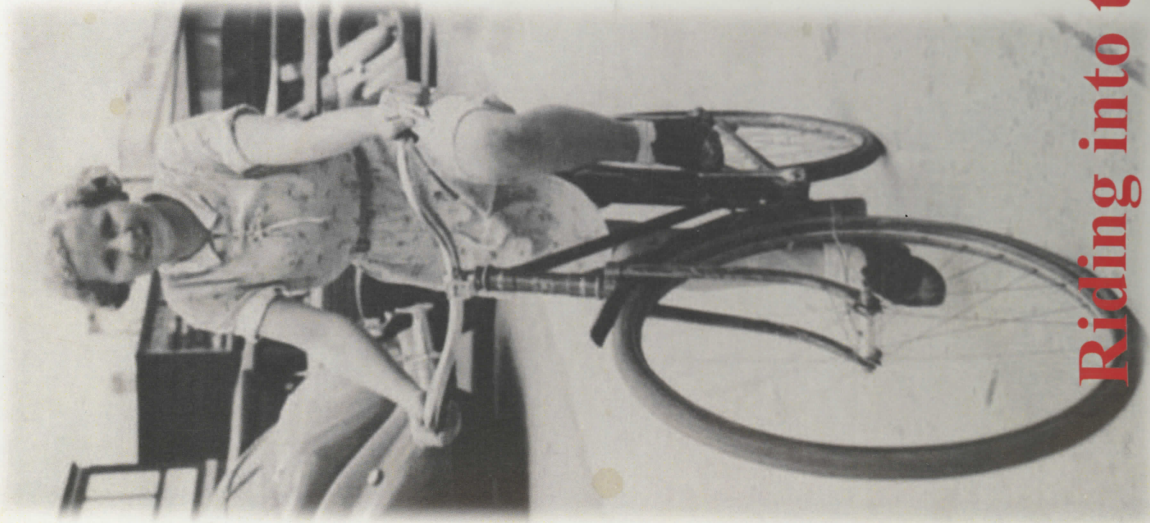


QUINBEAN

Vol 6, No 2
Sept 2013



175 years
Queanbeyan

A town born 1838 - A city lives 2013

Riding into the future

QUEANBEYAN & DISTRICT HISTORICAL MUSEUM SOCIETY

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

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

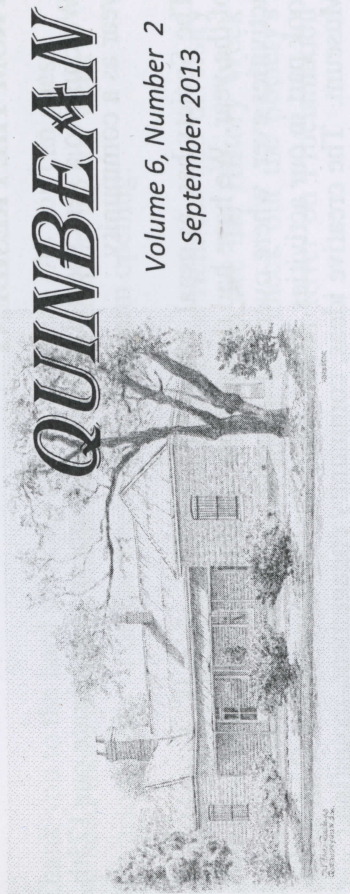
Contact us:

email qbnmuseum@yahoo.com.au

THE MUSEUM OF QUEANBEYAN

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

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



QUEANBEYAN

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September 2013

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Our Cover Girl: Leila McInnes, riding her bike in Monaro Street on her way to watch the Centenary Celebrations, 1938

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Welcome to a very special edition of *Quinbean* to celebrate our 175th year as a community.

The Society has, as usual, been incredibly busy since the beginning of the year. We have had the most successful Heritage Week activities ever, where over 2,700 people visited our exhibitions or took part in our activities, either *The Way We Wore* at The Q or at the Museum. The creative ideas, community engagement, mounting, publicity, and event organisation for the events was tremendous and carried out to a professional standard.

The oral history project is proceeding well with nine interviews completed and more on the way. Preparations are under way for a display on the project *Queanbeyan's Living History* and presentation to the participants on Saturday 7 September at 12 noon as part of History Week and the 175 celebrations.

At the same time, a visiting exhibition *A Capital Idea* is due and preparations for that, to be opened on 5 September 5.30 at The Q, are taking a lot of time for Society members. It was curated by Bridget Sant of the Lady Denman Maritime Museum and explores and displays the work of Henry Halloran, the significant and visionary town planner of Envisona renown

All this is as well as working bees, newsletter and journal publication, cataloguing, keeping the museum open, presentable and up-to-date, reviewing other museums in the Riverina, hosting school and other groups and attending training sessions!

We also farewellled Elise Bernard, our valued colleague and museum cataloguer, we wish her well in her teaching career.

Thank you to the hard working active members. As you can guess we need more people to volunteer for work either during the week for various tasks or on the weekend for museum opening.

All year the Society has been celebrating the richness and diversity of our town and its 175th year. Coming up are the History Week Events mentioned above. Come along and check out the Society's tent at the Celebrations by the Queanbeyan River on Proclamation Day 28th September.

FROM THE EDITOR

How do you create a journal that reflects 175 years of a town's history?

Not earth moving, world shattering history, mind you – just the garden type history of people who lived in a small country town that began as a village on the very edges of European settlement, grew to town in its own right, saw an opportunity to overcome the ills of depression and rural recession by inviting the building of the nation's capital on its doorstep and then having to develop and adapt because of the success of that invitation.

How do you fit that into one small journal? You really can't!

This edition of *Quinbean* attempts to give some glimpses of Queanbeyan at various times in its marvellous 175 years. Margaret Downey tells of living here and the people she knew. Errol Lea Scarlett tells the story of just one house and the people who lived there for over a century. Halloran's dream and the story of Letchworth and Envisona reflect what might have been had there been no depression.

There are many photographs scattered through this edition, and most have never been published because they were not commercially produced – they are from family albums and amateur photographers' snaps and they are glimpses of life and the town as it was.

But right now, we are celebrating 175 years, so Happy Birthday Queanbeyan!

Gillian Kelly.
Editor



Christ Church, the Rectory before it was extended and the Queanbeyan River before the weirs were built.

WE STARTED FROM NOTHING

At the re-opening of the Queens Bridge on September 17, 1874, the Honourable Leopold de Salis made the following statement : "When we came to Queanbeyan in 1840, there was but one house here, and the site of the present town was only bush. Since then we have not laid up our talents in a napkin... the old bridge and the new one, give proof of this. We were inexperienced, but, unassisted, and by means of our own energy alone, the town was created....we the older generation started from nothing."

It wasn't until ten years later that a petition was presented to the government of the day praying that Queanbeyan be proclaimed a municipality. It was proclaimed in 1885. Fifteen years after de Salis' statement , Queanbeyan was listed as a significant town in the Colony of New South Wales. It appeared in the *Australian Handbook Shippers and Importers Directory for 1889*, (page 239) and was described thus:

"Queanbeyan possesses a hospital, public school with average attendance 146, a Court House (Court held daily) a gaol, Police Barracks, a Convent, Mechanics Institute, two large flour mills, new post and telegraph office, and two banks , Commercial and New South Wales.

Hotels are the Royal, Victoria, Commercial, Rose, Shamrock and Thistle, Union Club and Globe.

One member is returned to the Legislative Assembly ...and the district has eleven miles of roads and streets, and rateable property valued at 104,570 pounds.

Places of worship: Episcopal, Wesleyan, Presbyterian, and Roman Catholic. The public buildings also include an Oddfellows Hall, a Protestant Hall, Temperance Hall, a Masonic Hall, the Protestant Hall being by far the most capacious. Also a pretty little park with suitable cricket and football grounds.

The district is both pastoral and agricultural, with 71997 acres under cultivation...there are six societies, Loyal Orange, H C Guild, Manchester Unity of Oddfellows, Grand United Oddfellows, Sons and Daughters of Temperance, C of E Temperance Good Templars, and Protestant Alliance.

The population comprises 1,050 persons, and the district numbers 5,455. Newspapers are The Queanbeyan Times' and 'The Queanbeyan Age'."

Thus, Queanbeyan had become quite an established town in just a few short years. However, The Queanbeyan Age (1891) noted improvements were yet needed, (like kerbing and guttering), and remarked "The two lions of the average country town are usually the TOWN PUMP, and the TOWN CLOCK.

Queanbeyan possesses the former in a more ornamental than useful form, but the latter is conspicuous by its absence."

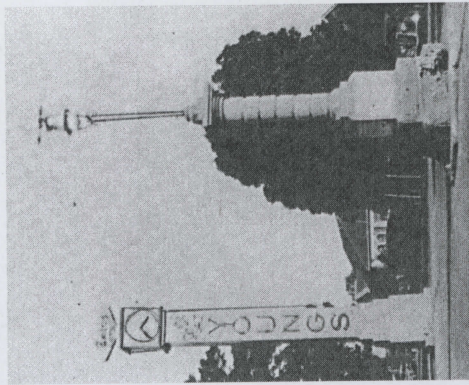
In 1925 the old town pump was replaced by a modern water supply which by 1937 supplied 17,005,726 gallons to town consumers.

Unfortunately Queanbeyan was never to achieve a successful town clock, as did some towns of similar size. In 1938, a frail tapering clock tower did appear, advertising J B Youngs, in Crawford Street, midway between the banks at the main intersection. Its multiple clock faces did not keep the same time, and alongside the Boer War Memorial (also in the centre of the road), became a traffic hazard as the numbers of vehicles increased. Council was loath to remove these two monuments, and it was quietly arranged to have the Boer war memorial 'scraped' by a truck, to obviate the dangerous situation.

The war memorial was moved to its present site, and the clock tower (called 'the leaning tower of Piza' by some) collapsed and was removed by the early years of World War II. In the 1980s, another attempt was made for a town clock on a bank wall in Monaro Street. Unfortunately it too did not keep the correct time, and was soon removed.

Queanbeyan it seems was not destined to have a town clock, but its progress has continued regardless. From de Salis' stone house..., and only bush" there now stands a pleasant city.

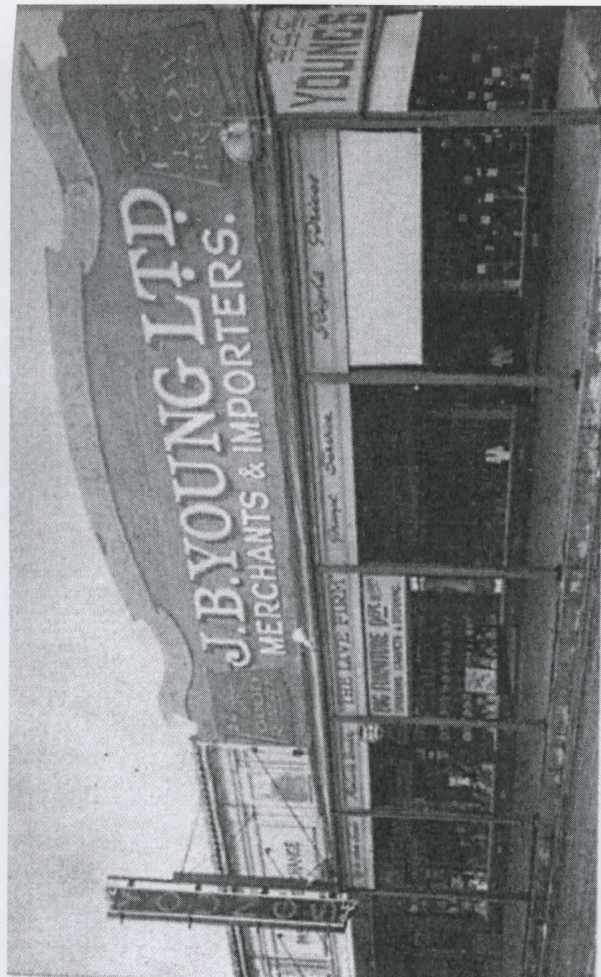
Rosemary Curry



Town Clock, Boer War Memorial with the Tree of Knowledge. Errol Lea-Scarlett collection



Queanbeyan's Grand Order of Oddfellows, est 1876. Banner held by QDHMS



J B Young's Store in 1953 just before it was demolished to make way for modern version opened in 1956.

REFERENCES:

- Errol Lea Scarlett : *Queanbeyan District and People*, published 1968
 Story of Queanbeyan, Town's Centenary, 1838-1938 : printed Age Office.
 Sheedy and Percy : *Moneroo to Monaro* published 1995
 Susan Mary Withycombe : *Town in Transition*, published City Council 1985
 Sheedy, Bert oral history recorded Rosemary Curry
The Australian Handbook, Shippers and Importers Directory for 1889 Gordon & Gotch

Queanbeyan Museum Presented *The Way We Wore*



The unprecedented reaction to this exhibition from both far and wide delighted and amazed QDHMS. We opened with a glamorous group of some one hundred and twenty guests on the evening of April the 12th amid a great deal of publicity from the community and by the end of the following day another one hundred and twenty folk had visited.

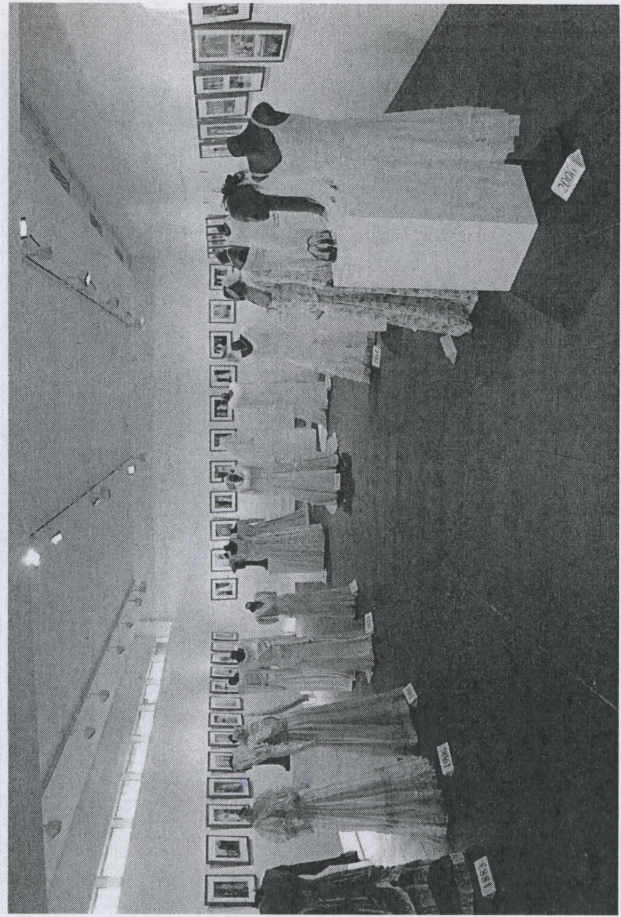
The exhibition was manned continually by the team from QDHMS with a little help from several Friends of the Q. As each of the twelve open days passed we kept saying this can't continue – but continue it did, and when the doors closed on the afternoon of Sunday April 27th an amazing 2386 visitors had oohed and aahed, delighted at what they had seen.

People came from everywhere – our own from Queanbeyan and Canberra, of course, but others made special trips – from up and down the coast, from Braidwood, Yass and Goulburn, from Sydney, and incidental folk from Queensland, New Zealand and even England! The photographic display intrigued viewers as much as the gowns. Family groups visited and reunited. Long time residents who remembered many of the brides and grooms told their stories and the textile addicts were fascinated.

It is worth noting – this was an open exhibition. That is, there was nothing between the exhibits and the public and on not one occasion did a visitor touch or interfere in any way with the display.

The team effort to produce this exhibition was stunning, with everyone contributing ideas, huge amounts of time and effort. My personal gratitude and thanks to them all is endless.

Gillian Kelly
Curator.



RUSH TO QUEANBEYAN

The streets of Canberra were empty. The mud puddles, undisturbed by traffic, mirrored the little patches of blue which promised a return to dry feet and solid land. The hotels were quieter than the Sahara to a deaf man. You could have commanded the whole staff for your especial delectation. On the golf course, even Mr. Hughes was not grinding his teeth with invincible determination over the fifth tee. The windows of the secretariat were blind, blank eyes, and in Parliament House, there was a strange, confusing quiet. No politicians expanded upon the unique charms of this Federal territory, and in loud, assertive voices, challenged you to deny that a man could wish for no better place in which to spend all his days.

Of course, you remembered that they had left on Friday by the special train, which rushed them away to Sydney in a few hours. A dreadful thing it was, they would tell you, to return to the whirl and hubbub and false joy of a big city after a few days in this delicious bubble quiet, a sad thing. They gulped your sympathy.

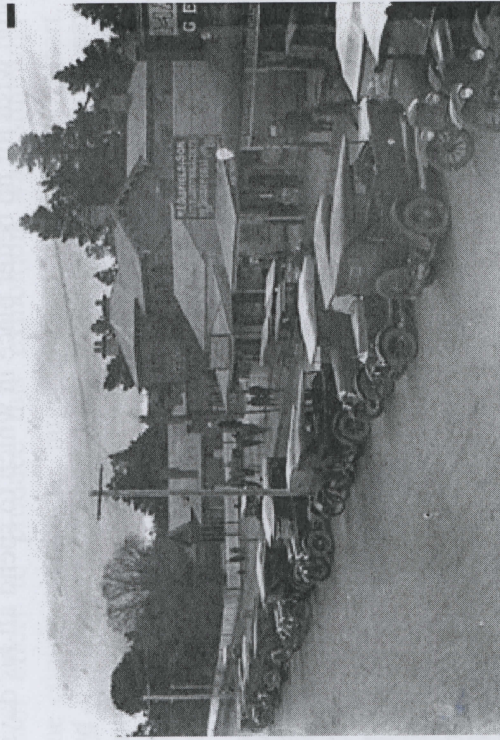
In short, Canberra was evacuated. It was Saturday afternoon.

The last motor car was disappearing over the horizon in a mist of yellow ochre and rain water, and unless you wanted to go mad in the isolation, you could do nothing but follow it. So you joined the strategic retreat to Queanbeyan.

The difference between Queanbeyan at 10 o'clock on Saturday morning and 11 o'clock on Saturday morning is the difference between the banks of the Nile before and after irrigation. At 10 o'clock it is a blank, unpromising, soothing, phlegmatic waste of streets; at 11 it is a place of frantic expectation and restless, happy, enlivening action. By 1 o'clock there is scarcely room for a single car

in a street where nearly five hundred are parked. By 4, there is no room at all for a single drinker in a single bar. By 5 there isn't a seat left in the picture theatre. By 6 there isn't a table uncrowded in the dining rooms. By 8, everybody is everybody else's friend or eternal enemy. By five past eight, enemies are friends and friends enemies; By 9 all meat pies, saveloys, and fried fish are off the market. By 10, even Sydney tram guards or sardine packers might learn a lesson from the buses. And by 12, the town is quiet, except for the tinkle, tinkle of silver on the counting table.

That is Saturday in Queanbeyan, the gay Paris of the Federal territory.



Monaro Street, southern end c 1926, Photo QDHMS Collection

For all that, arguments commencing with a quiet, philosophical discussion, passing to the respective merits of certain lagers, and from there, logically to the charms of certain bar ladies, and after examining minutely and insultingly the personal characteristics of

each controversialist, end in a duel with the nearest empty bottle - for all that, Queanbeyan is an amusing place when the Federal Capital calls on it during the week-end.

Anybody who has a taste for the absurd conflict of contradictory character under the stress of extraordinary circumstances would find Queanbeyan inexhaustibly entertaining.

There in the main street on Saturday afternoon simple arcadian souls used, for twenty and thirty years to visit the town on this day for beer, flour, and conversation, see through a mist of whiskers a procession of politicians weighed down under a burden of draught ale and dignity, public officials decorated with hats obviously not their own, and an air of happy abandon equally unnatural, journalists trying to forget the terrible hours of debate through which they have sat in Parliament, a Salvationist selling religious papers to generous inebriates, a wild Scotchman with bagpipes, a society lady, a famous barrister.

At the crowded corners you can hear conversation and argument upon every subject from the cost of living, and Mr. Hughes in plus fours, to the effect of undistilled water on rum and the melancholy lack of entertainment in the capital. Never was life so entertainingly assorted.

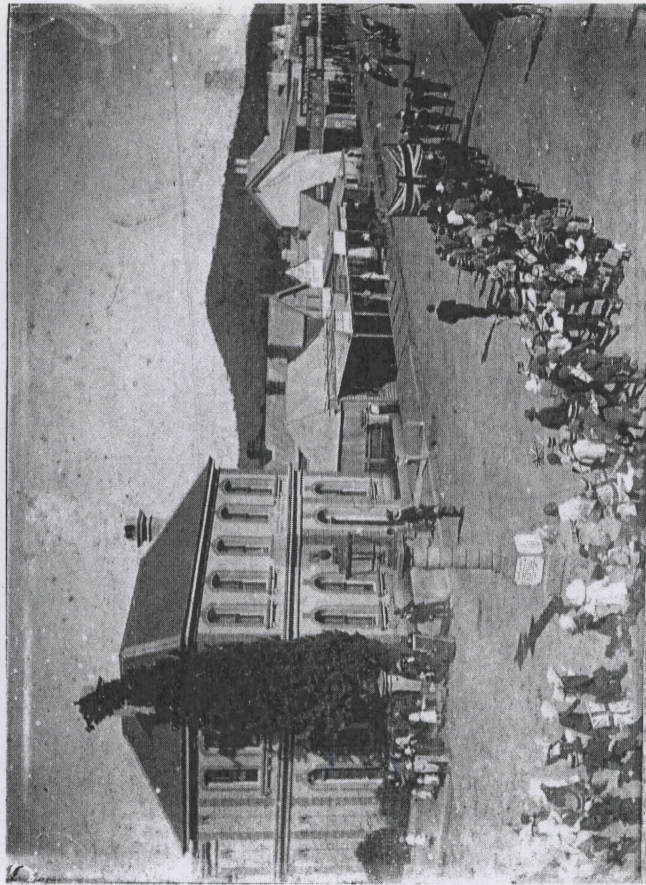
The only cause for lamentation is the tendency of prices to rise on the wings of demand, so that simple necessities of life cost often 50 per cent, more in Queanbeyan than in Sydney. The fact is Queanbeyan is so far from the capital that a taximan charges £1 to drive the seven miles, and time sweeps inexorably on to midnight.

Sydney Morning Herald
October 3, 1927

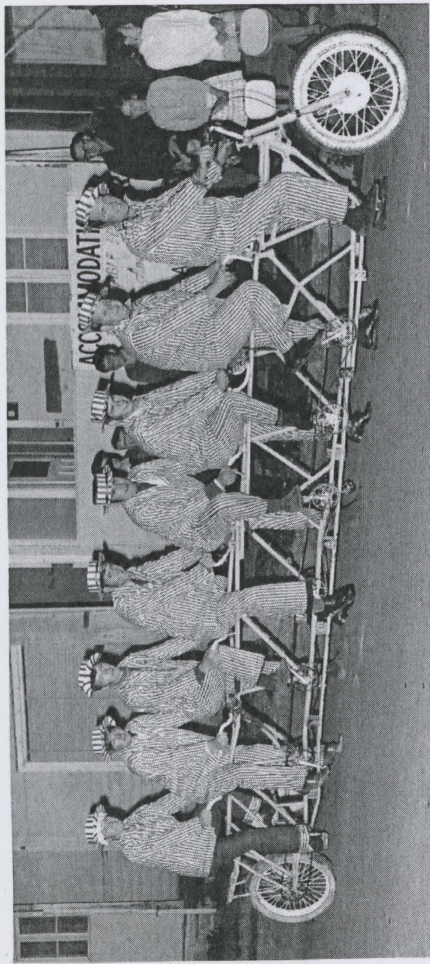
FROM OUR ALBUMS



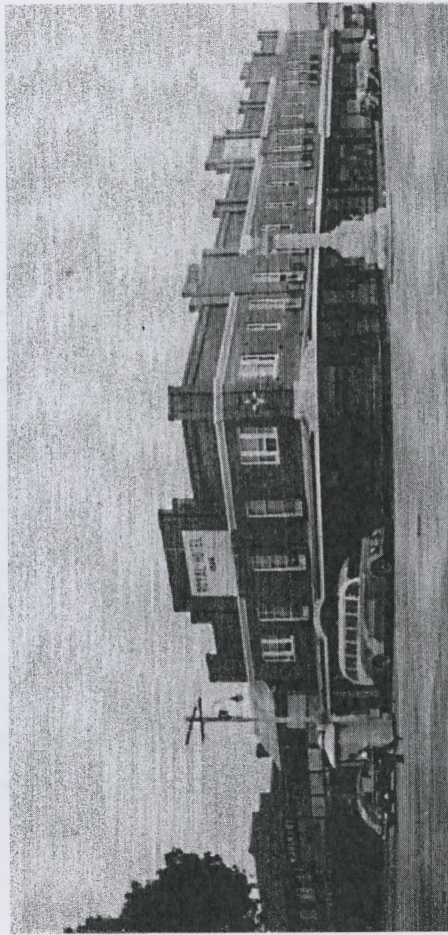
Lilian Whitby outside store in Cooma Rd, c 1945, Dale Hummer Collection



Corner Monaro and Crawford Streets, Children's Parade, probably Empire Day Day, c 1910, Photographer T Channon



Phil Canciller's eight seater bicycle, early 1960s Photographer Bob Woods



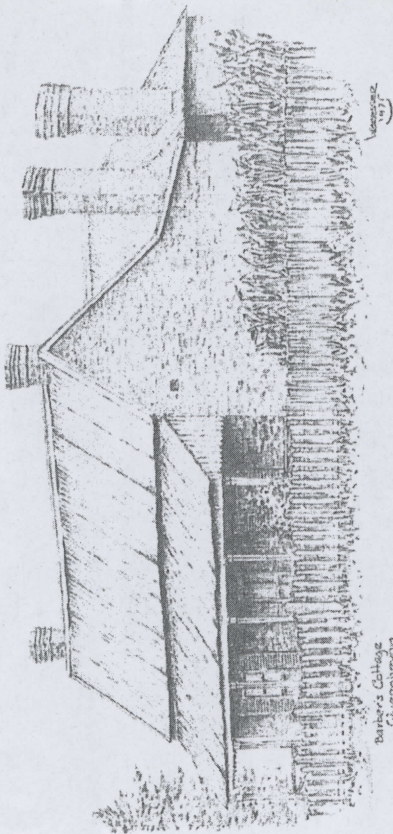
The Royal Hotel with Quodling's bus and telephone booth, 1955. Photographer Charles Relph



Queanbeyan Showground, c 1900

BARBER'S COTTAGE

An attempt to establish the *Geist* of an old Queanbeyan house.



Houses absorb something of the emotions of those who occupy them. Some are happy, others haunted by the ghosts of former residents or at least by the agony of misfortune and outright tragedy. *Barber's Cottage* over many years was the setting for unhappiness, relieved by a period of peace only during the twenty-three years in which it was the home of John Breen and his family.

Building of the cottage commenced about 1885 with the intention that it should become the residence of William Joshua Barber, a storekeeper, who before its completion transferred it to George Tomsitt.

The reason is unrecorded and it may well have been distorted to the disadvantage of George Tomsitt by the belief of Harry Barber that it was his mother's home but 'Tomsitt and the Dornbusches had a mortgage on it and Mother lost it. That is how Mrs Miller got hold of it'. With the exception of the claim that it was at one time Mrs Barber's home the changes of ownership as stated are correct and Tomsitt's acquisition probably was related to the fact that before its completion William Joshua Barber developed consumption from which he died at the age of thirty-two on 21 July 1886. As there is no memorial over his grave in the local cemetery the sole memories of his name are in Barber's Cottage and Barber's Lodge, the names given to the two sections of the extended residence at 30-30a Atkinson Street.



Barber's Lodge, 2013 Photograph G Kelly

Evidence of George Tomsitt's acquisition of the uncompleted dwelling exists in the store journal of N.M. Lazarus whose premises were in Macquoid Street, very close to Atkinson Street. The journal records frequent purchases in 1886 by George Tomsitt of building

¹ Interview recorded at Queanbeyan by P B Sheedy 27 August 1967

materials - mostly timber, nails etc., but on 15 April sashes, kalsomine, locks and hinges, suggesting that a house was on the point of completion. If the house concerned were not in East Queanbeyan the purchases would logically have been made of one of the stores in Monaro Street, the main thoroughfare.

Tomsitt, who had been living at The Oaks House in West Queanbeyan, just outside the town boundary, cited his address as Atkinson Street for the first time in February 1887, indicating that by that time the cottage was complete and inhabited.

In June it was reported that he was improving his land on Jerrabomberra. That was because he was about to commence building the two finest houses in Queanbeyan, both on the western side of the town, and one of those houses, Mimosa (now Karabar), was situated on Jerrabomberra. He was in residence there by February 1888. The other, Glenrock, on the bank of the Queanbeyan River opposite Dodsworth, soon followed, and it became his principal home although when a tenant for Mimosa was lacking the Tomsitts lived week and week about in both houses.



Glenrock, Malcolm Road Queanbeyan

In the mid-twentieth century the cottage suffered grievously at the hands of a neglectful owner and more recently it was subjected to even worse treatment by his successor who essayed to improve and modernise it - too often a sure path to destruction of the character and historical ambience of an old building. In its time it was part of a revolution in construction of cottages which prior to the late 1870s in Queanbeyan too commonly used materials such as bark and perhaps scraps of metal, all whitewashed over as a respectable finish. Part of the reason lay in the poor quality of local bricks until John Kealman, a master tradesman, began to produce excellent bricks in the mid 1870s.

The site in Atkinson Street had its principal drawback in the morass which frequently surrounded it in times of heavy rainfall when large volumes of water running down from High Street found their natural course along Mowatt Street until the landform diverted the deluge towards Macquoid Street and down to the river via the Atkinson Street corner.

It was not until the late 1880s that the difficulty was resolved by the newly formed Municipal Council which engaged a surveyor, Lucas, to take street levels throughout the town as a prelude to a programme of road formation which has continued ever since. The promise of that work would have motivated W.J.Barber's decision to build on the block which on the south side touched a group of two or three well-built brick cottages of the 1870s fronting Macquoid Street.

In 1889 the Atkinson street cottage, jejeunely named *Barber's Cottage*, became the home of Tomsitt's intimate friend and son-in-law, Ernest George Dornbusch when he arrived from England with his wife and children. After Tomsitt's death in 1892 it became the property of Dornbusch's mother-in-law, Mary Ann Miller, who let it

in 1897 to John Breen who remained in occupation with his family until 1920. In the relationship of Tomsitt, Dornbusch and Mrs Miller lay the secret which spelt unhappiness for Tomsitt and Dornbusch and cast a shadow over the cottage in Atkinson Street.

The tragedies, however, had begun with the development of tuberculosis by W.J. Barber and continued through his widow's belief that she had lost the property and her struggle to provide for her two sons. The widow Elizabeth Harriet Barber was a member of the Land family, well known in Queanbeyan as publicans and civic leaders, but her condition as a young widowed mother in an age before the introduction of government pensions left her desperate. It was possibly a kind gesture by George Tomsitt that permitted her to live in a cottage at his woolwashing establishment on Oaks Estate, taking a boarder as a means of making ends meet. In the mid-1890s Mrs Barber found employment with a residence attached as curator of the School of Arts but consumption claimed her just as it had claimed her husband and she died in 1897.

George Tomsitt, the first occupant of Barber's Cottage, was a native of London who arrived in Melbourne as a very young child with his parents and siblings. The family was associated with the firm of Locke Tomsitt, wholesale chemists, who had a London office, probably accounting for the return of George Tomsitt to England in the 1870s. There he developed a close friendship with Ernest George Dornbusch whose widowed mother, Emma (nee Wallis) he wed although she was ten or more years his senior. They had one child, George Tomsitt junr., born in 1881.

In 1884 the little family arrived in Sydney², staying briefly at Clifton, Birchgrove, from where George wrote twice to the editor of the Sydney Morning Herald³ and later that year⁴ he arrived in Queanbeyan, purchasing a general store which he conducted for a short period before setting up the first large industrial enterprise in the town, a woolwashing works and fellmongery on The Oaks estate. The marriage of George and Emma Tomsitt appeared to be very happy if one is to judge from Emma's letters written from Queanbeyan to Ernest Dornbusch⁵ who was still living in London with his wife and three children.

Ernest's marriage, however, was not happy. He had married Katherine Miller who had a penchant for locking him out of the house and later continued the habit in dealing with their children in Australia. The agent of the disharmony, in the opinion of Emma Tomsitt, was Katherine's mother, Mary Ann Miller, who was married to a solicitor, Ambrose Miller.

Mrs Miller appeared in Mrs Tomsitt's letters as a quite evil character, not at all resembling the lavender-and-lace old lady perceived by the inhabitants of Queanbeyan. Although the nature of Mrs Miller's hold over both George Tomsitt and Ernest Dornbusch has not been explained an uncomfortable suggestion of blackmail is hinted at in the letters.

² Shortly after their arrival Emma Tomsitt published *A Diary of my Voyage from London to Sydney 19th July to 18th September 1884*. (Melbourne, pr Charles Troedel 1884), a pamphlet now very rare.

³ Sydney Morning Herald 29 September 1884, 30 September 1884. His brother, Alfred.

Who died at Ashfield the following year, may have resided at Clifton at the time.

⁴ His obituary (Queanbeyan Age 10February 1892) is specific about this date.

⁵ Preserved by Miss Rosa Dornbusch and now held by the Queanbeyan City Library

As well, although Mrs Tomsitt may have been unaware of it, mysteries commenced on the very day of Ernest's wedding when Mrs Miller informed her daughter that her name was not Katherine Miller, as she had supposed, but Katherine Fisher, her father being an American whose legal status, whether through marriage or an extra-marital liaison is not known. The resort to deception continued when the Dornbusch family left for Australia and their daughter Rosa, aged about five, was carried asleep on board the ship and found herself on the high seas when she awoke.

Rosa was much attached to her grandmother, Mrs Miller, and fretted throughout the voyage for her. It was no wonder that she disliked Australia from the time when they landed at Sydney and continued to do so throughout her life.⁶

The Dornbusches were barely settled in Barber's Cottage when Emma Tomsitt died at Mimosa in March 1890, followed two years later by her husband at the very time when the nemesis of Mrs Miller appeared as an arrival in the Sydney shipping lists. Tomsitt had just returned from a visit to Sydney and, according to local lore, left open on the table at Glenrock a Sydney newspaper recording the arrival of the Millers when he decided to go out shooting. Later that day his body was discovered in a fence through which he appeared to have been climbing when his rifle fired. An inquest returned a verdict of accidental death but local belief was that he had suicided.

⁶ At the time of the Captain Cook bicentenary in 1970 she wrote to me that 'it was a pity they ever discovered the place'. Her life, too, was tragic. As a musician she found that pre-1914 Germany was a natural home where she made many friends, all the ties with whom were severed during the disruption of the Great War and she was not again to find such friends. She was in Germany in August 1914 and barely managed to escape with the aid of friends who found a berth for her on a ship leaving Wilhelmshaven for England.

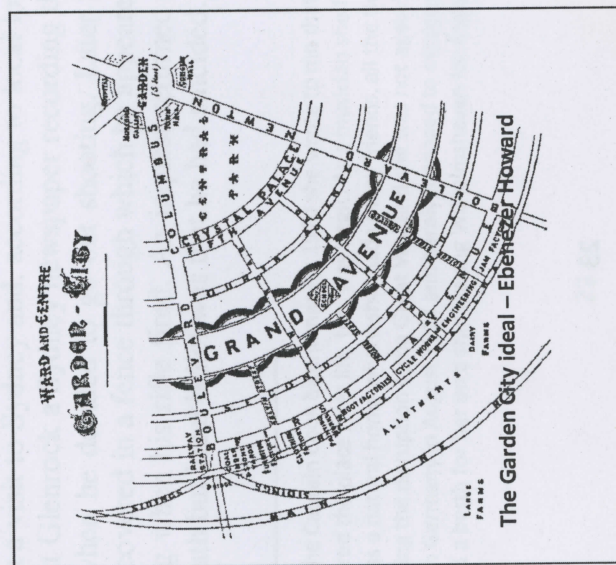
Within a very short time a partnership of Dornbusch and Miller was formed, taking possession of parts of George Tomsitt's property, including the cottage in Atkinson Street.

*(TO BE CONTINUED IN QUINBEAN,
DECEMBER 2013)*

CANBERRA FREEHOLDS ESTATE - QUEANBEYAN'S GARDEN CITY

Towards the end of the nineteenth century the Industrial Revolution had created havoc in the living conditions of the world's big industrial cities. They were overcrowded, lacked water supplies and sanitary arrangements and were devoid of any attempt to create a pleasant atmosphere for family life.

To counter this a new approach to town planning was developing. A Londoner, Ebenezer Howard, presented a unique plan that was an answer to what he saw as decaying industrial cities. He wanted all people to be able to live in conditions as far removed from those in his overcrowded and unhealthy London as possible. He planned incredibly wide roads, public parks and private lawns and his roads were circular rather than linear.



He wanted to combine the joys of countryside living with the benefits of a town and to promote his theories he wrote a book that was a detailed answer that specified that his idealised garden city would house 32,000 people on a site of 6,000 acres, planned on a circular pattern with open spaces, public parks and six radial boulevards each 37 metres wide, extending from the centre. The garden city would be self-sufficient and when it reached full population, another garden city would be developed nearby. Howard envisaged a cluster of several garden cities as satellites of a central city of 50,000 people, linked by road and rail.^[1]

Howard needed money to buy land on which to build his Garden City and to do this he founded the Garden Cities Association which in 1899 created First Garden City Ltd and in 1904 Unwin & Parker, architects and town planners of London won a competition to plan Letchworth, an area 34 miles outside London.

By now, the story is familiar to Australians. In 1911 the Commonwealth Government of Australia held a competition to design the proposed national capital. The brief⁷ included five main objectives: The design was to be that of:

- a beautiful city in a commanding position
- a city in a landscape
- a city with a Garden City appearance
- a city worth of becoming Australia's official and social centre
- a city that embodied all recent developments in the science of town planning

⁷The Brief Federal Capital Design Competition 1911-1912

The competition closed on February 29, 1912 with 137 entries from all over the world. One of the last to arrive was from an American, Walter Burley Griffin. In today's world of easy research and communication Howard's influence on Griffin is obvious. What isn't so obvious is that Griffin followed Howard's belief that all town planning must be adapted to its locale and this is what has made Canberra such a superbly designed city – Walter Burley Griffin cradled a Garden City into a magnificent landscape with the natural beauty of the area and the spectacular man-made environment meeting all requirements of the original brief.



Walter Burley Griffin's plan for the Federal

But there is more to this story. Enter Henry Ferdinand and Halloran.

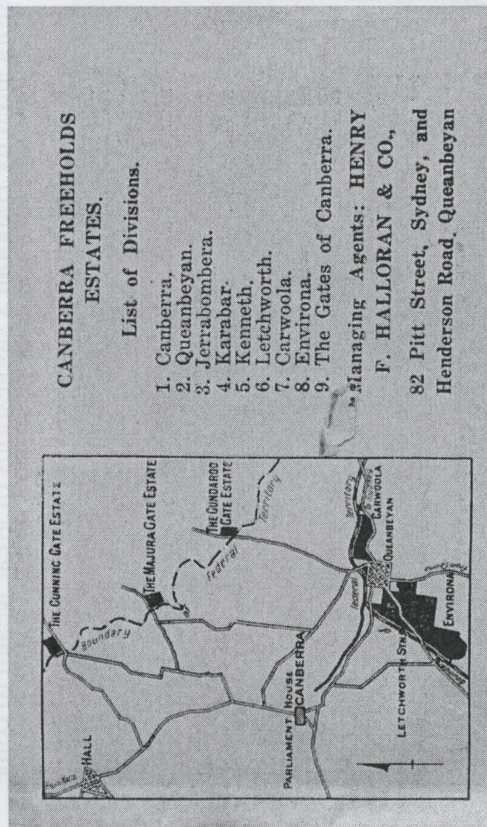
Henry Ferdinand Halloran was born in 1869 at Glebe, Sydney, eldest child of Edward Roland Halloran, a native-born bank clerk and later architect, and his English wife Adeline Burgess, née Reuss.

He was articled to Arthur Stephen at Blue Gum Flat and became a licensed surveyor in 1890, a valuer in 1895 and conveyancer in

1896. By 1897 he had set up in Sydney as Henry F. Halloran & Co., specializing in land and property dealings.

After the First World War, the building of Canberra began in earnest and Halloran turned his visionary eyes to the land outside the Federal Territory. He did not like the leasehold system of the Federal Territory and he believed he was not alone in his thinking.

He was unusual in his strategies. His aim was to design town centres along the borders of the ACT in the Garden City style. They would reflect the philosophies behind the Garden City concept of Letchworth in England and he turned his plans for new communities into actual land developments, and advertised them rigorously across Australia and England.

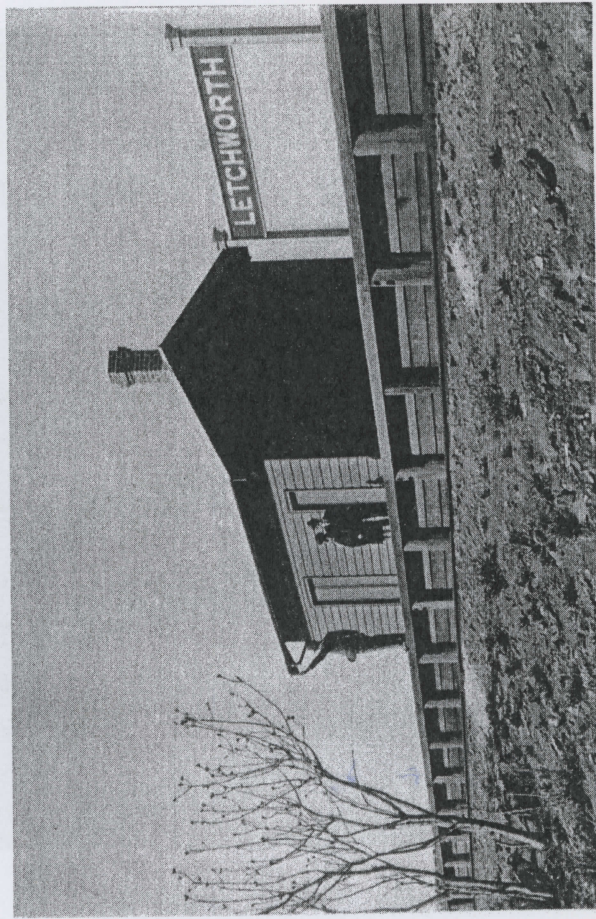


And so Henry F. Halloran was Queanbeyan's first major land developer. He bought up large tracts of land along the railway border between Queanbeyan and Canberra and designed a series of towns between the two. Queanbeyan would not defer to Canberra

but would offer freedoms that come with private enterprise and private ownership. One such town was to be Letchworth

By 1926 The Canberra Freeholds Estate of eight separate divisions had been subdivided, yielding enough land to support a population of 30 000 to 40 000.

Halloran persuaded NSW Railways to build a railway station between Queanbeyan and the crossing at Tharwa Rd, to be called Letchworth, and then invoked Council to support a request to the Federal Capital Commission to build a road from this station to Canberra, and following this success, his advertising began in earnest. There were offices in Queanbeyan and London and while many blocks sold, few were settled on as the purchasers were investors lured by Halloran's suggestions of great wealth to come.



Letchworth Railway Station, Queanbeyan c 1926
Photograph Halloran Collection, Lady Denman Maritime Museum, Huskisson.

LEITCHWORTH.

This new town occupies a splendid position on the boundary of the Federal Territory, with over a half mile each of frontages to the main Railway Line and to the main Tharwa Road, leading into the Federal area ; about 15-mi nutes' car drive to the centre of Canberra City.

Realising its importance the Railway Commissioners have established at its centre a new railway station bearing the same name. This name is taken from the first garden city in England, and the avenues and streets have been named after prominent Town Planners.

From the extensive semi-circular traffic place at the new railway station, seven wide main avenues radiate, while between these, six lesser streets are focussed on the same point, where a tower has been erected. The central avenue 100 feet wide is axial to a high hill in the background, and each of four other avenues 80 feet wide has its own special terminal feature. The area within the first two circumferential roads may be used for business purposes, but outside this, with a few special exceptions, the lots which are very ample in size, may be used for residential purposes only. Where the central avenue crosses the main road a spacious circus 400 feet in diameter has been formed round which are 30 sites, the ground floors of which may be used for retail shops only. Parks, Playgrounds, and Motor Parking areas are numerous and ample.

The land is gently undulating, with only just sufficient slopes to provide efficient drainage, is clear grassy land of good soil and ready for building at any time. Inspection is invited, and the local offices of the Managing Agents opposite Queanbeyan Railway Station will be glad to motor intending buyers to inspect. As this Estate is already selling very rapidly, early application for lots is necessary. Lots vary in price from £40 to £150, and are all good building lard, many with views of Canberra City. The title is absolute Freehold under Torrens Act. The same easy terms apply extending over 5 years with only 5 per cent, interest. A purchase of a lot for himself and one for each of the children will be the natural thought of every far-seeing man.

The good times were fading – the Wall Street collapse, the ensuing Depression and the slow progress of the development of Canberra all took their toll. During this time Halloran the marketeer offered many enticements:

CANBERRA LETCHWORTH and QUEANBEYAN

**EVERY SATURDAY MORNING FOR £1/10/ WHICH IS
REFUNDED TO PURCHASERS**

**400 MILES RAIL 40 MILES MOTOR and HOTEL
ACCOMMODATION**

The Proprietors of the Suburb of Letchworth invite you to make this wonderful trip and see our Beautiful CAPITAL CITY and its suburbs, in the glorious Autumn Particulars from

REALTY REALIZATIONS LIMITED 153 Elizabeth Street Sydney¹

The second World War with its land sale controls turned Halloran's dreams into tatters not only for himself but for his managing company Realty Realisations Ltd, the local council and the ratepayers. Henry Ferdinand's Halloran's death in 1953 marked a period of inactivity in the Queanbeyan property market.

In later years the boundaries of the town of Queanbeyan were extended to include the lands known as Letchworth and the Canberra Estate. Without its planned railway it was little more than another paddock of dreams.

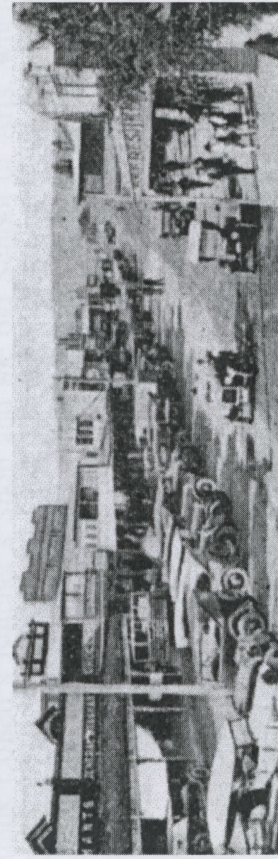
Eventually The NSW Housing Commission resumed Letchworth from Realty Realizations, the original company of Henry Ferdinand

Halloran. Because of the problems associated with the area being partly sold it was considered ideal for resumption by a statutory body such as the commission and the plan was to build about 1300 commission houses to house some 6000 people but this development was quashed because the area encroached on the Department of Defence's naval telecommunications zone.

Alternate plans for Letchworth included moving the show ground from its present position. This too was tied up in legal constrictions because the Showground is Crown Land while the Housing Commission owned Letchworth. Another thought was to turn it into parks and gardens with sporting fields.

In the long run much of Letchworth was established as a residential area, but the only remnant of Halloran's original plan is a small section of the northern end of Hoover Road.

In the long run Henry Halloran's Canberra Estate survived, not as a Garden City suburb, but with his street plans and names retained it is an area of light industry on the periphery of the town – which, surprisingly, is how Garden Cities were meant to be planned!



Monaro Street. C 1926 Photo Halloran's Canberra Freeholds Estates Advertising

SISTER MARGARET DOWNEY REMEMBERS

I was born in Queanbeyan and went to school at St Benedict's Convent School at the age of five years and five days later on I transferred to the Superior Public School because there were no qualified teachers at the Convent School in those days. I am the third daughter of the late Henry Francis Downey; his mother came from Ireland and his father from England.

My father was born at Collingwood in Victoria in the year 1858 – he called his only son Collingwood after his birth-place. My mother was Mary Ann Leach, eldest daughter of the late William and Catherine Leach of Michelago, and was born there in the year 1867. She came to live in Queanbeyan in the year 1883, met my father and was married at St Gregory's Roman Catholic Church in July 1886 by the Reverend Father Patrick Hickey. I am the last surviving member of the Downey family.

Queanbeyan has grown rapidly since Canberra became the Capital City. In fact today we see a new Monaro-street, very different to what I remember as a child going to school. The hotels have changed hands a number of times. The old Commercial, now re-named the Tourist, was run by a Mr and Mrs McNamara, followed by Mr Mooney and later by Mr Allsopp. Walsh's Hotel was run by Mr Phil Pooley and family. The Royal was owned by Mr Martin Byrne and the Victoria by Mr E. Land and family. The chemist's shop adjoining the Royal Hotel was owned by Mr Firth, and Mr Gabriel had a little shop adjoining; what I remember most about it was the snakes and centipedes bottled in spirit in his window.

Mr and Mrs Charles Black had an oyster saloon where the Commonwealth Bank is today; they later moved to the opposite side of the street next to the Commercial Hotel. Mrs Black was the first lady hairdresser in Queanbeyan – well, actually in those days only

men had haircuts. Mr Black used to parade the street on sale days dressed in a long white coat and nailcan black hat, ringing a bell to let people know it was sale day. I remember standing with some other school girls one lunch hour as he came along calling out 'Fifty head of prime fat cattle' and he cupped his hands around his mouth, looking at us and laughing, and said 'as poor as bloody crows.'

I remember when a local milk vendor used to turn his cows out on the street at night and they camped under the verandah where Dunn's Newsagency is today. In those days little Tommy Cox had his newsagency there, and school requisites. Below him was a fruit shop owned by Mrs Sullivan. Carrington Buildings was owned by Mr and Mrs Fallick. Mrs Fallick was the daughter of the late Mr John Gale.

In those days Fallick edited a paper called *The Observer* and the John Gales *The Age*, which is one of the oldest papers in circulation today. Mrs Fallick was a great favourite with the school kids. She catered for their every need. I remember one little episode. A boy went into the shop one day and it was top spinning sport at the time. As she came out, she said 'Oh well, my boy, oaken top and strong'. He said 'No. Work box and needle' and ran out of the shop laughing and thinking it was a great joke.

I think Collett's Butcher's Shop and the old School of Arts, where Mr Don Campbell is today, are the only old buildings and the old Temperance Hall, where Fosseys⁸ are carrying on their business still remain in the main street.

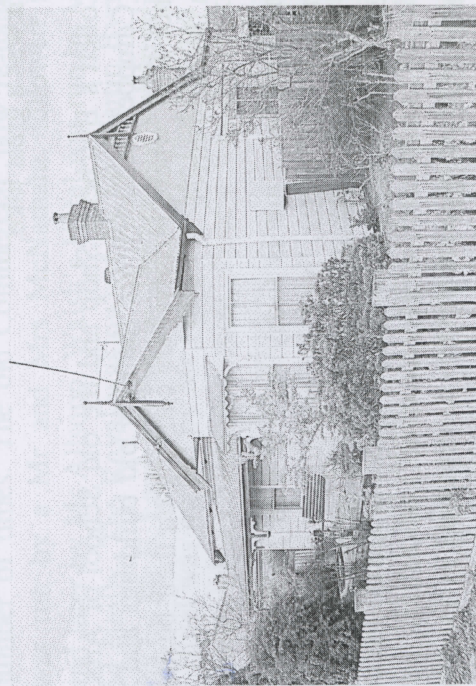
Where the Leagues Club is today an old man named Mr Paddy McLaughlin, a water carter, lived. He used to cart the water in a cask from the river to the different townspeople at 6d. a cask; he'd drive

⁸ Ray White Real Estate in 2013

the old horse and cart down the bank into the river, fill up the casks – two – put a sack bag and a hoop over it to keep it from spilling, and on his way. We were frequent customers of his as we had moved a mile out of town and in summer months were always short of water and he's be most apologetic to us because he had to charge us 1/- a cask.

There were only three homes on this end of the town in those days – *Karabar*, built by a Mr Tompsitt and resided in by Mr Arundel Hill Garraway, a solicitor (his wife was Miss Frances Rutledge, daughter of Forster Rutledge of *Carwoola*, Bungendore), *Glenrock* and this old home on the river was built and lived in at the same time by Mr Tompsitt; *Langdene* was occupied by Mr Jeffries, the C.P.S., and his family of two boys and two girls.

Our home, which we put together later and called *Harlow*, contained 18½ acres and is now occupied by a lot of people as a caravan park, but only has six acres in it today, being subdivided at one time. We left *Harlow* in 1916 and my father got Mr Frank O'Connor to build a new place for us at the corner of Donald-road and Fergus-road where



38 Donald Road

I am living in retirement today.

My father was very civic-minded. He carried out the duties as secretary of the District Hospital for twenty-nine years but I noticed when they printed the booklet on the hospital's centenary they only credited him with ten years. Many times I have made up my mind to correct the error.

He was also an alderman of the Borough Council for a great number of years, member of the Cricket Club and Rifle Club. He and a man named Mr Larry Maloney, a saddler in Queanbeyan at the time, convened the first race meeting in Queanbeyan where the same course is today. Later on a grandstand was built which in later years was pulled down and the material sold for a debt.

The Municipal Council honoured my father by named a street after him, Downey Street, in the new subdivision nearby. I'm proud of the honour bestowed on him.

I am a trained nursing sister and spent almost fifty years in nursing in various places, hospital appointments and private nursing, ten years of it in Sydney, mostly specialising at private hospitals.

In my day applicants for hospital training school had to be twenty-one years old before they were accepted – and then on one month's probation. We frequently worked the round of the clock. Matrons were very severe. I did my training at the Goulburn Base Hospital. It was an excellent training school as we got a very good training in infectious nursing. Quite a large wing was set aside for it. I trained during World War I and we had two large camps of soldiers billeted opposite ther hospital. Hence we were kept very busy as there was an outbreak of meningitis in the camp and all cases were nursed at the Goulburn Hospital.

I enlisted for war service in 1917. Due to a shortage of war nurses, trainee nurses were allowed six months off their four years training if they enlisted for war service, which I did – but unfortunately for me the end of the war was in sight before I was called up. I was very disappointed but I benefited by the six months off my four years training. Our first year's salary was £1.1.8 a month, second year £2.3.4, third year £2.10.0 and fourth year £2.12.6.

My first position as sister was at the Temora Hospital and the salary was £80 per annum, later at Yass at £90 a year, and I had a matronship later at a salary of £120 per annum. Conditions and salaries and time off are very different today. The time off is excellent, yet they seem to be having great difficulty in getting trainee nurses. Nurses' living conditions and amenities are something I never dreamed of, born fifty years too soon. Yet I'd have mine all over again; I loved it. After all, I believe nurses are born, not made.

I would like to tell you one of my early experiences in nurses when I was only a couple of months in hospital. There were a family of blacks, known as Dick Lowe and family, camped in the bush about one mile from the Queanbeyan Hospital, known as Bull's Paddock. Well, his wife was confined by an old lady in the town and had a son. The following day or so our Dr Richardson called at the hospital to tell matron to send me across to the blacks' camp with a small bottle of castor oil for the mother.

I was all decked out in an outdoor nurse's uniform to help me through my ordeal. As I was nearing the camp, which consisted of a couple of bush shanties, I was besieged by a pack of dogs barking very savagely at me. I began to call out, 'Will the dogs bite? Call them off!', but they couldn't speak English, just grunted at me. However, I arrived and looked about for the mother and found her in a little bush shelter. She smiled at me and I began to feel at home.

I explained as best I could the purpose of my visit and gave instructions about the dose of castor oil as best I could, being so junior, looked at the little black baby and told the mother he was lovely, said goodbye to all and made off. I can assure you the dogs gave me a great send-off.

I was shaking all over with fright as the male folk at the camp never looked like being friendly towards me and looked on me as an intruder. On returning to the hospital I said 'Please, Matron, don't send me there again as I was terrified.' I've gone a long way in the profession since that day and never remember being frightened since.

Our ambulance conveyance was very primitive. It consisted of a canvas stretcher on four wheels with a canvas hood shelter from sun and rain, pushed along perambulator-fashion by one man. I am sure our ambulance men were honorary and gave their services free. Our fire brigade was just as primitive but we never seemed to have many fires in those days.

Queanbeyan could boast of two flour mills, one over the railway line in Oaks Estate and the manager was Mr John Knox, the other near the river below the Suspension Bridge, owned by Mr J.J. Wright, at one time Mayor of Queanbeyan. The town also had a cordial factory, opposite the Methodist Church in Rutledge-street.

Two horse-drawn coaches used to meet the mail train to and from Sydney, night and morning; one was owned by Mr Allan O'Neill and the other Mr William Meredith. Kerosene lamps were used for street lighting; Mr Nicol McInnes was the lamp lighter in the early days, followed by Mr Frank Penney. The lights were only confined to the street areas.

I well remember Christmas time in the old town in my childhood. All the verandah posts from the Post Office to Victoria Hotel and up the other side were decorated with gum trees cut down and brought in from the bush and tied to the posts. I can assure you to this day I always miss the trees and Christmas has never been quite the same to me in Monaro-street since the cantilevers had taken the place of the old verandahs – which is more uniform and streamlined to make way for progress.

Recorded by P.B. Sheedy c.1964; retyped from original transcript typed by Marj Sheedy c.1967



RANDOM PHOTO
Flood at the low level bridge, Morisset St, 1974. Photographer Bob Woods

QUEANBEYAN 1938

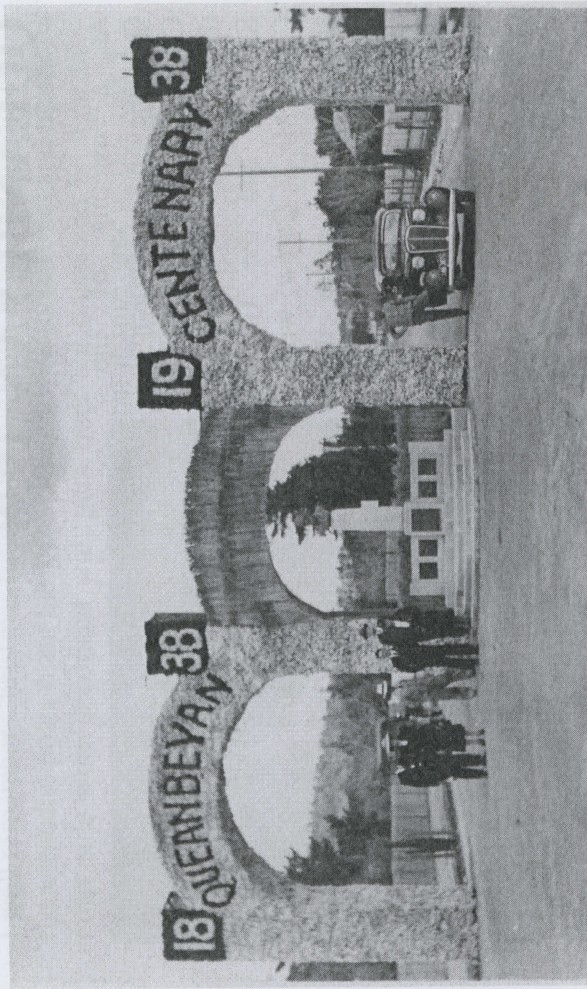
At a meeting of the Queanbeyan Municipal Council at the end of 1937 the Mayor (Ald. J. Esmond) and the Town Clerk (Mr. P. Carew) were authorised to make the initial arrangements for the town's celebration of its centenary. The Mayor said that he felt that the proposal to celebrate the centenary would meet with genial approval by citizens. If efficiently organised, a series of functions could be made to yield a large net profit.

A sum of £100 had been included in the next year's estimates for the assistance of the movement.

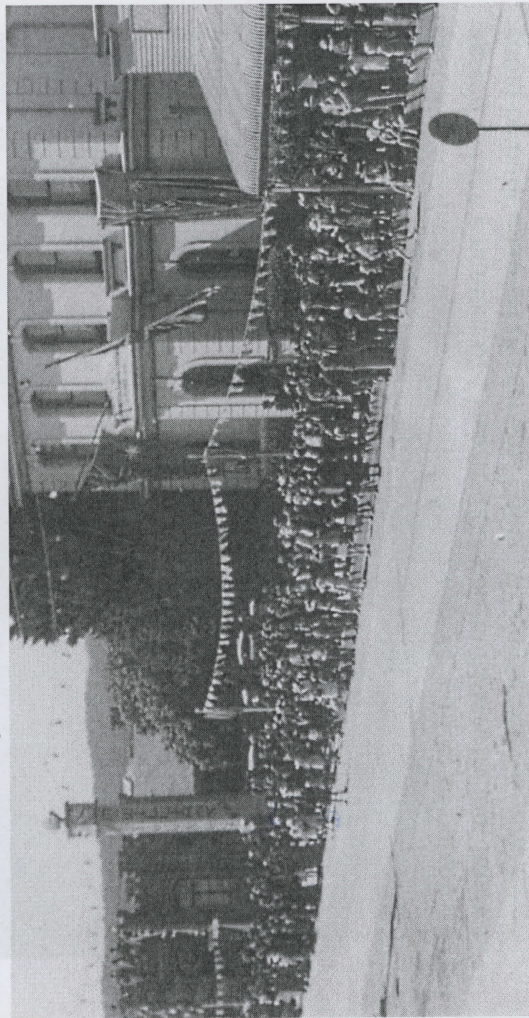
However, a fairly substantial sum would be required to finance the celebrations, and he suggested that a debenture scheme would be the best way to finance the initial objective. If a large number of persons agreed to take a number of £1 shares, payable at call, sufficient funds could be built up to set the scheme going. When the celebrations were over the debenture holders would be repaid from profits.



The Centenary Birthday Cake



Archway of wool and wheat, Farrer Place.
Postcard Collection G Kelly

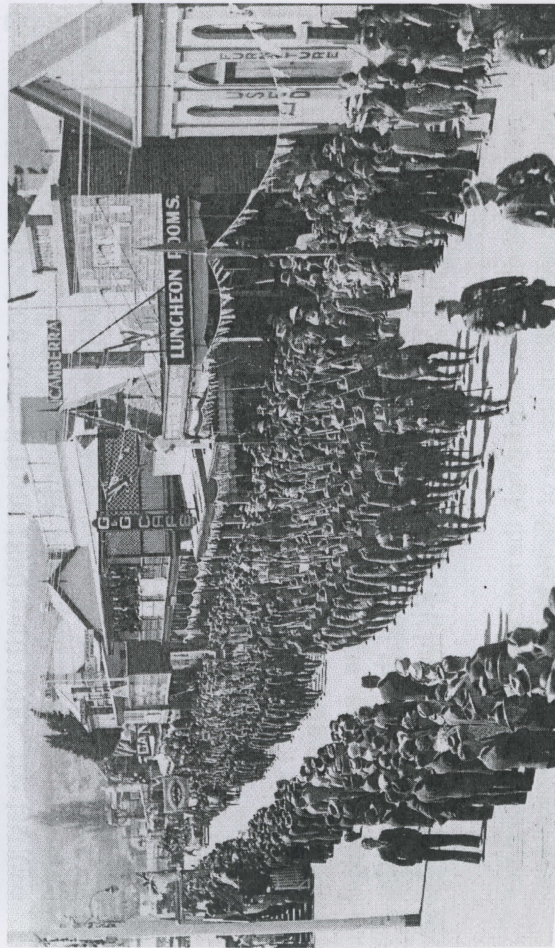


Centenary Celebration Parade, cnr Monaro & Crawford Streets
Photograph Hardwick Family

TV



Centenary Celebration Parade, Monaro Street
Photograph Bill Willis



Centenary Celebration Parade, Armed Forces
Post Card G Kelly

WILLIAM PIKE

Mayor of Queanbeyan 1897-1899

William Pike was born in 1851 at Wanniasa, the son of Martin Pike and Mary Ann Blackburn. In 1879 he married Johanna McNamara, of Katy Flat.

William followed in his father's footsteps in his commitment to his community. His first occupation in this town was that of butcher, then publican and then a cordial manufacturer. From 1889 to 1895 he appears to have taken turns with his brother-in-law, Michael McNamara, at being licensee of the Commercial Hotel. He was a foundation member of the Volunteer Fire Brigade and a member of the Australian Holy Catholic Guild.

In 1884 he was amongst those who signed the petition to the Government requesting that Queanbeyan become a Municipality. By 1890 he committed himself to the town by successfully standing for Council. He remained on council from 1890 until 1906, the last two years as Mayor. After a short break he was again elected and served as an alderman during 1912 and 1913.

It is fitting that William Pike's achievements are recorded in this, our 175th and Canberra's 100 birthday celebrations.

In 1898 he accepted a position on the committee of the New South Wales Federal Association.⁹ In October 1899 the townspeople of Queanbeyan took up the question of where the nation's capital should be and decided to forward the claims of their locality to the position of the federal capital. With Dr Richardson leading the

⁹ Queanbeyan Age, April 6, 1898. Interestingly the note immediately below states the Age would like to see Goulburn the site of the Federal City!

charge, a petition was signed and presented to the Mayor, Mr W Pike, asking him to call a public meeting on the question.

The following public meeting saw the establishment of the Queanbeyan Federal City Committee. At its first meeting William Pike was made chairman and Theo Cox secretary. J Cadden, J. Cunningham, F. Campbell, O'Hanlon, Grady, John Gale, Dr Blackall, Dr Richardson formed the that resolved to advocate as the Federal city site, the land lying to the north west of Queanbeyan, embracing Tuggeranong, Lanyon, Yarralumla, Duntroon, Gungahlin, and Glenwood stations, together with adjoining lands.¹⁰

And in the long run, many debates later, this is how it was.

Perhaps *An appreciation by an Old Friend*, printed in the *Queanbeyan Age* on January 29th, 1915 better describes the contributions of William Pike to his community.

THE LATE WILLIAM PIKE

During the last week, the mortal remains of Mr William Pike, J.P., who, from childhood, was a man well-known and highly respected in the Queanbeyan district, were interred in the Roman Catholic Cemetery. Mr Pike's age was 64 years... The late Mr Pike, in his personality, combined all the qualities that endear man; in the strongest sense, to his fellow-man. His nature was broad and kindly to the uttermost.

His integrity was unimpeachable. Everyone who knew him loved and admired William Pike, for the undeniable uprightness of his character, his good fellowship, his broad generous nature and the wealth of charms, in a personal sense, with which he was endowed... In local affairs, Mr Pike was

¹⁰ Queanbeyan Age, October 14, 1899

for the past 30 years, in the writer's knowledge, a prominent -man in everything calculated to advance the prosperity and material interests of the town and district.

He was to the front in everything that he considered would benefit Queanbeyan and its people ; not because he was a new-comer and courted prominence and popularity, but because he was born in the district and thoroughly believed in its future, and his people had reigned here before him...For several years Mr Pike was in the Municipal Council. He was twice Mayor and always took keen interest in the welfare of the ratepayers. He was a magistrate of the State, and in the discharge of his duties as such, his judgments were always tempered with mercy. I have witnessed him sitting on the Bench and fining a man 10/- for a police offence, with the usual alternative of imprisonment, and, on the culprit avowing his inability to pay, Mr Pike paid the fine to the recorder himself ... He was a faithful churchman andwhat is more, he was true and earnest in his belief, and broadminded in regard to the beliefs of others: In his unfortunate decease, both the church and the community will realise the loss of a really good man.

The late Mr. Pike was an ardent supporter of sport, being associated with the Racing Club for many years, helped to start the now defunct pony club, was president of the football club, and while at Captain's Flat took a great interest in the sporting clubs of that town. He was also a keen worker for the P. & A. Association and was one of a few townsmen who promoted a coursing club in Queanbeyan.

Mr. Pike was born at Tuggeranong and later started a butchery business in Queanbeyan. He afterwards commenced business as a cordial and aerated water manufacturer, and later also started business in the same line at Captain's Flat where he won and held the respect of the whole community.

The deceased gentleman was a member of one of the pioneer families of the district, and married a daughter of the late Mr. Patrick Mc Namara of London Bridge. He leaves behind him a widow and grown-up family of sons and daughters, and two brothers, Messrs. Jas. and Andrew Pike.