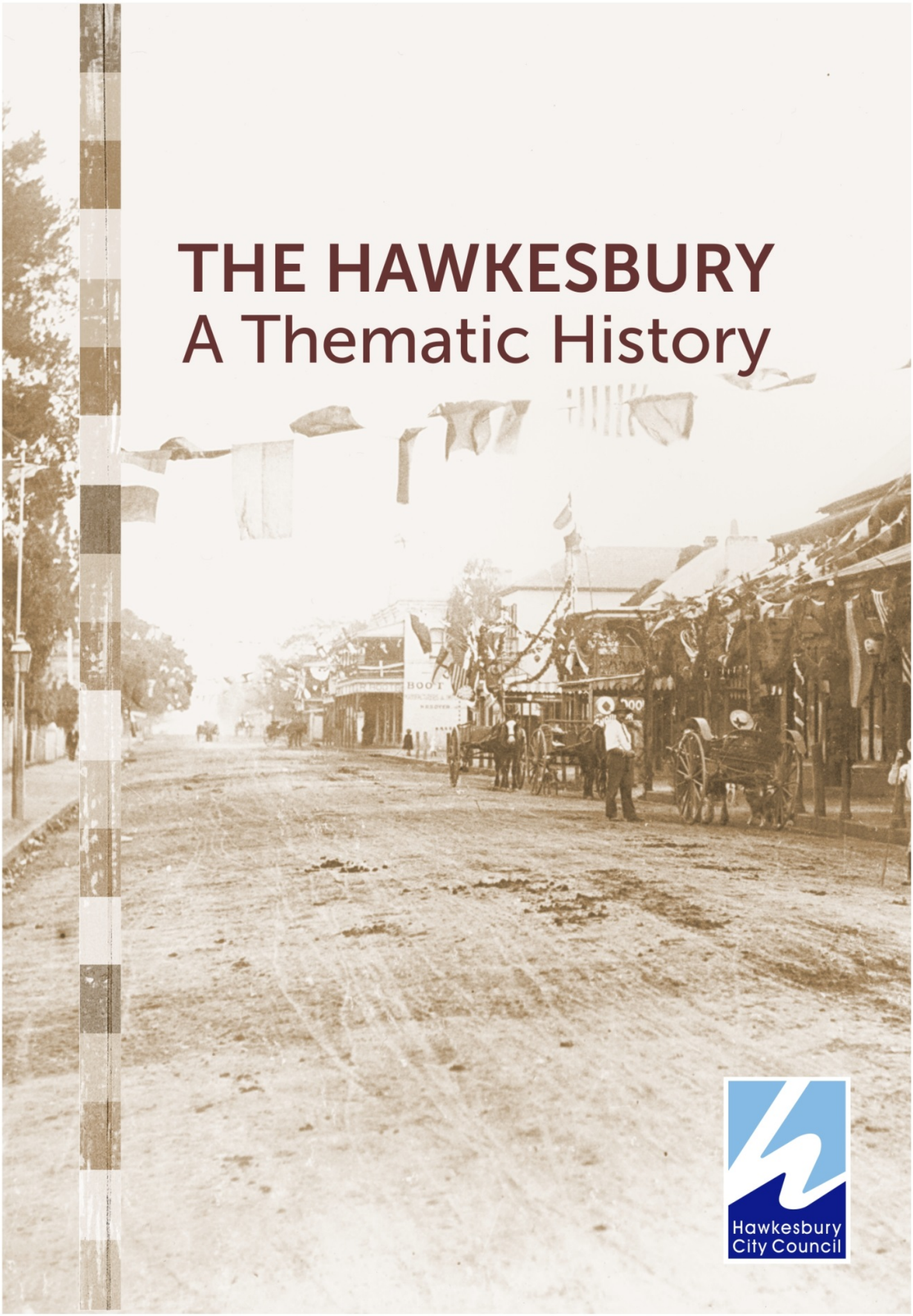
THE HAWKESBURY
A Thematic History



Hawkesbury City Council

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Front and Back cover: Windsor Street Richmond circa 1900, Courtesy Hawkesbury Library Service

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Foreword

Helen Proudfoot wrote a "Structural History" of the Hawkesbury in 1987. It was the product of many years of research into the history of the area and long experience with the physical context of the district and its natural and built heritage.

The history she wrote has been used in typescript form by researchers over more than a decade and half since it was completed but was never formally published. When a review of the heritage of Hawkesbury Local Government area commenced, the consultants and Hawkesbury City Council agreed that Helen Proudfoot's history had stood the test of time. There was no need to write a new history for the Heritage Review since the focus of the project would be upon heritage items. The historian's time would be better devoted to more detailed work on the items investigated in the survey work rather than preparing a revised history for the Heritage Review. Helen Proudfoot's history formed the basis for the identification of heritage items and for analysing their place in the development of the district. Helen Proudfoot's history was not simply a pleasant ornament to the study. It underpinned the Heritage Review. Helen Proudfoot's history has been fundamental to the process of identifying items of heritage value and assessing their significance. Matrices and tables prepared by the Heritage Review team based upon her work were important analytical tools for assessing significance.

So that the historical context of the items identified in the Heritage Review could become clearer, a wider distribution of Helen Proudfoot's history was necessary. Thus, to promote better understanding of the history and heritage of the area, it was agreed that Helen Proudfoot's history should be published. In order to bring it into line with current practice, additional material was prepared by Terry Kass, dealing with the occupation of the area by the Darug and with the evolution of public appreciation of the heritage of the Hawkesbury and its district. These appear as appendices to Helen Proudfoot's History.

Hawkesbury City Council should be congratulated for issuing this publication aimed at promoting a wider understanding of the heritage of the locality.

Terry Kass
Historian
Lidcombe

Introduction

In this Thematic History of the area administered by the Hawkesbury City Council, attention has been given to the underlying forces that have shaped the area and influenced its development. It might well be called a "structural history", as it does not deal with individual sites or buildings, but with the broader landscape and the man-made infrastructure.

Through the centre of the district winds the great Hawkesbury River on its way to Broken Bay and the sea, a river which draws on a huge catchment to the south-west and which is still subject to dangerous flooding. The rich alluvial flats it waters are only of small extent and are already heavily pressed by competing land uses. The towns are especially historic - Windsor, Richmond, Pitt Town and Wilberforce - all founded by Governor Macquarie, sited on slightly elevated ridges near the river. Pressures of suburbanisation from the expanding metropolis of Sydney grow stronger year by year. Kurrajong, Glossodia and Pitt Town are absorbing some of these.

The Hawkesbury's relationship with Sydney has always been important, but at the same time, it has always retained a special quality and its surrounding flood-liable lands should be regarded as a means of keeping development compact and maintaining the essential landscape character of the area.

In this history, the importance of the role of communications is acknowledged; early urban settlement patterns are described and their influence on present-day patterns noted; the provision of services is traced, rural land sequences discussed, local industries and institutions noted. Population trends are observed. Finally, the way that the Hawkesbury has influenced artists and writers is introduced.

Helen Proudfoot
Historian and Heritage Consultant
Roseville

1 Landforms

> *"The Heights rose crowding, with their summits all*
> *Dissolving, as it seemed and partly lost*
> *In the exceeding radiancy aloft:"*
>
> Charles Harpur
> "The Creek of the Four Graves"

Charles Harpur was the poet of the Hawkesbury landscape. The contrast of the fertile river flats with the great crowding heights to the west and north inspired some of his most memorable poetry.

The landforms of the area, in fact, have an inspiring quality and the mountain views, with their changing qualities of light, have a perennial fascination. Harpur recognised the sublimity of the mountains; he found them forbidding, enticing, mysterious. The juxtaposition of the cultivated paddocks with the slow, wide river winding between them and the vast wildernesses of the great ranges beyond, gives a sense of drama and tension to his poetry, as it does to the landscape itself; "*… and westward,*" he wrote, "*the high massing woods … lay ridged and heaped*".

> *"… in the lit dusk, they seemed*
> *To hang like mighty pictures of themselves*
> *In the still chambers of some vaster world."*[1]

Griffith Taylor, a noted geographer and writer of the Hawkesbury scene, describes the Hawkesbury landscape in geological terms. Travelling west from Sydney through Kellyville to Windsor, he describes the undulating country and defines it as being on the edge of the Hornsby Plateau, which runs as a broken spine between the Lane Cover River and the Lower Hawkesbury River after the latter turns eastward to the sea from Wisemans Ferry. The "Upper Hawkesbury" between Wilberforce and Wisemans travels through this raised plateau country, which links up to the west and north with the great mountain barrier of the Blue Mountains Plateau which encircles the Cumberland Plain.

After the junction with the Grose River at Agnes Banks, the Nepean River, drawing on the great catchment area to the south-west, changes its name to the Hawkesbury and curves through an area covered by deep river-silts and gravels deposited there by the river over millions of years. A narrow belt a few kilometres wide along the modern river is of recent alluvium beds and is bordered by much older gravels and loams. The richest lands are on the low flats close to the Hawkesbury, with good mixed farming soils extending out to a line near to South Creek.

As the river travels northwards past Richmond, Windsor and Wilberforce, however, it enters the plateau country. "*No region in the world illustrates better than the upper Hawkesbury what happens when a topography of entrenched meanders is first warped and then drowned by influx of the sea*", writes Griffith Taylor of this landscape.[2] The river, paradoxically, is flowing through higher lands, which then rise to some 300 metres above the flood plain of the Hawkesbury at Windsor. The sandstone hills begin to rise about 15 kilometres downstream from Windsor and the waters begin to turn salty. "*We are in fact*", writes Taylor, "*entering the upturned northern rim of the geological basin centred near Prospect*".

The topography close to the Hawkesbury is characterised by a number of "silt-troughs", formed in the small creek valleys dropping down to the main stream. The river deposits silt across the mouth of the silt-troughs during floods, building up a levee which prevents the egress of waters from the subsidiary creeks. A wide swampy area is formed behind the levee bank. While the best crops and orchards are located on the levee itself, the soil further inside the trough supports grazing.

Griffith Taylor considers that during the Ice Ages, when rainfall was higher in Australia, the powerful river in its gorge cut into the sides in various places. Later, the sea invaded these deep valleys along

[1] From *The Poetical Works of Charles Harpur*, edited by Elizabeth Perkins, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1984
[2] Griffith Taylor, *Sydneyside Scenery*, Sydney, 1958, Chapter 7

the Hawkesbury and extensive silt deposition occurred. Near the bridges in the lower Hawkesbury, for instance, a layer of 200 feet of silt was deposited, causing problems for later bridge-builders. The diagrammatic map of the northern part of the Sydney Region, at Figure 1, illustrates the topographical dominance of the mountain vastnesses around and beyond the Hawkesbury and its alluvial flats and its relationship to Port Jackson and the Cumberland Plain.

A useful article on "The Physiography and Geography of the Hawkesbury River between Windsor and Wiseman's Ferry" was written by one of Griffith Taylor's research students, Lesley D. Hall and published in the *Proceedings of the Linnean Society* for 1926. In this article, Hall gives a detailed description of the river-side topography at that time. She considers the landform and ecology of the area, its occupations and resources, the nature of the tributary streams and the population and settlement patterns that continue to be determined by the physiographic controls.

She divides the river locality into three topographic areas:

> "*In general, the outstanding feature of the area is a region of low relief to the south, rising gradually northwards to a level of about 700 feet. This arrangement gives a natural division into three topographic areas. … The first of these divisions is formed by the southern basin of flat country, bounded to the east and west by low rounded hills, through which the river flows in wide senile meanders. To the north, the flood plain of the river gradually becomes narrower, the hills close in on either side, while the relief generally is more pronounced. This is the second, or intermediate area and contains the line of change from lowland to highland. The third division is marked by rugged uplands, dissected into deep juvenile gorges by innumerable small streams. In this region the river, which still maintains its meandering course, is deeply entrenched and a typical feature is the occurrence of trough-shaped valleys. These are not valleys formed by trough faulting, but juvenile gorges eroded during a previous cycle, which are now filled in at the base with silts*".[3]

A number of maps and diagrams are provided on the following pages to illustrate the Hawkesbury topography and the points made by Griffith Taylor and Lesley Hall. For example, the map of the Windsor District by Lesley Hall, at Figure 3, shows the location of the three towns, Windsor, Pitt Town and Wilberforce in relation to the deposits of silts, gravel outcrops, shale beds and sandstone hills.

[3] Lesley D. Hall, "The Physiography and Geography of the Hawkesbury River between Windsor and Wiseman's Ferry", in Proceedings of the Linnean Society, Sydney 1926.

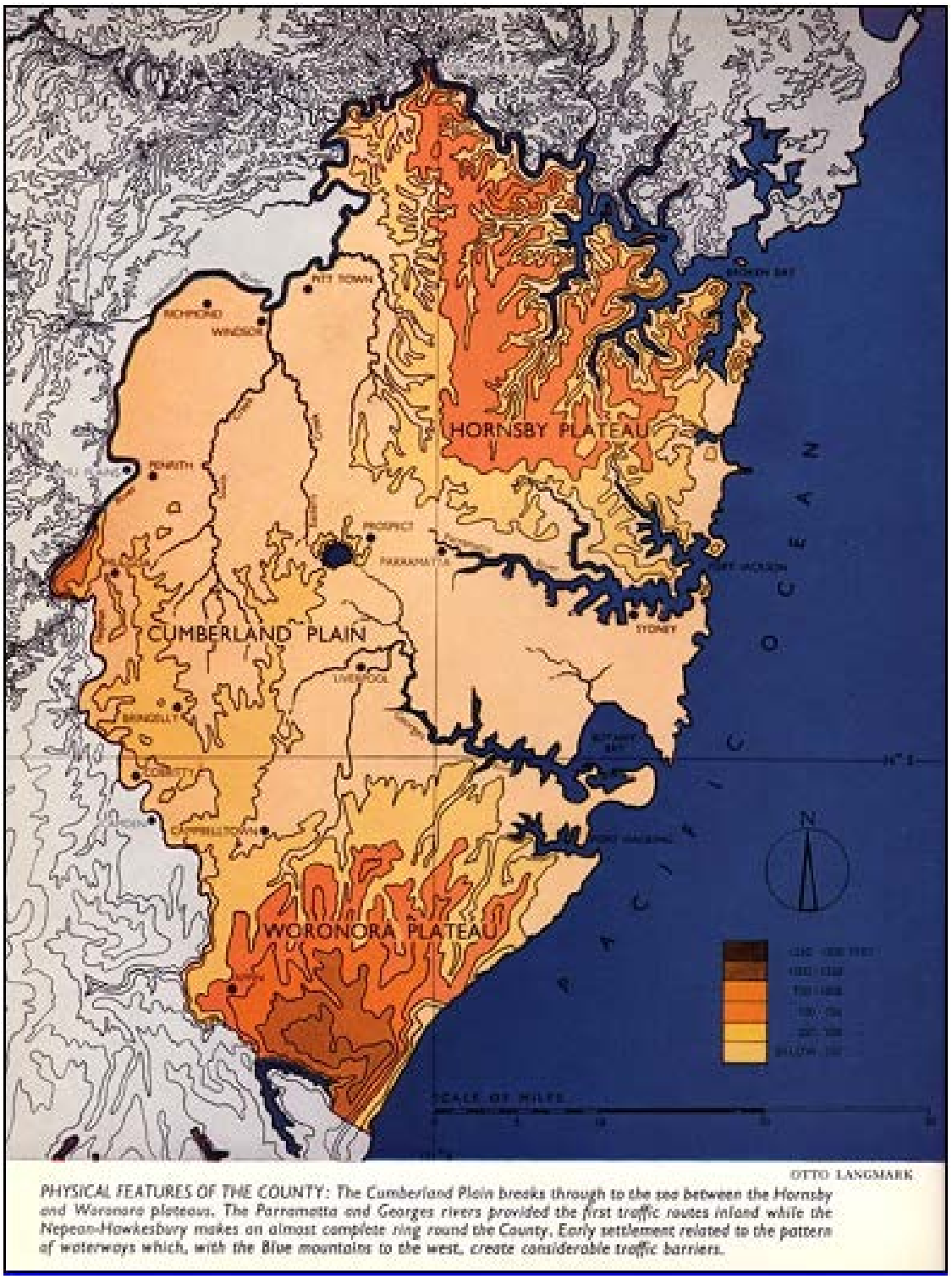


Figure 1: Diagrammatic map showing the Hawkesbury Shire (City) in relation to the Cumberland Plain and the Hornsby Plateau, with the mountainous topography to the north and west.

From Denis Winston, *Sydney's Great Experiment*, Sydney, 1957

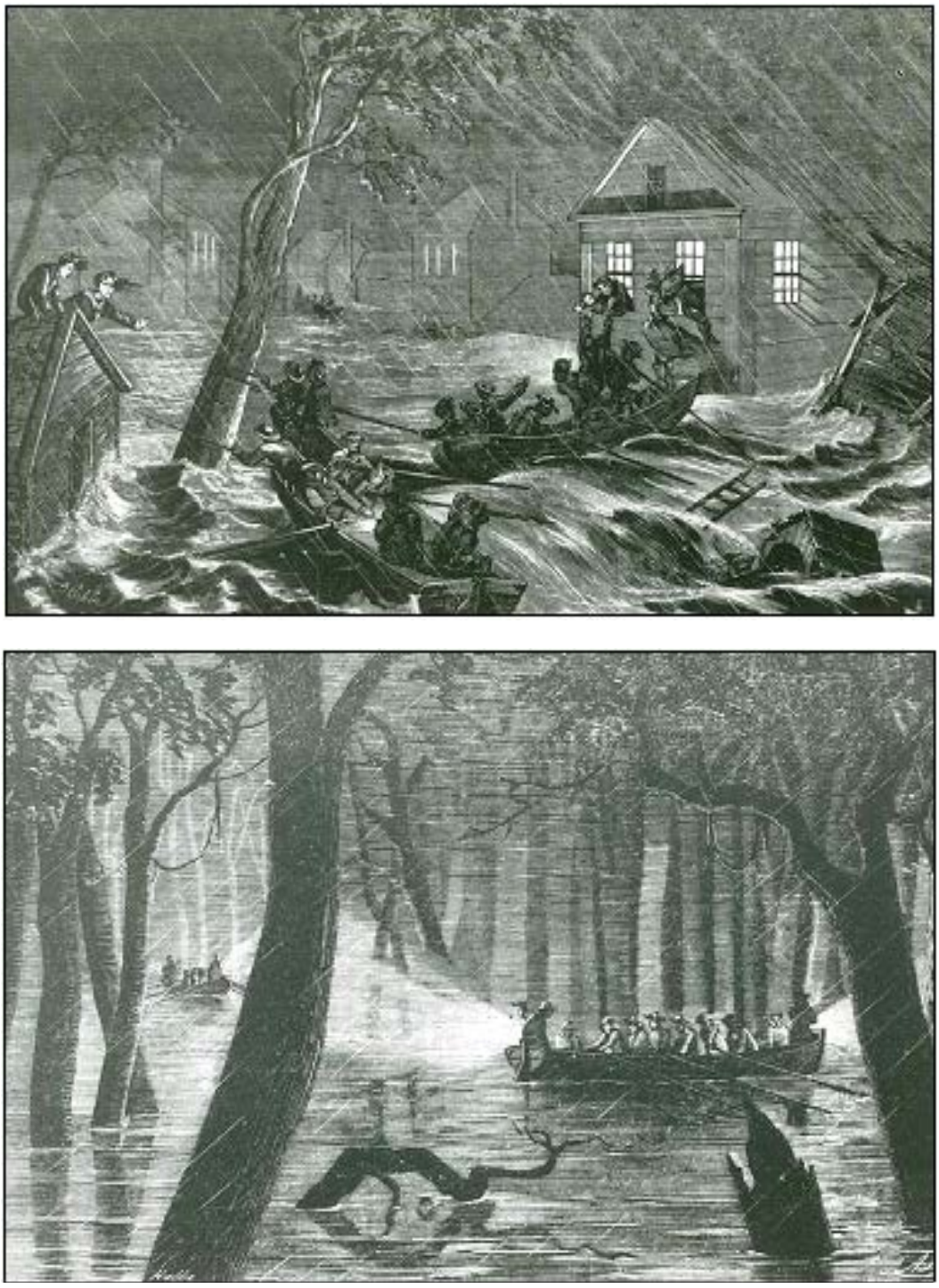


Figure 2: The Floods on the Hawkesbury, by Habbe, Woodcuts by A.S.J., Illustrated Sydney News, 16 July 1867

Images reproduced courtesy of SLNSW

The geological determinants influenced Governor Macquarie's choice of sites for the town and villages and have since had a major bearing on the land use and development of the district.

On the following page, at Figure 4, the block diagrams from Griffith Taylor and Lesley Hall show the topographical change from lowland to highland with the river entering the mountainous areas north of Windsor and the series of four block diagrams by Lesley Hall illustrates the physiographic development of the river lands between Windsor and Wisemans Ferry. The sketch maps by Lesley Hall at Figure 7 provide insights into the topography and town layout and the small diagram by Griffith Taylor at Figure 9 shows the main features of a slit-trough, where a flat swampy floor is blocked by a levee built by the main stream.

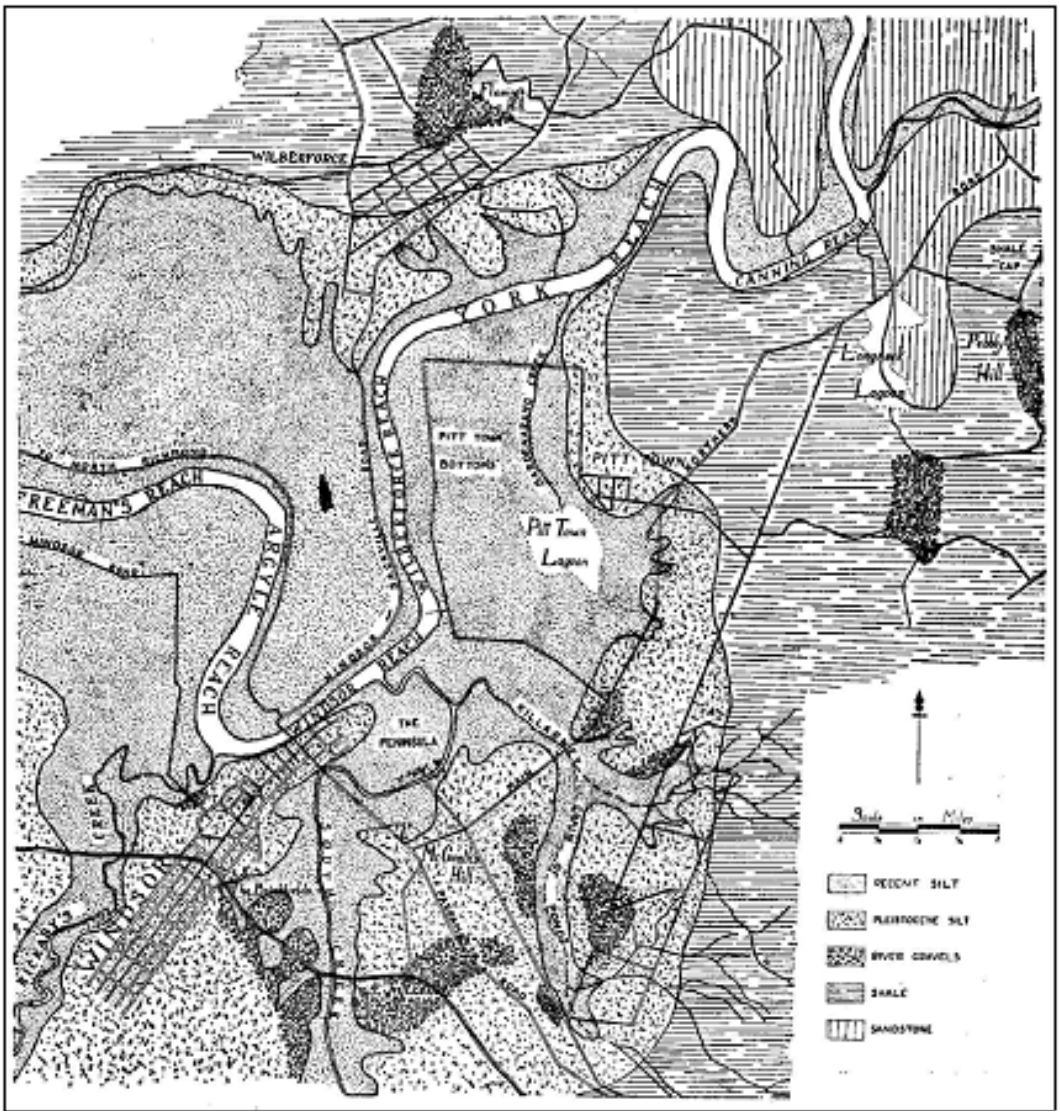


Figure 3: Map of Windsor District showing Pleistocene and Recent Silts and the location of the river gravel outcrops. Geological boundaries approximate.

From Hall, Lesley D "The Physiography and Geography of the Hawkesbury River between Windsor and Wisemans Ferry" in *Proceedings of the Linnean Society* (1926)

Figure 4: Block diagram of the upper Hawkesbury River where it enters the Hornsby Plateau

From Taylor, Griffith (1958) *Sydneyside Scenery*, Sydney

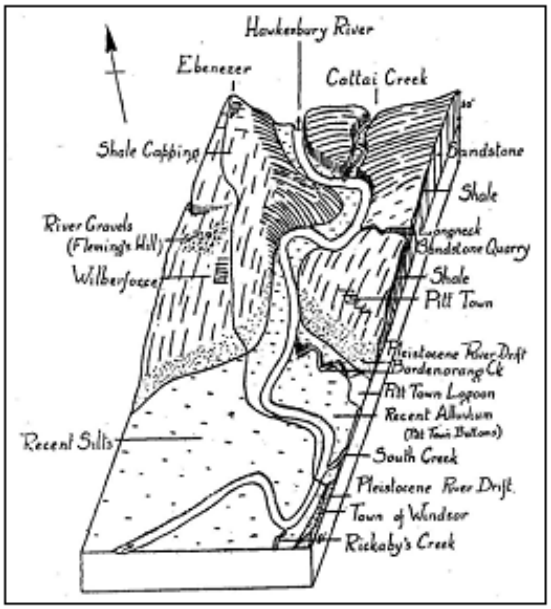


Figure 5: Diagrammatic representation of the Hawkesbury River north of Windsor, showing the change from lowland to highland

From Hall, Lesley D (1926)

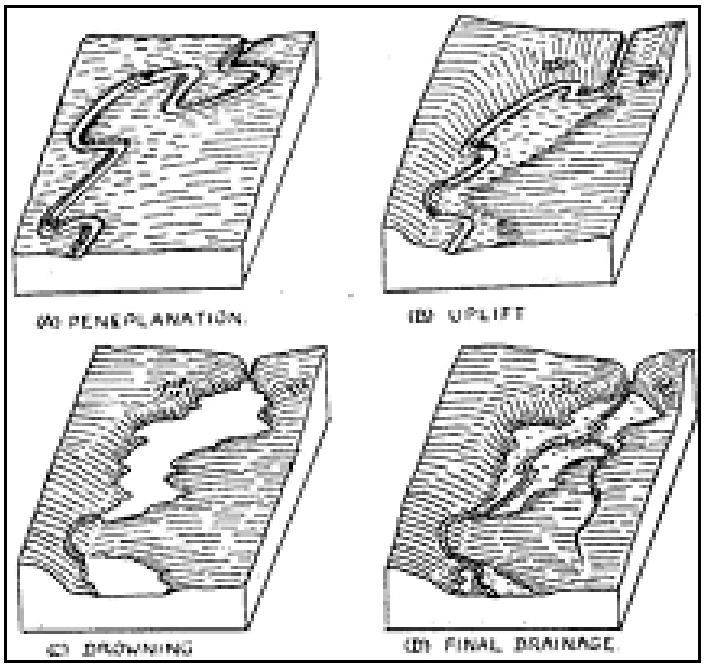


Figure 6: A series of four block diagrams illustrating the physiographic development of the Windsor District.

From Hall, Lesley D (1926)

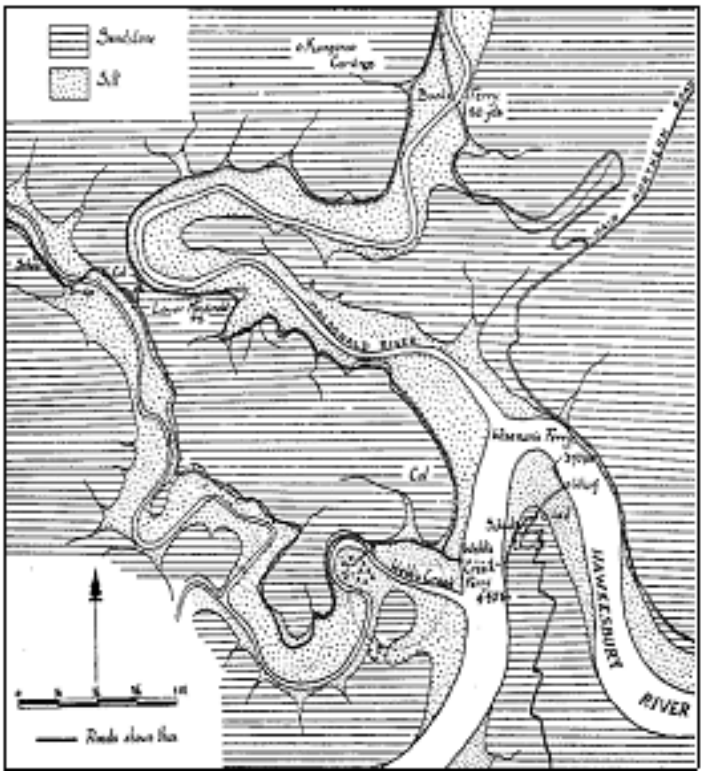


Figure 7: Map of Wisemans Ferry District showing the sandstone ridges and the areas of silt along the banks of the rivers.

Based on field sketches. From Hall, Lesley D (1926)

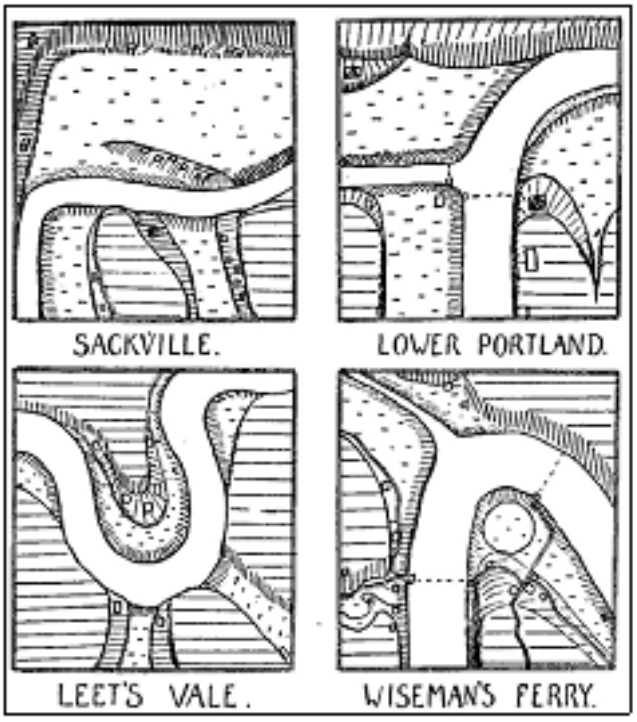


Figure 8: Sketch maps of four townships between Windsor and Wisemans Ferry. A - Sackville. B - Lower Portland. C - Leets Vale. D – Wisemans Ferry.

From Hall, Lesley D (1926)

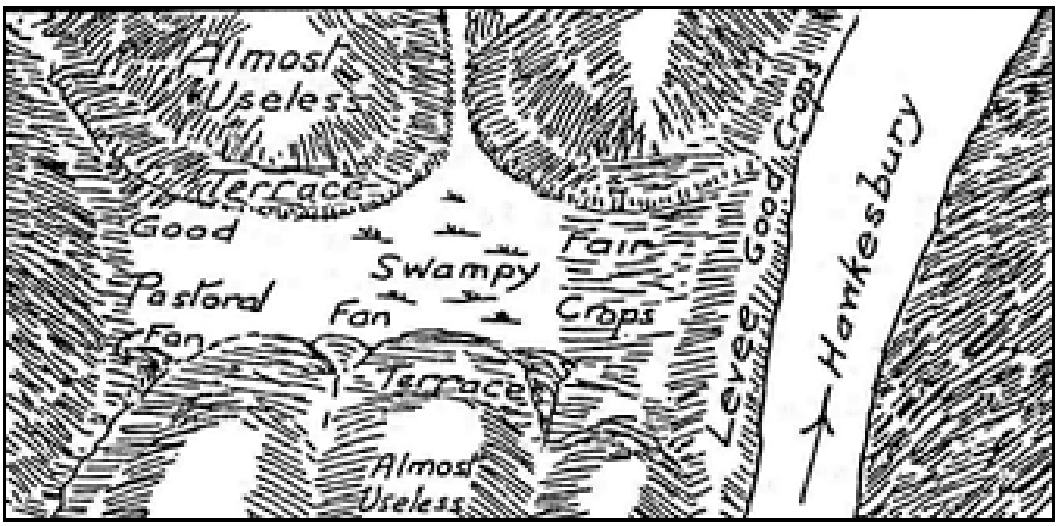


Figure 9: A diagram illustrating the main features of a silt-trough

A flat swampy floor is blocked by a levee built by the main stream

From Hall, Lesley D (1926)

Lesley Hall notes that the population is grouped according to the controls of the three topographic areas. A dense rural population is centred at Windsor, Wilberforce and Pitt Town, a second group consisting of small village clusters is located along the river throughout the uplifted district and there is a third group of isolated families located at the silt pockets at the base of the sandstone highlands. Since she published her article, of course, there has been intensification of the urban areas with the designation of a large area east of the Hawkesbury, between McGraths Hill and Pitt Town, for suburban housing. This has been the main change in the pattern of settlement, which, once established by about 1830, remained remarkably stable, with little change, until very recently.

Thus the topography of the Hawkesbury Region has important implications for its use and settlement after 1788. The alluvial soils offered the best opportunities located in the colony for growing crops in the early decades. Their promise, however, was offset by the recurrence, at unpredictable intervals, of swift and highly destructive floods, channelled by the river from the huge mountain catchment to the south-west and squeezed by the entrenched meanders north of Windsor. The floodwaters, unable to spread out, back up along the alluvial flats around the early-settled towns and farms.

The topography also posed great problems for the establishment of effective communication routes between Sydney and the Hunter Valley and between Sydney and the Western Slopes and Plains, problems that have really only reached a reasonable solution since the construction of massive road works since World War II.

One of the most perceptive early descriptions of the Hawkesbury flats was written in 1857 by a young scientist, Stanley Jevons, who was working as an assayer at the Sydney Mint and who liked making excursions in the colony. He set out on a walking tour on New Years Day, undeterred by the hot weather.

> "*Early next morning the lowlands near the river were covered by beds of mist and the sky was thickly covered by low cloud of a vapoury misty appearance. This did not immediately forebode rain though their appearance was dark and thundery, for having formed during the night and near the surface of the earth, they were probably caused by the cold night air off the mountains flowing down onto and running with the warmer and damper air of the valleys. The first rays of the sun in the morning by warming the earth and the air immediately up quickly redissolves the vapour and the sky is soon quite clear. So it luckily turned out soon after starting, which I did about 8.00 am after having had breakfast. Turning my back upon some very tempting highlands and mountains, but a few miles off, I proceeded, according to a programme I had marked out, to walk through the*

> *splendid cultivated lands for which the Windsor district is celebrated and to make myself acquainted with two or three places which though figuring largely on the map are nothing but small villages …*
>
> *"The plains are formed of a rich and exceedingly deep natural earth which seems to require nothing but the sowing of the seed to bring forth corn or anything else without further preparation. No wonder that this narrow strip of land has been greedily seized upon, divided up and cultivated as closely as in any English model farm, while 20 or 30 miles of busy and woody country between it and Sydney lie comparatively uncleared and wild. Indian corn, oat, lucerne and crops chiefly intended for horses occupied most of the land and are often cut when young for green stuff of hay and it is singular how seldom wheat is seen growing near Sydney. The Indian corn was in all stages of growth for crops are not in this climate so much confined to one regular and fixed period of the year, as at home, when tall and planted in a wide regular manner it has a handsome and beautiful green appearance. Granaries full of the pods here and there showed its great productiveness."*[4]

A discussion of the agricultural sequences experienced in the Hawkesbury Valley will be found in a later chapter.

The National Parks: Blue Mountains, Wollemi and Dharug

Three huge National Parks surround the Hawkesbury Shire on the west and north, enclosing the mountainous and broken wilderness country. The northern part of the Blue Mountains National Park (total area 208,101 hectares) and the south-eastern part of Wollemi (total area 500,000 hectares) are included in the Hawkesbury Shire, while Dharug (14,186 hectares) borders the eastern side of the Great North Road. Declaration as parkland in 1959, 1979 and 1967 respectively, formalised public recognition of the wilderness qualities of the parks, but from the beginning of white settlement, they have formed impressive and largely hostile environmental barriers to settlement.

As Taylor points out, the great plateau areas were raised from the level of the coastal plains about a million years ago and subsequently eroded by creeks and rivers, to form the enormous canyon like valleys and mountainous terrain. The term "The Great Dividing Range" is misleading, in that the mountain barrier is up to 50km or more wide to the west and some 150km wide between Richmond and the tributaries of the Hunter to the north.

The rocks forming the plateau were deposited as sandy sediment about 200 million years ago. The softer top layers of shale have been washed away, leaving the thick, hard layers of sandstone. The sandy soil is not generally very fertile, but nevertheless, the mountainous parklands contain hundreds of species of wildflowers and are the habitats of a great variety of wildlife. Protected pockets in the valleys contain lusher vegetation and the basalt-capped peaks such as at Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine supported rainforests before they were settled and converted to gardens and orchards.

These great wilderness areas mark the edge of early settlement around Sydney and with the exception of a few favoured pockets, have remained unsettled. Their continuing presence has meant that, in a sense, Windsor and the Hawkesbury towns have retained certain qualities of frontier settlements. The great sandstone barriers have prevented local expansion, so the limits of settlement attained during the first thirty years of the foundation of New South Wales have prevailed ever since. The alluvial, arable flats cover only a tiny percentage of the Hawkesbury Shire's area, not ten percent of the whole and the influence of the self-contained and still mysterious mountain fastnesses is pervading.

[4] *Papers and Correspondence of William Stanley Jevons*, Vol I, Biography and Journal, edited by R. D. Collison Black and Rosamond Konekamp, Macmillan, London, 1972. 137-138.

2 Communication

In 1794, the first emancipist settlers were established on small farms on the alluvial soils along the Hawkesbury River. The first 118 settlers granted small holdings there found the soil particularly rich and their crops showed "the greatest luxuriance". Lieutenant Governor Francis Grose made the decision to settle the emancipists on the farms. He called the district "Mulgrave Place" in honour of his friend Lord Mulgrave, whose patronage he had enjoyed in England.[1]

Road Connections

A track was marked out from Parramatta to the settlement which began to form at "The Green Hills" or "Mulgrave Place" as it was then variously called. By June 1795, a year later, the area had attracted 546 people[2] eager to establish small farms, not unmindful of evidence of floods, but prepared to take the risk for the promise of bountiful crops. By 1801, the farms of the Hawkesbury-Nepean had become the major source of colonial grain and the uncertainty of food supplies which had characterised the early years of the colony's establishment had ended.

The following year, 1802 andrew Thompson built the first bridge, a floating structure, over South Creek, allowing easier access to the elevated levee-bank on which the Green Hills village was forming. A punt crossed the wider Hawkesbury River. A store run by Thompson was allowed by Governor Hunter and in response to a settlers' petition for the appointment of a local magistrate, Hunter set up a quarterly session of the Civil Court[3]. Thompson's bridge was replaced by a large strong bridge in 1813, named after its builder John Howe, but the floods guaranteed a history of collapses and reconstructions during the nineteenth century.

By the time Macquarie rode out to inspect the outlying farms, the road to Windsor was in a poor state and a turnpike road was constructed in 1814, 32 feet wide, with two toll gates, one at Parramatta Bridge and the other at Rouse Hill[4]. A second road was built in 1819 from Prospect to Richmond, but the Old Windsor Road retained its importance as the main thoroughfare.

Traffic was constant and at times heavy. Colonel Dumaresq, commenting on its character in 1829, thought it similar to Whitechapel Road in England, busy with travellers and their livestock. There were constant complaints about its poor condition. A traveller in 1857 described his journey in the Sydney Morning Herald on 23 June:

> "*The poor horses were tried to the utmost by the deep ruts and almost interminable sloughs, the soft yellow clay ploughed by the narrow wheels and hollows of veriest mud.*
>
> *We passed several teams on the road struggling for existence… About midway a large load of hay was capsized in the centre of the road and by the side of a hill a dray full of grain had also upset*".[5]

Nevertheless, the road, once constructed, rapidly overtook the river and sea passage in popularity. The sea route had been important in the early years, but by 1812 there were complaints about the bad condition of the wheat landed in Sydney due to the poor state of the boats and careless handling[6], so the settlers began to prefer the more reliable road transport for their goods. Certainly the route to Sydney by road was shorter and less perilous that that by sea.

[1] Grose to Dundas, 29 April 1764, Historical Records of Australia, I 468.
[2] *Historical Records of Australia*, I, 483, 501-2.
[3] *Historical Records of New South Wales*, 3, 498; Bobbie Hardy, Early Hawkesbury Settlers, 19.
[4] D G Bowd, *Macquarie Country*, 57.
[5] *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 June 1857, quoted by Max Kelly in the *Heritage Study of the North Western Sector of Sydney*, DEP, 1984.
[6] *Sydney Gazette*, 8 August 1812, quoted by E V Evans.

Following the establishment of a settlement at the Coal River, later to be called Newcastle and the knowledge of a wide river there and a fertile plain inland from its mouth, several attempts were made by Windsor men to penetrate the mountain country to the north and find a suitable route through to the Hunter Valley. Some had a small measure of official sponsorship; some initiated the discoveries themselves. They were aided by the Dharug native tribes who were still camping in groups north of the Hawkesbury. William Parr, Ben Singleton and John Howe were three who went on exploring expeditions during the years from 1817 to 1820. A track heading north from St Albans on the Macdonald River was blazed and another route was discovered further to the west through Howes Valley and Putty, called the Bulga Road and later Putty Road. Following first the narrow valleys through the mountains and then the ridges near the Colo, this road became an important route for stock travelling down from the Hunter Valley and the north-west of the state to the Sydney markets. It was not upgraded for vehicular traffic however, until as late as World War II.

The track north from St Albans pushed along the Mogo Creek valley towards Wollombi and Cessnock. Numbers of second-generation settlers from the Hawkesbury District then migrated northwards into the Hunter Valley and further on to the Liverpool Plains. Thus Windsor, Richmond and the Macdonald Valley became stepping-off points for the great mid-nineteenth century migration of white settlers to the Hunter Valley and the north-west of New South Wales.

Official attention was also given to the making of a reliable route to the north in the 1820s. When Captain Dumaresq visited Wollombi and Cumnaroy on horseback in 1827, he set out from Parramatta and turned off the Old Windsor Road at Pye's Corner, about six kilometres from Parramatta. The road was planned to go through Dural and along the Maroota heights to the east of the upper Hawkesbury, to Wisemans Ferry, across the wide river by ferry and then ascend the heights east of the Macdonald Valley. It had been commenced by convict road-gang labour in 1825 and in 1827, after two years of hard labour by some 300 men, a "fine, broad avenue" had been cleared through the forest for a distance of twenty kilometres and a road made wide enough to drive a coach and four.

But after that, Dumaresq remarked that "*the road is by no means easy to find, although the trees are notched all the way*".[7] Once the barrier of the wide Hawkesbury River was crossed, a high, lonely waterless route was planned north of Wisemans Ferry and a road was constructed through the difficult terrain with tremendous hardship for the gangs. These were stationed mainly in a rough collection of huts on a hillside overlooking Wisemans Ferry when the road building was going on.

The Great North Road itself, built by the convict road gangs between 1826 and 1836 and recently interpreted by Grace Karskens,[8] has left behind valuable evidence about the skills of the convicts in their working parties and the organisation of the convict system itself. The road today is an impressive monument to their stonemasonry and road building skills and to the organisational abilities of their supervisors. Its monumental scale and size needs to be experienced at first hand to be properly appreciated and in its setting it offers a spatial experience still to be acknowledged, with changing views down to the smooth shining Hawkesbury waters below. If the Hawkesbury River could be called the "Nile of New South Wales", as it was by Barron Field, then this road is its Great Pyramid.

By 1830, the vision of Lieutenant Percy Simpson, the surveyor in charge of the road gangs on the Great North Road was materialising. "*His 'lofty and massive side walls' were rising steadily, defying nature and distance; handsome stone bridges spanned the craggy gullies; extensive and elaborate stone drainage systems ensured the road's protection against the ravages of water*".[9] As the road rose up the mountain side it was supported by great stone ramparts; it was honey-combed by culverts built to take the water underneath it; bordered by drains and carefully graduated in elevation. Though there is little written evidence of the convicts' life and work, Karskens considers that "*evidence about the organisation, skills and progress of the men in the gangs is encoded in the size, shape and arrangements of stones and the distribution of structures over a 100 kilometre stretch of road*".[10] And

[7] *The Australian*, 31 August 1927.
[8] Grace Karskens, "As good as any in England: The background to the construction of the Great North Road", *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, 68 (3), 1984; Grace Karskens, "Defiance, deference and diligence: three views of convicts in New South Wales road gang", *The Australian Journal of Historical Archaeology*, 4, 1986.
[9] Karsens, "Defiance, deference and diligence", *op cit*, p.18
[10] *Ibid*, p.19

this is impressive by any standards. It was called "*the grandest improvement in the country*" at the time it was built.

The irony was that the year the Great North Road was completed through to the Hunter Valley, the first steam-ship undertook her voyage to New South Wales. These ships from that time made the sea voyage to Newcastle from Sydney much safer and were able to steam up river to Morpeth, thus attracting travellers away from the long and tedious road journey. The Great North Road, constructed with such labour, skill and effort, was never used extensively, it was poorly maintained and has now become a rutted and in parts, impassable track. The local settlers preferred the easier route through St Albans.

The lower end of the road, near Wisemans Ferry, has now been closed to vehicles, but makes an exciting walking route.

In 1844, George Peat established his ferry further down the Hawkesbury. This second route, however, was only a little used bridle track for many years and it was not until the construction of the Coast Road to Newcastle in 1930 that the main land route to the Hunter crossed the river at this point eastward of Wisemans Ferry. The first Hawkesbury River Bridge for road traffic was opened in 1945.

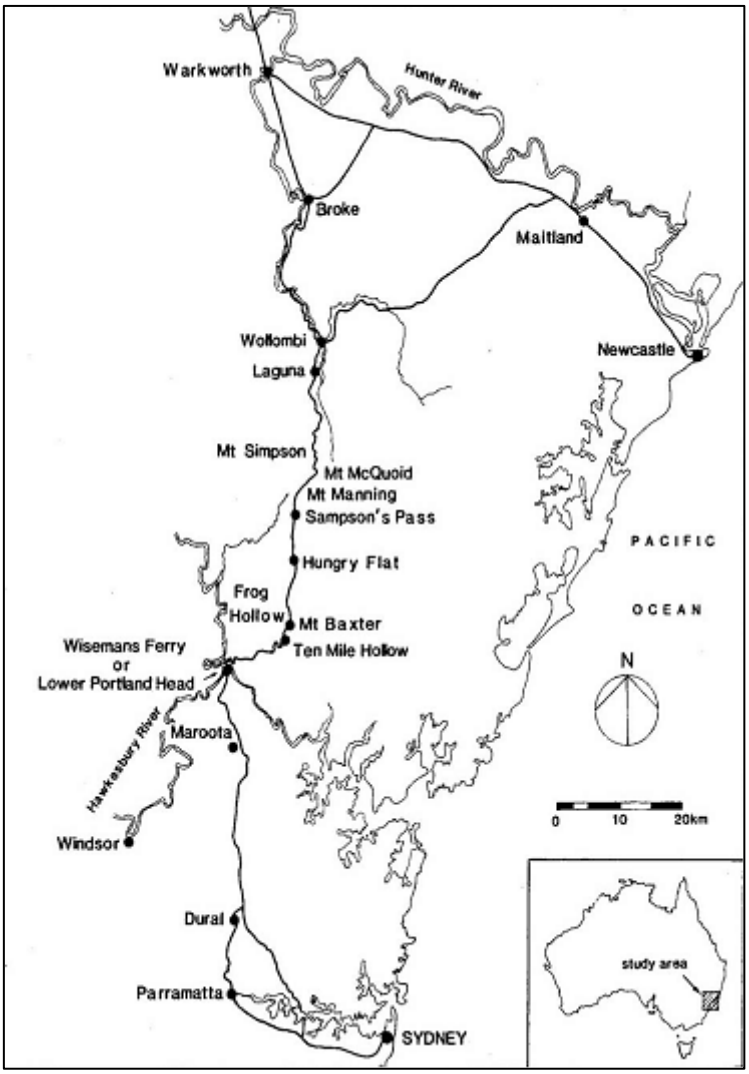


Figure 10: Line of the Great North Road, 1836

From Karskens, G, Journal of the RAHS, 68, (3), (1984)

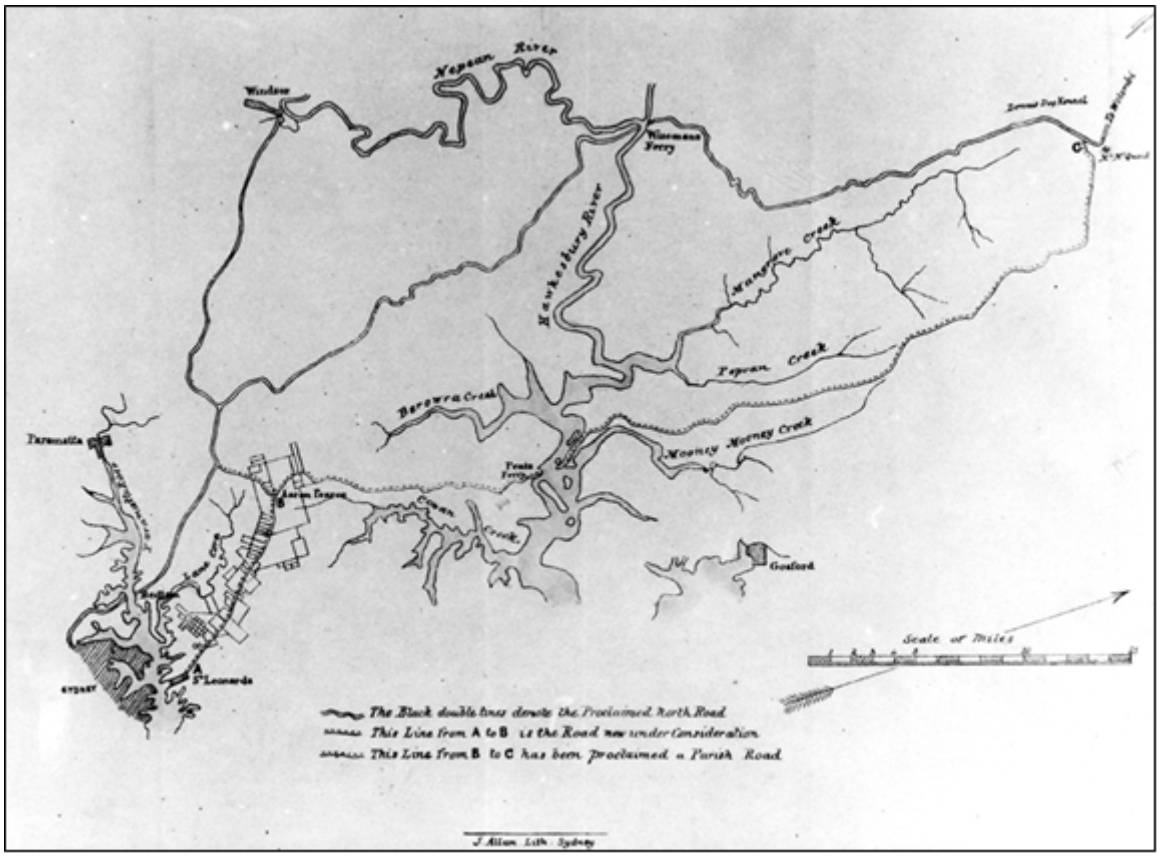


Figure 11 Map showing the roads north from Sydney in 1848, with the location of the two roads, one to Wisemans Ferry, and the second to Peat's Ferry. From the Report of the Select Committee on Internal Communication in the Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Council of NSW, 1852
The road to Wisemans Ferry is the one taken by Captain Dumaresq in 1827.

Image reproduced courtesy of SLNSW

The route westward from Windsor and Richmond which followed the Bells Line of Road, was also bedevilled with difficulties. Again, the route itself was blazed quite early, by young Archibald Bell from Belmont at Richmond, who, guided by an Aboriginal woman, travelled the ridges westward to Coxs River in September 1823. An official report was prepared by Robert Hoddle and Hamilton Hume also traversed the mountains. Farms extended out beyond Bilpin by 1830.[11]

Local enthusiasm for a through road found expression in the formation of the Hawkesbury Bathurst Road Company Committee in 1840, but the task was beyond the resources of local enterprise. The track was used by cattle moving eastwards and, in the 1850s by gold seekers travelling west.

When the railway was built over the mountains, following the Great Western Road further south, a siding was opened at Bell in 1875 which gave access to Mount Wilson, where surveyors Wyndham, Bowen and du Faur had surveyed lots on the rich basaltic soils after 1868. Bells Line of Road, however, remained notoriously bad despite the efforts of Colo Shire Council, formed in 1909. The worst part was from Mount Tomah to Mount Wilson junction.

A very steep section was locally known as "Jacob's Ladder". Some roadworks were carried out during the depression of the 1930s and during World War II there were further attempts to improve the road. By 1956, the ascent of Kurrajong Heights still remained un-reconstructed.

[11] E Macleod Morgan, "Bells Line of Road", *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, 42,(1), 1956, p.33

Bridges

The old South Creek bridge at Windsor was replaced in 1853 by the arched Fitzroy Bridge, 93 feet long; by 1881, it was in turn replaced by a new iron bridge, which has in turn been superseded in recent years by a wider reinforced concrete structure.

The bridge over the Hawkesbury at Windsor came later and has survived longer. It was opened on 20 August 1874. A long bridge of 455 feet, with 11 bays, its opening was the occasion of great local rejoicing. Its deck was later raised eight feet (in 1897) and further improvements were made in 1924.

At Richmond, the Hawkesbury Bridge was built by private subscription in 1860 and sold to the state in 1876 for £7,000. A new iron and concrete structure was built in 1904.

The width of the river and its fast and torrential flooding makes bridge building a difficult business. Further north from Pitt Town, the local traffic still relies on punts to cross the wide stream at Wisemans Ferry and Webbs Creek. Further north, on the Macdonald River, the "Bent Bridge", twisted by floodwaters, but still secure, has become something of a local curiosity.

The Railway

Nine years after the Sydney to Parramatta railway line was completed, in 1864, a branch line was built out to Windsor and Richmond. Though Governor Denison favoured a small gauge train line, the Chief Engineer of Railways, Thomas Whitton, argued for a uniform gauge, which was constructed.

It was hoped locally that the coming of the railway would reinvigorate the town of Windsor and reinforce its position as a "depot" town where farm produce would be brought for redistribution. It did this for a time, until the river silted up in the 1880s and by then Windsor's dominance of the Sydney markets had fallen to the wider acres west of the mountains and the town remained a sleepy farming centre, away from the main traffic arteries which were being established elsewhere.

River Transport

Communication between Windsor and Sydney was established in the first instance by the sea and river route. Discovery, headed by Governor Phillip, had been by boat in 1789 and in the crucial first years of establishment the activities along the Hawkesbury River were of prime importance.

Attention to the part the river played in the communications network is given in the following chapter on the Hawkesbury River.

3 The River: Sailors and Floods

> "*Where the blue Hawkesbury in long reaches draws*
> *Its broad abundance,*"
>
> Charles Harpur

An early etching of Windsor, drawn and engraved in 1813 by Philip Slaeger, shows the Hawkesbury River there busy with boats - sailing ships and rowing boats. There are steps down to the river for the military buildings on the north side of Thompson Square; Fitzgerald has built his large, commodious inn on the southern side; what appears to be a bell is there on the rise of the hill and while stumps of trees are dotted about the square, other trees have been planted around the new buildings. Windsor was becoming a town.

Another early view, c.1813, thought to have been executed by surveyor George William Evans shows the "Settlement of the Green Hills" from a similar viewpoint across the river, again with ships plying down the stream and buildings on the opposite shore. Joseph Lycett, drawing Wilberforce in the 1820s, shows other small sailing ships journeying along the river and the alluvial lands cleared for crops.

The river provided the vital link with Sydney in the early years and sailing ships, medium- sized and small, undertook the perilous journey out into the wider Hawkesbury waters east of Wisemans, past Lion Island and out to sea, to follow the coast down to Sydney Heads. Government vessels, the *Francis*, *Norfolk* and *Cumberland*, varying between 56, 40 and 26 tons, were the first to visit in the 1790s. The *Francis* carried goods between the two centres in 1795, making three trips, returning with a cargo of maize. The other two were seized by convicts and wrecked.[1]1

By 1802, ships were being built in the colony, both at Sydney and at the Hawkesbury. Andrew Thompson's small sloop, the *Hope* (16 tons) was completed in October 1802,[2] and the *Nancy* (20 tons) was built for him and launched at the Hawkesbury by Mr Kelly the following year,[3] to be followed by the *Hawkesbury* in 1804. They sailed out from Windsor to Sydney, to Newcastle for coal and to Bass Strait and New Zealand for seal skins. They were joined by John Grono's Speedwell (18 tons) in 1804 and by the much bigger *Governor Bligh*, a vessel of 100 tons, built for Thompson by Grono in 1807. Other boat builders, Daniel Smallwood, Thomas Dargin and John Palmer joined in the shipping trade for a time. Jonathan Griffiths launched his vessels from his farm at Richmond, the *Speedy* in 1804 (17 tons), the *Hazard* in 1808, the *Elizabeth* and *Mary* (80 tons), the *Betsy* (15 tons), *Rosetta*, *Nancy* and *Glory* (85 tons), between 1810 and 1819. John Webb and John Benn built the *Unity* in 1808, Charles Beasley built the *Windsor* at the bottom of Fitzgerald Street in 1811.

The greatest shipbuilder of them all was John Grono at Pitt Town, who constructed no fewer than twelve vessels over the period from 1804 to 1833. Most of them were comparatively large vessels for colonial times: *Governor Bligh* (100 tons), *Elizabeth* (130 tons), *Industry* (170 tons), *Australian* (270 tons) and the *Governor Bourke* (200 tons). The launching of the *Australian* in March 1829 was the occasion for a great local celebration. Everybody from the district was there:

> "*She went off the stocks in great style amidst an assemblage of all the rank, youth and beauty of the surrounding districts… As it was known the launch of the* ***Australian*** *would take place at the heights of the spring tide the people congregated from an early hour… Never before was such excitement and interest manifested in the interior of the Colony. A deafening shout was raised from every person present as she began to move from the station she had so long occupied.*"[4]

[1] D G Bowd, Macquarie Country, 23.
[2] *Ibid*, 24.
[3] *Sydney Gazette*, 23 October 1803
[4] *Sydney Gazette*, 28 March 1829.

Grono was born in 1767 at Newport, Pembrokeshire, in Wales. He had joined the Royal Navy for a time and sailed with his wife and family as a free settler to New South Wales in 1798, acting as Boatswain on the voyage. He became first officer of the *Francis*, the first of the government boats travelling to the Hawkesbury. He was granted land near Pitt Town and later purchased Benn's farm adjacent to the river on Canning Reach. There he built his boats. In 1828 he employed 32 men: 20 labourers, three stockmen, one shepherd, two sawyers, one joiner, one blacksmith, one shoemaker and three servants. Some of the vessels he captained himself, venturing far into the Pacific for trade.[5]

Boat building was continued on by the family. Mostly small river boats were built, but John Joel Grono and William Grono built the *Esther Marie*, a ketch of 52 tons, launched at Pitt Town on 7 October, 1866. Most of the boats were made of local wood, cedar when it was available and turpentines and hardwoods from Cattai Creek and other rainforest pockets along the river. Blue gum, black butt, iron bark and apple tree woods were used, some from Cattai Creek, from the Colo River and from Pitt Town Bottoms. Later, timber was cut from the Pitt Town Common.[6]

An epitaph at Ebenezer Cemetery commemorates the sailing days of one of Grono's sons-in- law, Robert McKenzie:

> "*Through blustery gales and rolling waves*
> *I have been tossed to and fro*
> *Now at length by God's decree*
> *I have a harbour here below …*"

A note on the Hawkesbury River trade was made by E. Vaughan Evans in his article in G. Wotherspoon's *Sydney's Transport*, 1983. He notes that the *Experiment*, loaded with 60 logs of cedar and some mahogany from the Hawkesbury departed for India in 1789. In 1802, however, an Order was issued stating that no further cedar was to be cut without permission. In 1803, 18 vessels made some 74 trips up the river; in 1804, 23 vessels made 62 trips and in 1805, 16 vessels made 44 trips. The smallest boat plying between Windsor and Sydney was the Argument, of nine tons, with two men as crew, a tiny vessel for large seas.

There were hazards for the farmers as well as the sailors. Often the boats sank, or the grain would have to be jettisoned in bad weather. In 1812 it was reported that the grain condition on the Hawkesbury boats was bad, due to the poor state of the boats and the careless handling.[7]

After the building of the railway line to Windsor in 1864, the town became a depot for goods brought in by small boats from along the Hawkesbury, Colo and Macdonald Rivers. The boats were generally about eight metres long with oars as well as sails,[8] small vessels carrying maize, poultry, eggs and oranges in to the Windsor railhead. With the clearing of the catchment, however, sand and silt, moved by the floods, was deposited in the river bed and the shipping channel to Windsor was no longer navigable by the mid-1880s. In 1881, 468 large boats berthed at Windsor, by 1888 there were only 40.[9]

An additional factor in the change of pattern in the eighties was the increasing dominance of steam-driven vessels on the Hawkesbury which were able to negotiate the shallower parts of the river. These had been steaming down Sydney since the fifties, but they assumed greater importance after 1890, when the Hawkesbury Steam Navigation company was formed and the *Hawkesbury* (117 tons) and the *Kingsley* (61 tons), as well as other ships, made regular trips down the river. The *Alma*, a paddle-wheel steamer owned by John Jurd, plied between Windsor and Central Macdonald from 1881. Excursions became popular, with holiday parties viewing the sights and admiring the views. One of the more famous excursionists was the visiting English writer Anthony Trollope, who wrote about his trip with enthusiasm.

[5] *Two Hawkesbury Sailors*, Grono-Books Association, Richmond, 1984.
[6] D G Bowd, *Idem*, 27-28.
[7] Quoted by E Vaughan Evans in G Wotherspoon (ed) *Sydney's Transport*, 1983.
[8] D G Bowd, *Idem*, 29.
[9] *Ibid*.

The painter, Irving Homer, reminiscing about his life on the Hawkesbury years later, spoke of his family sending down hundreds of boxes of oranges on the deck of the S.S. *Erina*:

> "*We had only one profitable season there*", he remembered. "*We sent a whole boatload, so far as we were concerned, down to Sydney and time went by and nothing happened and my brother went down and finally we got a bill for the cost of dumping them. That was the end of that project, but it was such a beautiful spot up there*".[10]

The last of these steamers, the *Erringhi*, made her final voyage about 1936. 50 years later, in 1987, it is interesting to note that a new large modern steamer, the *Lady Hawkesbury*, is advertising excursions along the Hawkesbury for large parties of people.

But the river trade dwindled away to nothing after the thirties. Now, the weekend speed- boats dominate the long reaches north of Windsor and the waves of their wake wash at the river banks.

Floods and their periodic character

A detailed study of the floods on the Hawkesbury up to 1885 was made by J.P. Josephson and published as a paper in the *Journal of the Royal Society of NSW* in that year. D.G. Bowd in *Macquarie Country* (1969) gives a list of the recorded flood heights, covering major floods from 1799 to 1964 and from this a certain irregular pattern can be observed. The floods do not occur regularly but some periodical tendencies are apparent.

Over the 20 years from 1799 to 1819 there were ten major floods. Then, during the next 37 years, only one major flood (1830) is listed; from 1857 to 1879 15 floods occurred, nearly one every year. The highest flood ever recorded was in 1867, which rose to 63 feet at Windsor. There was a ten year interval to 1889 and then four in a row until 1891, an interval of nine years to 1900 and 1904, then longer intervals from 1916, 1925 and 1943. From 1949 to 1964 there were six major floods.

The recorded period is still relatively short, but it can be observed that groups of flood years tend to occur together and the longest period without major flooding has been 28 years. The building of Water Catchment dams in the Upper Nepean at the end of the nineteenth century and finally Warragamba Dam, completed in 1960, has diverted huge quantities of water out of the river system for metropolitan use. In 1926 Lesley Hall considered that there had been a "steady decrease" in precipitation over the Hawkesbury Catchment since 1870[11] and concluded that the likelihood of floods had decreased, but this would seem to be a premature judgement. One result of the dam building is that river silt is now being deposited in the bottom of the dams rather than being carried downstream to renew the alluvial lands along the Hawkesbury.

The early floods caused great distress to the settlers: harvests were swept away and homes destroyed. Fences, sheds and livestock were put at risk, hundreds were reduced to starvation. Usually, the floods were very swift and allowed little time for preparation. Their severity became legend. Whole families drowned, lost in the floodwaters.

There were local heroes: Andrew Thompson and Thomas Biggers amongst them. People helped where they could. Perhaps the severity and devastation of the floods became a factor in the rapid emergence of a sense of local cohesion and social responsibility at the Hawkesbury. This was very strong, even as early as 1808, when Hawkesbury settlers were able to speak with one voice in support of Governor Bligh. They set up a Benevolent Society to care for their old and sick in 1818 and this had been preceded even earlier in 1811 by the Windsor Charitable Institute.

[10] Geoffrey Lehmann, *Australian Primitive Painters*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1977. Chapter on Irvine Homer.
[11] Lesley D. Hall, "Memoir on the Hawkesbury", *Proceedings of the Linnean Society*, Sydney 1926.

Floods where the compelling reasons for Governor Macquarie choosing elevated sites for his five Hawkesbury towns in 1810: Windsor, Richmond, Pitt Town, Wilberforce and Castlereagh further south. Town allotments were to be allocated in proportion to agricultural holdings and the Governor urged each settler to move his house and the centre of his operations to town. Some did, some did not. The establishment of the Commons by Governor King in 1804 provided elevated pasture land where stock could be moved in flood times.

4 Urban settlement patterns, 1794-1820

Crucial to the prosperity of the Hawkesbury farms was the formation of the urban centres along the river. Even before Macquarie arrived and designated the sites of his five towns, an urban nucleus was forming around the wharf at the "Green Hills". Andrew Thompson had erected his grain stores there, a "Government house" for officials and barracks for the military had been built and rough dwellings were springing up. Both Evans and Slaeger show the emerging settlement in their pictures of 1813.

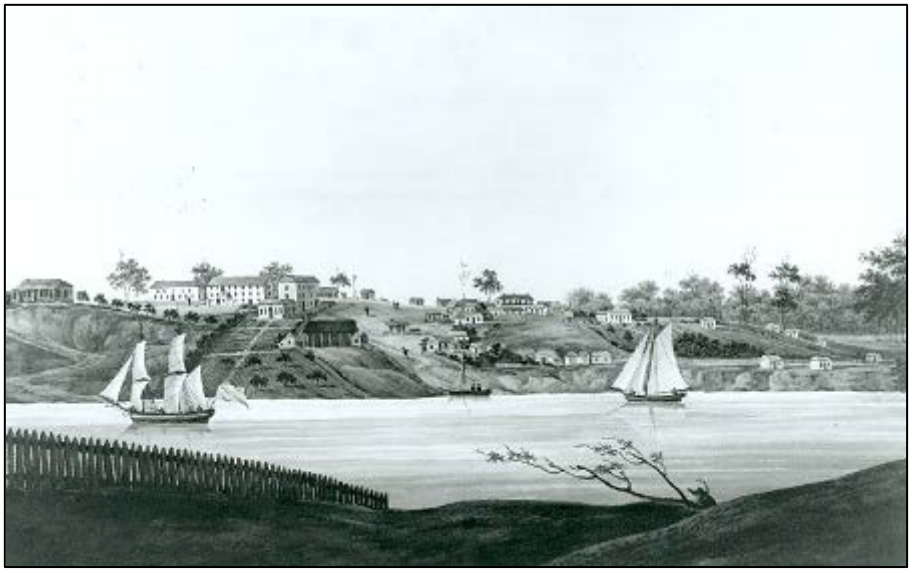


Figure 12: The settlement on the Green Hills, c.1813. Watercolour attributed to G. W. Evans

Image reproduced courtesy of SLNSW

A few years later, a better road was being constructed from Parramatta with a bridge over South Creek, trading routes by river and sea were established, a ferry crossed the river, a commodious inn had been built, churches were rising and the quarterly sessions of the civil court at Windsor established by Governor Hunter, were supplemented by twice-yearly meetings of the Governor's Court. Thus the essential pre-requisites for a town were being put into place from the earliest years of white settlement, to support and complement the small farms of the district.

The official establishment of the Macquarie Towns was an early act of social organisation carried out by Macquarie in his first flush of enthusiastic paternalism. He was acting, however, on his instructions from London, originally issued to Governor Phillip, but reiterated to each successive governor.

> "*And whereas it has been found by experience that the settling of planters in townships hath very much redounded to their advantage, not only with respect to the assistance they have been able to afford each other in their civil concerns, but likewise with regard to their security, you are therefore to lay out townships of a convenient size and extent in such places as you in your discretion shall judge most proper, having, as far as may be, natural boundaries extending up into the country and comprehending a necessary part of the sea coast where it can be conveniently had*".[1]

There was no sea-coast at Windsor, but there was access to the coast via the Hawkesbury.

[1] *Historical Records of New South Wales*, Vol 7, 138.

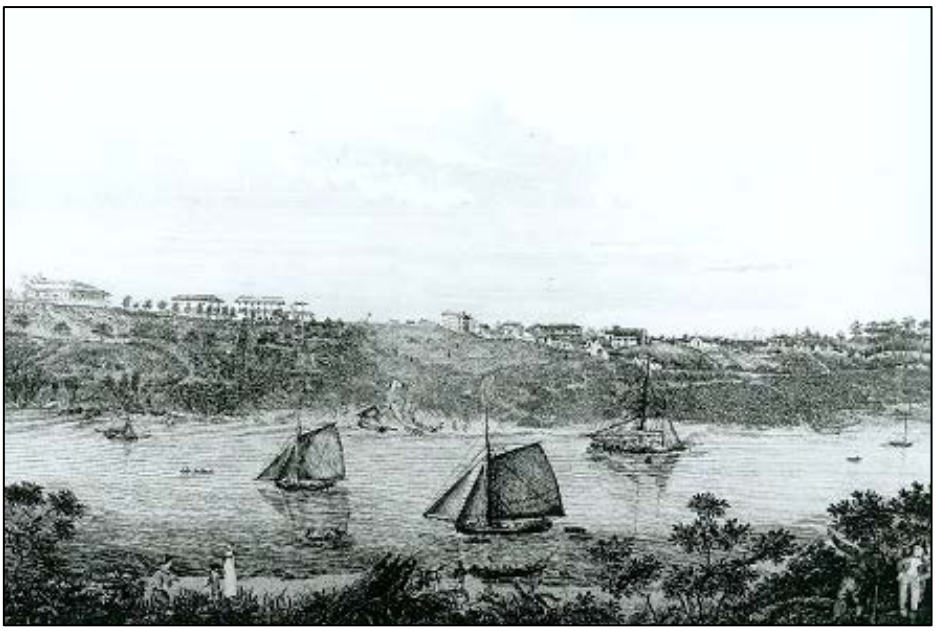


Figure 13: The river scene at Windsor, 1813 Engraving by Philip Slaeger

Image reproduced courtesy SLNSW

According to these instructions, the town area was to be a mutually convenient town and pasture lots, it should be near a navigable river if not on the coast and land was to be set aside for fortifications, soldiers' barracks, a town hall and "other public edifices" as thought necessary. A site was also to be set aside for a church and glebe land of 400 acres (160 hectares) set aside for the clergyman's maintenance and 200 acres (80 hectares) for a school master.

Close by the Green Hills nucleus, where Andrew Thompson had erected his grain stores, Governor King had "*annexed very considerable tracts above the level of the river, to serve as commons for the depasturing of cattle belonging to the occupiers of the smaller tracts in the lower land, thus securing a more free and extensive range for their cattle and a temporary retreat from inundation*".[2] The establishment and use of these Commons: Ham Common at Windsor and Richmond; Pitt Town Common; and later, St Albans Common, is discussed in a later chapter. It was into part of one of these Commons that Governor Macquarie extended his plan for the town of Windsor in 1810.

The hierarchy of urban land, land allocated for small farms and "common land" for depasturing stock was being established. There were virtually no large farms to start with, apart from those granted to Samuel Marsden, 200 acres (80 hectares) and his son Charles, 80 acres (320 hectares) and to Maurice O'Connell, 2500 acres (1,000 hectares) near Riverstone. There were about eight grants of between 200 and 400 acres (80 to 160 hectares), but the remainder were in the order of between 30 to 100 acres (12 to 40 hectares).

The town land contained granted land (i.e. land which became privately owned) and land set aside for defence, or army purposes, civic uses and for cultural, i.e. for approved church and school uses. In a Government and General Order of 15 December 1810, Macquarie stated his intentions for the town. The town allotments were to form an "inseparable part" of the farms and were not to be sold separately. The sites of Windsor, Richmond, Pitt Town, Wilberforce and Castlereagh were designated and were to be surveyed. The Acting Surveyor was to mark out the several allotments, so that the settlers could commence "with the least possible delay the business of erecting houses and removing thither". The dwellings were to be of brick or weatherboard, to have brick chimneys and shingled roofs and no dwelling house was to be less than three metres high. A plan was to be lodged with each district constable.[3]

[2] J T Bigge, *Report on Agriculture and Trade in NSW*, London, 1823, 11.
[3] *Historical Records of New South Wales*, Vol 7, 469-470.

Windsor's plan was ambitious and the buildings it attracted were surprisingly large and imposing for a recently formed frontier settlement. There were two squares: Thompson Square at the older Green Hills settlement and a large new square in front of St Matthew's Church site. However, despite Macquarie's efforts to entice the settlers into town, Commissioner Bigge remarked in 1820 that many of the "*lower classes"* of settlers had not taken advantage of the offers of land in town. These people, "*the occupiers of the smaller tenements*", seemed to Bigge to be "*in a very abject state of poverty*."[4]

Macquarie embarked upon an ambitious building program for Windsor: an outstanding red brick church and a fine rectory, a carefully built new Court House, a wharf to Mr Greenway's plan (1817), a bridge over South Creek (1813) and toll house nearby, a new military barracks (1818) and convict barracks (1820) which became a hospital a few years later. The citizens were appropriately grateful, requesting permission to commission a portrait of the departing Governor in 1821 which still hangs in the Court House.

The Bigge Enquiry gives some details about the situation at the Hawkesbury at the end of the Macquarie period. Evidence from Richard Fitzgerald, overseer of convict labour, John Howe, chief constable at Windsor, William Cox, landowner, magistrate and builder and Archibald Bell, amongst others, help provide a reflection of the times.

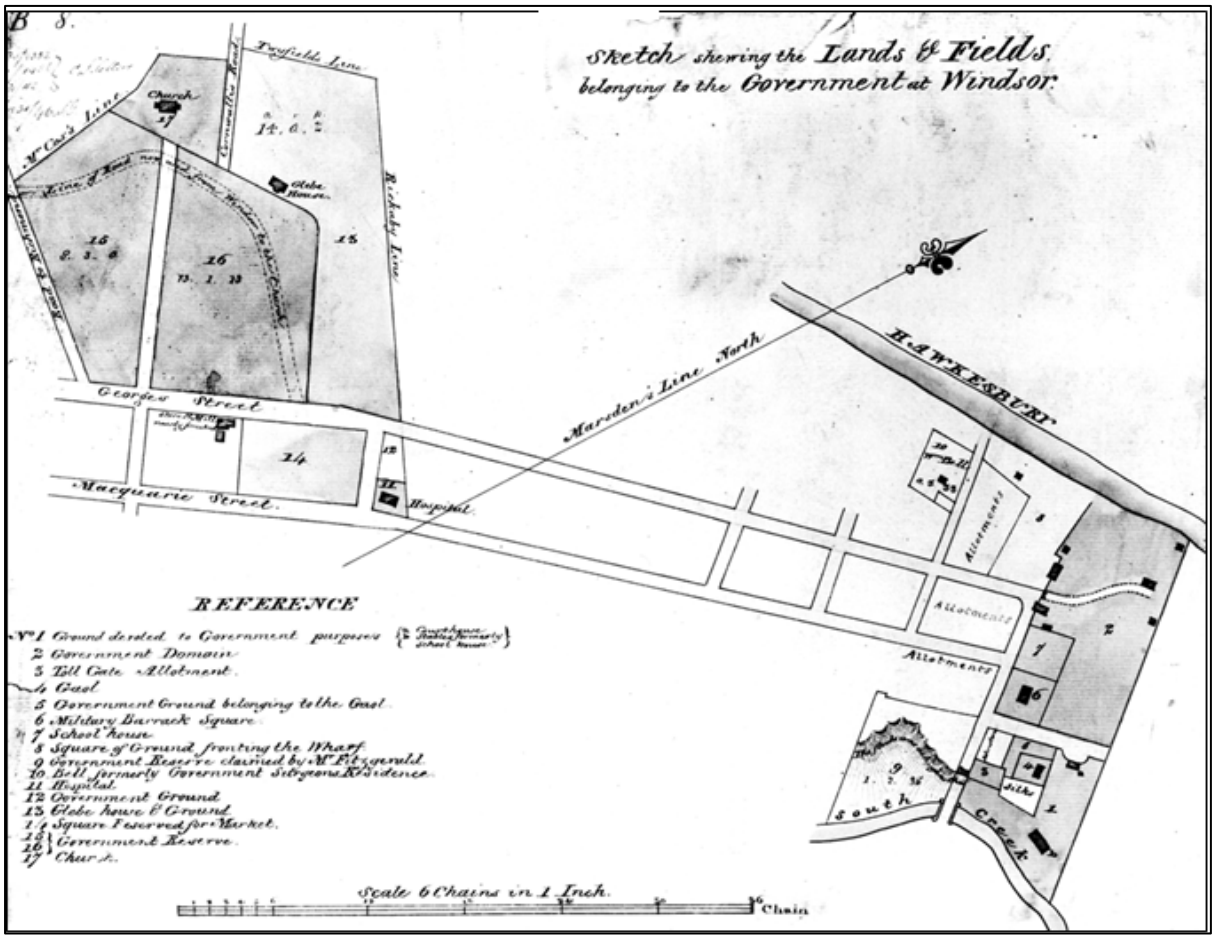


Figure 14: Sketch showing the lands and fields belonging to the Government at Windsor Surveyor's Sketchbooks

Image reproduced courtesy of SRNSW

[4] J T Bigge, *Op cit*, 11.

Richard Fitzgerald gives details about the soldiers and convicts usually stationed at Windsor: there were fourteen soldiers there in 1820, one sergeant, three acting sergeants and ten privates. They were housed in the barracks at Thompson Square. There was a large number of convicts, 94 in all, most of them engaged in Macquarie's extensive building program for the town. Fitzgerald gives a detailed list of the public buildings, with dimensions, carried out between 1810 and 1820.[5] There were ten large and substantial brick buildings: the new church, the prisoners' barracks, the granary and issuing store, the government granary, the old church and charity school, the government cottage, the government stables, the hospital, the jail and the military barracks. There were also seven smaller brick buildings and five made of logs or weatherboards. The streets of the town were being formed.

In addition, there were two road parties centred on Windsor, numbering in total 78 convicts. There was also a Richmond road party of 31, a Windsor jail gang of five and "settlers men" in the vicinity of Windsor numbered six. That is, there were 214 convicts based on the town in 1820. They were hutted near where they worked, e.g. near the brickyards or at the church, or in a government hut in the town or in a house leased to the government by Fitzgerald himself.[6]

A large quantity of bricks were being manufactured at Windsor by the brick maker's gang, who were turning out 2,000 bricks per day. For the buildings, stringy bark, already becoming scarce in the district, was used for flooring and weather boards and blue gum was used for cladding. Iron Bark was used for beams and joists. Cedar, once in abundance on the Hawkesbury was by 1820 "scarcely to be found", having been "wantonly destroyed" in the first wave of settlement.[7]

Despite all this building activity, the floods continued to interfere with development. Windsor's slow growth puzzled Commissioner Bigge, who wrote about the town in his report:

> "*The town of Windsor is of earlier date than the other towns, but its progress has not been so quick as might have been expected, considering that it has been the resort of the settlers of a large and cultivated district, the depot of its produce and the place of export of a portion of that produce by water carriage to Sydney. Considerable pains have been taken and some expense has been incurred, in levelling the descent to the river and making a quay for the embarkation and delivery of grain; and facilities have likewise been afforded to the passage of the river by the establishment of a good ferry boat.*"[8]

A map held in the State Archives shows the town of Windsor as surveyed in 1812 and approved by Lachlan Macquarie.[9] The major buildings at that time are drawn in: the church and school house and the granary store near the space marked out as Thompson Square, a small "Government House" on the levee bank close to the river, an even smaller military barrack building, quarters for the assistant surgeon, Mr Thompson's building on the land enclosed by Mr Baker Junior and Thompson's block of land near the river.

A large number of town blocks are marked out, 42 in all, extending southwards past the land marked "Reserved Square" in which was shown located "Mr Thompson's Grave" and in which St Matthews was later to be built. A detail from this plan is reproduced in this chapter. This plan, with its southerly extension, is confirmed by another neat map prepared by Surveyor G B White in 1827,[10] which indicates the buildings erected 15 years later, including St Matthews and the Court House. Houses are mainly strung out along George Street, with only one shown south of St Matthews, but some of the southern blocks have allotments allocated to various settlers.

Thus Windsor's configuration of 1882 was actually pre-dated by seventy years, in optimistic anticipation, but it appears that these town blocks remained vacant until they were resurveyed with narrow laneways down the middle of each block in the 1880s.

[5] Bigge Appendix, Bonwick Transcripts, Box 25, p.5309, December 1820, Mitchell Library.
[6] Evidence of Richard Fitzgerald, Bigge Appendix, Bonwick Transcripts, Box 1, pp.341-362, Mitchell Library.
[7] Evidence of Archibald Bell, *Ibid*, pp.2026-2073.
[8] J T Bigge, *Report*, *Op cit*, 43.
[9] A O Map No SZ529.
[10] A O Map No SZ524.

A more realistic town plan is available for the year 1835,[11] which reflects in considerable detail the close concentration of buildings around Bridge Street with the town extending for four blocks along each side of George Street. This map confirms the remarks made by the compiler of *The New South Wales Calendar and General Post Office Directory* of 1832, who wrote: "*Most of the houses are built of brick and are erected chiefly along the street, leading to the church, which is about a mile from the bridge. The church is,*" he added, "w*ith the exception of those in Sydney, one of the best in the Colony*".

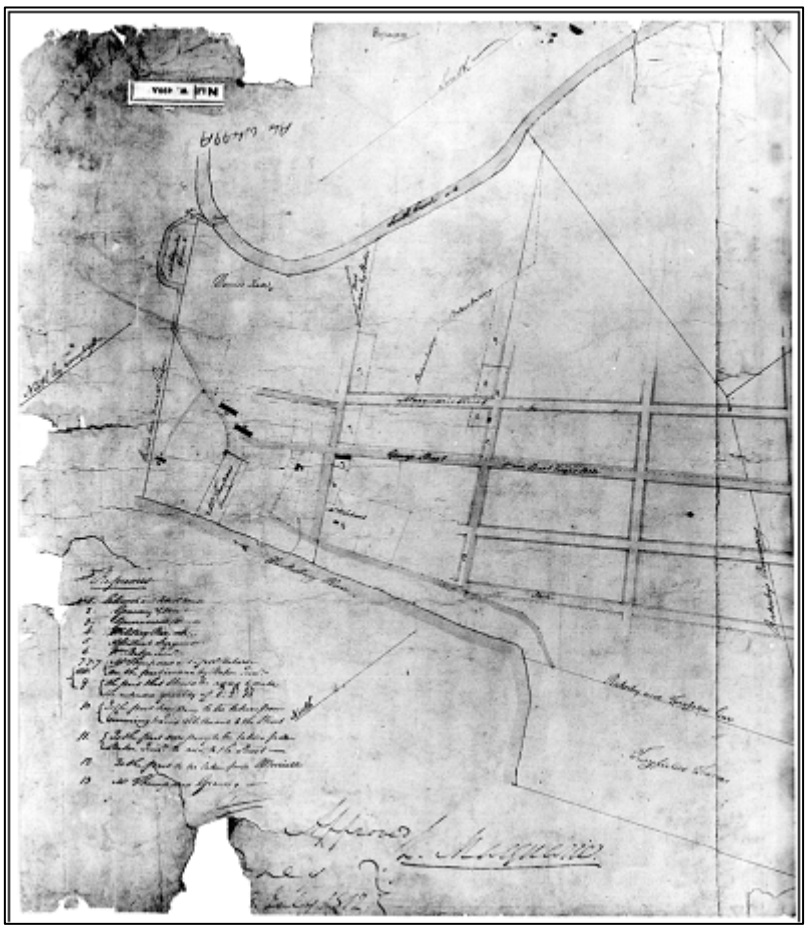


Figure 15: Part of Map of Windsor, 1812

Image reproduced courtesy of SRNSW

[11] A O Map No 5968.

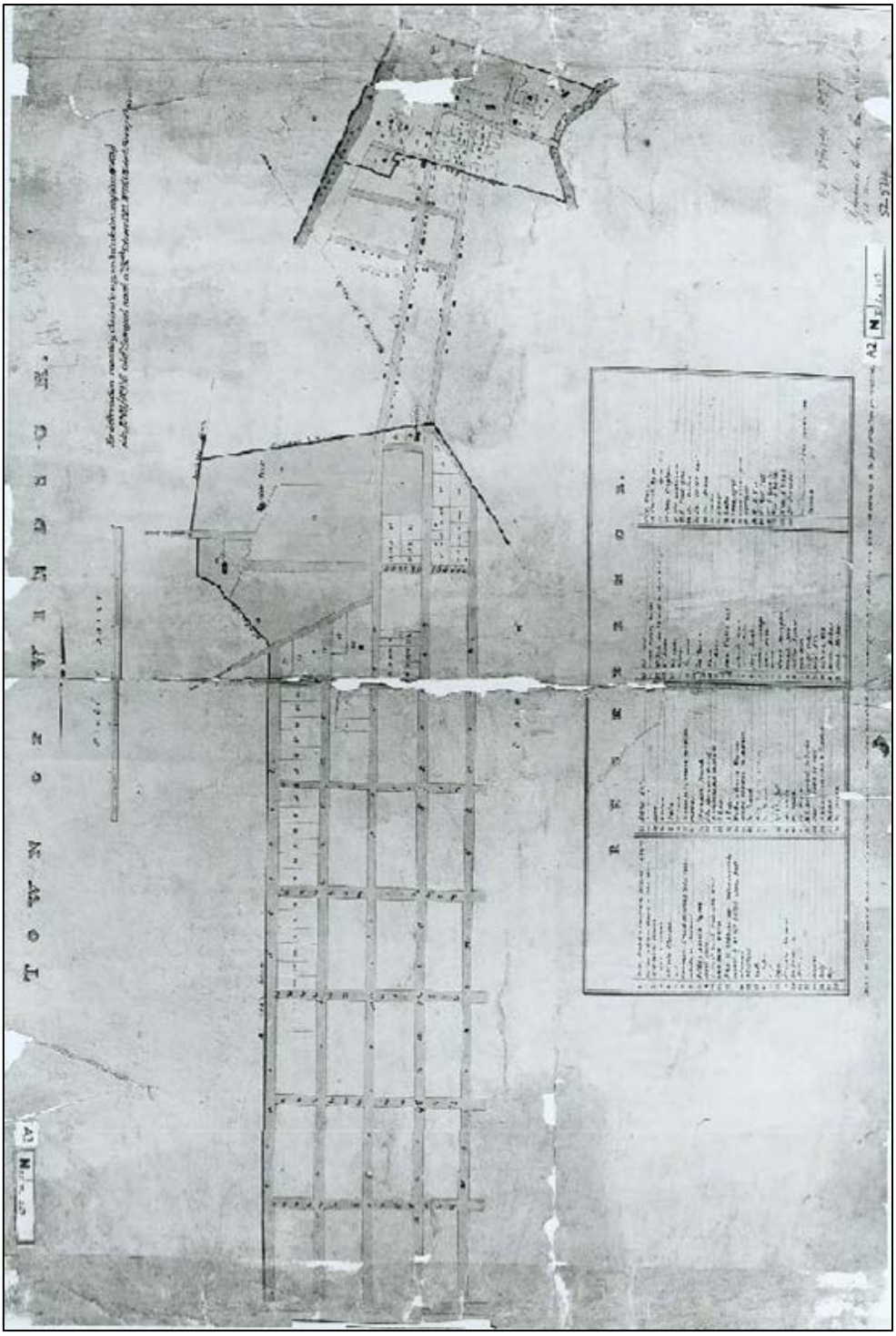


Figure 16: AO Map No SZ524 - Town of Windsor 1820s

Image reproduced courtesy of SRNSW

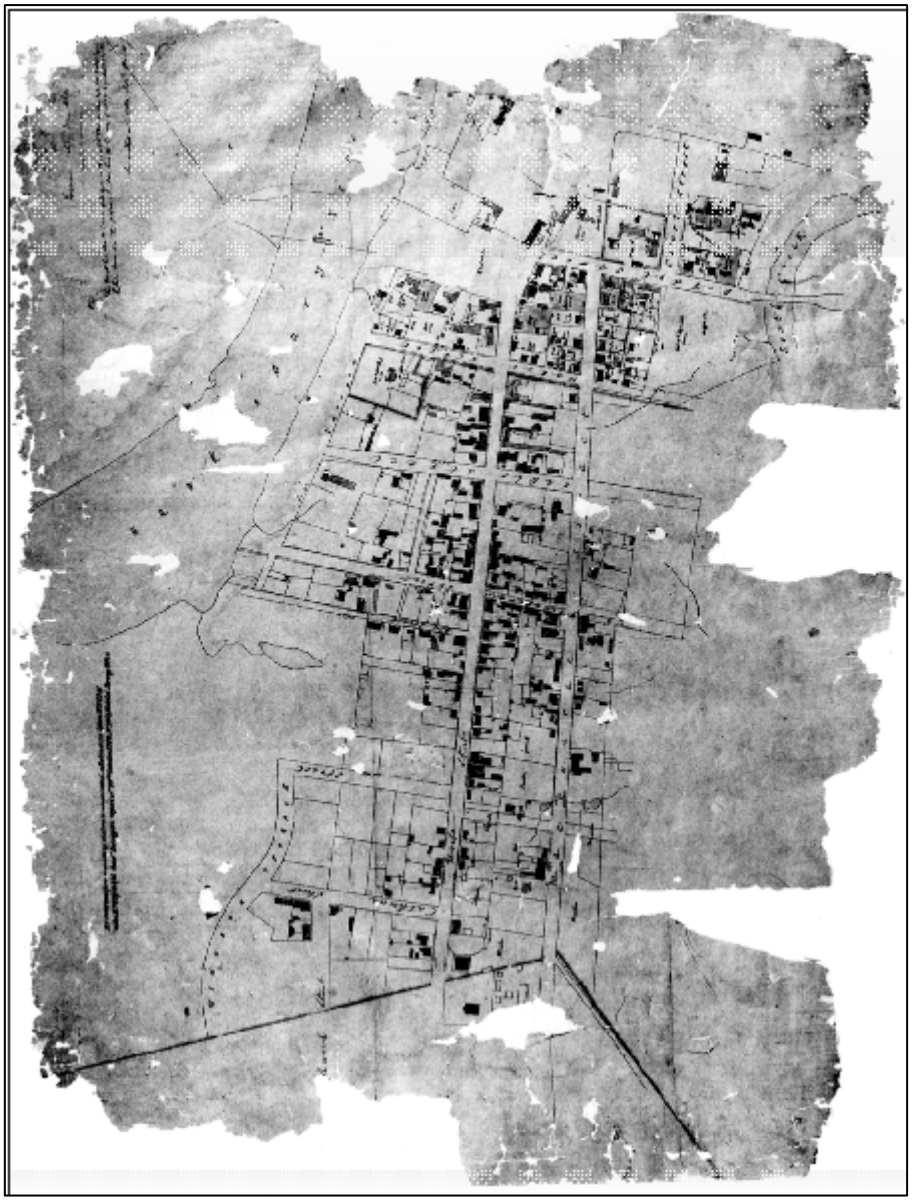


Figure 17: Map No. 5968 - 1835 (Windsor)

Image reproduced courtesy of SRNSW

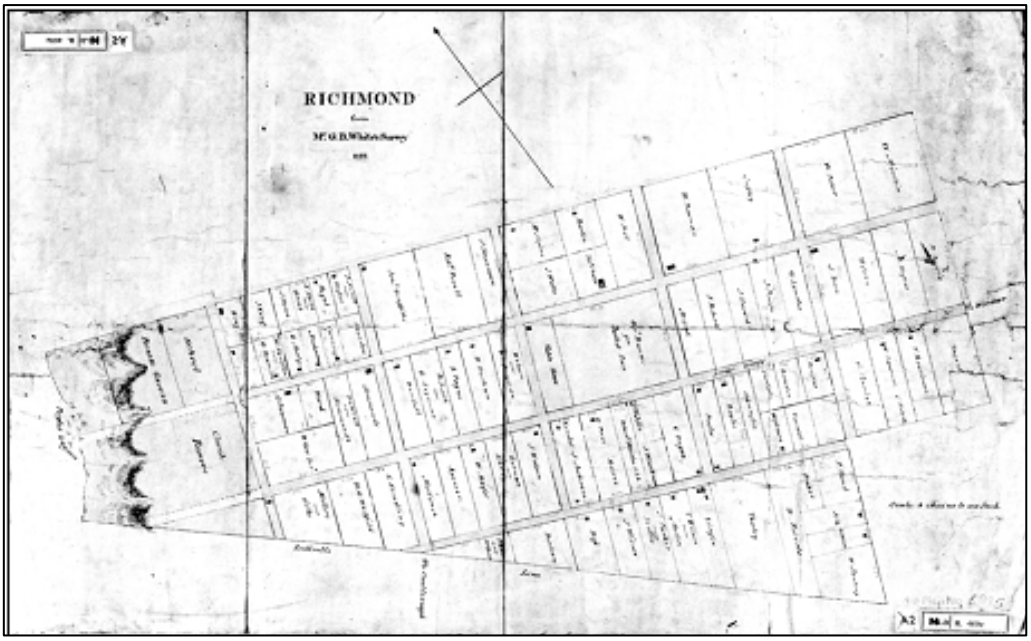


Figure 18: Plan of Richmond, 1827 - by Surveyor G B White Archives Office of NSW, Map No 4985

This plan shows the houses built by that time.

Image reproduced courtesy of SRNSW

One of the reasons for Windsor's slow development may have been the fact that Macquarie, in his zeal, also dedicated three other sites within a radius of a few kilometres from Windsor for urban establishment. To the west, Richmond had been surveyed and by 1820 Commissioner Bigge reported that "*some of the proprietors of land … have begun to build small tenements and from thence to superintend the cultivation of their farms*".[12] A public reserve had been made in the centre of the town and a school house and chapel constructed. There were 79 allotments, uniformly large at 0.8 hectares each and 24 dwellings had been built by 1820, marking Richmond's beginnings.

William Cox gives some details about the formation of the town of Richmond, which he stated in his evidence to Commissioner Bigge was settled and laid out in the year 1816.[13] Land for the town was purchased from Mr Bailey, who was given 200 acres elsewhere in return for it and a small part of Bowman's farm was taken and compensated for. Part of Richmond's plan also encroached on the Common.

Cox had authority from Governor Macquarie to allocate allotments in Windsor and Richmond. "*They are given to persons who rent low lands*", he stated, "*and to various mechanics or industrious persons to induce them to settle in the townships*". The size of these allotments could be up to two acres (just under one hectares). There was a stated condition that a house 26 feet (or eight metres) long and nine feet (or three metres) high should be built, shingled and glazed with glass windows before the title of the allotment was handed over.[14]

A map of Richmond prepared in 1827 by surveyor G. B. White[15] shows the town with a sprinkling of about 40 dwellings by that time. The town blocks are rectangular and the allotments are quite large in size, averaging about one acre (or 0.4 of a hectare). There was a reserve made for a Market Place in the centre of the town, which now remains as Richmond's major park and land reserved for a church, school and burial ground at the western edge of the town.

[12] J T Bigge, *Report*, *Op cit*, 43.
[13] Evidence of William Cox, Bigge Appendix, Bonwick Transcripts, Box 1, pp 1935-2025.
[14] *Ibid*.
[15] AO Map No 4985.

Wilberforce in 1833[16]16 appears to have half Richmond's number of buildings, with about 13 dwellings and a Church and school building. This building still stands, in its colonial simplicity, with the burial ground nearby, where many early headstones remain and the town reserve is now a park. At Wilberforce there was also an area of 6,150 acres (2,460 hectares) reserved adjacent to the town for a Common.[17]

Pitt Town, east of the Hawkesbury and Wilberforce to the west, were even closer to Windsor. In both, school-houses were built by 1821 and a reserve and burial ground marked out. Allotments in these two villages were also generous, between 0.8 and 1.4 hectares at Wilberforce and much the same at Pitt Town. Thus Windsor had three competitors close at hand.

Built Evidence

The buildings of the Macquarie period have been cherished down the years. In them, Georgian England was transposed to the antipodes and the settlers, indirectly, expressed their determination to stay. The buildings were powerful symbols of establishment when they were built and their presence today reminds us in a tangible and immediate way of early settlement days.

Evidence of the early settlement period, indeed from the first two decades of the nineteenth century, is particularly rich in the Hawkesbury towns and district, richer, indeed, than in any other place in Australia. As well as the official buildings, there are modest houses surviving in the towns as well as on the farms. Amongst these are Rose Cottage at Wilberforce (1812-17), Reibycroft (c.1820), Bowman Cottage at Richmond (1817), Cad- Die at Cattai (1821), Mountain View near Richmond (1812) and Agnes Bank (c.1820).

Characteristic of this period is the jerkin-head or half-hipped roof structure. Roofs were clad in shingles, particularly in the towns where the regulations enforced this, or were of bark, stripped from the eucalyptus tree. Walls were of wooden slabs or of brick nogging between timber uprights covered with mud plaster or weatherboarding. Some walls had a rubble infill; some were a little bit of everything. Locally-made bricks, small in size and ruddy in colour, were used in official buildings and, by comparison with Sydney or Parramatta buildings, there was a sparing use of stone. Unrendered red bricks was the major building material. Small paned double hung windows with imported crown glass and six panelled doors made of colonial cedar were also characteristic and stone paving was used for verandah floors. The kitchen was detached in the large houses and the chimneys were of brick.

[16] AO Map No 5060.
[17] Historical Records of NSW, Vol 5, 416.

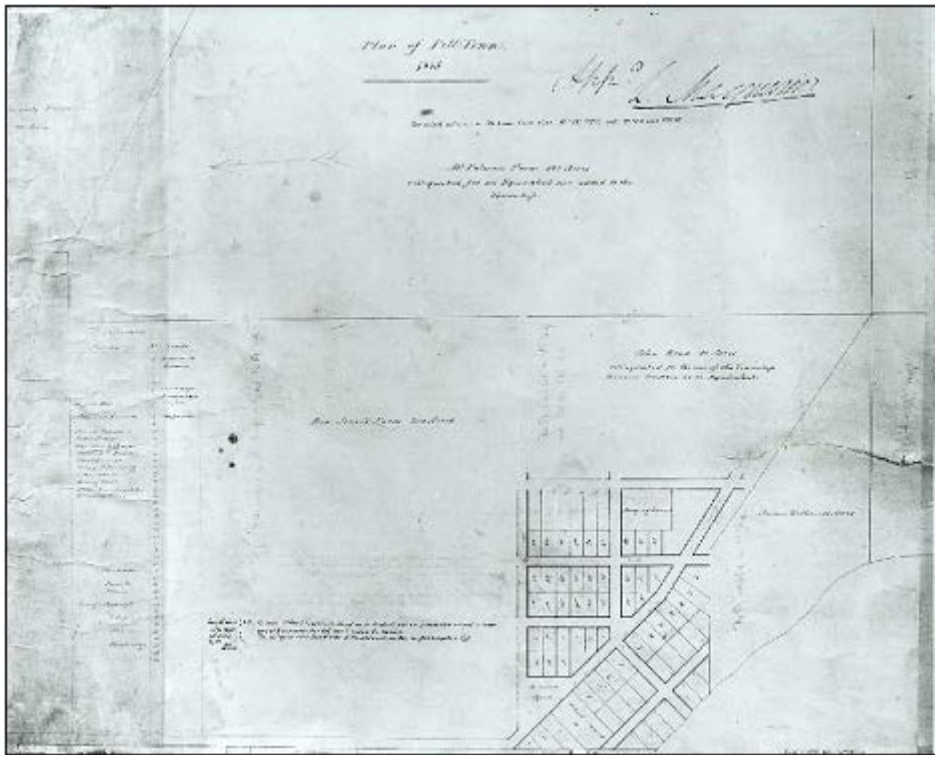


Figure 19: Plan of Pitt Town, 1815 as approved and signed by Governor Macquarie.

Archives Office of New South Wales, Map No 4796.

Image reproduced courtesy of SRNSW

> Within its unusual triangular configuration, dictated by the topography and the route of the roads northwards and to the river, there was land set aside for a school, a village reserve and a burial ground. In addition, adjacent land granted to John Benn was relinquished for the use of the township.

The buildings of this early colonial period along the Hawkesbury have a special and strangely endearing quality. They are simple, but highly evocative of their period, representing as they do the first attempts at permanence in the new land, the first attempts to build, using materials at hand, in a place where no buildings had ever stood before. They represent the cultural patterns of our antipodes, transported and reformed, adapted by necessity to the soils and rocks and timber and topography of New South Wales. They also represent the people who came here and stayed, committed to their new country. They must become, in time, even more precious than they are today.

Characteristics of the Early Town Plans

The early plans exhibited certain consistent distinguishing characteristics. They are based on simple grid forms, with straight streets crossing each other at right angles, allowing clear and precise delineation of allotments. Though much of the ground work may have been done by G. W. Evans, who worked in the district for a time,[18] it was probably his superior, Surveyor-General John Oxley, who determined the basic principles of the design.

Allocation of land for public purposes in the urban area, was, as has been pointed out, stipulated in the Instructions from London to the Governors. The follow-up of substantial early building activities in the major towns was made possible by the nature of the penal system itself. Convict labour was cheap and available. Even in the plans for the small villages, such as Wilberforce and Pitt Town, land

[18] Bobbie Hardy, Early Hawkesbury Settlers, 1985, 111.

was allocated for a school and church and for a burial ground, the latter usually at the edge of the town. The plan for Wilberforce is the most regular and typical of Oxley's plans. Pitt Town's plan is modified by the topography and by the routes of the roads northwards and to the river. Richmond's plan was similar to Wilberforce, though there was more variety in the lot sizes. The plan of Windsor itself was the least typical of the four, with large areas of urban land allocated to public use and a wide variety of irregular allotment sizes. Certainly it was the most densely-built town of the four in the early years, as well as the most dominant in terms of population.

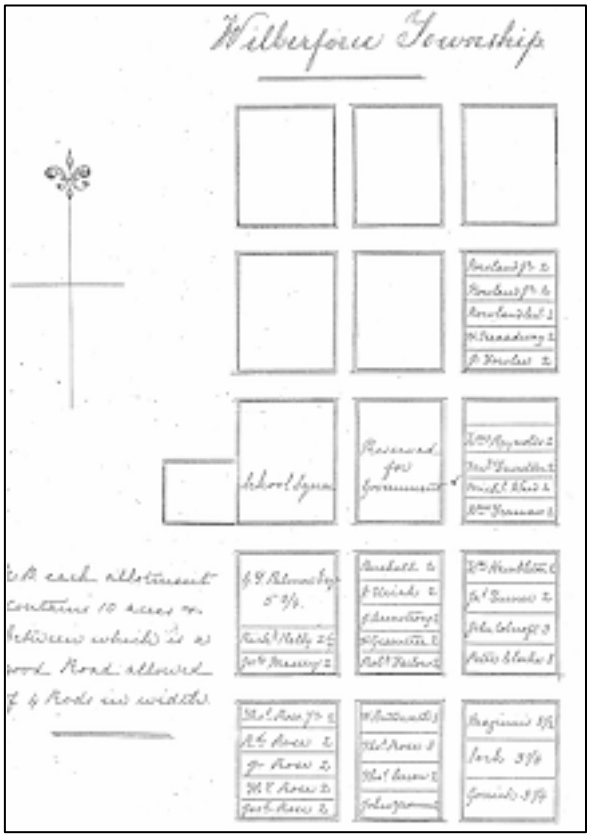
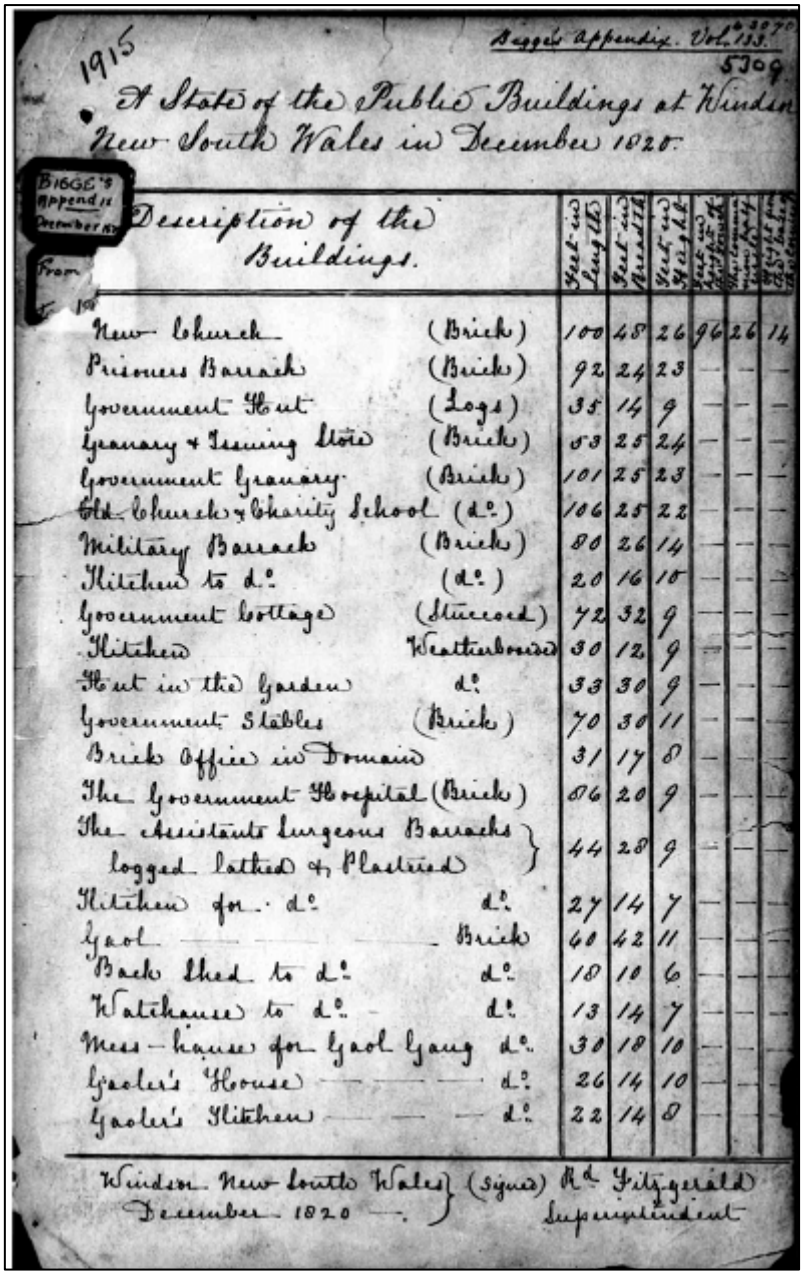


Figure 20: Wilberforce Map. AO Map No. 5060

Image reproduced courtesy of SRNSW



Bigge's appendix. Vol. 139. 5309

1915

A State of the Public Buildings at Windsor New South Wales in December 1820.

BIGGE'S Append. to December 18

From

Description of the Buildings.		Feet in Length	Feet in Breadth	Feet in Height			
New Church	(Brick)	100	48	26	96	26	14
Prisoners Barrack	(Bricks)	92	24	23	—	—	—
Government Hout	(Logs)	35	14	9	—	—	—
Granary & Teaming Store	(Bricks)	53	25	24	—	—	—
Government Granary	(Bricks)	101	25	23	—	—	—
Old Church & Charity School	(do.)	106	25	22	—	—	—
Military Barracks	(Bricks)	80	26	14	—	—	—
Kitchen to do.	(do.)	20	16	10	—	—	—
Government Cottage	(Stuccoed)	72	32	9	—	—	—
Kitchen	Weatherboarded	30	12	9	—	—	—
Hout in the Garden	do.	33	30	9	—	—	—
Government Stables	(Bricks)	70	30	11	—	—	—
Bricks Office in Domain		31	17	8	—	—	—
The Government Hospital	(Bricks)	86	20	9	—	—	—
The Assistants Surgeons Barracks logged lathed & Plastered		44	28	9	—	—	—
Kitchen for do.	do.	27	14	7	—	—	—
Gaol	Bricks	60	42	11	—	—	—
Back Shed to do.	do.	18	10	6	—	—	—
Watchhouses to do.	do.	13	14	7	—	—	—
Mess-house for Gaol Gang	do.	30	18	10	—	—	—
Gaoler's House	do.	26	14	10	—	—	—
Gaoler's Kitchen	do.	22	14	8	—	—	—

Windsor New South Wales December 1820. (signed) R.d Fitzgerald Superintendent

Figure 21: Table of Public Buildings at Windsor N.S.W. in December 1820

Image reproduced courtesy of SLNSW

5 Urban expansion after the 1820s

An 1835 map of Windsor[1] shows that it had retained its town nucleus around Thompson Square, with George and Macquarie Streets pushing southwards along the ridge, past Baker, Kable and Fitzgerald Streets, all named after early citizens, past a little New Street, to a line just south of Catherine Street. The buildings were mainly clustered in nine town blocks; the location of the Hawkesbury punt is shown and the beginnings of Windsor Terrace leading out to St Matthew's is indicated.

Another detailed map,[2] also showing buildings, updated from 1841, shows the town extending southward to the road turning off to Richmond.

On 8 June 1841, a notice appeared in *The Australian* advertising allotments for sale in George Street, New Street, Church Street and on Windsor Terrace. "*Windsor is well known as a third town of consequence in the Colony*", wrote the auctioneer, "*and is rapidly increasing in importance*". There were plans for steam-boat communication with Sydney. The lots in the Terrace were praised for their picturesque beauty:

> "*The remaining lots are fronting on Windsor Terrace, that enviable and picturesque spot, most delightfully situated on a beautiful eminence, commanding a very extensive and pleasing view of the Hawkesbury River, which winds its course through the highly cultivated and improved farms on its banks … and adds that beauty to the scenery which is so essential to the landscape*".

In 1848 there were 1,679 people living in Windsor, "*large and excellent*" inns and a daily stage-coach to Sydney. The railway, coming through in 1864, skirted the built up section of the town on the south cutting, close to the house Fairfield.

When it was laid out in 1812, Windsor was planned as a large town with a potential of 42 town blocks, extending southwards from Thompson Square into the Common. The blocks south of the railway line were reaffirmed in 1882, with a narrow lane added through the middle of each block. Allotments were a quarter of an acre in size (0.1 hectare) and two further blocks were set aside for churches and burial ground. This extension provided plenty of land for expansion for the next 60 years, with Windsor experiencing a very slow population growth during this period, from 2,033 people in 1881 to 3,460 in 1941.

Richmond was also growing slowly. In 1832 it was said to have "*many ornamental cottages*" and by 1848, there were 746 people and 147 houses, a church, burial-ground and school house. W. S. Jevons on his walking tour in 1857 remarked on its regularity: "*the cottages or houses were large and good and surrounded more generally with fine gardens*", he wrote.[3] Pitt Town, too, though "*a very straggling and rather small village*", in 1857, had some "*very neat comfortable cottages generally of wood*", with "*very pretty little gardens filled with rose trees, oleander bushes, orange trees and all the ordinary garden flowers*". Even today, the perfume from orange blossoms at Pitt Town is all pervading in the spring.

Local Government and Town Services

The Windsor District Council was established in 1843, set up to oversee the roads and bridges of the district. Responsibilities without the power to raise money to carry them out, made this Council an ineffective body.

In 1858 the Municipalities Act was passed, enabling local incorporation of town councils with the ability to strike a rate on freehold property for funds. Early town meetings to discuss local government were rowdy affairs, with the townspeople dividing into two camps, for and against. The Borough

[1] Windsor in 1835, Map No 5969, Archives Office of NSW.
[2] Map of Windsor, 1841, updated to 1882, Lands Department of NSW, W443A.
[3] *Papers and Correspondence of William Stanley Jevons*, *Op cit*, 139, 142.

Council of Windsor was finally incorporated on 4 March 1871 and nine aldermen were duly elected. Robert Dick became Mayor.[4]

Richmond's Borough Council was incorporated soon after Windsor's, in 1872 and George Bowman became the first Mayor.

In 1906 both Boroughs of Windsor and Richmond became municipalities and boundaries were altered to include rural areas. In 1949 the two towns and their immediate districts were amalgamated.

In the meantime, the Colo Shire Council was formed in 1906 with headquarters at Wilberforce from 1910. Amalgamation with Windsor and Richmond took place in 1981.

Gas and Electricity

Local services were cautiously and slowly introduced. Some oil street lights were erected in 1875, but remained unlit until 1880 when Council levied a special lighting rate. A Windsor Gaslight Company was formed in 1883 and built its works south of the railway line between Cox and Church Streets and gas replaced the old oil lamps for 30 years. The Onus Brothers then supplied electricity to the town from 1916. Since 1913, Richmond had received electricity from the Sydney Electrical Engineering Company, which used the Hawkesbury Agricultural College supply from 1915 to 1924. In that year Windsor's power station in New Street was burnt down and Windsor was also supplied by the College. After 1934 both Windsor and Richmond used electricity from the Sydney City Council and the supply was extended to Pitt Town. In 1960 Prospect County Council took over.[5]

Water Supply and Reticulation

Though Windsor was located beside a large river, water was not easily obtained and it was both expensive and polluted. Water carriers brought water from the wharf at Windsor or, when the water became brackish, from Pugh's Lagoon at Richmond.

Windsor decided to establish its own water supply, pumping from the river to an elevated tank in Fitzgerald Street and work commenced in 1889.

Richmond's water supply works, built by the Public Works Department in 1892, were managed by the Metropolitan Water Board. Water was drawn from the Hawkesbury by a pumping station below the confluence of the Nepean and Grose Rivers, taken to a brick reservoir and then reticulated both to the town and to North Richmond. The Hawkesbury Agricultural College established its own supply in 1910. After 1911, the town water was treated. In 1926, an elevated service reservoir was erected near Church Hill to augment supply. An amalgamation of the two Richmond systems was negotiated in 1939 and an additional pumping station was erected at the elevated Richmond tank.[6]

The Water Board took over the management of the Windsor supply in 1951. Two concrete reservoirs were constructed at Windsor and South Windsor and an elevated tank was rebuilt. An elevated reservoir was also constructed at Pitt Town in 1958 and the Richmond supply was extended to Londonderry in 1958, allowing urban subdivision to proceed south of Richmond after that date. Wilberforce did not have reticulated water until 1967.

The Hawkesbury district remains dependent on its own local water supply system pumped from the river near Richmond and has not as yet been linked up with the metropolitan reticulation system, which would require massive investment to bring water mains north from Prospect. This has been an inhibiting factor for more intensive development in the area.

Sewerage works were introduced for Windsor in 1939 and for Richmond in 1962.

[4] D W Bowd, *Macquarie Country*, Sydney, 1962. Chapter on Local Government.
[5] *Ibid*.
[6] W V Aird, The Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage of Sydney, Sydney, 1961.

A detailed account in 1892

It can be seen from the population figures that both Windsor and Richmond, though possessing some substantial buildings, grew only very slowly during the nineteenth century after the first burst of activity when the towns were established and the land cleared and farms put under crops before 1820.

A detailed description of the towns is given in *The Australian Handbook* of 1892. Windsor's major buildings, works and institutions are remarked upon and a good idea of the town at that time can be obtained from the account:

> "*Windsor, a Borough town on the Hawkesbury River, 34 miles NW from Sydney … has a post, money order, Government savings bank and telegraph office … The principal streets are George and Macquarie. There are about 12 principal stores. Hotels: the leading being the Fitzroy, Royal Exchange, the Royal and Carrington. The School of Art is a substantial building, with a library of about 1,100 volumes. The public school is a fine building, cost about £1,500 and having an average attendance of 302 scholars, increased accommodation recently afforded by the erection of a girls' school and a ladies' school. The places of worship are the Church of England (St Matthew's), a brick building with tower and belfry, the foundation stone of which was laid by Governor Macquarie in 1817; Roman Catholic Church (St Matthew) built in the Gothic style; Wesleyan Chapel and Presbyterian Church, both of brick, the Congregational Church and the Salvation Army barracks, a wooden building. The Fitzroy Bridge crossing the South Creek has been replaced by a new structure, on iron cylinders. The Windsor Bridge, built on iron cylinders and spanning the river Hawkesbury, is a fine substantial work. The Bank of New South Wales, A.J.S. and Commercial Bank have business here. There is also a hospital and benevolent asylum combined, a court-house and a goal, also a private observatory, kept by Mr John Tebbutt, FRAS, astronomer. Water is laid on, the supply having cost £6,500. The town is lighted with gas. Formation: sandstone and slate.*"

The river by this time, was navigable to vessels of any draught only to Churchill's Wharf on Sackville Reach. The population was estimated at 2,500, but despite the small numbers, there were two newspapers, *The Australian* and *The Windsor* and *Richmond Gazette*. The fare to Sydney by railway then was 4s.8d. or 2s.11d.

Richmond, six kilometres away, was considered "*one of the most English looking towns in the colony*". The principal hotels were the Royal, the Post Office, the Black Horse and the Horse and Jockey, reflecting the district's interest in horses and horse racing. There was a Post Office.

> "*The more important buildings are the Episcopal Church, a fine large brick building; the Roman Catholic Church, a much smaller edifice; the Presbyterian Church, a compact building of stone with a palatial manse; and the Wesleyan Chapel, an unpretending structure of brick; a School of Art, with library of 1,600 volumes, branches of the New South Wales and Commercial Banks; one public school with average attendance of 192, one denominational school belonging to the Roman Catholics, conducted by the Sisters of Charity and a court-house. There is a spacious park like reserve, with handsome pavilion, in the centre of the town. Masonic, Oddfellows', Temperance and Orange lodges are also established in the town.*"

The population of Richmond in 1892 was 1,400 people, with 3,100 in the district.

Pitt Town was described as a small village, consisting principally of a very long street, with an Episcopal Church and a Presbyterian Church, both of stone, a public school with average attendance of 86, one inn and a number of dwelling houses. The population was 350.

Wilberforce was also noted as a small village, with one hotel, The Old Retreat, an Episcopal Church, "a neat stone building at the north end of town, a Wesleyan Church, a brick building in the centre of the town, a public school, with an average attendance of 60, a watch house, two stores and a leather factory. The population of the district given was 500.

North Richmond, Kurrajong and Kurrajong Heights were also noticed as villages: North Richmond with a hotel, a small school and two churches; Kurrajong with three churches, two small schools and three boarding establishments; and Kurrajong heights with a school, a Presbyterian church, two or three boarding houses, "*and several handsome gentlemen's residences*".

Some of the less favoured rural land was subdivided and offered for sale by land speculators in the late nineteenth century. In 1865, 111 allotments adjoining Richmond, of between a quarter and a half an acre were offered and it was in this vicinity, near the Richmond to Castlereagh Road, that repeated attempts were made in the 1880s to sell off tiny blocks of suburban land.[7]

Town lots in Windsor and adjacent to Richmond were on offer in the 1890s, with Crown Land on the north-east corner of Richmond being added in 1893.

Subdivision of farm land was also being offered in the eighties and nineties, from small farmlets of from 4 to 11 acres near Pitt Town and at North Richmond and Kurrajong, to farms of from 45 to 50 acres at Clarendon and a few larger ones at Kurrajong.[8] Into the twentieth century, a few small farms of from 11 to 15 acres were selling hear Rickabys Creek.

Few of these "farms" appear to have had any agricultural potential. They were offered as speculation for investment under the guise of "poultry farms" or "orchard blocks" or as "rural retreats", especially in the Kurrajong district.

[7] Subdivision Boxes, Mitchell Library. The Bellevue Estate, the Clifton Park Estate, Richmond Park and Killarney Lakes Estates were for sale in 1883 and 1885.
[8] See illustrations of Killarney Estate near Pitt Town, 1885, and Freehold Country Properties around the town of Richmond, 1898.

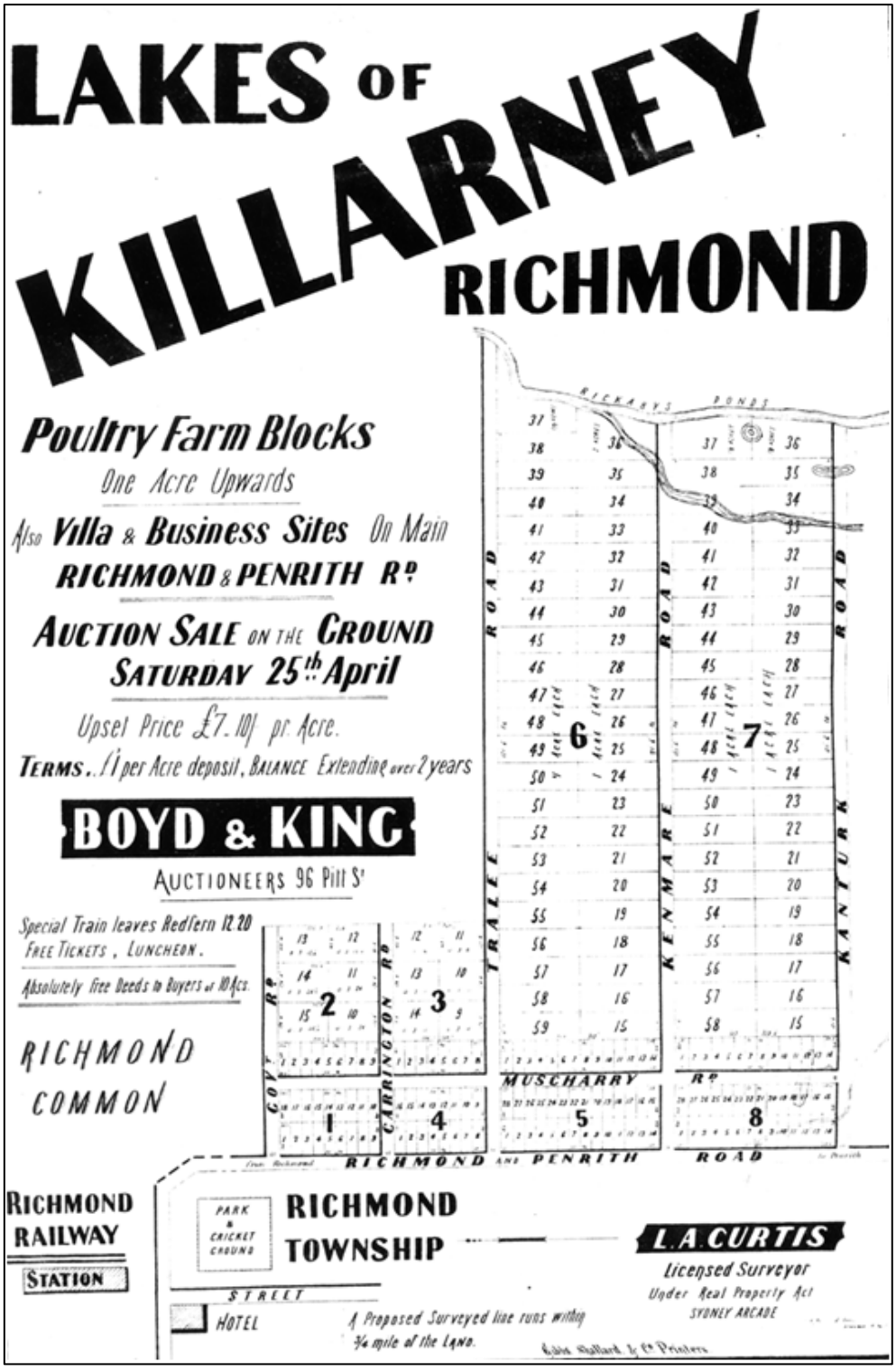


Figure 22: Subdivision at Richmond, 1885

Small town blocks and one acre suburban allotments were offered at Richmond in 1885. Mitchell Library, Subdivision Boxes.

Image reproduced courtesy of SLNSW

Figure 23: Subdivision of Pitt Town

Subdivision advertised by Campbell Mitchell & Company in 1886 offering farmlets of from 5 to 7 acres adjacent to Pitt Town Common, which is itself used as an enticement: "*Ten thousand acres as a free run to all purchasers in this estate, also free use of timber for home purposes*". Poultry farmers and orchardists were targeted.

Mitchell Library, Subdivision Boxes

Image reproduced courtesy of SLNSW

Souter, D. H., “From a Painter’s Point of View”, *The Australian Magazine*, March 1899.

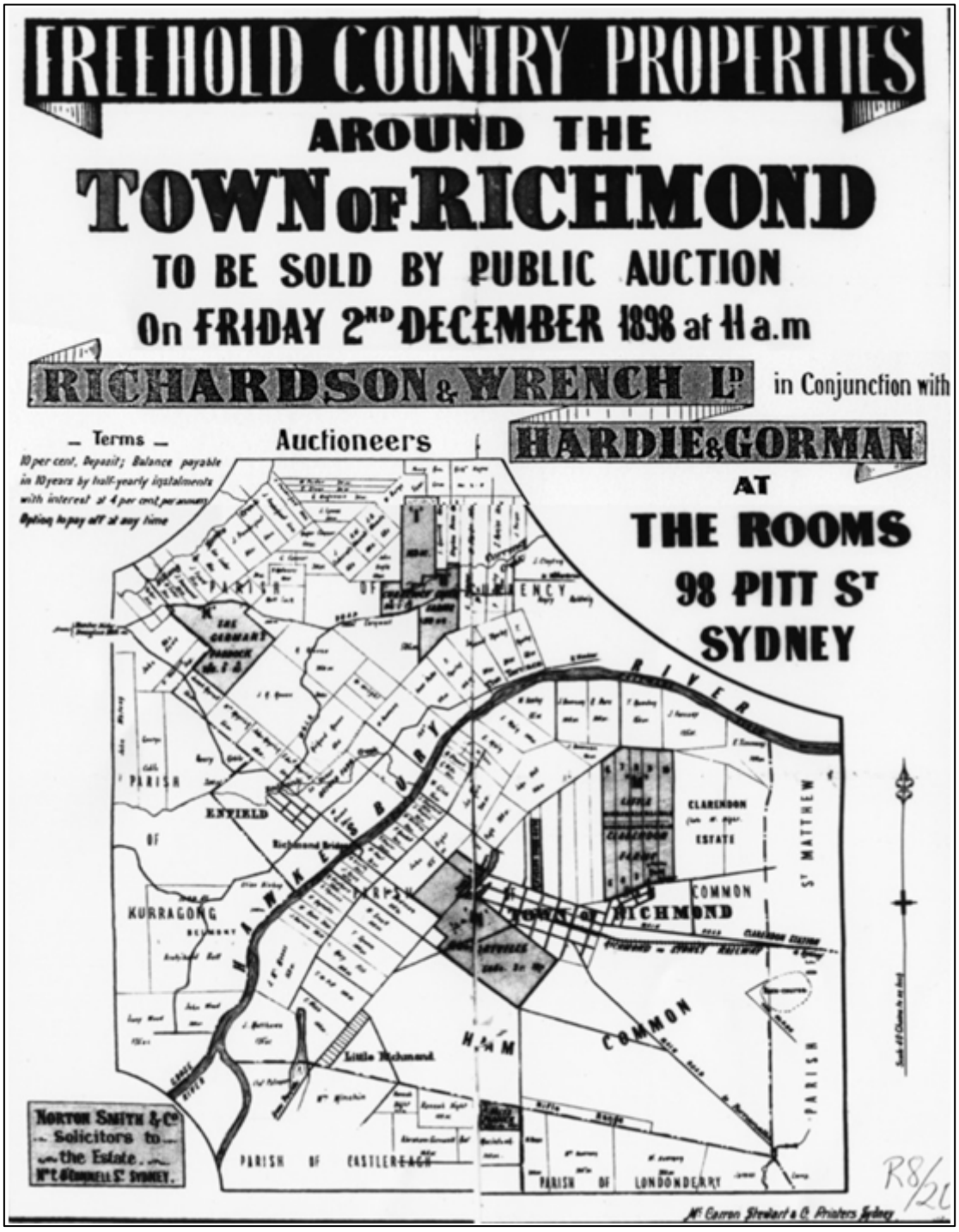


Figure 24: Agricultural land subdivision around Richmond, 1898.

Agricultural land subdivided for sale in 1898 in parcels of 45 to 50 acres. Larger parcels of over 100 acres are offered on the slopes. Mitchell Library, Subdivision Boxes.

Image reproduced courtesy of SLNSW

6 Population growth and distribution

There is little doubt that the Hawkesbury Region supported considerable numbers of Aborigines before the invasion of the European settlers. Traces of their occupation are still to be found in rock carvings, cave drawings, rock grooves and middens. Long after the upheaval of the first wave of white settlement, an Aboriginal Reserve was established at Sackville and some Aborigines continued to live there in the 1920s.

By 1800, a white population of some 964 people had established themselves at the Hawkesbury. Of these, 406 people (141 men, 82 women and 183 children) were recorded as being victualled by the Public Store. Thirty of these were holding ground by grant or lease. There were also 558 people (488 men, 63 women and 7 children) who were regarded as supporting themselves.[1] Ten years later, in 1810, the population had risen to 2,389 at Hawkesbury; 243 free and 58 prisoners and their children were victualled from the Public Stores and the number no longer dependent on government beneficence had risen to 2002.[2]

In the Census held in the colony in 1828, when the total white population of New South Wales was only 21,586, the Windsor district had risen to 4,456 people.[3] The population of the County's western rural areas along the Hawkesbury River system equalled that of Sydney, with the alluvial flats around Richmond and Windsor becoming areas of important activity.

Between 1821 and 1858 both Windsor and Richmond became well established as townships, though it appears their populations did not increase significantly. Windsor, still considered a frontier town, retained the familiar sight of redcoats marching to church on Sundays, stepping out along George Street accompanied by a lively band until the 1840s. The town grew quieter after the withdrawal of the military presence in 1842. As the agricultural land was all virtually taken up by 1820,[4] and there was no vacant land for excess population after that, the young white men struck out for the fertile river flats of the Hunter, or journeyed further out to the Liverpool Plains. The Singletons, the Howes, the Bowmans and many other families had members who migrated further out, travelling up the Macdonald Valley past St Albans, or making their way by the stock route along the Bulga Road.

In 1832, Windsor was described in the *New South Wales Calendar and Directory* as having most of its houses built of brick, erected chiefly along the street leading to the church. In 1848 there were 1,679 people living in the town, large and excellent inns and a daily stage coach to Sydney.

Richmond had 746 people by this time, 147 houses, a church, burial-ground and school- house.

[1] *Historical Records of New South Wales*, Vol 4, 160.
[2] *Historical Records of New South Wales*, Vol 4, 360
[3] *1828 Census of New South Wales, Sydney*, 1980.
[4] B H Fletcher, *Landed Enterprise and Penal Society*, Sydney, 1976.

A comparison of population figures is possible from the Census breakdowns from 1861 to 1911 and is shown in the following table.[5] The Hawkesbury towns remained small, but were growing very slightly. The villages of Pitt Town and Wilberforce remain almost static.

Location	1848	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901	1911
Richmond	746	943	1065	1239	1242	1201	1860
Remainder of Parish of Ham Common		839	466				
Village of Colo			88				
Kurrajong District			868				
Windsor	1679	1900	1732	1990	2033	2039	3470
Pitt Town	229	298	241	351	351		
Remainder of Parish of Pitt Town		386	265				
Remainder of Parish of St Matthew		569	412				
Wilberforce		189	375	356	482		

A second table gives the number of houses noted in census years after 1861.

Location	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901
Richmond	159	180		219	230
Windsor	311	318		375	382
Pitt Town	59			66	
Wilberforce	30			93	

The break-down into houses of different materials is as follows:

Location	Stone	Brick	Concrete	Wood	Iron	Other	Total
Richmond Municipality		133	1	122		2	258
Windsor Municipality	5	308		112	1	3	429

More recent population figures are as follows:

Location	1921	1931	1941	1954	1968	1981
Richmond	2010	2050	2640	N/A	N/A	7882
Dwellings	435					
Windsor	3807	3380	3460	9867*	14200*	5564
Dwellings	867					
	* composite totals					

From these figures, it can be seen that Windsor established an early dominance as the chief of the Macquarie Towns, growing very slowly over the years, but having two periods of recession, from 1861 to 1881, when numbers dropped and from 1921 to the 1940s, when numbers declined again. From the 1950s, the growing influence of metropolitan Sydney must be given the credit for the rise in population figures, as both rural subdivisions and commuter traffic increased and as both Windsor and Richmond became more tightly enmeshed in the web of metropolitan expansion.

Richmond kept pace with approximately half Windsor's population and the villages of Pitt Town and Wilberforce, both very close to Windsor, remained very small. Further down the river, there were other tiny hamlets formed around the nucleus of a school, a post office, a church, or an inn, such as those

[5] Figures are drawn from G. H. Wells, *Geographical Dictionary of the Australian Colonies*, Sydney, 1848; Census of the Colony of NSW, 1861, 1871, 1881; Census of New South Wales1891; H. Tanner, M. Kelly et al., *Heritage Study of North Western Sector of Sydney*, DEP, 1984; *New South Wales Statistical Registers*.

at Sackville, Ebenezer, Wisemans Ferry, Lower Portland, Leets Vale and on the Macdonald River at St Albans.

Lesley Hall, in her 1926 study of the Hawkesbury,[6] divided the white population into three main groups, each dependent on physiographic controls. The first group was found in the region of greatest density in the vicinity of Windsor, an area which constitutes a definite natural region of fertile lowlands which support a dense rural population, centred on the town of Windsor, the two smaller villages of Wilberforce and Pitt Town and the town of Richmond. She notes that this is the only region where the population showed any degree of unity, being the only area where the alluvial flats on which the people live are extensive. The second and much smaller group consisted of the small village clusters which formed links in the chain of communication throughout the uplifted district, which occurred where the river flats are extensive enough to maintain a few farms as at Sackville and Lower Portland, or at definite positions along the lines of communication, such as North Richmond and Wisemans Ferry. The third group was made up of the numerous isolated families which had established themselves along the banks of the river wherever the areas of silt at the base of the sandstone highlands afforded land for cultivation. The group was limited in numbers and was located in the uplifted region of juvenile dissection and the isolation of the farming families was due to the barren nature of the sandstone hills. Since the decline of the river traffic this century, these tiny pockets of settlement have become even more isolated and these, together with the Macdonald Valley, have become pockets of almost-forgotten landscapes until quite recently, when they were re-discovered by the water-skiers and alienated city-dwellers.

Recent population figures from the 1981 Census show that the Richmond/Hobartville urban area has outstripped the Windsor/South Windsor area in population by 7882 to 5564, with expansion taking place south along the Castlereagh Road. The total population of the Shire of Hawkesbury has risen to 36,757.

Apart from Richmond, significant population increases have occurred in McGrath's Hill and Maraylya, North Richmond, Kurrajong-Kurmond and Glossodia, with suburban subdivisions taking place in each locality.[7]

Peripheral expansion and infilling has taken place in both Windsor and Richmond. Windsor appears to be holding its own as the major centre, with both the Council Chambers and the hospital established there, but Richmond is beginning to offer strong competition in both commercial and service industries.

A study of the population figures gives emphasis to the fact that the Hawkesbury population has, from the beginning, been comparatively small, concentrated around the two main towns. The district's importance, however, has been such that one expects greater numbers of people to have lived there. Historically speaking, there are numerous well- known figures from colonial days who made their home there, or grew up there in childhood: Charles Harpur, William Cox, Thomas Arndell, John Howe, William Bowman, Mary Reibey, Samuel Marsden, Margaret Catchpole, Robert Fitzgerald, William Grono, Thomas McQuade, William Walker and John Tebbutt, to name only a few. These names of folk who lived there, are drawn from this small but important group of early colonists.

[6] Lesley D. Hall, "The Physiography and Geography of the Hawkesbury River between Windsor and Wiseman's Ferry", *Proceedings of the Linnean Society*, 1926.
[7] See Hawkesbury Council Population Distribution Map, Town Planning Department, 1984.

Figure 25: Map showing the distribution of population between Windsor and Wiseman's Ferry From Hall, Lesley D (1926)

7 Colonial agriculture and subsequent land use sequences

While it has been generally accepted that the alluvial lands of the Hawkesbury are exceedingly rich and productive, it must be recognised that these do not extend over a large area and indeed, the area is very small and subject to great difficulties in the destructive floods and non-periodical rainfall.

James Atkinson, writing in 1826, acknowledged the richness of the Hawkesbury Valley without giving due weight to its attendant difficulties. "*The alluvial lands in New South Wales are not surpassed in fertility by any in the world;"* he wrote, *"the principal tracts are found along the banks of Hawkesbury, Nepean and the various branches of the Hunter; they consist of vegetable mould more or less mixed with sa nd of many feet in depth…*"[1] Atkinson went on to criticise the first wave of settlers: "*The greater part of the alluvial lands upon the Hawkesbury and Nepean have been cleared and are under cultivation; and in the hands of any other than their present ignorant, indolent and improvident possessors, would produce the most plentiful and valuable crops.*"[2] He did, however, quote another opinion by a Gentleman of the Colony, "of long experience and accurate observation", who took a more accurate and realistic view:

> "*Notwithstanding the fertility of the soil upon the Banks of the Hawkesbury and Nepean, the farmers there run much greater risks in cropping their lands than in any other part of the Colony. If the season proves wet, the wheat, in consequence of the richness of the soil, grows so rank in the straw, that it is liable to be laid by the winds and rain and to rot upon the ground; and where it is not laid it is very light in the ear. In very hot seasons the soil in some parts binds so hard, that the roots of the wheat cannot tiller and spread and in other places, where there is much sand, it is burnt up: but when the season proves favourable, the crops are immense.*"
>
> "*The Farmers upon these banks also run very great risks from the floods, which do not return at any stated periods and therefore the crops are liable to be destroyed by inundation in every stage of their growth. If the land is overflowed when the wheat or other grain is just sown, it generally swells and bursts, or rots; and in all the low grounds it is totally destroyed, as the water is some time before it runs off, or is absorbed by the earth.*"[3]

Atkinson was taken to task for his comments by a reviewer of his book in the *Sydney Gazette* of 20 January 1827, who took issue with him for having written "*disrespectfully*" of a class "*which is the honour and prop of the community, that is the 'dungaree settlers'*" of the Hawkesbury, who were staunchly defended. Their shortcomings were excused and it was argued that it was due to their exertions that the colony was "*indebted for almost everything*."

At this time, the major crops in the area were wheat and corn. At first, very primitive farming methods were used. Tree-stumps were not easily removed; the ground was hoed and the seed scattered by hand.[4] As animal stocks increased, bullocks and horses were used for ploughing and it was possible to increase the acreage under crops. Settlers made wooden ploughs from box tree wood and carts from stringy bark and blue gum.[5] Local mills were built to grind the local grain; there were nine mills in the Hawkesbury district by 1833.

The farms along the Hawkesbury were small, averaging from 30 to 100 acres (or 12 to 40 hectares) and they appear to have been increasingly productive over the ten years from 1810 to 1820. During these years the total cropped area at the Hawkesbury rose from 4,896 acres (or 1,958 hectares) to 14,927 acres (or 5,970 hectares). Most of this was under wheat and maize, with fruit and vegetables occupying only 638 acres (or 254 hectares). The horse population rose to 942, cattle and sheep figures were high at 11,720 and 17,339 and hogs were increasing rapidly to 16,855.[6]

[1] James Atkinson, *An Account of the State of Agriculture and Grazing in NSW*, London, 1826, 7.
[2] *Ibid*, 8.
[3] *Ibid*, 9
[4] Bigge Appendix, Bonwick Transcripts, Box 5, p. 1966, Mitchell Library.
[5] *Ibid*, p 2048, quoted D.G. Bowd, p 191.
[6] B.H. Fletcher, Landed Enterprise and Penal Society, Table 19, p 200.

The Reverend Mr Cowper named 83 Hawkesbury settlers whom he considered to be "*industrious and well disposed*", when questioned by Commissioner Bigge. Others had fallen into debt and some had forfeited their farms, but it would be simplistic to conclude that these were necessarily, in Atkinson's words, ignorant, indolent or improvident. It is evident from a detailed survey of the Hawkesbury lands that there is a great difference in quality between the more favoured alluvial river soils and those further back from the river where small farms continued to be allocated. With markets controlled by often rapacious Sydney merchants, uncertain seasons and occasional floods, many farmers and their families would have had difficult times.

In 1943, when W.H. Maze conducted his detailed land use survey at the Hawkesbury, he noted that a considerable area of land, particularly in the Kurrajong/Wilberforce area, was reverting to secondary-growth forest scrub. Describing the soils of the area, he divides them into three categories: the deep alluvial of the flood plain, sandy loams or loams ideal for intensive farming; the clay loams of the sloping uplands, fairly fertile; and the light sandy soils of shallow depth in the north and north-east of his defined area. These, he notes *"are usually well drained, but are generally too infertile for economic cultivation as witnessed by the large areas of regrowth and pasturage returning to forest which are found associated with many abandoned farms*".[7]

When the Parish Maps of Kurrajong, Currency and Wilberforce are examined, it becomes obvious that little or no recognition was made of the unequal qualities of the soils in the area in the allocation of farm sizes during the early nineteenth century. Many farmers in these areas were coping with less than auspicious soils, as they were also further south of Richmond in the Londonderry area and on the higher land east of Pitt Town in the Maraylya area.

Griffith Taylor, too, noted the difference in soil quality east of the "alluvial edge" which he marked on his diagrammatic map.[8] He draws a distinction between the Recent alluviums close to the river and the much wider area of Tertiary gravels and loams which were in 1958 still largely covered by secondary-growth woodland.

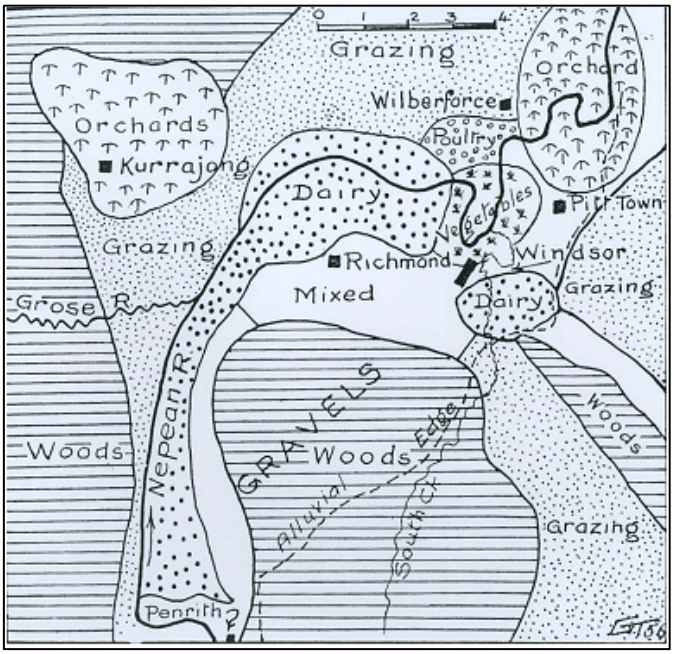


Figure 26: Land use in the 1940s

A generalised map of land use in the Windsor-Richmond district in the 1940s

From Taylor, Griffith (1928)

[7] W.H. Maze, "Land Utilization Surveys in the Kurrajong-Windsor District, NSW", *Australian Geographer*, IV, 6 November 1943, p 162.
[8] Griffith Taylor, *Sydneyside Scenery*, p 90-91.

Thus it is unfair to accuse the Hawkesbury pioneers generally of either mismanagement or indolence. Rather, we should see in their efforts the uneven achievements of uneven opportunities. Only a sprinkling of large landowners in the district, William Cox, Archibald Bell, Samuel Marsden, were being favoured with numbers of assigned convicts. Most of the smaller settlers had to rely on their own labour. Many had been convicts themselves; they had won emancipist status and had subsequently been granted land, in accordance with the British policy of the time. This scheme of granting small holding to emancipists has been claimed to be a "*unique experiment in the history of British land settlement policies*" by Brian Fletcher, historian of this early period.[9]

Though the experiment was less than entirely successful and the hope that farmlets would provide former convicts with the means of staying in New South Wales slowly faded, it turned out that it was not the possession of small farms, but the opportunities for other forms of employment that kept most of them in the colony.[10] These opportunities were greater in the towns and especially in Sydney, than they were in the countryside. The experience on the Hawkesbury foreshadowed the larger pattern of agricultural experience throughout the state in the following decades of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The emancipist farmers were leavened by a number of free settlers who migrated in the 1790s or early in the nineteenth century, like John Bowman and his family, who came in 1798, the Gronos of Pitt Town, who arrived in 1799, John Dight, who came in 1801 and the Ebenezer Presbyterians, a self-reliant lot, most of whom arrived on the *Coromandel* in June 1802. Together, the emancipists and the free settlers made a considerable contribution to the process of turning New South Wales from a goal to a colony. Farming and grazing were some of the earliest forms of small private enterprise in the colony and the other local endeavours connected with these - ship building, town building, carting, milling, trading in small surpluses, further advanced the process. All this, according to Brian Fletcher, vests early farming and grazing with a considerable significance. The patterns set and the experience gained before 1821, in the years when the Hawkesbury was being settled, were of great importance in the history of agriculture and pastoral enterprise in Australia.[11]

Later in the nineteenth century, the district changed from one that produced both wheat and corn, to one producing predominantly corn, as rust began to affect the wheat growing industry throughout the County of Cumberland in the 1860s and 1870s. Maize continued to be grown into the twentieth century, with lucerne hay, oranges, melons and pumpkins, the fruit and vegetables having the advantage of proximity to the Sydney markets.

Horse-breeding was an important local industry. Andrew Town of Richmond became a renowned race-horse breeder and draught horses from the Hawkesbury were in strong demand for haulage in Sydney.[12]

The *Australian Handbook* for 1892 lists the agricultural production centred on Windsor at that time. Many of the crops appear to have been cut and baled for local sale for hay for horses and supplementary fodder for dairy cattle, which were then beginning to increase in numbers. Stock returns for the district in 1891 were: horses 4,375; cattle 8,688; sheep 8,163; pigs 4,885. Total area of holdings was listed at 100,459 acres (or 40,182 hectares), of which 14,458 acres (or 5,782 hectares) were cultivated.

Produce was predominantly maize at 230,839 bushels; wheat was at only 428 bushels; barley at 595 bushels; and rye at 342 bushels. There were 587 tons of potatoes produced and 177,712 cases of oranges; a sizeable amount of wine at 15,770 gallons and 125 gallons of brandy.[13]

The best land in the district still had a high reputation for fertility, producing as much as 100 bushels of maize to the acre. It is interesting to see, however, that the total area under cultivation, 14,458 acres (or 5,782 hectares), was slightly less than that cultivated in 1820, which was then 14,927 acres (or 5,970 hectares).

[9] B.H Fletcher, Op cit, p 224.
[10] *Ibid*.
[11] Ibid.
[12] D.G. Bowd, Macquarie Country, p 192.
[13] Australian Handbook, Gordon and Gotch, London.

This picture can also be compared with that given in a comprehensive survey carried out by W.H. Maze and his students 50 years later, in the early 1940s.[14] At that time arable farming was chiefly concentrated along the alluvial flats, with some upland agriculture, mainly citrus orchards, associated with poultry farming, where a fair depth of loamy soil existed. Irrigation from the river allowed intensive cultivation and cropping of alluvial land close to the river, with vegetables predominating: cauliflowers, cabbages, carrots, turnips, beetroot, silver beet, lettuce and beans. Melons, pumpkins and tomatoes were also grown, as were fodder crops, with lucerne and both summer (maize and sorghum) and winter (wheat, oats and barley) fodder crops.

Pasture land on the slopes and uplands was noted to usually be of poor quality and there was no instance observed of improved pastures being sown. Quite a large percentage of the upland areas, 35% in Kurrajong, had either remained in its virgin state or reverted back to secondary scrub due to the poverty and sandy nature of the soil or to its much dissected topography.[15] By this time, in the early 1940s, dairy farming, which had gained in importance since 1900, was in decline and land devoted to dairying on the uplands needed supplementing by alluvial lands to supply the herds with fodder crops.

Few houses were found in the intensely cultivated flats and were usually located on the uplands or in the towns. It was noted that farm size had remained relatively small, reflecting the original subdivision patterns of the early days of settlement and that there was then no observable tendency towards amalgamation. Diagrams from the land use surveys made in the Wilberforce, Pitt Town and Kurrajong areas have been reproduced here to illustrate these conclusions.[16]

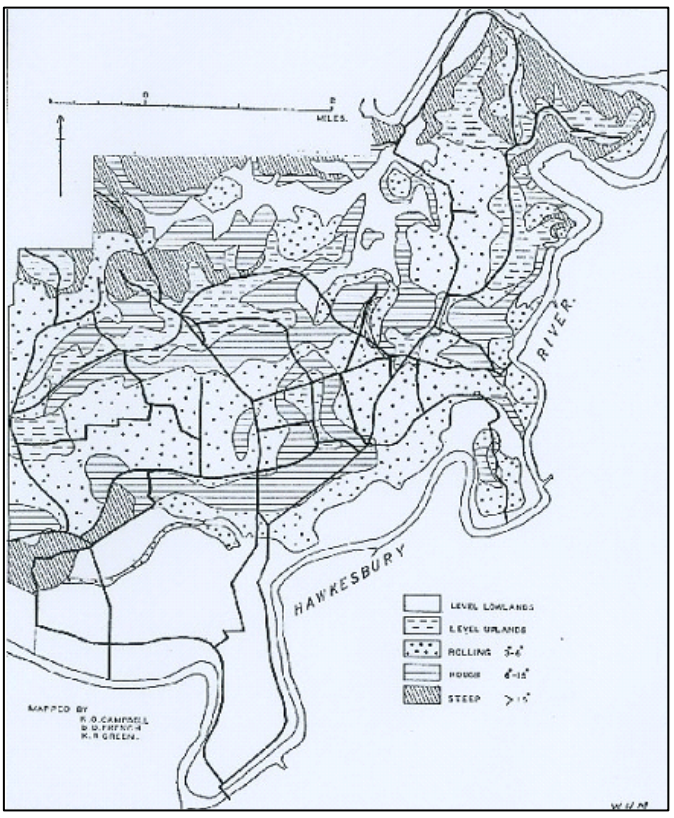


Figure 27: Topography at Kurrajong

From Maze, W. H. "Land Utilisation Surveys in the Hawkesbury - Windsor District, NSW" *Australian Geographer IV*, 8 November 1943.

[14] W.H. Maze, *Op cit*.
[15] *Ibid*.
[16] *Ibid*. Figures 3, 4, 5 and 6.

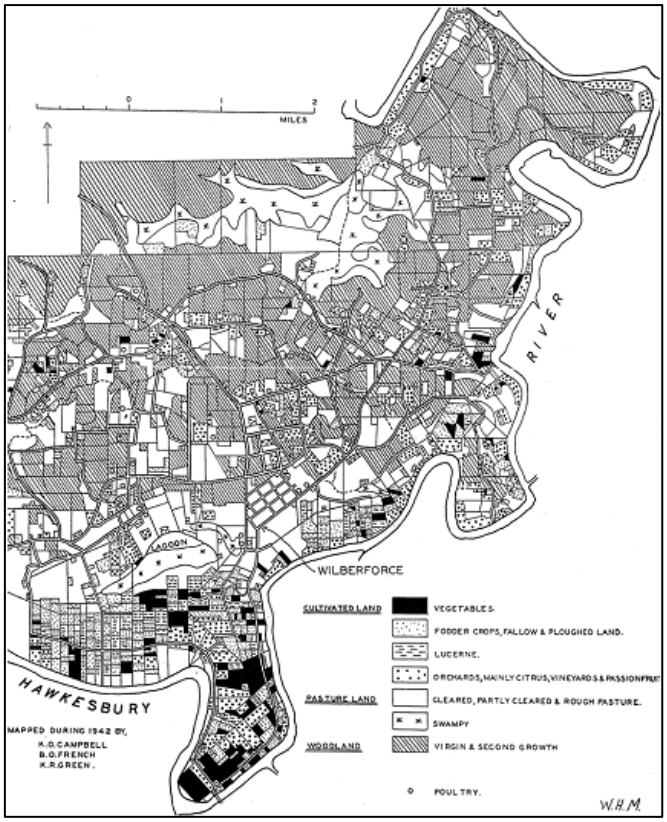


Figure 28: Land utilisation in the Parish of Wilberforce, 1942 From Maze, W. H. (1943)

Image reproduced courtesy of Taylor & Francis Group www.tandf.co.uk/journals

The high proportion of land under virgin and second growth woodland is apparent from this map. Citrus orchards, lucerne farms, fodder crops and vegetables dominate the river alluvials.

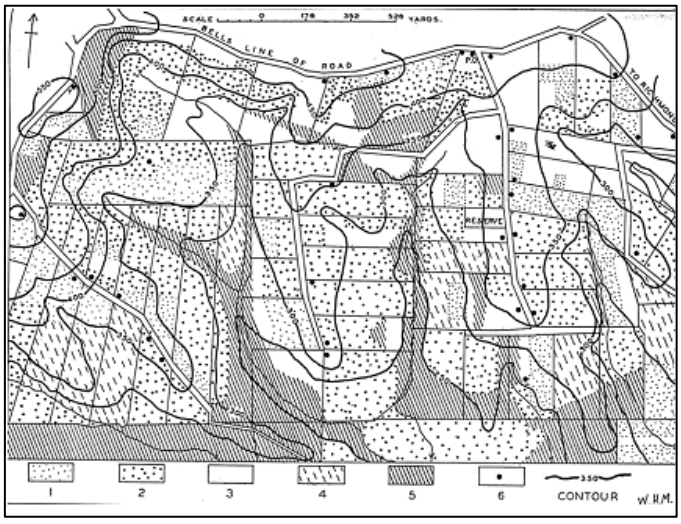


Figure 29: Land Utilisation Survey of part of the Kurrajong District

1.Cropland. 2. Orchards (mainly citrus). 3. Cleared pasture. 4. Partly cleared pasture.5. Woodland. 6. House.

(Data from maps prepared by Miss A. Spiers, Miss H.O. Reeve (1940) and J. Brunt and J. Shaw, 1942.)

From W.H. Maze, The Australian Geographer, November, 1943

Image reproduced courtesy of Taylor & Francis Group www.tandf.co.uk/journals

Kurrajong, in the foothills of the Blue Mountains, in contrasted with the river lands of Pitt Town. Citrus growing was the principal land use in Kurrajong, on farms from eight to ten acres (three to four hectares), with some peas, beans and early stone fruits also grown. A limited area of cultivation was usually associated with dairying. There was also some cultivation of the so-called "Kurrajong Wool" or wattle bark, used by the tanneries and this provided a useful supplementary income for a time.[17]

Kurrajong had become well know as a health resort in the late nineteenth century, with numerous farmhouses advertising accommodation for guests.[18] This need to take in paying guests was symptomatic, here as elsewhere in the west of the County of Cumberland, of a decline in profits from agriculture and grazing. There were six boarding houses in the 1870s, offering health giving fare for invalids, honeymooners and holiday makers and the number increased to dozens after 1926 with the opening of the Kurrajong-Richmond rail link and the onset of the Depression of the 1930s.

In 1923, Kurrajong became the location for a Soldiers Settlement scheme. The Crown acquired three large Kurrajong estates, Hoskinson's, Fitzgerald's and Cleves' and divided them into 46 small holdings averaging 35 acres (14 hectares) each. They were offered for sale to returned serviceman for an average price of £1,060. A supervisor, a graduate of the Hawkesbury Agricultural College, was appointed to assist with advice.[19]

The land was not suited to intensive farming, the soil was not a rich alluvial, like that on the river flats, few of the farms had assured water and the experiment, like so many other token Soldiers Settlements elsewhere in the state at that time, was a failure. 35 acres of picturesque land was not a living area.

In contrast, on the Pitt Town flats, where the average size of holding varied from 15 to 30 acres (six to 12 hectares), spray irrigation was extensively practiced and the farmers could make a relatively good living. Vegetables and lucerne were the main crops in 1942 at the time of the Maze survey. There was some dairying on the slopes and citrus orcharding both on the river and on the upper terrace land. Further back from the river, to the east in what was the old Pitt Town Common, the land, like that at Kurrajong, was less fertile and less intensively used.

[17] *Ibid*.
[18] *Post Office Directory*, 1878-9, quoted in H. Tanner, M. Kelly et al, *Heritage Study of the North West Sector of Sydney*, Department of Environment and Planning, 1984, S.2.7.4.
[19] Vivienne Webb, Kurrajong, Sydney, 1980, pp 40-41.

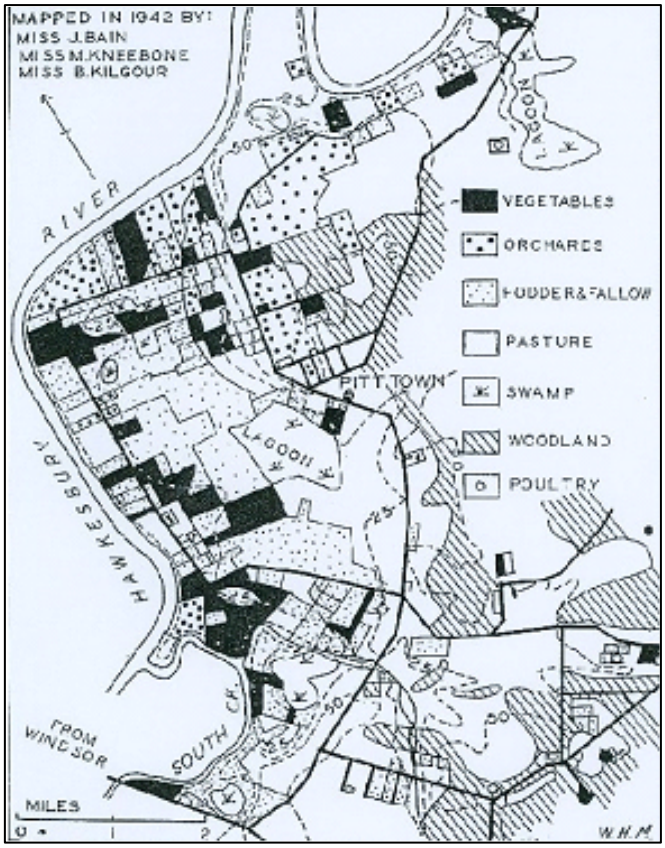


Figure 30: Land utilisation on the Pitt Town Bottoms and around the village in 1942.

From Maze, W.H. (1943)

Agricultural changes since the 1940s have been noted in a recent survey commissioned in 1984.[20] This study points out that the importance of the alluvial soils along the Hawkesbury for the Sydney Region has progressively declined as other agricultural areas became established and as transportation improved. However, even though the overall importance of agricultural produce is significantly less than in earlier times, it nevertheless still has significance for the district in its direct economic value, which is considerable, its ability to supply fresh fruit, vegetables and milk and its production of specialised agricultural crops, such as turf.

Dairying, horse breeding and the extent of grain crops of maize and sweet corn are on the decline, but turf farming is a recently introduced industry along the river, with its main period of growth being since the 1970s. In 1984 there were 55 producers with over 1,500 hectares under cultivation and an annual turnover of $8.5 million. Though the area occupied by orchards has also declined in recent years, the district still remains an important supplier of fresh fruit to the Sydney market, specialising in citrus fruits and stone fruits. Vegetable growing, however, is by far the largest agricultural enterprise along the river lands and a range of crops are grown, including lettuce, carrots, cabbages, cauliflowers, potatoes, broccoli, turnips, silver beet, beetroot and cucumbers.[21]

Agriculture along the river in the 1980s is subject to pressures from a number of sources. In particular, there is increasing competition from other land uses: with urban and institutional land uses, extractive industryand recreational uses all competing for resources. There are problems appearing in the salinity levels in the water used for irrigation near Windsor. The beauty of the rural landscapes, seeming so timeless, may be threatened by changes as these pressures grow stronger.

[20] Mitchell McCotter & Associates, *Hawkesbury-Nepean River Environmental Management Study*, for Joint Councils Committee, 1984, pp 81-2, 102.
[21] *Ibid*.

8 The Hawkesbury Commons

A special place in the history of Australian land settlement must be given to the Hawkesbury Common Lands, established by Governor King in 1804 close to the farm already granted by then and, as it transpired, close to the towns that Macquarie later founded in the district. These commons were precursors to the Reserves set aside for grazing sheep and cattle near most of the country towns that were later surveyed throughout the state. These Reserves became the focal points of the vast networks of Travelling Stock Routes which later criss-crossed the inland areas and which contributed to a distinctively Australian pattern of raising, moving and selling sheep and cattle, adapted to the vagaries of the climate, which still have a vital function in the grazing industry today.

The Commons established by Governor King, however, are now changed in function and encroached upon by other uses. Some of these uses are still "public" in character, but could hardly be claimed to be "local". Of the four Commons in the Hawkesbury district, the one established last, that is, the Wollambine Common near St Albans, which was in use from the 1820s and given legal status as a Common Grant as late as 1853, is the only one whose use today resembles that originally intended.[1]

There were three major areas of land established as Commons at the Hawkesbury on 11 August 1804. These backed up the river lands at what was then called Mulgrave Place and were located on slightly elevated land secure from floodwaters. They covered quite large areas in relation to the lands granted to the settlers along the Hawkesbury River and South Creek, each being over 5,000 acres (or 2,000 hectares) in size.

Governor King, wishing to encourage the increase in stock numbers in the colony and acknowledging the limited extent of the alluvial lands and the small area of each grant, sought to provide additional pasture in this way, so that the smaller settlers could graze their animals close to home. King announced his intention in a Government and General Order of 11 August 1804:

> "*Whereas it is necessary for the preservation and increase of the breeding stock that portions of land should be reserved adjoining those districts where a number of settlers have been fixed in small allotments bounded by others and it being impracticable to locate longer allotments to all who now possess, or may hereafter possess, stock, in order to secure to their use pasturage for rearing and maintaining cattle and sheep, His Excellency has deemed it expedient to allot, by grant under His Majesty certain portions of grazing lands hereunder stated, such lands to be held and used by the inhabitants of the respective districts as common lands are held and used in that part of Great Britain called England.*"[2]

[1] E.Hutton Neve, *The Forgotten Valley, History of the Macdonald Valley and St Albans, NSW*, Library of Australian History, Sydney, 1978, Chapter 19. For King's announcement of the Commons, see *Historical Records of NSW*, Vol. 5, p 415.
[2] *Ibid*.

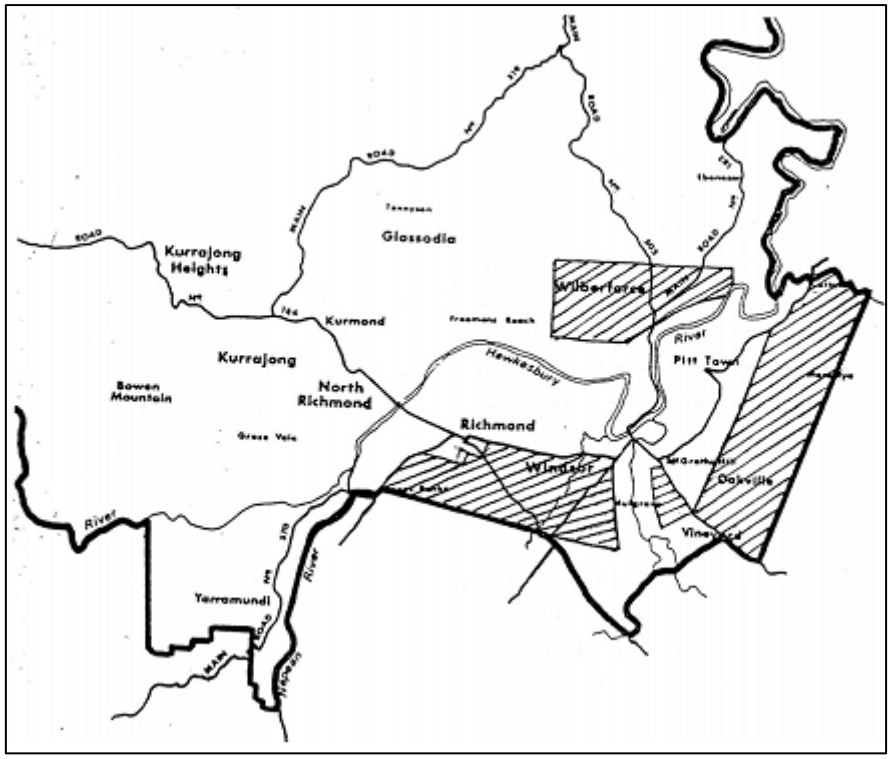


Figure 31: The Three Hawkesbury Commons

The southern part of the Hawkesbury Shire, showing the location of the three Commons set aside by Governor King for the use of the stock of the small settlers.

The leases were to be made out in the names of three persons residing in the district, who were to be named by the rest and approved by the Governor.

The three Commons were designated then as being in the Nelson District, the Richmond Hill District and the Phillip District; the first in the Nelson District was defined between Thomas Arndell's farm on Cattai Creek and the Hawkesbury Road, limited on the other boundaries by granted farmlands. This was later called the Pitt Town Common. The second was nearby, but defined as being in the Richmond Hill District, from John Smith's farm and Webb's farm on Yellow Munday's Lagoon across to the Hawkesbury Road. This was later called Ham Common. The third was in the Phillip District on the other side of the river, bounded on the south-east by the river farms already granted and stretching back along the uplands nearby. This was later called Wilberforce Common.

Each of the towns of Windsor, Richmond and Wilberforce, planned in the years following Macquarie's designation of the sites in 1810, encroached upon these defined Common lands. Other Commons were also defined at the same time in the County of Cumberland at Prospect, Baulkham Hills and Field of Mars.

King remarked in a despatch to Lord Hobart a few days after his announcement that he had set the Commons aside "*with an intention of encouraging the rearing of stock*", as the bankruptcy of the Paymaster of the New South Wales Corps (William Cox), who had previously monopolised a great quantity of stock bartered and exchanged by Government, had meant that the stock had been distributed "*so that every industrious settlers possesses some of one kind or another.*"[3] This allotment of Commons, then, had nearly taken up "*the whole of the disposable grounds*", he wrote to Sir Joseph Banks in December of the same year.[4] Early next year, he instructed Judge Advocate Richard Atkins to explain the meaning and rights of the users of Common Land and this was published in the *Sydney Gazette* on 20 January 1805. As this explanation has a bearing of the subsequent use of the Commons, it is here reproduced in full.

[3] Historical Records of the NSW, Vol 5, p 422.
[4] Ibid, p 528.

'Right of Commonage'

'And that the Right of Commonage may be understood and thereby vexatious complaints and litigations be prevented, I am directed to draw up and make public the following Epitome of the existing Laws respecting Commons, for the information of all concerned, viz.' (The writer has deleted the title 'Lord of the Manor' in the following and 'the King' has been substituted for easier comprehension).

'The word 'Common' in its most usual acceptation, signifies Common of Pasture. This is a right of feeding one/s beasts on another's land; for in these waste grounds usually called Commons, the property of the soil is generally (vested) in the King, or his Representative for the time being.

'Commonable beasts are either beasts of the plough, or such as manure the ground. This is a matter of most universal right; and the Law annexes this Right of Common as in separately incident to the Grant of lands; but this right may extend to other beasts, besides such as are generally commonable, such as hogs, goats, sheep, etc, or the like, which neither plough nor manure the land. This is not a general right and can only be claimed by immemorial usage and prescription.

'The King may inclose as much of the waste as he pleases, for tillage and wood ground, provided he leaves Common sufficient for such as are entitled thereto. The interest of the King and Commoner in the Common are looked upon in Law as mutual: They may both bring actions for damage done, either against strangers or each other, the King for the public injury and each Commoner for his private damage.

1. The King may depasture in Commons.
2. The King may agist (i.e. take in and feed the cattle of strangers in the King's forests), the cattle of a stranger in the common by prescription and he may licence a stranger to put in his cattle, if he leaves sufficient room for the Commoners.
3. The King cannot dig pits for gravel or coal.
4. The Commoner cannot use Common but with his own proper cattle, but he may borrow other cattle and common with them for by the loan they are in a manner made his own cattle.
5. No Commoner can distrain the cattle of another Commoner, though he may those of a stranger.
6. If a Commoner incloses or builds on the Common, every Commoner may have an action for the damage.
7. A Commoner may not cut brushes, dig trenches, etc, in the Common, without a custom to do it.
8. Any man may, by prescription, have Common and feeding on the King's highway although the soil doth belong to another.
9. Infected horses, mares and stone horses under size, are not to be put into Commons.

"And should any local Regulation be deemed necessary, the Trustees will signify the same to the nearest resident Magistrate, that he may apply for regular Permission and eligible Persons to be appointed, to consider of the propriety of such Regulations.

By Command of His Excellency
Rd Atkins, Judge Advocate"[5]

[5] *Sydney Gazette*, 20 January 1805, quoted by E Hutton Neve.

The subsequent fortunes of the three Commons which hemmed in the farms and the towns of Windsor, Richmond and Wilberforce, can be traced from a succession of parish maps prepared between 1835 and the 1920s.

Pitt Town Common

This Common, lying east of the village of Pitt Town and stretching between Arndell's Cattai grant and the Hawkesbury Road to Windsor, had grown from 5,650 acres (or 2,260 hectares) to 8,950 acres (or 3,580 hectares) by 1835.[6] The quality of the land was described by Surveyor Felton Mathew as "*middling forest land*" to the south, "*undulating land*" across the centre of the Common, with "*high rocky ridges to the north and swampy near Cattai Creek*".[7] The elevated land would have been doubly useful in time of flood.

In the 1846 Parish map, the names of John Larkin Scarvill, William Johnson and Joseph Smith are written across the Common and probably refer to the "three persons resident in the district" who acted as holders of the lease on behalf of the settlers. The legal situation remained similar in the following decades (see Parish Map of 1881), but by 1894, small "Homestead Selections" of between 40 and 65 acres had been parcelled out in both the northern and southern parts of the common, with some even smaller blocks of about ten acres (four hectares) and the central section had been designated a Casual Labour Farm, notified 17 June 1896. This section had earlier, in the midst of the Depression of the 1890s, been set apart as a "Labour Settlement", where an experiment was tried in making provision for settling 100 destitute men and their families, to work the land on a communal basis. After three years and many vicissitudes, the ill conceived venture was acknowledged a failure. The soil was just not rich enough to sustain such a scheme. The area was then vested in the Minister for Labour and Industry as a site for a Casual Labour Farm with a less ambitious program, where unemployed men could be provided with lodgings, food and a small wage in return for labour on the farm.[8] The Common was used in this way until 1911.

[6] Parish Map of Pitt Town, 1835, AO Map No 263.
[7] Parish Map of Pitt Town, 1837, AO Map No 26084.
[8] Parish Map of Pitt Town, 1894, AO Map NO 26084 and Helen Proudfoot, Report on the Scheyville Site: Historical Analysis for the Department of Housing and Construction, 1986.

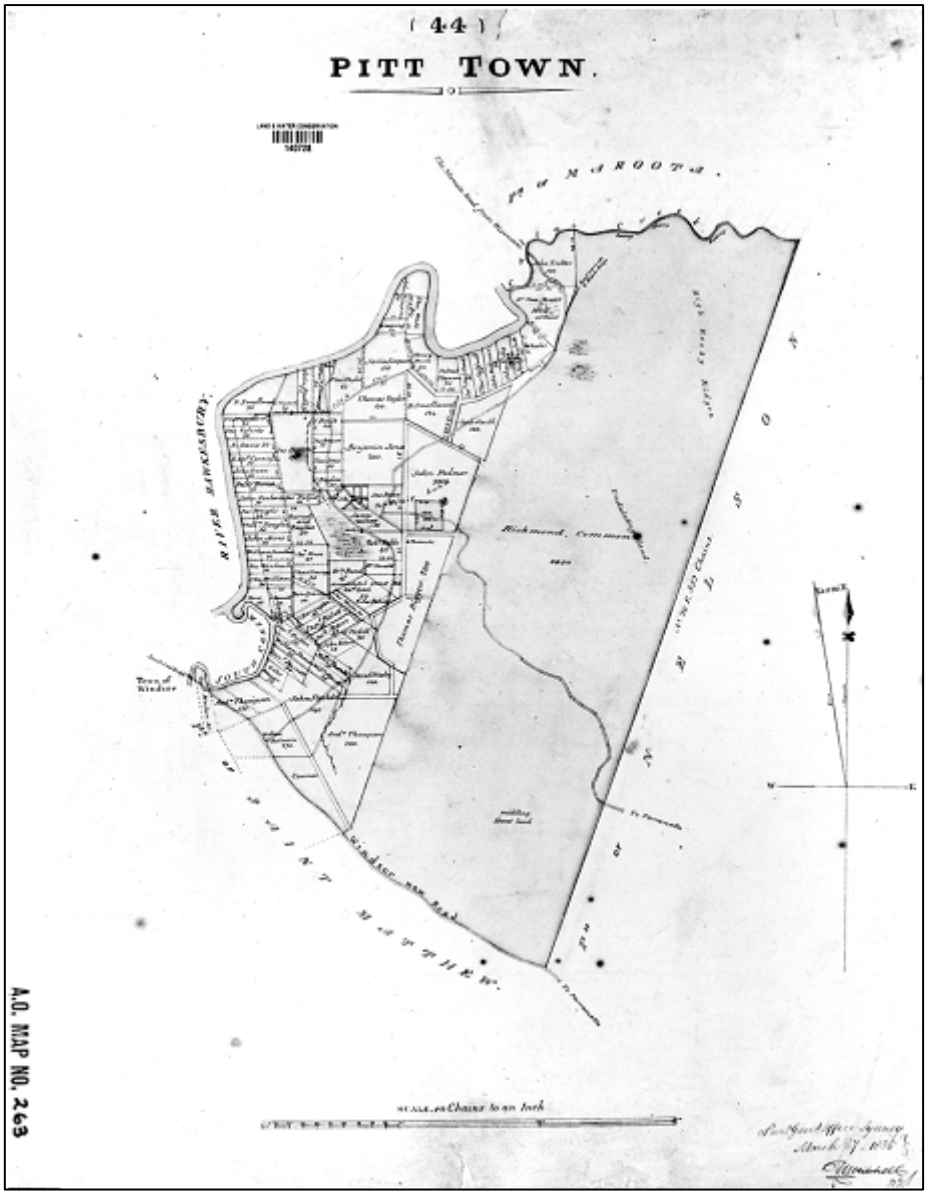


Figure 32: Parish Map of Pitt Town

1835 AO Map No 263

Image reproduced courtesy of SRNSW

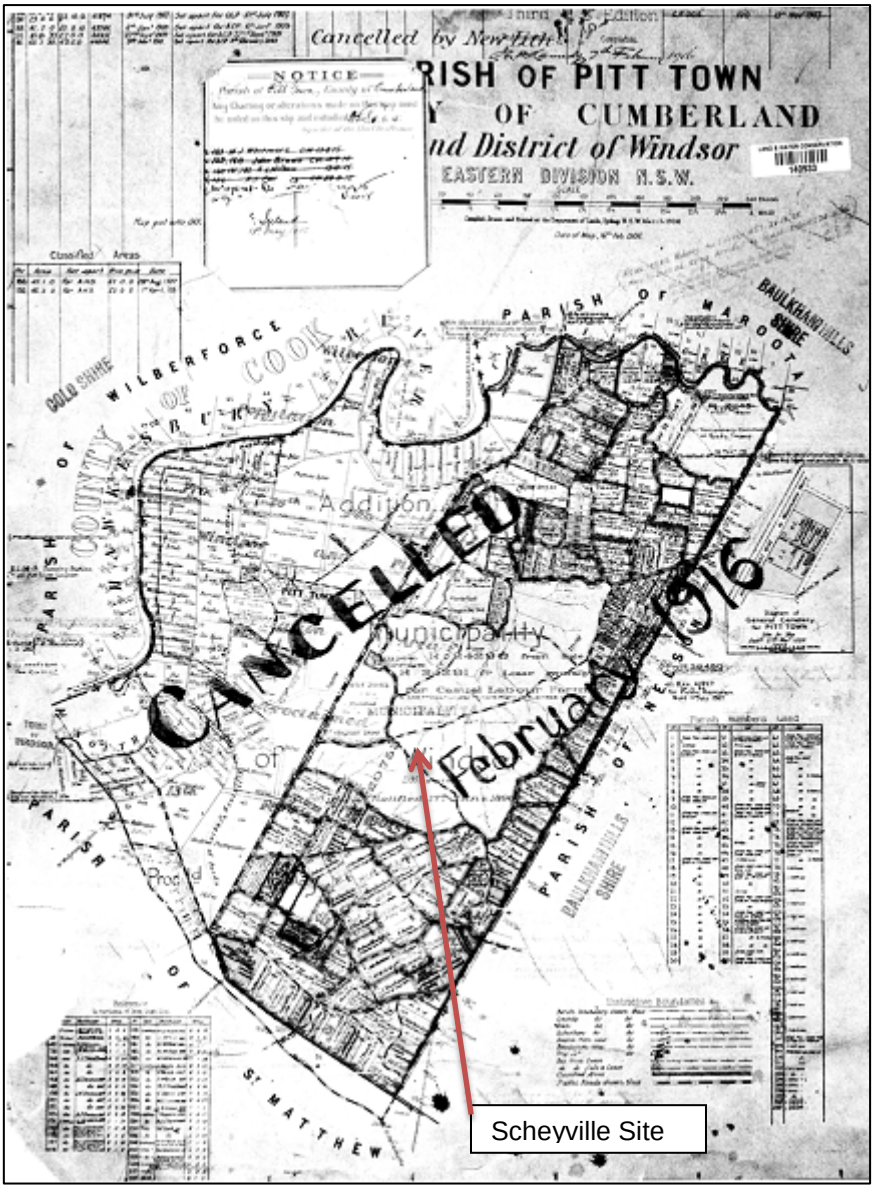


Figure 33: Parish of Pitt Town 1906

AO Map No 26084

Image reproduced courtesy of SRNSW

It was on 2,150 acres (860 hectares) of this central section of the old Common that the NSW Government established its Scheyville Government Agricultural Training Farm. Through negotiation with the Dreadnought Trust, which was a voluntary body, an agreement was made in 1909 for the sponsorship of immigration of boys from England between the ages of 16 and 19, to train them at the farm for three months in Australian farming practices. Accommodation for 100 boys was provided.

The Dreadnought Scheme had its genesis in a popular movement to present a battleship to Great Britain, but when the Commonwealth decided to build an Australian navy, the fund was diverted to an immigration program. It retained, however, the name "Dreadnought". The Training Farm appears to have been a success, with nearly 800 boys trained there by 1912 and then disbursed to employment in various parts of the state. A large proportion went to the Northern Rivers, often to become prosperous landholders themselves. By 1929, some 4,500 boys had been trained at Scheyville.[9]

[9] *Windsor and Richmond Gazette*, 15 February 1929 and 3 January 1930.

Though there was already an extensive complex of farm buildings on the Scheyville Farm by the 1920s, it was decided to construct a new building complex in 1929, arranged formally around a quadrangle, with the buildings detailed in Georgian-Revival style and a planting scheme of dark pines, which now lend a distinctive character to the site. By the end of World War II, the Training Farm had ceased operation and in 1950 its complex was expanded to accommodate a large number of new Australian migrants, then arriving in increasing numbers from war damaged Europe. These buildings were of various styles and materials; Nissan and Romney huts were used. They were grouped to the east of the 1929 complex, along the elevated ridge. After 1967 an Officer Training Unit was established on the site; it was then leased briefly to the Hawkesbury Agricultural College and other bodies and is now empty, awaiting a new use.[10]

Ham Common (or Richmond Common)

From the Parish Map of Ham Common of 1835,[11] it can be seen that the Common abutted the town of Richmond and the Castlereagh Road on the north-west and west and stretched across the high ground on each side of the Richmond Windsor Road to the farmland granted near the river.

The first encroachment was from the town of Richmond itself, followed by a small part of the Glebe land set aside for St Matthew's. Another encroachment was made by the railway line, built through in 1864.

In 1868, 200 acres were set aside for a racecourse on the eastern part of the Common, at Clarendon and the Hawkesbury Race Club was formed a few years later, in 1874. Its race meetings attracted a large number of people, peaking in the 1880s before the quieter Depression years.[12] The long tradition of racing in the district is still continued on this site. A more detailed account of horse-racing at the Hawkesbury is given in the chapter on local institutions.

[10] Helen Proudfoot, *Report on Scheyville Site*.
[11] Parish Map of Ham Common, 1835, AO Map No 236.
[12] D G Bowd, *Hawkesbury Journey*, Sydney, 1986, Chapter 17.

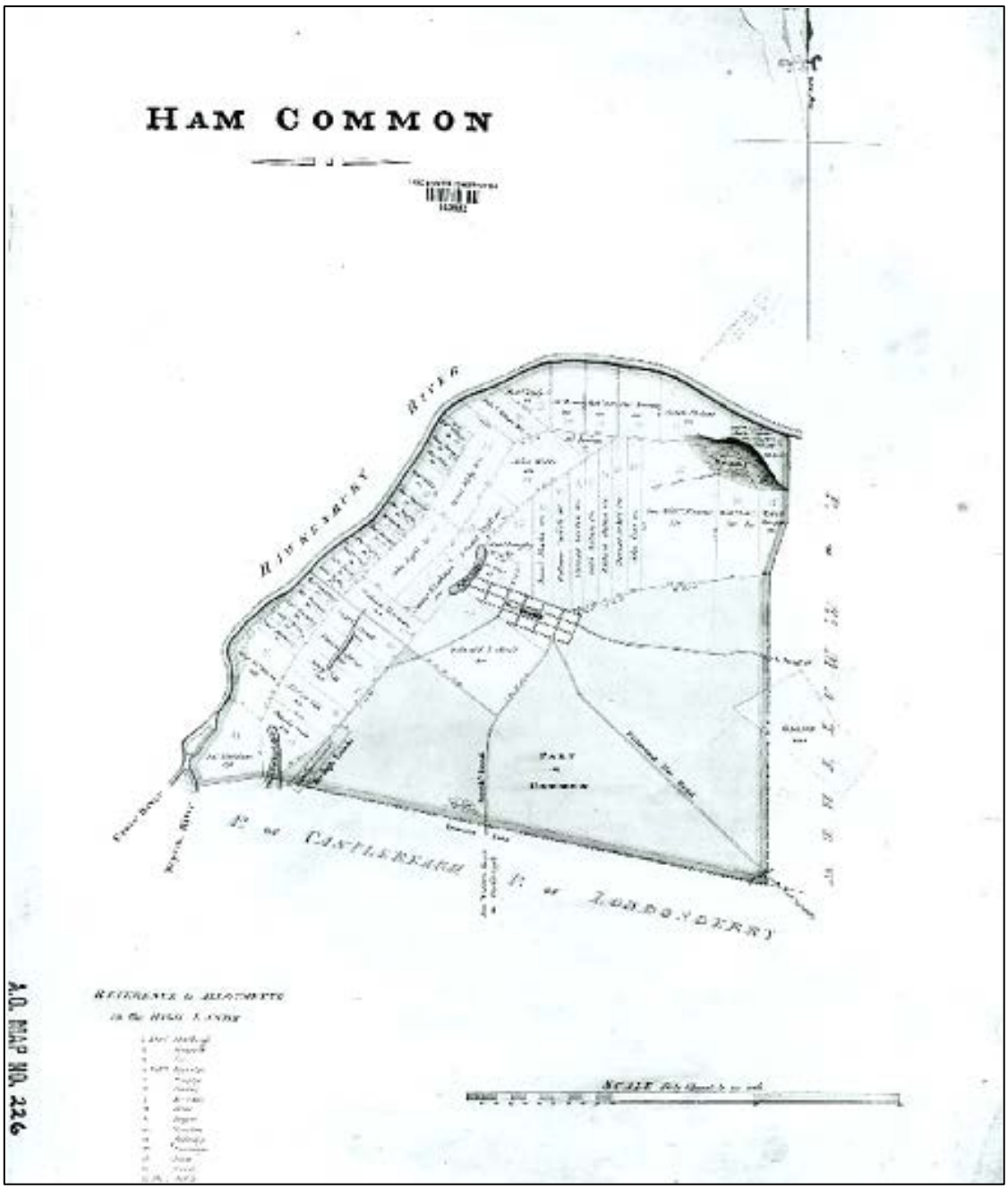


Figure 34: Ham Common, AO Map No 226

Image reproduced courtesy of SRNSW

Figure 35: Ham Common, 1901

Image reproduced courtesy of SRNSW

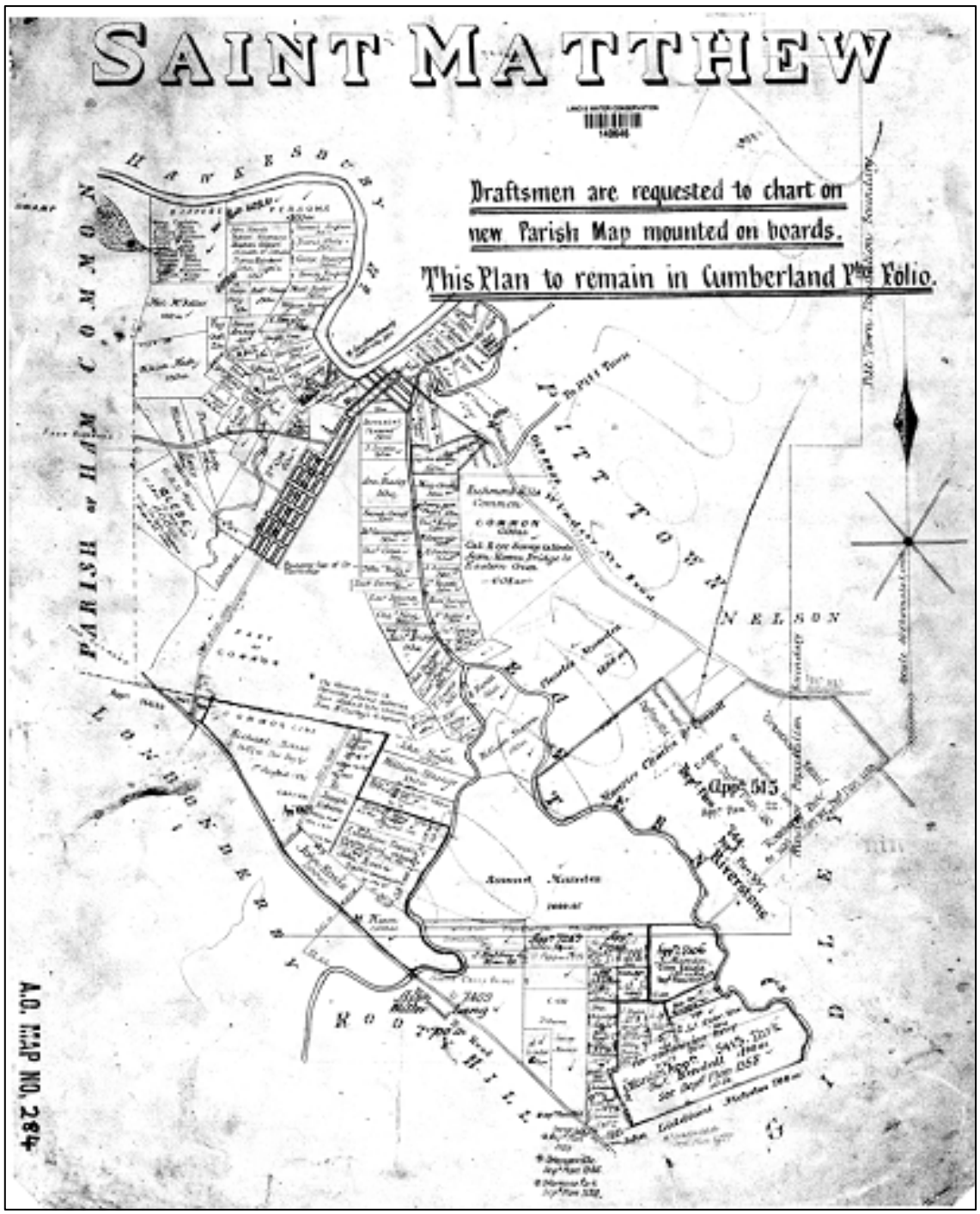


Figure 36: Parish of St Matthew, AO Map No 284

An 1880's Map of the Parish of St Matthew which, nonetheless shows the original settlement patterns at the Hawkesbury at Windsor and along the Southern and Eastern Creeks. Macquarie's town plan for Windsor is clearly visible.

Image reproduced courtesy of SRNSW

Hawkesbury Agricultural College

In the 1890s, there were moves by the Department of Agriculture to establish a College for the training of young farmers. Ham Common was chosen as a suitable location, accessible to Sydney, yet close to a variety of farming soils and an area of 3,195 acres (or 1,278 hectares) was lopped off the western side of the Common for this purpose and dedicated on 25 November, 1891. At the time, the land was reported to be in its natural state, with a dense cover of forest, poor soil and without access to permanent water.[13] It was not favoured by the rich alluvial soils of the river flats.

Students were housed at first at *Toxana* in Richmond and Andrew Town's house was also leased. By 1894, 200 acres (80 hectares) had been ploughed, a variety of crops planted and several buildings constructed, the most impressive being the large quadrangle of wooden stable and workshop buildings, built by foreman carpenter A. Brooks to the design of the principal, J. Thompson.[14] A program of fencing, trenching and draining the land was begun. Orchards, vineyard, piggery, poultry yards and dairy supplemented the growing of crops. Further buildings were erected by 1905 and the pleasant character of the built environment at the Hawkesbury Agricultural College began to emerge, supplemented by an interesting planting program of tall palms in the stable quadrangle, avenues and park like grounds. It is thought that William Guilfoyle, Director of the Botanical Gardens in Melbourne, but a Sydney man in origin, gave advice about the laying out of the grounds.

The College generated its own electricity and supplied it to both Richmond and Windsor from 1915 and 1934. It pumped water from the river to a 17 metre high concrete reservoir of 175,000 gallons capacity for irrigation and town use.

RAAF Air Base, Richmond

Ham Common was, as D G Bowd points out,[15] the very cradle of aviation in Australia. William Ewart Hart, a Parramatta dentist and Leslie McDonald used Ham Common as an airfield from 1911, the intrepid hart recuperating in Windsor Hospital when injuries were received from inadvertent crashes.

When World War I commenced, the N.S.W. Government established a School of Aviation on 37 acres (15 hectares) in the north-east portion of Ham Common, the part cut off by the railway line. Pilots and planes used the hangars and airfield after the war: Kingsford Smith, Charles Ulm and P. G. Taylor became local heroes, joined by Amy Johnson and Jean Batten.

In 1923 the Commonwealth took over 175 acres (70 hectares) of Ham Common and established the RAAF Base there. Flight Lieutenant Lukis and 34 airmen arrived in 1925. During the thirties, more buildings were built and personnel increased and expansion accelerated after 1941 and the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour. New land was acquired east of the Base and the runway was reconstructed.[16]

These two institutions, the Hawkesbury Agricultural College, now a College of Advanced Education and the RAAF Base, both sited on the lands of Ham Common, have had a great impact on the farming community of the Hawkesbury and the small towns it supported, creating large numbers of jobs for local people and introducing a new residential population to the area, particularly to Richmond, which began to overtake Windsor in population growth several years ago. The institutions have also enriched the quality of local life, providing an injection of new blood to the district in a time of agricultural hiatus.

[13] *Ibid*.
[14] *Ibid*.
[15] *Ibid*, Chapter 16.
[16] Ibid.

Wilberforce Common

Over 6,000 acres (2,400 hectares) were also set aside for a Common at Wilberforce. Felton Mathews' plan of 1833, now much the worse for wear, lists the adjacent land holders between the common and the river.

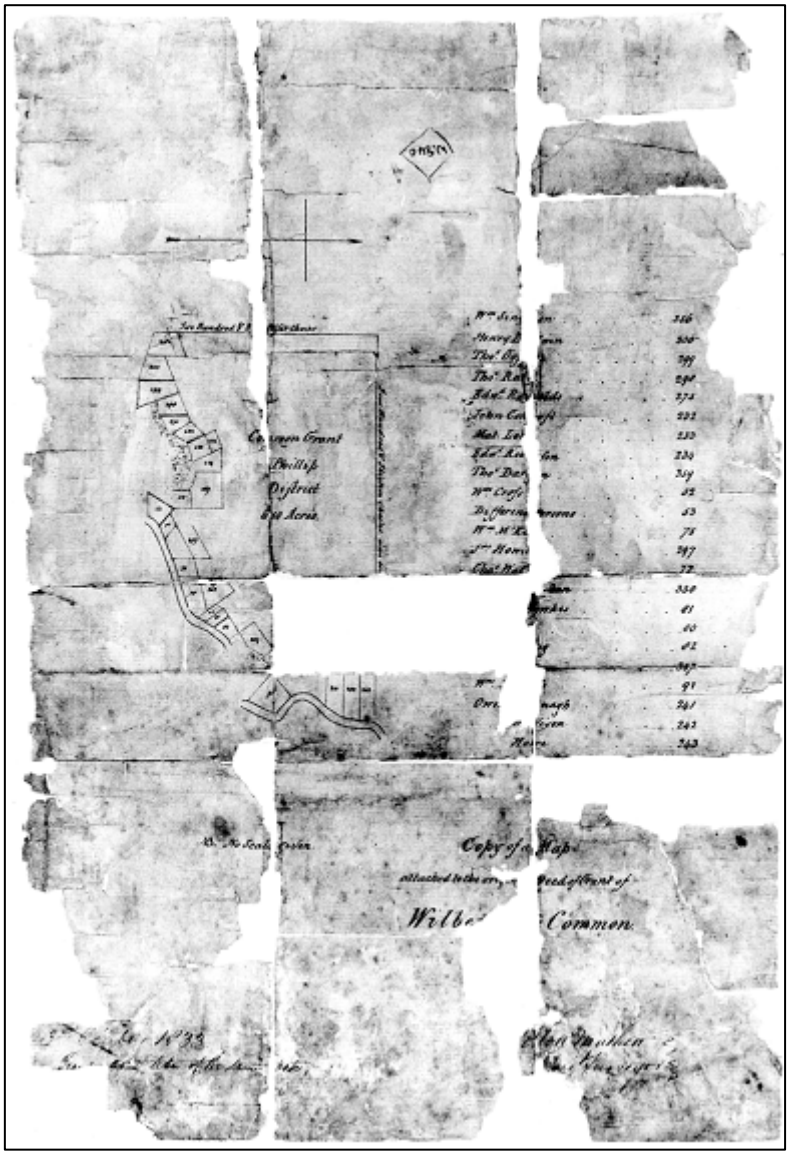


Figure 37: Common Grant Phillip district (Wilberforce), 1833

Image reproduced courtesy of SRNSW

It appears that this Common was parcelled out in small farms of from 40 to 100 acres (16 to 40 hectares) in the latter part of the nineteenth century and had virtually disappeared when the Parish Maps were reissued in 1893 and 1906. In the 1906 Parish Map of Wilberforce, a much smaller "Temporary Common" of roughly 600 acres (240 hectares) is shown further north, notified in 1895.

The Wallambine or St Albans Common

A few kilometres north of the village of St Albans, Mogo or Wallambine Creek joins the Macdonald River. Siltation at the confluence of the streams causes the creek to bank up to form a long, shallow lake in wet seasons and a swampy area in dry seasons. The grass verges are usually rich and green, providing fine feed for cattle in a long ribbon of green stretching along the valley floor for several kilometres between the hills. "*Both beef and dairy stock have grazed peacefully here for one hundred and fifty years*", writes M. Hutton Neve, in her book on the Macdonald Valley.[17]

The policy of allocating small land grants to settlers, characteristic of the Hawkesbury district, was continued along the Macdonald Valley or "First Branch" as it was called, when it came to be settled in the 1820s and 1830s, though its earliest known white use was in 1803 when the Cross brothers entered it to graze their stock. By 1833-34, when Surveyor Felton-Mathews was compiling his map of the valley,[18] there were 86 landowners settled from the mouth of the Macdonald where it joined the Hawkesbury to the "Boree Swamp", which came to be called the Wallambine Common. Most of these blocks were too small to allow any increase in the settlers' herds, so in the early 1820s some of the settlers petitioned the governor for a Common to be reserved for their stock, similar to those that existed near Windsor and Richmond.

On 16 March 1824, the Surveyor-General instructed Surveyor Robert Hoddle to reserve 2,000 acres (800 hectares) for this purpose:

> "*The settlers on the Upper Branch have petitioned for land to be reserved to grass their cattle over and having pointed out where they wish such reservation, you will on marking the farms in that vicinity, reserve to the use of the Crown 2,000 acres of land in such a situation as may best suit the interests of the settlers and because of the value at some future time as Church and School lands; the place mentioned by the settlers is on the Wallambine Creek*".[19]

However, there appears to have been some dispute amongst the Macdonald River settlers, with some wishing to purchase the land rather than use it as Commons. The reserve did not become officially notified, though the custom of common grazing there became well entrenched locally. In 1842, there was consternation amongst the locals when it was found that no Deed had ever been issued for the Common. As a writer in The Sydney Herald of 13 January 1842 pointed out, "*The main features of the country absorb the principal portion of the ground for agricultural pursuits, with little or no background; consequently the main dependence of the inhabitants for a run for their horse stock is on the Common; and as our rising youth are principally interested in the support of their horse stock, the Common is their main stage and its loss would entail the most ruinous consequence*".

There were further delays, but on 4 March 1853, Governor Sir Charles Fitz Roy signed the Grant of an area of 2,567 acres (1,026 hectares) as Common land.[20] It was issued to five local men as Trustees: Roger Sheedy, Joseph Furnance, John Joseph Walker, Matthew George Thompson and John Jurd, "*to hold the Same for the Benefit of the Settlers, Cultivators and other Inhabitants of the said District*".

This arrangement is still in effect today. There is a public road passing through on the eastern side of the lake, but the Commons, under the terms of the Grant, has a different status to a Public Reserve. It is under the protection and care of its Trustees and is used for the purpose for which it was created. Camping, shooting or fishing by strangers to the district is not permitted.

[17] M Hutton Neve, The Forgotten Valley, History of the Macdonald Valley and St Albans, NSW, Library of Australian History, Sydney, 1978.
[18] Quoted by M Hutton Neve.
[19] M Hutton Neve, Op cit.
[20] Land Register of the County of Northumberland and Hunter No 10, 1840-1864. Register of Grants 105, Registrar General's Department.

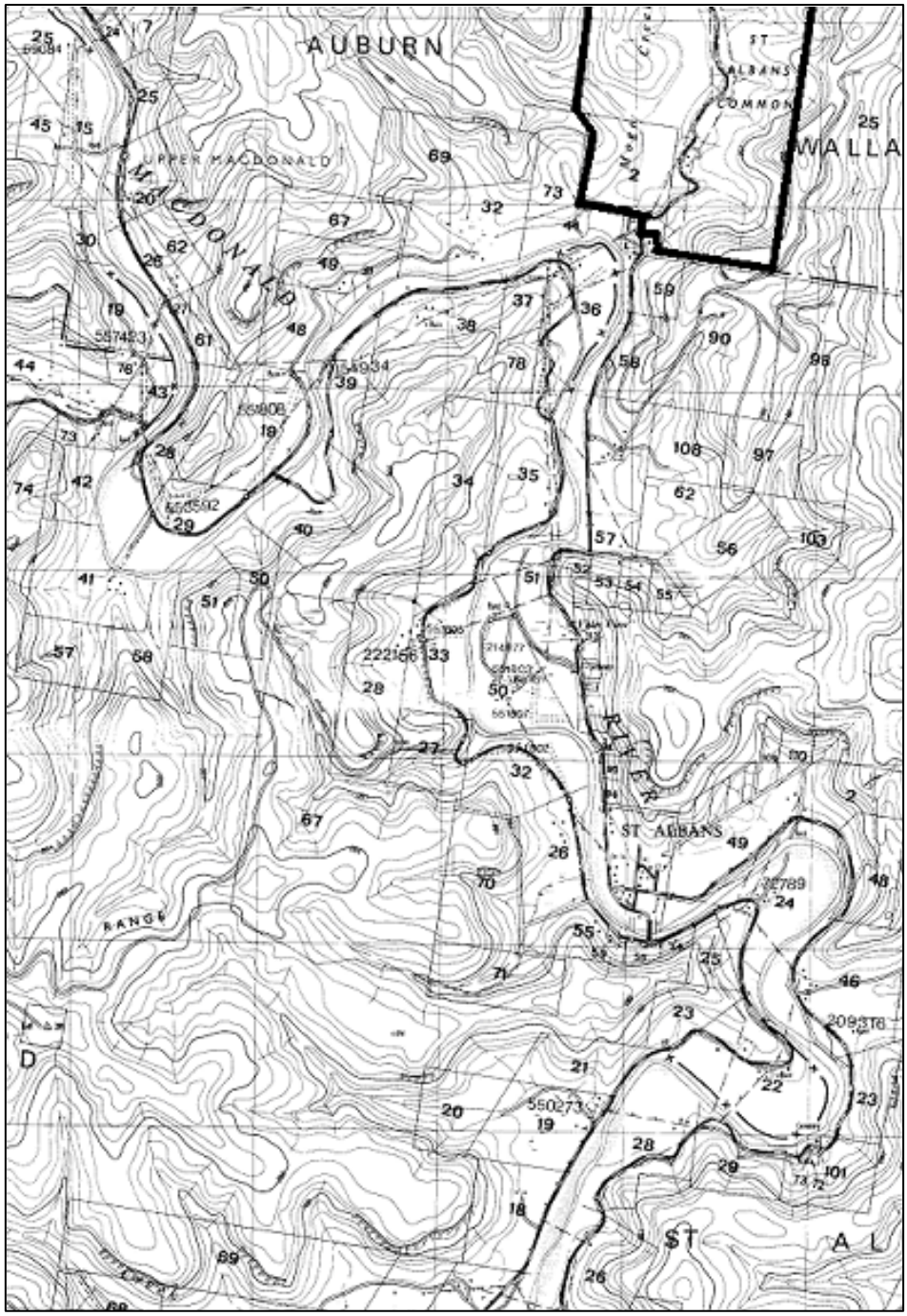


Figure 38: St Albans Topographic Map 1:25 000

Showing the Village, the Macdonald River and the Common (top right).

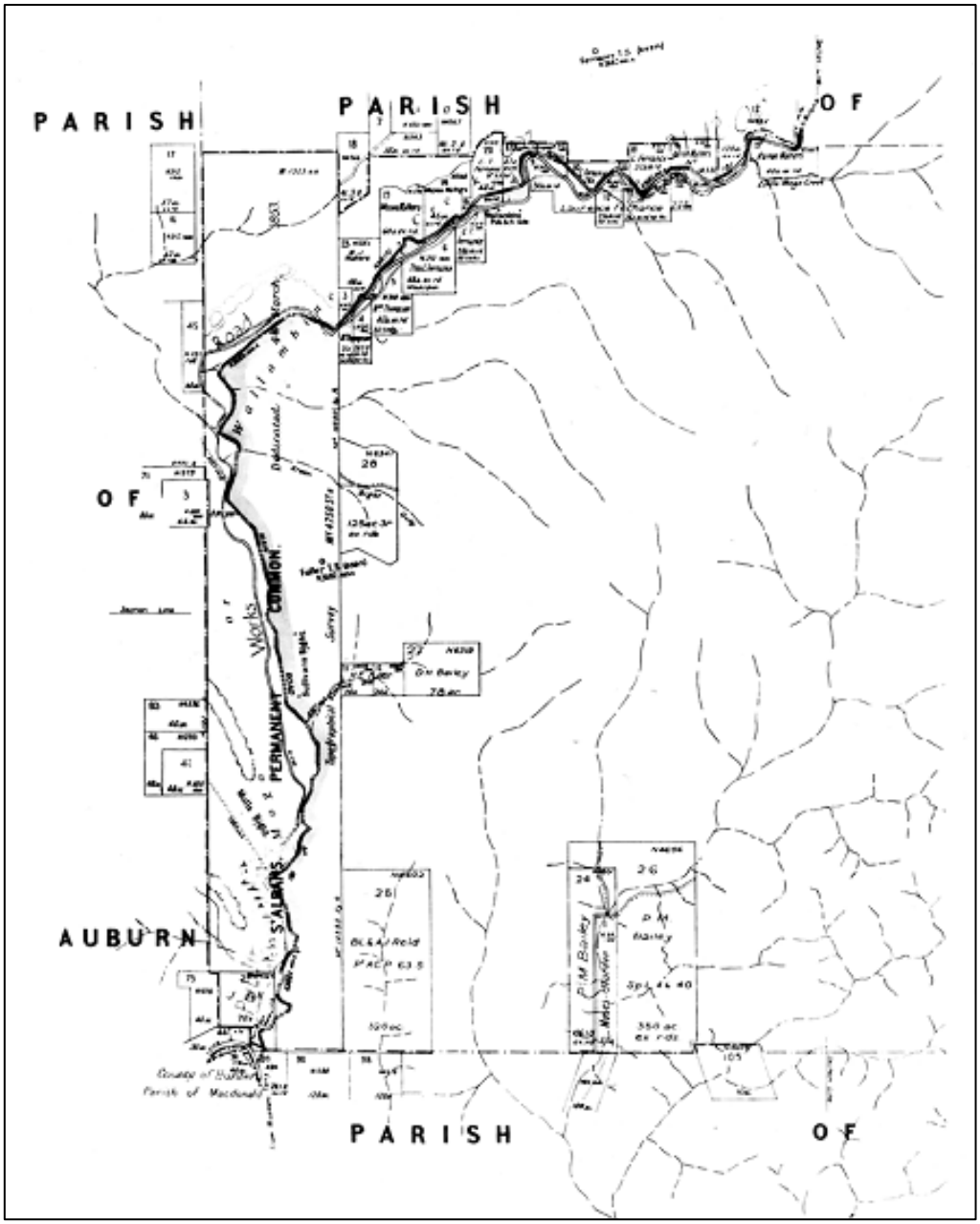


Figure 39: St Albans Common, Parish of Wallambine 1968

Image reproduced courtesy of SRNSW

The Wallambine Common is very much in the tradition of the older Hawkesbury Commons created in 1804 by Governor King. The others, both on the Hawkesbury and elsewhere in the Sydney Region, have now virtually disappeared, some largely taken over by other public or quasi-public uses, such as aerodromes, agricultural colleges, cemeteries, town extensions, or else have been sold off in small allotments in times of Depression, as at Pitt Town and Wilberforce. The Common north of St Albans is therefore a unique and historic survivor in the Sydney Region of this old pattern of land use, a pattern which had its origins in medieval England and which was tried as a measure to assist the small settlers in establishing themselves in colonial Australia.

Figure 40: St Albans Common Lagoon, 1987

The photograph shows the view along the Common from the Southern end

9 "Manufactories, mills, machinery, mines and quarries" - Industry in the districts of the Hawkesbury

Industry at the Hawkesbury has been related to primary production, being dominated by the processing of grain, hides and wool, with shipbuilding being another important local enterprise in the first half of the nineteenth century and extractive industry beginning to become established at the beginning of the twentieth century. Shipbuilding has been dealt with in a previous chapter.

Although most of the farmers sent their grain down to the Sydney market, a substantial amount was milled on the Hawkesbury during most of the nineteenth century. The first mill was set up by Laurence May in 1815.[1] It was a horse-driven mill and May offered to collect wheat landed at Windsor Wharf. Two years later, Benjamin Singleton had completed a water mill at Wheeny Creek near the present Kurrajong and by the 1820s, Thomas Arndell had erected a fine stone mill at Cattai, catering for the river-bank settlers.

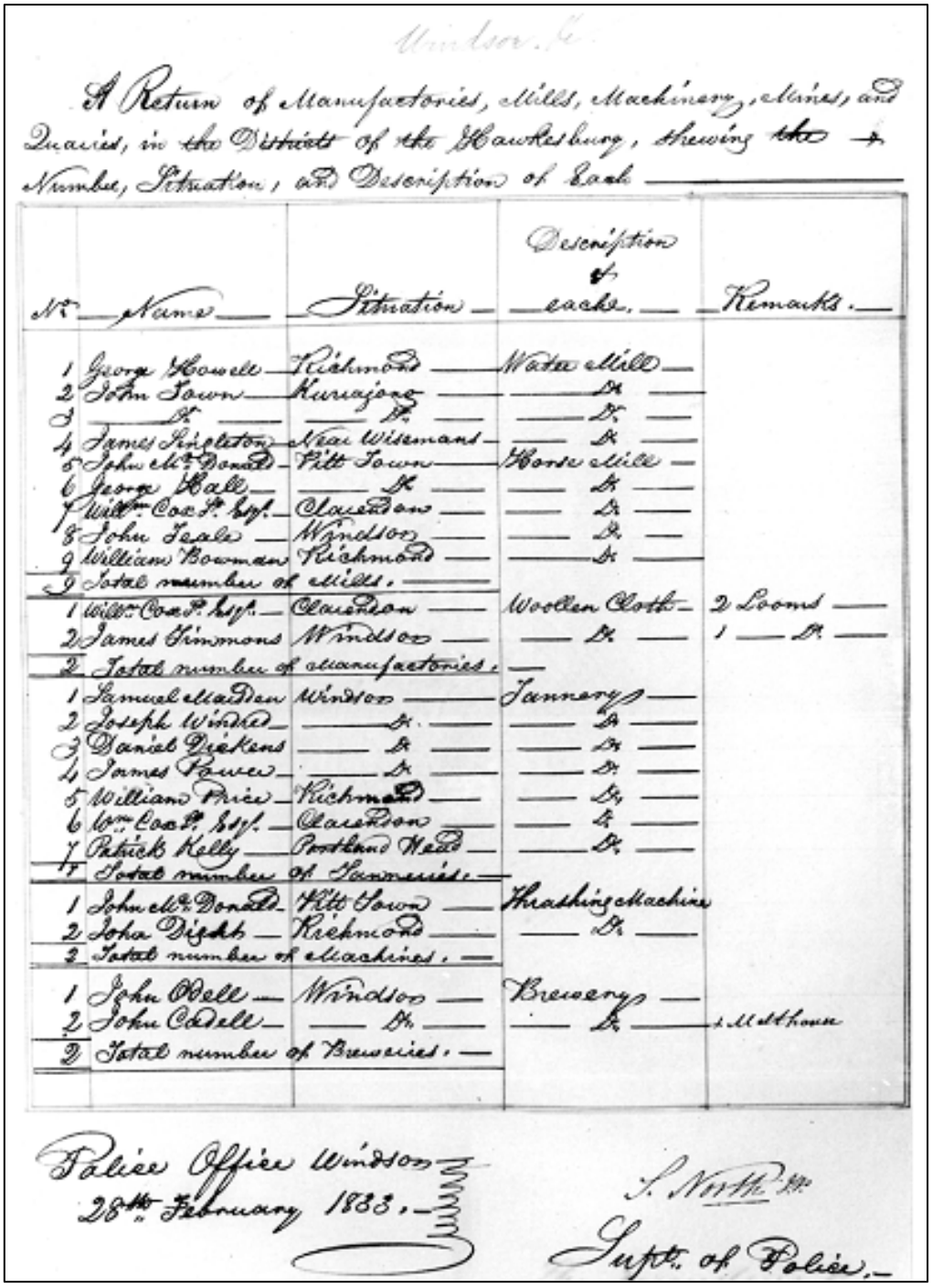
On 9 May, 1831, it was announced in the *Sydney Herald* that George Hall had erected "*a very handsome mill upon his farm below Pitt Town. He has now two mills of the same kind…the large wheel of Mr Hall's mill is twenty-eight feet diameter.*"[2] Another mill at Pitt Town was operated by John McDonald by the late 1820s and in 1831 he installed a thrashing machine for wheat, reportedly thrashing 70 to 100 bushels in 12 hours,[3] a laborious process even when done by a machine.

In Windsor, the Endeavour Mill was operating opposite McQuade Park, where the Hawkesbury Council Chambers are now located, from the 1830s. It was also known variously as Teale's, Dawson's, Liddell's and Hoskinson's. It was part of the Windsor scene until it was demolished in 1896.

An interesting list, now in the State Archives, entitled "A Return of Manufactories, Mills and Machinery, Mines and Quarries in the Districts of the Hawkesbury, showing the Number, Situation and Description of Each", was compiled at the Windsor Police Office on 28 February 1833 for the Colonial Secretary. Lists like this one were compiled regularly during the 1830s and 1840s and reflect the busy local scene, especially in the 1830s, when the number of Hawkesbury mills was greater than the number at Parramatta, forming significant components of the Hawkesbury region's economic growth at that time.

In 1833, there were nine mills altogether, Teale's at Windsor, two at Richmond run by George Howell and William Bowman, one at Clarendon under William Cox, two at Kurrajong belonging to John Town, John McDonald's and George Hall's at Pitt Town and James Singleton's near Wisemans Ferry.

[1] Sydney Gazette, 4 March 1815.
[2] These examples are quotes by D G Bowd, Macquarie Country, Chapter 28 and confirmed by "A Return of Manufactories, Mills and Machinery, Mines and Quarries in the Districts of the Hawkesbury", AONSW 4/7267, which was also quoted by Tanner, Kelly et al in the Heritage Study of the North Western Sector of Sydney, DEP, 1984.
[3] Sydney Herald, 9 May, 1831.



A Return of Manufactories, Mills, Machinery, Mines, and Quaries, in the Districts of the Hawkesbury, shewing the Number, Situation, and Description of Each

No	Name	Situation	Description & Each	Remarks
1	George Howell	Richmond	Water Mill	
2	John Town	Kurrajong	Do	
3	Do	Do	Do	
4	James Singleton	Near Wisemans	Do	
5	John McDonald	Pitt Town	Horse Mill	
6	George Hall	Do	Do	
7	Wm Cox P. Hyf.	Clarendon	Do	
8	John Teale	Windsor	Do	
9	William Bowman	Richmond	Do	
9	Total number of Mills.			
1	Wm Cox P. Hyf.	Clarendon	Woollen Cloth	2 Looms
2	James Simmons	Windsor	Do	1 Do
2	Total number of Manufactories.			
1	Samuel Marden	Windsor	Tannery	
2	Joseph Winkel	Do	Do	
3	Daniel Dickens	Do	Do	
4	James Power	Do	Do	
5	William Price	Richmond	Do	
6	Wm Cox P. Hyf.	Clarendon	Do	
7	Patrick Kelly	Portland Head	Do	
7	Total number of Tanneries.			
1	John McDonald	Pitt Town	Thrashing Machine	
2	John Dight	Richmond	Do	
2	Total number of Machines.			
1	John Odell	Windsor	Brewery	
2	John Odell	Do	Do	1 Malthouse
2	Total number of Breweries.			

Police Office Windsor
28th February 1833.

S. North Esqr
Supt. of Police.

Figure 41: Return of Manufactories, etc, 1833

Image reproduced courtesy of SRNSW

> Throughout the 1830s detailed returns were kept by the Colonial Secretary of the progress of the "Mills and Manufactories" in the various centres along the Hawkesbury, from Kurrajong to Wisemans Ferry. (Source: Colonial Secretary's Bundles, Archives Office NSW, 4/7267).[4]
>
> Quoted by Max Kelly, Heritage Study of North Western Sector of Sydney 1984

[4] Archives Office of NSW, Colonial Secretary's Bundles, 4/7267.

In addition, John McDonald at Pitt Town and John Dight at Richmond operated Thrashing Machines; William Cox at Clarendon manufactured woollen cloth from two looms and James Timmons at Windsor had one loom. There were seven tanneries in the district: four at Windsor, one run by the redoubtable Rev Samuel Marsden, the other by Joseph Winfred, Daniel Dickens and James Power; one at Richmond under William Price, another run by William Cox at Clarendon and the seventh at Patrick Kelly's at Portland Head.

There were also two Breweries, with John O'Dell in Macquarie Street and John Cadell on Cornwallis Road, both turning the local barley into beer with government approval. Brewing had been an old industry on the Hawkesbury; there had long been rumours of illicit stills in Broken Bay when Andrew Thompson had gained a license to brew beer on 11 May 1806, sanctioned by the Governor in the hope that it would make inroads into the pernicious rum trade.

From the 1850s there were three steam mills at Windsor. Thomas Cadell built a large brick mill in Kable Street and there was another opposite the Presbyterian Church. They were all in operation until the 1890s.

Windsor also became a strong centre for tanneries. In 1833 there were four in the town and by 1888 there were six, with N. F. Linsley on South Creek operating a tannery works capable of handling 250 hides a week. Though the smaller tanneries had ceased operation by 1900, the South Creek Tannery, a descendant from Marsden's via Linsley and Busby, continued on until 1957, purchased by F. B. Anschau. A spin-off was a shoe factory, which set up operations in the old School of Arts Building in Thompson Square.[5]

Another industry processing primary products was the Windsor Butter Factory, which operated from 1892 to 1920. A co-operative venture was then formed in 1922, the Hawkesbury Dairy and Ice Society, which treated fresh milk for the Sydney market.

Another primary industry processing works needs to be included in this account of Hawkesbury industries, though it is not strictly located within the boundaries of Hawkesbury Shire. It nevertheless has had a considerable influence on the district for many decades. This is the Riverstone Meat Works. Benjamin Richards, its founder, was born at Richmond in 1818. He was a butcher by trade, who opened shops in Sydney and Windsor. In 1878 he bought 2,700 acres (1,080 hectares) at Riverstone on the railway line and built the first part of his meat works. He located it to intercept the great herds of cattle which were wending their way in to the Sydney markets, down from the Hunter Valley via St. Albans and Wisemans Ferry, through the Bulga Road and Howes Valley. The cattle also came in from the west by the Bells Line of Road. By 1898, when Richards died, the works was handling half a million sheep and 2,500 cattle annually, mostly for export and was a major employer of local labour.[6]

In 1919 the firm was bought by Angliss & Co. and diversified its operations.[7] It has continued to be an important source of employment for Hawkesbury people.

Reference is made by James Steele to a wool-scouring wash on South Creek, operating for ten years between 1883 and 1893.[8] He also mentions brief attempts to establish another meat-works at Clarendon, a jam factory at Riverstone in the nineties and a local cordial factory.

[5] *Windsor and Richmond Gazette*, 6 October, 1888; J S Steele, *Early Days of Windsor*; D G Bowd, Macquarie Country.
[6] *Windsor and Richmond Gazette*, 12 March, 1898.
[7] *Windsor and Richmond Gazette*, 29 June, 1934.
[8] James Steele, *Early Days of Windsor*, Chapter 26.

Sand and Gravel Extraction

A local industry with metropolitan significance that has had an increasing impact on the landscape along the Nepean/Hawkesbury River since the turn of the century has been sand and gravel mining. This has substantially altered the topography at Castlereagh, further upstream, but its impact has not been so severely experienced yet between Agnes Banks and Windsor, though extraction is also proceeding there.

There are large operations established at the Agnes Banks low-level crossing and near the Richmond low-level bridge. These works exploit the gravels described by Griffith Taylor[9] which underlie the alluvial flats all along the river valley and which extend back from the river to a line shown on the map in chapter 7. This gravel is particularly suitable for the manufacture of cement and its extraction has been fuelled by the spectacular nature of the growth of metropolitan Sydney in the past few decades, providing an essential raw material from a location close at hand. There will, therefore, be strong pressures for this industry to continue to expand as the Sydney region increases in population density. It will probably create considerable problems for the small and precious alluvial flats as time goes by and begin to alter the face of this most historic of Australian landscapes in the decades to come, as it has already done further upstream at Castlereagh.

Indeed, in a recent report,[10] four major areas of extractive resources reserves were identified: the Hawkesbury River bed between Argyle Reach and Yarramundi which provides sand and gravel; the Richmond Lowlands which is a major source of a range of sand types and high grade aggregate; an area near Pitt Town which contains large quantities of sand suitable for mortar and concrete use; and parts of the riverbed downstream of Windsor Reach which contain significant quantities of sand and coarse aggregate.

The Richmond Lowlands is the largest known undeveloped deposit of sand and gravel in the Sydney Region and also contains a major deposit of high grade aggregate. The presence of this potential resource may have important implications for the heritage of the Hawkesbury cultural landscape in the near future. Already, there are five sites where sand and gravel are being extracted from the bed of the river in the area between Argyle Reach and Yarramundi.

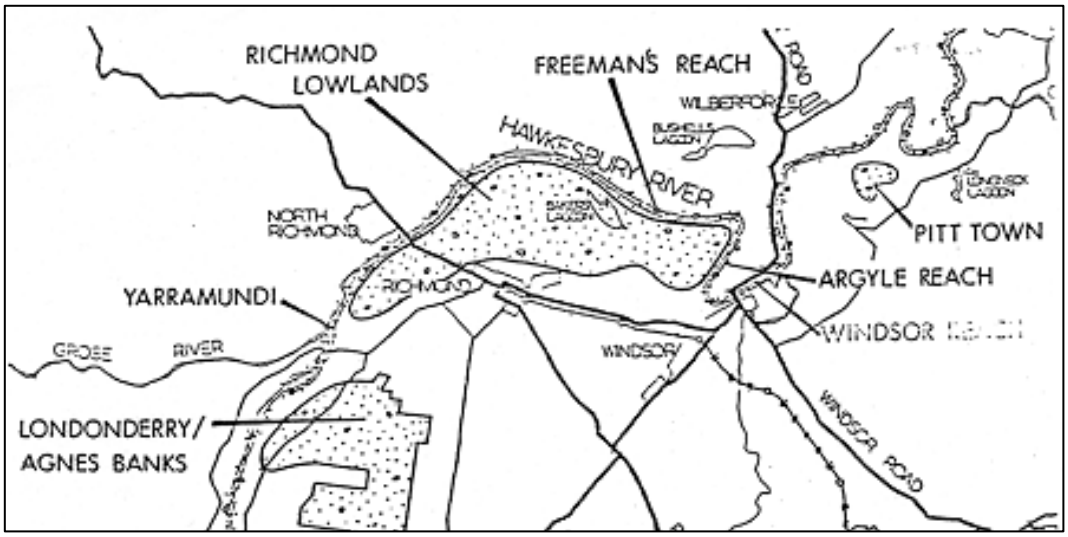


Figure 42: Map showing extractive resources in the Hawkesbury River lands

From Mitchell McCotter & Assoc.

Hawkesbury-Nepean Environmental Management Study 1984.

[9] Griffith Taylor, Sydneyside Scenery, Chapter 7.
[10] Mitchell McCotter & Associates, Hawkesbury-Nepean River Environmental Management Study, for Joint Councils River Committee, 1984.

10 Local institutions and social activities

Local institutions in the Hawkesbury district have played an important role in binding the population together and allowing a strong local identity and cultural life to emerge. Some of these institutions, such as churches, Schools of Arts and court houses, became symbolised with the erection of distinctive buildings, others, such as the military, early schools, newspapers and supporting activities, did not always have an architectural presence, or if they did, this presence has now been altered or demolished.

Local government, agricultural colleges and the air base at Richmond, which could also be classed as institutions, have already been dealt with in the chapter on the Commons.

The Military Presence and the Convicts

The first institution to have an impact on the town of Windsor was the army and indeed the military presence could be counted as one of the primary reasons for the town's foundation and growth. It accounted for most of the permanent structures at the Green Hills before 1810 and, together with the buildings for the convicts, for the bulk of the buildings erected during Macquarie's term. The number of convicts stationed at Windsor was relatively large and the public works program undertaken was substantial.

83 troops were sent out from Sydney in 1795.[1] The Hawkesbury was then seen as the "frontier" of New South Wales; the Aborigines were perceived as an intermittent threat. Later, in the 1820s, bushrangers were notorious in the district. The permanent military presence, however, was not large and the convict uprising at Rouse Hill in 1804, when a party of 400 convicts gathered together to defy the authorities, caused alarm and consternation locally.[2] They were dispersed easily, their leaders hanged and the emancipist presence deterred further uprisings.

In 1820 there were only 14 soldiers permanently at Windsor, but a large number of convicts, 214, were engaged in public works in the vicinity.[3] William Walker, reminiscing about his early years, recalled the military stationed at Windsor in the 1830s and '40s as "*a pleasant establishment in town*", a "*very jolly lot of fellows.*" "*They were a splendid set of men, finely officered, from the colonel downwards and they had a magnificent band.*"[4] They used to help the farmers at harvest time, reaping the heavy crops of wheat. They were popular in the town and tears were shed when they were recalled and marched away playing "*The Girl I Left Behind Me*." The military continued to be stationed at Windsor until 1842.

The Barracks built for them has not survived, but the Convict Barracks, built in 1820 did continue on as a convict hospital, converted in 1823 and was taken over by the Hawkesbury Benevolent Society after the military withdrew.

The Hawkesbury Benevolent Society

This local Benevolent Society had its beginnings in 1818 when the Windsor Charitable Institution was formed as a voluntary body to relieve the "*poor and indigent*" of the district. It changed its name a few years later. They grazed cattle, probably on the Common, to raise funds. The story of this herd of cattle, which followed the explorers up to the Hunter Valley in 1822 and then on to near Tamworth at the edge of the Liverpool Plains and finally to Mooki station also on the Liverpool Plains, is a saga in itself, lasting until 1907 when the Benevolent Society's land on the Mooki was finally sold and the herd dispersed.[5]

---

[1] *Historical Records of New South Wales*, Vol.2, p.313. Lieut-Governor Paterson's Return of the New South Wales Corps, 15 June, 1795. The two officers in charge at Hawkesbury were Lieut Edward Abbott and Ensign Neil McKellar.
[2] Helen Proudfoot, *Exploring Sydney's West*, Sydney 1987, p.14-15.
[3] Bigge Appendix, Bonwick Transcripts, Box 5, Mitchell Library.
[4] William Walker, *Reminiscences (Personal, Social and Political)*, Sydney 1890, p.8.
[5] Jas Steele, *Early Days of Windsor*, Sydney 1916, Chapter 19.

The formation and continued organisation of the Benevolent Society and its hospital at Windsor is evidence of the independent spirit and community concern that developed at the Hawkesbury in the nineteenth century.

Figure 43: Foundation Stone, Convict Barracks, Windsor 1820

The foundation stone is now contained within the grounds of the former Windsor District Hospital, Macquarie Street, Windsor

The Law: Court Houses and Gaol

Both the Windsor and Richmond Court Houses, representing the Law, are reflections of the times when they were built. Windsor Court House is well known as an historic building, designed by Francis Greenway and constructed by local magistrate William Cox in 1822. It houses a portrait in oils of Governor Lachlan Macquarie subscribed for by the local citizens in 1821 to mark their gratitude for his sponsorship.

At Richmond, the Court House was not built until much later, in 1878. It is a plain brick building sited in the centre of the town.

The early presence of the Court House at Windsor and the regular holding of hearings by both magistrates and District Court Judges, gave solidity to Windsor's establishment.

The Court House at Windsor was actually preceded by a simple gaol building, the first building to be erected after Macquarie had decided upon a sustained public works policy for the town. It was erected in 1812-13, but is not now extant. Jim Kerr considers it a building with "*conscious architectural qualities*," intended by the Macquarie "*to serve the dual function of a place of confinement and an architectural exemplar to encourage the surrounding settlers.*"[6] The small brick gaol was neatly laid out in a "*diminutive Neo Palladian form,*" with a central block and flanking cell pavilions.

[6] James Semple Kerr, Design for Convicts, Sydney, 1984, p.31.

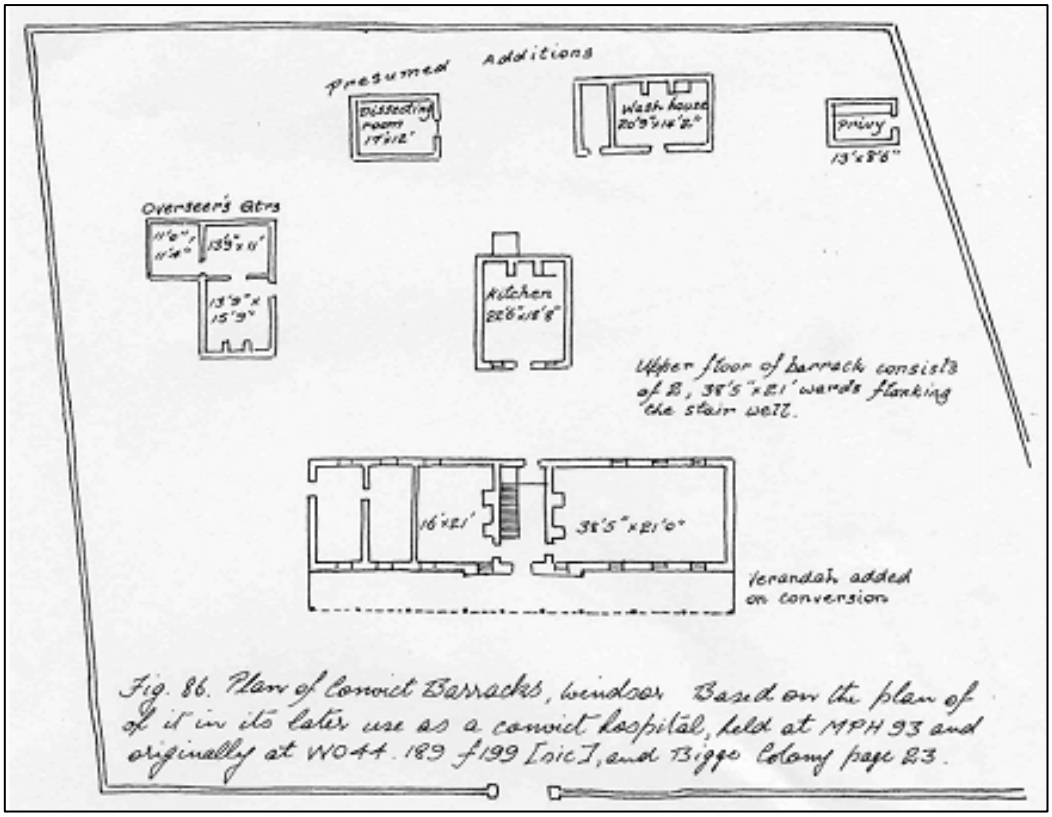


Figure 44: Plan of Convict Barracks, Windsor From Kerr, J S, Design for Convicts (1984)

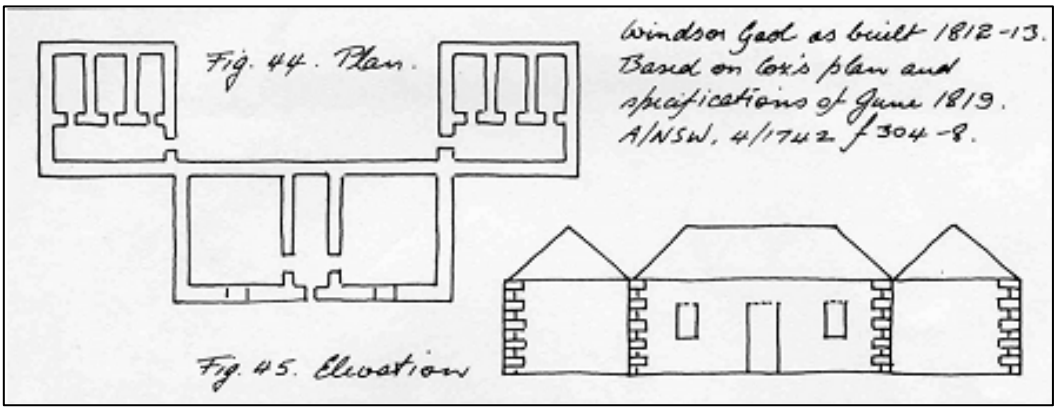


Figure 45: Plan of Windsor Gaol From Kerr, J S (1984)

The Churches

Churches on the Hawkesbury and their graveyards, have been an important and symbolic part of the built environment, as well as being strong social focal points in the past. Their flagship is, of course, St. Matthew's (Anglican) (1817-1822), amazing in its solidity and style, a benign presence in the valley and a reminder of steadfast early endeavours.

A list of 30 extant churches, most with important early graveyards associated, is given below. Only a few were built in the Colonial Georgian style: Ebenezer Chapel, St. Matthew's, Wilberforce Church and School and St. Peter's at Richmond. A little late essay in Regency Picturesque, the Wilberforce Methodist Church (1862) was demolished only in the last few years.

Most of the remainder are in a simplified Gothic Revival style. Edmund Blacket was the author of at least two: St. John's Wilberforce (1856) and St. James', Pitt Town (1857-59) and his son, Arthur Blacket, designed St. James' Kurrajong Heights (1889). James Atkinson, a local builder, is known to have built St. James', Pitt Town and was probably responsible for building quite a few churches in the district in the middle decades of the nineteenth century.

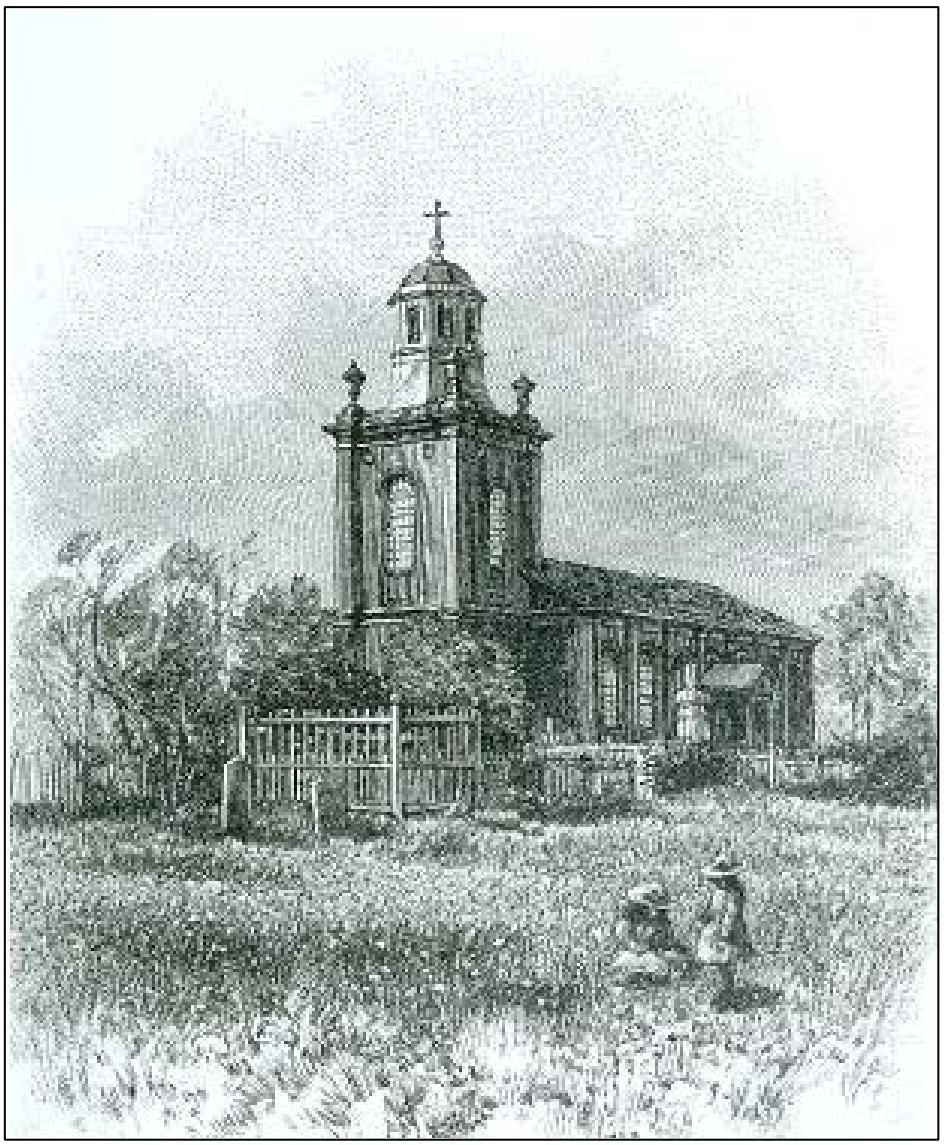


Figure 46: St. Matthew's, Windsor.

From Garran Andrew, Picturesque Atlas of Australia, Volume 1

Image reproduced courtesy SLNSW

Churches on the Hawkesbury in Chronological Order

Ebenezer Chapel, 1809

St. Matthew's, Windsor, 1818-1822 Wilberforce Church and School, 1819

St. Matthew's Roman Catholic Church, Windsor, 1836-40 St. Peter's, Richmond, 1838-41

St. Joseph's, Macdonald Valley, 1839-53. burnt 1888,

St. Mary Magdalene, Wisemans Ferry, 1841-47. Rebuilt 1888. Ruin. New Wesleyan Chapel, Richmond, 1842. (First one, Windsor, 1818) Our Lady of Loretto, Upper Macdonald, 1843. Ruin.

St. Andrew's, Richmond, 1877, 1945 St. John's, Wilberforce, 1856.

Methodist Church, North Richmond (Enfield), 1857. St. James, Pitt Town, 1857-59

St. Monica's, Richmond, 1859, sanctuary and transepts 1897. Scots Presbyterian Church, Pitt Town, 1860

St. Philip's, North Richmond, 1859

Wilberforce Methodist Church, 1862. Demolished.

Sackville Methodist Church, 1868-69. First building destroyed 1867 flood.

Sackville Reach, St. Thomas C of E, 1870-74. First building 1833, destroyed 1867 flood. Congregational Church, Windsor, 1869

St. Stephens, Grose Vale Road, Kurrajong, 1869

Methodist Church, Windsor, 1875-76. Rebuilt after town fire.

Lower Portland Methodist Church, 1884. 1848 building destroyed 1867 flood. St. David's Presbyterian Church, Kurrajong Heights, 1867.

St. Albans Church of England, Wharf Road. St. James, Kurrajong Heights, 1889

St. Albans Methodist Church, replaced 1902

St. Gregory's, Kurrajong, 1904. Slab church 1840s. Wesleyan Church, Paget Street, Richmond 1929 Leets Vale Church, 1937. 1875 church demolished. Anglican Church, Upper Colo

Cemeteries

Some of the earliest cemeteries in Australia are dotted over the Hawkesbury landscape and these are highly significant sacred plots on both historic and aesthetic grounds, as well as being social and religious markers. The old sandstone gravestones are carefully inscribed by hand, often with suitable verses or quotations. They tell us of the pioneers and their lives in a direct and poignant way and their emblematic embellishments of angels, wreaths, columns and books remind us of great hopes, of resignation and of sorrowful regard for those departed.

All, without exception, are valuable historic resources. They need protection and care to enable them to continue to evoke the early settlers. Sydney has lost most of its early graveyards, from mounting urban pressures in a time of disregard for heritage. On the Hawkesbury, there is the opportunity to keep these little cemeteries and to give them the respect they deserve in the coming decades of population expansion.

A preliminary list is included below:

> St. Matthew's Cemetery, Windsor Roman Catholic Cemetery, Windsor Presbyterian Cemetery, Windsor McGrath's Hill Cemetery Pitt Town Cemetery
>
> St. James, Pitt Town Presbyterian Church, Pitt Town Wilberforce Cemetery Kurrajong Heights Cemetery St. Peter's Cemetery, Richmond
>
> Richmond Presbyterian Cemetery, Jersey Street St. Philip's Cemetery, North Richmond Ebenezer Cemetery
>
> Jurd Cemetery, East bank, Macdonald River
>
> Our Lady of Loreto Cemetery, Upper Macdonald

Horseracing

Horseracing was one of the first sporting events enjoyed by the Hawkesbury people and by 1806, in a copy of a map showing the extent of flooding in that year, a "Race Ground" is located at the southern end of Pitt Town Common near the Killarney Chain of Ponds.[7] This came to be known as the Windsor Race Course.

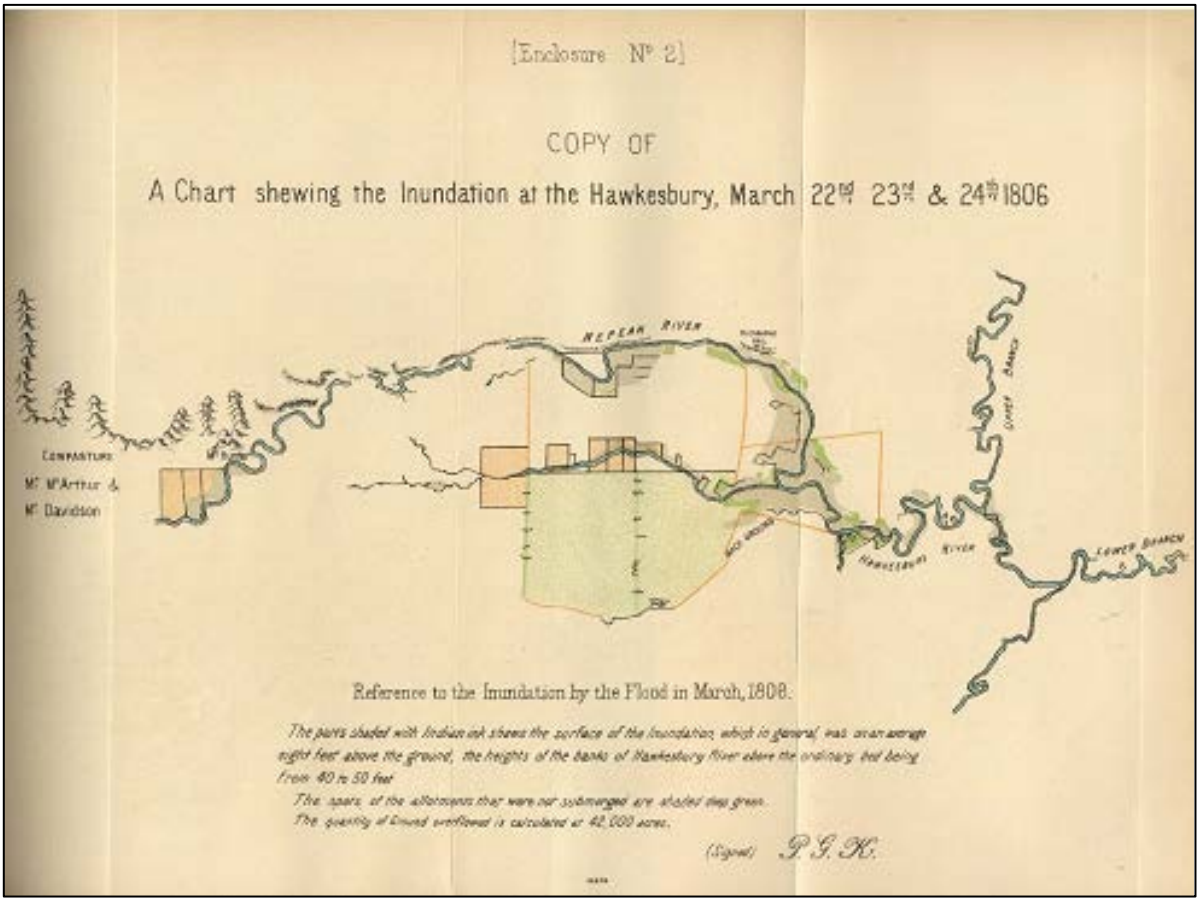


Figure 47: HRNSW, Vol.6, after p.64

Copy of map showing extent of 1806 flooding.

The location of a race ground is shown near Pitt Town Common.
It was later known as Windsor Race Course

By 1829 well-organised two-day meetings were being held, with horses assembling from as far afield as Maitland.[8] The Killarney course became a popular venue between 1830 and 1890, holding what was then known as "*the best meeting out of Sydney*".[9]

Races were also held on Ham Common, one mile from Windsor, on the road to Richmond from 1834,[10] at North Richmond from time to time and annually at Wilberforce. 200 acres of land on the Common at Clarendon was put aside for a racecourse in 1868 and the Hawkesbury Race Club was formed in 1871 to hold its races there.[11]

[7] *Historical Records of New South Wales*, Vol.6, opp. P64. A chart showing the Inundation at the Hawkesbury, March 22nd, 23rd & 24th, 1806, by P G King.
[8] D G Bowd, *Macquarie Country*, Melbourne, 1969, Chapter 19.
[9] *Ibid*.
[10] *Ibid*.
[11] *Ibid*.

William Walker describes a race meeting held on 1 April, 1846. The races were run in heats, "*the best two out of three deciding the winner. They lasted for three days - Thursday, Friday and Saturday, the middle day being generally for small events. The prizes were not for very large amounts, but some very fine horses contested, notwithstanding…. Everyone seemed happy on the ground…. The course was largely frequented by equestrians, male and female, from Kurrajong, Wilberforce, Pitt Town and Lower Hawkesbury.*" There were picnic parties, with everyone bringing hampers, the weather was exhilarating and the governor drove about "*in a four-in-hand amidst an attracted crowd.*"[12]

The hey-day of the Hawkesbury races was in the 1880s, with crowds travelling out by train from Sydney for the day. After a period of some decline, the Hawkesbury Race Club began to revive in the 1950s and a fine trotting track was laid down in 1960.[13]

The Hawkesbury was also known for its cricket matches and foot races. Challenge races were often held; a famous one being between H. Williams of Windsor and Jurd of Wollombi in 1862, conducted amidst great excitement.[14] Even cows were raced in the early days. One such race is recorded along George Street, Windsor, in the Sydney Gazette of 28 March, 1812. There were regattas as well: "*The fair sex, who graced the verdant banks, were not a few and everyone seemed filled with enjoyment,*" wrote William Walker about one held in 1845.[15]

Agricultural Shows

Local people also came together for the annual Agricultural Show for a few years from 1845 to 1848, when the Hawkesbury Agricultural Association was formed, but regular shows were not held until after 1879 and have been staged since then on the Hawkesbury Racecourse.

In the early shows, ploughing matches with horses or bullocks were held. The show became a great centre for the display of the district's horses, with coaching and buggy horses, hackneys, ponies, jumpers, race horses and draught and plough horses all being exhibited. "*There were rustic booths, pens and sheds for the horses, cattle, pigs and agricultural produce*", wrote William Walker. *"What fine exhibits of wheat there were!*" There was also much "*speechifying*."[16]

Schools of Arts

A Literary Society was formed in Windsor in 1857, meeting to discuss literary events and receive papers. It even sponsored a local magazine for a time, the Windsor Review, a Monthly Magazine of Literature, Science and Art, which ran to four issues. Its temper was optimistic and patriotic. The editor, J Kennedy, wrote of the task of the rising generation: "on them will depend the future of this vast Island Continent…. Their first duty must be mental and social improvement, their motto - ADVANCE AUSTRALIA."[17] Another writer, the Rev T. C. Ewing, admonished his audience: "You may be unable to seek the cultivation and expansion of your minds in travel…. You can, nevertheless, peruse illustrated editions on all subjects and now valuable libraries are open to the public. Books are so numerous and cheap, that the labouring man may avail himself of the knowledge of bygone days, hold intercourse with the mighty dead and surround himself with the productions of the finest intellects. Schools of Arts are yours and in them you can cultivate your minds."[18]

[12] William Walker, *Reminiscences*, pp.14-15.
[13] D G Bowd, *Op cit*.
[14] *Ibid*.
[15] *Op cit*, p.16
[16] *Ibid*.
[17] Editorial, *Windsor Review*, No.4, October 5, 1857.
[18] *Windsor Review*, No.3, September, 1857.

After petitioning for a site, a School of Arts Committee erected a building at Windsor, in Thompson Square, in 1862. It flourished until about 1915 and was finally sold to Enoch Taylor for a boot factory in 1947.[19] Richmond also had its School of Arts opened in 1866, a substantial hall, which was also used by the Municipal Council for its meetings from 1872 to 1913. Additions were made to the building in 1896. Further out, on the Kurrajong slopes, some small halls were also built, both of brick and of corrugated iron, acting as focal points for social activities.

Newspapers

Despite its small population size, the Hawkesbury has had a history of newspaper writing until recently, beginning with *The Windsor Express* in 1843 and the *Hawkesbury Courier* in 1844. The *Windsor Telegraph* appeared in 1850 and the *Windsor Advertiser* in 1860. The *Hawkesbury Times* commenced publications in 1870 and *The Australian* in 1871, running to 1893. The *Hawkesbury Chronicle* began in 1879, to be succeeded by the *Windsor and Richmond Gazette* in 1888. The *Hawkesbury Herald* began in 1902.[20]

[19] D G Bowd, *Hawkesbury Journey*, Sydney, 1986, p.92.
[20] Jas Steele, *Op cit*. pp.212-213.

11 The artists

The Hawkesbury has attracted many artists. In the beginning, the Aborigines drew their mythical animals on the rock faces at Maroota and along the Berowra Waters foreshores, leaving enigmatic emblems to puzzle later observers.

William Bradley, exploring with Governor Phillip in 1789, drew watercolours of the craggy mountains. William Westall, Flinder's artist, sketched the winding river in pencil. G. W. Evans did a neat watercolour; Philip Slaeger engraved the river and Windsor in 1813; William Preston engraved Captain Wallis's view; and Joseph Lycett painted idealised versions of the villages in 1820. Anonymous artists drew the floods; all were trying to record something of a strange but very special environment.

Once the Great North Road was built, Conrad Martens painted the scene, realising its "sublime" qualities. He sketched the river lands and the houses. Wisemans Ferry became a favourite sketching ground for various artists over the sixty years from 1880 to 1940, as did the river flats near Windsor and the Kurrajong Hills.[1]

During the early 1880s a group of artists employed in Sydney in illustrating *The Picturesque Atlas of Australasia* spent some of their weekends near Richmond and along the Hawkesbury River sketching and painting in the open air. The group included Frank Mahoney, A. H. Fullwood, George and Arthur Collingridge, A. J. Daplyn and the young Julian Ashton. In 1884 Julian Ashton painted a large watercolour of Sentry Box Reach on the river and this, according to Bernard Smith in his important book *Australian Painting* published 1962, brought "*a new feeling for light and space to the treatment of Australian landscape.*"[2] It captures the atmosphere of the still, smooth water of the wide middle reaches of the Hawkesbury after it rounds the point at Wisemans Ferry, with the enclosure of the mountains behind dropping down steeply to the river, mountains that, in Governor Phillip's words, "*appear to be accessible to birds only.*" The smoke of the river-boat and the foreground figures humanise the scene.

Ashton's painting also re-enforces a change of emphasis in the depiction of the river. Whereas many of the earlier artists had sought to depict the physical evidences of settlement of the river banks, with emphasis given to the buildings, seen as symbols of settlement achieved and stability won, in this painting Ashton takes the human incidents almost for granted and is concerned to convey a sense of the sublime in the overall atmosphere of the tree-clad, steep mountains and the calm waters of Broken Bay. Bradley, Westall and Martens had preceded him in this approach.

Julian Ashton brought his friend Charles Conder to Richmond and there in the spring months of 1888 Conder produced some of his most carefree and delightful oil paintings; fruit trees in blossom, ladies in big skirts and parasols, farm animals and fences, set against the long low foothills of the Blue Mountains. The colours were spring-like, the light bright and clear, qualities being developed by the French Impressionists about the same time as the other side of the world.

An engraving from an Ashton drawing of the Hawkesbury at Wisemans Ferry was included in the Picturesque Atlas of Australia, published in 1888. Others who came in the eighties and nineties were Lister, the Collingridge brothers, Henry Fulwood, Percy Spence, Charles Hunt, Albert Hanson and Sydney Long, painting the peaceful, picturesque scene with its unruffled waters and lofty hills. Arthur Streeton's fine panoramas of the Hawkesbury, painted from Richmond Hill and along the rich river lands, captures a special quality of the Australian scene - the long, hot, hazy summers, the noble scale of the river valley, the golden sandstone and the blue mountain forests. In his paintings he imprinted for the Australian public a lasting vision of the Hawkesbury landscape which was transcended by his art into an archetypal Australia.

[1] Daphne Kingston, *The Changing Hawkesbury*, Sydney, 1979, includes a useful chronology of recorded engravings, etchings, drawings, oil paintings and water-colours in the Hawkesbury district from 1788 to 1938.
[2] Bernard Smith, *Australian Painting*, Melbourne, 1962.

Figure 48: Windsor Barn

A print from the original Woodblock by Lionel Lindsay.

Image reproduced courtesy of SLNSW

The artists continued to come after the turn of the century. The subject-matter of nestling farm-houses and tumble-down barns lent itself to the etchings and woodcuts which were becoming popular in the 1920s. Lionel Lindsay headed a group of artists who depicted early colonial buildings and old orchards, gum trees and peaceful pastures along the Hawkesbury. W. Hardy Wilson produced his impressive *Early Colonial Architecture in New South Wales and Tasmania*, drawing many buildings from Windsor and Richmond and making them widely known. Sydney Ure Smith produced his magazine *Art in Australia* from 1916, publicising the artists and providing a vehicle for popular persuasion. He also published a special volume, *Windsor*, in 1921, a beautifully type-set and decorated volume, as well as *Old Colonial By-Ways* in 1928.

> "*We had always been unable to decide whether the Hawkesbury looked best in her spring attire of pink and green or in the more sombre robes of early autumn," wrote one of her painter/writers, D. H. Souter. "The skies are warm grey with streaks of amber and the landscape runs from the gold of the ripe maize fields, through the browns of the bare paddocks, to the various purples of the frost grass in the old orchards. Then the hills are less blue and nature has abandoned her pale cadmium in favour of yellow ochre.*"[3]

The mood was pastoral and nostalgic, dream-like, until World War II. Since then, most of the painters have turned to other subjects. However, a more recent painter of the great river, Irvine Homer, in his *Summer by the Hawkesbury*, 1959,[4] continues the sublime tradition, investing the scene with an apocalyptic aura, recalling both the explorers William Bradley and William Parr and the colonial painter Conrad Martens and even Arthur Streeton, in his great glowing canvas.

[3] D H Souter, "From a Painter's Point of View," The Australian Magazine, March 30, 1899.
[4] In the National Gallery, Canberra Collection. Reproduced in Geoffrey Lehmann, Australian Primitive Painters, Sydney, 1977.

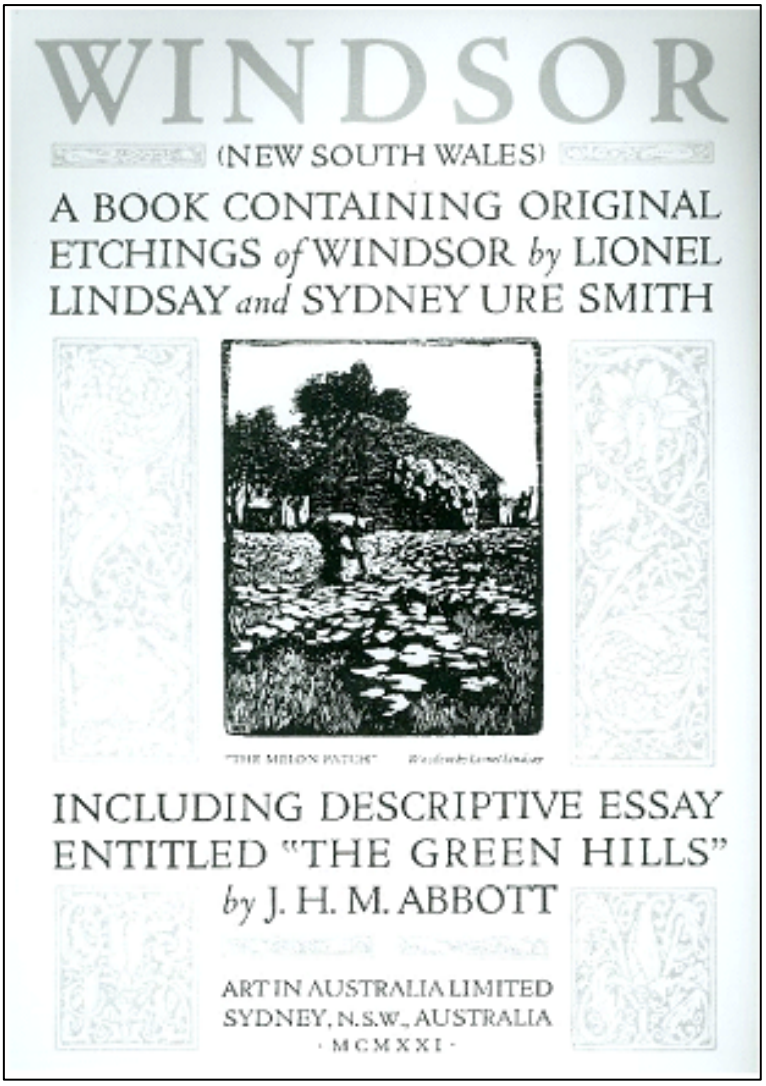


Figure 49: Windsor, Book of Etchings, 1921

Image reproduced courtesy of SLNSW

Charles Harpur writes of the timeless quality of the river in his lines:

> "*Old billowy Hawkesbury so bravely expanding,*
> *The same as of old, as abounding and free!*"

To him, the Hawkesbury had become a true landscape of the mind, an inspirational landscape. As another old resident, N.G. (Bob) Charley, has put it: "*This is my sacred site.*"[5] It is this very special quality that artists and poets have tried to evoke.

[5] In conversation with the author, 1986.

12 Conclusion and brief statement of significance

The Hawkesbury City Council area encompasses landscapes and buildings of great cultural significance for Australians. It holds almost legendary significance in the process of the formation of the first white settlement on the continent, because it was on the alluvial flats of the Hawkesbury that the prospect of famine and starvation for the colony was fundamentally changed, largely by the efforts of the emancipists themselves, to a more enterprising and productive future.

This was not without hazard. The very formation of the landscape gave promise and danger at the same time. The tremendous floods which swept down the river valley and which formed the productive river flats, continued their inexorable course and the settlers on the farms and in the towns combined to face these locational hardships, as they still do today.

In all the various categories of significance - historical, archaeological, social, scientific, aesthetic, architectural, Aboriginal, natural - the Hawkesbury has very special characteristics. The Windsor buildings completed before 1822 were some of the finest built in the colony and Francis Greenway created his masterpiece in St. Matthew's Church. Many early town houses and farmhouses and barns are still extant.

There is no district in Australia that speaks so emotively of the early colonial years, because the basic ingredients are still intact - the slow-winding river, the rich alluvial flats, the towns topping the ridges, the rolling foothills backed by the great barrier of sandstone mountains beyond, rising tier upon tier to the north and west.

It is landscape that has sublime qualities. It has inspired both poets and painters, being a special place which helped the colonial poets Harpur, Thompson and Wentworth, create their visions of Australia. The "Hawkesbury School" of plein air painters, Streeton, Ashton, Conder and Long amongst them, painted their glowing canvases along the Hawkesbury in the 1890s and later the Neo-Georgians led by Hardy Wilson, Ure Smith and Lionel Lindsay lovingly depicted the old barns and colonial buildings.

Thus the Hawkesbury City Council holds an important part of Australia's heritage in its hands. It is a challenge to be in a position to guide future development while recognising and appreciating its irreplaceable legacy.

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Appendix 1

Occupation by the Darug

Prior to the entry of white European settlers into the area, Hawkesbury Shire formed part of the land occupied and utilised by the Aboriginal/Koori peoples. The earliest evidence of Aboriginal occupation of the Sydney basin comes from archaeological evidence in gravel beds of the Penrith Castlereagh area, with artefacts ranging in age from 28,000 years ago to up to 40,000 years ago. This area was attractive to them since it had an abundance of food sources, focussed around the river system. The river provided birds, fish, shell fish and some plants. Women foraged for food with digging sticks. Fire was used to drive game towards hunters and to clear the undergrowth to make the capture of smaller animals more effective. In addition, the area contained stones which could be worked to produce sharp edged tools. The Aboriginal occupiers combined their use of this area with seasonal migration to other areas such as the upper Blue Mountains in the warmer summer months.[1]

Not only did the river provide them with food, but their whole lives were centred around it. Their habitations were situated close to the river but on higher ground out of the immediate reach of the first "fresh" coming down in flood. Ritual and art sites were positioned to see the river yet remain out of reach of its fury when in flood. Their name for it has variously been recorded as Venrubbin; Deerubin and as Deerabubbin.[2]

About 4,000 years ago, the dingo was introduced into the area which resulted in changes to the fauna. At the same time, spear throwers were introduced into the area along with edge-ground axes which had originally appeared in northern Australia about 20,000 years ago, plus stone-barbed spears and pointed spears.[3]

From 4,000 to 2,000 years ago, kangaroos were the main part of the Aboriginal diet but, from 2,000 years ago, increased population meant that game was a smaller part of their diet and that they had to increasingly rely upon harvesting from the creeks and rivers of the area. The river banks of the Nepean were searched for yams which became an important part of the diet.[4]

On sandstone outcrops in the Blue Mountains and nearby, Aborigines used rock shelters. The oldest in the Sydney region is at Shaws Creek near Yarramundi, which has evidence of occupation from 15,000 years ago. Other sites are at Lyrebird Dell at Leura and on Mangrove Creek. Away from these areas, Aborigines camped in the open usually near water, so that artefacts are found as scatters across an area. These artefacts mainly consist of flaked stone from making tools. Sites investigated by archaeologists include South Creek, Eastern Creek, Rickabys Creek and Second Ponds Creek.[5]

By the time of European settlement, Aborigines in the Sydney area had a diverse range of clans and they were practising some conservation of their environment by managing their resources. They burned off the undergrowth and deliberately planted yams to allow them to grow for future harvests.[6]

The Darug (various spellings) occupied the area from Botany Bay to Port Jackson northwest to the Hawkesbury and into the Blue Mountains. The name for this group was collected by R H Mathews, a surveyor for Parramatta who collected a good deal of material about Aborigines.[7]

The cultural life of the Darug was reflected in the art which they left on rock faces. Hand stencils were the most common art form in rock shelters but tools and weapons were drawn too. Rock engravings were left wherever a suitable sandstone face was available. The rock carvings depicted weapons, animals, tracks and abstract designs as well as spiritual figures.[8]

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[1] J Kohen, *The Darug & Their Neighbours: The Traditional Aboriginal Owners of the Sydney Region*, Darug Link & Blacktown & District Historical Society, Blacktown, 1993, p. 4-5.
[2] J Barkley & M Nichols, *Hawkesbury 1794-1994*, Hawkesbury City Council, Windsor, 1994, p 1-2.
[3] J Kohen, p. 5.
[4] J Kohen, p. 6.
[5] J Kohen, p. 7.
[6] J Kohen, p. 8.
[7] J Kohen, p. 9.
[8] J Kohen, p. 8.

Before 1788, there were probably 5,000 to 8,000 Aboriginal people in the Sydney region. Of these, about, 2,000 were probably inland Darug, with about 1,000 living between Parramatta and the Blue Mountains. They lived in bands of about 50 people each and each band hunted over its own territory. The "Mulgowey" lived between Castlereagh and Mulgoa, the Gommerigal-tongarra lived on both sides of South Creek. The Boorooboorongal lived on the Nepean from Castlereagh to Richmond. A fourth band were Gundungara speakers and hunted from the Burragorang Valley to the southern parts of Emu Plains. The Boorooberongal clan had rights to the basalt pebbles which were found on the banks of the Hawkesbury River.[9]

Watkin Tench lead an early expedition into the area in June 1789 when he discovered the Nepean River near Penrith. He found Aboriginal huts mainly consisting of a sheet of bark bent in the middle, animal traps and two old canoes on the river bank.[10]

Little information was collected about the Aborigines of the Hawkesbury before their removal by white settlement, details of their lifestyle had to be inferred from the practices of other south-eastern Aborigines. Thus, it is believed they lived in bark gunyahs. The men hunted game and the women foraged for food.[11]

Disease, such as smallpox and other respiratory diseases preceded the arrival of white men in the area and killed many Aborigines. Venereal disease added its impact once they came into direct contact with white men. When white explorers first entered the area, they found that the Aborigines already bore the scars of smallpox on their faces and bodies.[12] Numerous Darug words have entered the European vocabulary, such as boomerang, dingo, kookaburra, koala, wallaby, woomera and corroboree, plus the cry coo-ee.[13]

With the onset of European settlement along the Nepean-Hawkesbury system, a temporary truce between the new settlers and the Aborigines prevailed until 1795. The first serious clash between the settlers and Aborigines occurred from the deprivation of the Aborigines of their yam beds along the river. Tensions rose until there was open conflict.[14] From 1800, there were repeated clashes between the Aborigines and the white settlers.[15]

From 1815 into 1816, there was a short war between white settlers and the Gundungara Aborigines who had come down from their country to attack white settlers along the Nepean. The Darug were used against them by white settlers, often serving as trackers. The Darug mainly remained peaceful throughout this fighting.[16]

Incorporation into white society as lower class citizens and the negotiation of other modes of existence were gradually worked out by the Darug. By the 1820s, the Native Institution at Blacktown involved some of the Nepean Darug.[17] By 1828, there were 15 men, 13 women and ten children in receipt of blankets near the Nepean or Penrith. These were thus minimum numbers of Darug in the area.[18] The evidence of blanket returns also show that the number of Aboriginal children was low so that the population numbers of the Aborigines was under stress.[19]

[9] J Kohen, p. 6.
[10] Captain Watkin Tench, *Sydney's First Four Years*, edited by L F Fitzhardinge, Library of Australian History, Sydney, 1979, pp 154-5
[11] R Murray & K White, *Dharug & Dungaree: The History of Penrith and St Marys to 1860*, Hargreen, with Penrith City Council, North Melbourne 1989, p. 22.
[12] J Brook, *Shut out from the World: The Hawkesbury Aborigines Reserve and Mission 1889-1946*, Deerubbin Press, Berowra Heights, 2nd edn, 1999, p. 8; R Murray & K White, Dharug & Dungaree: The History of Penrith and St Marys to 1860, Hargreen, with Penrith City Council, North Melbourne 1989, p. 29
[13] R Murray & K White, *Dharug & Dungaree: The History of Penrith and St Marys to 1860*, Hargreen, with Penrith City Council, North Melbourne 1989, p. 25
[14] R Murray & K White, p. 119-120.
[15] R Murray & K White, p. 122.
[16] R Murray & K White, p. 125-6.
[17] R Murray & K White, p. 233.
[18] R Murray & K White, p. 233.
[19] R Murray & K White, p. 234.

A role as exotic adjuncts to white society emerged for the Darug which sometimes enabled them to maintain their previous modes of existence and lifeways. About the 1840s a fight was held between Aboriginals at Yarramundi an event which was one of the earliest memories long lived resident Michael Long.[20]

There may have been 100 inland Darug still alive by the 1850s, which seems to tally with what appear to be numbers of non-Christians in the 1856 Census.[21] By the 1870s, Aborigines had become scarce in Penrith area. J C Cox, a collector of stone tools, commented that they had largely disappeared in the past 35 years and that any evidence of their stone implements was now hard to find.[22]

In 1883, the Aborigines Protection Board was established. It created reserves for Aborigines at Sackville, as well as ration stations at Penrith. A mission to Aborigines also continued on the Richmond Road on land owned by the Lock family, who were descendants of Boorooberongal members of the Darug.[23]

Aborigines Board figures suggest that by 1887 in the vicinity of Windsor, there were 33 adult aborigines and 64 children. Kohen surmised from these figures that most of the population was not dependent on the Protection Board.[24] In 1891, there were 91 Aborigines of both full and mixed blood at Windsor, mainly used a seasonal labour by local farmers.[25] Some worked at Dr Fiaschi's winery at Tizzana in the early twentieth century. Others had married so that they forged links with local families such as the Barbers who lived near the Reserve in Sackville Reach.[26]

Martha Everingham, the last known full-blood Darug Aborigine died in 1926.[27]

[20] W H G Freame, Memoirs of a District Veteran, [press-cutting book of article from Nepean Times, 1910] M L 991.2/F, originally in Nepean Times 6 April 1912.
[21] R Murray & K White, p. 324.
[22] J C Cox, 'Stone Implements of Australia and the South Seas Islands', *Proceedings of the Linnean Society of NSW*, I, 1875.
[23] J Kohen, p. 79.
[24] Kohen, p. 111.
[25] Brook, *Shut out from the World: The Hawkesbury Aborigines Reserve and Mission 1889-1946*, Deerubbin Press, Berowra Heights, 2nd edn, 1999, p. 9.
[26] J Barkley & M Nichols, p 5
[27] J Brook, p. 8.

Appendix 2

Heritage appreciation in the Hawkesbury

There was already a strong awareness that the Hawkesbury was the earliest surviving core of agricultural settlement in NSW by the late nineteenth century and early twentieth centuries. Popular memory plus family traditions were bolstered by publications and other cultural productions, which emphasised the exotic but oddly familiar nature of the Hawkesbury.

The *Picturesque Atlas of Australia* was one such publication in the 1880s, which drew attention to the "ancient" nature of settlement. It also published illustrations of some the historic landmarks of the area, such as churches. By the early twentieth century, a host of authors provided histories of the area, often chatty in tone but based upon memory in the absence of readily accessible sources. James Steele's *Early Days of Windsor*, J C L Fitzpatrick's two books – *The Good Old Days* and *Those Were the Days*, drew attention to the Hawkesbury's antiquity. Sam Boughton's reminiscences of Richmond published as newspaper articles, served a similar purpose. They drew attention to the locality by arousing debate and encouraging others to reminiscence about earlier days,

Paintings of the locality by some of the early Australian "plein air" painters drew a mystical veil over the Hawkesbury and its especial character. Its clear, unsullied air coupled with its old dwellings and landscape redolent of past lives. Its winsome charm stemming from an idyllic lifestyle and a mellow decay made the Hawkesbury an exotic but familiar place to Australians who were rapidly becoming the most urbanised people in the world. Publication of etchings by Ure Smith often with the Hawkesbury as subject and the art books of W. Hardy Wilson brought the Hawkesbury to the attention of the cultivated and artistic members of Australian society.

Whilst books and artists popularised the Hawkesbury as hallowed places, collectors of Australiana such as D. S. Mitchell and William Dixson acquired documentary materials, which would underpin the burgeoning historical interest in these areas. Historical enthusiasts centred on the Royal Australian Historical Society were instrumental in making the Hawkesbury into places of pilgrimage by organising tours of the historic Hawkesbury.

Museums were created by local enthusiasts to collect and preserve the physical remains of the Hawkesbury's past. They served to focus the relevance of the region's history and heritage. Greater car ownership from the 1950s onwards meant that Sydney residents were able to make weekend visits to nearby centres. The Hawkesbury with its historical landscape and old houses attracted a number of day- trippers.

The County of Cumberland Planning Scheme foresaw the need to preserve buildings of historic interest and gave council the power to acquire them. As part of the process of promoting greater interest in them and to identify buildings of interest, Helen Baker (later Proudfoot) was engaged to research the history of some of these buildings as well as to prepare informative booklets about them. The booklets issued included Parramatta, Liverpool-Campbellltown, as well as Windsor and Richmond (first issued in 1967 by the State Planning Authority). Material in the Hawkesbury volume was later issued in an expanded volume in 1987 as *The Historic Buildings of Windsor and Richmond*.

Heritage conservation work was undertaken by the state government on important buildings. These included Windsor courthouse and St Matthew's Church, Windsor.

The National Trust of Australia (N.S.W.) was active as a voluntary body promoting the value of the area's heritage. However, it was based in Sydney. Whilst the National Trust had a large moral impact in pressing for the preservation of the area's heritage and raising public knowledge about the area, local historians were often as effective in raising the level of public appreciation. For many years, Doug Bowd wrote about the history of the Hawkesbury, issuing a series of books.

In the tradition of earlier writers on the Hawkesbury such as Fitzpatrick, his works whilst well researched were often not histories in a formal sense but chatty accounts which ranged across a variety of subjects. They often had a strong focus on the individuals involved with the Hawkesbury. In this, Dowd's books foreshadowed another aspect of emerging historical sympathy, which was to attract ever-increasing attention. The family history boom from the 1970s onwards alerted many people to their roots deep in the rich fertile silt of the Hawkesbury floodplain. As many more family researchers uncovered their Hawkesbury connections, increasing attention was focussed on the region. The Hawkesbury currently appears to be one of the most popular locations for family reunions in NSW. The Hawkesbury Library's Local Studies Collection is an important focus of this interest.

Identification of the Hawkesbury's landscape and its built heritage has been undertaken in a number of studies. The National Trust was one of the first to identify important evidence of the past in the Hawkesbury. When it issued its Register on 31 December 1969, there were a number of places in the Hawkesbury area, including early churches, public buildings, early farmhouses and town buildings such as the Doctor's House in Windsor and the Museum, both in Thompson Square. The Trust's Hawkesbury River 1977 symposium, which was issued in published form in 1979 drew participants from a range of disciplines and alerted the community to the state of the river and issues of catchment management.

The Hawkesbury planning scheme of the early 1970s was one of the first to include a schedule of heritage buildings as well as a map of their locations. National Estate Grants were used to finance studies of the buildings in the district.

Professionally commissioned studies were also undertaken. The North-West Sector study by Howard Tanner and Associates in 1983-4 was one of the earliest studies commissioned by the state government and it sought to identify aspects of significance ahead of the onrush of suburban development. The study identified many elements of the Hawkesbury's heritage and emphasised the importance of the Macquarie towns. The Hawkesbury Heritage Study of 1987-9 surveyed much of the area but was not finalised. Townscape studies were undertaken of Windsor and Richmond.

Increasing development pressure has made it imperative that a review of the heritage listings and planning instruments of the Hawkesbury is undertaken.