

The Pick of the Great North Road

The Road, the Road builders and its Neighbours Vol 4—2006

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The Journal of the Convict Trail Project Inc.

Why a “Grand Folly”

Elizabeth A Roberts

The vision for the Great North Road was that of a great artery along which people, stock and goods flowed. The fact was that it was already being described as a folly before it was completed.^[1]

Why did the Great North Road not reach its potential? The Hunter valley and beyond were settled and rich river-flats were producing crops and fat stock. The lands beyond the settled areas were attracting squatters and this should have produced a steady flow of traffic.

Sarah Mathew’s casual observation on 14 February 1833 gives part of the reason. She wrote about rowing up the river toward Windsor

A few miles on we met the William IV , steamer from Windsor to Sydney...; she visits Windsor once a week and takes market produce for the settlers to Sydney; On other days she was engaged in the Sydney Newcastle run.

On the 14 May 1831 the British-built steam-driven paddle-wheeler *Sophia Jane* arrived in Sydney under sail for the Sydney Newcastle run. After a month being converted back to a steam driven paddle-wheeler she acted as a tug boat before she departed for Newcastle on 19 June, arriving back in Sydney on 22 June. Australia’s love affair with new technology is not new. On 13 June 1832 *The Sydney Morning Herald* carried the following item

Yesterday (Sunday 12 instant) the public were highly gratified in witnessing the Sophia Jane, steam vessel, towing the “Lady Harewood” (for London) down the harbour; the ease and rapidity with which she drew the “Harewood”, excited the



The Sophia Jane. Artist unknown Queensland's State Library

greatest admiration and applause. This is the first application of steam power, to the purpose above mentioned, that Australia can boast of; and from the important benefit that must ensue to the colony, by the general introduction of this valuable discovery, we think the proprietors of such vessels, deserve every support that the Government of the colony, and the community at large can give them.

Prior to the arrival of the *Sophia Jane*, the *Lord Liverpool*, a 70-ton cutter, provided a weekly service between Sydney and Newcastle and several other smaller boats made irregular trips to Newcastle. John Dunmore Lang in writing about the Hunter Valley said he had known the *Lord Liverpool* to be detained up in Sydney Harbour up to thirteen days by a strong north-easterly wind, he described the alternative the overland trip via Wisemans Ferry as a toilsome journey of three full days on horseback over the intervening mountains.^[2] The *Sophia Jane* and *Lord Liverpool* continued in competition for a few months before the *Lord Liverpool* withdrew.^[3]

The *Lord Liverpool* had made her first voyage to Newcastle in 1824 with fifty passengers and last voyage to Newcastle on 1 September 1831, leaving there on the 9th to return to Sydney where she arrived two days later. Finding the competition and regularity of the steamship difficult to compete with she switched to the New Zealand trade route departing on her first trip there on 30 September. The *Lord Liverpool* was wrecked on one of the Tongan or Friendly Islands in early 1833. ^[4]

The *Sophia Jane* did not have the Newcastle run to herself for long. In 1831 a shipbuilding company called Deptford was established on the Williams River. Here the first Australian steam driven ship was built. To be named the *William IV* she made her maiden voyage to Newcastle on 20 February 1832.

The impending launch of an Australian built steam ship created excitement as shown by this letter in the *Sydney Gazette* in 1831:

I, with pleasure take up my pen, to describe the gratifying sight I have this day enjoyed. Many of your readers, I am inclined to think , only know the Williams River as a part of the

Hunter, while it is in fact a separate River, emptying itself into the Coal River; and has from its mouth to Clarence Town (a distance of about 68 miles), a depth of from four to five fathoms of water, without a single rock or bank to impede its navigation. On the right bank of this noble river, now well named after our most gracious Sovereign, and adjoining to Clarence Town, the township of the Parish of Uffington in the County of Durham, Messrs, Marshall And Lowe, shipwrights have in their yard on the stocks a steam vessel nearly finished to be called the William the Fourth.

This colony can now boast of being able to build her own steamers, and these with her own indigenous timber, the flooded gum, which Messrs Marshall and Lowe, declare is equal to any in the world for ship building, and particularly for treenails. Whenever this beautiful vessel may be launched into her proper element; which it is calculated will be in about a month, it will be seen that vessels now of 600 tons can be built or completely repaired in the William River quicker and cheaper than can be done in Sydney Cove, a circumstance of the utmost importance to our whale fishery speculators who I have not the least doubt will, when they see the masterly work of the 'William the Fourth' not fail to vie ample employment to Messrs Marshall and Lowe'.^[5]

Three years after Sarah Mathews had proclaimed of the *William IV*, 'the Machinery of course from home' steam engines were manufactured in Sydney.^[6]

The two steam driven paddlewheel vessels provided a twice-weekly service to Sydney, the *Sophia Jane* a daytime service and the *William IV* an overnight service. The trip generally took about 10 hours. In one very fast trip the *William IV* made the voyage in 7 hours.

Although the fares quoted were expensive (20/- for cabin and 12/6 for steerage), this compared favourably with a four to five day ride down the Great North Road with the risk of being robbed on the journey.^[7] Assistant Surveyor Mathews and his wife considered the risk along the Parramatta to Windsor road so great they travelled in front of the local coach when travelling home to Windsor even when it meant arriving very late. There were no coaches to travel in front of down the Great North Road.

The influential settlers that the road was built to service, could afford to pay the fares to travel to Sydney by steamship, especially when the ships regularly started from Morpeth after the wharves were established there in the mid-to-late-1830s.

Stock was still driven to market in Sydney but longer more roundabout routes were used. There

were a number of problems for drovers with using the Great North Road or later Peats Ferry Road. On both routes the stock had to be swum a considerable distance across the river with the loss by drowning a very definite possibility. Bullocks from bullock teams that were used to being handled, balked at being put on a ferry.

Travelling stock need regular water and grass, but between Mount Manning in the north and Dural in the south there was little of either. It was easier to take stock the long way round via the original route to the Hunter (what is now Putty Road) or by Blaxland's track and cross the Hawkesbury at a much narrower point in Windsor. For many of the early Hunter settlers, their overseers and workmen, droving cattle to the Sydney markets this way would have also meant a chance to visit with or at least catch up with news of Hawkesbury relatives.

The combination of Thomas Mitchell's passion for straight lines with roads built along waterless ridge tops together with the introduction of a twice weekly steam ship from Sydney to Newcastle, the fear of bushrangers and the difficulties in swimming cattle across a wide river all combined to allow what was really a major engineering feat, the building of the Great North Road, to be dubbed a Grand Folly.

1. Lavelle, Siobhan, *Stage1 Conservation Management plan for the Great North Road* page16
2. Historical and Statistical Account of New south Wales by John Dunmore Lang vol II 1875. page 227
3. Nicholson, Ian Hawkins. *Shipping Arrivals and Departures Sydney 1826 to 1840*; <http://www.jenwillets.com/Steamships.htm>
4. Bateson, Charles. *Australian shipwrecks Volume 1 1622-1850*
5. <http://www.jenwillets.com/Steamships.htm> July 2006
6. Cole Harry, 'Explosion on board the steamer *Native*: the limits of early marine engineering in colonial New South Wales' *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society* Volume 92 part2
7. Harvard Olive, transcription of 'Mrs Felton Mathew's' *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society* 1943. 14 February 1833
8. <http://www.jenwillets.com/Steamships.htm>; July 2006. Hanna, Cliff. *Bandits on the Great North Road*.

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The Road and its Surrounds as seen by Mrs Felton Mathew

Annotated extracts from Mrs Felton Mathew's Journal 1832-1834

Annotated by E.A.Roberts

Sarah Mathew, the wife of Assistant Surveyor Felton Mathew kept an extensive journal between 1832 and 1834. The journal, written in a series of small exercise books of which a number have survived, was started by Felton before Sarah arrived. Those written by Sarah were transcribed in 1942 by Olive Harvard and published in the RAHS journal in 1943, as *Mrs Felton Mathew's Journals*.

Felton Mathew, who was in NSW from 1829 to 1839, was one of a number of surveyors employed by the Surveyor General's Department. When he was established in NSW, he was joined by his fiancée, his cousin Sarah. Shortly after her arrival in early January 1832 they were married and, as they had no children, she travelled with him constantly while he worked, generally staying in the camp during the day and amusing herself writing a journal describing their travels. The journals were probably written to send home to the family and were only written whilst away from home.

The Mathews lived in Windsor and journeyed out from there to where Felton was sent to survey. Sarah Mathew was an acute observer of people and nature. From Sarah Mathew's writing we have contemporary descriptions to much of the area the Great North Road passed through between Parramatta Road and Wisemans Ferry. She also provides pen portraits of the Simpsons and the Rev. Sharpe both of whom were associated with the road. Her choice and use of language is interesting, making a clear distinction between her social equals and those she considered beneath her.

Mrs Felton Mathew had a favourite camping spot at Wisemans Ferry which she referred to throughout the journal as their regular camping spot. In the beginning of the journal she described the spot.

Nearly opposite Wisemans, in a very pretty sequestered spot surrounded by wattles and screened by rock so as to be completely hidden. This is the prettiest of our camping places and the most delightful excepting for the mosquitoes, which are so very numerous that they are quite an intolerable pest, assailing one most pertinaciously by day and night. One

advantage this spot also possesses which is a very uncommon one and that is a walk on which account we were more anxious to be there on Sunday; from the neighbouring settlers too we procured milk and fruit, great luxuries the former, since I cannot yet learn to drink tea without. The fruit consisted of figs and Peaches the former delicious, the later hard and bad. Though there are such immense numbers of Peaches in this county yet few are to obtained which are really good.

A later extract revealed her favourite camping spot was the small area of flat land at the base of Finches Line of road.

Feb 24 1833

...we enjoyed a very delightful walk along the old road which ascend a mountain of immense height, by a number of transverses cut with much labour through rocks, nearly to the summit, and from different spots obtained very romantic and beautiful views of the river winding along between immense rocky mountains covered with wood, and relieved by small patches of low land in cultivation with little white cottages and farm buildings. This road being now useless, (as the new ascent opposite Wiseman's is much better in every respect) is falling away rapidly, and in many parts is covered by stones of large size, fragments of rock and fallen trees washed down by storms.

Sarah Mathews was intrigued by the Flame Lilies which she called Gigantic Lilies, currently they grow in profusion along the road near Clares Bridge. Having been told they grew in a glen, she searched for two days for them on the ridge tops above the MacDonald River finally finding them late in the afternoon. She returned the next day

11 August

we set off in good time, and climbed the mountain once more, pursued our way readily to this favoured glen, where the Lilies are as thick as possible. Only a few were partially blown, but sufficiently expanded to be acknowledged the most magnificent flower in Nature. No description can give an adequate idea of them: the plant its self is very handsome with its large liliaceous leaves of bright green, we measured some of them, six inches in breadth, and six feet long was the general size: then the flower stalk, a long straight jointed stalk, with smaller leaves at each joint; these

rise from eight or ten to sixteen feet in height, and the flower which this stupendous stem supports, resembles in form a fourteen branched candelabrum, each cluster containing three flowers, separately enveloped in a crimson sheath, this opening, displays the lily, a corolla of six petals, narrower than the petals of the garden lily, but like them, turned slightly back, showing the inside of the flowers, these are of a bright Crimson colour, most delicately shaded within: the stamens, six in number, are jointed at bottom to the petals, and are of a pale pink surmounted by large anthers of a bright green, the pistil rising from the centre is of a deep crimson – we brought home three of the most advanced flowers, and cutting the stems have put them sand and water.



Later she collected roots and took them back to grow in her garden in Windsor.

Felton Mathew surveyed much of the land already settled in the Macdonald Valley so he made frequent trips there from his home in Windsor, generally by boat. On one occasion, as he was later going on to survey at Pennant Hills, they rode via Maroota and the Great North Road

to Wisemans Ferry. They returned a few days later to travel down the Great North Road from Wisemans Ferry to Dural then back to Windsor travelling through an isolated area in front of the regular coach to protect them selves from bushrangers even though the main bushranger in this area had already been captured. This long extract describes just how isolated this now mostly urban area was in 1833.

June 4th. 1833. A week at home, and then being obliged to return to the banks of the Macdonald River, and the Hawkesbury near Wiseman's, we determined to go by land so far, as the river is so circuitous that it is impossible to reach Wiseman's in less than two long days by water, while by the Marroota road, [along the river bank] it is only a day's journey: this arrangement was also agreeable to me as having the charm of novelty, the Marroota Road being quite new to me. I shall not be desirous of renewing my acquaintance with it though, for it is certainly the worst of all the bush roads I have travelled : we had a long and very cold ride and twice went several miles out of our way, by losing the right road, and being compelled to return. At length however we reached the new North road [Great North Road] as it is called about six miles above Wiseman's, and in several places where the road is carried along the summit of the range there are some very fine and extensive views. in one we could clearly distinguish Windsor Church and the white houses in the town at a distance of 20 miles: but I was most delighted with the view from the heights above Wiseman's: I think nothing can be finer, than the river Hawkesbury here, a noble stream, its tributaries the Macdonald and Webb's creek with the masses of mountain along which they flow; on the other side the eye commands a long and beautiful reach of the river, with the cottages and cultivated land of several settlers on its banks, while close beneath is a deep and rocky glen, several hundred feet below the road, here cut along the side of the mountain out of the solid rock: though cold and tired and our tents almost in sight, (for we had caught a glimpse of them in the valley to which the road descends) we could not but stop awhile to admire this beautiful scene just illuminated by the rays of the declining sun on the mountain tops, while the dense foliage on the sides were in deep shade. We found on rounding the summit of the range another point of beauty in the picture before us. Opposite Wiseman's was a large ship of 240 tons lying at anchor; she is going down to Sydney to be finished being built

by a man of the name of Grono near Pitt Town, and called the "Governor Bourke." We found our tents pitched near the bank of the river almost opposite to old Doherty's

June 6th. Moved the camp and returning to the North road pursued our way towards Franklin's on the Pennant Hills a distance of upwards of thirty miles, therefore we were aware, far too long a journey for our baggage in one day; we had no alternative but, keeping their slow pace, to camp in the evening wherever we should find wood and water.

Surveyors were allocated six convicts and two bullocks and camping gear necessary to work in the bush. Through the journals Sarah never names these men except once when that she just names Phillips.

The morning was most lovely and on gaining the summit of the heights above Wiseman's the whole landscape lay before us beautiful and clear: the broad glittering river with a few small boats skimming along, the patches of cleared land on its banks, with the white cottages of the settlers: the course of the Macdonald too among its mountains we could distinctly trace, and even fix some remarkable heights in the ranges beyond its source, mountains well-known to Felton by name, (being in his county Northumberland). It would be difficult for even the best artist with pen or pencil to do justice to the scenery I am endeavouring to describe, and for me it is absolutely impossible -Anything like interesting scenery, in this country is so rare, that perhaps after all it may be only its novelty that makes this view so pleasing; the road has been constructed at an enormous expense, but is falling into ruins and unless kept in repair will soon be impassable; it is cut for several miles along the sides of rocky mountains gradually ascending to the summit of the range, and there formed along the top, in some parts tolerably level, in others so narrow that the sides are banked up with rough stones which in heavy rains, are washed down the precipice carrying with them fragments of the road, thus forming dangerous passes; from about the junction of the Marroota road, the range becomes more level, at least its summit is not quite so sharp a ridge, and therefore the sides of the mountains fall more gradually, the valleys are more extensive, and for some miles the road runs through what is called Marroota Forest; then again the country changes suddenly and rocks and scrub, as the stunted underwood which everywhere covers the forest land is called, takes place of the forest scenery; and thus continues for many miles till the eye is wearied

and disgusted, and the traveller feels every mile as long as two. An Itinerary published in the Almanac & Directory having noticed a settler's grant on this road about 12 miles from Wiseman's, we endeavoured to reach the spot for the sake of water and a little grass for the cattle, since the barren range we were traversing afforded neither, without going down into some gully or narrow glen, which as evening was closing rapidly would be difficult, if not impossible; we therefore pushed on as well as the rocky broken road allowed, but after toiling up and down many tedious hills every one of which as we descended we hoped would bring us to this clearing: we found we should certainly have to pass the night in the bush, unless by retracing our steps we could return to our baggage before it was quite dark, since we had travelled nearly twenty miles and not found this place: about three miles back, we met the dray toiling slowly on, the poor animals so weary that to attempt taking them on more than four miles would have been cruelty, even had there been light enough : we ourselves too were cold and tired, and the sound of the bullock-drivers whip and voice urging and encouraging the animals was never to me more welcome: we stopt immediately that we reached a spot wide enough to pitch the tent at the side of the road, and with the aid of a "Lucifer" soon kindled a fire; by its light our tent was quickly set up, and in less than an hour we were comfortably seated in our portable home: in the mean time two of the men with a pail and kettles had descended into the glen and found water, a seasonable supply for our tea, from which we spared a little for our horses as it was impossible to take them down the glen till daylight: the bullocks were allowed to provide for themselves both food and water as they could be allowed to stray down the valley without any risk, while the horses were obliged to be tethered near the tents.

June 7th. A most glorious morning, and with renewed spirits, we started early on our journey. The road, still on the high mountain range, presented from different points, fine extensive views over vast tracts of country of various character; Windsor, Belmont, the hills beyond, and the well-known points in the Blue-mountain range, as Mt. Hay, Tomah, King George's Mounts &c. The low lands on the banks of the Hawkesbury, as the mist which enveloped them gradually rose, had a most beautiful appearance: as the sun advanced, the vapour rose higher, and hung in snowy masses, or wreathed along the sides. of the dark mountains, giving varied and beautiful effect, to the otherwise monotonous picture: the absolute stillness which prevails in these solitudes is very

striking; not a sound of bird or beast to be heard, not a single living creature to be seen. After passing the spot we had fixed on as the point of our yesterday's journey, and which belongs to a settler named Acres,~ the country greatly improves: this man seems to have fixed on the very edge or border of the rocky scrubby country through which we had been travelling, for after leaving his cleared land, the country assumes a very different appearance, the range is tolerably level, and the road bordered with young trees: huts and clearings, and a few cottages succeed rapidly along the road, and a few miles on, there is a neat, comfortable looking Inn, kept by a man of the name of Best; Best's Inn is the half way house between Parramatta and Wiseman's; it was about noon when we reached it, and in order to let the dray with our baggage precede us, we determined to halt a few miles on, and give the horses a rest for an hour: we soon came to a favourable spot, and giving over the horses to the care of the groom, we lighted a fire by the aid of the invaluable "Lucifers" and amused ourselves with a book and some biscuits for a couple of hours, till ' the clouds assuming a very threatening appearance obliged us to hasten on, in hopes of reaching the camp before the rain came on : we were however disappointed; we were still several miles from our destination, when a cold thick rain commenced, and on turning from the high road, saw, to our great mortification the dray moving slowly along, instead of being as we hoped all camped before the rain : there was no help however, and when we reached the spot I sat in the gig under a tree till our tent was pitched, everything meanwhile getting as wet as possible: the rain too became thicker, so that it was some time before we could get a fire to burn: we had fully anticipated a wet night, but as the moon rose it cleared off and about nine o'clock was as cloudless and fine as the morning had been; so sudden and violent are the changes in this beautiful climate.

June 8th. A very beautiful day, with a fine bracing air: I had every thing laid out in the sun which had been rendered damp the preceding evening, and in a few hours all was dry and comfortable again. We had purposed to send the camp on to Liverpool on Monday, while we should, arrived home and spend Sunday and Monday there, and join the camp again on Tuesday as we could travel in one day the distance it would take two, for them to accomplish. Felton returned rather earlier from work than he expected, and we resolved to start home immediately, upwards of twenty miles. The road between Paramatta & Windsor



Sarah Mathew (Auckland City Library)

is at present so much infested by bushrangers -that it is scarcely safe to travel it at any time of the day, we therefore intended on reaching that road, to wait at Pye's Inn till the Windsor coach appeared, and then to keep before it all the way, this detained us till quite dark, and obliged us to move on so slowly, and wait so often that it was past ten o'clock before we reached home: the night was fine but the moon rose late, so that it was rather dark. It is not often that robberies are committed at night on the roads, these marauders being generally too lazy to move at that time, and more unwilling perhaps, as the risk is greater from constables and policemen being more on the alert, and frequently traversing the most infested roads in disguise, thus they might be entrapped unawares.

Another day she described the ferry at Bedlam Point

10 October 1833

The Punt plies across a bend in the river which is not more than a mile wide, but the current, or rather the tide runs so strongly that it is a work of some time and difficulty to get across:

I think we were nearly an hour in the Punt: the bank on either side has been cut away, and forms a tolerable ascent; the road on the Sydney side is called the Concord Road and running through a miserable scrubby country, joins the Parramatta and Sydney road, about six miles from the later place. The Punt being small would not contain the dray and five bullocks, they were therefore obliged to make two journeys which occupied so much time, that finding it would be dark before we pitch out tent, we resolved to return to Parramatta. And take up our quarters at Mrs Walkers Inn - it was with great difficulty they succeeded in getting the dray across at all: when about the middle of the river two of the bullocks became unmanageable, jumped out of the Punt, and swam back again to the shore ...

Sarah Mathew was not impressed with the Percy Simpson household. It is interesting she failed to mention his work in supervising the construction of the Great North Road which had only been completed to Wollombi the previous year.

Thursday 10 October 1833

I did not move out while at Parramatta excepting one day to dine with the Simpsons, who would otherwise have been offended: they are an Irish family who have been several years in the Colony. Mr Simpson was in the army, and was Commandant at Wellington Valley, the farthest inland station in the Colony; he is now an Assistant Surveyor: they are very kind and hospitable people, but to be much in their company is the greatest bore imaginable, they have a house full of ill-bred children, and the whole family is in a state of continual disorder and confusion, while the lady is without exception the most incessant talker I ever encountered, it is positive fatigue to sit an hour with her.

In The Pick Vol 3 there was an article about the Reverend Sharpe, here Sarah Mathew describes his church at Laughtondale.

Sunday 9 February 1834

The stormy appearance of yesterday evening prevented our moving the camp as we had purposed, we therefore were obliged to move this morning a distance of four miles; and we were then about half mile from the church, we left the men to pitch the tents and walked on; we found the service half over, and Mr Sharpe the catechist told us afterwards, that he usually found his small congregations assembled when he reached the church and that he therefore began without much minding what the time

might be. The church was small rough building of wood, thatched, and the sides plastered with mud, which had fallen out in many places, there was no floor, no windows; the desk and seats and pulpit all made of rough boards, such a place, as would not pass for a good barn in England.

Mr Sharpe lives in a small cottage on the banks of the Hawkesbury nearly opposite Wisemans: he has a very extensive district, and seems very assiduous in the discharge of his duties; of course he can only visit the more distant parts of his district, at stated and rather distant periods; he performs divine service once a month at Brisbane water for example, which is a very long and hazardous journey, since the road is so intricate and difficult to find that he has repeatedly lost himself for several days, and been in imminent danger of starving; he has a small boat in which he visits the several churches in the River and its branches.

14 February 1834

The Hawkesbury River was a shipping artery Rowing up the river from the Macdonald toward Windsor A few miles on we met the William 4th steamer from Windsor to Sydney: this is a neat little vessel built in the Colony, the Machinery of course from home; she visits Windsor once a week and takes market produce for the settlers to Sydney; and also I am told water for the shipping in Port Jackson, there being great scarcity of water in Sydney and generally very bad.

March 11 1834

Sarah Mathew describes an Iron gang working on the Great Western Road near Lennox Bridge.

There is a very pretty stone bridge of a single arch. Thrown across one of the ravines and forms a striking contrast with the wild, dark scenery around. After crossing this bridge, we heard the clanking of chains, and saw the labours returning from their days work, escorted by soldiers, the whole work has been performed by Iron-gangs as they are called, that is by convicts who for various offences in the colony, have been condemned to work in iron gangs for certain periods; we passed about 150 of these wretched creatures marching in ranks, a most painful spectacle.

It has long been considered that much of the Great North Road followed Aboriginal pathways, Sarah Felton tells us that Bells Line Road was originally an Aboriginal pathway.

29 March 1834

This track was shown by a native to Mr. Archie

Bell, and he explored it as a road to Bathurst, a the time when a new route thither was bring sought, he received a grant of land as a reward.

Sarah Mathew also tells us that in 1834 there was still at least one group of Aborigines living in a transitional manner in the bush behind the upper reaches of the Macdonald River.

18 April 1834 whilst travelling some twelve to fourteen miles up the MacDonalld river by boat the dead unbroken silence which prevailed all around was extremely oppressive, and the voices of some natives which broke on the ear after some time, was really quite a relief: on nearer approach we found they were hunting Wallabi (a small species of Kangaroo) or what they call Wallabuning(?) a number of them assemble, and while some run along the tops and sides of the rocky heights shouting and screaming, drive down the poor little frightened inhabitants to the flats below where other[s] attack them with spears and dogs; we saw three of these little creatures hopping along with all speed, followed by dogs and blacks in full cry-

While Sarah Mathew was writing in her journal, her husband was surveying grants already promised and solving disputes between neighbors over boundaries and roads. One letter from Felton to the Surveyor General revealed the sort of disputed he was called on to resolve,

Milson, Duffy and Thorn of the parish of South Colah were arguing amongst themselves where the road (now Pennant Hills Road) that connect to the main road (Great North Road) went, each trying to push the road onto the others land and leave the unfenced road area narrower that it was surveyed as the road reserve along the ridgeline.

As well as describing the area round the Great North Road, Sarah Mathew provides us with a description of Mangrove Creek and an insight into what was to become a great Australian pest when on 19 March 1833 she wrote that on the estate of Ludenham, George Cox's property there was a rabbit warren "*and the little animals were said to thrive well* "

Fortunately the conditions that meant the road was abandoned soon after its construction, have also meant that in general rabbits have found the land in the vicinity of the road inhospitable and their burrows into and under the stone walls are not a conservation problem.

1. Surveyor General Letters received form Surveyor Felton Mather 32/647 May 1832 page 171-3

Biography and quotes.

Journal of Royal Australian Historical Society. Volume XXIX 1943 part 2; Mrs Felton Mathew's Journal
Journal of Royal Australian Historical Society. Volume XXIX 1943 part 3; Mrs Felton Mathew's Journal
Journal of Royal Australian Historical Society. Volume XXIX 1943 part 4; Mrs Felton Mathew's Journal



Caricature of Surveyor Felton Mathew
Drawn by W.H. Fernyhough.
State Library of NSW

Some insights of life in a Road Gang

Elizabeth A Roberts

In amongst the various Assistant Surveyors' correspondence files there are a few returns showing the strength of the Road Parties and Iron Gangs and what various persons were employed at. These returns give a snapshot view of the work of the road gangs.

A return showing the strength of the Road Branch dated March 1832 shows there were 266 convicts stationed at Lower Portland Head. A return from Percy Simpson the previous month shows where these men were stationed.

The Road Party 25 was on the southern bank of the Hawkesbury. On the last day of January 1832 it had a strength of 63 men. By the end of February its strength had dropped to 48 men.

Number 3 Iron Gang was on Devines Hill and at the end of January it had 100 men. After considerable movement of men in and out, it finished February with 105 men.

Number 4 Iron Gang was also on Devines Hill and it also finished January with 100 men, and after movements in and out its strength had increased by one at the end of February.

The North Road Bridge Party was at Mount Manning at the end of January, when it had a strength of 30 men. By the end of February it had 5 men only having received 15 men from but returned 38 men to Road Party 25. By April the Bridge Party had increased to 14.

Of the 266 convicts stationed at Lower Portland Head district in March 1832 four were overseers (Samuel Ashford, William Rigby, Thomas James and William Barratt) ten were assistant overseers and five men were working as stockmen and messengers. They had eight working oxen to look after. Eight convicts were working as cooks and delegates, nine were in hospital, and one was Percy Simpson's clerk. There were eight men employed carrying water, two employed as watchmen and two attendant on the military that were guarding the heavy Iron Gang on Devines Hill.

The rest of the men were involved in building the road. Some of the tasks were to clear the line of road by cutting and clearing and burning trees, quarrying stone, working stone, building stone walls, breaking stone for the road surface and raking the road surface.

Runaways were still a problem when in March

1832 the Governor issued an order that must have caused a great deal of dissatisfaction amongst the overseers and assistant overseers. He ordered that instead of one paid assistant overseer per gang there was to be an assistant overseer for each 12 men in irons. These men were under the assistant overseer's immediate charge. Now the assistant overseers were not paid, but at the end of the month the assistant overseer who had lost the least number of men from his gang was to receive as a gratuity the salary that would have previously been paid to the one paid assistant overseer. Further the principle overseers were to lose three days pay for each man that escaped. This was particularly harsh on those overseers who were married.

The hard work and harsh conditions took a toll on the men's health, with men being declared unfit to work in the gangs because of rheumatics, hernias, asthma and old age.

The behavior of the overseers was strictly regulated. George Morley a long-time overseer was dismissed in 1834 for being found returning to camp at 11 o'clock at night. Henry Martineer, then an overseer on the Western Road, was dismissed for using a government man and team to pull his cart-load of fowls to market. This was poultry he had bred at a previous station. Another was dismissed for having a woman not his wife in camp.

The use and movement of materials was also reported in the surveyors correspondence. From Assistant Surveyors Abbots correspondence we learn the Percy Simpson was having bridge building timber cut at the head of Wrights Creek and floated down to Wisemans Ferry and another Surveyor wrote to saying there was good supply of Sandstone at Portland head that could be carried by boat to Windsor for use in work there. Surveyor John Abbott had to acquire about 500 bushels of lime for Mr. Lenox for his bridge at Emu Plains, some of this came from the Hawkesbury to Windsor and was sent as a return load via the dray that had carried men hospital. That dray could carry 25 bushels.

Another letter tells that the Public Works Department owned a Pile Engine that the Roads

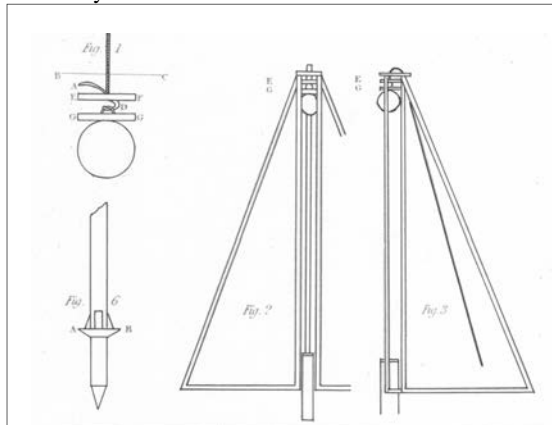
Department sometimes borrowed.

Many of the letters reveal that each department closely guarded its possessions and the skilled tradesmen that were assigned to them often placing great obstacles in the way of anyone wanting to borrow skilled workmen or equipment.

1 Colonial Secretaries Correspondence out 32/25 duplicate 14 March 1832 29/30 to John Nicholson from Harington for the Colonial Secretary.

2 Reel 3051 [2/1509] Surveyor General letters received Abbot John, 21 March-13 May 1834; letter written from John Abbott, 32 March 2007.

3. Surveyor Generals Letter's received from John



Pile Engine or Pile Drive

So far no illustration has been found of the Pile Engine owned by the Public Works Department.

It may have been modeled on the above illustration published in 1816 in Howard Douglas's *Essay on the Principals and Construction of Military Bridges*.

Pile drivers operated on the principal of a heavy weight being dropped from a height onto the post being driven into the ground. Some were built to float.

ATTEMPTED CONVICT ESCAPE

Letter to the Surveyor General

Emu Plains Sept. 19th. 1832

Sir

I have the honor to inform you that in consequence of a discovery made by James Wardell per *Baring* a Prisoner in irons lately in the employ of Percy Simpson Esq. and information given by him to the principle overseer James, the Prisoner in irons Andrew Morrow per *Mangles*, a most notorious bad character, reported by me yesterday as being absent, was found secreted this morning in a large hole made by the prisoner in one of the Barrack Rooms, and which was covered over with stone flags so well that the place could not possibly have been discovered.

I went yesterday with the officer of the guard to make a short search in the hopes of being able to find some clue to his escape by ascertaining if he had left his irons behind, and must have passed over the place where he was buried. I have detailed him to be taken to Penrith Court House and Friday next to be dealt with by the Magistrate, and have the honor to be, sir,

Your obedient servant

John Abbott

IRON GANGS

Other than being a constant run-away it is often not known what a convict had done to be sentenced to time in a iron gang. Whilst it is not know which gang he was sent to this police report in *Sydney Morning Herald* 28 November 1831 shows the entrepreneurial nature of some convicts:

Police Incidents

James Toole, for nearly starving to death two horses belonging to his master and selling their corn for rum, with which he treated all the brickmakers in the neighbourhood, was sent three months to an iron gang

ROAD PARTIES

On the 16 th February 1829 Governor Darling announced all convicts returned from settlers were immediately to be forwarded to the nearest Road Party where they were to remain for exactly six months before being re-assigned.

As the weekly and monthly returns only exist for a small periods of time over the whole 10 years the road was being built it will never be possible to know all the names of the men or how many worked building the Great North Road.

The Road Party and Iron Gang returns that exist show men moved from Iron Gangs to Road Parties at the expiration of their Iron Gang sentence.

Historic Records of Australia . Series 1 Vol. XIV p.648
Convict gang returns

The Humble Petitioner

Sarah Hatchman wife of Robert

Research by Pauline White, text by Barbara Appleton

Nicholson, Jan 1830 to July 1831. 2/1561.2

It was a harsh life, working in irons on the Great North Road. But for many convict consigned to that fate there was someone else affected by the sentence, someone who was, or had been, close to him.

One such person was Sarah Hatchman, the wife of convict Robert Hatchman. Sarah did everything in her power to be near to Robert and to keep their small family together. Robert Hatchman was born in the year 1790 and lived in Epping. At the age of about 31 he had his first conviction (Old Bailey, January 1822) for stealing and was sentenced to 6 months' jail.^[1] In February 1823 he was again convicted of stealing, and this time was sentenced to death, but because he was a married man with two children this was commuted to transportation for life to New South Wales.^[2] Records describe Hatchman as a swarthy man with black hair and pale blue eyes, height 5ft 3¼in (161cm), occupation shoemaker.^[3]

Hatchman sailed from Portsmouth on the *Guildford (6)* in August 1823.^[4] Arriving at Port Jackson in March 1824, he was assigned to James Holmes of Castlereagh Street. But Sarah was determined to follow. Unacquainted with the ruling which would have allowed her a free passage, she paid forty guineas for a passage on the *Adrian*, bringing only one child. It is possible the other child had died. She arrived in the colony in June, 1825, and then applied for Robert to be assigned to her, a free woman, as a servant.^[5]

This was granted, and things seem to have gone well for a time. But assigned convicts who had a trade with which to support themselves were required to pay dues of three shillings and sixpence a week to the government, and Hatchman defaulted and was returned to barracks. Sarah's letter of 26th June, 1826, says that the privilege of having him as a servant "was withdrawn on Saturday last the 24th Instant" – only two days previously.^[6] A note written on one of her later letters by a government official states that Hatchman had actually been "*recalled from her service*" a month before, on the 24th

May.^[7]

This letter gave her address as George Street and explained that in reality her husband was "of no trade whatever", but had described himself as a shoemaker because he believed this would allow him to stay in Sydney. She requested that Robert "*be returned to her as an assigned servant free of Expence*". In the interim Hatchman had complained of her infidelity. This accusation had caused a convict named Jones to have his Ticket of Leave revoked. So, in his wisdom, Mr Hely, the Superintendent of Convicts, suggested that Hatchman should be allowed to "*sleep out of barracks*". This was granted from 6th July 1826.^[8]

This arrangement was quite common. Such prisoners then had the liberty to work for themselves "*after 10 o'clock*" each Friday and were required to earn enough to pay for their lodgings. They continued to receive their rations whether in or out of barracks, and the amount issued weekly would have helped to support Sarah and their child. It included seven pounds of beef or four pounds of pork, seven pounds of flour or wheaten meal, three pounds of maize meal and half-a-pound of sugar.^[9]

Sarah recognised that the arrangement was an "*indulgence*", and Hatchman continued to work in the General Provisions Stores, conducting himself "*satisfactorily*" and even "*with propriety*".^[10] But it was not enough for Sarah. By October she was complaining that "*the opportunities this afforded*" were "*inadequate to support herself and child*".

Just two days before Christmas 1826 Sarah, now living at No. 6 Sussex Street, begged yet again for Robert's assignment to her. This letter appears to have gone unanswered until February, when a character reference for Robert was attached. Another official scrawled "*Recommended*", but the governor rejected the request (14th February, 1827), possibly because Hely mentioned the matter of the alleged improper behaviour of "*This petitioner*".^[11]

Did Sarah's desperate situation drive Robert back to crime? Six weeks later he was found breaking in to a house in Pitt Street. He was sentenced to

ten days on the Tread Wheel (March, 1827).^[12]

In August 1827 Sarah wrote again – or rather, had someone write for her. (The letters written on her behalf are each in a different type of handwriting. The signature “Sarah Hatchman” is different in each case, even down to the formation of the capital “S”.) Robert still continued, as she put it, “*in the employ of Government*”, but she was about six months pregnant and “*wholly unable to support herself and a child of five years*”. She was pleading that her husband again be assigned to her. Comments written on her letter at the time show that Hatchman had not only been allowed once more to sleep out of barracks, but that he had had the privilege withdrawn just two days earlier on the order of the Sydney Magistrates. (He was thought to have been involved in the theft of a blanket.)^[13] Sarah did not get back her husband, and in November gave birth to a son, Stephen, who was to live only three years and eleven months (died 17th October, 1831)^[14]

Sarah had to find work. By the time of the Census in 1828 she was employed as a sempstress by a Joseph Marquis, of George Street Sydney. Listed with her are two sons, Robert, then aged seven, and Stephen (all shown as Atchman). Their father had by then been transferred to road work. By November 1828 he had run away from his gang – and been caught. Records show that on 20th November he was sentenced to six months in an Iron Gang, and within two days was sent to Parramatta.^[15]

New Year’s Day 1829 saw Hatchman’s name in the Sydney Gazette. It gave a full description of him and said he was from the No. 8 (possibly a misprint for No.3) Iron Gang, and it was his “second time of running”.^[16] He now spent some time in hospital, but by the 17th of January was received back to the No.3 Iron Gang which was based on the north side of the Hawkesbury.^[17]

This was a time of revision of plans for the Great North Road. Major Mitchell decided the ascent planned by Finch was unsuitable, and after some days selected the route via Devine’s Hill.^[18] This is where the new stockade for the No.3 Gang was built, and where Hatchman should have served the remainder of his time with the gang. That sentence should have been completed by the end of May 1829, but by 10th March he had

absconded for a third time.^[19]

In the records available to us there is no further mention of Hatchman for more than six years. But May 1829 did see a change in Sarah’s life: on the 15th she gave birth to her fourth child, John Thomas.^[20]

The pressure of surviving in the colony without the support of her husband was too much for Sarah. On 21st April 1834 she hanged herself in her bedroom. An inquest was held in the Red Lion, Kent Street, and it was stated that she had suffered from melancholy for a considerable time, and had made previous attempts on her life.^[21]

Robert Hatchman gained a Ticket of Leave in the district of Murray on 28th September, 1835. This had been recommended by the Bungonia Bench of Magistrates on the 30th April. In 1842 he was granted a Conditional Pardon, and this was signed by Governor Gipps on the 13th January, 1843.^[22] What became of the children is unknown.^[1]

- 1.Old Bailey Ref: t18220109-49
- 2.Old Bailey Ref: t18230219-26
- 3.Details on Conditional Pardon 43/36
- 4.Ibid.
- 5.Colonial secretaries correspondence 27/1580*
- 6.Ibid.
- 7.See note on cover of above document.
- 8.Ibid.
- 9.*Historical Records of Australia*, Vol. IX, p.659, 16 June 1825.
- 10.comments added by Stores officers to letter of 8/8/1827 - ?/7514
- 11.Hely’s note attached to letter of 23/12/1826 - ??? 27/1580
- 12.Note on cover of letter of 23/12/1826.
- 13.Note on cover of letter of 8/8/1827.
- 14.NSW Death Reg. No.V1831902 2C/1831
- 15.*Sydney & Darlinghurst Gaols Entrance Books 1825–1832*, Reel 851.
- 16.*Sydney Gazette*, 1/1/1829, p.2.
- 17.Reel 590 (of what?) No.3 Iron Gang report, 12-17 Jan., 1829.
18. Ian Webb, *Blood Sweat and Irons*, p.32.
19. *Sydney Gazette*, 10/3/1829, p.4.
- 20.NSW Birth Reg. No. V18299380 1C/1829
- 21.? Sydney Gazette ? date? page no.?
- 22.Ticket of Leave No. 35/763
- 23.Conditional Pardon No.43/36



William Earp. Convict .

Adrian Earp & Elizabeth Roberts.

William Earp was born in 1800 in Melbourne, Derbyshire, England. Also born in Melbourne Derbyshire in 1808 was Thomas Cook, later the famous Travel Agent. Lord Melbourne, after whom the city was named, took his title from Melbourne, Derbyshire.

The Earp family has been in the village since at least the 1670s and by 1800 had several branches. William's parents were John & Elizabeth Earp.^[1]

William Earp was tried at Derby Assizes 17th March 1824 (aged 23) along with William Lewis aged 25. On 18th/19th November William Earp was apprehended in Nottingham (about 18 miles away) by his father John Earp with the Melbourne constable Robert Baldwin and taken back by coach to Derby Gaol. William Earp's occupation is not noted on the Calendar of Prisoners but he would seem to have been a tailor. He may have been working in Nottingham since at this time other Earps had in fact moved there.

The crime took place in early November 1823, when the two had broken into John Earp's (William's father) tailors shop in High St. Melbourne, and had stolen clothes, a quantity of cloth and handkerchiefs, value £10.

On 5th December William Earp was committed for trial by the Magistrate John Crompton. A handkerchief was given to Maria Clay (aged 17) of Nottingham who was also charged with having stolen property. The trial was before Lord Robert Gifford and Sir John Bullock. The charge was

'breaking into the shop of John Earp of Melborne (sic) and stealing thereout a quantity of woollen cord, several waistcoat pieces, two made up waistcoats, one pair of cord breeches, one piece of printed wool shag, one piece of printed velveteen, a piece of flannel, one gown piece, several cotton shawls and other articles, the property of the said John Earp.'

William Earp pleaded guilty and William Lewis was brought from Leicester on a writ of Habeas Corpus to face the same charge pleaded not guilty, but was found guilty. Maria Clay (17

years old) was charged with having in her possession a handkerchief, the property of John Earp, knowing it to be stolen but was discharged. The two men were condemned to death. This was commuted to transportation for life.^[2]

It is interesting to speculate why William Earps broke into his father's shop; there must have been a family feud of some description. It appears William, having completed his apprenticeship with his father, was sent to Nottingham to find work (possibly because of the post Napoleonic economic state or because of his nature), but felt that he ought to have been taken into the business by his father. From his later actions, he appears to have been a rather rebellious or hot headed young man.

On 20th May 1824 it was reported in the Derby Mercury that the two Williams had been transferred to the prison *Hulk Dolphin lying at Chatham* along with two other prisoners, James Sharpe and James Wilson. Here William Earp was classed as healthy, behaviour good.^[3]

They were transferred to the *Minerva* at Sheerness on 2nd July 1824. It is interesting to note that the letters of petition from his father, and local people to Sir George Harpur-Crewe of Calke Abbey, asking for a reduction of the term of transportation, had this same date. The family must have been kept informed as to his date of transferral and to his impending departure. He was only on the *Dolphin* for about 6 weeks.^[4]

The convict ship *Minerva I(4)* sailed from Sheerness on 13th July 1824. The captain was John Bell and the Surgeon Alexander Nisbit MD. The *Minerva*, 530 tons, was an old ship having been built in 1804 at Lancaster and had made three previous voyages to Australia. There were 172 male prisoners on board together with a detachment of the 40th Regiment. This comprised Major Kirkwood, Quarter Master Hales, three Sergeants, four drummers and thirty six other ranks. (A similar number were on board the *Mangles* which departed the same day from Portsmouth but arrived four weeks earlier than *Minerva*). The voyage via the Cape of Good Hope took 128 days and they arrived at Port Jackson on 19th November 1824. Two convicts

and one soldier had died on the voyage. Both William Earp and William Lewis were among seventy five people treated on the voyage mainly for dysentery, on arrival ten people were admitted to hospital. [5]

On arrival William Earp who was listed in the indent as a tailor was assigned to Mr Pendray Sydney. The indent revealed William was tall for the time, being 176 cms (5ft 9 ½ inches) with blue to grey eyes, brown hair and a pale complexion.[6] William was assigned to his trade Mr William Pendray, a tailor per *Neptune* in 1818 who had a conditional Pardon he had received by 1822. William must have been unsatisfactory as in the 1824-5 Muster he was working in a government clearing gang working on Capt Campbell's property at Bringelly, indicating he had been returned to the Government.

After a period in the Clearing Gang he appears to have again been assigned as a tailor as on 10 February 1826 he was before the Magistrates for taking a coat he was altering. (Value 50/-). He was sentenced to receive 50 lashes and was returned to government work as on 26 July 1826, he absconded from Hyde Park Barracks and was sentenced to 10 days on the treadmill.[7]

He continued to be in trouble as the next reference to him is in the 1828 Census when in November of that year he was in Iron Gang No 4 at Wisemans Station working on the construction of Great North Road. Iron Gang No 4 was responsible for getting the road from the top of the ridge down the sandstone escarpment to the river. By March 1829 he had served his time in the Iron Gang and has been transferred to Road Party 25 which was also working at Wisemans Ferry as he again absconded, now listed as a Notorious Runaway.[8]

The records do not relate where he spent the next two years but after capture and further secondary punishment for absconding he was again assigned to his trade this time to Moses Brown. In late 1830 the *Burrell* arrived with convicts including a Daniel Cohen, a jeweller, who was assigned to the AA Company. From the remaining correspondence it appears initially Sir Edward Parry the Commissioner of the AA Company was unhappy to be assigned Daniel Cohen but Moses Brown a cap maker and

general dealer in George Street selling jewellery, furniture and general merchandise from his store called "The Grand Repository" wanted him so expand his jewellery business and wrote to Sir Edward Parry to organise a swap of convicts. On the 5 April Sir Edward Parry replied that he found D. Cohen a more useful & trusty worthy man than I first supposed and could not swap him unless replaced with a more able bodied man that the lad Moses Brown had apparently initially proposed or a Mechanic. Moses Brown obviously wanted Daniel Cohen so he proposed to swap him for both William Earps and Thomas Saunders per York 1829. It appears William Earps was unhappy about the proposed swap as he again absconded only to be caught a week later. Once apprehended Moses Brown lost no time in despatching William Earps and Thomas Saunders to Port Stephens on the *Lambton*. [9]

The following year Edward Ebsworth the Superintendent of the AA company wrote to the Principal Superintendent of convicts to report that William Earpe per *Minerva* had died on 27 March 1832 24th March at Carrington Hospital after a 'severe attack of Angina Pectoris', Convict Death & Burial Register stated he died at Port Stephens on 27 March 1832. at Port Stephens. [10]

How did his co-conspirators fare. In 1826 Maria Clay of St Marys Nottingham was sentenced at Nottingham Assizes to 7 years transportation for stealing. (3/- and a purse). An amount nicely judged to get her transported but only for 7 years, it will never be known if she was trying to follow one of the Williams. She was transported in 1827 to NSW on the *Grenada*. Shortly after arrival she married John Tucker. She is listed in the 1828 Census as Maria Tucker at Parramatta but not in a family group. In 1833 she was awarded a Ticket of Leave which was later converted to a Certificate of Freedom when her term expired. In all these documents she is shown as being the wife of John Tucker of Kent Street Sydney.

William Lewis was also transported on the *Minerva*. The indent shows he was also a tradesman being a Miller. He was twenty four years old, five foot four and a half inches tall with grey eyes and brown hair with a pale complexion. On arrival he was assigned to C.J. Smith at Appin was assigned to a farm at Appin, south of Sydney. He arrears to be another

rebellious young man, as for reasons unknown in November 1828 William Lewis was on the Hulk *Phoenix* in Sydney Harbour. As a miller his skills would have been in demand. In the 1837 Muster he is in Government employment at Port Macquarie. He finally receiving a ticket of leave in 1839, 15 years after arriving in NSW and died the following year at Patricks Plains.

Researched and UK section written by Adrian Earp Derbyshire UK (descendant of William's brother) Australian section written by Elizabeth Roberts

1. John [1775-1856; Elizabeth [1779-1856] nee shepherd of Weston on Trent
2. Copies of the committal report (*Derby Mercury*) Calenders & Sentences of Prisoners held in Derby Local Studies Library.
3. *Derby Mercury* 20 May 1824 Derby Local studies Library. Hulk Records National Archives UK HO8
4. National Archives London UK HO 17/9/62 Pt 2 LK38.

5. Surgeons journal ACJP PRO reel 3205. Bateson, Charles *The Convict Ships 1787-1868*. Library of Australian History 1983.
6. Nicholson, Stephen Ed. *Convict Workers Reinterpreting Australia's past*. p80 The average height for convicts born between 1800-1809 was 166cms for urban born and 168 cms for rural born.
7. *Sydney Gazette* wed 15 Feb 1826; wed 2 August 1826.
8. *Sydney Gazette* Tues. 30 March 1829.
9. http://epress.any.edu.au/isc1/pdf_instructions.html *Australian Agricultural Company letter book volume 1, 1829—1832 letters no. 380,400,427. Sydney Gazette 12 April 1831, Sydney Gazette 21 April 1831. Information on Moses Brown and Daniel Cohen email from Gary Luke 20April 07*
10. *Australian Agricultural Company letter book volume 1, 1829—1832 letters nos 590. 27 March 1832. Convict Deaths & Burial Register 1828 -1879; 4/4549 Fiche No 749; State Records NSW.*

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Henry Martineer

Ralph Hawkins

Henry Martineer was born on 24th January 1803 the second son of Louis and Martha Martineer nee Harvey. Henry was christened in St Marylebone Church on 2nd April 1809. Louis Martineer was of Huguenot descent. In the early 1820s Henry was part of a gang of eight men who were counterfeiting banknotes and passing them off as legal tender. The gang was tried at the Old Bailey on 11th April 1821 and the men were sentenced to 14 years transportation.

Henry arrived in Hobart on board the *Lord Hungerford* in January 1822, but had been transferred to Sydney by the brig *Nereus* in September 1822 where the Chief Constable took him in charge to the Carters Barracks which were situated between the brickfields and the burial ground.^[1] From here he was assigned to Lieut. Croker the Assistant Engineer and when Croker retired he was transferred to Lieut. Ovens with whom he remained into late 1824.^[2] Martineer put in a petition for an indulgence in October 1825 as he had heard that Governor Brisbane was about to return to England, but it was ignored, probably because he had no supporting referees in the document.^[3]

Martineer absconded from his master in 1826 and was sent to a Road Gang working on the road

between Parramatta and Baulkham Hills where he was still working two years later.^[4] As the Great North Road proceeded northwards Martineer was promoted to overseer of No. 9 Iron Gang which was working at Mount Manning 25 miles north of Wiseman's Ferry between January and December 1830. Amongst other things it was Martineer's job to collect the rations for his gang from the contractor Solomon Wiseman back at the Ferry. Martineer was recommended for a Ticket of Leave on 31st October 1829 by the Parramatta Bench of Magistrates for having apprehended two runaways. The Ticket was issued eight months later on 1st May 1830.^[5] He was in some kind of limbo until the Ticket was issued, and dare not do anything to jeopardise getting it.

In June 1830 Martineer requested a transfer away from the road gangs at Wiseman's Ferry. He swore under oath that he was being threatened by Solomon Wiseman who;

Threatened that he would take his horse, ride off and have his ticket taken because Martineer had refused to take a greater quantity of meat for his gang than the regulations stipulated.^[6]

Tickets of Leave could be cancelled on complaint

from members of the public. Such cancellation would mean that Martineer would have to remain in the convict system. Martineer was also relying on his Ticket and a transfer so he could marry back in Parramatta. Percy Simpson, in a covering letter recommended that Martineer be transferred. He became overseer of a road gang working at Prospect.

Martineer married Elizabeth Gorman on 9th March 1831 at Parramatta by Banns. Elizabeth Gorman was the daughter of Thomas Gorman, a wheelwright of Parramatta who had arrived on the *Rolla* in 1803 and had formerly been employed as storekeeper at Bathurst. The pair had at least seven children born between 1831 and 1857 and it is here we can see Henry's changes of occupation. In 1831 he was an overseer at Prospect, 1833 labourer Parramatta, 1836 servant. On 31st Aug 1836 Elizabeth Martineer was sent to the Female Factory in Parramatta. On her release the family moved to Sydney where the next child was born in 1838

and Henry was working as a groom. By 1841 Henry was Livery Stable Keeper, in George Street South. The Martineers returned to Parramatta and Henry took up residence in Aird Street, opposite the gates of St John's Cemetery. He was now employed as a coachman on the Parramatta to Windsor run from at least 1853 until his death on 14th December 1857.^[7] The family erected a tall sandstone headstone over his grave which is situated just inside the gate of St John's cemetery.

1. Reel 6009, 4/3506 pp101, 254, 256. State Records NSW
2. Assignment Register 1821-22 Fisc. 3290, 4/4570 D pp 80, 87. State Records NSW
3. Petition of Henry Martineer, Oct 1825 Fisc 3250, 4/1874 p 154. State Records NSW
4. November 1828 Census
5. Ticket of Leave, Henry Martineer, No 30/184
6. Henry Martineer to Col. Sec. 8 June 1830, Col Sec in letters 2/1579. State Records NSW
7. Birth Registrations, Martineer: Martha 1831 1/16, Mary 1833 88/17, Henry jr. 1837 529/21, Catherine 1838 614/23, George 1841795/25, Elizabeth 1853, Ann Sophia 1855 340/42.



This painting by Augustus Earle, 1793-1838. Now in the National Library titled *View from the summit of Mount York, looking towards Bathurst Plains, convicts breaking stones, N.S. Wales* shows many of the elements of life in a Convict gang. It appears this was a heavy Iron Gang, They are guarded by a soldier and the water carrier is wearing the broad cuffed leg irons designed to prevent escape. The invalids in leg irons, including one recently flogged wearing a convict leather hat, are sitting breaking stone with hammers to form the road surface. The convict overseer in his distinctive coat and straw hat appears to be talking to the seated surveyor in the black hat, advertised for 11/6 in the Sydney Morning Herald 1831.

Solomon Wiseman and the Exploration of a Myth

Ralph Hawkins

This article began with a discussion between Liz Roberts and myself about the mythology relating to Solomon Wiseman. When did it begin and where did it come from, and why was it passed on and published? What need did it fulfil, and what was there to gain from it all? Liz had thought long and hard and suggested some options which I have followed up. What follows may have some wrinkles ironed out of it at some future date, but it is a good working hypothesis.

TRANSMISSION OF RELIABLE INFORMATION

Solomon Wiseman probably stood out as an interesting character right from the time of his arrival in 1806. His successful career, all too often set back by tragedy, marks him out. He was enterprising and entertaining.

The Royal Australian Historical Society was founded in 1901 with the aim of researching and publishing Australian history. The first reliable article on the Great North Road was that by Frank Walker which was read before the society in June 1910 and published in the following journal. It was so well researched that it is still being used by historians nearly a hundred years later.^[1] At least eight authors published reliable information about the Hawkesbury River, prior to 1924, the year when a series of articles on the folklore relating to Wiseman, appeared in the Windsor and Richmond Gazette, mainly for the benefit of outsiders. The reliable histories all avoid the legendary material, although it was being transmitted orally at the time.^[2] For instance, Alexander Oliver, in 1889 gives a vivid description of Wiseman's Ferry at night;

See how a full moon can reveal and half the rugged peaks, and riding high in her sphere, irradiate with silvery beams the dark receding water glades.^[3]

It would have been a golden opportunity to mention the ghost stories current in the 1920s which were projected back into the mythical past. But no. All he mentions is that Solomon Wiseman's mansion house was now converted into an hotel.

Reliable historians agree with the following outline of Wiseman's career.

Wiseman was born in 1777 and apprenticed as a

lighterman on the river Thames in 1795. He married Jane Middleton in 1799. After the death of his master in 1801 Wiseman was transferred to another from whom he stole 12 logs of brazil wood in April 1804. He was apprehended, tried and found guilty and transported. He arrived in the Colony on the Alexander in August 1806. After receiving his ticket of leave in 1810 he became a ship-owner, cedar-dealer and government contractor. Between 1813 and 1817 he ran a hotel in Sydney. He lost two of his vessels in quick succession. In 1817 he selected land on the Hawkesbury River at Lower Portland Head where he had opened an inn by 1820. His wife Jane died after a lingering illness in June 1821. There were six children to the marriage born between 1810 and 1816. All of them survived into adulthood.

Solomon married again in 1826 to Sophia Warner who returned to England in 1841 after Solomon's death. In 1826 he obtained the contract for the supply of provisions to the convict gangs and surveying parties working on the Great North Road. He also asked for a licence for his new inn which he had built below his house right on the road. In 1827 he established a ferry for the benefit of the public with the proviso that Government employees, cattle and baggage should travel free. His eldest son William drowned when his vessel, the *Industry* owned by his brother-in-law John Grono foundered in a bay in New Zealand. Wiseman sold his ferry to the Government in 1832 and also relinquished the licence for the inn which was taken over by his son-in-law. After this he was involved in charitable activities until his death in 1838. Sophia Wiseman returned to England in 1841 where she died at Hammersmith on 13th June 1870.

Of the remaining children (who all married) Richard died at Tuena in 1850, John died in 1848, Thomas died at Wollombi in 1855, Mary married Thomas Crawford and moved to Wollombi where she died in 1875 and Sarah married John M. Davis and died at Currabubula

in 1902. When the Wiseman Estate was subdivided in 1857 there were no longer any family members at the Ferry.

SOLOMON WISEMAN CONTEMPORARY OPINIONS

Contemporary opinion of Wiseman is generally favourable.

Our wealthy and respectable contractor.[4]

He was known to be most hospitable to people he knew, but rather eccentric with strangers.[5]

industrious and his character for probity irreproachable. He gave to all a friendly greeting. He was eccentric and hospitable.[6]

He was a man of considerable natural ability and deeply read in the corruption of human nature.[7]

... a respected colonist and friend of the poor. He was an old and respectable colonist, truly loved for his hospitality, in him the poor have lost a friend.[8]

But Solomon was well aware that there were people who didn't like him for a variety of reasons.

A lot of people are pleased to accept Old Wiseman's comfortable rooms and stay a few days in this beautiful district, but avoid and despise Wiseman himself.[9]

It had a lot to do with the purge of men who had been loyal to, and successful under, Governor Macquarie's regime and their subsequent vilification after the arrival of Governor Brisbane and a new public service elite. The best known examples of men who lost out in the new regime were Francis Greenway and George Druitt. An echo of this is to be found in Wiseman's obituary published in the Sydney Monitor where he was described favourably as;

Solomon Wiseman, a very old Colonist, much respected by all the old hands of the Colony as a warm hearted, industrious man. He has left a large family well provided for.[10]

"Respected by all the old hands of the colony" - but not necessarily the new ones.

THE ROMANTIC ERA

The 19th Century was the time of publication of the Gothic Horror Novel, *Frankenstein* was

published by Mary Wollstonecraft in 1818. Edgar Allan Poe published *The Fall of the House of Ussher*, in 1840, Emily Bronte had published *Wuthering Heights* in 1847 and Oscar Wilde published *The Picture of Dorian Gray* in 1890 as a serial then as a book in 1891 and *Dracula* was published in 1897.

New South Wales with its short history of British occupation had to turn elsewhere for its horror. The earliest layer was chosen by novelists and journalists — they chose the Convict period.

There were at least three novels published in England with an Australian connection; *Fisher's Ghost* was published by Charles Dickens in 1840, *Margaret Catchpole* by Rev. Richard Cobbold in 1841 and *Great Expectations* by Dickens in 1860. Marcus Clarke published *For the Term of His Natural Life*, as a serial in 1871 and in book form in 1874. He based his novel on the stories he had been told by the former inmates of Port Arthur. However, when this was checked by the photographer, J. W. Beattie of Hobart the former convicts admitted they had been telling tall tales.[7] This view was supported by J. Fitzpatrick who was informed by an old resident of Windsor that he...

had read For the Term of His Natural Life, it was a pack of lies, and was highly exaggerated.[12]

But it brought in the tourists. Port Arthur in Tasmania closed as a Convict Establishment in 1877 and the remaining inmates were transferred to Hobart. However there was an interest in the place because of Clarke's novel, and tourists began to arrive by excursion steamer. A number of former convicts returned to Port Arthur to earn a living by acting as tourist guides. In 1884 the church was burnt out by a bushfire and a major bushfire burnt out more in 1895.[13]



The view from Court House Cave across the Hawkesbury to the Macdonald Valley photo EARoberts

About 1900 J.W. Beattie published *An Excursion to Port Arthur*, which had been originally written up in a journal in 1842, he also published a special set of Port Arthur views, postcards, lantern slides and other souvenirs. In the foreword to his publication he wrote;

The wrecks of its great prisons are today, just like the ruinous tombstones of a neglected old grave-yard, giving evidence of the magnitude of the past, and creating a longing desire in the minds of the curious to know something of its wonderful history.[14]

The former ex-immigrant ship and State of Victoria hulk the *Success* was refitted as a convict ship museum which toured the world, arriving in Sydney in 1891.

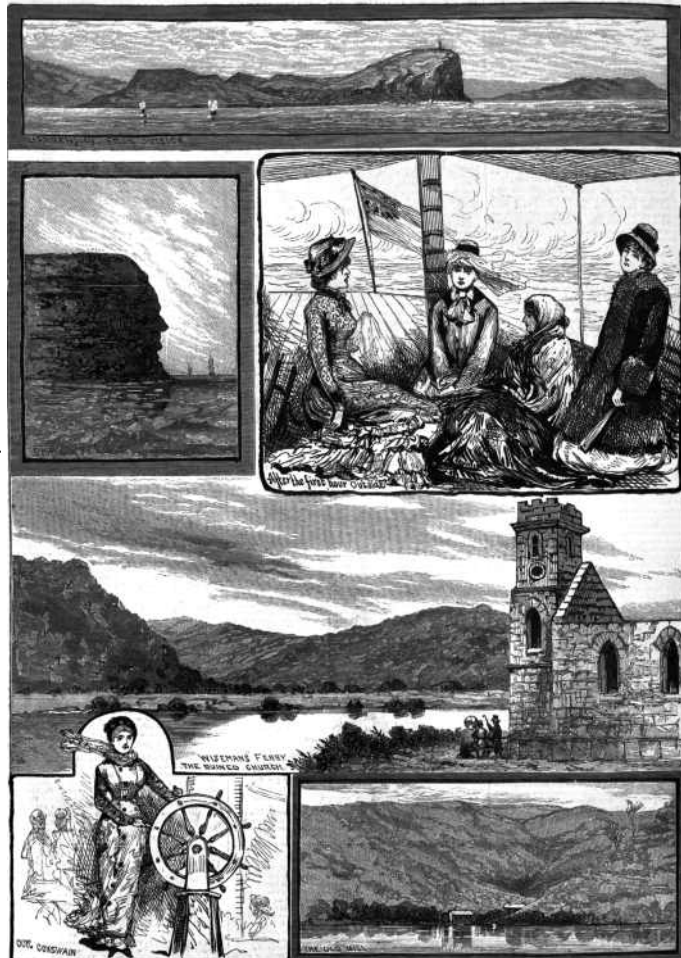
HAWKESBURY RIVER

A similar thing happened on the Hawkesbury River. Like Port Arthur, Wiseman's Ferry was isolated and approached by water. It was atmospheric. Visitors to the *Branch Inn* in Wiseman's time came to see the stupendous scenery. Anthony Trollope and Alexander Oliver give vivid descriptions of the river in 1873 and 1889. In 1884 *The Mystery of the Wiseman's Ferry Road* appeared as a serial in the Parramatta paper, the *Cumberland Argus*. This is perhaps the first time that anything mysterious was published about the environs of the ferry.

The railway line was opened to Hawkesbury River in April 1887 making a boat trip up and down the river even more accessible than from Sydney or Pittwater. The only substantial building at the Ferry was *Cobham Hall*, Solomon Wiseman's former house with the cemetery located on the riverbank downstream. The other once substantial building St Mary Magdalene church was in ruins and was demolished late 1887. It was described in 1864 as;

Almost unshingled, the hinges torn from the arched door, the fine bell fallen from its tower, the handsomely cut stones from the summit broken and half buried in the grass.[15]

In August 1889 Alexander Oliver published an article entitled *Selections from a Freshwater Log*, where he described a trip from Brooklyn to the Colo River by boat. He made mention of Wiseman's Ferry, even Wiseman's converted



Sketched of a trip up the Hawkesbury from Sydney to Wisemans Ferry. Published in the *Australasian Sketcher* 5 Nov. 1881

mansion house. He described the mist rising from the river at daybreak and the full moon revealing and concealing the rugged peaks along the river. But there was no mention of ghosts or anything mysterious.

The newspapers published in Windsor did a marvellous job in promoting the Hawkesbury. One of the major promoters of the Hawkesbury as a tourist destination was George Johnson the proprietor of the *Hawkesbury Chronicle* c 1881 – 1888 and later contributor to the *Windsor & Richmond Gazette*. He published material under the pen name of Cooyal, a name he had picked up when he resided in Gulgong in the mid - 1870s. In July 1888 J.C.L. Fitzpatrick established the *Windsor & Richmond Gazette* and ran it until 1899 when Frank Campbell purchased it. Campbell remained editor and proprietor until about 1925 when his son Perce took over. Frank Campbell died on 23rd Oct 1930.

Tourists needed something tangible to see. At the

Ferry there was a suitable atmosphere with Courthouse Cave on the south side and Hangman's Rock on the north connected by the stone-walled road where convicts had sweated under the lash. There were the ruins of three convict stockade sites, two on the south and one on the north. But the most tangible site was still standing as a fully functional building. It was the pub, formerly Wiseman's house.

THE HAWKESBURY HOTEL

After the sale of the Wiseman Estate in 1857, Cobham Hall was leased by Edward Wamsley who ran the post office in the building until August 1858 when the property was purchased by J.R. McKenzie of Pitt Town. Mackenzie resigned as postmaster in August 1864 when George Purvis Black purchased the building. Black had been born in Wexford, Ireland about 1836 and was the son of John and Jessie Black of Castle Hill who had emigrated in 1838. Judging from the style of the cast iron on the veranda it appears that Black made extensive alterations to the building. He replaced the roof and verandah, and seems to have demolished the pavilion on the eastern end of the veranda. But the outbuildings behind the hotel remained open to the weather, having lost their shingles. George worked in association with his brother Edwin (Ned) Black (1844–1932) who operated as a coachman out of Parramatta taking tourists to the scenic spots around Dural and Pennant Hills. It is likely he took tours as far as his brother's pub at Wiseman's Ferry.

After George Black's death from pneumonia in January 1880 the licence was carried on by his wife Mary Ann, nee Foody, who had relinquished the licence prior to 1890. Mary's father James had lived at the Ferry since the time of his transportation to NSW on the *Sir Godfrey Webster* in 1826, although not an assignee, he would have known Wiseman for a period of twelve years. The Foody family remained at Wiseman's Ferry where James died in 1878. Mary Ann was a capable hostess. When Peter Kemp won the world sculling championship in 1889 six hundred people attended a dinner in his honour at Wiseman's Ferry hosted by Mrs Black.^[17] Mary Ann Black too remained in the neighbourhood and died in 1922. The next licensee was Tom Wilbow who died in February 1896. After that came Christina Jones nee McDonald, who had been born on the Isle of

Skye in 1839. She married John Wiseman Jones the son of William Jones and Catherine Elkins. She died in Chatswood in 1904.^[18] By 1895 James Walmsley held the licence then F. Collison in 1900. In 1905 P.J. Kelly held the licence. It was held by John Walmsley in 1916 then Laura McDonald in 1918.

In 1919 the licence was transferred to James Richard Hennessey, the husband of Edith Maud Black whom he had married in 1905. Edith Black had been born in 1869 and was the daughter of the earlier licensee George Purvis Black.

TRANSMISSION OF STORIES

Stories relating to Wiseman and the ferry have passed through three stages:

- 1) Until the 1880s, stories about the Hawkesbury, were passed on orally, and like a game of Chinese Whispers they became distorted during the fifty years after Solomon's death. They were passed on from a generation who may not have been all that literate.
- 2) Once these stories began to be written down and printed they gained an air of authority despite the fact they were sometimes quite erroneous.
- 3) From the 1970s the State Government began to transfer materials to the newly created Archives Office of New South Wales. Historians were now able to get improved access to original written material. This process has reinforced the factual material, and shown up the fiction for what it is.

TELLING TALES

Solomon may well have enjoyed spinning yarns, but the stories Roger Therry published about Wiseman some 40 years later are demonstrably false and have been seen to be so for a period of about 80 years. Was Wiseman having Therry on, or was Therry one of the first to misrepresent his former host? Therry gives the following account of his host published in 1863 some 30 years after the events:

On the first of my three days' ride to Maitland I arrived at the house of Solomon Wiseman, a well known government contractor, whose comfortable residence occupied a beautiful spot on the river Hawkesbury, commanding a fine view of the

mountain ranges, and of the gently flowing Macdonald River in the distance. There was no hotel in the neighbourhood; and at this period it was a privilege for any traveller to expect and receive hospitality at whatever place he might halt at the end of his day's journey. On this occasion I was particularly fortunate in my host. He was quite a character – a person of great natural shrewdness and of considerable prosperity; for he was then engaged in the fifth year of a contract with Government, for supplying provisions to convicts who worked upon the roads, that brought him a net income of from £3000 to £4000 a year. His coming to the Colony had originally been occasioned by a difference of opinion with the Customs House officers of the Isle of Wight as to the mode of landing spirits and cigars – his opinion being favourable to night time, as best suited to the purpose. Be this as it may, in the Colony his conduct was industrious, and his character for probity irreproachable. I saw him often afterwards, but never without a telescope in hand, with which he kept a look-out for travellers as they descended a mountain pass on the opposite side of the river to his house. He gave to all a friendly greeting.

At the time I visited Solomon Wiseman, he was surrounded by all the substantial comforts that a farmer with a like income enjoys in England. His household consisted of his wife, an amiable Englishwoman, and four sons, remarkably fine youths, varying from thirteen to eighteen years of age. Being inquisitive how these youths were brought up, and how he provided for their education, I found his notion on the subject of education curious and original. He said education was a point on which he was not very particular; and asked me what was the good of it? – adding the observation, that the acquisition of wealth was the main lesson in life. I told him that; amongst other good things “Education aided in the acquirement of property”. “Oh” he said, ‘my views are quite different. I have four sons; and I say to Richard, ‘There’s a herd of cattle for you,’ and to Tom, ‘There’s a flock of sheep – look after them’; ‘so in five years’ time they become rich, each the owner of a large herd of cattle and flocks of sheep. Now that’s what I call education, for by it they acquire means to live.’[19]

Therry has telescoped events together. Wiseman, according to Therry on the first visit is some five years into his Government contract, that would make it around 1831. By this time the road was nearing completion and a three days’ ride is a feasibility. He mentions a wife so it must be after 1826 but gives incorrect ages for the children.

He gives Richard Wiseman’s age as 18 which would make it 1824, (Therry didn’t arrive until 1829) at which time Wiseman was a widower, but in 1831 Richard was living on his own farm at Wollombi. Wiseman’s account of his reason for being in the colony is interesting. It was:

occasioned by a difference of opinion with the Customs House officers of the Isle of Wight as to the mode of landing spirits and cigars – his opinion being favourable to night time, as best suited to the purpose.

Therry’s *Reminiscences* has been criticised for its inaccuracies, names and dates are awry and some sections are misleading.[20] The statement is worth comparing with Wiseman’s trial papers. There is no evidence of Wiseman being near the Isle of Wight while he was serving his apprenticeship in the River Thames. In the 1930s Florence (nee Loxton) Wiseman, widow of Denbow Wiseman told the following story.[21] So Therry’s story was believed in one branch of the family.

Our ancestor Solomon Wiseman, was a a ship’s captain. He smuggled French spies across to England and English spies to France. He came to Australia after a terrible argument with customs officials on the Isle of Wight.’[21]

The historian Charles Swancott had this to say on the matter;

Solomon Wiseman probably spread the story that he had been transported for smuggling. In the early days smuggling was not regarded by the settlers as a very serious crime – the Customs were fair game to be circumvented if at all possible. Smuggling, of course, was respectable compared with stealing.

Swancott was paraphrasing what James Jervis had said back in 1942. The above story can be traced back to Solomon himself. About 1834 he told Baron von Hugel that;

As a young man I was known as a bold seaman, and this earned me a commission from the British Government to land letters in France and I thought to make use of the opportunity to carry contraband. I certainly did wrong and was quite justly convicted.’[23]

PROMOTING THE PUB

By 1914 tales of a ghost at the pub had made it into print.

Strange tales are told by the descendants and contemporary settlers respecting Wiseman and his ways – strange and unnerving tales and more than one patron of late years swears that he has seen in the ghost’s room at the old hotel things which made his flesh creep and his hair stand on end like unto the quills of the porcupine.[24]

It was after the publication in the *Bulletin* magazine in 1924 of a poem relating to the haunted room at the Hawkesbury River Hotel, that the historian George Reeve wrote to fellow historian William Freame who gave the following reply;

I heard the most awful things about him [Wiseman]. At Wiseman’s Ferry Hotel I occupied The Haunted Room for three nights and although I do not believe in such things I must confess, like others, I could not sleep I felt a sinister presence.
[25]

THE HAUNTED ROOM

*What has been done in the olden time
In this chamber dim and low?
Was it a deed of guilt or crime,
A hid wrong or stealthy blow,
That it acted again at midnight’s chime
With clangour of wail and woe?*

*Ah! Who shall tell? Not the pallid walls,
Or the dusky lattice pane;
The bat that flits as the last stroke falls,
Or the panel’s crimson stain,
Where the tapestry waves in phantom palls
Alive with weird forms again.*

*But sure as ever the hour comes round
A heaviness chills the air,
The rustle of silk and a footstep’s sound
Are heard on the creaking stair;
While moving past, o’er the echoing ground,
A presence unseen is there.*

*Slowly it climbs, with a hollow pace,
You can count it’s progress sore,
Till it stops and lists on the landing-place,
Then it tries at the fastened door.
As within are shrieks and a struggle’s trace,
Dull thuds on the oaken floor!*

*‘Let me in!’ it always pleads and moans,
‘Let me in!’ the same cry goes;
But no answer comes, save the dying groans
Of a soul in mortal throes.
Then it sobs and glides away, while it tones*

Ring out on the dread repose.

*Sadly, wearily, downward it wends
To the spot from whence it came;
Thank heaven, with daylight the glamour ends
This horror without a name,
That all the warm life-blood quivering sends
Like ice through the thrilling frame.*

This poem was published in *The Bulletin* around 1924, and a copy was found filed with George Reeve’s papers.[26] The title of the poem has been trimmed off and Reeve has written *Wiseman’s Cobham Hall* in its place.

The publication of the fiction relating to Wiseman and the Ferry reached a peak in the *Windsor & Richmond Gazette* on 26th Dec 1924. This is about the time that Fred Campbell relinquished his job as editor in favour of his son Perce. Neither of these men had access to original documents and they probably published the articles in good faith, being given the impression it was common knowledge passed on by the old hands of the district. The 1920s were nearly 90 years after Wiseman’s death. Anyone who knew him, including his children, were dead. The stories that the old hands of the Hawkesbury passed on would at best be second-hand.

The author of the series of articles remains unknown at the moment. It certainly wasn’t William Freame of Parramatta and it wasn’t



Stone Walling Devines Hill ; Wisemans Ferry.

George Reeve, who kept all the copies of newspaper cuttings of his articles as published in the paper. There was no way in the 1920s for the average person to check the veracity of stories published in the paper. Interestingly, James Hennessey, the licensee of the hotel at the time, said he had never seen or heard a ghost in the hotel.

Then the ghost stories went national just prior to the outbreak of the Second World War. James Valentine

published, *Then and Now*, Historic Roads Round Sydney, in 1939. Valentine appears to be the first to state that the ghost was that of Solomon Wiseman's.

We crept up tortuous stairs and were shown the haunted room. Solomon might have been there, but at the moment he wasn't even opaque.[28]

Valentine also published the story about Solomon throwing his three wives over the balcony onto the circular steps below. Valentine states that the story is a legend, but then he goes on to report;

The story goes that Solomon flogged a convict who died as a result of it. "You will never rest!" he cried. Years later the vault in which Solomon and his wife were buried was broken open. His coffin was smashed and his bones were scattered. Larrikins kicked the King of the River's skull along in the dust. Later, what remained of his skeleton was buried in the churchyard. Thus his body did not rest. Nor could his spirit. A traveller from Germany visited the inn in the eighties. He was given the haunted bedroom. He woke up with the horrid feeling that someone was in the room. Someone was. Solomon Wiseman was standing by the window. The German could see through Solomon Wiseman. He pulled his mattress out on to the verandah.[29]

If we assume the haunted room was the one above the entrance hallway, any occupant would have to have pulled a single bed mattress out through the sash window which when open would have provided a space of about 90cms by 60 cms (2'6" by 2') to play round with. The landlord told Valentine other strange tales of that room. It was the same James Hennessey who had denied anything ghostly happening some 15 years before.

During this period Wiseman's Ferry became a popular place to visit by car. It was illegal to drink on a Sunday, but if you drove 25 miles away from home, you could drink in a country pub.[30] For a lot of Sydneysiders the hotel at Wiseman's Ferry was

ideally situated. My uncles who used to go shooting at Ten Mile Hollow both drank at the pub on Sundays, and both reported that there was definitely something strange in the building.

By 1984 the haunted room was apparently forgotten, as were some of the details published in the 1920s. A notice outside the hotel now proclaimed that among other things Wiseman had 300 convict servants!

The witching hour of midnight echoes the sounds of a woman's piteous screams and the clank of convict fetters. Blood could be seen on the steps on a moonlight night. The ghost of Wiseman's first wife Jane and a tall thin ghost boasting only a nightshirt adds to the mystery. But Jane Wiseman had died five years before the current building was built.

SO HOW DO WE ACCOUNT FOR THE GHOST?

It was not unusual for journalists to seek out ghost stories for publication, they made good reading. When discussing the appearance of the ghost stories in the press Liz suggested a possible senario based on an incident from her childhood when a older Cooyal born Wollar resident spoke of his grandparents and friends entertaining each other with ghost stories. With the local Windsor press of the 1880s-90s often reported people going to Mudgee for holidays, she suggested:

A journalist may have said to someone in the pub, when I was on holidays at I heard about this ghost — this is a pretty old building do you have any ghosts around here?[32]

At Wiseman's Ferry the ghost was a woman



Wisemans Ferry, junction of Hawkesbury & MacDonald Rivers
Illustrated Melbourne Post August 1867.

identified with Jane Wiseman. She was heard. The ghost was a man identified with Solomon. He was seen. Talk of ghosts made it into print some 90 years after Solomon's death and 104 years after Jane had died. Cobham Hall had been altered several times since the 1830s. Would a ghost survive the alterations, or would it appear as a result of building alterations? Who knows? The ghost is probably an explanation of an otherwise unexplainable phenomenon. It is a 19th century explanation. Today we might use some other word.

ASK THE GHOST

I am grateful to Rex Stubbs for republishing a lot of the interesting stories relating to Wiseman Ferry as published in the *Windsor and Richmond Gazette*. Here is the last ghost story.

It was the custom in Wiseman's day to give a ticket of leave to a seven year convict after the expiration of four years if his conduct had been good.

A young man had served four years with Wiseman, and was eager to get his Ticket of Leave to go to Sydney for a mother or sweetheart who had followed him out to the colony. But Wiseman, after some hot words, refused to report him for good conduct and he was put on the hardest roadwork, chained during the day to the gang. Goaded to desperation by one of his overseers, who put him to work on a great ant-bed, the boy with two companions, attempted to escape by swimming the Hawkesbury. But hampered by his leg-irons he was drowned. His mates were captured, and one of them, who was deeply attached to the youth, split open the skull of the overseer with a pick. For this he was made to walk the plank into eternity at Judgment Rock. Legend has it that the spirit of the young convict comes periodically to the house, and clanks up the stairs, always to beg over again from the 'Governor' the ticket of leave denied him.^[33]

This ghost is identifiable, he made the mistake of telling tales about himself later on, revealing information that only he and Wiseman could know. This ghost had a motive, and the opportunity and the means of passing on tales of the supernatural, implicating Wiseman. And there was revenge for a perceived wrong committed in June 1830. This ghost was the overseer of Iron Gang no. 9 – Henry Martineer who with a reason to dislike Wiseman in later life became a coach-driver on the Parramatta-Windsor run. (see earlier story)

As a coachman, Martineer had ample opportunity

to obtain and give out information to a wide variety of people. Ask any modern-day taxi driver. Martineer certainly told tales about his exploits as a coach driver on the Parramatta-Windsor run. They were still being still being told and published in Windsor as late as 1899.^[34] The passengers of the 1850s were certainly old hands by the 1920s, and they had their stories from a reliable source, someone who had almost been betrayed by the old Government Contractor at the Ferry.

1. JRAHS, Vol 3
2. They were: Anthony Trollope in 1873 Alexander Oliver, *Selections from a Freshwater Log*, Centennial Magazine, Aug 1889 William Walker, *Reminiscences*, 1890 J.C.L. Fitzpatrick, *The Good Old Days*, 1900 The Hawkesbury & Shoalhaven Calendar, 1905 Frank Walker, *The Great North Road*, in Journal Royal Australian Historical Society, 1910 James Steele, *Early Days of Windsor*, 1916 J.C.L. Fitzpatrick, *Those Were the Days – More Hawkesbury Stories*, 1923
3. Alexander Oliver, op.cit. p 30
4. Sydney Herald 13th June 1831
5. Captain McCumming to Baron von Hugel c. 1834
6. Therry, *Reminiscences of Thirty Years Residence in New South Wales and Victoria*, London 1863 pp 120 - 123
7. Rev Thomas Atkins, Chaplain of the Lower Hawkesbury, 1837
8. Obituary in *SMH* 30th Nov 1838
9. Wiseman to von Hugel, op.cit.
10. *Sydney Monitor*, 30th Nov 1838
11. reported in, *Shadow Over Tasmania*
12. J.C.L. Fitzpatrick, *The Good Old Days*, Windsor 1900 p 39
13. Ian Brand, *Penal Peninsular*, West Moonah, 1970
14. J.W. Beattie, foreword to *Port Arthur, Van Dieman's Land*, Hobart c 1900
15. Charles Swancott, *Wiseman's Ferry*, p 23
16. Obituary Frank Campbell W&RG 7th Nov 1930
17. Percy Gledhill, in *JRAHS*, n.d. CF Swancott, op.cit., p 27
18. NSW BDM, 1828 Census
19. Alison Wilson, pers.comm. June 2006
20. Roger Therry, op.cit., pp 120 - 123
21. C.H. Currey, Roger Therry, in *ADB* Vol 2 p 514
22. Wiseman file, SAG, 4/14709
23. J.F. Blaxland, Wiseman file, SAG PR 4/14709 p 16. Swancott is relying on James Jervis, Solomon Wiseman and His Ferry, in *JRAHS* Vol 27 p 351
24. Wiseman to von Hugel c1834. W&RG 19th June 1914
25. William Freame to George Reeve, 5th April 1924,
26. Wiseman file SAG Primary Records 7/617
27. Reeve Records, Society Australian Genealogists, Primary Records 7/617.
28. W & RG 26th Dec 1924
29. James Valentine, *Then and Now, Historic Roads Round Sydney*, Sydney 1939
30. Valentine, op.cit. p 37
31. Ross Wood, pers.comm. 9th June 2006
32. Transcription of Hotel sign, Hawkesbury Hotel, 1984, SAG Primary Records 4/8988
33. Liz Roberts, pers.comm. 22nd June 2006
34. W & RG 26th Dec 1924
35. Bunter, *Days of Yore*, Australian Windsor, 10th Feb 1899 p 3

Early Buildings of the Convict Trail: Mulla Villa

Barbara Appleton

About two kilometres south of Wollombi the road bends to the right at the foot of a bluff. The traveller is presented with a pleasant view of the upper Wollombi valley. To the left a paddock slopes gently to the Brook, but to the right the cleared land rises steeply and displays an attractive, solid building now functioning as a guest house.

This is Mulla Villa, built from 1840 to 1841 for David Dunlop, his wife Eliza and their family. Dunlop was the first magistrate appointed to the police district of Wollombi and the Macdonald River, a large but thinly-settled area which was bordered on the north by the police districts of Merton, Patrick's Plains and Maitland, on the south by the district of Windsor and by the Colo River, on the east by the district of Brisbane Water, and on the west by those of Bathurst and Mudgee.^[1] Material exists which shows that Dunlop corresponded with the magistrates in these neighbouring areas.^[2]

Dunlop was born in northern Ireland, his father being an army captain. It was Eliza's father who had a legal career, serving as a magistrate in India and Bengal. She saw that her children had a thorough education, and this was of great benefit as they came to adulthood and sought positions in the colony. Eliza's daughter from her previous marriage, Georgina Law (b.1816), was to live in Australia with the Dunlops. David and Eliza had five children, but the second (Jane) died in Ireland at the age of eight years.^[3]

The family arrived in Sydney aboard the *Superb* in February, 1838 to a colony where law and order had always been a major issue.^[4] They would make their home in Wollombi, but not before a difficult time in Penrith.

The system of policing we know today of a paid and uniformed force had been introduced in England comparatively recently, in the early 1830s, and was being followed in the colony. For several centuries prior to that, each small English community had expected all its fit males to take turns as watchmen, and be answerable to a knight commissioned by the King as a keeper of the peace.^[5]

And to whom would the new police answer? Or bring their law-breakers? England chose to appoint retired officers from the armed services as chief constables, but New South Wales had a variety of needs. In the larger towns, full-time magistrates could be appointed. Smaller centres were covered by a special Act in 1833, which allowed the appointment of "*two or more justices of the peace [unpaid laymen] to act as police magistrates and to appoint and control the police*".^[6] The system was called "the Commission of the Peace".^[7] Thus the practice grew of three local "magistrates" sitting together to deliberate in the local courts. These courts were known, among other titles, as police courts, courts of petty sessions or courts of request.^[8]

On arrival in Sydney in February, Dunlop "*presented his credentials*" to Governor Gipps. But Gipps, too, had only arrived in Sydney that month.^[9] By June he appointed Dunlop a "*Magistrate of the Territory*" and on June 18th made him the Police Magistrate at Penrith.^[10] Regardless of his character, which was yet unknown, Dunlop could not meet anything other than a hostile reception. The Penrith "*justices*" had been requesting the appointment of a paid magistrate, but they had named their own chairman as the ideal choice. This was Robert Copeland Lethbridge, after whom the suburb of Lethbridge Park is named.^[11] Lethbridge was a son-in-law of an earlier governor, Governor King, and his sister had married that other powerful local land-holder, the governor's son, Phillip Parker King.^[12]

In his attempt to blacken Dunlop's name, Lethbridge used rudeness, insults and acts of discourtesy.^[13] Most references call him Robert Lethbridge, but Governor Gipps refers to him as Copeland Lethbridge.^[14] Was it ironic that David Dunlop later owned a well-appointed house in Wollombi called "*Copelands*"?^[15]

Dunlop did not gain favour with the land-holders by stating that he intended "*to do equal justice to assigned servants and their masters*".^[16] Their hostility increased. Letters both of criticism and of support sped back and forth for more than a year, some to the Governor but most to the newspapers. Finally

Gipps was given a solution. Dunlop was appointed to Wollombi, and the Penrith unpaid magistrates again had to take responsibility for their district. Their rancour went on for more than another two years. They wrote to Lord Stanley in London as the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and in 1842 Governor Gipps was forced to explain the real situation. There was another body involved, which the Penrith landholders knew about but chose to ignore: it is not mentioned in Lord Stanley's query to Governor Gipps. Apart from Governor Gipps's own statement that to appoint an honorary magistrate as a paid one was against his principles and "*would not unjustly have given rise to a suspicion of abuse*", it was a committee of the Legislative Council, not the Governor, who had decided just which districts needed paid magistrates. Penrith, they reported in 1839, had "a sufficiency of unpaid magistrates" and the paid position was abolished.^[17] This, of course, in bringing about Dunlop's transfer, partly fulfilled the wishes of the Penrith "mushroom aristocracy", but the *Australian* newspaper of September 24, 1839, expressed a belief that "*the Governor has acted unwittingly in this unworthy proceeding*".^[18]

Wollombi, on the other hand, had a current need. The committee recommended that a paid magistrate be appointed to the area as there were no unpaid magistrates within thirty miles.^[19] So Dunlop took the Great North Road in early December, 1839, to inspect the Wollombi district. What state was the road in? After the journey he reported "*illness resulting from fatigue*", and in late January 1840 "the inhabitants" were complaining that he had not taken up the position.^[20] By April, however, they were praising his effectiveness, and his name headed a list of those who would donate money towards the repair of the road – described at that time as "almost impassable".^[21] This was the road he would live beside for another twenty-three years, until his death, and he was learning to recognise it as a major factor in the lives of the community. The distance to any major centre was an inconvenience, but a poorly-maintained road made the situation worse.

In May of that year he travelled the road again, and wrote to Eliza that "the jolting of the cart" would have broken their furniture to pieces, while a heavy fall of rain overnight "was



evident from the state of the roads".^[22] This time he was accompanied by some of his constables. All together, he brought to the area a staff of fourteen men, who would form a district police force and man both the court and the watch-house. The numbers were smaller than those at Penrith, but in each case the last but essential member of the team was that symbol of rough justice, the scourger.^[23]

At first Dunlop both lived and held court proceedings in a bark hut, and later the court moved to a slab timber building. But as a residence the hut presented a dramatic contrast to that occupied by the Dunlops near Penrith – the old Government House, a spacious two-storeyed sandstone home at Emu Plains (demolished in 1973).^[24] Dunlop wasted no time in purchasing two adjoining portions of land, of fifty acres each, and arranging to have a home built for himself and his "beloved Eliza" and their children. Georgina came to Wollombi later: for a time she was employed as a governess in the Hassall family. Her sketches of the Penrith district (including Old Government House) are in the Mitchell Library.^[25]

Both David Dunlop's portions of land are bordered on the east by Wollombi Brook. They include productive river flats which have supported dairying or the growing of fruit and vegetables since that time.^[26] The blocks cross the road and rise toward the sandstone ridge which separates Wollombi Brook from Yango Creek. By choosing a steeply sloping site halfway up the rise, the builders were able to position the house on bedrock, a very desirable base for a building in which the walls are two feet (60cm) thick, formed from stone quarried on the property.

Mulla Villa is an unusual house. Said to be Georgian, it is not typically so. It is square in shape and has a pyramidal roof and central

chimney. It consists of four main rooms, two on each side of a central passage which leads to the front door. The back is almost at ground level, the front elevated. An undated photograph including a horse-drawn vehicle, and taken before the verandahs were added, shows a covered porch near the front door, from which stairs led down.^[27] Inside the house all the door posts, architraves, and window supports are cut from the stone of the walls. A writer for the Maitland Mercury in 1949 commented on the efficiency of the chimney flue, and added “*there are ten tons of stone in the chimney itself, between the ceiling and the roof, immediately above the hall arch*”.^[28]

Beneath the two front rooms are the cellars which were used as convict cells. They are fitted with thick hardwood doors with heavy locks, and fixed to the walls are iron rings for the chaining of convicts. The only original source of light and air for each cell was an oval opening in the upper wall, perhaps 40cm across. Each of these was finished with a central vertical iron bar for extra security.

At the rear wall of the cells it can be seen that there is only about 90cm height of stone block foundations beneath the floor level of the house. The remaining depth of the cell walls, and the floor, were hewn out of the solid rock. The floors were “concreted over in 1924”.^[29] One of the current owners pointed out that the sloping site has needed the addition of extensive agricultural drains. To this day, after heavy rain there is some drainage into the cells at the level where water seeping through the soil meets the natural surface of the rock base.^[30]

An older wing at right angles to the back of the

main house contains the original kitchen and servants’ quarters. This was joined to the house when the verandahs were added in 1927.^[31] The upper part is now the lavishly-furbished guests’ dining room, while the lower (the old cellar) is now inaccessible. It was used to confine the convicts at night while the main house was being built.^[32]

Dunlop was aware that he had created a fine and lasting home, and that this relatively small parcel of very productive land should be nurtured. In his will, he left it to Eliza, and on her death his only son, David Henry, was to get half the estate. One proviso was that Eliza must not cut any timber, other than what was needed for firewood or to maintain the house and fences. It would probably have been unimaginable to him that David Henry would die six years before his mother, and that even David Henry’s son (Cornish Hamilton Dunlop), already established in work in another part of the colony, would forego his rights as one of Eliza’s executors in the disposal of the estate.^[33]

1. Margaret de Salis, *Two Early Colonials*, Cessnock, 1972, p.80.
2. SRNSW Call No. 4/5698 as per www.huntervalleygenealogy.com 21/4/2006
3. de Salis, op. cit.
4. *ibid.*, p.40.
5. *The Australian Encyclopaedia*, 6th edn., Sydney, 1996, p.2438.
6. *ibid.*, p.2442.
7. Lord Stanley to Governor Gipps, cited by de Salis, op. cit., p.59
8. *The Australian Encyclopaedia*, 6th edn., Sydney, 1996, p.1869.
9. Gipps to Lord Stanley, cited in de Salis, op. cit., p.60.
10. de Salis, op. cit., p.41.
11. *The Sydney Gazette*, June 30, 1838.
12. *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne, 1967.
13. *The Australian*, September 24, 1839.
14. de Salis, op. cit., p.59.
15. Dunlop’s will, SRNSW probate 1/5969.
16. de Salis, op. cit., p.48.
17. *ibid.*, p.60.
18. *The Australian*, September 3, 1839.
19. de Salis, op. cit., p.61.
20. de Salis, op. cit., p.58. *The Australian*, January 24, 1840.
21. *ibid.*, April 25, 1840.
22. de Salis, op. cit., p.81.
23. *ibid.*, p.61.
24. www.penrithcity.nsw.gov.au/index.asp?id=452 16/06/2006
25. *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne, 1967.
26. interview, Harold Sternbeck OAM, previous owner, June 9, 2006.
27. in *Wollombi Valley*, Wollombi Progress Association, 1979.
28. cited in de Salis, op. cit., p.100.
29. *Wollombi Valley*, Wollombi Progress Association, 1979.
30. interview, Caroline and Francesca Maul, owners, April 10, 2006.
31. www.mullavilla.com.au/hist.html 14/04/2006
32. *ibid.*
33. Dunlop’s will, SRNSW probate package 1/5969. www.bdm.nsw.gov.au/cgi-bin/IndexSearch?form=IndexingSearch&cgiurl=%2F 16/06/2006. Probate package Eliza Hamilton Dunlop SRNSW 3/5484

David Davis: On Both Sides of the Law

Ken Shilling

One early settler along the Great North Road was David Davis, who was born about 1798 in the parish of Abergwilly near Carmarthen in South Wales. His early years are a mystery, but he came into the records in 1818 when he stepped outside the law. About one o'clock in the night of 24 January, in the company of William Lewis, he "with force and arms the dwelling house of one John Davies... feloniously and burglariously did break and enter."^[1]

On 7 February David made his confession to the Constable of Abergwilly, Samuel Jenkins. In this he states that he entered the house of Mr John Davies on Saturday 24 January at Tycock, and "did feloniously... take away some bread and butter therefrom."^[2]

The indictment, however, listed the stolen property as One Coat the value of five pounds, One Great Coat of the value of five pounds, two loaves of the value of four Shillings, four pounds weight of bread of the value of four Shillings, two pounds weight of butter of the value of three Shillings, Thirty Keys of the value of fifty Shillings and Ten pounds weight of Sugar of the Value of fifteen Shillings. Obviously, David had a lapse of memory when he dictated his confession, and the jury rejected the pleas of himself and his partner of "not guilty", returning a death verdict on both. This sentence was later reduced for David to fourteen years transportation, while William Lewis was given seven years to serve. ^[3]

The trial took place on 30 March and both men were quickly transferred to the depot at Woolwich. From there they were taken aboard the transport Shipley which sailed 18 July, arriving in Sydney 18 November, a voyage of 123 days. The vessel made no landfall, and of the 150 convicts who began the trip, 146 were landed.^[4]

After the usual formalities and delays that awaited the arriving convicts in Sydney, David was disembarked on 24 November and forwarded to Windsor for distribution.^[5] In the 1822 Muster he is recorded as being a government servant in

the employ of J. Desmond at Windsor, while in 1825 he is in the lower Hawkesbury working for John Stoodley, who had arrived on the Guildford in 1812. Mr Stoodley was attesting to David's character in February of that year for the purpose of his obtaining a Ticket of Leave.^[6] The application was successful and ticket 25/367 was issued, in which David was described as five feet four and a half inches tall, of dark complexion, with black hair and dark eyes.^[7] In following musters he is shown as a labourer at Wilberforce.^[8] By the time of the 1828 Census he is listed as a twenty-nine-year-old labourer working for John Single at Luskintyre, and on 1 June 1832 he finally gained his Certificate of Freedom.^[9]

At this time David moved to Wollombi where he met John Wells, holder of Veteran Allotment 1. John had been a soldier in the 38th Regiment of Foot ^[10] and had married Catharine Wilson in Warwick, England, 22 August 1822. The death certificate of their first child, Philip, shows that he was "born at sea", which suggests that John and Catharine arrived in Australia with the regiment, in 1826. Their next child, Hannah, was born in the Colony 4 January 1827^[11], and Louisa was the second child christened in Wollombi 2 February 1831, a similar ceremony having first been performed on Matilda Budd.^[12]

There has not been found any reference to John Wells, however, in the pay books of the 38th Regiment. There are entries for a John Walls, and a John Wills, and as John Wells is also shown as Wills in some records, it may be assumed that, as was not unusual for the time, his name was not always recorded accurately. On Christmas Eve 1828, John Wills, a member by now of the New South Wales Veterans Corps, was shown in the pay book as receiving three month's pay as a soldier veteran in Captain Robinson's company.

By 1829 John Wells had been discharged from the Veterans Corps and was occupying a 100-acre grant slightly west of the large bridge over Wollombi Brook at Millfield. In 1830 it was reported that he was one of a number of soldier-settlers who had "Ten acres of Land cleared or under Cultivation".^[13]

The land unfortunately was poor, and in a letter sent early in 1831 to Major Mitchell, the Surveyor General, John complains that he had only “twelve acres of ground fit for cultivation a part of that during the last heavy rains has become a swamp”. As he had a wife and three children to support and because of ill health had to employ labourers to assist with the farm work “which takes the best part of my crops to pay them”, he was requesting an additional fifteen or twenty acres adjoining his grant on the west. Mitchell passed the letter on to the Colonial Secretary, agreeing that the land was poor and that vacant land was available. [14]

Perhaps David Davis was one of the labourers employed by John Wells, for when John died in 1832 David was to marry his widow (8 March 1834) at Maitland.[15] The land granted to John Wells, still consisting of only 100 acres, was transferred to David Davis as trustee for “Catherine Davis (formerly Catherine Wells) Hannah Wells, Phillip Wells and Louisa Wells and their heirs as Tenant in Common”. [16] On 27 March 1852, Philip bought the shares of his mother and sisters, paying his mother an annuity of more than £17, and his sisters £60 each. Philip eventually disposed of the property and moved with his family to farm in the Inverell District.

Meanwhile, the union between David Davis and Catherine proved fruitful, producing six children, adding to the three she brought from her first marriage. By the time of the 1841 census the family was living in a finished wooden house.

When John McDougall arranged a meeting of qualified electors at the Governor Gipps in Wollombi to secure the election of William Foster to the Legislative Council on 8 April 1843, one of those in attendance, listed as belonging to the “middle ranks”, was “David ap Davis”. [17] This is an indication that he had improved his station in life and also, probably had less than a perfect knowledge of his second language, English.

At some time the family moved to Yango (or Yengo) Creek, for in 1849 David Davis was advertising the services of the “well known Carriage Stallion Young Farmer” at his Green Hill Farm. [18]

David continued to improve his circumstances

when on 19 June 1850, he bought Portion 26 of 30 acres at £3/10/0 per acre at Yango Creek. [19] Over the following years he added a number of other blocks to his holdings, each in the vicinity of 30 acres.

As befitting an owner of property, David is known to have contributed generously when a worthy cause presented itself. He gave a subscription to the repair of roads and bridges in Wollombi [20] and in 1846 donated ten shillings to the Irish Relief Fund [21] following this up with a donation to the Patriotic Fund’s Crimean War appeal in 1855. [22] Among his farming activities, it is known that he kept pigs [23] and had an interest in horse breeding. [24]

He also shared the farmer’s lot by suffering from natural disasters, and a flood in 1857 caused him much damage. A report in the Maitland Mercury of 15 August 1857, told the story.

Great destruction occurred here by the flood to both grain and fencing. Edward Reardon lost a great deal of grain and land, taking it deeper than the plow had gone. D. Davis is a great loser of grain and fencing as is also A. Forbes. W. Keefe lost a good deal of wheat and fencing. It started John White’s hut, making three or four doors in it.

1849 had also been a bad year for David Davis. He was accused of having stolen a colt, the property of John McDougall, and was ordered to stand trial at the Maitland Quarter Sessions. He was given bail, but had to provide £100 himself, and two sureties for £50 each. [25]

Outbursts of temper also landed him in court in 1861 when he appeared at Wollombi Courthouse to answer a charge of having struck Mary Ann Castles, née Cunneen, when he found her crossing his fields. Although the charge was supported by Mary’s sister, Ellen Cunneen, this case was dismissed. On the same day another charge was brought against him by his own wife, Catherine, who claimed to be “in fear of her life from his violence”. This charge was proven. [26]

It was late in 1865 that David Davis found himself the victim of an attempted robbery. The half-caste bushranger William White, known as Yellow Billy, arrived at his property where he attempted to rob Mr David Davis’ house, of Yango Creek. Billy went there in December last, and no person being about the house at the time

except Mrs Davis, he called on her to bail up. At the same time presenting a double-barrelled gun at her, telling her he would shoot her, when she called for help (perhaps rather foolishly), but which brought the assistance of her husband and William McFarlane, who was there at the time reaping in the paddock convenient to the house.

Mr Davis managed to get into the back part of the house, when Billy made off, the former firing at him as he ran; but on account of the gun being loaded with small shot at the time it only wounded him slightly; but his hat falling off him when the shot was fired, he also dropped a small pistol, but still kept the gun in his possession.

There is one thing which might be said of Billy, that I think he would not have had the slightest intention of shooting Mrs Davis, but merely to frighten her to give up her money, from the fact of allowing her husband not only to approach his gun without his (Billy's) firing at him; nor did he attempt to fire at Mr McFarlane, who also went to her assistance; and besides, he has never fired at any person since he has been out, that I could hear of.^[27]

After having experienced life from "both sides of the law", it is hoped that David Davis went quietly about the rest of his term, continuing to farm his land at Yango Creek. He made a will in 1876 in which he left to his wife "all my landed property consisting of two hundred and thirty acres ... for her life and after her death to my son David Davis." A daughter, Catharine McKennon, was left the sum of £40. When the will was probated in 1917, after son David died, the value of the land and all the improvements upon it was given as £795, while his other assets brought this figure to £963.14.9. He had no debts. Significantly, he signed with his name on the will, whereas the confession he made in 1818 had been signed with a cross. He had certainly arrived at a comfortable existence since he arrived in the Colony a chained prisoner!

David died 20 October 1877 from a cancer of the lip, a problem which had been a concern for the previous two years. He was buried in Wollombi Cemetery on the 23rd. Catharine joined him when she passed away 29 May 1879.

Ken Shilling is great-great-great grandson of David Davis. This story was compiled from original research and additional information that has been generously supplied by members of the extended Davis and Wells families. Special

thanks are due to Jenni Davis of Sydney and Anne-Marie Mobbs of Dural.



David & Catherine Davis grave Wollombi Cemetery photo
Anne Mobbs

- [1] Parchment indictment, Carmarthen Great Sessions.
- [2] Voluntary Examination and Confession of David Davis – County of Carmarthen Records.
- [3] Great Sessions Carmarthen, file number 4/761/3
- [4] Bateson, Charles. *The Convict Ships* 1787-1868.
- [5] Colonial Secretary's Papers. Reel 6006; 4/3499 p.168.
- [6] Colonial Secretary's Papers. Reel 6027; 4/1717.1 p.58.
- [7] AONSW, shelf ref: 4/4060.
- [8] Baxter, Carol J. ed., *General Muster List of New South Wales 1823, 1824, 1825* ABGR, 1999.
- [9] Certificate no. 32/0528. State Records shelf ref: 4/43 11.
- [10] These words appear on the headstone of Philip Wells in Warialda cemetery: 'Philip Wells, son of John Wells, 38th Regiment of Foot, died 21 October, 1900, age 73.'
- [11] NSW birth certificate V1827100 11.
- [12] Parkes W.S., Comerford Jim and Lake Dr Max, *Mines Wines and People*.
- [13] Colonial Secretary's Papers. NSW State Records 6/1039.
- [14] Colonial Secretary's Papers. NSW S.R. Reel 1196
- [15] New South Wales marriage record no. 1411 Vol: 18.
- [16] Grant of Land. NSW State Records Reel 2710 7/529.
- [17] *Maitland Mercury*, 22 April 1843.
- [18] *Maitland Mercury*, 29 August 1849.
- [19] Report to the Colonial Secretary. NSW S.R. Reel 1118, 2/7839.
- [20] *Maitland Mercury* 6 July 1841.
- [21] Gibbs, Monica. *The Irish Relief Fund - list of Subscribers* published in *The Maitland Mercury* in 1846, NFHS Inc., 2002.
- [22] *Sydney Morning Herald* 7 June 1855.
- [23] *Government Gazette* 11 August 1843. "Eight small sow pigs, the property of Mr Davis of Wollombi, were impounded at West Maitland."
- [24] *Maitland Mercury*, 15 September 1847 and 19 August 1848. The horse Young Farmer was "a bright dappled bay ... 17 hands high" and was "a well known foal getter."
- [25] *Maitland Mercury*, 20 October 1849
- [26] Hoipo Carl, transcriber, Wollombi Court Records July December 1861. 2001.
- [27] *Maitland Mercury*, 13 November, 1866. The attempted robbery is also reported in the *Armidale Express* 10 November 1866.

William Bowen, The Pioneer of Black Creek and Landowner at Yango Creek

Anne Mobbs

There have been many a tale told of the luck or frustrations brought to the new settlers from the building of the Great North Road, commencing at Dural and travelling through Wisemans Ferry, Bucketty, Wollombi and up to Cessnock and Singleton. One such tale has not been fully told, and that is the story of the pioneer and entrepreneur of Black Creek - William Bowen, who arrived in the Colony just after the commencement of building The Great North Road and settled initially on a three hundred and twenty land grant at Black Creek. He became an innkeeper, pound keeper, mail distributor, fly coach operator, horse breeder and developed his holdings into a considerable port folio. William arrived as a settler when the colony was expanding and the bush was being settled. The Great North Road was both a boon and a frustration to this energetic man.

William Bowen was born at Seven Oaks in Kent England^[1] and was christened on 24th April 1801 at St. Alphege Greenwich, Kent to parents Morgan and Elizabeth Bowen. William Bown (sic) married Elizabeth Millner on 22nd March 1818 at Mancetter, Warwick.^[2] Elizabeth was the daughter of Thomas and Martha Millner and was baptised at Allesley, Warwick on 25th may, 1800. William and Elizabeth departed London on 21st August 1826 and arrived in Sydney on 11th January 1827 on board the brig 'Magnet' with fellow passengers Mr. Browne, Mr. Adairs and Mr. Ovington.^[3] On arrival William immediately presented his papers to the Colonial Secretary, and requested permission to receive a grant of land. He stated that it was 'his intention of becoming a settler, having been bred to farming from my youth. I am the son of a farmer...and my wife...is also a farmers daughter' (from Warwickshire)^[3]. William and Elizabeth had no acquaintances in the colony and had obtained character references from fellow ship's passengers, Messrs Brown and Adair. William advised that he had brought out with him, seven hundred pounds of household furniture which was 'not admissible in a schedule of capital available to agricultural purposes.' The Colonial administration duly noted that William had also supplied the following:^[4]

2 silver watches at seven pounds each	14.0.0
2 fowling pieces at eight pounds each	16.0.0
1 ½ cwt: of best assorted shor at 8d p lb	5.11.6
28 lbs bottle power at 3/- per lb	4.04.4
6 saws and 6 axes including a hand saw, and pit and cross cut saws	11.10.0
5 doz of steel files for general purposes	3.12.0
hammers, gimlets and nails etc	3.03.0
1 doz of milk strainers at 2/- each	1.04.0
6 suits of men's wearing apparel including hats, boots etc at £10 each suit	60.00.0
8 suits of women's apparel complete at £6 each	48.00.0
an assortment of household earthen wear for a diary	
	10.00.0
4 iron boilers at 15/- each	3.00.0
3 tin dos [ditto?] at 13/4 each	2.00.0
Tubs and milk pails for dairy	3.00.0
Packing cases, hampers etc for the goods as Specified	
Ready cash deposited in the Australian Bank	100.00.0
TOTAL	£288.26.0

Further correspondence noted increased capital offered towards the potential grant.^[5]

Cash on hand	£100.00.00
Goods for trade	127.00.00
Agricultural Implements	40.00.00
Furniture	72.00.00
TOTAL	£339.00.0

William was granted immediate possession of three hundred and twenty acres at Black Creek Luskentyre. He named the property 'Farmborough'.^[6] His arrival at Black Creek would have either been made via travelling through the Hawkesbury and up over the escarpment or by ship to Newcastle and then by foot as the Great North road was only partly surveyed and work recently commenced. Either route would have been a difficult journey for William and Elizabeth, unused to the Australian terrain and climate.

The 1828 census noted that both William and his wife Elizabeth were thirty seven years old and settlers at Black Creek Luskentyre, arriving free. A young daughter, Elizabeth jun. aged nine months was identified as born in the colony. William's household had grown to include Ann Douglass aged nineteen years, born in the colony and her son James aged one year nine months and Henry Ham, born in the colony aged twenty one years; The assigned convicts included



Typical Black Creek slab hut with stinging bark roof replaced with corrugated iron

William McCoy, Ticket of Leave, arrived per 'Shipley' aged thirty years, Charles Riley arrived per 'John' aged 18 years; William Wagstaff arrived per 'John' aged twenty one years and Richard Ward arrived per 'Morley' aged twenty eight years. William and Elizabeth had two children. Elizabeth junior was born on 20th January 1828 and baptised on 30th June 1832, her father is noted as a settler at Maitland. Thomas was born on 1st January 1832 and baptised on 13th February 1832 his father is noted as a Farmer at Maitland.^[7]

Two years passed, and William worked tirelessly to improve his property, he also became very uneasy. On the 10th May 1830 he wrote to Alexander McLeay with his concerns:

I beg to inform you that I arrived in this colony in 1827, a free settler and his Excellency the Governor granted one half a section of land which I selected behind that of Mr. A.B. Sparkes situated at the above place. I wrote to the Secretary's Office stating where I have selected my grant of land in reply to which I was directed to inform Mr. Finch of the same which I accordingly did. Mr. Finch not having the chart of the Hunters River told me he believed it to be unsolicited where I had made my selection, and told me to take possession. I saw Mr. Finch again at Maitland a short time afterwards and requested my grant measured, he replied he had not been in Sydney, but should very shortly when he would receive the order and comply with my request. This was in May 1827. Since then to the present time I have not heard from him although I have frequently written on the subject.^[8]

William advised that he contacted the surveyor Mr. White and conveyed his instructions of writing to the Land Board Office to advise that apparently his selection had not been laid down on the chart and therefore he was unprotected against the selection being duplicated by others. He also advised of the tardiness of Mr. Finch who had prevented William 'from enclosing in my cultivated land using other ways than a temporary fence. I have about 74 acres cleared of which 65 acres is tillage'.^[9]

Heneage Finch was the surveyor of the Great North Road. Its construction began in 1829 and was still not completed. It is thought William felt that Heneage Finch, considered the new settlers a nuisance, hence he kept them dangling, ignoring their pleas to complete their conveyancing.

William's letter remained unanswered, so on 19th June 1830 he again wrote.

I beg leave to state that I forwarded a letter to the Colonial Secretary's office dated on or about 9th May last, requesting my selection of land at the back of Mr. A.B. Sparkes grant, Hunters river might be measured as I have been repeatedly disappointed in that respect by Mr. Finch, who had frequently promised me it should be measured. Through so many delays I have been much perplexed, as I have made much improvement thereon.^[10]

His frustration at boiling point, William Bowen formally made a claim for his possession to be finalised dated 8th December 1837 as he still had been unable to obtain confirmation of his selection.^[11] William advised in his covering letter that he had arrived in the colony 'on the faith of the printed regulations from Downing Street under Sale April 1826. That I received an authority to select 320 acres of land under date 18th February 1827 and selected the same and took possession of it from Mr. Assistant Surveyor Finch in the month of March following'.^[12] William detailed seven letters of written correspondence and advised that 'he was still in possession of the land and have expended financially one thousand dollars upon it. That he was not indebted to any thing in way of quit rent to. H.M. Government and that I have now on hand applicable to the improvement of a further grant, stock to the value of £1,000 and rents of £276 per annum with the produce of 40 acres under cultivation. An accompanying schedules with the claim stated Bowen's available capital

as:

200 head of cattle at £5 each	£1,000
9 horses at £30 each	£ 270
Implements of husbandry	£ 100
200 acres of land at £1 per acre	£ 200
Cash	£ 300
TOTAL	£1,870

A schedule of improvements was also included:

House and stables, known as the Bush Inn	£400
Farm House, barns etc.	£300
	£700
Fencing – 1180 Rods fencing @ 3/6 p/rod	£224
	£224
Clearing etc –	
clearing 175 acres @ 25/- per acre	£218.15
Stumping 70 acres @ 25/- per acre	£52.10
	£271.5.0
TOTAL	£1195.5.0

Official notification from the secretary’s office confirmed William Bowen’s assets as £2,515.5.0.^[13] William Bowen again requested for the opportunity to substantiate his claim in a letter dated 19th August, 1838. The Report of the Commissioners appointed under the act to review the claim advised on 21st September 1838:

It appears, that the applicant immigrated to this colony on the faith of the Government Regulations of April 1826, arrived in the year 1827 and received authority to select 320 acres of land, which he accordingly did at Anvil Creek, and was authorised to take possession thereof on the 18th September 1830. It clearly appears that the permanent improvements effected by the claimant on his primary grant far exceed five times the amount of its estimated value, which is £266-13-14. The improvements, made within 7 years from his first possession amount to £1,000.^[21]

It is thought that Governor Gipps was frustrated and embarrassed as to how this situation had got out of hand, and accordingly he authorised that the papers be drawn up to confirm the selection from a promise given on 16th February 1827, three hundred and eighteen acres was confirmed and the document signed on 19th August 1839.^[22]

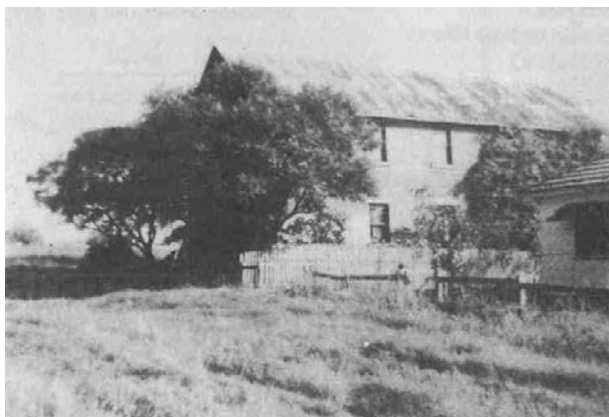
Although frustrated with the lack of response in finalising his grant, William Bowen applied his energies to other activities. On 28th May the Government Gazette advertised that William Bowen was permitted to depasture livestock on 1,000 acres bounded by northeast on his own

grant, west by Thorps grant and the south partly on Jones’ Grant for the rent of two shillings and six pence sterling. On the 13th July, 1831 The Internal Revenue Office approved a license to retail wines and malt and spirituous liquors for the house known by the sign of ‘The Angel Inn’ at Maitland, for the sum of twenty five pounds William had taken up the license from the infamous Molly Morgan.^[16] Correspondence dated 4th January 1832 was received from William Bowen of the Angel Inn, Maitland, applying for the contract of conveyance of the mail from Maitland to Allcorn’s Inn, Falbrook weekly for fifty two pounds.^[17] The contract was confirmed on 18th January 1832 and William was informed on 19th January 1832.^[18] The mail contract would have evolved from the completion of the Great North Road in 1831 and would provide William not only with an added income, but also with great networking possibilities amongst the growing community.

The Sydney Gazette published on 6th March 1833 that William Bowen applied to lease eight hundred and thirty dollars bounded by the grants of Thorp, Dunn, Marshall, a church grant, and Bowen. William re-leased this acreage and accordingly advertised such in the Government Gazette on 14th May 1834. The Government Gazette dated 28th January 1835 advertised that William Bowen was the lessee of six hundred and forty acres commencing 1st April 1835. William Bowen purchased (lot 4) one hundred acres, situated at Anvil Creek north of John Dunn’s Grants. This was accordingly advertised in the Government Gazette dated 28th January 1835 and confirmed on 8th May 1835 for the purchase price of twenty five pounds. Still restless William applied for a further one hundred acres (lot 8), east of Dunn’s grant, north of Bowen’s and West of Thorps on 27th May 1835.^[19] William’s application was confirmed in the Government Gazette dated 1st July 1835 for the price twenty five pounds. On the 20th January 1836 the sale was confirmed in the Government Gazette as town allotments. Time stood still again for William, as the sale of the first allotments for the township of Black Creek was not advertised by the Maitland Mercury until 12th August 1843.^[20]

William must have been very successful with the license at ‘The Angel Inn’ at Maitland for he had now constructed a house and stables on his land

at Black Creek and applied for a further license, stating that the public house would be known as 'The Bush Tavern' at Anvil Creek. The deed of license dated 11th July 1836 is interesting in the fact that one of the Justice of the Peace signing on William's behalf was George Wyndham.^[21] William retained the license for only one year, and continued to lease the business out, the name changing alternatively between *The Bush Inn* and *The Bush Tavern* ^[21]



Thought to be the Bush Inn later Bercinci's Produce Store

William applied on the 20th February 1837 for the 100 acre town allotments to be put up for sale, and on 21st March 1837 he applied to purchase the remainder of sections 5-3, and 5-4 in the Parish of Branxton.^[22] Although William may have had a large employment force working for him, the 1837 census records only one convict being assigned to him, he was Peter Barr aged twenty three, who arrived per 'Lloyds' from Inverary, Scotland. The Government Gazette dated 7th March 1838 advertised that one convict labourer was employed by him.

William Bowen continued to expand his holdings when making application on 29th August 1837 for a further twenty acres of land at Branxton on Anvil Creek (Black Creek's name had been officially changed to Branxton) and on 30th June 1838 the Government Gazette advertised William applying for a depasturing license for stock in the Liverpool Plains district, the license period applied for - six months at five pounds sterling. ^[23]

William Bowen was still having trouble in obtaining a deed for his original three hundred and twenty acres at Branxton, it still not having arrived on 13th May 1839.^[24] That same day

William applied for three hundred and twenty acres (lot 43) at Yango Creek, Wollombi, bounded on the east by Yango Creek and on the north by Porters Land, this was confirmed and published in the Government Gazette on 4th May 1841. A further two hundred acres (Lot 22) at Yango Creek, Wollombi Brook was advertised in William Bowen's name in the Government Gazette dated 16th April 1841.^[25] This land joined Williams three hundred and twenty acre property purchased of 1839. William Bowen raised a Memorial in the Supreme Court on 28th November 1840 for the conveyance of land from James and Kezia Ferguson to himself for lot 95 for two hundred and seventy acres.^[26] The Government Gazette advertised on the 6th May 1844 that William Bowen had purchased Lot 19, being 2128 acres in the County of Northumberland, Parish of Branxton for twenty pounds. The notice was signed by W.H Christie, Agent of Church and School Lands. A question arises here, as to whether William was buying the land for a school and transferring it to the Church or whether the property was being sold by the Church concerned. On 13th February 1845, William finalised a conveyance to purchase land from the Deceased Robert Scott, of lot 125 at Branxton on the Singleton to Maitland Road, for ten ponds sterling to Robert Scott's executor and brother, Helenus Scott. Thomas Raisbeck was a witness to the deed.^[27]

William Bowen sponsored immigration and settlement in the district. The Hunter River Gazette placed a notice in its broadsheet of the subscriptions paid to the Home for Immigrants and William Bowen was recognised for contributing five shillings. The Maitland Mercury dated 14th January 1843 placed an advertisement of:

A superior travelling by the fly by the partners Messrs Reeves and Bowen, from Maitland to Patricks Plains...Messrs R and B. have secured good cattle and competent drivers, and from their own punctuality in coaching, trust to merit a share of the public patronage. Passengers and parcels can be booked at the Rose and Albion Inn, West Maitland and Mr. T.L. Mitchell's Inn, Patricks Plains'.

William participated in the local politics, the Maitland Mercury advised of his patronage to Mr. Foster.^[28] The day his town allotments were placed for sale, William Bowen notified under

his obligations of district pound keeper, the descriptions of marauding cattle.^[29] William Bowen was involved in horse breeding and accordingly advised:

To stand this season at Mr. Bowen's Black Creek, and to travel to Wollombi and Patrick's Plains, the Draught Stallion 'YOUNG GALLOWAY LAD'. Young Galloway Lad is by 'Galloway Lad' imported by H. Pringle, Esq., and is a dark bay, with black points, 3 years old, stands 15 hands high, great bone and muscle. Terms: for a single mare 15s, for twin mares 25s, and for any number beyond two 10s each.^[30]

On 4th October, 1845 The Maitland Mercury described the inaugural meeting of the Anvil Creek Management committee, in which William Bowen was elected onto the Committee.

William Bowen was actively involved in the Church life of Branxton, and provided lots for both the Anglican and Catholic Churches. The 1841 Directory, in the West Maitland Catholic Parish advised that 'at Black Creek, there is a wooden chapel, roofed and will be soon completed; to cost about One hundred and twenty pounds 120.0.0. Site given by Mr. Bowen, a Protestant, will contain more than 200 persons'. William lobbied the Colonial Secretary for permission to use the abandoned quarried stone (unused for seven years) on his property at Anvil Creek for building the foundations for an 'Episcopalian Church as we are short of funds and wish to erect it at as little cost as possible. His Lordship the Bishop of Australia wished me to write to the Government for the stone'.^[31]

On 1st January 1847 William remortgaged the balance of his 318 acres property to be realised in 1852.^[32] Elizabeth Bowen, the daughter of William and Elizabeth Bowen of Black Creek married Thomas Raisbeck (an immigrant from Westmoreland, U.K who arrived on the 'Braken Moore' in 1840, arriving in Port Adelaide) at the Anglican Church at Singleton on 12th January 1847.^[33] On the 8th January, 1848 the Maitland Mercury advised the death of Elizabeth Bowen, William's wife. 'Deaths...At Black Creek, on 31st December, after a short and painful illness, Elizabeth, wife of Mr. Wm Bowen, of that place, aged 54 years'.^[34]

The Maitland Mercury notified on 2nd February 1850 the town allotments no 15 – 17, 1, 11 for sale. The years 1850-51 were sad ones for the family.

William Bowen died intestate on 11th day of April 1850.^[35] William's land deals were in a tangle, his daughter and son in law Elizabeth and Thomas Raisbeck, concentrated in salvaging the estate. It is thought that William Bowen may have died of T.B. His death was not registered; correspondence uncovered describes how his son Thomas fell ill, and application was made to the Sydney Infirmary for his admission.^[36] Unfortunately it was refused 'Thomas Bowen, he not being considered a fit object for medical treatment in this institution'. Thomas Bowen died under the age of twenty one years on the 7th January 1851.^[37] The Raisbeck family continued as administrators of the Bowen Estate, and their sons William and Henry and their families continued as landholders of portions of the Bowen estate at Branxton and the Yango Creek Properties until well after the Second World War.

William Bowen from Kent contained his land holdings to Yango Creek and Branxton, further land holdings belonging to the name of Bowen, relate to an unrelated William Bowen and William Lewis Bowent, details are as follows:

William Bowen, a saddler from Pembrokehire was tried in London on 22nd November 1824 and sentenced to fourteen years transportation. He arrived in Port Jackson on 4th May 1825 on board the 'Royal Charlotte'.^[38] William's wife Elizabeth gained permission to travel on the 'Andromeda' with her five children also arriving at Port Jackson in 1825.^[39] Elizabeth applied to the Colonial Secretary for permission for her husband William to be signed to her, without the necessity of paying a fee of 3.6. That on his arrival William was assigned to Mr. Hudson.^[40] The 1828 census confirmed William Bowen, aged forty four years, a sadler (sic) and convict arriving per 'Princess Charlotte' living at 18 Market Street, Sydney, together with his wife Elizabeth aged forty four and children who had arrived on the Andromeda. Four children were living with their parents, the were Ann aged thirteen years, Isabella aged eleven years, Sarah aged nine years, William jnr aged sixteen years.. Two servants were assigned to William Bowen Sadler, they were Ann Parks, born in the colony and apprentice, John Williams aged fifteen years, born in the colony. The 1837 census advised that a Edwin Coulter aged eighteen years, arrived per 'Bengal Merchant' in 1836 and was assigned to W.L. Bowen of Maitland. The Government Gazette published on the 22nd February 1837 that William Lewis Bowen was

assigned two farm servants – 1 labourer and 1 farm boy.

The family's grants were sighted as being sixty acres near Ellalong.^[41] The details being: 'William Bowen of Market Street, Sydney, 60 acres more or less, Grant of land "B" near Allelong, by token granted – Sir George Gipps, 21st March 1839, £10.00'. The land known as lot 25 had originally been granted to Thomas Pendergast in 1825 by Governor Brisbane, but was not taken up.^[42] The Government Gazette advertised this sale by confirming Deed No 14, Case No 314, approving William Bowen being given 60 acres, the original donee being Thomas Pendergrass or Pendergast near Aellalong for the annual quit rent of ten shillings - the commencement of quit rent as at 1st January 1838, the date of deed was signed on 21st March 1839.

The Government Gazette further advertised on 14th March 1839

William Bowen and William Lewis Bowen, 100 one hundred acres, parish unnamed at Aellalong bounded on the north by a line east 63 chains, at the SE corner of William Smith's 640 acres; on the east oby a line south 20 chains to the northern boundary to William Smith Senior, 320 acres primary grant, on the south by part of that boundary being a line west 36 chains to the Aellalong or Wollombi Brook to the south west corner of William Smith's 640 acres.

Promised by Sir Ralph Darling on 20th December 1830 and possession authorised on 12th January 1831 as a small grant to William Smith jnr and the deeds advertised in his name on 25th May 1839, but now at his request re advertised for Messrs Bowen.

This land was known as lot No 114.^[4] The description of purchasers were confirmed as William Bowen and William Lewis Bowen, both of Sydney.^[44]

William Lewis Bowen, bachelor, a member of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, married Harriet Thomas, Spinster, at the Scots Church, Pitt Street, Sydney on 3rd Day of February 1854. William Lewis Bowen, aged sixty, died on 16th April 1873 at 326 Elizabeth Street, Sydney, his profession given as bookkeeper. His parents were advised as William Bowen, Saddler and Elizabeth Waters. William was buried on 18th April 1873 at the Camperdown Cemetery. The certificate

confirmed that William was born in London and had been in New South Wales approximately forty five years. The informant was his sister Mary Par..? of St. Leonards, North Sydney who advised his wife as ? Thomas.^[45]

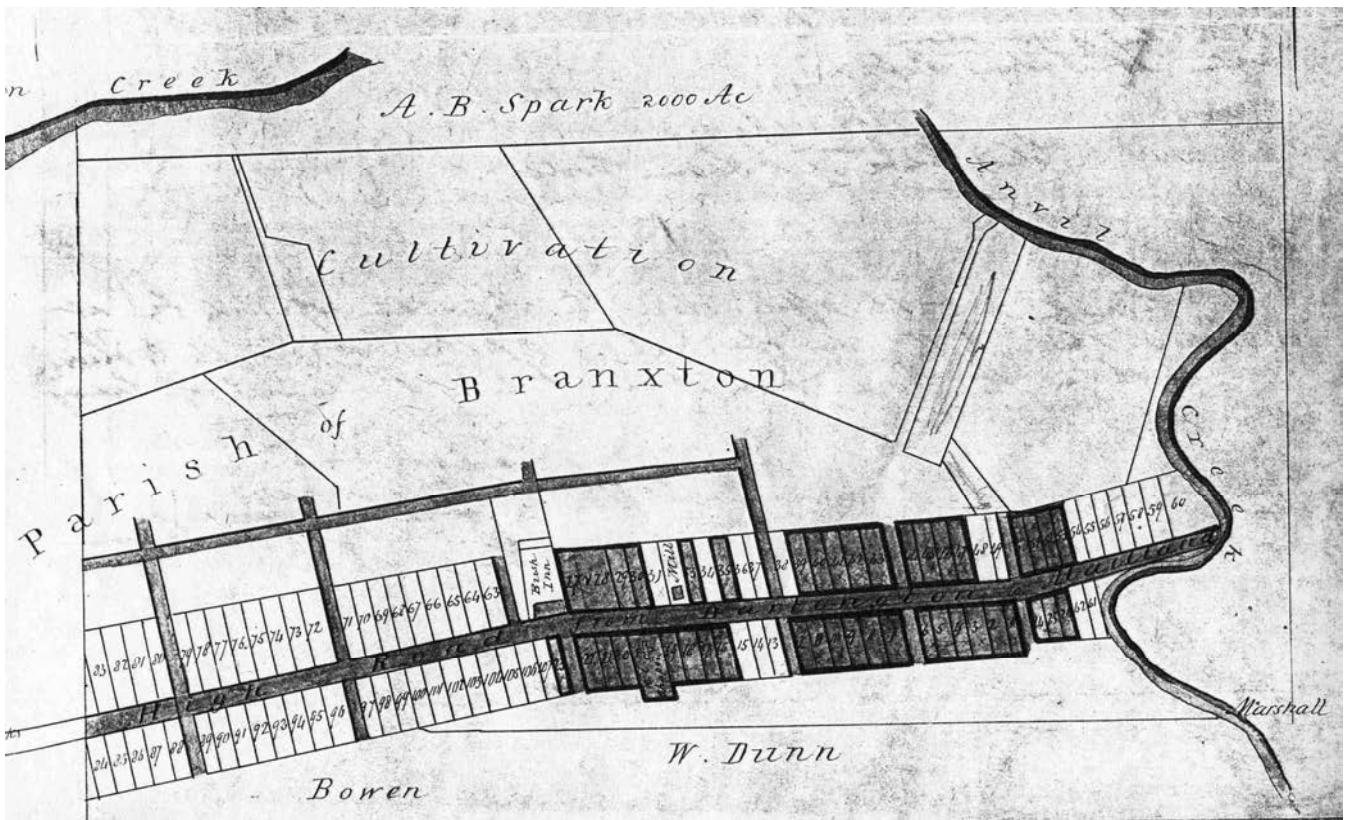
When the Great North Road opened for travellers to the Hunter Valley, the land opened up to great settlement expansion, and confusion occurred with the selection of properties, of bushranging with the 'Jew Boys Gang,' cattle rustling and petty disputes amongst neighbours, and family stories claimed the saying 'to go for Broke' related to this area.. These are tales for another time.

©Anne Mobbs. Taken from essays to be published in 'The Black Creek Chronicles'.

- 1.SRNSW Colonial Secretary's Correspondence re land letter no unknown ,item 2/7807 reel 1099
- 2.www.familysearch.org/Eng/Search batch no C006321, Film No 6906349; batch no C0039661. Film No 6906349.
- 3 .SRNSW Colonial Secretary's Correspondence, Report of Vessels Arrived 1826 – 1831 Reel No 1263, shelf 5198.
4. SRNSW Colonial Secretary's Correspondence re land. Letter no unknown, item 2/7807 reel 1099. letter 27/828 item 2/7807 reel 1099. letter no unknown item 2/7807 reel 1099
- 5.SRNSW. Colonial Secretary's Correspondence re land. Letter No 27/828, item no 2/7807, reel 1099.
- 6.Department of Lands, Grants Book B2 no 245.
- 7.Registrar Births Deaths and Marriages Ref. V1832 707 16. ref V1832 702 16
8. SRNSW. Colonial Secretary's Correspondence re land, Letter No 30/3944, item 2/7807, reel 1099.
9. Ibid.
- 10..Ibid letter No 30/5263, item 2/7807, reel 1099.
11. SRNSW. Colonial Secretary's Correspondence re land. Claim no 19, item 2/7807 reel 1099.
- 12..SRNSW. Colonial Secretary's Correspondence re land. Letter No 8489, item 2/7807 reel 1099
- 13.SRNSW Colonial Secretary's Correspondence re land Letter No 8839, item no 2/7807 reel 1099.
14. Colonial Secretary's Correspondence re land. Report 38/3898, Item no 2/7807 reel 1099.
- 15 Department of Lands, Primary Application No 31054, R.P. Vol 4518, Fol 108.
16. SRNSW. Reel 5049 license no 1831/233. Colonial Secretary's Correspondence letter No 31/233
- 17 SRNSW Colonial Secretary's Correspondence, Letter No 32/124; 32/375;32/123/
- 18.Ibid letter No 35/4424
- 19.Appendix of allotment sale from an idea by Jack Delaney, expanded from original deeds
- 20.SRNSW Colonial Secretary's Correspondence letter No 36/308 and Reel 5055 license no 308/1836.
21. Fogo The Hunter Valley Is P.18.
22. Ibid letter No 37/114 Letter No 37/35.
- 23 Ibid Letter No 38/6070
- 24 AO NSW Colonial Secretary's Correspondence re Land. Item no 2/7807, reel 1099, Letter No 38/5040; 39/1212; 16.5.1839.
25. Ibid.Letter no 39/10.
- 26.Department of Lands, Memorial, Folio 96 book U.
- 27.Department of Lands Folio 398, Book 8.
- 28.Maitland Mercury 28th January 1843; 4th February 1843; 20th May 1843
- 29.bid 12th August, 1843.
- 30.bid 14th September 1844; 25th October 1845;
- 31.SRNSW Colonial Secretary's Correspondence. Letter no 45/8483;45/8804;45/8876;46/518;46/680
32. Department of Lands Book 4, No 974.
- 33.Department of Births, Deaths and Marriages Ref No. V184737442C
34. Society of Australian Genealogists. Primary Records No 4/8397; E.A.D. Opie *South Australian Records prior to 1841*, Adelaide, 1917.and *Manifests of Vessels arriving from Oversease 1838 – 1842*, S.A Archives, GEG 41/8.
- 35.Probate 1/3014 granted 21st May 1850.
- 36 SRNSW Colonial Secretary's Correspondence Letter No 50/4562.
- 37.Department of Lands. Release Folio 53 of Book 22.
- 38.SRNSW Shipping Ident. Fiche 655, Page 173.
- 39.Log of Logs p.25
- 40.SRNSW. Colonial Secretary's Correspondence Letter No 74.
- 41.SRNSW Reel 2561, shelf 7/497 No 46, page 205
- 42.First Land title Holders of Cumberland and Northumberland.
- 43.Ibid.

44. Ibid Reel 2561 index to land grants No 59 page 291
 45. Register of Births, Deaths and Marriages Ref No 1873/000562.

FOOTNOTE: Elizabeth Raisbeck nee Bowen died 24.5.1855 & Thomas Raisbeck died 11.10.1871 as per Vol 280 Folio 548 Deposit Deeds packet 21153



Map of Bowen subdivision

Description of Parramatta Road

At about the time the Great North Road was being built James Hassell as a very young child traveled from Parramatta to Sydney passing, where in 1828??, the new line of the Great North Road was surveyed to connect with Paramatta Road saving a long loop round via Parramatta. As an elderly man the Rev. James Hassall, (1823- 1904) the son and grandson of three Anglican ministers wrote *In Old Australia* published 1902.

He recalled:

One of my first recollections is driving from Parramatta to Sydney with my father, over 70 years ago, and I retain a clear remembrance of the latter town as it was at that time. We travelled the road from Parramatta without seeing a house, except the half-way inn at Homebush, and, nearer Sydney, the residences of Mr Underwood of Ashfield, Dr. Ramsay of Dobroyd, Mr Robert Johnson of Annandale, and a few slab huts on the roadside.

The 1828 Census supports James Hassell's childhood recollections as twenty nine people gave their address as Parramatta Road with most stating Parramatta Road Petersham as their place of residence. There were four publicans, three nailors, five servants and two laborers and two landholders. It appears there were eight groups. The largest group, ten people in total including an assistant publican, were associated with Mrs Underwood, a publican, of Petersham. Mr Underwood of Ashfield in the recollections. The rest including the three nailors and two publicans with no servants or family, appear to have lived in the few slab huts along the roadside.

BRANXTON – LAND GRANT HISTORY WILLIAM BOWN'S 1839 SUBDIVISION OF FARMBOROUGH ALLOTMENTS ON
CESSNOCK SIDE OF MAIN STREET COMMENCING MAITLAND END FIRST TITLES

ALLOT	PURCHASE	AREA	PRICE	BOOK	FOLIO NO	DATE
1	John Ryan	80p?	26.0.0	V	503	6/7.4.1841
2	Edward Thornton	80p?	21.0.0	141	789	30.7.1840
3 - 6	John Johnston	) 2a. 0r 0p	120.0.0	T	876	30.6.1840
	Reserve Road					
7 - 11	Thomas Taylor	) 2a 0r 80p	160.0.0	1	381	27.6.1842
12	Not known					
	Road reserve					
13- 14	Not known					
15	John Bayliss	½ a	195.0.0	29	84	10.2.1859
16	John Pyne	80p	33.10.0	27	923	3.18.1853
17	John Reader	80p	33.0.0	T	873	30.6.1840
18	Joseph Liddeard	80p	33.0.0	U	328	30.6.1840
19	John Hunt	80p	31.0.0	U	330	30.6.1840
20	Henry Dangar	80p	32.0.0	U	329	30.6.1840
21- 22	Ben & Mary Singleton	) 1a 0r 0p	72.0.0	T	880	30.6.1840
	Thomas Street					
23	Robert Rodgers	80p	36.0.0	T	882	30.6.1840
	Thomas Street					
24	Joseph Dewick	80p	21.0.0	T	868	13.6.1840
25	Henry Thomas	) 1a.0.0p	42.0.0	T	877	30.6.1840
27	Not known					
28	George Collins	40r	60.0.0	38	648	10.7.1855
29 - 30	Joseph Palfrey	)1a 0r 0p	66.0.0	T	879	30.6.1840
31	Edward Doyle	1/2a 0r0p	32.0.0	T	159	21.8.1840
32	McNab					
33	Dominick Gillespie		33.0.0	X	735	11.10.1840
34	John Tierney					
35	John Piggott	80p	32.0.0	V	506	13.4.1841
36	Patrick Doolan	½ a	20.0.0	35	24	28.6.1854
37	John Sweeney	80p	20.0.0	29	88	3.8.1851
	Road Reserve					
38	John Hughes		20.0.0	29	87	3.8.1853
39	John Lumley	80p	33.0.0	T	881	30.6.1840
40	Michael Healy	½ a	21.0.0	34	165	13.4.1854
41	William Jones	80p	80.0.0	T	878	30.6.1840
42	William Jones	80p	113.0.0	V	507	13.4.1840
43	Edward Doyle	½ a 0r 0p	32.0.0	T	159	21.8.1840
	Road Reserve					
44						
45	John Bayliss	½ a 0r 0p	21.0.0	T	162	11.9.1840
46	William Terrett	80p	21.0.0	T	874	30.6.1840
47	Mary Dooling	½ a 1r 0p	22.1.0	T	158	21.8.1840
48	George Collins – house & barn	80p?	400.0.0	36	494	23.1.1855
49	James Scrutton	½ a	15.0.0	34	705	7.10.1853
	Cessnock Road					
50 - 52	Not known					
53	Robert Carter	80p	33.0.0	U	325	5.10.1840
54	William Shepherd	80p	30.0.0	10	293	1.12.1842
55	Not known					
56	George Collins	) 80p	100.0.0	29	85	3.8.1853
57	George Collins	) 80p + 9a				
	Henry Raisbeck	70a 3r 25p	Inherited	280	548	
	William Raisbeck	17a 3r 9p	Inherited			
	Park	5a	donated	835	699	
	Episcopalian Church	1a 20p	10s	10	251	26.1.1846
	George Maggs	3r 36p	3r36p	29	88	3.8.1853
	John Shanahan	54a 31p	600.0.0	29	313	3.8.1853
	Patrick Doolan		54.0.0	35	25	1.12.1854
	John Shanahan		40.0.0	36	491	18.7.1854
	John Bayliss	11a 2r 6p	95.0.0	36	807	12.2.1855
	John Shanahan		60.0.0	36	808	12.2.1855
	George Maggs			37	314	
	James Scrutton	3r 24p		55	228	
	Patrick Doolan	50a		33	76	
	John Hoskins			D	634	
	John Nichols			K	660	

Samuel Paley

Ken Marheine

Samuel Paley is believed to be the earliest and longest resident of Ten Mile Hollow. A native of Sheffield at the age of twenty Six he was sentenced to fourteen years for uttering forged notes at Middlesex on 11 th April 1821 and was no Clarke Gable, being only five foot three inches with a very large nose and had lost three upper front teeth. He had brown eyes, dark brown hair and his dark complexion was a little pock-pitted.

He arrived in the Minerva (4), 1821 and his certificate of freedom gave his trade or calling as carpenter although this is doubtful.

His first assignment was to Captain Irvine of the district Cooke but it was remarkable for its short length. The Minerva arrived on 16th October 1821 and on 21st December 1821 a letter from William Hutchinson, the Principle Superintendent of Convicts to Fredrick Goulburn the Colonial Secretary, said that Captain Irvine had returned him to the Government to the prisoners barracks, as originally he reported himself to be a carpenter but proved to be a porter,

The first Ticket of Leave he received number 28/231 allowed him to remain in the district of Melville(Prospect) and stated his occupation was labourer. The census of the same year shows him working as a labourer in the district of Melville. When Paley returned his ticket of Leave on 26th July 1830 in a mutilated condition, his new ticket said allowed him to remain in the district of Wollombi. A renewal of his ticket in 1832 32/1001 says he was to remain in the Wollombi district. Paley received his certificate of freedom number 35/483 on 2nd May 1835 and moved south to the Dural district. Nothing more is known of about Samuel until his married at St John's Parramatta when he married Bridget Cushen on 29th December 1837. Both bride and groom were recorded as coming from the parish of Dural.

Paley's first recorded connection with the Great North Road was in the Sydney Morning Herald of 4th August 1841 under the heading Lower Hawkesbury the article stated:

Another inconvenience which presses heavily upon the traveler is the want of suitable accommodation and the scarcity of water. To be sure there is Paley's at the Ten Mile

Hollow where you can obtain accommodation with a cup of tea for your self and feed for your horse.

In a court case about cattle theft recorded on pages 121 to 132 of the Brisbane Waters Bench Book 1846 Samuel Paley was called as a witness as the cattle would have had to be driven past his house on the way to Wisemans Ferry. His occupation was given as a farmer in the police evidence. Paley presumably occupied the building of which the footing remain on the town blocks granted to Solomon Wiseman which he never took up.

Solomon Wiseman, and John Johnson of Pitt Town both applied for an inn license at Ten Mile Hollow but neither received permission. The building foundations at Ten Mile Hollow were perfectly placed for an inn. All travelers – either heading north or east towards Mangrove creek would have passed it situated in the angle between the two roads.

One group who did not miss Paley's small lodging house at Ten Mile Hollow was the Jew Boy Gang of Bushrangers who in August 1840 had escaped from the gang building Busby Bore which was Sydney's first engineered water supply. Apparently they crossed at Wisemans Ferry and proceeded along the new road north to Ten Mile Hollow where they bailed up Paley and robbed him of £16/- and items food and clothing. Upon the five members of the gang moving north along the road Paley notified Richard Gorman of Mangrove Creek the nearest constable. Then Gorman, Paley and a man named Jones set off to inform Magistrate David Dunlop at Wollombi. They came upon the men at Mt Manning but decided discretion was better than valor and skirted around the gang and proceeded to inform Dunlop. Dunlop raised a body of men and with an Aboriginal tracker found where they had had a meal near Mt Manning and followed the gang for eight miles in the direction of Mt. Warrawalong before they lost all trace of them. Samuel Paley then fades from the records. From NSW BDM death records it appears Samuel and Bridget had at least one child a son Samuel.

Ken Marheine, researcher and writer, and a keen supporter of the Convict Trail Project, died recently. He submitted this article and some suitable for the next theme some months before he died..