had no intention of developing Bells Line as an alternative route to the west.^v Despite the settlement of a dozen veterans on 100-acre blocks around Bilpin in 1829-1830, Mitchell refused in 1833 to build a second Zigzag on the eastern slope of Tabaraga to improve the daunting ascent to the existing Zigzag.^{vi} Such government intransigence angered potential users resident along the Hawkesbury-Nepean valley, and between 1837 and 1839 a committee of prominent men in Windsor and Richmond raised enough private money to call for tenders to make the entire length of Bells Line a road suitable for traffic, primarily as a stock route but also for travellers on horseback.^{vii}

'A party of gentlemen from Richmond', headed by William Bowman, a prosperous grazier based in Richmond, was deputed by the committee to "survey" Bells Line and this they did on horseback in early March 1839.^{viii} The previous month Andrew Brown had met Bowman at Mount Tomah, where Brown concluded that the road:

..... seems too much ever to be accomplished by private enterprise.^{ix}

Nonetheless, by 1840 the substantial sum of £160, with no contribution from the government, had been successfully spent on three separate improvements: the crossing of Tabaraga Ridge, the Mount Tomah passes and "for clearing the road from Mount Tomah to Mr [Andrew] Brown's mill [at Coerwull in Bowenfels]". The largest part of the money, £100, was spent on the part of the road leading to Hartley Vale.^x

The contractors were all local men. Joseph Douglass, who kept the inn on Kurrajong Heights (now Lochiel), worked on Tabaraga Ridge. Douglass constructed a bypass to the Zigzag on easier grades just to the south, meeting the present Bells Line and the bottom of the Zigzag near Cut Rock. This dray road still survives and is a comfortable walk but runs partly through private property. As a result, the Kurrajong Zigzag has been disused since 1840, but remains legible, the earliest surviving Zigzag in New South Wales.

Thomas Dargin of Windsor employed men at Mount Tomah, including the local overseer, Samuel Seinor, while the work from Tomah to Hartley Vale was organized by a Windsor solicitor, Thomas Darling, and was completed by mid-1840.^{xi} Andrew Brown was already sufficiently reassured as to choose to ride to Sydney via Bells Line in mid-June 1839 and he recorded in his diary how, before they started the ascent from Hartley Vale, he, James Walker of Wallerawang and David Archer made breakfast together on 16 June "on a branch of the River Lett".^{xii}

Their picnic spot was about to be the site of the first bridge to be built on Bells Line. The stone bridge across what became known as Kerosene Creek has not been noticed as an early feature of Bells Line, but there is a strong case to attribute its building to the committee work of 1839 to 1840.

Part of Thomas Darling's assignment in 1839-1840 had involved the final descent of Bells Line from the Darling Causeway to Hartley Vale. What is now known as Hartley Vale Road is the only viable route westwards off the middle portion of the Darling Causeway. On his first expedition in August 1823, Archibald Bell had been unable to find a way down, but, presumably with Aboriginal help, when he returned a month later he found the narrow pass down the headwaters of the River Lett.^{xiii} Darling had work to do to improve this descent, which still today has some challenging narrow bends between a sheer cliff face on the south and a sharp drop to the Lett on the north.

After Hartley Vale Road swings away from the River Lett, it cruises easily into Hartley Vale, but it has to cross a fairly vigorous tributary of the Lett, known since the later nineteenth century as Kerosene Creek, because of the major shale-oil works which straddled it after 1865.

Kerosene Creek was, of course, still not bridged in 1823 and Hoddle made no special mention of the crossing, although he marked it clearly on his plan (*Figure 2*).^{xiv} Hoddle showed two alternative routes on this final stage into Hartley Vale, both of which crossed Kerosene Creek. His own preference was for the more southerly one, shown on his plan as "Best Line Marked", which is the present Hartley Vale Road.

It is very likely that among Thomas Darling's tasks in 1839-1840 was the construction of a bridge across Kerosene Creek. There is no particular likelihood that Pierce Collits or any other early settler in Hartley Vale would have invested in a substantial bridge and the government, especially under Thomas Mitchell, did not view Bells Line with favour. A bridge is not, however, specified among the objectives of the 1837 Committee of Management and the horses, cattle and sheep which were expected to populate the road could normally ford Kerosene Creek (the only creek on the whole length of Bells Line from Kurrajong Heights to Hartley Vale).

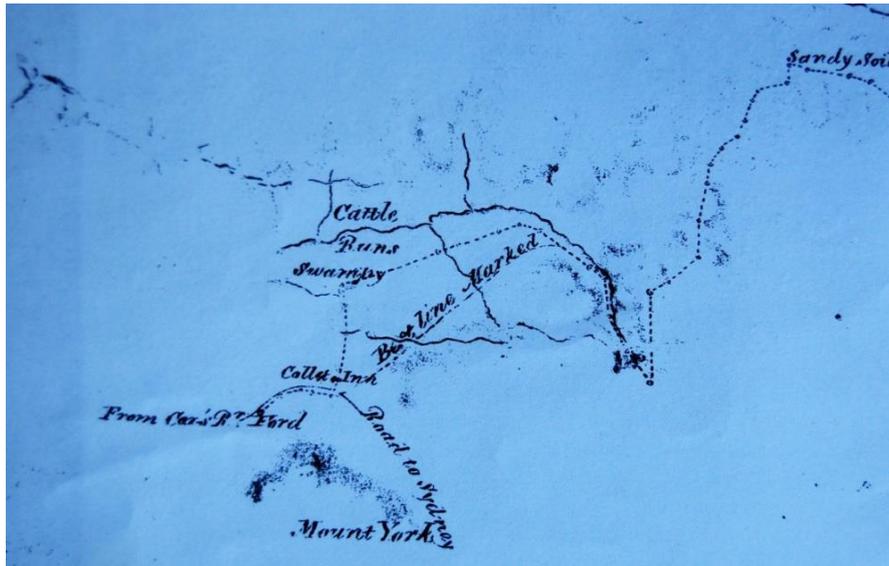


Figure 2. Hoddle's map of his descent in 1823 into Hartley Vale from the Darling Causeway on the right. Bells Line, the dotted line, takes a very sharp bend northwards onto the pass along the beginnings of the River Lett. Hoddle showed alternative routes into Hartley Vale but preferred the one swinging away from the Lett to the south, marked 'Best Line', which is the present road. Both routes had to cross the tributary of the Lett which is now known as Kerosene Creek. **Source.** SARNSW, Map SZ 422

Nonetheless, Hartley Vale was becoming a prosperous farming community and on 1 January 1839 among other allotments advertised for sale was the future portion 41 which straddles Bells Line and that part of the creek where the bridge was constructed. When the detailed plan of the 100 acres was completed in 1840, the surveyor made faint marks across the road on either side of the creek, the southern part of which is clearly delineated (*Figure 3*).^{xv} It is hard to see any other explanation for these marks than to denote a bridge in the context of Thomas Darling's extensive roadworks just completed.

There is no evidence for the construction details of this postulated bridge of 1839-1840. The first clear evidence for the existence of the present bridge is much later, in a surveyor's road-plan of August 1883.^{xvi} Thus beautifully executed plan shows the whole of Hartley Vale Road from Darling Causeway down to the south-west corner of portion 41 and includes a recognizable sketch of the actual bridge (*Figure 4*).

The 1883 survey of Hartley Vale Road shows a strongly buttressed bridge with eight lateral planks as carriageway, which it is easy to identify with the present bridge (*Figure 5*). It is possible, but not likely, that the bridge shown in 1883 had been built or rebuilt soon after the creation of a major shale-oil industry in this part of Hartley Vale in 1865. Two significant companies were launched within months of each other in the second half of 1865, first the Hartley Kerosene Oil and Paraffine Co. Ltd [HKOPC], then the Western Kerosene Oil Co. [WKOC]. The HKOPC made the initial running, establishing the Petrolea Vale retorts and refinery in the valley and marketing Star brand kerosene. The rival company, the WKOC, pursued an alternative strategy, opening up mines but building its retorts and refinery in Sydney, at Waterloo, in 1868. The land acquired by the two companies between 1865 and 1871 is shown in *Figure 6*.

The commercial reason for one of the companies to build a stone bridge (or to rebuild an existing wooden bridge) would have been to expedite the road transport of heavy products (ore or oil) to Sydney. Until 1870 this could be done only by carting the material on drays to Mount Victoria railway station. But in 1870 the construction of an incline by WKOC leading to a horse-drawn tramway above, going directly to the new Hartley Vale industrial railway siding on Darling Causeway, largely removed the need for a dray-road.^{xvii}

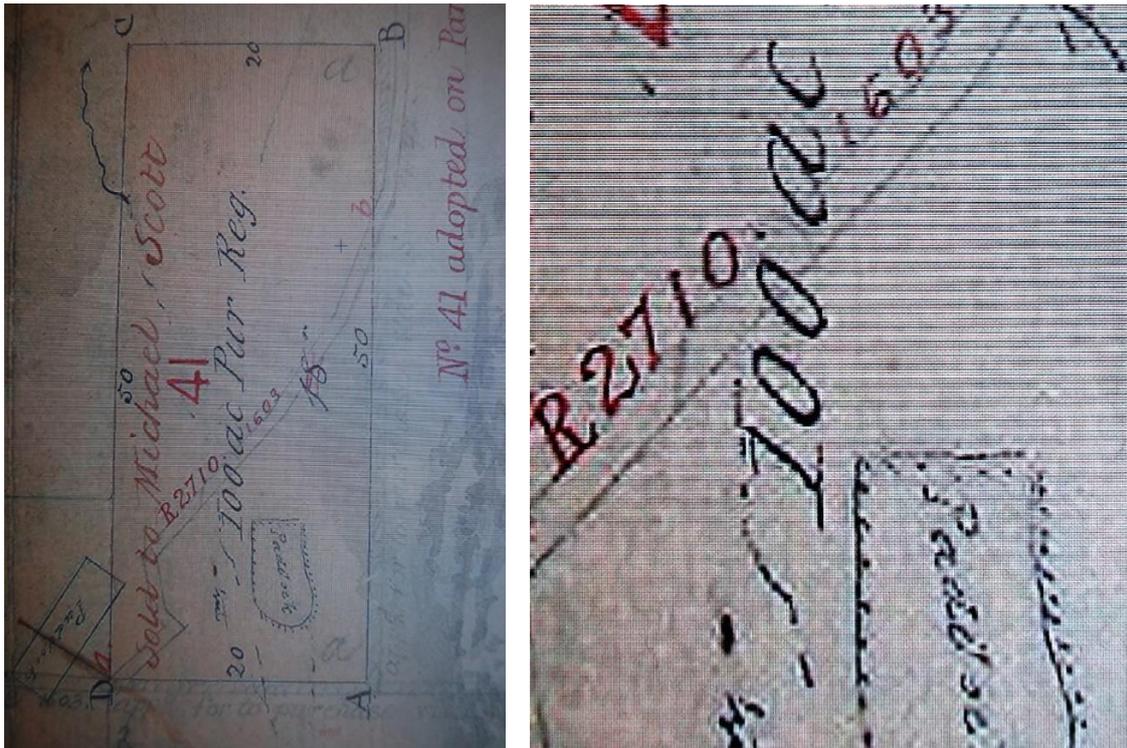


Figure 3. Surveyor's 1840 plan of portion 41, parish of Hartley, county of Cook, showing Kerosene Creek south of Bells Line. Faint marks on the roadway are suggestive of a bridge in the location of the present bridge. The marks are on either side of the second 0 in '100 ac'. Detail on right. **Source.** Crown Plan, B 576.691

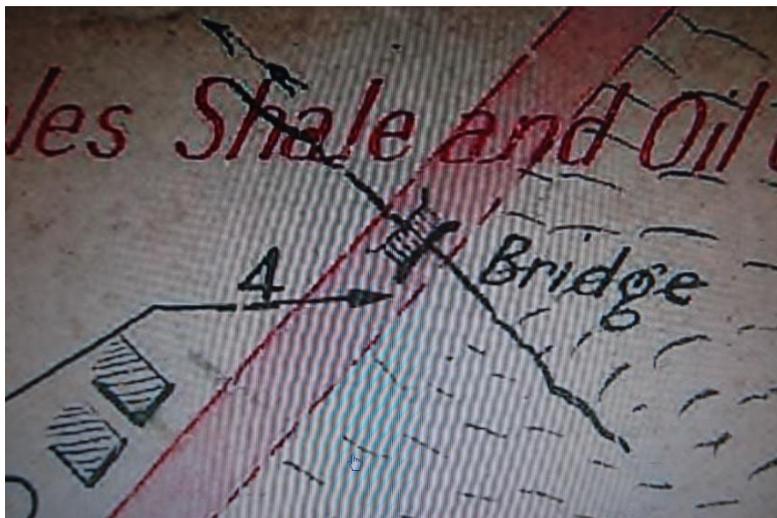


Figure 4. The Kerosene Creek bridge at Hartley Vale sketched on 23 August 1883, showing details of construction.

Source. Crown Plan, R 2710.1603 R.

During the five years from 1865 to the end of 1869, the route taken by the industrial drays is not specified in surviving company correspondence,^{xviii} but a road-plan of 1867 strongly suggests that the companies used an existing "dray road" westward from the end of Bells Line and then followed the line of today's Brown's Gap Road to join the Great Western Highway a little west of Little Hartley. The drays could then use Victoria Pass to reach Mount Victoria (Figure 7).



Figure 5. Kerosene Creek bridge from the south in 2019.
Source. Photograph, Ian Jack, 21 March 2019

The shale-oil companies built at least five bridges of their own so that an internal system of tramways could pass over Kerosene Creek and other tributary streams (*Figure 8*). The location of these bridges is known but no trace of their construction has been reported. As a result, there is currently no comparative material to show whether the companies used a style of bridge-building similar to the existing Kerosene Creek bridge.

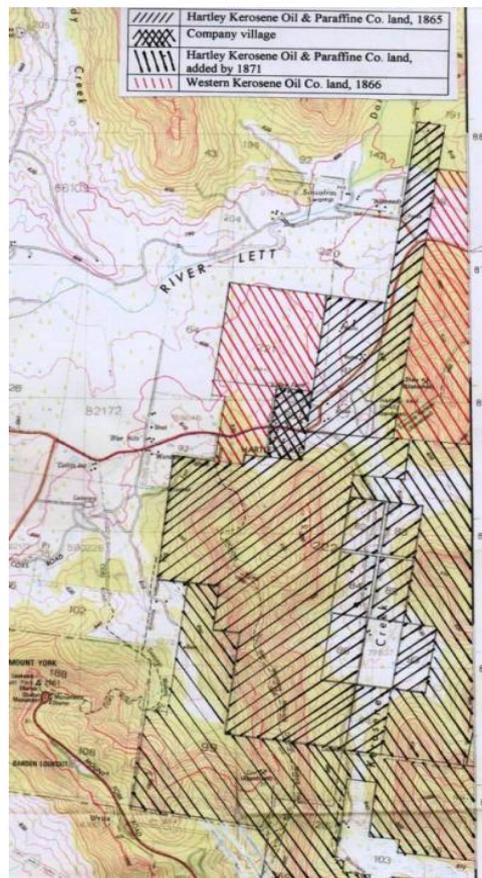


Figure 6. The land in Hartley Vale held by the two oil-shale companies between 1865 and 1871, showing the company village cross-hatched on the land of the Hartley Kerosene Oil and Paraffine Co. Portion 41 and the bridge, straddling Hartley Vale Road, are immediately to the right of the village area.

Source. Base map, 1:25000 Hartley 8930-4N, superimposed with information on land titles partly from Darryl K. Mead, 'The Technology and Operation of the New South Wales Oil-Shale Industry from 1865-1906 with the Inclusion of Hartley Vale, Airly and Torbane Sites to 1913', unpublished PhD thesis, University of New South Wales, June 1986, vol. I, p.142 Figure 6.1; p.162, Figure 6.4; p.167 Figure 6.5.

The best conclusion to be drawn from the available historical evidence is that the present bridge over Kerosene Creek was built in 1839-1840 by the public-spirited community Committee based in Richmond and Windsor. The formation in the 1830s of a local Committee to raise private funds and to take sole responsibility for essential features of an entire road with the perceived potential of Bells Line is without precedent. The only surviving part of Bells Line infrastructure which can be attributed to the Committee's work in 1839-1840 and which is still in use is the Kerosene Creek bridge.



Figure 7. In this plan of 1867, two years after the shale-oil industry had commenced in Hartley Vale, the 'present dray track' is shown starting at the end of Bells Line on the right and curving westwards before turning south to join the Great Western Highway north of Little Hartley. Only the eastern end of the dray road is reproduced in this detail. The bridge over Kerosene Creek is not marked. **Source.** Crown Plan, R 718.1603

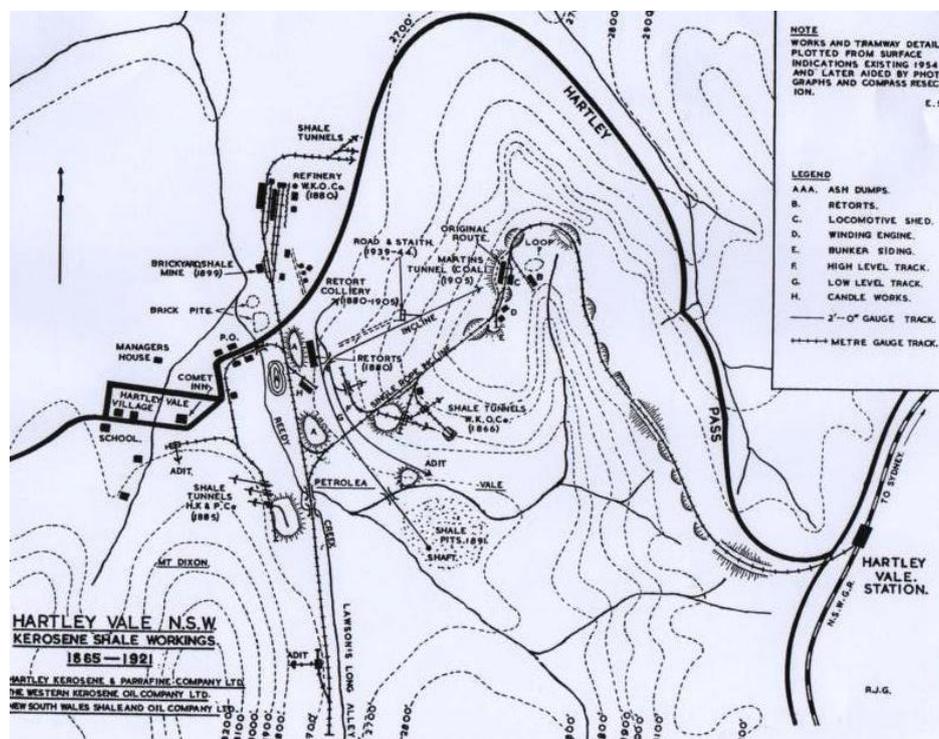


Figure 8. Composite plan of Hartley Vale shale-oil works over its fifty years of existence, showing five tramway bridges.

Source. G.H. Eardley and E.M. Stephens, *The Shale Railways of New South Wales*, Australian Railway Historical Society, Sydney, 1974, p.16.

The bridge was a statement in defiance of Sir Thomas Mitchell, the dominating Surveyor-General, who refused to develop Bells Line into an alternative route across the Mountains. It's very workmanlike stonework is different in style from the many culverts and bridges built around the same time by Mitchell's road gangs on the western and northern roads, just as it is much more sophisticated than the stone walling of the Kurrajong Heights Zigzag of the 1820s at the other end of Bells Line.

The case for 1839-1840 as the construction date of the Kerosene Creek bridge is impelling. The bridge requires repair and it is good that the Lithgow City Council, on the advice of Christo Aitken acting on my reappraisal of the historic evidence, is undertaking sympathetic conservation works.

Ian Jack

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The Bloody Cutting

Just above the backwaters of Lake Lyell, west of Lithgow, lies the site of the No 2 Stockade, Cox's River. This largest of the convict stockades providing labour for Mitchell's Road to Bathurst, operated from 1832. Its capacity peaked some time before 1835, with some seven hundred convicts and guards sited at this lonely outpost. Little remains to remind one of what transpired here, but the road to the west up the ridge beyond the site, is a powerful memorial to those who slaved here. No more significant memorial exists than this cutting a few hundred metres up from the river - the Bloody Cutting, a single lane pass, cut by convicts in irons, through the black metamorphosed shale of the spine of the ridge.

Mitchell's road that ascends this ridge through the Bloody Cutting has been called the Old Western Road, probably since the time the current line of the highway was determined in the 1960's. To avoid the confusion for emergency and postal folk, that emanates from the multitude of bits of old road still carrying the Old Western Road name, it has long been the target of a road renaming proposal.



Bloody Cutting 2016



Isolated stockade landscape 2016

Bishop Ignatius Doggett, whose childhood was spent in Rydal and who died in 2004 at the age of 96, was interviewed in the 1990's by Sue Rosen and quoted in her seminal work on the Western Road. He passed on his recollections of his father's stories about the naming of the cutting and its history.

A number of different proposals for the renaming of the road have been considered. A proposal to Lithgow Council that the road should be named after "*it's most distinctive feature, known locally as the 'bloody cutting' a narrow defile wide enough to accommodate a single vehicle that was cut by the recidivist convict road makers dedicated, against their will, to the execution of Mitchell's Bathurst Road vision*" was initially considered by Lithgow Council staff to be unacceptable under road naming rules, as likely to be offensive, racist, derogatory or demeaning. A considered defence of the Bloody Cutting Road naming proposal by heritage aficionados, eventually won the support of Lithgow City Councillors, who asked that the Bloody Cutting Road name proposal be proceeded with. The next week saw the headline "*Why the Bloody Hell shouldn't we have Bloody Cutting Road*" by the Lithgow Mercury, as Council proceeded to a further round of community consultation on the issue.

The results are now in. Council's staff have confirmed that the name is acceptable to the Geographic Names Board and the latest round of community consultation has brought only two responses. One suggested that the name proposed was defamatory to the Lithgow LGA, whilst a second respondent claimed that they had long known the cutting as the Black Cutting and that the road should be named Backwater Road. As Council officers suggest, the use of the term "*bloody*" may be offensive to some, on the other hand it may also accurately reflect the history surrounding the road.

Subsequently at their June meeting Lithgow City Council resolved "*that Council proceed with the online road naming process and gazette the road name of Bloody Cutting Road accordingly and notify appropriate landowners and authorities of the new address changes*". This proposal will shortly be loaded onto the Geographic Names Board website where it will be displayed for one month as a current proposal for public comment before being formally recognised. Any support of this proposal would be appreciated.

Hopefully, Bloody Cutting Road will forever resonate with travellers and spur them to explore and ponder this very real piece of our early convict history. *Ramsay Moodie*

Book Review: The Duck Hole

by Michael Keats and John Fox

The Duck Hole is a section of the Glenbrook Creek that has long been a popular bushwalking and swimming destination. Those who were observant would have noticed some infrastructure on the track down and at the water's edge and may have been curious about what its origins were. The book includes many historic photographs and reads like a detective story. The authors set out to learn more about the historic infrastructure, and a

systematic investigation was made. In the process, they refuted local folklore and discovered the real story behind a fascinating period of rail history in the Blue Mountains.



This compelling text was officially launched at the Lapstone Hotel, Great Western Highway, Blaxland, on 24th June 2019, and is available from most local book outlets in the mountains. You can find out more information about the book and also buy it at:

<https://www.bushexplorers.com.au/books/tdh1.htm>

The Technical Side

The Run-rig System of Land Tenure and Farming

The run-rig system of land tenure and farming of arable land was operated under the old clan system in Scotland, particularly in the Highlands and islands, where clan chiefs usually had a military background. It was also known as rig-a-rendal, a "rig" being a narrow strip of ploughed, cultivated land.

Tacksmen leased large areas of land ("tac" meaning farm) from the clan chief on a long-term basis as a reward for military service or through family ties. They, in turn, sub-let most of the land to small holders on an annual lease without security or tenure. The small holders annual rent was therefore payable to the tacksmen and it was usually paid in kind, either by labour or agricultural produce or both.



Open arable land was divided into towns or townships, comprising an area of cultivable "in-bye" land and a larger area of pasture and rough grazing around it. The in-bye was divided into strips, called "rigs". No part of this arable land was held permanently by any individual small holder. About one third was re-allocated annually. That way a third of the land under cultivation was reallocated each year and the whole of the tack land changed hands every three years, so that the good land and the poorer land rotated among all the tenants.

The land round the township was held collectively by all the small holders from within the township in the same way as it is today as common grazing under the crofting system. The run-rig system was adopted in the late medieval period, replacing earlier enclosed fields which were associated with a more dispersed pattern of settlement. It fell into decline mainly over the last quarter of the 18th century and the first quarter of the 19th century, when replaced by the crofting system.

The detailed working of run-rig differed from place to place, and this included the degree of co-operation within the communal farms. In some instances, where ploughing was carried out by horse gangs, the responsibility for this was shared among the tenants - so providing an obvious communal activity. A further complication was that many parts of the West Highlands used the caschrom (a crooked spade for tillage used for turning the ground where a plough cannot work because of stones) to work arable fields, especially in the Hebrides, so the driver of a shared plough team was not required.

Two documented methods of working run-rig demonstrate the relatively limited level of co-operative working required:

- A typical township might have 8 tenants who would plough all the arable land, then divide it into parts judged to be of equal quality and draw lots for each crop, as to who would occupy each part. The tenant of each part would then prepare his own section for sowing, broadcast his seed and then finally harvest.
- The second was where spade and caschrom working was used. Here the land was divided before any working of the soil and each lot was worked entirely individually by the occupier.

It is considered to be a system of management not necessarily based on communal ownership, but was a system that valued private property and employed communal activity only when necessary.

From the mid-18th century the system was steadily replaced in Scotland as the in-bye was divided into crofts under fixed tenancy, although run-rig survived into the 20th century in some parts of the Hebrides. In Ireland, a similar system was called rundale.

The run-rig system of tenure should not be confused with the agricultural practice known as rig and furrow, where a horse drawn plough is worked in a clockwise direction, with the mould board turning the furrow to the right, thereby creating, over time, permanent ridges.

The marks of long-abandoned run-rigs are still visible today on bare hillsides all over Scotland, especially after a light dusting of snow.

Patsy Moppett

References:

The Run-rig System of Land Tenure: Angus McLeod, Hebridean Connections

Wikipedia, Run Rig

Run-rig farming – Jacobites, Enlightenment and the Clearances: www.sath.org.uk

Community events & updates

Update: Roxy Theatre, Parramatta

Further to an article in the BMACHO Heritage Newsletter No. 61 March-April 2019, an update is provided by the writer, Les Todd, on the fate of this iconic building.

The threat to the heritage listed Roxy Theatre was to demolish the rear half and build a 33 storey tower over the top of, and behind it. The proposed plan, which was rejected by Council last September, would have also involved restoration and refurbishment of the forecourt and demolition of a rear section of the building, including much of the side walls, a roof truss structure and significant original decorative fabric.

When Parramatta City Council refused his application, the applicant appealed to the Land and Environment Court. After a three day hearing in June, the court has decided to refuse his appeal. The Commissioner said in her judgement that ".....*The concept proposal has not, however, struck a reasonable balance between developing the site and retaining and conserving the heritage item..... [It] will have an unacceptable impact on its identified*

heritage significance as a good and relatively intact representative example of the 'picture palaces' of the interwar period."



Roxy Theatre, Parramatta

The developer has also tried twice to have the theatre de-listed from the State Heritage Register, but these were refused also.

The building was erected in 1929 and fell into disuse from 2014. The Roxy changed hands in 2002, closing as a cinema in 2004. It was then adapted as an entertainment complex. Its former stalls, dress circle and shops were used as bars, restaurants and a live entertainment venue during its time as an entertainment complex, before it closed in 2014.

The owner and developer of the Roxy said he would now renovate the building and reopen it as a pub. He claims that this would require no further approvals as the site already had a 24-hour pub licence for more than 2,000 patrons, as well as a licence for 15 poker machines. It remains to be seen.....!

Patsy Moppett

References:

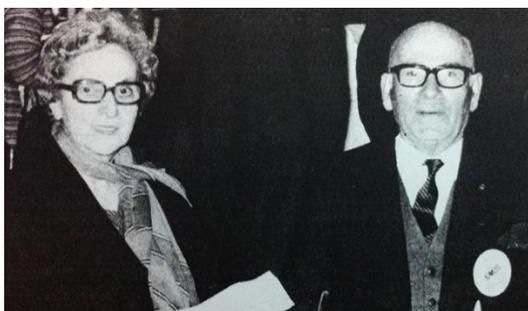
Les Todd, Vice President, Parramatta branch of the National Trust, email of 2 July 2019

Roxy Theatre in Parramatta spared demolition after 'excessive' development proposal rejected: WIN News, 2 July 2019

Seductive and dramatic proposal to redevelop historic Roxy Theatre rejected: Sydney Morning Herald, 28 June 2019

Remembering The Paragon

One of the objectives of the Friends of The Paragon group is to provide a forum and resource for those interested in the history of the former Paragon Café, Katoomba. The Friends of The Paragon Cafe, Katoomba are extending an invitation to the community to share their treasured stories of The Paragon Cafe. To coincide with the launch of History Week 2019, the proposed date for the storytelling event is Saturday, 31 August 2019, to be held at the Blue Mountains Historical Society venue at Hobby's Reach, 100 Blaxland Road, Wentworth Falls.



Mary & Zac Simos



Early days

People have been asked to share their treasured stories of the Paragon Café, Katoomba, during the renowned Simos era. The Friends are planning an afternoon of storytelling and

reminiscing, sharing treasured memories or mementos of visits or connections with The Paragon. Sharing stories, big or small, inspire us to value and protect special places. The Paragon Café means a lot to so many across generations!

Contact the Friends of the Paragon for further information at friendsoftheparagon@gmail.com

Blue Mountains: New additions to National Trust Register

The National Trust of Australia (NSW) was formed in 1945, as an organisation to address community concerns that commercial activities and government policy at that time were destroying parts of the natural and built environment, which should be preserved for future generations. This concern has evolved over ensuing decades to a role of advocacy on behalf of the community, for the incorporation of environmental and heritage issues and objectives into the process of government decision-making and commercial development. To reinforce this policy, the Trust holds a Register of places significant to the State which seeks to support their perceived responsibility for identifying and conserving heritage places. Three iconic Blue Mountains properties have recently been added to the National Trust Register. They are:

- Officers' Mess at the Glenbrook RAAF Base,
- Palais Royale Hotel, Katoomba
- Savoy Theatre, Katoomba.

While it is acknowledged that the Register does not have legal status, the listings serve to acknowledge the heritage significance of these items to the wider community.

The Officers' Mess was built in 1936 as the Lapstone Hotel and retains many of its original features, both internal & external. It has been restored and the interior re-modelled, though only slightly due to its historical status, while the outside remains unaltered. The RAAF acquired the premises in 1949 and have occupied it from 1950.



RAAF Officers' Mess, Glenbrook



Palais Royale, Katoomba

The Palais Royale started out as two separate cottages named Glen Eric and Hillside, built in 1896. In 1901 it became a convent school and bible college, and then became a guest house and a dance hall from 1912. It continued as a guest house for many years and today is a luxury hotel. Although it has had many renovations over time it retains its early charm and elegance.

The Kings Theatre and Amusement Hall was built in 1911 and played a significant role in the social and cultural life of Katoomba. It included a skating rink in the basement. The name of the building on the site became The Savoy in the 1930s. Springwood Historians note that in its lifetime it has served as a venue for live theatre, a chocolate factory, a Turkish bath, a billiard saloon and a grocery store.

National Trust representative Rod Stowe advises that the National Trust *"..... recommend that their significance as part of the national, state, or local heritage be conserved through controls that allow, where necessary, for new and compatible development and associated works, all of which respect the character of the place or item through enhancement rather than conflict."*

The buildings also remain listed on Schedule 5 of Council's Local Environmental Plan 2015 as locally significant.

Patsy Moppett

References:

Buildings placed on National Trust Register, Blue Mountains Gazette 21st June 2019

Savoy Theatre Katoomba, Springwood Historians, 2011

Savoy, Office of Environment 2001

Palais Royale, Office of Environment & Heritage

RAAF Officers' Mess, (former Lapstone Hotel), Office of Environment and Heritage

2019 Linnean Society of NSW Natural History Field Symposium

World heritage on Sydney's doorstep: the natural history of the blue mountains, geology, flora, fauna and human impacts.

The first circular has been issued with regard to the abovementioned event. NSW has had previous field symposia in the Snowy Mountains and the Warrumbungles (last September), and now the Society is bringing one to the Blue Mountains. The previous symposia have included a field trip and a day or two of presented scientific papers. This time they have decided to add a session on general natural history for the public, on Saturday 9th November at the Springwood Sports Club.



Rugged Blue Mountains landscapes

The symposium will take place from 7th to 9th November, 2019, and will comprise three sections:

- 1) A geological /botanical field trip in the western Blue Mountains on Thursday 7th November, leaving from Katoomba. Numbers are limited.
- 2) A session of scientific papers held at the Springwood Sports Club on Friday, 8th November.
- 3) A series of lectures on general Blue Mountains natural history held at the Springwood Sports Club on Saturday 9th November.

Participants can register for any combination of the three day sessions.

The Springwood Sports Club Auditorium holds 150 people and is located at 83 Macquarie Rd, Springwood. Lunches and teas as well as program booklets are included in the registration fees for the Sports Club sessions. Participants must provide their own lunch for the field trip on November 7th.

For further information and registration contact the Linnean Society of NSW office:

secretary@linneansocietynsw.org.au

OR

Dan.Bickel@austmus.gov.au

Imperial Hotel, Mount Victoria

After many months of speculation an announcement has now been made as to the future of the significant premises on the corner of the Great Western Highway and Railway Parade at Mount Victoria.

The Radisson Hotel Group has signed up to manage the Asia-Pacific's first Radisson Collection Hotel in the Blue Mountains, in a deal with China-backed One Pro Investment Group. Under the deal, the historic Imperial Hotel on the Great Western Highway at Mount Victoria will be redeveloped into a 60-room Radisson Collection Hotel, with a deadline to open in 2023.



The One Pro Group bought the Imperial Hotel for about \$2.5 million two years ago and has since worked on a development application, obtaining approval for the heritage restoration and new build earlier this year.

Their property manager advises that Radisson will manage the premises, which will be restored to its former glory. Apart from the room upgrade the hotel will feature an all-day restaurant, lobby, bar, fitness centre, ballroom and outdoor terrace.

The Imperial Hotel opened in 1878 and has hosted prime ministers and royalty including Kings George V and George VI. It was reputed to be the largest building in NSW outside Sydney. Since 1901 the building has borne the regal Coat of Arms as can still be seen today. In later years it has been a haven for day trippers in the sunny beer garden and terrace.

Patsy Moppett

References:

www.realcommercial.com.au

History to be reborn at the Mount? Lithgow Mercury, 2 July 2019

Glenbrook & District Historical Society Inc Celebrates 25 Years

On Saturday 1st September 2018 the Glenbrook & District Historical Society celebrated 25 years as an entity, holding a special morning tea at which the Society acknowledged their achievements. The achievements were outlined by President Joan Peard, and included:

- 1) Organising the 125th anniversary of the first Glenbrook Public School.
- 2) Lobbying against improper use of Whitton Park.
- 3) Acquiring a building at the old primary school in Ross Street for use as a museum.
- 4) Restoring damaged plaques on historic sites, and the damaged "Blinky Bill" bus stop in Ross Street.
- 5) Organising a successful & informative historic walks program through Tim Miers and Doug Knowles.
- 6) Establishing a Pioneer Wall adjacent to the Visitors Information Centre to honour early Glenbrook families.
- 7) Growth of membership, and Newsletter distribution.



Speakers on the celebration day included:

- David Payne on “Ulinbawn”.
- John Dikeman on “Bonnie Doone”.
- Some members talked about their own families from the area.
- Doug Knowles gave an official mention on the 1st Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade in Glenbrook.
- Peter Berry spoke on the history of St.Andrews Church.

An anniversary cake was cut and a booklet has now been produced which records some history of Glenbrook and the Society, and the anniversary event. The booklet is available from the Society.

Patsy Moppett

Rex Stubbs Symposium 2019 – Bringing the Past to Life

Hawkesbury City Council Cultural Services are issuing invitations to the Rex Stubbs Symposium for 2019. The Symposium is named in commemoration of Emeritus Dr Rex Stubbs OAM, who was first elected to Hawkesbury City Council in 1983. He held office for nearly 27 years and was the Council’s Mayor and its longest serving Councilor.

This is a free event that recognises Dr Stubbs’ commitment to the Hawkesbury community, and aims to promote interest in the unique history of the area.

The theme this year is *Bringing the past to life* with topics relating to publishing tips and also researching objects.

Guest speakers are:

- Megan Martin, Librarian, Head of Collections & Access at Sydney Living Museums - *“Building a narrative from objects”*.
- Christine Yeats, Historian, Archivist & President, Royal Australian Historical Society - *“Publishing tips for historical societies & groups”*.

Other topics:

- *Spanish Influenza Project* by Michelle Nichols & Neil Renaud.
- Library, Museum and Gallery's new integrated online catalogue.
- Your group's projects and activities – each group invited to give a 5 minute update.



Deerubbin Centre, Windsor

This annual history symposium is an information sharing and networking opportunity for members of all Hawkesbury Local Government Area historical societies and heritage groups, as well as those in immediate environs. It provides the opportunity for the representatives of groups to broaden their knowledge of trends in local and family history, heritage and collection management and to hear about projects that other organisations are focusing on.

Date: Saturday 31 August 2019

Time: 9:30am - 3pm

Venue: Tebbutt Room, Deerubbin Centre,
300 George Street Windsor

A light lunch is to be provided.

For more information or to book, email Kate.Fisher@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au

Kate Fisher is the new Creative Programs Coordinator for Cultural Services.

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Frederick D’Arcy, surveyor: some age and genealogical matters

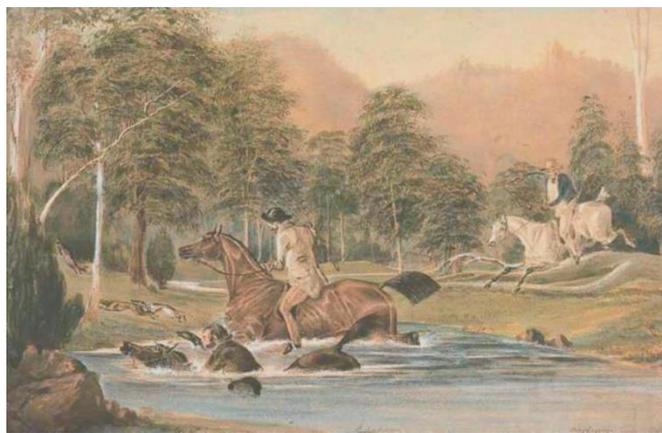
Some readers of this newsletter may have my 2010 book “*Frederick Robert D’Arcy: colonial surveyor, explorer and artist c1809-1875*”. Others may have seen a library copy.

Frederick D’Arcy, who was my great-great-grandfather, had a chequered career in New South Wales, Port Phillip, Van Diemen’s Land and Queensland. His claim to fame in the Blue Mountains area includes his surveys of the rugged Colo country for Major Mitchell in the early 1830s, his stint as clerk of court at Hartley from 1849, and his subsequent years as district surveyor at Rylstone.

No official record has been found of his date of birth. When I published the book, even his year of birth was speculative because contradictory versions of his age cropped up in various records throughout his life.



*Frederick D’Arcy’s grandfather
Gordon Major-General Robert D’Arcy CB*



*Frederick D’Arcy’s c1868 painting of the poet Adam Lindsay
on a kangaroo hunt. The rider in the water is probably Frederick
himself*

Since publication however, English family researcher Tim Anderson has discovered a note in the proverbial trunk of family memorabilia. Hand-written by Frederick’s grandfather Major-General Robert D’Arcy (c1750-1827), it lists the birth dates of his nine children, and of his grandson Frederick.

Assuming the note is correct, Frederick was born on 22 May 1811, two years later than I believed based on the balance of other evidence. Thus, he was only seventeen when he came to the Colony, and only twenty when Mitchell put him to work on the Colo.

The correction raises a significant and puzzling issue. In my book I relate how, in 1846, after a period of unemployment, Frederick applied for a position as customs officer. He was offered for the job, but then rejected because it was realised that he was “*above the age prescribed for admission of outdoor officers ... he has admitted to Mr Barnes that he is thirty-*

BLUE MOUNTAINS ASSOCIATION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE ORGANISATIONS INC.

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Email: committee@bluemountainsheritage.com.au or j.koperberg@bigpond.com

Website: www.bluemountainsheritage.com.au

ABN: 53 994 839 952

The organisation: Blue Mountains Association of Cultural & Heritage Organisations Inc. (BMACHO) was established in April 2006 after local historical and heritage societies and individuals recognised the need for the creation of a cultural heritage strategy for the local government area (LGA) of Blue Mountains City Council. The constituency now embraces but is not limited to, the LGAs of Blue Mountains, Lithgow, Hawkesbury and Penrith. BMACHO membership includes historical and heritage groups, museums, commercial enterprises with an historical or heritage component in its core business, local government (local studies units, library collections) and a limited number of individual members by invitation such as but not necessarily academics. The objectives of the organisation are:

1. To raise public consciousness of the value of cultural heritage
2. To encourage and assist cultural heritage
3. To initiate and support cultural heritage activities not already covered by member organisations.

One of the aims of BMACHO is to bring the various bodies into closer contact to encourage them to work more closely together and to provide a combined voice on matters of importance within the heritage sector.

Affiliations: BMACHO is a member of the Royal Australian Historical Society.

Publications: BMACHO's official newsletter *Heritage* is edited by Patsy Moppett. The annual refereed *Blue Mountains History Journal* is edited by Dr Peter Rickwood and occasional papers are published from time to time.

Membership: The following organisations are members of BMACHO: Blue Mountain Education & Research Trust; Blue Mountains Botanic Garden, Mt Tomah; Blue Mountains City Library; Blue Mountains Cultural Centre; Blue Mountains Family History Society Inc; Blue Mountains Historical Society; Bygone Beautys Treasured Teapot Museum and Tearooms; City of Lithgow Mining Museum Inc; Colo Shire Family History Group; Everglades Historic House & Gardens; Friends of the Paragon Inc; Glenbrook & District Historical Society Inc; Hartley District Progress Association; Hawkesbury Historical Society Inc; Kurrajong-Comleroy Historical Society Inc; Leuralla NSW Toy & Railway Museum; Lithgow & District Family History Society Inc; Lithgow – Eskbank House Museum and Lithgow Regional Library – Local Studies; Mt Victoria & District Historical Society Inc; Mt Wilson & Mt Irvine Historical Society Inc (including Turkish Bath Museum); National Trust of Australia (NSW) – Blue Mountains Branch; National Trust of Australia (NSW) – Lithgow Branch; Nepean District Historical Society Inc; Norman Lindsay Gallery and Museum; Scenic World Blue Mountains Limited; Springwood Historical Society Inc; Transport Signal Communication Museum Inc; Valley Heights Locomotive Depot Heritage Museum, Woodford Academy Management Committee, Zig Zag Railway Co-op Ltd.

The following are individual members: Fiona Burn, Philip Hammon, Dr Wayne Hanley, Associate Professor Ian Jack, Ian Milliss, Patsy Moppett, Keith Painter and Dr Peter Rickwood.

Committee: The management committee for 2019-2020 (from March 2019) is: Ian Jack (President), Patsy Moppett (Vice President and Newsletter Editor), Fiona Burn (Secretary), Philip Hammon (Treasurer), Dick Morony (Public Officer/Membership Secretary/ Calendar Editor), Suzanne Smith (Events and Venue Co-ordinator), Jan Koperberg (Correspondence Secretary), Summar Hipworth, Rae Clapshaw, Roy Bennett, and Rod Stowe (co-opted).

Greater Blue Mountains Heritage Trail sub-committee: Fiona Burn, Jan Koperberg, Rae Clapshaw and Suzanne Smith, with guest member Gay Hendrikson.

Blue Mountains History Conference 2020 sub-committee: Ian Jack, Patsy Moppett, Jan Koperberg, Summar Hipworth, Phil Hammon.

Disclaimer: views and opinions expressed in Heritage originate from many sources and contributors. Every effort is taken to ensure accuracy of material. Content does not necessarily represent or reflect the views and opinions of BMACHO, its committee or its members. If errors are found feedback is most welcome.
