

Quinbean

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*The Journal of
Queanbeyan and District Historical Museum Society*

QUEANBEYAN & DISTRICT HISTORICAL MUSEUM SOCIETY

QDHMS is a local history society aiming at preserving the history of the city and its wider district and sharing this, with the strong support of the Queanbeyan City Council, through the context of the Museum of Queanbeyan.

Find us on the net at www.queanbeyanmuseum.org.au

Contact us:

email qbnmuseum@yahoo.com.au

Cover Picture – Queanbeyan Woodcutter, no further identification.
Lea Scarlett Collection, Queanbeyan Library QPRC

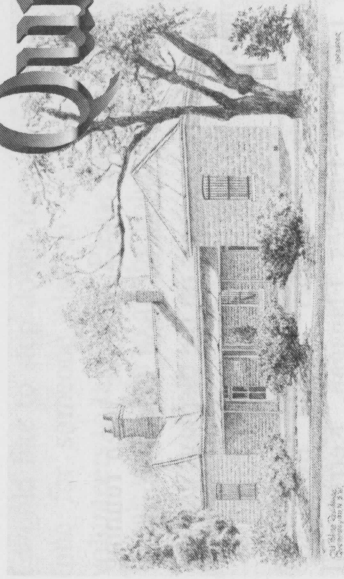
THE MUSEUM OF QUEANBEYAN

The Museum is open from 1pm to 4pm Saturdays and Sundays or by arrangement.

It is found at 10 Farrer Place Queanbeyan, next to the Police Complex and opposite the State Office Building.

Quinbeam

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From the President, <i>John McGlynn</i> ,.....	2
And the Editor, <i>Gillian Kelly</i>	3
Mutiny on board the Premier, Migrant Ship, <i>Eric Rawlings</i> ...	4
Buckley and Hirst, <i>Gillian Kelly</i>	8
Jackass City, <i>Peter Proctor</i>	13
Margaret Curran, Scrubbing Against the Grain Part 2, <i>James McDonald</i>	17
From Roadside Shanty to Modern Hotel, <i>Ernest Spendelove</i> ..	24
Queanbeyan Canberra Railway: Beurocracy and Nation Building, <i>John McGlynn</i>	33

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Since my last report the Society and the Museum have been running smoothly with the Museum open on weekends, good visitor numbers and particularly with very favourable comments on the displays and the visitors' reception by our volunteers.

Our hardworking Secretary, Kerrie Ruth has retired from the Committee and her place taken by Frances Flanagan. Kerrie will continue to work for the Society in other roles.

Thank you very much Kerrie for all you have done over the 12 years you have been involved with the Society, including the Committee, President and Secretary roles. Large building and refurbishment projects and many lively Museum events are just some of Kerrie's achievements over that time.

The project to rehouse and conserve the farm machinery has gained a grant from Council, thanks again to Kerrie Ruth for her efforts in gaining grants. Frances Flanagan and Fred Monk are taking leadership of this project.

A very successful Open Day in History Week featured bicycles and the history of cycling in Queanbeyan. Bicycle races have long been a feature of sporting life in this city. Thanks especially to John Rosewarne and Nancy Monk for organising this.

Our presence on Facebook and the internet has continued to grow and Lee Davy has taken on this activity and is creating fantastic interest with her posts.

I was pleased to note that while I have been on holiday overseas the Museum has functioned smoothly and Kris Flynn has stepped into the role of organising school and group visits.

I would like to step down from my role as President of QDHMS. It is time for someone else to take the leadership role and I welcome volunteers to take over. Please contact me if you are interested. Thank you again to all the volunteers.

John McGlynn

AND THE EDITOR

As I typed Ernest Spindelove's recollections of the hotel business, it struck me that his very interesting memories are actually part of the history of many of our readers that is disappearing fast. I came to Queanbeyan in 1964, and although I considered myself an adult, legally I wasn't and hotels, except for the Ladies' Lounges, were off limits and as such were places of great mystery. My experience was limited to the Ladies' Lounge of the Royal Hotel in Goulburn where country folk gathered on their monthly shopping excursions to the city – a lemonade in the Lounge, while parents and grandparents enjoyed an ale, then lunch of vegetable soup, roast lamb and apple pie – absolutely guaranteed – in the Dining Room

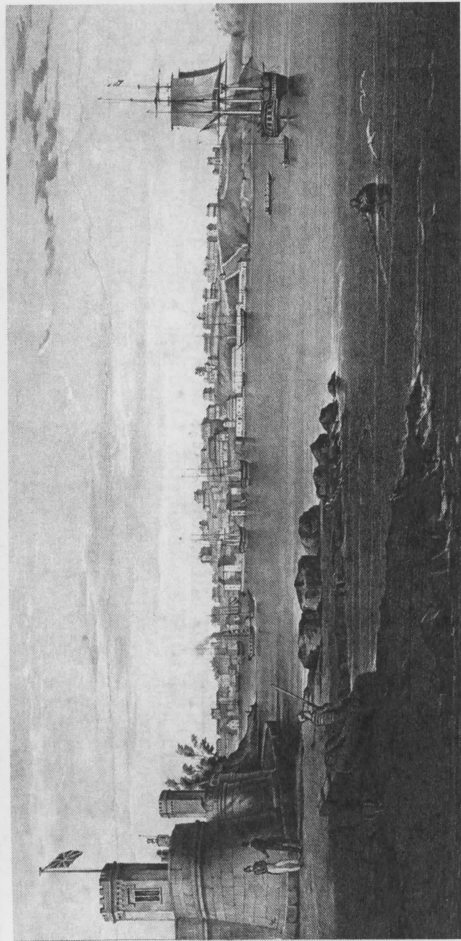
Almost as recently I was at a family gathering where a cousin opened a true treasure chest of family memorabilia that had been gathered by my grandmother and not seen by our generation. It was a glorious evening marred only by the fact that there was so much there we didn't understand and could not identify.

The point is: more than ever we **must** record our own stories now! Individually they may not be important outside our families, but collectively they tell a story of a community. I challenge you – do you remember the fires on Mount Jerrabomberra in the 50s? or the cycle races to Sydney? Or the grand Floral Festival Parades? What are your little stories of this place? Please share them!

Gillian Kelly

MUTINY ON BOARD THE PREMIER MIGRANT SHIP

Eric Rawlings



Sydney Harbour c 1840, lithograph Frederick Garling, State Library of NSW

Dear sir,

To prevent misconception ,the following account of the mutiny on board the Premier, from the log book, is at your service, if worth inspection.

I remain yours obediently,
J TURNER, surgeon.

I have much pleasure in bearing testimony to the ready and willing manner in which most of the male immigrants came forward on Tuesday 6th June to assist in navigating the ship under circumstances of a most trying nature.

The day previously a serious mutiny took place on board the Premier, owing to one of the Seamen having struck Captain Were, when slightly

corrected and reprimanded by him for extreme indolence. Captain Were immediately ordered him to be placed in irons, on which his comrades (Seamen) immediately rushed between decks and succeeded in rescuing the prisoner, though I demanded the assistance of the male immigrants to prevent their effecting their purpose, they however at that time refused to comply with my request not knowing the merits of the case.

During the night the sailors refused doing duty (the Captain having thrown their tea overboard) with the exception of relieving the wheel, which they did with much difficulty, and steering so badly as to endanger the masts and spars, leaving us entirely at the mercy of the waves.

The following morning they still persisted in not going to work, though frequently warned of their mutinous conduct by Captain Were in my presence as also that of his Officers, but to no purpose. I then offered to procure the assistance of the male immigrants in navigating the ship, for which purpose I assembled them below and stated the alarming situation in which the ship was placed, it blowing at the time a smart gale, and a heavy sea running, requiring the immediate shortening of sail, about twenty four of them gave in their names willingly, and in a few moments more were seen scattered on the yards and rigging, reefing and furling fore and aft, which they performed with the assistance of Officers, Apprentices, and with surprising dexterity, and in a short time all was made snug for the night.

Towards evening a report was circulated by an immigrant, William Browning, "bloody work" would be consequence if the Immigrants persisted in assisting the Captain. The man Browning himself acquainted me of this, wishing me to use my influence with the Captain to prevent his further notice of the mutinous transactions and pardon the offenders. This I contemptuously refused to do, and having learned that most of our recruits had deserted from fear, and others wavering, I again assembled them for the purpose of banishing their fears, in which I was successful, as also adding a few to their number. They then

assembled in the Cuddy, and with the assistance of Captain Were, I formed them into three watches consisting of nine individuals each. They all behaved admirably during the night, each of them taking his turn at the lee wheel with one of the apprentices.

On the following morning, June 17th, Captain Were, assembled all the Immigrants on the Quarter Deck and explained to them the powers the law gave to him over the Persons of Passengers in case of being deserted by his crew, they were also given to understand the illegality of supplying any of the mutinous seamen with provisions, all supplies being stopped from them with the exception of bread and water, they were particularly cautioned against doing so lest they should be held in the light of sidlers and abettors in the mutiny.

About 11am the male immigrants were again assembled, their names called over and requested not to proceed further forward than the main mast as information was received by the Captain that the seamen were arming themselves with whatever they could procure - knives etc - and parading the main deck with pipes in their mouths, more like master than servants.

The Captain, Officers etc together with myself, then armed ourselves, rushed forward, and succeeded in securing the four parties whom we had long identified as ringleaders. They were then put in irons and placed in confinement. Captain Were broke the blade of his rapier across the shoulders of one of the mutineers, but fortunately no serious accident occurred.

During the execution of this bold and vigorous stroke the entire body of the immigrants seemed lost in astonishment at the determined manner in which their Captain acted, and have ever since lent a ready hand in assisting the remainder of the crew - who came forward expressing their regret for having acted in such a manner, begged forgiveness and permission to return to their duty.

The conduct of two of the immigrants - William Browning and James Leek - during the progress of the mutiny was disgraceful - exciting their companions to add fuel to the already ignited flame, their expressions were also very disgusting.

(Signed) John Turner, M R C S L, surgeon Superintendent

NAME (Hus.)	PARKER, John
OCCUPATION	Farm lbr. / 1840
REL	Prot AGE 37y 26 May / a.w. Yes
NATIVE PLACE	Limerick, Ire
FATHER	PARKER, Thomas
MOTHER	CORNELL, Anne (dead)
NAME (Wife)	PARKER, Margaret
OCCUPATION	Nurse
REL	Prot AGE 36y 17 Mar a.w. Yes
NATIVE PLACE	Monthly...?
FATHER	REED, James
MOTHER	YOUNG, Anne
CHILDREN	Thomas 15y; James 13y; John 11y; Margaret 9y; Anna Sarah 7y; Mary Anne & Eliza listed under single women
SHIP	"PREMIER"
DATE OF ARRIVAL	1 July 1840 vol 34

John Parker and family were passengers on the Premier during this mutiny. The Parkers settled in the Monaro district and were the nucleus for many families in the Monaro - Queanbeyan - Bungendore areas including the Rawlings family.

References: From the Sydney Monitor and Commercial Advertiser (NSW: 1838-1841) Saturday 4 July 1840 page 2

BUCKLEY AND HIRST

Gillian Kelly

When Surveyor Robert Hoddle traced what he termed the Queanbeyan Creek in July 1835 he marked a hut on the hill where Glenrock House is today, a hut on the Eastern side of the river near the corner of Trinculo Place and Macquoid Street (Skeate's blacksmith's shop) and a fenced paddock above the river. Two years later Surveyor Larmer labelled this fenced paddock that now enclosed a collection of buildings as Buckley and Hirst's Store.

So who were Buckley and Hirst? Let us begin with William Hirst, the second son of George and Ann Hirst of Mirfield Yorkshire. George was initially a clothier in Little London who became a successful wool manufacturer, living in Foxhouse and later Nickhouse in Mirfield.



Nickhouse, Mirfield Historic Images

As early as 1821 the quality of Australian wool was obvious. The Sydney Gazette reported:

"Sir B. Bloomfield presents his compliments to Mr. Commissioner Bigge, has had the honour to lay before his Majesty the specimen of cloth made by Mr. Wm. Hirst, of Leeds, of wool from the colony of New South Wales, which Mr. Bigge transmitted for that purpose, and his

Majesty was pleased highly to admire the beauty and texture thereof, and to express his commands to Sir Benjamin to convey to Mr. Bigge his Majesty's acknowledgments of his attention. Sir B. Bloomfield has to request Mr. Bigge will have the goodness to inform him if an additional quantity of the said cloth can be procured in England."

So perhaps it is no surprise that in 1832 George's 22 year old son William Hirst arrived in Sydney as a cabin passenger on the *Sarah*. What is a surprise is that travelling with him, as a steerage passenger was Joseph Kaye aged 23, also of Mirfield, and later to become much better known in Queanbeyan than William Hirst.

By 1834 Hirst had established himself as a draper in Phillip Street. He consistently imported goods and advertised widely through the Sydney newspapers.

EX ELEANOR,

On Sale, at the Stores of the Undersigned,

A N assortment of superfine BROAD CLOTHS (made from the growth of New South Wales wool).

Ditto CASSINETS
— LASTING STUFFS
— VALENTIA WAISTCOATING
— FUSITAN SLOPS, &c. &c.

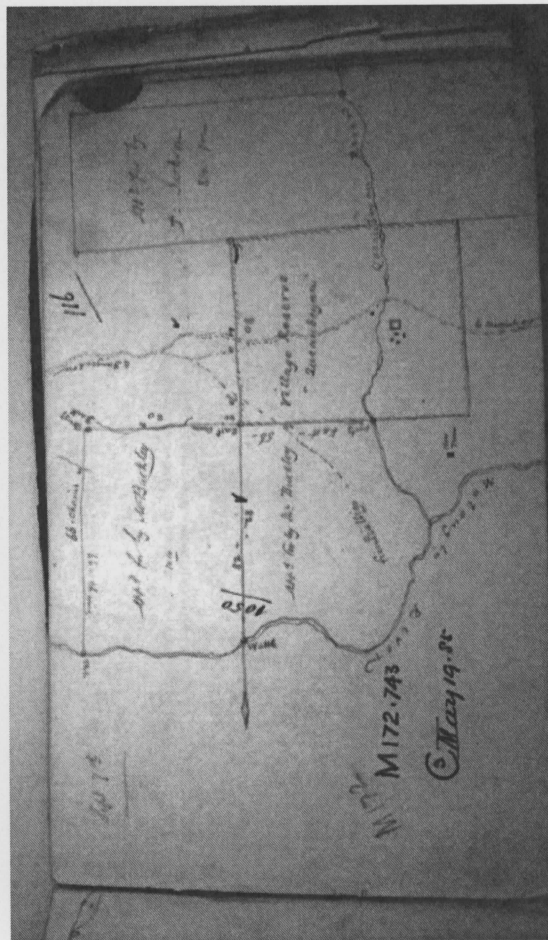
— ALSO,
A small quantity of fine old MADEIRA WINE, in Bottle.

WILLIAM HIRST & CO.
Phillip-street, February 5, 1834.

His ambitions seem to have been that of a successful business man, with Joseph Kaye still associated with him in some way as in 1846, the Sydney Directory corrected an error :

a respectable firm in Phillip street is entered by the name of "Hurst and Kaye." It should be "Hirst and Co." the individual named Kaye having nothing to do with the business. Mr Hirst is the managing partner in this colony ; the other partners are in England.

Henry Buckley arrived on the *Medora* in 1834. He, too, was the son of a Mirfield woolen manufacturer, one Benjamin Buckley. Henry came with merchandise to be sold and his ambitions became obvious when he bought stock and by 1837 gave his address as Queanbeyan. Soon after 1834 Buckley and Hirst formed a business partnership. Their first public joint business venture seems to be the store of Buckley and Hirst in the skeleton village of Queanbeyan, and they had also formed another, more binding link. In 1836 William Hirst married Elizabeth Abbott, the daughter of Lieutenant John Abbott and in 1838 Henry Buckley married her sister, Susannah.



Field Book, James Larmer 1837/8. NSW State Records

Surveyor Larmer's sketch maps in his field studies book clearly show the extent of what was now known as Buckley and Hirst's store, the blacksmith's shop and the new inn - *Elmsall*, established by Joseph Kaye and William Hunt. It also shows Buckley had applied for 1050 acres of land on the village reserve's western border. This land unsurprisingly was allocated to Robert Campbell so Buckley and Hirst purchased land on the Monaro called *Arable*, where Buckley took up

residence, and a large tract of land in the Glebe in Sydney, including the house known as *Hereford*. Buckley lived on the Monaro, and Hirst at *Hereford*.



Hereford House, Glebe c 1920

Hirst didn't ever live in Queanbeyan or even the district, and may not have ever visited, but Joseph Kaye did, keeping an eye on Hirst's interests. When the village was subdivided, Hirst bought up land presumably as investments, and in 1841 he sold Lots 16 and 17 of Section 7 to Joseph Kaye.

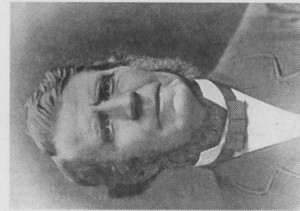
After Larmer's warnings that alcohol was a severe problem in the district, Faunce and his constabulary commenced their work early in 1838 and Buckley and Hirst's store came into repeated disrepute as a place where sly grog could be bought. The Queanbeyan Bench books show many offences against Buckley even though it was his store manager who provided and sold the alcohol.

On July 9th, 1838 the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported that Sydney's Chief Constable had apprehended a man who was formerly storekeeper to Messrs. Hirst and Co, at Queanbeyan. Mr Mitchell acted under a warrant from Queenbeyan (sic), which stated that the storekeeper had

been convicted of retailing spirits several times, and had fines amounted to £190. He was leaving the Colony in the French ship *Jemie Eliza*.

It was enough for Buckley and Hirst to get out of the store and it was taken over by John Gray who bought the land as soon as it was available around 1838. Buckley and Hirst continued dealing together in stock and station with successes and misadventures. Hirst bought land in Eden, and built the Crown and Anchor Inn. He became involved in an unscrupulous land deal in New Zealand, buying a huge tract of land from a Maori Chief for a pittance.

Together they were involved in buying and selling stock, including an extremely complex court case involving sheep. Around 1844 both became bankrupt. Hirst sold up his properties, including the Glebe, and moved to Darling Point but seems to have continued with his Phillip Street drapery until his death in 1846, aged only 36.



Henry Buckley

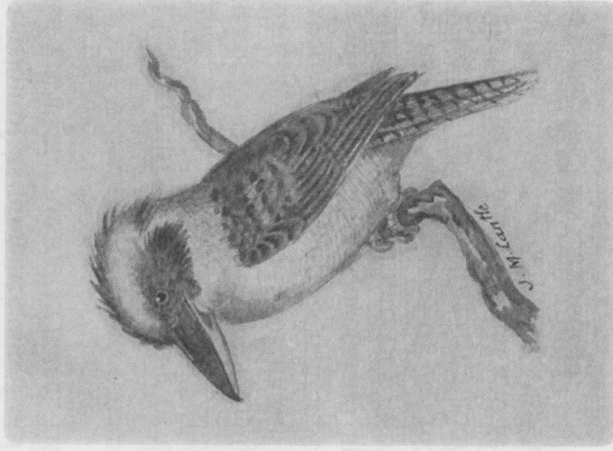
Buckley sold up his Monaro interests and moved back to Sydney until 1849 where he led a successful financial and political life until his death in Brisbane in 1888.

Buckley and Hirst's names will be perpetuated forever on the earliest records for Queanbeyan.

They were businessmen, stock and station agents, and financiers, not true pioneers of this town, but perhaps that little store on the hill, along with Skeate's smithy, was the starting point of it all!

Jackass City

Peter Proctor



Kookaburra, watercolour c1880 artist John Mitchell Cantle, brother of William Robert Cantle of Booth Street Queanbeyan

'Jackass City!' they all chuckled with delight as they said the name. 'Jackass! So, that's what it means!' Newspapers all around Australia made fun of this news. They knew that a 'jackass' was an idiot, and associated with that, a 'laughing jackass' was colloquial for the kookaburra. The connection was plain for all to see, especially as the proposed city with that name was big news at the time. It was about the new capital city Canberra, and 'jackass' was the meaning of its strange name. They had found the evidence.

It was March 1913. On the 12th of that month. Lady Denman wife of the Governor-General, stood on the strange-shaped, slippery base of the 'Commencement Column'. She read out the proposed city's name to a small crowd assembled for the purpose. The place was to be called 'Canberra' after all. There had been a lot of fuss about the choice. She gave the definitive version of its pronunciation. Lord Denman himself publically opined that it was an 'Australian name'. He said it had been used locally for a long time.

Then on Saturday 15 March 1913, the meaning of the name was put before the public's gaze. 'Canberra' was the name of the young jackass. 'Kankurra' was found in four different Aboriginal languages. When the bird was fully grown it was called 'Kokoburra, Kukuburra, and Kukugahka'. The expert witness about this matter was Mr A Meston. He was a government official from Queensland and a 'recognised authority' on Aboriginal dialects. In an interview Meston suggested he could trace the name back in vocabularies of the 1850s. However, he said that the young kookaburra, as a distinctive national bird, might be an appropriate symbol for the Federal Capital and seat of the national parliament. It was the unsaid bits — the implications of his article — that made the city's name a joke. Jackass City indeed!

The report ran in the Evening News and the Sydney Sun that weekend. It was suggested that this native name was misapplied. It was ridiculous. Next, in today's terms, the news 'went viral'. That is, the article was repeated and reported in newspaper columns across each state throughout the nation. Even the Queanbeyan Age ran with the definitive version just a few days later. It was great fun, and the butt of the joke was obvious.

Naturally, there was a frantic response. Most of it was just as ill-informed and misleading as the original article. Mr C T Burfit of the Australian Historical Society (before it was Royal) was adamant that

Meston could not spell. He said that he mixed his 'u' and 'oo' sounds (SMH, 20 Mardi 1913 p17). Frederic Slater saw a bit of the funny side. He recognised it as 'an amusing instance of the way our so-called historical researchers clutch at straws...' (Sun, Sydney, 21 Apr 1913, p6). He explained the linguistic connection between Aboriginal words for 'kookaburra' and 'head*'. So it went on, but it was a flash in the pan.

There is no mention of 'Jackass Gty' in any of the three reviews about the origin of the name Canberra. It looks as if it was too silly to consider for a moment longer. An article by C S Daley (in Selth, 1976) gave an amazing range of suggested names for the Federal Capital. He even repeated the comment he heard at a Pageant in Melbourne Town Hall in 1944. A stranger explained that the word Canberra meant 'the place of the Campbells'. Greg Murphy (1987) did not mention the Laughing Jackass version either.

Murphy concluded that he believed that CANBERRA is probably not of Aboriginal origin, but is most probably a minor variation of an old English place name'. Robinson (1927) saw something we hardly notice. He commented that Aboriginal names were taken and misapplied to localities and areas with which they had no original relevance at all. He showed that it applied to the name Canberra too.

For what it is worth, an eyewitness participant in the local scene from 1838 to 1847 offered his own observation about the name, Canberra. He was Stewart M Mowle. While he lived and worked at Yarralumla as a young man, he became well acquainted with Aboriginal people and their language. Quite remarkably, over 50 years afterwards he could still sing entire Aboriginal songs from memory.

He put two of the songs in an article in The Australian Town and Country Journal in May 1896. The first line of one of them reads, 'Korindabria, korindabrio, bogarona, bogarona. Iwariniang'. However, he was adamant that Aboriginal people 'could not interpret their

language into our own'. That is an astute observation from firsthand experience. As with the songs themselves, Mowle could never ascertain from them what particular place names meant either. It is not surprising. Even Europeans have difficulties with the origin, meaning, and spelling of place names. This is in spite of the way our cultural heritage assumes we are each experts at explaining about 'who?', what?', when?', where?', why?', and how?'

John Gale, who was an expert newspaper reporter provided a straightforward statement about the name Canberra. Almost immediately afterwards he sprouted the legends and spurious tales. He did not say which was which. It is left to the reader to sort it out. First, Gale said there was 'no known meaning* for the name. Then he said that it might be 'meeting place', but if you wanted a slightly ribald meaning, 'women's breasts' was an option. He hinted that one of them was an 'absurd gag* (SMH, 10 May 1913,P17).

We are no further advanced in this matter today. The only appropriate answer for the meaning of Canberra is that 'we do not know'. Any other answer treats the audience as gullible, though the behaviour of some politicians in the media's eye hints that the name 'Jackass City' was worth considering.

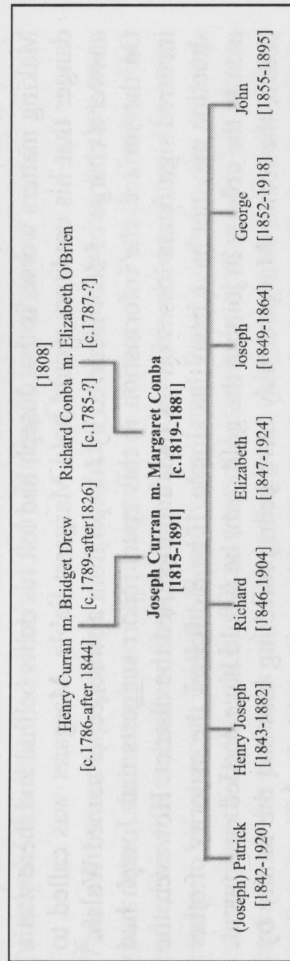
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- DALEY C S, 1976, 'Canberra nomenclature', in P A SELTH (ed), Canberra collection, Canberra & District Historical Society, & Lowden, Vic, ppl-17.
MURPHY Greg, 1987, 'Canberra. What's in the name?', Canberra Historical Journal, March 1987, n.s. no.19, ppl4-17.

MARGARET CURRAN: SCRUBBING AGAINST THE GRAIN, Part 2

James McDonald

A reminder of the family of Joseph Curran and Margaret Conba



'Scrubbing' her way out of destitution

The 1860s were difficult times on the Limestone Plains for many residents, with changes to land legislation unsettling the labour market, a brief resurgence in bush-ranging and some adverse climatic conditions.¹ For the Currans in this decade, there were also appearances in court for some of the boys. But of most concern, it that Margaret and Joseph were separated by 1862. We can only guess why, but the timing leads to two theories: i.e. that Joseph sought to capitalise on the 1861 land reforms and left to seek funds to invest; and/or he abandoned the district as part of the gold rush. But there is no hard evidence. The alternative explanation of estrangement and desertion, is less palatable, but is probably the most likely scenario, as Margaret and Joseph were never to be reunited.

We know that Joseph had left the district permanently by early 1862 and that Margaret claimed not to know where he had gone. Moreover, it is the children,

¹ See L. L. Gillespie, *Canberra: 1820-1913*, Canberra, pp. 127-150.

Patrick and Elizabeth, who erect their mother's headstone in 1881; not her husband. Joseph does not appear in the colonial records until his death near Bathurst in 1891.² On his death certificate, the informant is the Senior Police Constable, who states that the deceased had no children and that he was 'unmarried'. This would suggest that Joseph had deliberately lived as a single man in the Blue Mountains and had lost contact with his family. It seems that he and Margaret never reconciled. Without the breadwinner, Margaret went to work 'scrubbing' for local shopkeepers to keep her young family afloat.

Making matters worse, is that Joseph had left his debts behind and there was a danger that his creditors would hold Margaret liable. Margaret was called to answer a charge of debt incurred by Joseph from a storekeeper named Walsh.³ On the surface, the information in this court report suggests that Joseph had incurred significant losses on his own and then fled the district. However, the situation may not have been that simple. If he did follow the majority of other men in the colony in joining the gold rush, he would have needed equipment; hence, the loans. Margaret may have been protecting him and the family by claiming not to know his whereabouts, but this seems unlikely.⁴ The fact that Margaret appeared to defend her husband's charges, suggests that she was still hoping to be reunited, at this point. As stated above, the interpretation of marriage breakdown and desertion, on balance, is the most likely explanation.

1862 continues to be a bad year. Another court appearance involves the eldest son, Patrick. One of the plaintiffs, again, is the storekeeper, Walsh.⁵ The allegation was that Patrick was found in possession of goods stolen from Walsh. His 'accomplices' had run off and left him to be caught 'red-handed'. Patrick's motives may have been, in part, driven by his anger with Walsh resulting from the embarrassment he had brought his family in prosecuting his father and bringing his struggling mother to court. At the time of the indictment, Patrick would have been twenty years of age.

² Despite searches made by the Bathurst District Historical Society, for which I am most grateful.

³ *Queanbeyan Age and General Advertiser*, 21 November 1861, p. 2; 27 February 1862, p. 2.

⁴ For the exodus to the gold rush, see G. Serle, *The Golden Age: a History of the Colony of Victoria, 1851-1861*, Melbourne, 1977, pp. 21-2. For the 'spate of new gold discoveries' in the local area, see the series of three articles by B. McGowan in the *Canberra Historical Journal*, 27, 28, 30 (1991-1992), passim; Gillespie, *Canberra*, p. 127.

⁵ *Queanbeyan Age and General Advertiser*, 9 October 1862, p. 2.

The comments of the magistrate, J. J. Wright, show that Patrick had formerly been of good character, but had recently fallen in with a bad crowd and, on this occasion, was left bearing sole blame for the incident.⁶ Very fortunately for Patrick, we hear that when the case is resumed seven days later the police were still unable to produce the 'accomplices' and, although the case against Patrick was substantial, the action was dismissed on the proviso that the local police sergeant 'sift the matter further with a view if possible to implicate the other parties concerned'.⁷ It would seem, therefore, that Patrick was not the principal felon that the authorities were hoping to apprehend.

This narrow escape, perhaps compounded by the death of his brother two years later, seems to have had a significant impact on Patrick Curran. He turned his life around and stepped into the shoes of his absent father. He even changed his name to Joseph. Some years later, Patrick left for the mining community of Drake, about 80km west of Lismore in northern NSW, where he rose to the positions of Mining Registrar, Magistrate, and Coroner. But Patrick was not the only Curran in the court report of the 16 October 1862 edition of the *Queanbeyan Age and General Advertiser*.⁸

His younger brother, Joseph, also appeared. He was aged 13 years, at the time and was charged along with two other boys of 'stopping up a chimney', a dangerous prank they played on a woman who lived alone. Two things are interesting about the newspaper account. Joseph, like Patrick, seems to have fallen in with local larrikins in late 1862. Second, there again seems to be reluctance on the part of the authorities to punish a Curran boy. The view

⁶ The Wrights, of course, were well-known and prominent in the district. This particular member of the family, John James Wright JP, appears in Lea-Scarlett, *Queanbeyan*, pp. 47-50, 97-9, 104-9, 116-17, 125-46, 169-70, 243-4; Gillespie, *Canberra*, pp. 131, 146, 149, 152-54, 170, 173, 180-81, 187-88. His most notable contribution seems to have been as champion of the free selectors, but we should also note that he was an early patron of the Orange Lodge; yet despite his religious views and the bitter sectarianism of that time, he was willing to take a very sympathetic approach to young Patrick's case.

⁷ *Queanbeyan Age and General Advertiser*, 16 October 1862, p. 2.

⁸ *Queanbeyan Age and General Advertiser*, 16 October 1862, p. 2.

seems to be that the stern words of an unidentified father (clearly, not Joseph senior) were sufficient to serve as the appropriate disciplinary measure. The matter was dropped.

The next legal difficulty encountered by the Currans, comes on the heels of the previous court appearance in November-December 1862. Again, the case involves Joseph junior, but this time, he is the plaintiff.⁹ Joseph had been apprenticed to a Mr. Evans who had refused to formalise the agreement after twelve-months service. He left this employment and sued his master for wages. The court found in Joseph's favour and awarded him a portion of his lost wages (£5).

In the next month (January 1863), we find the Currans in court yet again.¹⁰ This time it is Margaret. She is arraigned by a butcher for an unpaid bill of 13 shillings and three pence. Margaret's defence was that she was owed unpaid wages for 'scrubbing' in the shop to the amount of 20 shillings and that she was owed the balance. The court recognised a portion of what she claimed and only awarded the plaintiff, a man named Same, three pence.



Headstone of Joseph Curran (1849-1864)¹¹, James McDonald

These court reports certainly show that the Margaret and her children had hit hard times, with Joseph away, employers not honouring agreements and Margaret having to take on cleaning work to support the family. But the worst was yet to come. Tragically, fifteen year-old Joseph contracted enteritis (a gastric disease) in the last week of September 1864 and he was dead within the week. Joseph Curran junior is buried in Queanbeyan cemetery next to his mother. Clearly, he was much loved, if the expensive tombstone erected by his struggling family is any indication.

⁹ *Queanbeyan Age and General Advertiser*, 20 November 1862, pp. 2; 4 December 1862, p. 2.
¹⁰ *Queanbeyan Age and General Advertiser*, 8 January 1863, p. 2.

But from here on, Margaret and her children managed to stay out of trouble. Slowly, she shored up her financial situation whilst managing to see that her children were all well educated and 'settled'.

In these happier days, the Curran children were active in sport, particularly cricket. Although it is not always possible to tell which Curran is referred to in the press reports, it is clear that Richard, George and John were the pick of the sportsmen in the family and did well for the Queanbeyan cricket teams.

George and John also went on to become regulars in the Ginninderra sides in the late 1870s while Richard opened Queanbeyan's batting with a man named Larkins.¹¹ It was probably this same Larkins, who had teamed-up with Richard's younger brother, George, to win the 'live wheelbarrow' races at a Queen's Birthday sports carnival in Queanbeyan in 1872 and again in the 'Anniversary Day' celebrations of 1873.¹²

Margaret was also active in community life. In 1866, her signature appeared along with those of other petitioners supporting a local Catholic teacher who had clashed with his superiors. The letter was unsuccessful in stopping the teacher's removal, but it did at least delay matters and he was able to stay on for another six months before being removed by the Catholic School Board.¹³ Margaret's involvement in this petition demonstrates a strong interest in education. It must be said that she did an excellent job, on her own, supporting her family and encouraging the education and betterment of her children.

Margaret's death, 1881

¹¹ *Queanbeyan Age and General Advertiser*, 26 March 1863, p. 2; 26 May 1864, p. 2. For George and John's cricketing records, see *Queanbeyan Age and General Advertiser*, 13 November 1878, p. 2; 4 January 1879, p. 4; 1 February 1879, p. 2; 10 May 1879, p. 2; 10 April 1880, p. 2.

¹² *Queanbeyan Age and General Advertiser*, 30 May 1872, p. 2; 30 January 1873, p. 2. George also won a novelty race in which contestants were blindfolded and used the sound of bells to roll barrels into a goal.

¹³ *Queanbeyan Age and General Advertiser*, 6 December 1866, p. 3. On the controversy, see L. Gillespie, *Early Education and Schools in the Canberra Region*, Campbell, 1994, pp. 49-50.

The effort in raising her family alone, whilst warding off destitution and defending herself and her family in a number of legal disputes, along with the harsh experiences of her life as a young pioneer, may have exhausted Margaret. In May 1881, she died aged just 62. She had lost a long struggle with phthisis ('consumption', or pulmonary tuberculosis).

Margaret Curran (nee Conba) emerges quietly as a formidable figure amid the rubble of old Queanbeyan town's social history. She has made her many descendants in the district proud. She had the foresight and courage to leave pre-famine Ireland and all that was familiar, banking on a new and promising life at the other end of the world. It began well in the colony, but the desertion of her husband and his debts almost destroyed the family in the early 1860s. But despite the many hardships she encountered along the way, Margaret worked hard, persevered, and managed to raise a fine family.

We do not know why Joseph left his family, nor what attracted him, eventually, to the outskirts of Bathurst. We can only speculate whether he suffered from alcoholism, poor mental health, or similar issues. He is absent in the documentation held by the Bathurst Historical Society relating to the 1880s.¹⁴ Perhaps he was an itinerant shepherd and only chose to settle at Bathurst in his dotage.

All that we really know is that by 1891, Joseph Curran was living a solitary life. His address is given as Brewongle, which probably meant that he was working as a farm hand on the property by that name, owned by the wealthy grazier and horse-racing enthusiast, Thomas Lee.¹⁵ Although his death certificate reports his burial in Bathurst Cemetery, there is no headstone or any record of where we might find his grave. It is a sad contrast to the memorial set up for his estranged wife by her loving children in Queanbeyan by its beautiful river.

¹⁴ The only Curran in the Bathurst district at the time is a Walter R. Curran at Wallarawang, White Rock, listed amongst the landholders of 1885.

¹⁵ Lee's daughters ran tearooms at the Sydney Cricket Ground, after which the famous Brewongle Stand is named. For his obituary, see *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 September 1893, p. 5.



Margaret Curran's headstone, Queanbeyan cemetery¹⁶

¹⁶ The inscription reads: IN Memory of our dear mother MARGARET CURRAN WHO DIED 21ST MAY 1881 AGED 62 YEARS. ERECTED BY HER SON AND DAUGHTER PATRICK AND ELIZABETH. MAY HER SOUL REST IN PEACE. The photograph, again, is courtesy of Brian Maher (taken c. 1980). Note that the NSW death certificate says she died on 20 May, while the headstone inscription says 21 May 1881.

From Roadside Shanty to Modern Hotel and the Vanished Inns of Queanbeyan Recalled



Ernest Spendelove

Ernest Spendelove was the first hotel licensee in the Australian Capital Territory and for some years conducted the Hotel Ainslie. He became owner and Mine Host of Queanbeyan's Victoria Hotel in 1936 and in the Queanbeyan Age in the 1950s he offered his thoughts on early hotels:

The first shanties appeared on the trails our forefathers blazed in search for pasture land, and later on the routes to the newly discovered gold fields. Later still, the railway, pushing out in many directions, was the magnet that attracted the enterprising purveyor of fermented and spirituous liquors.

These shanties were not always the dens of iniquity that quite a number of people think they were. They provided shelter and food as well as liquor, mostly rum, and we have Henry Lawson's word for it that many a happy night was spent in some of these shanties.

Lawson wrote a poem The Shanty on the Rise, and one of the verses goes like this:

*City swell who do the Royal would have called the shanty low
But 'twas better far and purer than some toney pubs I know
For the patrons of the shanty had the principles of me
And the spieler if he struck it wasn't welcome there again.
You could smole and drink and yarn or else soliloquise
With a decent lot of fellows in the shanty on the rise.*

There were many shanties in this district. The last to go was the one at Hall, run by Mon Lazarus. It was still there twenty years ago¹⁷, but the old slab building has now completely disappeared. Others were at Bungendore Hill and Tuggeranong. They opened up as the railway pushed through.

As the roads and railways became the traffic arteries of the country areas a more permanent form of accommodation for travelers had to develop. This was the Inn, more commonly called the 'country pub'. It was usually a rambling, one storied building surrounded by a verandah, from which you entered your room.

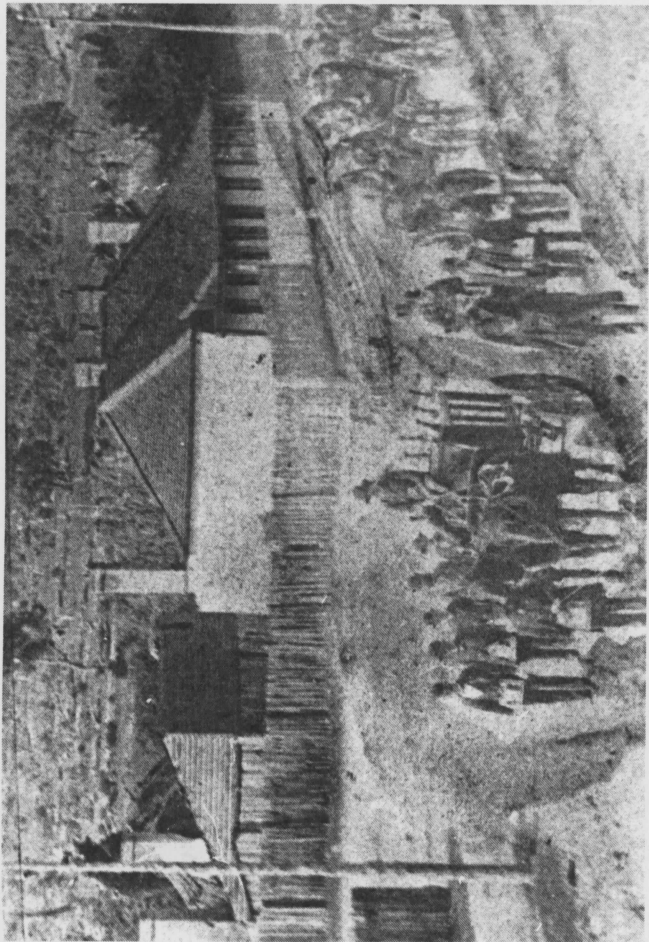
Many of these buildings are still standing and we have several of them in Queanbeyan. There were at least three in Macquoid Street and the back portion of the Shamrock, Rose and Thistle¹⁸ is just behind Taylor Brothers¹⁹ offices in Monaro Street.

At one time there were nine or ten in Queanbeyan, all on the Sydney side of the river.

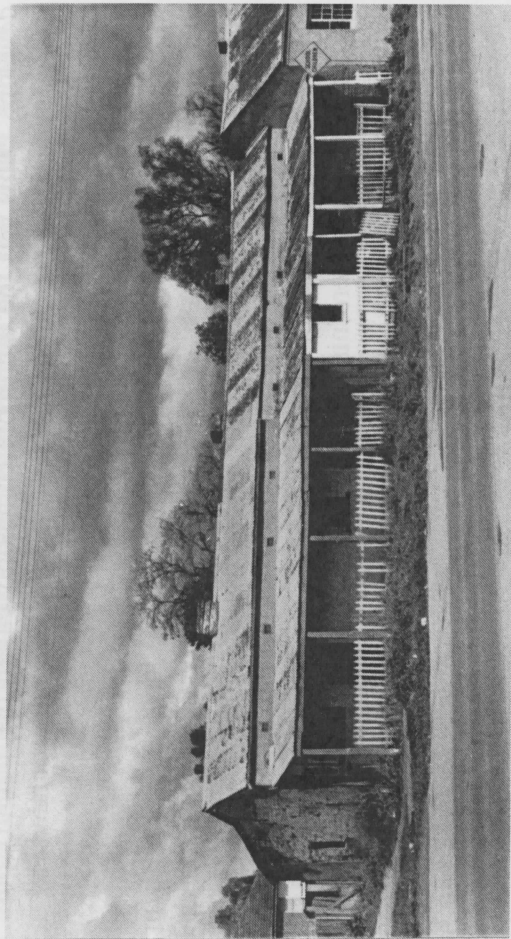
¹⁷ C 1930s

¹⁸ Now Icon Hairdressers

¹⁹ Now Moonlight Nails

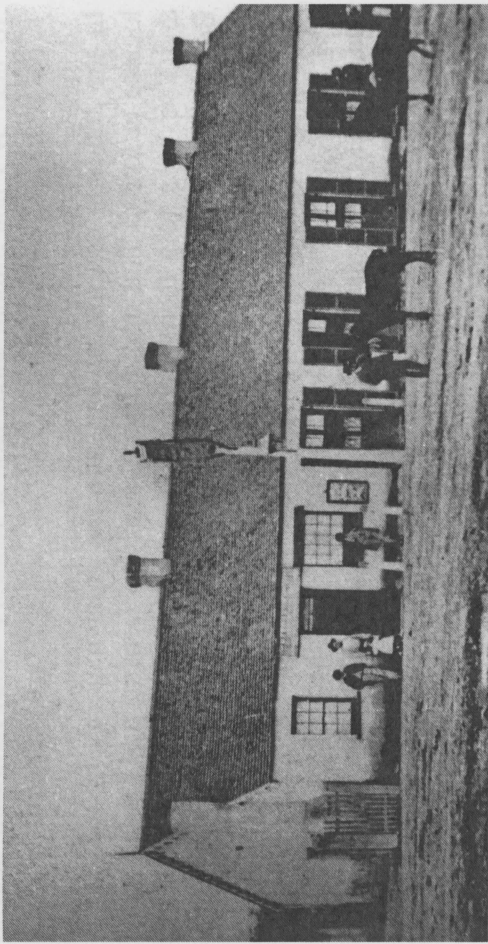


O'Rourke's Inn, Macquoid Street undated, Kelly Collection

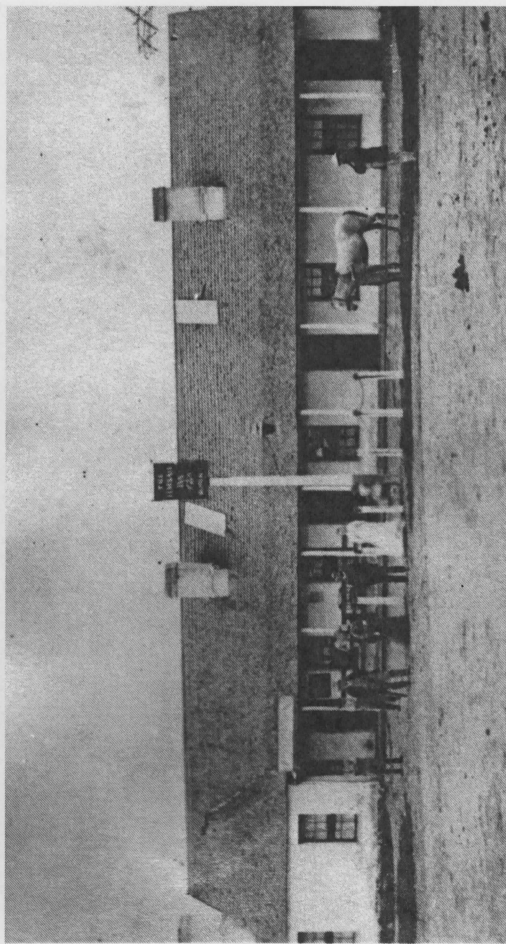


Royal's Inn, Macquoid Street, 1969 Errol Lea Scarlett Collection, QPRC Librar

Queanbeyan Hotels of bygone years included the Oaks Inn; the Queanbeyan Inn, Crawford St; Byrnes Hotel, Monaro St; Hand and Heart, MacQuoid St; Elmsall Inn, Trinculo Place; St Patrick's Inn, Crawford St; Queen Victoria Hotel, Macquoid St; Oddfellows Arms, Monaro St; Rose Shamrock & Thistle, Monaro St.



Hunt's Hand & Heart, Macquoid Street, 1870 Beaufoy Merlin, Kelly Collection



The Elmsall Inn, Trinculo Place, 1870 Beaufoy Merlin, Kelly Collection

Braidwood Hotels included the Willow Tree, Pig & Whistle, Commercial, Royal, Courthouse, Albion, Criterion, White Swan and Chamberlain.

At Gundaroo were the Cottage of Content and the Traveller's Arms. Between Braidwood and Araluen there were atleast thirty, but that included shanties, and there were three at Gunning.

In the southern districts at any rate the great majority of inns were located at fords. This applied particularly to Berrima and Queanbeyan and I've been told there were thirteen hotels on the Sydney side of Berrima. The obvious reason for this was the need to accommodate travelers by coach and wagon when the rivers were in flood.

The bedroom of a country inn was usually furnished with a black iron bed, a dressing table and a wash stand, plus a bedroom set of four articles.

Generally speaking, the food was plain and wholesome. You sat at one long table and Mine Host carved the roast in front of you on a sideboard at the end of the room. The menu wasn't varied, but there was plenty to eat.

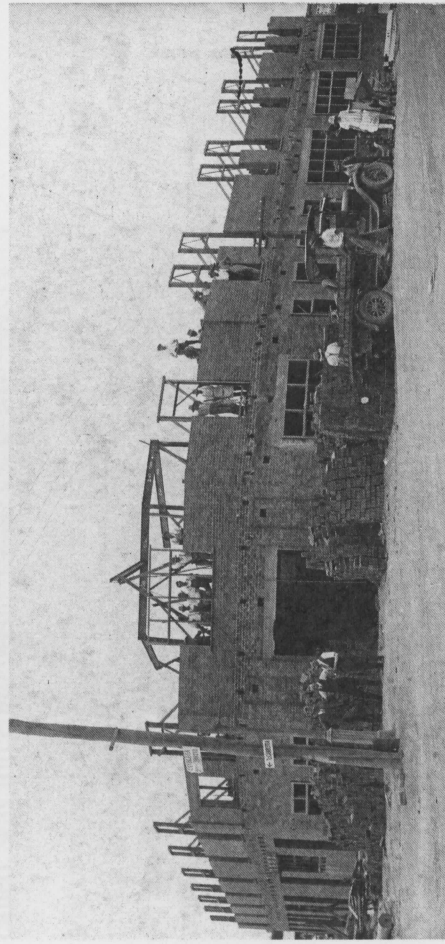
The bars were not at all elaborate, and were usually furnished with some wooden forms, and there was usually a utensil not seen now - the spittoon.

Gas to raise the beer was unknown; the publican really pulled the beer by pump. I do not remember whether the beer was better or stronger then, but drinking vessels of any size other than the pint were unknown - and there didn't seem to be any more people under the influence than there are now.

Various methods were used to keep the beer lively. Usually fermenting aids such as raisins etc were used.

The main spirit called for was rum - imported, of course - but I am not in a position to say whether it was any better or any worse than our present imported rum. Possibly it was more mature and I've hear of Scotch whisky being shipped in sherry casks in the old ships on a voyage around the world and back to Scotland. The idea being that the rolling of the sailing ship and the long time taken by the voyage matured the whisky.

The Coming of the Modern Hotel

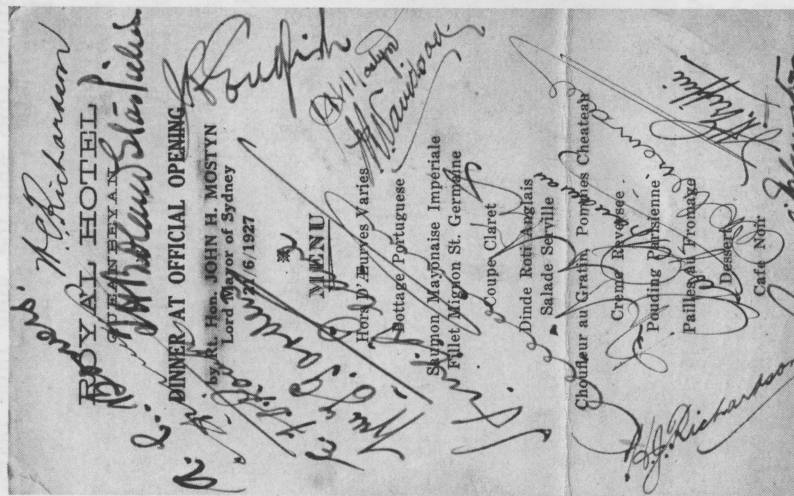


Hotel Queanbeyan under construction 1926, QDHMS collection

The country hotel as we now know it is an enlarged and improved version of the old country inn. It gradually came to be built of brick. It became two storied and in a few instances it had three or four stories. It provided sample rooms in which the old commercial traveler could display the contents of his huge cases. It had separate dining rooms,

usually known as the commercial dining room and the second class dining room.

The commercial dining room now acquired a menu written in what could be called cooking French. I called it that because the terms used are international. If it is Crème du Barry in Australia it is Crème du Barry everywhere, including the big ocean liners. Second class diners got what they were given.



Menu, Opening of new Royal Hotel 1927, using Spendlove's 'cooking French' language.
QDHMS collection

However, it is only in recent years that the now pampered guest gets what he usually hasn't got in his own home: hot and cold water in his bedroom.

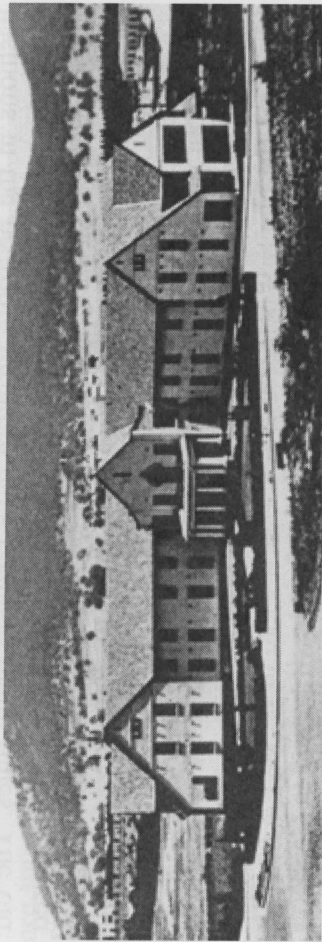
Fashions in the bedroom furniture have changed many times. The old black iron bed again to be sneered at, and the whim of the day required that one should sleep in a wooden bed. At the same time the bedroom set disappeared.

Ideas about our modern bar vary. I am fairly certain, however, that it is much cleaner than say, twenty years ago. This applies to both the bar itself and the plant. Whether it is the ideal way to drink beer is another story. The fact is the continental beer garden idea was tried in Canberra in 1928 and failed, and the Department that ran the cafes, as they were called, was forced to put in bars.

My own preference is for a combination of both ideas, tables and chairs and a long, straight bar with a small service bar for the person waiting on the tables. The idea is that you can please yourself whether you want to drink at the bar or at a table.

Regarding the drinks sold in the modern hotel, I think it is generally conceded that the beer at any rate, particularly in the country, is of better quality and it is better served. The long, slow trip to us from the brewery to the hotel and the lack of proper cooling facilities made the beer practically undrinkable. In Sydney and in towns with a local brewery it was different as the beer went to the hotel fresh and cool. The cooling problem was eventually overcome by the adoption of the icebox system, which had the advantage common to the wheelbarrow- it would always work, and, providing it wasn't overtaxed, it was quite effective. The weakness was in the rush periods, when the beer was forced through the coils so quickly it didn't have time to cool.

Ern Spendelove was a Master builder by trade who took on the Hotel Ainslie when it was Government hostel established to house members of Parliament and public servants. It was privately run by Ern and his wife until they bought the Queanbeyan Victoria Hotel in 1936 .



Hotel Ainslie 1930, Ainslie ACT, Holiday Snaps, Library of South Australia

Victoria Hotel, Monaro St, 1870 Beaufoy Merlin, QDHMS



Victoria Hotel, Monaro Street 1930, Kelly collection

Ern retired from the hotel trade in the late 1950s . He died in Queanbeyan in 1964 aged 78. In the 1950s he shared his knowledge of the trade run by the innkeepers and hoteliers of the district with the readers of the *Queanbeyan Age*. The published date is unknown.

Queanbeyan Canberra Railway

Bureaucracy and Nation Building

John McGlynn

While glancing through some digital files from the National Archives of Australia I noticed a file of correspondence from 1916 about a railway joining Queanbeyan and Canberra. It piqued my interest in the light of the controversy about the Gungahlin to Civic light rail construction and the idea that ideally there could be rail connections between the Canberra town centres and Queanbeyan. I was amused by the bureaucratic delays in gaining approval for the link, involving both the Federal Government, then in Melbourne, and the NSW Government in Sydney. On a smaller scale it reminded me of the machinations dramatized in the ABC satirical program, *Utopia*. I could find no evidence that the actual timetable was instated until at least 1923, but further research may correct that impression.

References: NAA: A1, 1917/12126 & NAA: A1, 1923/25876



Perrier car at Canberra Railway Station 1927- Image State Library of NSW

COMMONWEALTH
1917 112
HOME AFFAIRS



C.W. 17/8303 L.

In your reply, refer to
this number and address "THE SECRETARY"
Barr 6 P.O.

Office of the Commissioner
Sydney
15th Dec. 1917.

Sir,

17 MAR 1917
With reference to my letter of the 26th September
last and subsequent reminders of the 18th January and 28th
February last, regarding the draft agreement between the
Commonwealth Government and the Railway Commissioners for
New South Wales for the working of the Queanbeyan-Canberra
Railway, I shall be glad if you will kindly expedite your
reply, advising when the agreement will be completed and
returned.

I have the honor to be,
Sir,

Your Obedient Servant,

W. J. Hughes
Secretary.

The Secretary,
Department of Home Affairs,
MELBOURNE.

The Secretary,
Department of Home and Territories.

The previous papers on the subject are with the Federal
Capital Director of Design and Construction - vide quotation paper;
Will you please advise as to the present position of the matter.

Walter D. Hughes
Acting Secretary,
Department of Works and Railways,
26/3/17.

COMMONWEALTH RAILWAYS.

C.R. 5342.

Melbourne, 12th November, 1923.

THE SECRETARY :-

Department of Works and Railways.

Train Service - Queanbeyan-Canberra Railway.

With reference to my CR. 5342 of the 16th ultimo, I have
to advise that as result of representations made to the New South
Wales Railways, it has been arranged that a train service is to be
instituted between Queanbeyan and Canberra commencing on Monday next
15th instant.

Telegraphic advice of this has just been received and
full particulars are not yet available.

It is known, however, that the following timetable
will operate :-

Daily (Sundays Excepted)

Queanbeyan	dep. 7-10 a.m.
Molonglo	dep. 7-40 a.m.
Canberra Power House	arr. 7-40 a.m.
Canberra Power House	dep. 5-15 p.m.
Molonglo	dep. 5-45 p.m.
Queanbeyan	arr. 5-45 p.m.

It is arranged that Molonglo be a stopping place.

The following are the fares :-

	Workmen's Weekly Tickets.	Ordinary daily Single Tickets, Second Class.
Queanbeyan-Molonglo 3 miles	2/9d.	5d.
Queanbeyan - Power House 6 miles	4/6d.	10d.
Molonglo - Power House	2/9d.	5d.

Will you kindly arrange to notify all concerned by wire.

(Sgd) MORRIS C. REIL
Commissioner.

The Secretary,
Home and Territories Department,

Referred.

Walter D. Hughes
Secretary.