

QUINBEAN

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Queanbeyan's Centenary Arch – Celebrating 100 Years.

The Journal of
Queanbeyan & District Historical Museum Society Inc.

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The Police Sergeant's Residence – Queanbeyan Museum

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*The Image on the front cover is of Queanbeyan's Centenary Arch.
If you look closely you will see our humble Museum in the
background!*

From the President...

It is indeed wonderful, that again we celebrate the birthday of Queanbeyan. This edition commemorates Queanbeyan's 170th Birthday with historical information about 17 interesting decades in our town.

The Society has been working very hard at the Museum, opening the Museum, interpreting the collection, mounting new displays and hosting groups. Attendance at the museum is going very well. We are proud that 407 people visited the Museum in June 2008. We are also proud of our record on community engagement with a full program of events for locals and visitors.

We have developed a strong partnership with the Canberra Institute of Technology, and other institutions. The National Archives of Australia has donated acid free cardboard and the National Gallery lent frames for the CIT student's exhibition, the NSW Police have donated a display cabinet and we are working with them on their 30th Anniversary events. A very large number of school groups visit the Museum and we have good attendance at our events.

An important activity at the Museum later on in the year will be the engagement of a person by the Queanbeyan City Council to work with the Society in assessing the historical significance of the collection and to conduct significance training with us. This will assist us in targeting collection material for conservation and in applying for funding.

Enjoy this edition of *Quinbean!*

Kerrie Ruth

A Queanbeyan Timeline: 17 interesting titbits celebrating 17 decades of Queanbeyan.

Compiled by Andrew Blundell

1838 - 1848

In 1838 James Larmer surveyed the site that was Queanbeyan and describes the location: *"The hut on the east bank of the river is occupied by Wm Skate, a blacksmith and the paddocks, huts and store on the west bank are occupied by Messrs Hurst and Buckley. The low ranges on the east side of the river are unfit for cultivation and the timber on them consists of gum, stringy bark and bastard box. The flats although good are sometime under water. The low ranges on the west bank are tolerably good for cultivation and the ground here is good and never undulated and as is a more eligible situation than any other I could point out. I beg to suggest that the first sections be marked out there and sold.* In October 1838 land went on sale in Queanbeyan for £2 per acre, and by 1841 the NSW census recorded Queanbeyan as having 72 persons, 16 female. There were the Elmsall and Dog and Style Inns, a police barracks, constable's hut and lock-up, two stores and three residences.

1848 - 1858

Queanbeyan's first bridge was built by locals who were fed-up with having to use stepping stones to cross the river. This structure did not last long and business folk began agitating for a proper structure. It seems a bridge would be built due to beer and food. Bradbury did not want his supply of brewery products becoming stuck in the river when he crossed them to Hunts Inn, and J. J. Wright wanted the

custom of those living on the Eastern shores. But the next question was where should it go? Mowatt to Rutledge Sts, Trinculo to Monaro St? On Thursday 19 August, 1858, decked with flag and banners, Miss Faunce officially named the newly opened Bridge, "*The Queen's Bridge*".

1858 - 1868

Discussions occurred on the possible site of a Court House for Queanbeyan. Mr Downey had prepared plans and these had been accepted but the townspeople were not in agreement as to where it should go. Market square was not possible due to the possibility of flooding, and the corner of Monaro and Lowe Sts was offered. Local sportsmen had a problem with this as it would interfere with their sports and cricket grounds. A pleasant hill top in Crawford St was offered, but it was near a permanent swamp. In April 1860 the NSW Government stated the Monaro/Lowe corner was ideal and McLean and Ross of Goulburn constructed a courthouse, on the site that still hands out decisions today.

1868 - 1878

In 1870 John Robertson was replaced as Minister for Lands by Queanbeyan's newest MP, The Honourable William Forster. Forster was elected to represent Queanbeyan, beating Charles Campbell, who subsequently took a seat in the Legislative Council. In Queanbeyan a meeting was held to organise a testimonial for the former lands minister, whose actions and subsequent land act benefited free selectors not only in NSW, but also in Queanbeyan and the wider district. It was decided that some substantial recognition be shown to him. Collections were taken to benefit the Robertson family in Sydney.

1878 - 1888

In November 1881 a young man, Mr Stewart Lee, was arrested for trying to sell a gold chain that had been stolen earlier from Mr Gabriel's dispensary. During questioning some startling confessions were made. With two others, and knowing Mr Gabriel was at the Church of England for choir practice, Mr Lee stood watch at the Commercial Bank corner, whilst the others entered the dispensary through an unlocked back door. Lee whilst being held in the Queanbeyan jail, named the other parties, but also explained that other stolen goods were secreted in the banks of the Queanbeyan River. The trio also claimed planning the robbery of the Queanbeyan branch of the Bank of NSW and Mr E. Lesmond's jewellers. Barely out of their teens, they were described as suspect characters of ill repute.

1888 - 1898

The drought and lack of water in the late 1800's caused a lot of strife in the financially burdened Municipality. A couple of years earlier, Dr Fitzpatrick suggested a dam on the river that could supply water and prevent disease. It was deemed too costly and it wasn't until 1901 that the weir was built with funding from NSW Public Works, of which E. W. O'Sullivan, the member for Queanbeyan was the minister. There was however a Municipal well in Trinculo Pl, O'Grady sunk it in the mid 1880's, but slowly dried up as the drought progressed. In 1891 Queanbeyan was inundated by flood, the water problem was solved for a short time, but the ebb and flow of water would continue to cause Queanbeyan issues.

1898 - 1908

At the end of March 1900 another case of typhoid was officially reported. The child belonged to Mr C. Hawes, who lost his eldest daughter from the same disease less than seven days earlier. The other cases of sickness in the town seemed to be recovering. At the instance of the Mayor, Mr J. Pike, the inspector of nuisances had been very busy working in cleansing properties and premises within the municipality. Making several inspections, nearly every resident has willingly gone to the trouble of cleaning up yards and retrieving nuisances. These actions should have the effect of checking and preventing the outbreak of typhoid and other diseases.

1908 - 1918

In 1915 a fire broke out in an ancient brick building at the back of Hayes and Russell stores. The old building originally consisted of two brick cottages under one roof which for many years were tenanted by private residents. The block these tenements were on was purchased by John Bull who erected the two story building that became his store before Price and Tomsitt took over, and consequently Hayes and Russell. Other notable fires in Queanbeyan include Wm Brook's saddler's shop, where Mrs Dudley's store later stood and in the 1870's a hotel on the eastern end of Macquoid Street kept by Mr Lonergan.

1918 - 1928

Local pioneers were presented to the Duke and Duchess of York at the opening of the Parliament in Canberra. Of note was Mr John Gale, the oldest journalist in Australia at 97 and coroner for the Federal Territory and Queanbeyan

districts. Others presented included Archibald McKeahnie at 94, Mr F. A. Campbell, Mr & Mrs S. Southwell, Mr & Mrs A. H. Wright, Mr Richard Schumack who was 85, Mr & Mrs P. Gallagher, Mr George Blundell who at 84 claimed to have grown 100 bushels of wheat to the acre on the flats within half a mile of Parliament House. Also presented were Mr & Mrs Wm Mayo, Mr & Mrs J. McLaughlin, the two Misses Moore (granddaughters of the late J. J. Moore) and Mr Patrick Curley.

1928 - 1938

On Wednesday 12 August 1931 unemployed workers gathered with leading citizens to beautify the small reserve fronting the Queanbeyan Showground on Cooma Street. It was an outcome of a Municipal Council meeting, whereby a working bee would be carried out to dig holes for trees donated by the Superintendent of Parks and Gardens in the Capital City. Fortunately the holes were easy to dig given the amount of rain the town had had in recent days. Afternoon tea consisted of cakes, sandwiches and excellent cups of tea. These refreshments were provided by the ladies of the Methodist Church. The left over food was parcelled up by the ladies for the later benefit of the unemployed workers.

1938 - 1948

Former rector of Christ Church, The Reverend Canon Gordon Hirst received a memorial window, dedicated to him at St Saviours Cathedral in Goulburn in 1942. Bishop, The Right Reverend E. H. Burgmann dedicated the memorial to Canon Hirst with Mrs Hirst, and her son Glen present at the service. The wording in the glass "Suffer Little Children To

Come To Me" was quite apt for Canon Hirst as he worked tirelessly supporting the children of his parishes.

1948 - 1958

In 1957 Queanbeyan Municipal Council declared war on Larrikinism in Monaro Street. The so called "milk bar cowboys" and "asphalt arabs" frequent the main street in their 'hotted up jalopies'. The Council asked the NSW Police Superintendent to provide Queanbeyan with a traffic policeman due to the lack of local staff. Motorbike riders had been known to ride on the footpath from the Victoria Hotel and race up the footpath as far as William's shop before going back onto the road. It got so bad that at one time a policeman hid in a telephone box at the taxi rank to avoid being assaulted by these youths on bikes.

1958 - 1968

From November 1, 1961 period parking would be introduced in Monaro and parts of Crawford Streets. The NSW police traffic branch inspected Queanbeyan's traffic problems and had recommended these changes. The kerb sides of Monaro Street would become 1 hour parking during business hours, whilst the centre of the street would become 2 hours. Crawford Street, with the exception of the areas already utilised for the standing of buses will be converted to 2 hour parking. It was argued that these changes would benefit retailers with the onset of Christmas shopping. Twice the number of cars will be accommodated, but there were concerns that Council would not be able to introduce the restrictions in the time frame required by the police.

1968 - 1978

Inflation and the rising costs of wages and materials were blamed for the cost blow-out in the building of the new STCC building in Lowe Street in 1975. The tender price of \$830 000 went to \$1M in 18 months. The building was officially opened on Friday November 7 1975. The bottom floor would be used by the STCC and the other four stories leased to Federal Government agencies, including 2 and a half floors to the Australian Industries Commission. The building will be linked to the Goulburn HQ by computer link. Capello and Anderson commenced the building on 21 January 1974 until they went into liquidation in March 1975 when Meli and Eglitis were retained to take over.

1978 - 1988

Queanbeyan's lack of night life was highlighted in January 1986. Business was considered healthy and confidence high and establishments such as a gambling casino, night life, a heated swimming pool, amusement park and 10-pin bowling centre would be a great start. A survey was conducted by South-Eastern Regional NSW Tourism with the co-operation of QCC and the Queanbeyan Chamber of Commerce and Industry and it found that 60% of businesses saw tourism as important. Queanbeyan was now in a better place because of the success of the Woodger Canberra Raiders and more could be done to capitalise on Googong Dam and the catchment area for recreation and tourism. Live entertainment, facilities for young people, out-door restaurants, sidewalk cafes, a pedestrian mall and botanic gardens were identified as improvements to the city.

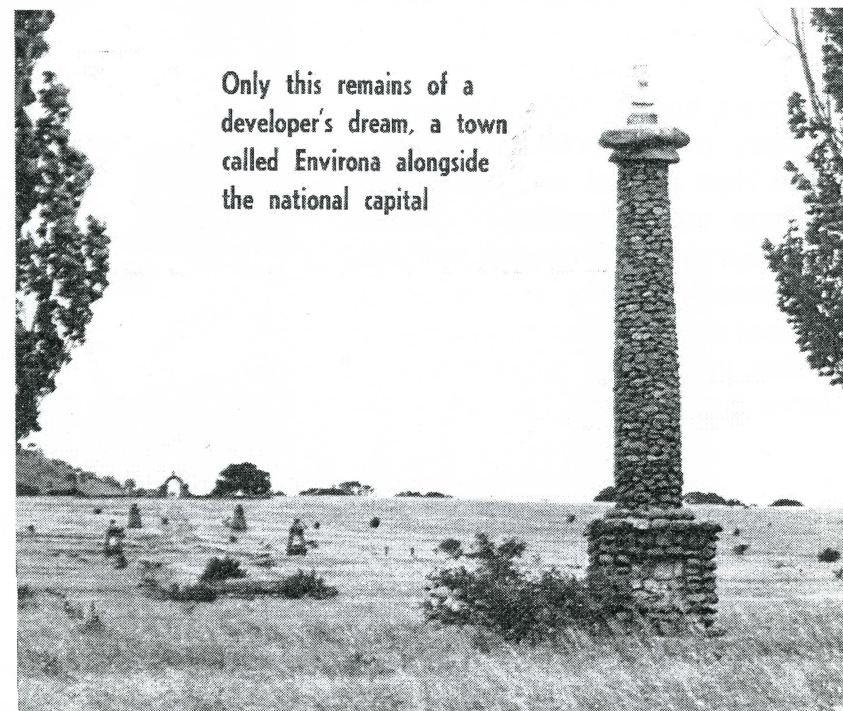
1988 - 1998

Queanbeyan's ongoing relationship with the ACT was tested once again when the ACT Assembly legislated to remove fluoride from the water supply. In 1989, QCC expressed concerns that because Queanbeyan received the same water as the ACT Queanbeyan residents would go without fluoridated water. Mayor Madew expressed concern about Chief Minister Follett's lack of consultation with QCC over the decision. Going it alone, and providing fluoride in the water supply would cost Queanbeyan \$150 000 a year. The Member for Monaro made representations to the NSW Health Minister regarding this issue when a poll of Queanbeyan residents suggested 85% of residents wanted fluoride to remain in the water.

1998 - 2008

In 1999, Queanbeyan businesses established a promotion where a house and land package would be given away to one lucky shopper. QCC donated \$20 000 to the promotion and underwrote the scheme. Queanbeyan Leagues Club was a major sponsor. The incentive was organised to bring people to Queanbeyan to shop. It was argued "...people from all corners of the globe will be flooding to the city for their chance to win the house". The house and land package was valued at \$250 000 and was located in Homestead Rise in Jerrabomberra.

THE LOST CITY OF ENVIRONA



Only this remains of a developer's dream, a town called Environa alongside the national capital

Environa – Henry Parkes gazes across the country that was to become Canberra

As Jerrabomberra, and indeed Canberra itself, move steadily closer to the division of Environa beside the Queanbeyan-Cooma railway line, perhaps it is time to look anew at the ruins, more easily sighted now, of the town that never was.

What remains among overgrown grass and on distant hills, are carefully crafted, rustic stonework ruins. This is Environa, a product of surveyor Henry Halloran's fanciful style of real estate development in the 1920s.

Halloran, born in 1869 at Glebe, Sydney, and schooled at Sydney Boys High School, and Newington College, pursued a career in land development, ultimately becoming a licensed surveyor. He developed at least sixty estates in New South Wales, including a major area at Jervis Bay, Federal Territory.

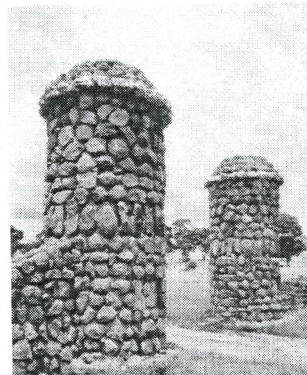


Henry Halloran

Forming his company, Canberra Freehold Estates, following the proclamation of the Jervis Bay Act, 1915, he began to look ambitiously at Queanbeyan's future.

Letchworth and Environa had been approved as new suburbs by Yarrowlumla Shire Council in 1926, and Halloran proceeded to develop them with roads, and meaningless monuments at Environa, and even a railway station at Letchworth.

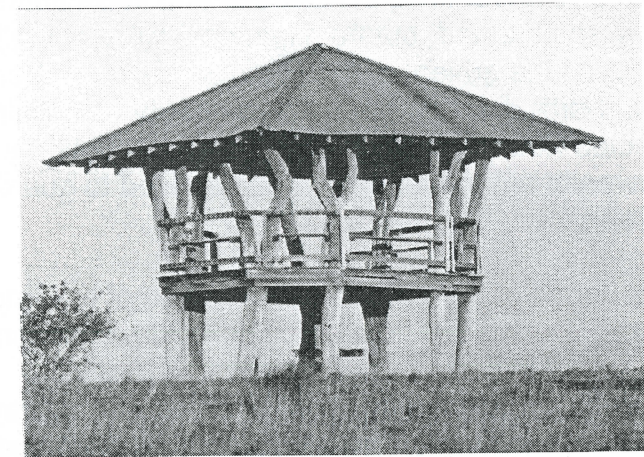
He drew up plans with streets exotically named (on paper only), and built monuments of local stone, laying out the actual town with archways, walls and gateways. A



Gateway, Environa

high imposing column was topped with a bust of Sir Henry Parkes, his face looking out over Canberra.

The gateways led to the focal point of the town, intended to be a town park. Timber pagodas, or bandstands, were scattered on several hills surrounding the division.



Pagoda, Environa

The selling point of these estates was, "the nearest freehold land to the Federal Capital city."

An article in the Queanbeyan - Canberra Advocate, Thursday, Oct 28, 1926, exemplifies the feeling of the day:

"Mayor broadcasts information: the question now arises, why Queanbeyan in preference to Canberra? There is but one answer. Queanbeyan is freehold, Canberra is leasehold sites within the Federal area are sold on a 99 year lease can never become your property, or your children's, or grandchildren's. Allotments are being eagerly sought in the municipality of Queanbeyan, and many lots have been sold in England and other countries,"

"Canberra city is the stage. Canberra freehold is the dress circle", ads stated; "Buy Australian land now purchase a plot of the nearest freehold land to Canberra, the new Capital City."

With Halloran's advertising in Australia and in England, deposits were obtained, but no allotments were actually acquired. With the advent of the Depression, then World War II, Canberra did not go ahead as quickly as anticipated. The expected housing level did not occur, partly because Commonwealth authorities were not disposed to guarantee essential services.

Halloran's hopes of the 20s, 50 years ahead of his time, disappeared. During this time of expected development, Halloran, based in Sydney, made repeated visits to Queanbeyan. He kept a bicycle at Queanbeyan railway station, setting out as soon as the all-night train arrived, to check on his developments. Henry Halloran, surveyor, valuer and auctioneer, as well as Local Government engineer, was praised by the Town Planning Association of New South Wales for his artistic layout of estates.

Environs had similarities to Burley Griffin's designs, and Halloran was later made a fellow of this organization, and a vice president. A quiet unassuming man, he had an interest in local history, and became a member of the Royal Australian Historical Society, and the Australian Pioneers' Club. He died suddenly on Oct 22, 1953, at Bellview Hill.

For a while, families would picnic at the 'ruined city', and often took photos of family members at the foot of the mighty Henry Parkes memorial. In 1971, Mr & Mrs David Larcombe built a home on the property, Mrs Larcombe

being a daughter of Henry Halloran. Her father's stone and timber memorials still surround the home, now much overgrown....A 'vision splendid' which did not eventuate.

Rosemary Curry Orange

Environs references

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The Queanbeyan-Canberra Advocate, 1926-11-28

The Australian Dictionary of Biography Vol 9 1891-1939

The Australian Women's Weekly, 'Canberra's Stonehenge', 1971-02-24

The Daily Telegraph, 1927-04-08

Environs photographs, 1982, R. Curry collection

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## ***Queanbeyan in the 1980's***

The 1980s in Australia saw people became involved in the social movements of the era. In 1980s Australia two of the main movements centred around the Franklin Dam, and Nuclear Disarmament. In Queanbeyan there were at least two local groups which reflected the national and international consciousness. These were the Queanbeyan and District People for Peace and the Monaro Conservation Society.

QDPP was formed in 1984 through the efforts of Harry Hesse. Harry sent letters to many people and groups he thought could be sympathetic and convened a public meeting of about seventy people. Harry had set out the rationale for the group in a letter to teachers, which read in part:

*Our profession more than any other devotes its time and energy to the development of the next generation of humanity. The future of that generation is threatened by the existence of fifty thousand nuclear warheads... I invite you to help the setting up of a local organisation to promote the idea of world peace and disarmament.* The Queanbeyan group was very active, and ran campaigns around nuclear disarmament, against nuclear testing in the Pacific and making our local government area nuclear free.

The unsuccessful struggle to protect Lake Pedder spawned the Tasmanian Wilderness Society which was the core of the successful No Dams campaign protests of 1982-3 against the Franklin Dam in Tasmania. This campaign was the catalyst for the mobilisation of conservationists all over the country. The Queanbeyan Age of 19th January 1983 published an article about Queanbeyan teachers and others from Canberra who joined together in an affinity group and braved wet, cold and dangerous conditions on Tasmania's West Coast to take non violent action in rubber duckies on the Franklin River. This campaign is now legendary in the history of environmental protests. The No Dams Campaigners provided opposition to the Liberal member for Eden-Monaro, Murray Sainsbury when ALP Jim Snow was elected. Many of the protesters will be celebrating in Hobart and around Australia on 1 July 2008, the 25th anniversary of the High Court decision which ultimately saved the Franklin River.

This group formed the nucleus and impetus for the formation of more locally orientated groups in particular the Monaro Conservation Society. Many of the same people were involved in the anti nuclear movement and were members of both the People for Peace and the Conservation Society.

These two groups are still active in Queanbeyan. The peace group mobilised against the Iraq War and organises the Annual Hiroshima Day ceremony in Queanbeyan Peace Park, Queanbeyan, every August 6. This year a seat in the park will be dedicated in the memory of Harry Hesse, peace activist and community worker extraordinaire.

**John McGlynn.**

### ***Edith May Leonard Walker, 1885 - 1975.***

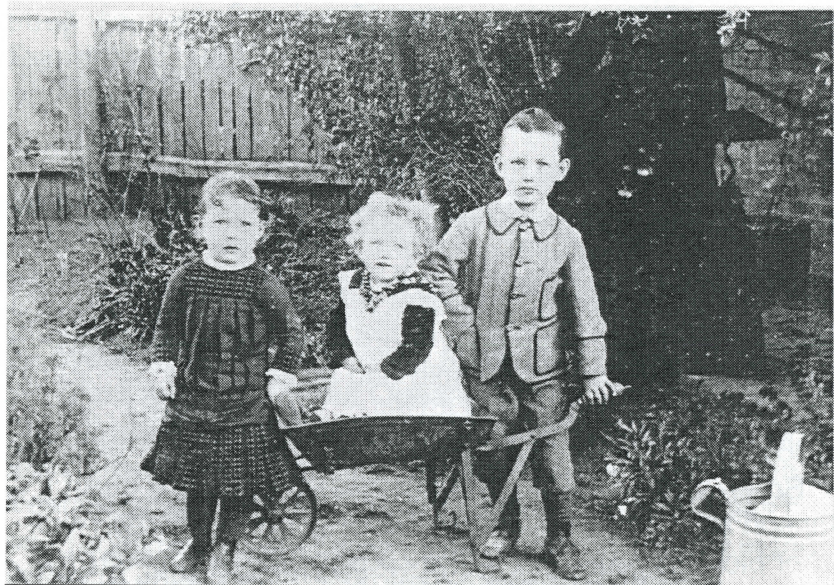
At the age of 71 Miss May Walker retired from teaching. This retirement allowed her to share with Queanbeyan her intimate knowledge of its people and history.

In 1861, Miss Walker's grandfather, Samuel Walker opened his "Braidwood Store" near the corner of Macquoid and Atkinson Sts. By 1866 he had moved the store to the corner block, where the current *Leagues Motel* stands. He continued trading there until 1879 when he became interested in the timber trade. In 1886 he died in the United States pursuing these interests.

Samuel Walker's son, Josiah continued running the Braidwood Store moving their four children into the store and residence. Three more children were born here, of which May was the youngest. May was appointed to the staff of Queanbeyan Public School in April 1922 where she remained a teacher until 1956. In 1963 she allowed the demolition of her old house and the erection of the motel. She moved next door and lived in the small cottage until her death in 1975.



May's parents first lived in Irishtown, Dodsworth St, just after they were married, before taking up residence at the store, number 1 Macquoid St. Of the seven Walker children, the last 3, Lancelot, Ida and May were born on this site.



Miss Walker and her siblings

In 1887 Eddie Hutchison took two photos of these three children. May tells the story: "...in one, Ida and Lance are together and I am in a barrow, waving my hands about; in the other I am in the middle, in the barrow. Liz Collier, our maid, was standing with her arms folded on the fence and mother was in the greenhouse (we had a summer house, all covered with Banksia Rose). It was fashionable for ladies to wear satin aprons with paintings on them, and on this day she was wearing a black satin apron on which my eldest

brother, Sam, painted fuchsias. Sam was quite an artist; he used to do some beautiful work".

Miss Walker remembered people who lived in Queanbeyan:

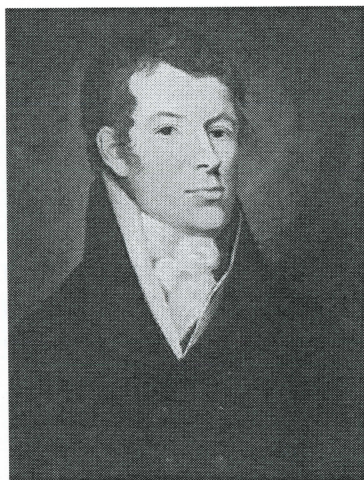
In Atkinson St lived the Dornbusches, they lived in a house closest to Trenerry's. The children were Rosa and Kitty, and there was a boy. Rosa who was older used to come to our place, but Kitty was quieter, she was my age and didn't come as often. Mrs Breen lived in the house after the Dornbusches left. Elsie Morton, now Mrs McVittie had some ducks which used to stray about. I can remember Mrs Breen telling Elsie Morton to 'take her ducks home and feed them'. Elsie's parents, the Dave Mortons, lived in Atkinson St on the opposite side and across Macquoid St, in Glenloch. Mrs Morton was a Holland. They had a little child who died of diptheria while they lived there.

Past Morton's was old Granny Williams, the nurse who brought me into the world, the grandmother, I think of Herb and Ulrich Williams, she lived in a long old-fashioned place. I think the next house then was Mrs Fanny Penny's, the last on that side of Atkinson St.\*\* Mrs Penny was a Swan and because we were very friendly with the Swans we used to call her Aunt Fanny. Harry Barber lived there with them.

*\*\*Mrs Blyton lived in this house, which has since been demolished. It has an interesting history, Mrs Penny's mother, Mrs Jane Swan, moved it brick-by-brick after it was flooded on a lower site in 1970.*



## ***The Legacies of John Macarthur and William Farrer: Queanbeyan's Agrarian Roots.***



John Macarthur (1767 - 1834), by unknown artist.

At school, students are taught all about the role wool and wheat had in the establishment of the colonies and then the Country. Queanbeyan, it turned out had an ideal climate for both. The district today still produces some of the best wool in the world and William Farrer was able to breed a strain of wheat that sustained a fast growing nation. Wool and wheat established Queanbeyan as a business centre in Southern NSW. In 1938 these two raw resources were used to celebrate Queanbeyan's Centenary – as you can see in the photograph of the arch over Farrer Pl on the cover of this issue of *Quinbean*.

Many readers have come to know of the *Old Identities* and their historical information published as letters in the *Queanbeyan Age*, here they recall more:

On the 21<sup>st</sup> January 1930 in a letter to the Editor of the *Queanbeyan Age*:

*Sir - The first bale of wool ever exported from New South Wales was in 1830 by Macarthur and realized 3/6 per lb. The first sheep introduced into the Federal area were those of Merchant Robert Campbell, obtained by him from the Government as compensation for ships commandeered. The next were those of James Wright, of Lanyon, obtained from Macarthur, the only source then from which they were procurable.*

*Merchant Campbell's place was then called Pillago, and afterwards changed to Duntroon. As far back as 1826 Merchant Campbell, or his agent, explored and took up Delegate Station, not for sheep then, but as relief country for his Pillago cattle. This property is still in the possession of his great-grandchildren.*

*Wool sent from Duntroon and Lanyon, as far back as 1835, all the way to Sydney by bullock team, was amongst the first of any importance to be exported and realised very high prices. These high prices continued for some eight or ten years, when all at once they came down without any warning to little more in pence than it had been bringing in shillings. Consequently down went many of the first pioneers who had been tempted to put all their capital into land and sheep. At the same time down with them went nearly all the banks and financial institutions then in the state, and for a while they had to carry on without money by a system of barter and exchange and the use of I.O.U.s.*



*Take care we don't see such times again, if we are not careful and endeavour to carry more than one kind of egg in our baskets and by our legislative enactments make it possible to profitably do so.*

*Yours etc*

*THAT OTHER OLD IDENTITY.*

*Ed. Note: George Blundell, of Church Lane, Canberry, Via Queanbeyan worked as a Bullock Team master on Campbell's Duntroon Estate from the 1860's. In what was a 6 week round trip wool was taken from Duntroon to the docks in Sydney and supplies for both the Campbell's, and businesses in Queanbeyan came back on the return trip. Just imagine driving a team of bullocks to Campbell's Cove and stores down George St to Circular Quay today!*

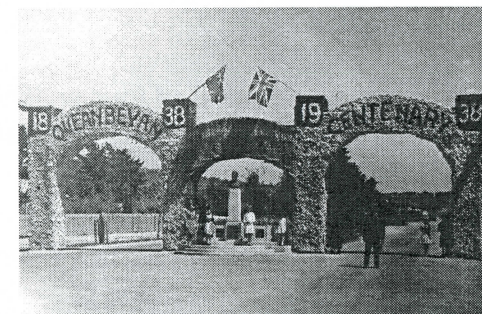
*On the 1<sup>st</sup> August 1930 Old Identity recalls memories of wheat:*

*In 1859 the residents of Ginninderra were astonished when it was reported that James McGregor had some fifty bushels of wheat stolen. At that time McGregor and a man named Crabb were neighbours; each had seven acres adjoining and had both stacked their wheat in the one yard – which was McGregor's. McGregor has two flocks of sheep in his charge and hired a man to thresh and clean the wheat. The flail and wind was the method then in force. McGregor got a shock one morning when the man reported that the heap of wheat had shrunk alarmingly during the night and that Crabb's had correspondingly increased. Later in the day, Sub-Inspector O'Neill was on the scene and Crabb was arrested, being charged with stealing 50 bushels of wheat the property of James McGregor.*

*When both the heaps were cleaned up, this was the shortage in McGregor's heap and the acreage was the same. Several witnesses swore that of the two crops McGregor's was the best. One day McGregor's man broke his flail cap and in repairing it severely cut one of his fingers. In binding it up the man cut a tassel off a scarf and a few days later it came off in his finger. This tassel was found in Crabb's heap of wheat and he got three years hard labour.*

*Crabb had a good reputation and was a clever workman. By trade he was a stonemason, but could turn his hand to other trades if necessary. When he was released in 1862 he and his family left the district. His eldest daughter, Betsy married William Bowyer, at that time considered the champion batsman of the Ginninderra Club. Some years later both families prospered in Queensland.*

*At the trial many people believed Crabb to be innocent, and the increase in his heap of wheat was the work of an enemy, as a short-time before he got a contract for fencing which caused some ill-feeling between him and the others that tendered for the job.*



The Centenary Arch – QDHMS Collection

## A CONVICT CHAIN

We all have eight great-great-grandfathers. One of mine, William Lee, died out in the Burra area, off the Old Cooma Road, in 1880. His death certificate stated, on the information of his son-in-law James Gibbs, that William Lee was born in Ireland. The Register (in Queanbeyan Court House) stated that he was "in the Colony of New South Wales 75 years", which implies that he arrived in Australia in 1805. The certificate stated that his father was William Obery Lee and his mother was Catherine Rielly.

Now William Obery Lee is a fairly distinctive name, and some Lee descendants have searched very carefully, but can find no record of the arrival of such person. There was, however, no difficulty in finding Catherine Riley, who married a John Lee at St Phillips Church in Sydney on 25 December (Christmas Day) 1803. We can find that her mother Elizabeth Riley was charged at the Kent Assizes in March 1789, along with three other women, for stealing ten yards of muslin, valued at 3 Pounds. The jury, however, found all four guilty of stealing only to the value of four shillings and sixpence, thus sparing them from the death penalty but incurring a sentence of seven years' transportation.

Elizabeth Riley was sent to the convict transport *Lady Juliana*, and was allowed to bring her daughter Catherine aged about seven years old. Their ship arrived at Sydney Cove on 3 June 1790, but two

months later, Elizabeth and Catherine were among 194 convicts sent to Norfolk Island. They returned to Sydney in March 1794, and Elizabeth was listed in the musters of 1800-02 and 1806, and described as a widow with one child in the Sydney area in 1814. There are no further records of her existence.

Following the record of Catherine's return to Sydney in 1794, there is a baptismal record for Catherine's daughter Elizabeth born on 10 March 1802, with the father given as John Lee. John Lee had been sentenced at Lancaster, and arrived at Sydney as a convict on *HMS Gorgon* with the Third Fleet in 1791. They had a second daughter Sophia born in October 1803, and baptised at their wedding on Christmas Day. It then seems that the family were sent to Tasmania, because we have found that their son William was baptised at St John's Church in Launceston on 26 February 1811. The family seems to have come back to Sydney, and in 1814 Catherine was recorded as living with her husband and five children. There is no further trace of John Lee in later colonial records. Catherine Lee was mentioned in records in 1822, and in the 1828 Census. She was living in Castlereagh Street Sydney at her death in April 1832.

There is no apparent record of William Lee in the 1828 NSW Census. On 30 September 1829 the Rev. Thomas Hassall solemnized the marriage of William Lee and Mary Ann Smith, both described as coming from "Goulburn Plains". It seems that the wedding took place at Bong Bong because the witnesses were from



Sutton Forest. We have not been able to identify Mary Ann Smith precisely, but she appears to be from the Bungendore family that is commemorated by the place name Smith's Gap on the road up the escarpment from Bungendore towards Lake George. Their first daughter Mary Jane was born at or near Bungendore on 24 April 1837 (and was called Jane in all subsequent records and on her headstone in the Queanbeyan Pioneer Riverside Cemetery).

Their son John George was born in 1840, and a second daughter Martha Elizabeth was born in 1843. John George Lee married Mary Jane Harriott at Christ Church Queanbeyan in 1861, and they had eleven children of whom there are many descendants in the Canberra-Queanbeyan and Bungendore area. Martha Elizabeth married James Eagar in 1871, and they had two sons before Martha died in 1876.

Jane Lee married James Gibbs at the old St Philips Church at Bungendore on 31 July 1854. James Gibbs was the eldest surviving son of John Gibbs and his wife Susanna Case from the village of Bishopstone in Wiltshire. They arrived as bounty immigrants in Sydney on the ship *Woodbridge* in 1838, accompanied by their sons James aged 4 and Edward aged 2, a niece Elizabeth aged 12, and John's brother William aged 17. They first worked for the landholders Hunt and Kaye in Queanbeyan, and then John Gibbs became overseer of "Mt Campbell", one of the many sheep stations of the Campbell family of "Duntroon". John and William Gibbs later worked as lime-burners along the Queanbeyan River, and James Gibbs

followed his father as overseer of the "Mt Campbell" run.

Following the passing of the Free Selection Act of 1861, James Gibbs took up numerous blocks of land in the valley of upper Jerrabomberra Creek, and became the main resident landowner in that area, with his sheep flocks centred on "Mt Campbell" homestead. He was one of the first three wardens of St Paul's Church at Burra that was opened in 1868, and he continued to serve that church for many years. He is also recorded as a director of the Queanbeyan Co-operative Roller Flour Mill Company Ltd that operated in the Oaks Estate.

James and Jane had at least eleven children. The eldest daughter was Mary Susan, born in 1855, who married William Roderick Graham, a son of the pioneers William Graham and Helen Cameron. They had one child, James Kenneth Australia Graham, born in 1875, before Mary Susan died in 1876. Jim Graham was brought up by his grandmother Jane Gibbs, who was then caring for her own eleven children, the two Eagar sons of her sister Martha, and her daughter's son. Jim Graham married Violet Adelaide Roberts in Sydney, and they had six children.

James and Jane's second child was Adelaide Amelia Jane, born in 1857, who married Thomas Henry Blewitt, a grandson of the Williamsdale pioneer family. They had a large family, of whom there are many

descendants in this district, some still living on the land.

James and Jane's third child was the eldest son, John William Solomon, born in 1858. He was found dead in a stockyard in 1887. His death certificate described him as a carrier, which meant that he had charge of the station bullock team. A coronial inquiry found that he died of "syncope of the heart" or a heart attack. Unfortunately the time of his death is a period when there are no copies of the *Queanbeyan Age* held on record so I have found no further details of his death. A local legend has it that he was "done in" by neighbours who were annoyed by the land selections by James Gibbs that had tied up all the good land and access to water. It has also been said that his body was thrown into the stockyard to hide the evidence, but a faithful dog guarded his master all night and prevented the cattle from trampling on the body.

James and Jane's next child was Edward Thomas (or "Ned"), born in 1860. He had apparently suffered infantile poliomyelitis, and although he stood 6'4" (or 193 cm), he walked with a calliper and crutches. He had not expected to become squire of "Mt Campbell", but this was thrust upon him with the sudden death of his older brother John in 1887. The great drought of 1900-02 hit "Mt Campbell" badly, forcing Ned to head off in his horse and sulky to shear in the sheds of the Monaro and the Riverina. Because of his disability, he could not drag the sheep out of the pens, and so he employed a local man as his catcher to bring the sheep to the board, where he shored with the blades,

sitting on a butter box. Ned was not a fast shearer, and by the time he paid wages to the catcher, all he made from shearing would have been three meals a day, his bed and some feed for his horse.

Ned took over "Mt Campbell" after James Gibbs died in 1902 and Jane died in 1905. He gradually acquired the adjoining blocks that had been left to his younger brothers and owned or controlled most of the land along Old Cooma Road in what are now the residential sub-divisions of Fernleigh Park, Mount Campbell, Little Burra, and the blocks adjoining the Monaro Station sub-division at the top of the Burra Hill. In addition to running sheep and cattle, he bred and raced horses at meetings throughout NSW including Sydney. In 1906 he married Eliza McLaughlin, whose Irish forebears (Patrick and Isabella McLaughlin and William and Catherine McClafferty) were pioneers in the Uriarra and Queanbeyan districts. They had three sons and two daughters.

The eldest son, James William (or "Jim") Gibbs was very well known in this district. He served the Show Society for many years, including some as President, and was the ring announcer at the annual shows. He was the first area co-ordinator of the Bush Fire Brigades, and was a President of Queanbeyan Rotary Club. He married Lucie Hall, who was very active in the Country Women's Association, and was a top judge and exhibitor of art and fancywork in Australia and overseas. They had five children.



Ned and Eliza's elder daughter, Alice Elma was born in 1908. She trained at Queanbeyan District Hospital and was the second trainee to qualify as a nursing sister in 1935. She is remembered for her efforts during the diphtheria epidemic that broke out in 1934. She married Ancel Johnston in 1938. He was secretary and chief executive officer of the District Hospital for a record period from 1929 to 1961. He played a prominent role in Queanbeyan's development, was an alderman of Queanbeyan Municipal Council for three terms in the late 1920s and 1930s, and served as Deputy Mayor from 1932 to 1937. He was a foundation member of numerous sporting, community and charitable organizations. They had two sons, John and Peter.

Ned and Eliza's second son, George Colin, was born in 1913, and died unmarried in 1995. He produced strong wool in big paddocks, and was an early user of aerial spreading of superphosphate in the district. He was a friend and supporter of generations of nurses at the District Hospital, and was a custodian and benefactor of St Paul's Church Burra. He was active in Bush Fire Brigades, and received the National Medal with 25 years' clasp.

The second daughter, Olive Mary, was born in 1920, but preferred to be called "Peggy". She was well known in lady rider and flag race events at district shows. She was probably the first female jockey in the ACT when she rode at Tuggeranong Picnic Races and Sports Day on Easter Monday 1941. Unfortunately her horse was bumped in the race and rolled on her. She

did not regain consciousness, and died in Queanbeyan Hospital a week later. The Tuggeranong Picnic Races were never held again as a mark of respect to the Gibbs family.

The youngest son, Leslie Thomas, was born in 1922. He trained in the 7<sup>th</sup> Light Horse, and enlisted in the 2/10<sup>th</sup> Battalion, known as "the Adelaide Rifles". He saw action at Shaggy Ridge in New Guinea and the Balikpapan landing on Borneo. He was active in the RSL, and in support of the Country Queen in the Floral Festival to raise funds for the War Memorial Swimming Pool. In a partnership with his brothers Jim and George, they owned "Tinderry Station" in the 1940s and 1950s, and their cousin Harold Gibbs managed that mountain property. Les married Dell Kennedy, who is living in Eecen Road in Karabar, and is still active in Probus and Laurel/Legacy clubs and the Uniting Church. They had three children. Their son Stephen John is a district officer in the ACT Fire Service. He married Karen Blewitt, in another link with the Williamsdale pioneer family. They live at the junction of the Old Cooma and Burra Roads. Their sons Thomas and William are the sixth generation of the Gibbs family to live in the valley of the upper Jerrabomberra Creek (which in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century was known as "Gibbs Vale").

The fourth child was Australia James, born in 1862, who was always called "Aust". He married Annie Hardcastle Blewitt, in another link with the Williamsdale pioneer family. He sold his blocks of the "Mt Campbell" inheritance to his brother Ned, and

moved to properties at Williamsdale, then Woodhouselee near Crookwell and later to Krawaree near Braidwood. Aust and Annie had three sons and two daughters. The eldest, William James, established the stock and station agency that is still operated by the Reid family as the real estate firm WJ Gibbs & Co in Monaro Street. The second son Harold Henry enlisted in the Light Horse and served with the Imperial Camel Corps in Sinai and Palestine during World War One. He married Theresa Kathleen O'Connor and they had eight children who followed careers in accountancy, engineering, nursing and music.

James and Jane's next child was William Lee, born in 1864 but died in 1868 when accidentally scalded with boiling water. A child Henry Albert was born in 1866 but died in 1869 from drowning in a waterhole of the nearby creek. A further child was stillborn in 1868.

The next daughter, Evangeline was born in 1870. She married Charles Simmons, who was a shearer and office-bearer in the Queanbeyan branch of the Political Labour League, and they lived in Campbell Street. They had one son Robert.

James and Jane's next child, Stephen Ernest was born in 1872. He sold his "Mt Campbell" blocks to his brother Ned, and conducted butcher's shops in Monaro Street for many years. He married Eva Brown of the Googong family, and they had two daughters.

Edna married Tom Nolan, and Doreen married Jack Moon, and there are many descendants in this district.

James and Jane's youngest child was probably the most colourful. Nathaniel Hart was born in 1875, and was known as "Nat". He enlisted in the NSW Imperial Bushmen during the Boer War, but I cannot confirm that he actually went to South Africa. He married Ida May Dickinson (nee de Smet) who grew up on the corner of Campbell and George Streets, but they had no children. He sold his "Mt Campbell" blocks to his brother Ned, and purchased what is now called "Wellsvale" in the Googongs. He conducted butcher's shops with his brother Steve, and was an alderman on Queanbeyan Municipal Council from 1906 to 1913. He was also a councillor for B Riding of Yarrowlunla Shire from May 1912 to November 1913, but I understand that he resigned in protest when the Federal Capital Territory (now the ACT) was cut out of the heart of Yarrowlunla Shire. He then moved to the Sydney district and owned "Harrington Park" that is now a large residential sub-division on the Northern Road between Narellan and Penrith. He died without a will in 1940, and there was a complicated distribution of his estate that required the compilation of a family tree of all his siblings and their descendants.

Peter Johnston

14 May 2007





Former Yarrowlumla Shire Offices on the site of the newly built State Office Block complex.

### Latest News:

With thanks to Queanbeyan City Council, the museum has new gallery track lighting in each of the galleries.

Please come and take a look at the new light fittings and celebrate a new mini-exhibition '*Museum Lights Up!*' 6.30pm Friday August 29 at the Museum.

Refreshments will be served.

