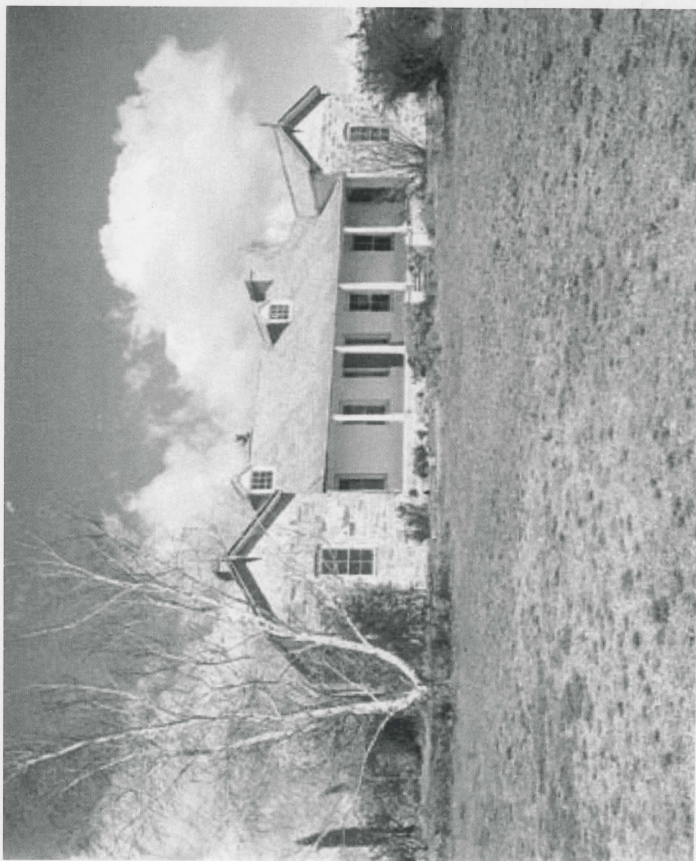


# Quinbean

Volume 11 No 1  
April 2018



*The Journal of*  
**Queanbeyan and District Historical Museum Society Inc.**



# QUEANBEYAN & DISTRICT HISTORICAL MUSEUM SOCIETY INC.

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 Palerang Regional Council through the context of the Museum of Queanbeyan.

## Find us at:

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Facebook: [www.facebook.com/queanbeyanmuseum](http://www.facebook.com/queanbeyanmuseum)

## THE MUSEUM OF QUEANBEYAN

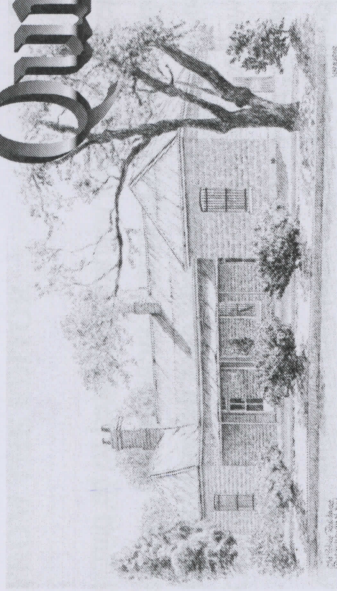
Is found at 10 Farrer Place Queanbeyan, next to the Police Complex and opposite the State Office Building.

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

Cover Photograph: The Oaks, first building in the estate, giving the estate its name. NAA: A6180, 25/3/74/20

# Quimbean

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## FROM THE PRESIDENT

There is a lot going on at the Museum and you are all invited to be part of the work and events, whether hands on or simply viewing our fabulous displays. Of course, the amount of activity does depend on our wonderful volunteers, and we are working towards providing a happy work environment for volunteers, ably assisted by Georgina Perri from QPRC. Volunteers are valued members of our team, all working together to keep our Museum open and functioning, providing a real community asset. Much valuable work is going on behind the scenes during the week, as well as our opening hours on the weekend, 1-4pm. More will be forthcoming about our outdoor equipment project, and the opportunities for training and involvement.

I have contributed a report on an inspiring conference I attended in 2017: *Whole Histories - Keeping The Stories Alive*. Next edition I will present the positive steps that can be taken by Historical Societies to improve their value to members and community, with advice by Judith Dunn OAM, past President and fellow of Parramatta & District Historical Society and councillor of RAHS and FAHS.

I am currently acting President of QDHMS, past Secretary and have been a member of the Management Committee since 2003. To discuss any issue raised, or to consult the published papers of the conference, I can be contacted on 0435 016985, or leedavy112@gmail.com

Lee Davy

## FROM THE EDITOR

Farewell to wonderful Gillian Kelly who has retired after a long and successful stint in the role of *Quinbean* Editor. John McGlynn and Kerrie Ruth are the new Editors and have produced this edition with Gillian's expert guidance.

Articles, snippets and poems about Queanbeyan's history are welcome. Thanks so much to all our regular contributors. You are treasures of the highest order!

Lee Davy has contributed a thought provoking article about the future of Historical Societies. We have been blessed with the high calibre of our volunteers and supporters over the years and touch wood we are still an active Society.

Contact John at [mcglynn\\_john@hotmail.com](mailto:mcglynn_john@hotmail.com)

John McGlynn



# AN APOLOGY

## MAIL CONTRACTS

GOULBURN/QUEANBEYAN/COOMA/BOMBALA ROAD

1867-1888

In the December 2017 issue of *Quinbean* I, as Editor, ran an article with magnificent photographs about the mail runs in this district in the nineteenth century. The information in note form and with photographs had been given to me, but without any identification. I wrongly assumed that it had been found at the Museum and as I am often given material in note form I thought nothing of it, but I didn't check!

The material is the part of a working document of Kristine Howard, direct descendant of Philip Pooley. It was intended for exhibition at the time of John Rosewarne's afternoon about Cycling in Queanbeyan, and definitely not for publication in this format.

It is entirely my error that the work was published without any form of recognition, and that I did not look for identification of those beautiful photographs. For this I apologise unreservedly.

Kristine is writing the story of the Pooley family in this town – they were an intriguing family. Not only were they early mail runners, they became hoteliers with Pooley's Hotel (now Walsh's) and avid cyclists in the days when cycle races drew great interest. I look forward to reading her finished work!

**Gillian Kelly**

# QUEANBEYAN FEARS LOSS FROM GOOGONG PROPOSAL

*The Canberra Times* October 23, 1954

The annual loss of trade passing through Queanbeyan if the Commonwealth Government proceeded with the erection of a water supply storage dam on the Queanbeyan River at Googong would be at least £240,000, said Mr. T. E. Woodger at a sitting of the Parliamentary Committee of Public Works yesterday.

The committee which is investigating a proposed water supply for Canberra heard evidence at Queanbeyan C.W.A. rooms. Two schemes proposed are for dams on the Upper Cotter and at Googong on the Queanbeyan river.

Mr. J. O. Cramer is chairman of the committee. Mr. Woodger, who is 83, said he had a lifelong interest in the development of Canberra and Queanbeyan. He was a foundation member of the original committee which suggested Canberra as a site for a future capital.

Mr. Woodger said he did not think the people of Queanbeyan had given consideration to the merits of either scheme. Opposition came mainly from the land holders in the proposed 39 square miles to be resumed near Googong.

He said that resumption would affect about 80 land holders and estimated there were about 85,000 sheep in the area which produced 2,400 bales of wool a year. At an average of £100 a bale, the total lost in wool alone would be £240,000. In addition there would be losses in beef, dairy cattle; and pigs. Mr. Woodger estimated the resumption and re-establishment for the Googong Scheme would cost in the vicinity of £2,000,000.



If the land were resumed it would cost the government and the taxpayers another £20,000 a year to keep rabbits down in the area. Mr. Woodger said that when Canberra was first planned it was agreed water from the Cotter could supply a population of 100,000. "It may be dearer to start now but it would be much cheaper to utilise the Cotter in the long run," he said. The chairman, Mr. Cramer, said that the Committee was concerned immediately with the resumption of only 9,700 acres if the Googong Scheme were to be proceeded with. The total area of 395 square miles as a catchment area, however, would also be taken into consideration.

Mr. Woodger said he did not think the residents of the Googong area should be disturbed in their primary production when an area for obtaining much purer water was available at the Cotter and had been specifically set aside for that purpose. Replying to a question, Mr. Woodger said the resumption of only 9,700 acres was "only the thin edge of the wedge."

John Carogh Gorman, manager of Googong station, said the resumption would vitally affect himself and his family. He said in a specific area of 9,700 acres, there were 11 holdings, most of which were free hold land improved. His family owned 4,284 acres and the river ran through the centre of the property. The property supported 15,300 sheep and 130 head of cattle. The resumption would mean that he would lose the use of 2,684 acres.

Gerald David O'Hanlon, Yarrowlumla Shire Clerk, said if the 395 square miles were resumed, the council would suffer a loss in rates of £3,748. If only 9,700 acres were resumed the loss in general rates would be between £600 and £700. The committee inspected the proposed site at Googong yesterday afternoon and will make an inspection of the Cotter area this morning.

## JOHN PETERS 1807-1887 &

SARAH JANE MCCUE 1829-1870



John Peters 1807-1887

My maternal great grandfather, John Peters was born on Samos, Greece in 1807 and came out to Australia around 1838 as a sailor on an English trading ship and presumably jumped ship because no record of his arrival has been found.

He is recorded as to be the first or one of the first free Greek settlers in Australia. He met a 13 year old Irish girl from Dublin, Sarah Jane McCue, and they married at St. John's Anglican Church Parramatta on



December 7th 1841. I assume they were both illiterate as they both signed with an X. Between 1842 and 1870 Sarah bore him ten sons and five daughters of whom four sons and one daughter died in infancy.

John worked on boats plying their trade up and down the Parramatta river. Around 1854 he and his family moved to the Braidwood area on the high plains some 150 miles from Sydney. He was first a shepherd at 6 Mile Flat near Braidwood and then around 1860 they moved and John worked as a shepherd on the first sheep station in the district called Bedervale established in the 1830's by Captain John Coghill whose son-in law Robert Madrill was managing it when John was working there.

They lived in a tiny shack a respectable distance from the homestead. Sarah probably worked there as a domestic as her children were allowed to attend school in the little schoolhouse in the courtyard.

Sometime between 1866 and 1869 John got the gold bug and went gold fossicking at the new gold diggings at Little River Mongarlowe and moved his family into a little hut on the diggings. He made a precarious living fossicking for gold as he never acquired a freehold of his own because he had never been naturalised. On May 11th 1870, after a life of physical hardship, Sarah died at age 42 of an intestinal illness and on was buried on the 15th in the Braidwood cemetery in an unmarked grave in an unknown location in the cemetery alongside her two youngest children. Her death certificate entry of Minister and Religion stated Nil.

John reared the younger children himself refusing to have another woman in the house and in the 1880's when the last of the children had married, he moved back to Sydney living in Albion Street, Surrey Hills where he died aged 80 on March 18th 1887 of kidney disease and was

survived by ten of his children. He was buried on March 20th 1887 in the Roman Catholic section of Rookwood cemetery Sydney section MI row 10 plot 544.



I am a proud 5th generation member of a very large Australian family descended from John and Sarah, at last count, up to eight generations. One of the most famous members being my grandfather William John's brother, Thomas Peters, born at Colombo Braidwood in 1878 and died in Braidwood in 1908 of multiple complications. He was two foot one inch tall, shorter than the famous Tom Thumb and people ask me if he ever married and I tell them he could not find a girl he could see eye to eye with.

Some third generation members were well known concert musicians and singers with one member Richard Divall being a world famous Symphony Orchestra Conductor.

**Patrick Jeffery**



## AN OLD LAND MARK DISAPPEARS

### *Queanbeyan Age, 1907*

The onward march of town or city improvements seldom takes into account antiquarian claims. Everywhere — from mighty London, with its venerable piles which withstood the ravages of time for centuries, down to our own little Queanbeyan with its history comprised within a single century, and its structures of even shorter exigence — the old order vanishes to make room for the new.



**Wright's Post Office Store on right with storage buildings behind.**

**Photograph: G Kelly Collection**

These reflections are suggested by the demolition of the late J J Wright's 'Old Post Office Stores', which, after some Intermediate changes, had become known to the business public as 'Solomon's Universal Stores'. Now that the old familiar structure has been razed to its foundations — to make room for premises more up-to-date and better adapted to present-day requirements and methods of trade, as pursued by the enterprising latest successor, the historic, though quaint and unpretentious pile must not be permitted to vanish without an 'in memoriam'.



### **Solomon's Store**

It was no matter of surprise to learn that premises which for two or three generations past had been the leading business mart of the town and district, should, when the work of dilapidation exposed its flooring-joists, and revealed the accumulated debris of its long lifetime, incite a search for 'treasure trove'. Through the worn and decayed boards, supported by these old joists, some small change, and other 'flotsam and jetsam' would from time to time have disappeared, it was naturally surmised. So for a day or two a small detachment of 'sappers and miners', in the persons of the small boys of Queanbeyan, set to work a-digging and scraping, and raking, in the dry dust and fluff, and not without compensation. Copper, silver, and even gold coin, is said to have rewarded their patience and perseverance, to say nothing of finds of other nature worth salvage.

As a souvenir, bought for a 'thrum', a gentleman showed us what he called a bronze medal, but which, upon examination we recognized as a token, such as, up to fifty or sixty years ago, did duty as small change in the colony, in the absence of copper coinage from the Imperial Mint, of



which there was little or none in circulation in New South Wales of that time. It was a legalised custom in those days for the big business houses and firms of Sydney to import tons of 'tokens' from England, bearing their firm-name and pay them out in small change, the law which sanctioned this requiring them to give their value in sterling silver or gold on demand. The particular token recovered the other day was impressed on its obverse with the colonial arms — familiar to everybody, the kangaroo and emu supporting a shield with its usual quarterings, and bearing the motto 'Peace and Plenty'. On the reverse were the words, T Hanks and Co, 1857'. If the writer's memory serves him aright, this was a well-known firm of tea-merchants in Sydney.

If the present generation inquire why the demolished premises were styled the 'Old Post Office Stores', they are informed that when the presiding genius of the place came to Queanbeyan in its earliest days, he followed humbler vocations, such as pound-keeper and village postmaster. When he embarked in store-keeping the post-office became an adjunct to the Store; hence its name.

Exactly in what year the late Mr J J Wright started (or succeeded to) his store or when the premises were built, history sayeth not. It was an odd looking building in the early fifties of the bygone century. It was doing a big trade before the discovery of gold at Kiandra in 1858; and upon that discovery branches of the business were established at Cooma, Adaminaby, Kiandra, and elsewhere - Including even Lambing Flat, upon the discovery of gold there. There was no branch of any bank in Queanbeyan then, and the banking business of the town and district was in the late Mr Wright's hands. We need say nothing here of the business of the 'Old Post-office Stores' within the last ten or fifteen years — it is known to everybody.

But the old place was famous for something else than its commercial transactions. It was the rendezvous of the prominent residents of the district, where they met to discuss matters political, social, and general. Beneath its roof such men of distinction as Sir Terence Aubrey Murray, his brother Dr Murray, Dr Andrew Morton, Willom Foster (late Agent-General), S M Mowle {the venerable Usher of the Black Rod) and such other pioneers of the district as George Campbell, Henry Hall, Alex Cunningham, Thomas Rutledge, Nathaniel Powell, William Davis, Charles McKeahnie, John McDonald, Geo and P C Palmer, L F DeSalis, and others - all of whom, with the exception of S M Mowle, W Davis, and John McDonald, have passed away from the living.

It was here, pre-eminently, that the politics of the day were discussed, and to some extent shaped. Here it was that local matters were talked over, and movements for the welfare of the town and district matured or squelched. The dictators there decided who should be supported for parliamentary or civic honours; and thence, whatever the fiat issued, it seldom miscarried. Notably, under the roof of the 'Old Post-office Store', the establishment of the Municipality of Queanbeyan was determined on; and it was there the rough draft of its code of by-laws was approved of, before being posted by the aldermen in council assembled.

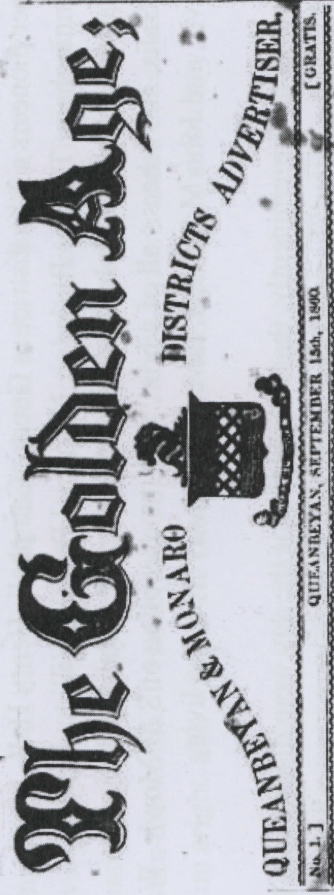
Nor does it detract from its historic interest to learn that Governors, Chief Justices, premiers and statesmen - such as Sir John Robertson, Sir George Dibbs, Dr Lang, Henry Copeland, and other eminent public men have shown their interest in the affairs of Queanbeyan or discussed public matters with the local leaders of thought in the 'Old Post-office Store'. To the old landmark, those who remember it in the days of its prosperity may well say VALE! Anon

Extracted from the *Queanbeyan Age*, Friday 12 July 1907, p2, by Peter Procter



# GOLDEN AGE 1860

Extracted by Errol Lea-Scarlett 1971



THE GOLDEN AGE and General Advertiser for the districts of Queanbeyan and Monaro: first number issued. Advertisement dated Queanbeyan 14 September 1860: "The proprietor, having just received his entire business plant, per 'Damascus', from the best English foundries and manufactories, the whole of which consisting of the latest improved kinds, and much of the Type being that of Besley's superior Hard Metal, designed for the more elegant styles of Printing; and having engaged the services of his brother, Mr F.P. Gale, (whose experience as a Letterpress Printer extends over a period of twenty-one years, and whose workmanship has rarely been surpassed in point of elegance and correct taste) as overseer of the mechanical department of his Office, trusts on these grounds, combined with strictly reasonable charges, to secure a liberal share of public patronage."

Saturday 15 September 1860

GALE, John, advertisement: editor, publisher and sole proprietor of *The Golden Age*, Queanbeyan.

*THE GOLDEN AGE*. Leader on policies: earnest advocacy of thoroughly popular and liberal measures, open strictures and comments upon parliamentary and legal affairs, fearless expressions of opinions, single aim "The Advancement of the Public Good".

QUEANBEYAN HOSPITAL. New building approaching completion under superintendence of D. Jordan, Queanbeyan; situated on a sloping eminence near the approach to Queanbeyan from the Canberra Plains.

ASSE John, a Chinaman, fined five shillings or one hour in the cells at Queanbeyan Police Court 14 September on a charge of being drunk and disorderly.

McMANUS, Bernard, a penniless vagabond passing through to the diggings, fined £2 or four days in the cells at Queanbeyan Police Court 14 September on a charge of obscene language.

BYRNE, James, of Molonglo, committed to Quarter Sessions from Queanbeyan Police Court 14 Sept for stealing a saddle and bridle.

CHRIST CHURCH, QUEANBEYAN. Opening services in new place of worship announced, Sunday 7 October.

QUEANBEYAN SPRING RACES to be held 16 and 17 October, three events each day.

O'NEILL, James, advertisement: his fast coaches to leave the Harp Inn for Lanyon at 3 p.m. and to leave Lanyon for Queanbeyan at 7 a.m. Single journey eight shillings, to and fro twelve shillings.



PRINTING TRADE. Apprentice wanted; opening for a steady, active and intelligent boy who can read and write at the *Golden Age* office.

COURTHOUSE, Queanbeyan. New premises now almost completed.

CRICKET GROUND at Queanbeyan unfenced and in a shameful condition.

TELEGRAPH. C.E. Newcombe, P.M., requisitioned to call a public meeting to memorialise the government on need for speedy establishment of electric telegraph communication between Sydney and Kiandra via Queanbeyan and Cooma.

LEVY, Abraham, advertisement: Goulburn Stores, Queanbeyan; Queanbeyan Stores, Cooma, and Cooma Stores, Denison. Large wholesale stocks also available.

WALSH, T. & E., advertisement: Railway Stores, Queanbeyan; new branch opened at Micalago.

HUNT, William, advertisement: Elmsall Inn, Trincola-place, Queanbeyan, under his management for past twenty-three years.

PALMER, P.C., Jerrabomberra, advertisement: his horse Artaxerxes to stand for the season.

BREEN, Catherine, advertisement: Harp Inn, Macquoid-street Queanbeyan, opposite the Commercial Bank and near the Post Office. New stocks laid in to cater for large and increasing traffic through Queanbeyan occasioned by the discovery of the Snowy River Goldfields; internal arrangements of the inn improved; Royal Mail booking office for coaches to Sydney, Goulburn, Cooma etc.

DOYLE, Mrs, advertisement: Queanbeyan Inn; excellent stabling and food available.

SOARES, G. Notice: is receiving names of persons desirous of renting seats in the new Christ Church, Queanbeyan.

ADVERTISERS (other than those listed above) in first issue of The Golden Age:

SCRIVENOR, W., manager, Commercial Banking Company of Sydney, Queanbeyan branch

O'NEILL, James, saddlery and harness establishment, Monaro-street; in this business four years

BEATTY, W.A., butcher and baker

NUGENT & COPE, Beehive Store

WRIGHT, J.J., Post Office Stores, Queanbeyan; Commercial Stores, Cooma, Russell's and Kiandra

HAYLEY, W.F. Vaccinations at town surgery each day

BLEWITT, George, Lobb's Hole; horse strayed from Kiandra

DENT, William; watch and clock maker, Crawford-street

HUTCHISON, J., sen.; carpenter, builder and undertaker, Queanbeyan

BRICK, Patrick; wine & spirit merch.t, Australian Store, Queanbeyan

HUTCHISON, Mrs; day school, opposite Wesleyan Chapel

BEALES, Dr R.T.; surgeon, Gundaroo

CAMERON, Robert; Caledonian Hotel, Micalago

CAMERON, John. Death; inquest at Mejura. Husband of Margaret

CONLEN, James, tailor, Crawford-street Qbn., report of inquest.

ROWLEY, Samuel John, son of Geo Rowley, died Burwood aged 19.

CAMPBELL, Walter, son of Charles Campbell, 22, of Duntroon, died England.



## A POST OFFICE IS A MOVABLE FEAST



Isaac Nichols, Australia's First Postmaster, and Second Fleeter  
Artist Iain McKellar

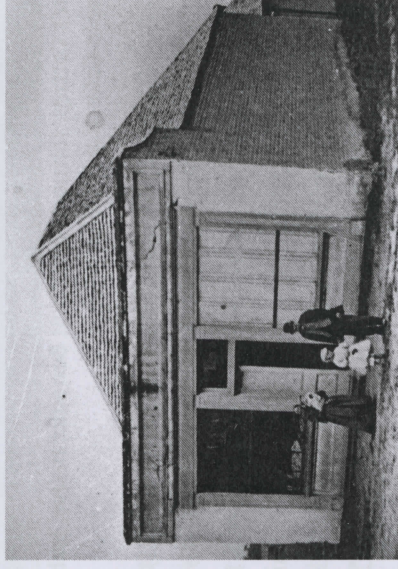
Australia's first post office was run from the home of a Second Fleeter, Isaac Nichols, in 1809. Mail delivery was in private hands for the next 16 years, until the first postal act in 1825 allowed the Government to assume direct control of the Colony's postal services, with power to appoint Post Masters throughout the Colony.

But outside Sydney's boundaries mail was carried privately or by constables with horse powered services well up to the 1920s. In our area, the Monaro, mails were non-existent beyond Bungonia, and beyond this point people had to make their own arrangements, sometimes travelling 100s of miles reach a post office.

Not until 1836 did Queanbeyan's 'Limestone Plains Post Office' open with C I Gerrard in charge, followed by Richard Redmayne. Their paid remuneration was 20% of postage collected. The establishment of this post office was probably because it marked the convergence of tracks

leading from both southern highroads to the Monaro. Queanbeyan's PO was the first established in NSW outside Sydney.

John Gray (the first businessman residing in the town whose influence got Queanbeyan moving) took over the store and PO in 1838, conducting mails from Bungonia twice a week. Mail deliveries remained with individual contracts, and by 1839, the speed of mail from Sydney had increased. It could be completed on horseback inside a week, instead of the previous 10 days. Occasionally mailmen carrying mail to Yass were attacked by hostile Aborigines and their horses speared. By 1844, John James Wright of Queanbeyan was appointed local Postmaster, and enlarged his store (later J B Young's and Grace Bros.), calling his shop 'The Post Office Store'.

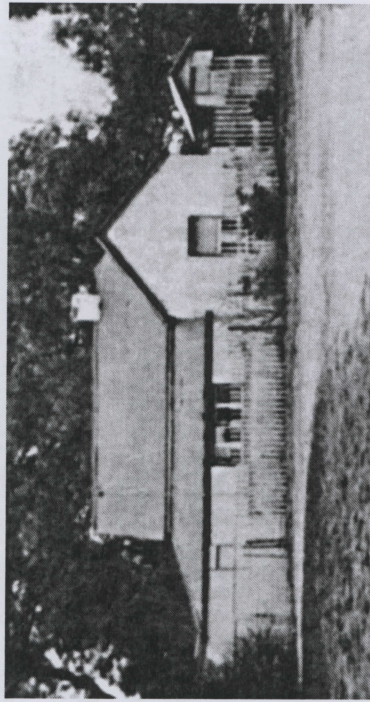


Levy's Store McQuoid Street, 1870,  
Photograph: Beaufoy Merlin

In 1854, the PO was moved to Abraham Levy's shop, Monaro Street. and the following year to Macquoid Street. Michael Duff, next door to the post office at one time, called his store 'the Telegraph' but the Telegraph was never located there.



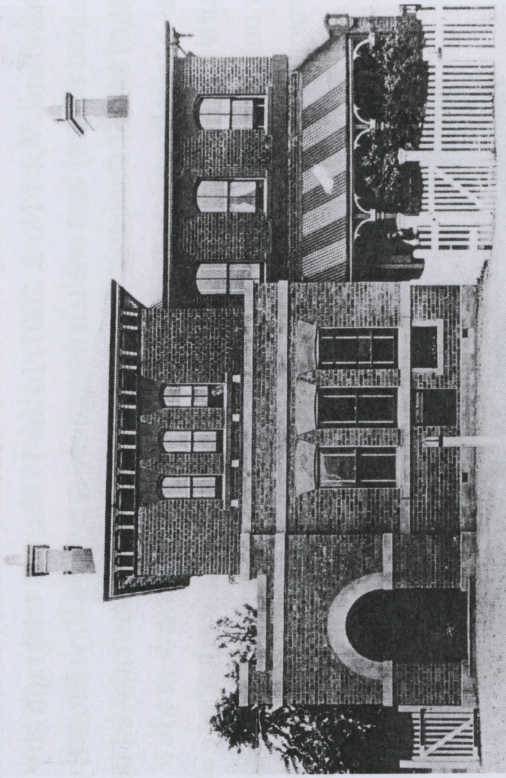
In 1864, the first Telegraph station was set up in Judge Callaghan's cottage (near St Benedicts,) and in 1870, Wilson's buildings, Monaro Street were leased to the Postal Department for a combined Postal and Telegraph office. Telephone poles were threaded along the north side of the street with strangely, one contorted pole. John Woodward was now the Post Master.



Callaghan's Cottage formerly behind St Benedict House, Isabella Street  
Photograph: Collection G Kelly

Queanbeyan's first official PO building was built in 1879/80 by John Kealman. Kealman's brickworks being on Garryowen estate near Uriarra Road. In 1881 a petition to the Post Master General requested a town delivery service and William Nugent commenced a daily delivery in 1882. About this time, three Michelago settlers agreed to take turns sending a man for letters once a week to the Queanbeyan PO, twelve miles away.

On one occasion he did not return. Waterholes were searched, and his body was found with the letter bag still strapped around his shoulders. "The letters were not even wet", settler John Eyre of Woodlands wrote in his journal.



Queanbeyan's First Post Office building, cnr Monaro and Lowe Streets  
Photograph: Queanbeyan and District Historical Museum Society

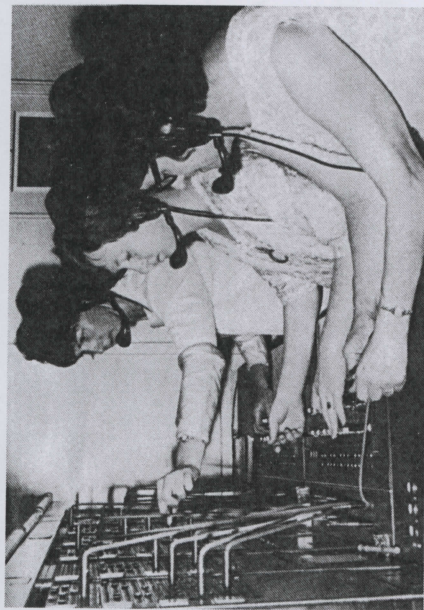
The telegraph was proving useful for passing on messages about bushranger attacks, as perhaps Ned Kelly knew when he shot up the Post and Telegraph Office at Jerilderie.

Not all postal workers were happy, however as one Ralph Clemenger wrote to the NSW Deputy Post Master General in 1903. "I beg to apply for an increase of salary. For 7 years I have received no increase, and I am on duty daily from 7.30 am to 8.15pm."

In 1926, Clarrie Munns (later of Surveyor Street) was sent to Queanbeyan from the city. "It was cold and raining, and I thought what a hole!" but work in Sydney was short, and one was lucky to have a job. The telephone exchange was at Acton No PO in Canberra. There were three Canberra subscribers, and 97 lines to Queanbeyan."



George Monk won the mail contract between Queanbeyan and Gunning (see *Quinbean*, Vol 1 No 2, 2007) In the 1950s, one telegraph boy complained he only had one ten minute toilet break a day. Elma Byrne, (nee Flint) late of Campbell Street, told me in 1983, she enjoyed her years as a telephonist, in Queanbeyan in the 50s. "I was sent to Goulburn for two weeks training (they paid my expenses). There were mostly only boys in the job except for one woman whom I replaced It was a manual exchange and I started as the only girl, ending up with ten on the staff."



Manual Exchange, Queanbeyan – used until 1969  
Photograph: Bob Woods Queanbeyan Age

As time marched on, many of the 4400 post offices established nationwide over a hundred years came to be ill-equipped to house modern technology. With shopping Malls, Post Offices were no longer at the hub of retail activity, so Post Offices became Post Shops, and Queanbeyan's Post Shop moved into the Riverside Plaza for two years.

Today's Post Shops are now on the corner of Antill and Crawford Street, one at Karabar, and one on Yass Road. Mail is no longer sorted in a Post Office.

Letter-writing is becoming an archaic pursuit, as writer Kelly Burke states in his book "The Stamp of Australia". Has mail become an endangered species as in Terry Pratchett's "Going Postal"? Perhaps people will one day wonder what Post Offices were for. Well, Queanbeyan had quite a lot of Post Offices in its day, as I've listed here. Will that day ever come again?

## Rosemary Curry

### References:

Cross, Bygone Queanbeyan  
Burke, The Stamp of Australia  
Lca-Scarlett, Queanbeyan and District  
Sheedy & Percy, Moneroo to Monaro  
Withycombe, Queanbeyan a Town in Transition  
Oral histories, Curry collection





## WHOLE HISTORIES - KEEPING THE STORIES ALIVE

**Papers presented at the conference held at St Clement's Retreat and Conference Centre, Galong NSW Friday 7 to 9 April 2017.**

I was fortunate to be able to attend this conference, and benefit from the experience of meeting with like minded history enthusiasts and volunteers in the region. Yass and District Historical Society is to be commended for the organising, advertising and implementation of an excellent event. The range of speakers was of great relevance to historical societies and to the study of history in general. Subsequently, the publishing of these papers in a single volume has allowed for a handy reference for the local history museum, and is of great relevance to our work here in Queanbeyan. The volume opens with a quote from Thomas J Noel, author and historian:

*"History is not something that happened long ago and far away. History happens to all of us all the time. Local history brings history home, it touches your life, the life of your family, your neighbourhood, your community".*

Dr Mathew Trinca from the National Museum opened proceedings, speaking of how local history casts light on and can even shape the national narrative. Many historians and professionals contributed articles, with the purpose to empower and enthuse local workers who are volunteers.

I will focus this time on the article, *Future Options in a Changing World*, by Dr Carol Liston AO, History Professor, Western Sydney University.

Local history and museum groups proliferated in the 1960s and 1970s, particularly in country areas, with many people involved as keepers of

their local history and objects. However, today there are more groups to compete for volunteer's time, and few younger people have time for community groups outside of their children's education and sporting activities. Dr Liston presents sobering facts on a world where future generations could have difficulty in engaging in the study of Australian history. She teaches university students, and cannot assume prior knowledge, for example in reading maps effectively or even handwritten documents and manuscripts. Reading habits have changed because of technology, and vocabulary has been lost. Multicultural groups have changed local demography. So, many are not interested in the local history, and one instance is cited of a historical society in Sydney being wound down, its papers thrown in the rubbish!

Managing a Museum is not easy, and community perception is very important. Record keeping, meetings, elections, constitutions, finances and tenure of positions are all important. Also of great importance is the rights of volunteers, covered by the Fair Work Act, anti-bullying legislation Jan 2014, gives volunteers rights to make complaints to the Fair Work commission, and societies are obligated to ensure a fair and safe working environment.

The objects of Societies include: to encourage the study of Australian and local history, and publish same, to acquire historical records for the purpose of research, acquire objects to form a museum, promote exchange of information with similar bodies, and preserve local buildings and places of historical interest.

Many societies have failed because of bullying or arrogant leaders, death of office bearers, burnout (our own experience in Queanbeyan! Although we are still pretty healthy), narrow membership, disrespect or destruction. The Society needs to be involved and reaching out to record and participate in the local community. A constant revision of



the objects of the society is needed, including visibility, education and advocacy. Ways to reach out to non traditional members of societies are needed, including multicultural and millennials. All members matter and should be made welcome. A valid point may be to consider projects rather than committees. Volunteers quit because of not feeling valued, lack of leadership, lack of communication, and lack of flexibility in how things are done and by whom. Dr Liston has provided a useful checklist; it would benefit us in Queanbeyan to discuss it.

Lee Davy



## OUR MUSEUM

Come, visit our Museum,  
There are lots of things to see,  
If you have a free weekend,  
This is the place to be!

Come see the history of Queanbeyan,  
Of churches, shops and schools.  
A lovely mural along a wall,  
And even old farming tools.

There is a lovely magazine.  
The title is "Quinbean".  
Please share your story to it,  
So by others it is seen.

Do YOU have a Queanbeyan story?  
Memories you'd like to share?  
Come into our little Museum,  
You are always welcome there.

The volunteers are friendly,  
They try to be helpful too.  
If you have memories of Queanbeyan,  
They would LOVE to hear from you.

Yes, please visit our little Museum,  
To look and chat and share  
The memories of YOUR Queanbeyan,  
So we hope to see you there.

Maria Lukacs



## OAKS ESTATE IN THE 1930S

In a recent edition of *Quinbean* I contributed an article based on a National Archives file about the resentment felt by the residents of Queanbeyan about what they saw as unfavourable conditions in contrast with the ACT over jobs during the Depression.

On the same file (NAA: A1, 1931/7622) were the fears of another group, which had an even more ambiguous relationship with the ACT. These were the residents of Oaks Estate who were in many ways part of the Queanbeyan community but separated from their near neighbours by an artificial boundary, the railway line.

In the file I looked at last year the residents of Oaks Estate were worried that if their community were to be transferred back to NSW, they would lose any preferences for jobs in the ACT. However, this was yet another dilemma for Oaks Estate which even today is seen as a sort of limbo by various levels of government and their agencies, as illustrated by an article in the *Canberra Times*, April 24 2017 quoting Oaks Estate Progress Association vice-president Hugh Griffin who said, among other things:

*"If you go back in the history of Oaks Estate [the government] refused our children diphtheria vaccinations in the '30s. Then they refused them a school. Then they refused them a bus to a school. Then they refused them a bridge to cross the train line so they could get to schools in Queanbeyan. Then they refused them gutters, drains, electricity, water, sewage, streets."*

A file (NAA: A431, 1959/905) in the National Archives of Australia from 1926-32 shows the long term problem. It is titled: *Oaks Estate*,

ACT. *Disabilities of residents on. [Provision of water and electricity].* Another file (NAA: A1, 1931/7622) titled: *Portion of town of*

*Queanbeyan in FCT. Proposed re-incorporation in Municipality of Queanbeyan*, documents the desire of at least some of the residents to be reincorporated in the Queanbeyan community. As illustrated by the letters below the matter went as far as correspondence between the Prime Minister and the premier of NSW. In a manner familiar to those looking at the complexity of any changes to law or practice as shown by the problems with citizenship for Members of Parliament, and the referendum on same-sex marriage, the question had to be referred both to the State Government of NSW and to the electors of that State.

The people of Oaks Estate had their immediate concern about employment allayed but "constitutional difficulties" were the excuse for not solving the fundamental problem of the ambiguous status of the estate.

**John McGlynn**



NAA: A1, 1931/7622

National Archives of Australia



PRIME MINISTER.

30/1

Canberra, N.S.W.  
A. 1356/12.  
DEC 31 1927

Dear Sir,

In reply to your recent enquiries concerning a proposal that the "Oaks Estate" - an area in the Territory for the Seat of Government adjoining the Municipality of Queanbeyan - be re-transferred to the State of New South Wales, I desire to inform you that this matter has been under consideration and representations would have been made to your Government on the subject but for a technical difficulty under the Commonwealth Constitution which would appear to render such re-transfer impracticable at present, except as the result of a special referendum to the electors of New South Wales.

From the accompanying plan it will be seen that the "Oaks Estate" lies between the Geom-Hydney railway line and the Molonglo River. In the Territory for the Seat of Government it was originally part of the town of Queanbeyan, but was included in the Territory, presumably owing to the fact that it was found convenient in that neighbourhood to adapt the railway line as the boundary of the Territory. At that time the estate was not of any considerable value, but more recently it has shown a tendency to develop as a residential area. This has involved the question of whether this somewhat eccentric development within the Federal Capital should be permitted.

The Federal Capital Commission, as the body responsible for the control of the Territory, has recommended that, as the area in question is more closely allied to the Municipality of Queanbeyan than the city of Canberra, its destinies be again linked with that town, and that, subject to your Government agreeing, it be re-transferred to the State of New South Wales.

After considering this matter, the Commonwealth Law Authorities recently advised that such a re-transfer could only be effected under Section 123 of the Commonwealth Constitution, which would require the consent of the Parliament of the State of New South Wales and also the approval of a majority of the electors of that State voting upon the question.

This represents the stage which consideration

/or

The Honorable,  
The Premier of New South Wales,  
SYDNEY.

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PRIME MINISTER.

of the matter has reached, except that the difficulty has been brought under the notice of the Royal Commission which is at present reviewing the question of amendments to the Constitution.

A collateral development, however, has been a request from your Government that an area in the Territory, contiguous to the "Oaks Estate", should be made available by the Commonwealth for sewage disposal purposes for the town of Queanbeyan. It would appear to be desirable that this area, if so utilised, should also be under the control of the Municipality, but the same difficulty arises in regard to divesting the Commonwealth of the sewage rights and again vesting them in the State of New South Wales.

If your Government agrees to accept re-transfer of the sewage rights over these areas the alternative appears to be an appeal to the people of New South Wales or an amendment to the Commonwealth Constitution. No doubt the former is out of the question for the present, in view of the expense entailed, but the latter may be possible within a reasonable time if the Commonwealth Government, as a result of the findings of the Royal Commission now sitting, decides to refer to the people of Australia the question of making certain amendments to the Commonwealth Constitution.

In the meantime, perhaps your Government would kindly state whether it favours the proposal in regard to the "Oaks Estate" and the adjoining proposed sewage disposal area, and whether it would be willing, if the way were open, to receive them again as portions of the State of New South Wales.

Yours faithfully,

Prime Minister.





DUPLICATE.

PREMIER'S DEPARTMENT,  
SYDNEY.

4th July, 1933.

Dear Sir,

Referring to your letter of the 9th May and previous correspondence, A.R. 253/14, respecting the proposed reversion to the State of N.S.Wales of certain areas in the Federal Capital Territory, I have to inform you that so far as "The Oaks" Estate is concerned the Lands Department has no objection to the re-transfer of this area when this can be brought about.

Yours faithfully,

ABBIE BRINTNELL  
for the Premier.

The Right Honorable  
The Prime Minister of the  
Commonwealth of Australia,  
CANBERRA, P.C.T.