

Quinbean

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*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:

Post: QDHMS Inc. PO Box 480 Queanbeyan 2620

Telephone: 02 6169 6213

E-mail: qbnmuseum@yahoo.com.au

Web: www.queanbeyanmuseum.org.au

Facebook: www.facebook.com/queanbeyanmuseum

THE MUSEUM OF QUEANBEYAN

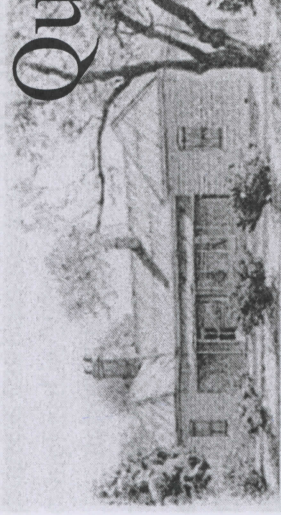
Is found at 10 Farrer Place Queanbeyan, next to the Police Complex and opposite the State Office Building.

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

Cover Photograph: Charles Bean with Nurses at
Queanbeyan Hospital c.1920 Photo: QDHMS MF1.2

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SOCIETY REPORT - 2019 ROUND UP

Vale John Cope. John was a member and well-known local historian and supporter of the Society; author of a large number of local history books including *If Only These Stones Could Speak: A History of Queanbeyan Public School* and *Boer War Men of the Queanbeyan-Braidwood Region*. He will be sorely missed.

The society has continued to prosper throughout 2019. New members have joined the society. School and other group visits have kept visitor numbers high; volunteers have kept the Museum open on the weekend; others have kept the museum neat and tidy and most importantly the work of updating and correcting the cataloging of the objects in the Museum has continued.

The demolition and building works on the Police Station next door to the Museum have made the entrance to the Museum less clear and may have led to fewer weekend visits in the last months of the year.

The Society started the New Year with a new management committee: President John McGlynn; Secretary and Groups Co-ordinator: Frances Flanagan; Treasurer, Members Co-ordinator: Fred Monk. Committee: Lee Davy; David Flanagan; Nancy Monk; Maria Lukacs; Cathy Kosmidis. Thanks to all for their dedication to the preservation of local history.

A QPRC grant of \$50,000 to reconstruct the outdoors display area was administered by a Management sub-committee. Plans were submitted to council in Jan 2019, but took council over six months to approve. Quotations were received from local builders and one was accepted in July 2019. We submitted documents to council in August 2019. We have not received the necessary the necessary building certificate so building works cannot proceed. Despite these frustrations tremendous

progress has been made in this regard and we expect to have the project completed in 2020.

The Storage and Archive area reorganisation work and declutter has continued, using and adopting Museum best practice. We are still finding objects that may or as in most cases have not been accepted into the collection. Cataloguing the collection has continued, including reorganising the Ephemera files and sorting through hundreds of photos. Some University Students assisted on various projects. New recruits and students have been learning museum practices.

Work on developing Libero continues, but we need to be vigilant as there are still a number of issues around the reliability.

In 2019 Braidwood museum hosted the QPRC Heritage Awards during Heritage Week but in future they will alternate and so Queanbeyan will take its turn in 2020.

It was agreed between Queanbeyan Hospital management and that all medical objects in our Museum storage should stay with the museum.

Other activities during the year included: two new exhibitions have had a refresh. The George Briand plan of Queanbeyan, an original document from 1862, was repaired and reframed. E-mails have been dealt with and posts on Facebook, which continues to be popular, updated. The web page needs a volunteer to take on role of keeping the page up to date.

We received a grant to develop an Education Kit supported by Create NSW's Volunteer Museum Grant Program, a devolved funding program administered by Museums & Galleries of NSW on behalf of the NSW Government. Proactive visits to a number of local schools resulted in a number of school children visiting museum.

The Oral history project has continued and a new team to interview more local residents was formed.

Quinbean has been produced three times a year and new articles are always welcome.

The inside rooms of museum are to be cleaned monthly by council contract cleaners. This job and that of looking after outside areas has been the responsibility of society members. We continue to search for a volunteer to be museum gardener.

The committee thanks all those volunteers and council staff who supported and helped during the year. Without whom the museum could not function.

QDHMS Management Committee



Briand Map 1862 – One of our Museum Treasures

FROM THE EDITORS

Welcome to your next edition of Quinbean and to 2020, hoping that it will be less calamitous than 2019 for our region. We have included a report on happenings at the Museum over 2019.

Fred Monk has contributed some tips for beginners on family history.

We are sad to report the passing of Erroll Lea-Scarlett, the author of the definitive history of Queanbeyan's early days: *Queanbeyan District and People*.

Peter Proctor continues his dive into our quirky past and even quirkier chroniclers.

Brigid Whitbread and Gillian Kelly have contributed two amusing pieces from 1845 and 1895, found in their local history researches.

John McGlynn has written about World War One in Australia using Queanbeyan as a snapshot and illustration of larger themes running through our history at that time.

Nichole Overall remembers the 55th anniversary of the filling of Lake Burley Griffin. We agree Canberra would not have been the picturesque place it is without LBG!

Contributions most welcome to our journal, articles, short or long, poetry, snippets, quirky news clips - it is all of interest! Contact John McGlynn or Kerrie Ruth at mcglynn_john@hotmail.com

John McGlynn & Kerrie Ruth

VALE ERROL LEA-SCARLETT

1932 - 2019

It is with sadness that we note the passing of historian Errol Lea-Scarlett. He wrote the authoritative history of our area: *Queanbeyan District and People*, Queanbeyan Municipal Council, 1968.

His research papers and photographs related to Queanbeyan are deposited at the QPRC Library in Queanbeyan.

Errol Lea-Scarlett was born in Sydney in 1932 and graduated in Arts from the University of Sydney in 1953. Through his mother (formerly Constance Tuttell), who was born and reared in Queanbeyan, he is descended from John Breen, host of the Harp of Erin Inn, who arrived in the district in the mid eighteenth thirties, and from John Webb of Springbank, who began farming near Canberra in 1841. He has been a councillor of the Society of Australian Genealogists since 1954 and curator of its important collection of historical manuscripts. He was well known as a lecturer and writer on historical subjects, and in 1963 published a major analysis of the records of St Thomas Cemetery, North Sydney. He was a teacher of history, and for many years was on the Staff of St Augustines College Brookvale. Besides history his other main interest was music, and was the organist at of St Mary's Cathedral, Sydney for a number of years. (Biographical notes from *Qbn District and People*).

Some of E Lea Scarlett's publications include:

Gundaroo, Errol Lea-Scarlett, Roebuck Society, 1972.

Roots and Branches: ancestry for Australians tracing your family tree
Errol Lea-Scarlett, Collins, 1978.

First light on the Limestone Plains: historic photographs of Canberra & Queanbeyan, Errol Lea-Scarlett & Tim Robinson, Hale & Iremonger [for] Canberra & District Historical Society, 1986.

LOCAL HISTORY TIPS AND TRICKS

Family Matters

Researching your family; for beginners

Where to start

- Begin with yourself and your partner
- Then siblings
- Then both set of parents and their siblings etc.

Family Tree templates are available from the web, or you may wish to purchase a Family Tree program.

Traps

- So, you found a relative in someone's tree. Don't be tempted to just download the information to your tree until you check it is your ancestor!
 - A distant cousin of mine found a woman's records on a web based tree, my cousin concluded it was my grandmother and copied it.
 - The details she copied recorded that this woman was living in Victoria and died there. The truth is my grandmother lived in Epping, Sydney, for all of her married life and died there. *This is all recorded in newspapers and on her death certificate.*

Where to find information

Most Australian libraries have family history material for their area, or contain links to local Family History Societies.

Local Contacts:

QPRC: Library of local History Books; Research Collections.

Brigid Whitbread T: 02 6285 6256

E: Brigid.Whitbread@qprc.nsw.gov.au

QDHMS: Library of local History Books. Contact us for time to view or drop in on the weekend 1-4.

Internet

Google: Just type the name you are looking for, if known include location.

Cemeteries: www.australiancemeteries.com.au

Newspapers. Index of deaths as reported in Australian newspapers www.ryerstonindex.org

Grevilles 1872 NSW Post Office Directory:

freepages.rootsweb.com/~hcastle/genealogy/grevilles/lists/abc.html

Military: <https://aif.adfa.edu.au/index.html>
<https://www.awm.gov.au>

Prisoners of WWI: <https://grandeguerre.icrc.org/en/File/Search>

National Library of Australia "TROVE" collection
<https://www.nla.gov.au>

National Archives Australia: Holdings include

military/immigration/colonial records www.naa.gov.au

NSW State Archives: www.records.nsw.gov.au/archives/collections-and-research/using-collection-search

Subscription sites

www.findmypast.com

www.genesreunited.com

www.ancestry.com

<https://www.lostcousins.com>

Good Luck – More Tips and Tricks in the next edition of *Quinbean*.

Fred Monk

WILLIAM DAVIS WRIGHT

all about bushrangers, cattle-duffers, and wild colonial boys

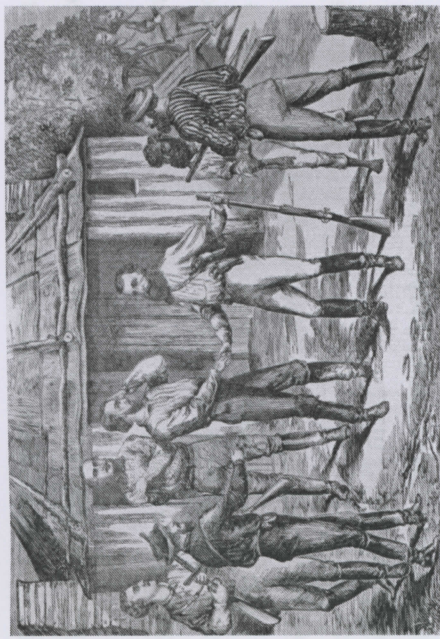
*The doings of the outlaws opened to the novelist and playwright
a field rich in stirring incidents and characters;
and gave a savour of wild romance and tragedy
to at least one epoch of our history.*

“Old Pioneering Days in the Sunny South”

– Charles MacAlister, 1907, Goulburn.

A continuing fascination with the glare and civil effrontery of bushrangers is still obvious in popular imagination. Just think of Frank ‘The Darkie’ Gardiner who left here for America. Then there are the Clarke brothers, superb horseman, from Jingera, south of Braidwood. Look at their contribution towards the memorial for the ‘special’ constables at Braidwood. Johnny Gilbert’s grave is a similar tourist spot. It is beside the road between Binalong and Harden-Murrumburrah. Do not believe quite all that the inscription says. Closer to Canberra, many residents of Tuggeranong have a clear view of Mt Tennant, or is it Mt Tennent, and which of them was the original name for that local bushranger?

Bushrangers were a popular topic to write about in the 1890s. Canberra book pioneer and historic expert William D Wright shared a few family stories about encounters with bushrangers. One event happened during the convict days on his family farm. Another incident near Lake George left his grandfather irritated, but not as much as a family who lived in a nearby village. Wright’s memoirs also include Captain Faunce, another pioneer. There is a connection; today the name is ‘Laura Norder’.



The capture of the Clarke Bothers; they were notorious bushrangers in the district

Let us start at Wright's beginning. 'According to promise', W Davis Wright contributed a description of old times in the Queanbeyan district. 'I will begin with this account of two bushrangers named Watson and Grun.' Wright's article is in the *Queanbeyan Observer* of 14 May 1895. He recalls some events that happened at 'Lanyon', the family estate.

The story fills some newspaper columns, so here is a summary. Because no one could find them, the police left it to two 'black fellows' to track down the pair known as Watson and Grun. At a shepherd's hut on his father's station, 'Lanyon', the highwaymen helped themselves to rations and rum. They retired to a nearby rise and prepared their meal. They were spotted. Through a ruse, the 'black trackers' sprang on their prey with a gun. They called Mrs Conlon, resident in the hut. She came up as arranged. She cut the waistbands of the bushrangers' trousers, and then tied up their hands. She rode off to Tuggeranong for further assistance. Eventually, Wright's father became involved, using handcuffs on the prisoners. Later he took the cuffs off Watson so he could assist with sheep-washing in the river while they all waited for the police to arrive.

When at length the constables took the prisoners to a 'sheep station hut' at Queanbeyan, Grun got away.

Twelve months later, Wright's father saw Grun in the court at Goulburn. No one seemed able to identify him until Wright's father did. 'Thereupon twenty others could do the same.' Wright finished with, 'I think my father said he got fifteen years.'

When Wright put this story in his 1923 *Canberra* book over twenty-five years later, some details were revised or remembered differently. The bushrangers were Green, 'a notorious character', and Watson, just 'bad company'. The 'black trackers were called 'Como' and 'Jacky'. In the first version they walked in the river twice to avoid being noticed by the bushrangers, but that did not happen in the 1923 version. Next, Conlon himself was a stockman rather than a shepherd at 'Lanyon'. Mrs Conlon still cut the waistbands, hobbling the bushrangers. Two different Mr Wrights in the first version became one. The police took weeks to arrive. After a careless incident with the constable's carbine and the handcuffs at Queanbeyan, one did escape, but Watson remained in custody. Then it was eighteen months later, not twelve, when Mr Wright was visiting the Goulburn magistrates' court. There he recognised Green. 'And that was the end of the episode,' Wright decided.

Although the story of the bushrangers Green and Watson is full of incidents one after another, there is something curious about it. A key factor is missing from Wright's reminiscence of his father's story. Right at the beginning, before Green and Watson got to Conlon's hut at 'Lanyon', notice that the pair were already being pursued by the law. Wright does not indicate what their initial crime was. He does not say when or where the alleged crime took place, who were the victims, what property was stolen, and so on; nor does he mention any witnesses

to that original crime. He does not know who put the authorities on to the pair to begin with.

When the 'black trackers' found the 'highwaymen', the latter were on a meal break. The two Aboriginal people engaged the support of Mrs Conlon instead of the constables. At that stage, those officials were out of the story. After the bushrangers were apprehended during their meal, they were handcuffed by either 'Parson' Wright from away in Tuggeranong, or W D Wright's father James 'Bothered' Wright of his 'Lanyon' estate. Depending on which story you read, the constables took days or weeks before they turned up. They had obviously withdrawn from the original case and had returned to their base, wherever that was. It was not at Queanbeyan.

A few minor matters arouse curiosity about Wright's bushranger story. On 29th March 1895, the men were 'Waters and Green'. In May, not long afterwards, they were 'Grun and Watson', but in 1923 they were 'Watson and Green'. It looks as if Wright's handwriting was one issue, so that a double 'ee' in Green's surname was mis-read as a 'u'. No one commented about Waters or Watson.

Another puzzle is about Conlon and Mrs Conlon. At first he was a shepherd, then he became a stockman later in the story. Afterwards on page 55 of the same book, Conlon was a dairyman. He took his butter and bacon to Sydney for sale. It would appear that this employee on 'Lanyon' was multi-tasking. It is harder to identify this couple. Their Christian names were unknown. Using today's resources, we learn from Bruce Moore that there is no extant, contemporary list of James Wright's employees at 'Lanyon'. However, he put forward a list in 1982. It is in his book, *The Lanyon Saga*. Moore provides the names of 41 people who were 'Assigned and Ticket-of-Leave holders at Lanyon 1835-1840' on his page 57. No one on that estate was named Conlon. The surname is an Irish one, with minor spelling variations at the end.

People of that name appear occasionally in the wider district, at Palmer's place in 1828, at Lake Bathurst, at Goulburn and Yass, and as a tailor and immigrant to Queanbeyan town in the late 1850s. None of those have a known or even suspected link to 'Lanyon' estate, and none had a known wife living with them in the district.

The time period for this Watson and Green event is conjectural. From the way that W D Wright spells it out, it points to the convict days. No gold is involved. Perhaps it took place at some time before the appointment of Captain Faunce as the police magistrate. He operated first at 'Acton' and then in Queanbeyan at 'Dodsworth' between November 1837 and 1842. His first court case was in February 1838. He is not mentioned in connection with Green or Watson.

There was an official account of an incident involving Joseph Green and James Moor. They were put on trial for stealing from a dwelling house. The place was at 'Ironmonger Creek' or 'Iron Mungy' on the Snowy River. The robbery took place on 29 April 1841. The owners of the property had a connection to Queanbeyan. They were 'Rolph and Beard', otherwise called Joe Rolfe and Tim Beard, and known for their 'Quinbean' claim. The judge at Berrima Assizes sentenced Green and Moor, but 'recommended them to the Governor for a pardon.' The case is in the *Sydney Gazette*, on 25 September 1841. A pure coincidence like this shouldn't spoil a good story like Wright's. Furthermore, Conlon's Corner, as Wright called it, was known as Point Hut well before 1896.

A real bushranger story involved Mr William Davis, who was William Davis Wright's grandfather. It is much more straight-forward. It happened on 4th March 1865, though the date is missing from W D Wright's book. In order for the Goulburn to Gundaroo Mail Coach to ascend from Lake George up through The Gap, passengers alighted and walked. Mr William Davis was about eight yards ahead when the shout

'Bail up!' came from behind three trees. Wright says that when Davis 'just put his hand for his revolver ... Ben Hall shouted, "If you touch that revolver, I will shoot you"'. The bushranger gang consisted of 'Gilbert, Hall, O'Malley and Dunn'. They even stole a new loaded rifle which Mr William Davis had left under the seat in the coach.



Capture and death of Ben Hall on the Lachlan Plain

W D Wright's version in his *Canberra* book on page 12 is fairly short. Many more details are available to us in the local papers of the time. The *Goulburn Herald* of 8 March 1865 is good, while the *Queanbeyan Age* has the recommended coverage on 9 March 1865.

As usual for W Davis Wright and place names, The Gap beside Lake George presented a problem. Wright thought it was 'Pary's Gap'. Also, he was not sure which of the bushrangers really were on the scene at the time, and as is the case, the name O'Malley is not quite correct. However, when a bushranger was shot dead at Binalong, Wright called him 'Gilbert Hall' rather than John Gilbert. There is a surprise even so. When Ben Hall was shot dead at Forbes, he was armed with a Tranter.

John Gilbert died in a creek at Binalong holding a Tranter revolving rifle. Both guns had identity numbers. They belonged to Mr W Davis, who had them stolen at The Gap.

In that January 1865, before grandfather Mr William Davis encountered the bushrangers up from Lake George, another incident took place a few miles away, to the north. It was the same bushrangers, Gilbert, Hall, and Dunn. It was a tragic incident. Wright reported that, 'Bushranger Dunn ... made Nelson's little son, whom he had captured, hold his horse. The little chap implored him, "Don't shoot my father, sir; don't shoot my father."' All the brute Dunn replied was, 'If you don't hold the horses and stop that noise, I will shoot you too!' (*Canberra*, p75.) Dunn murdered Constable Nelson anyhow.

Wright put words into the mouth of Constable Nelson's son. Frederick Nelson, the son, gave an account of his part in that malicious event. His testimony at court was reported soon after the incident. His own words are in the *Goulburn Herald* on 28 January 1865. Wright in 1923 did not check his facts. Wright called the little town 'Collection', but that is really not its name. It looks like Wright was not too familiar with various places around the district.

Frank Clune retold the original story in his book *Journey to Canberra* in 1960. Clune reminds us that Nelson's Monument, sometimes called 'Nelson's Column', is in the main street of Collector, near the pub. Nelson was buried at Collector cemetery. The same story was repeated again on 31 May 1980 by Valda Harding. She vividly revitalised it for the *Canberra Times*'s 'Saturday Page'. She called her article, 'The humiliation of "Big Mouth" Davis'.

There seems to be little reason for W D Wright to include stories about bushranger incidents as far away from Canberra as Cooma, Cootamundra, Junee, and Narragunda (or Nerrigundah), but he did.

After all, his 1923 book just has the title *Canberra*, not the 'South-east Tablelands and the Coast'.

Closer to his main subject, Wright introduced Captain Alured Tasker Faunce, saying, 'He was appointed the first police magistrate at Queanbeyan.' (*Canberra*, p16.) He meant, the first resident police magistrate, in 1837. Before that, those officials had been itinerant ones across the wider district. Wright's book and perspective was about significant and prominent persons in the area, who he knew about. He may have been unaware of the public agitation that brought Faunce to the place at all. The group was the Southern Association. In full it was known as the Association for the Suppression of Stock Stealing in general in the Southern Districts. It was aimed at rustlers rather than lazy convicts. The Colony already had similar Associations in Bathurst, and at the Hunter. A report on the formation of this lobby group appeared in the *Sydney Gazette* in March 1836. The Limestone Plains committee alone consisted of 20 names. Leading the list were those familiar from local history such as Sheriff Thomas Macquoid, James Wright, F Mowatt, Charles Campbell, William Balcombe, J T Palmer, Robert Johnstone, William Wright, Mr Simpson, J J Moore, and John McPherson. Landed proprietors were concerned about maintaining their cattle and knew that the government had to do something at both a community and a Colony-wide level.

When Captain A T Faunce was appointed to Queanbeyan, he had a difficult task to establish a place, to recruit staff, control constables, and to pursue a wide range of offenders like the ruinous gangs of cattle thieves, but also others, including convict runaways. He had to build a lock-up and a court. At least Faunce had previous experience at Brisbane Waters behind him. 'Law and order' was being transformed from a job for amateur untrained magistrates towards organized professionals. The Police Regulation Act of 1862 was a watershed. It was a long process in support of managing an aspect of the Colonial

economy. Faunce's particular appointment lasted only a few years. A reduction in the Colonial budget saw Police Magistrate Faunce displaced from this position in 1843. Further details are in the *Historical Records of Australia* during the time of Governor Gipps.

There is no way that William Davis Wright could cover the story of Canberra either in his series of reminiscences in the *Queanbeyan Observer* in 1895 or in his book in 1923. The book is so inadequate that newspaper editor John Gale called it 'a brochure' in the Preface to his own *Canberra: its history and legends*, in 1927. Though Gale considered Wright's stories of little consequence, that has not proven ultimately to be the case.

In due course it may be possible to provide some personal details about William Davis Wright himself and his career. He was not really a very long-term resident of Canberra. Would you believe that he never lived in Canberra itself? His contemporaries knew that. His 'Reminiscences of olden times' stopped.

References

- SMITH, Peter C, 1982, *Tracking down the bushrangers*, Kangaroo Press, Kenthurst NSW, 192p.
- WRIGHT, W Davis, (1923) 1977 (facsimile), *Canberra*, [John Andrew & Co, Sydney], Library of Australian History, North Sydney, 105p.

Peter Procter

DESTITUTE STATE OF MANEROO

A squatter from the district of Maneroo has sent us a very fervent address to the young ladies of Sydney, urging them to take pity upon the unfortunate bachelors of Maneroo, who, according to him, are driven to a state of desperation from the paucity of marriageable ladies, and indeed in one verse he darkly insinuates that no young lady ought to cross the border of the counties of St. Vincent or Argyle without being accompanied by her papa and a parson. Our correspondent commences by stating, that

Maneroo is a place for snow.

Why this is alluded to we can hardly say, except that "snow" rhymes nicely with "know" which is the end of the next line. But as we have no room just now for any long poems, we will at once give the most important verse :—

There are fifty bachelors besides myself,
Who are pretty well off in the way of pelf;
We all are to marriage much inclined,
If we could get young ladies to our mind.

This is what our friend Stubbs would call "well worthy attention". Fifty-one bachelors "pretty well off" are not to be sneezed at; and we think we can hear some of our Sydney belles exclaiming, "why don't the wretches come to Sydney", and this is what we say too; but listen to the barbarism of our correspondent :—

Now young ladies do be kind,
To matrimony make up your minds,
Tell pa to drive you here to see us,
And when you come you cannot leave us.

Now did you ever—no, we are sure you never did, see anything so abominably tantalising as that. The first two lines are well enough, because there are many young ladies who could, without a very great danger of violence to their feelings, "to matrimony make up their minds," but to suppose that any young lady could ask her pa to drive her to Maneroo (latitude 38 S.), to see fifty-one gentlemen, is rather too absurd—the idea is monstrous. No, if the squatters of Maneroo really wish to secure themselves from the state of single barbarism, in which they describe themselves to be, let them come to Sydney, and go to hear the band on a Thursday, and if they can see all that is to be seen there, and escape scatheless, then indeed they must be in a most pitiable state. Their appreciation of the beautiful must indeed be dead. But Maneroo gentlemen must bestir themselves: the ladies can't look after them, they must look after the ladies.

Ye Southern Squatters, know ye not
That if ye would be wed
The question you must pop.

In the vocabulary of the bush, the season is now approaching when the squatters must procure their "supplies"; and what can you gentlemen squatters supply yourselves with that will afford you as much comfort as a wife. Get wives and fixity of tenure, and instead of being in the barbarous state you are now in, squatters of Maneroo would be the most glorious set of fellows under the sun—especially while wool remains at two shillings a pound.

South Australian (Adelaide, SA: 1844 - 1851), Friday 12 September 1845, page 1;
National Library of Australia TROVE

I came across this little clip which I thought it was very funny. Interesting that they did not have room for the whole poem but they did have room to critique it extensively!

Brigid Whitbread

DIVISIONS IN AUSTRALIA 1914-1918

At the beginning of the First World War Australia seemed on the whole to be an homogeneous and peaceful society with every prospect of progress towards a "working man's paradise"¹ That this was an illusion was most clearly revealed by the divisions exposed and increased by the tensions of the war. Class-consciousness was intensified, the split between city and country made more obvious, the supportive role of women emphasised, and the masculine nature of Australian society enshrined. As well, racism, intolerance and political conservatism were shown to be prevalent as was a patriotism grounded in the British Empire. Above all, the war enabled an increase in Government control of people's lives, revealing a side of Australian society very different from the independent spirit projected in the ANZAC legend and in the poems of CS Dennis. The divisions that are particularly relevant to a look at Queanbeyan during the war are those around the conscription issue. Other divisions relate to strikes, especially the great strike of 1917, the treatment of "enemy aliens" and the tensions between the working-class Irish Catholics and the established English church, as well as the clash between the state and dissenting political groups such as the I. W. W. (International Workers of the World), and of course between political parties.

At the beginning of the war it seemed that Australia was united in support for the Empire. Mr Cook, the Liberal Prime Minister said: I want to make it clear that all our resources in Australia are in the Empire and for the Empire and for the preservation and security of the empire", while the Labor leader Mr Fisher spoke of: "the kindest feelings towards the mother county" and promised to "stand beside our own to help and defend her with our last man and our last shilling".²

¹ Cf F.K. Crowley (ed), *A New History of Australia*, Melbourne, 1974, p.311

² Argus, Melbourne, 3 August 1914 quoted in E.M. Trugeon & G.A. Johnston, *For King and Country, 1914-1918*, 1980, pp. 41-42.

Both sides of politics fully supported not only the war but also Australia's place as a British outpost of the Empire. This attitude reflected the predominately British origin of the non-indigenous population.

However, within this homogeneous mixture there were differences. A substantial group of German descent existed – 0.75% of the population were German born. There was an obvious concentration of these in the South Australian wine growing regions like Angas where 32% of the name on the electoral roll were German.³ However, there were people of German descent living in the Queanbeyan district. They suffered no official discrimination but there were instances of boycotts, snubs and insults by individuals against some.⁴ The war quite clearly polarised attitudes towards the German Australians and as it dragged on there were more and more examples of discrimination and bad treatment against these "aliens" both officially and in the popular sphere.⁵ For example German geographical names were considered to contribute to "preservation of racial instinct so far as enemy countries are concerned".⁶ These remarks of a South Australian Politician are a clear indication of a racist attitude in Australian society. Many people assumed an obvious link between race and culture and the nature of people and their behaviour. For them the only way to fit into Australian society was to cast off all links with their homeland, unless it was Britain, and lose themselves in the homogenous mix that was Australia.

³ Jenny Tilby Stock, 'Farmers and the Rural vote in South Australia in World War I: the 1916 Conscription Referendum', *Historical Studies*, Vol. 21, no 84, 1985 pp. 391-411.

⁴ Errol Lea-Scarlett, *Queanbeyan, District and People*, 1968, pp 178-179.

⁵ Brian Lewis, *Our War, Australia during World War 1*, Melbourne, 1980, pp.151152, p.158.

⁶ South Australian Parliamentary Debates, 26 September 1917, in F.K. Crowley, *Modern Australia in Documents*, Vol. 1, 1901-1939, Melbourne, 1973, p.293.

The war merely exposed racism in a new form – the racism that had been exhibited in Australia attitudes to the Chinese for example.⁷

In Queanbeyan the complexity of the issues can be seen in a speech of Mr Millar, the Labour Member for Monaro. He opposed conscription, attacked Germany but admitted his mother was German and defended her a good woman.⁸ In fact his name was Gustave but was called Gus.

Another division was that between the city and country. Rural Australians in general showed little confidence in the city governments and voted in the conscription referenda as suited their interests.⁹ They were also distrusted unions and in the strikes of later years of the war were prepared to travel to Sydney to help break the strike.¹⁰

The Conscription debates revealed and intensified the importance of the Irish, particularly Irish Catholics as a group that had a distinctive and important role in Australian society. The Archbishop of Melbourne, Daniel Mannix, was hugely influential. He was linked to the anti-British feeling exhibited in his native Ireland by the Easter Rebellion of 1917, but in Australia he was said to owe his influence on working class to already existing feelings.¹¹ McKernan also points to the shift in the attitude of Catholic papers from pro-conscription to neutral as evidence of the feelings of the ordinary Catholic.

On the other side of the debate, the Anglican and other Protestant leaders expressed the view of the middle class, in which religious righteousness is identified with the national good, which is in turn

identified with the good of the British Empire. Brian Lewis,¹² expresses well the connection, class and patriotism: "All our friends claimed to be middle class, and enlistment was accepted as a middle-class duty. Most people claimed an affiliation with some church or another; all churches ruled that enlistment was a religious obligation." The *Argus* of 16 October 1916 reported the decision of the Anglican General Synod to support the 'yes' case claiming that 'The liberty of Australia, and of the world, is at stake and without liberty all spiritual progress is grievously imperilled.'¹³

Nevertheless, class divisions were on the whole more significant than religious ones, as can be seen from the dissensions within the Catholic Church. Working class Catholics had more in common with other workers than with the hierarchy or with the establishment Catholics.¹⁴ Despite general official neutrality, the war and particularly the Conscription spit intensified the links between class, race and religion, helping to maintain a sense of common purpose among working class, particularly Irish, Catholics.¹⁵

The General Strike of 1917 and cost of living protests exposed more divisions with the rhetoric of the Conservative Nationalist parties standing for loyalty against disloyalists and revolutionaries, with such slogans as: "Do you realise that every vote for a Senate Nationalist candidate will be the equivalent of a bullet finding its billet in a German".¹⁶ In other words, support for a particular side in the strikes and referenda debates became conflated not with support for particular

⁷ H. McQueen, *A New Britannia*, Ringwood 1976, p.38.

⁸ Queanbeyan Age and Observer, Tues 6 march 1917

⁹ Tilby Stock, op. cit. pp. 393-394

¹⁰ Dan Coward, 'Crime and Punishment' in J. Ironmonger et al (eds) *Strikes*, Sydney, 1973, p.57.

¹¹ Michael McKernan, *Catholics, Conscription and Archbishop Mannix*, *Historical Studies*, Vol.17, no.68, 1977pp. 299-314.

¹² B. Lewis, op. cit. p.126.

¹³ J.M. Main, (ed), *Conscription: the Australian Debate 1901-1970*, Sydney, 1970, p. 62.

¹⁴ Janet McCalman, *Struggletown*, Melbourne, 1984, pp. 38 & 99-100, shows the influence of the Protestant Frank Tudor as an artisan radical.

¹⁵ M. McKernan, op. cit., p.307

¹⁶ D. Coward, op. cit. p.71

parties but also with a particular national identity in which Australia, the Empire and the Government were united, almost as one concept.

The divisions of the strike emphasised the conservatism of much of Australian society. Adherence to the status quo and acceptance of the rules of government and boss were equated with loyalty to the Empire and this was emotionally bolstered by reference to the soldiers fighting in France.

The role of women in the war is another area to explore. Apart from their official role as nurses, women were involved in all sorts of roles, including radical organisations such as the Women's Peace League and the Labor Women's Committee as well as supportive organisations such as the Red Cross. This latter organisation began to operate in Queanbeyan very early in the war and were very active.¹⁷ However, women's role was still defined as that of the nurturer: the wife and mother. An examination of the rhetoric of both sides in the conscription debates shows the same basic view of women's place in society. A women's journal claimed that the qualities which enabled women to do their part were: "sympathy, motherliness, tenderness, understanding, courage, fortitude".¹⁸

¹⁷ *Quinbean*, Vol 7, No 2, September 2014, p. 7.

¹⁸ Carmel Shute, 'Heroines and Heroes: Sexual Mythology in Australia 1914-1919', *Hecate*, 11. 2 (July 1976), p. 13.



WWI Historian Charles Bean with nurses, taken on the verandah of the original Queanbeyan Hospital c.1920; QDHMS collection, MF1.2

The other side of the coin is the masculine stereotype, exhibited most clearly in the Anzac legend moulded during the war and developed in Bean's history.

So, Australia, looked at in the light of divisions on the home front was a much more divided and unsure society than appeared on the surface at the outbreak of the war. It is clear that not all sections or classes of society had the same interests and, in an attempt to impose order on the diversity of interests, the state and the establishment drew on a deep vein of conservatism and self-interest in sections of Australian society. Racism combined with intense Empire loyalty to divide Australians of German origin from the rest of the community. The working-class Irish asserted their identity along with their champion, Archbishop Mannix. The strikers and the cost of living demonstrators found to their cost that they were not fully supported even by their own class and stirred up considerable hostility from the middle classes, the bush, employers and the government. Farmers exhibited a deep distrust of the city government and voted according to their own perceived interests in the conscription referenda but supported the government strongly against unionists and the strikers. Women had their role as nurturers and supporters of men reinforced and the deeply masculine nature of

Australian society was widely accepted as the myth of the Digger replaced that of the bushman.

In the Queanbeyan district we can see evidence of many of the general tensions outlined above. The editorials in the *Queanbeyan Age* tended to follow the official patriotic line of the Government, and there were many recruiting meetings and pro-conscription rallies. However, there were also anti-conscription meetings, including meetings where there was a clear division of opinions on party lines after Hughes split from the Labour Party and joined with the conservative Nationalist Party.

In the *Queanbeyan Age* and *Queanbeyan Observer* of Tue 14 Sep 1915 was a report of a meeting of the Queanbeyan Recruiting Association where: Mr. E. E. Morgan presided over a well-attended meeting of the local Recruiting Association held in the Municipal Council Chambers last night. The *Queanbeyan Age* and *Queanbeyan Observer* of Tue 22 Feb 1916 reported a meeting of the Queanbeyan War Service Committee, with President: Mr. F. P. Woodward, Mayor. Hon; Secretaries: Messrs. J. Ridley and J. Keefe, Hon. Treasurer: Mr C. T. Campbell and Sub-Committee for arranging farewells to recruits and welcomes to returned soldiers: Rev. G.: H. Hirst, Messrs. W. E. Oldfield, J. G. Harris, and C. A. Leslie.

Earlier in the war it seemed in the Queanbeyan district, as noted above for Australia in general, that there was a unified purpose in carrying on the war effort.

However, an opinion piece from Friday, September 6, 1918, titled *Difference*, shows that divisions arose, seen in the article as party political and linked to what could be seen as 'class warfare':
In America there is gratifying co-operation between Labor and the Government in the prosecution of

the war. ... *The only hope for civilization is to disarm the criminal Power ... Only complete defeat will dispel the illusions which goaded them to a career of, lawless aggression. ... How has it come to pass, that the "stay-at home" section of Australian Labor has adopted views so unworthy. Of brave and honest men? To supply a complete answer to the question would be difficult. It must "be remembered, however, that, if the war was brought to a speedy, if a premature end, the way would be cleared for the prosecution of schemes for bringing about at home the violent and spoliatory revolution which is avowedly contemplated by the more aggressive of the "one big union" propagandists. The ending of the war would also end embarrassing appeals. to enlist for active service... In Australia enlistment has been left to the judgment of the people, and, by very many, the liberty thus accorded, instead of evoking a worthy response, has been shamefully abused, first, by open opposition to the measures urgently needed for the defence of the Empire, and, next, going from bad to worse, to obstruction offered even to voluntary recruiting.*

In the *Queanbeyan Age* and *Queanbeyan Observer* of Fri 14 Dec 1917 was a report headed *The Referendum., Anti-Conscription Meeting*. It is interesting that some of the same people who participated in recruiting were also anti-conscription, for example Mr E.F. O'Rourke, who was a member of the Win the War League, as reported in the *Queanbeyan Age* and *Queanbeyan Observer* of Fri 5 Jan 1917.

And so, Queanbeyan with all its facets can be seen as a microcosm of the nation, at least of the portion outside the big cities.

John McGlynn

QUEANBEYAN'S BURNING

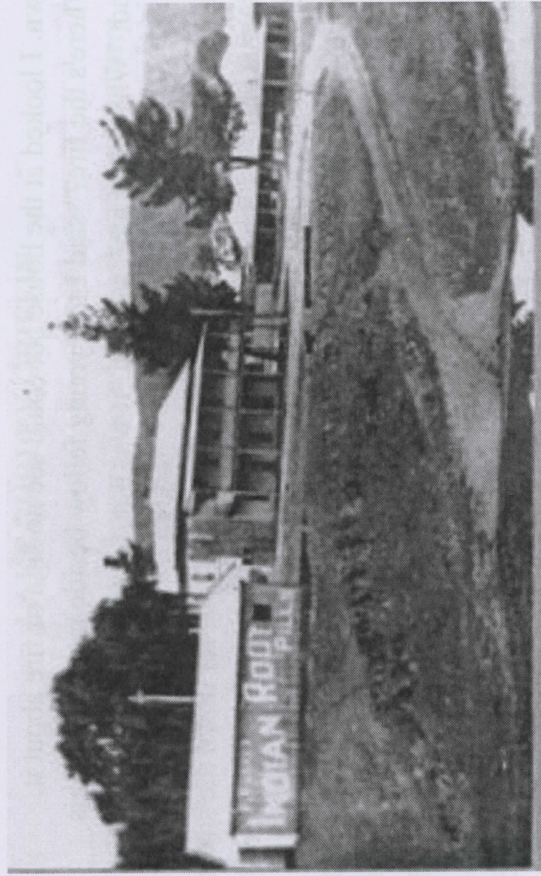
by Gullen

It is not often I take up my pen to write a line or two about what I see and hear, but on this occasion, I cannot resist the temptation to tell your readers all about the "big fire" which occurred in Queanbeyan last Tuesday at one of the numerous houses in Macquoid-street.

It happened that I, being a regular churchman, made up my mind to go in to the bazaar; accordingly, I saddled up my horse, Tramp, and jogged slowly into town.

When I got in the vicinity of the R.C. Church I heard a bell begin to ring at an awful rate and was surprised to see the inhabitants come simultaneously to their doors and look up and down the almost deserted street. I didn't take much notice of it and thought that it was Bellman Black ringing for some show. When I got round the corner a novel sight met my gaze, for there at a little corrugated-iron house with "Fire Station" painted on it, was an excited crowd assembled. There was great shuffling and confusion going on, I thought.

I pulled up and asked what was the matter, and was told there was a fire. After a lot of barneying one fellow suggested that the "hingin" be got out. It was got out, and immediately four or five hooked on to it, but then the startling question arose as to where the fire was. It was soon solved by a little red-headed son of Scotland who bawled out, "The Royal Furnishing Arcade; th'hoose next to 'ot". I ventured to tell them that I passed the place just a minute or two previously and saw nothing except a little smoke coming out of a chimney which would have done discredit to a respectable pipe, while a young fellow near me said, "There ain't no fire, for I jus' see Paddy McLaughlan goin towards the Post wid a cast-a-water on, and he'd be sure to be where there was a blaze". But the crowd would not believe us and away they went.



From left to right, the 'little corrugated house with Fire Station painted on it' that housed the 'hingin', Union Hotel (now The Olde Kent) and the Braidwood Stores, now the Leagues Motel.

Photograph Errol Lea-Scarlett collection

The bell meanwhile was kept going at an alarming rate and the frantic tugs of the campanologist threatened several times to pull the post down. I turned to go over the bridge, but both Tramp and myself had to wait, for there was a surging crowd coming along at double-quick time. The remarks of some of them who were not so anxious were varied and many. One said "Won't there be fun, Bill?" "My oath", responded Bill, and hurried on. Another said, "I'd like to see a good ole blaze! I ain't seen one since George Hunt's"; while a weary-looking pedestrian thought that it would be a good thing, and added - "The papers will ave sommat to put in besides what O'Sullivan's doin'".

I now began to think that there was a fire and so I turned my quadruped around and went up with the crowd which must have numbered between 50 and 60. They all congregated round the house talking and gesticulating as if the whole place had been burned

down. I looked at the house but could see no sign of fire about it. "Where's the fire?" said I to a young fellow beside me, a can in his hand. "Why, blow me", said he, "it was put out with a billy of water".

With this I retraced my steps back, but had not gone far down the street but what should I see but a pair of creamies attached to a waggonette and behind this vehicle was fastened the fire tank, (I don't mean the monument tank).

The driver looked awful anxious and his face wore the expression that if the house was burned down it would be his fault. He sent them ponies as hard as they could go. When told that it was not required a combined look of relief and disgust came over his face. But this was not all, for soon the big fire engine appeared to which was harnessed a clumsy-looking horse.

On the engine, amidst a couple hundred feet of hose, was seated two partially-dressed firemen, whose garb put one very much in mind of the "Dartmouth Fire Brigade". Last, but not least, came a spring cart full of water but when the driver saw the people coming back he turned into his own yard. The whole affair can be summed up in the words - "Much" ado about Nothing".

Queanbeyan Observer, Tuesday 5 March 1895

Contributed by Gillian Kelly

LAKE BURLEY GRIFFIN

It was a mid-Autumn day 55 years ago when the skies over Canberra erupted after seven parched months. As the rain finally fell, the dusty remains of a golf course and racetrack, and the skeletons of former abodes, disappeared beneath the artificial new lake at the capital's heart.

The moment had taken almost as long to reach as the time that's passed since. And drama, criticism, controversy – and tragedy – have shaped Lake Burley Griffin as much as the bulldozers that altered the landscape in preparation for it.

On October 17, 1964, with the sails of small boats billowing behind him, Prime Minister Sir Robert Menzies declared "with a feeling of great personal delight ... this Lake to have been inaugurated by me – a quarter of an hour ago!"

While his speech was short, it was back in 1911 that LBG's American creators, Walter and Marion Griffin, first crafted it as the pièce de résistance of their "ideal city".

Similar to New York's Central Park, with its man-made watercourses that emerged from swampland, Canberra's lake was to grow out of a willow-clogged river that meandered across a desolate floodplain.

Once complete, the 11km-long aquatic centrepiece covered an area of almost seven square kilometres – the equivalent of 1200-odd football fields. Although smaller than originally intended, it had been saved from being axed completely.

Essentially cleaving the city in two geographically, equally did it divide opinion.

The site for the Australian capital was selected in part due to its existing river systems and the ambitious potential this afforded.

As Menzies would allude much later, centralised water bodies have long been associated with the world's great cities.

With their artfully balanced, geometric design incorporating such a concept, the Griffins' submission was "the grandest" of the international competition entries for the planned First City.

At its core were three Basins - Central, West and East - and two larger lakes, further east and west.

Praised for its "simplicity and clarity", it didn't stop some, including those who wielded a level of bureaucratic heft, declaring it "grandiose".

Public agitation over the proposed watercourse also grew. Concerns ranged from flooding, it turning into mud flats, the loss of valuable acreage, becoming a fog trap, attracting mosquitoes and inevitably, its cost.

"Community and stakeholder opposition" eventually reached "near hysterical proportions".

As a result, the "paper" lake would be revised, modified, excised, remodelled and rescaled.

So dramatic were the alterations, by the early 1950s, what was left was little more than "a central basin and a ribbon of water".

Having reached an unfathomable impasse, contributing to yet more stalling of the capital's momentum, Menzies stepped in. For the first

time in Canberra's sporadic development, a single, powerful body responsible for its cohesive progress was created.

In 1957, a fellow by the name of John Overall was appointed as the inaugural Commissioner of the National Capital Development Commission.

The priority of the 44-year-old architect and war hero was to fulfill the Griffin plan - and that meant he needed to build a lake.

With elements restored and other significant undertakings kicking off in rapid succession, in 1959, a sizable spanner was thrown in the tracks of the bulldozers when the Prime Minister headed off to visit the Queen.

In his absence, the initial million pounds agreed by Cabinet to jump-start the massive project was removed from the Budget.

Rather than try to convince those responsible otherwise, Overall patiently marked the days until the PM's return. As the plane touched down at the Canberra Airport, the Commissioner was waiting for his boss - on the very tarmac itself.

The necessary finances were promptly reintroduced and when approved by Parliament in 1960, the very next morning, Overall had that earth-moving equipment ready to roll.

Trees, sporting facilities, farms and houses made way for what would become the bottom of a lake.

Hundreds of workers removed thousands of tonnes of soil, deep enough to dispel insect infestations, prevent weed growth and provide for boat keels. Islands were created and two bridges to traverse the watercourse were built.

Up rose the dam to hold back the Molonglo River and which would come to be "ranked fifth of 25 dams in Australia with heritage listing".

On September 20, 1963, the five gates of the 33m high (108ft) concrete wall named for surveyor Charles Scrivener, were locked in place.

It would be another year before LBG was welcomed as Canberra's focal point - socially, economically and environmentally: "A lake that will complete the amenities of life ... really, there's something here for all of us."

Soon after, John Overall, son of a Sydney publican, was knighted for his professional efforts.

In a quarter of the time it took to attain the engineering marvel, LBG was adorned with monuments and institutions of national significance.

As its status evolved, so too, its controversies.

Urban legends of bodies allegedly swept into it during flood events, to an unexplained "beast" lurking in its depths; accidental drownings and more sinister occurrences also. Problematic occasional algae blooms, while recent disputation on the development of its foreshores has seen the rise of the Lake Burley Griffin Guardians.

For all of that, today, LBG is referred to as the capital's "greatest treasure".

According to Sir John Overall, "without it, Canberra would have been a failure".

While there are those who can remember when the lake named for the man who conceived it did not greet them at virtually every turn, could

anyone truly suggest they can imagine a Canberra in which it wasn't there to sparkle?

Nichole Overall

Nichole has written about Sir John Overall, "the man who built Canberra", in the newly released anthology, "Capital Culture". For more on all of this, see anoverallview.wixsite.com/blog.



Photo from Nichole Overall of the official opening of the lake

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