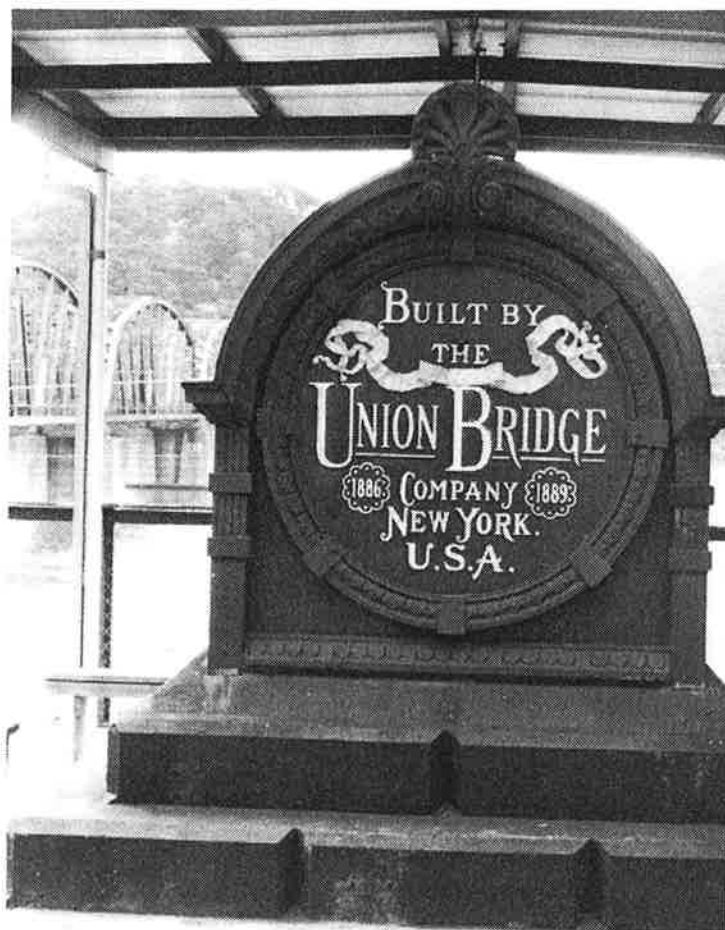


# HORNSBY SHIRE HERITAGE STUDY

## THEMATIC HISTORY



FOR HORNSBY SHIRE COUNCIL  
MAY 1993

**PERUMAL  
MURPHY  
WU**



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HERITAGE STUDY**

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**VOLUME 1**

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May 1993

**THEMATIC HISTORY**  
**OF HORNSBY**

**- FINAL REPORT -**

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May 1993

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## **FOREWORD**

This study has been prepared for Hornsby Shire Council in conjunction with Perumal Murphy Wu as the basis for a Heritage Study of the Shire. It is not intended to be an exhaustive history of the Shire. This History, in accordance with the Brief which forms the basis for this Study, is intended to draw out the major themes of development, seeking in the process to draw particular attention to the physical expression of the various forms of development within the Shire. Persons seeking further detail about the History of the Shire cannot do better than read Hornsby Shire Historical Society, *Pioneers of Hornsby Shire 1788-1906*, or Claire Schofield's *The Shaping of Hornsby Shire*. Both of these are readable and well researched accounts of the history of the locality. This Thematic History has drawn heavily upon them.

Recently the NSW Department of Planning issued a set of Historical Guidelines which would assist in the identification of items of state heritage significance. These guidelines provide a useful background when considering the history of any local government area. The history of any locality should emerge from an understanding of the documentary and physical evidence which demonstrate the development of that place, its inhabitants and its economy. The historical guidelines serve as a useful reminder of some of the physical manifestations of change recognised by landscape specialists, by historical geographers and by archaeologists, which have not yet been fully absorbed into mainstream academic history, or into the concerns of amateur local historical groups. In consequence, some of these aspects may be overlooked in the preparation of any Thematic History for a local government area. This Thematic History has benefited from a constant awareness of these guidelines and the possible expression of these themes, even when documentation is scanty.

I wish to acknowledge the assistance which I have received from Hornsby District Historical Society, particularly, Gwen Martin, the Society's Archivist and from David Green of the Planning Branch of Hornsby Shire Council.

**ABBREVIATIONS**

<i>ADB</i>	<i>Australian Dictionary of Biography</i>
A. O.	Archives Office of New South Wales
C. T.	Certificate of Title, LTO
DP	Deposited Plan, LTO
f	folio
HDHS	Hornsby District Historical Society
LHC	Local History Collection, Hornsby Library
LTO	Land Titles Office
LTOD	Land Titles Office, Deeds Register
ML	Mitchell Library
Ph	Parish
RPA	Real Property Application, LTO
<i>SMH</i>	<i>Sydney Morning Herald</i> (newspaper)

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## **HORNSBY CHRONOLOGY**

- 1770 Captain Cook noted existence of Broken Bay
- 1788 Governor Arthur Phillip's first exploring expedition by sea to Hawkesbury River
- 1789 Governor Arthur Phillip's subsequent expeditions to Hawkesbury River as far as Gentleman's Halt, and camped on Mullet (Dangar) Island
- 1804 Field of Mars Common granted to trustees
- 1805 Andrew Thompson producing salt from evaporation pans on Mullet (Dangar) Island
- c. 1816 Government Sawing Establishment at Pennant Hills
- 1820 James Singleton's flour mill commenced operation near Foul Weather Reach on Hawkesbury River
- 1820s Construction of New Line Road
- 1821 James Bellamy shoots bushranger dead at Beecroft
- 1826 Work commences on Great North Road to Newcastle
- 1827 Solomon Wiseman receives permission to operate a ferry across Hawkesbury River at Wiseman's Ferry
- 1829 "New North Road " in operation (Five Dock to Dural)
- 1829 Orange orchards in full production at Pennant Hills
- 1830 Constables Horne and Thorne break up Jack Donohue's gang which had been active in Pennant Hills area
- 1831 Government Sawing Establishment at Pennant Hills closed
- 1835 Thomas Edward Higgins occupying Old Mans Valley at Hornsby
- 1840s Ferry across Hawkesbury River operational from George Peat's grant, Brooklyn
- 1846 Wesleyan Chapel on New Line Road opens
- 1847 Dangar builds house on Mullet (Dangar) Island
- 1850 Petition from fruit growers at Pennant Hills against scale of fees charged at Sydney markets



- 
- 1850 Peat's Ferry Road from Wahroonga to Brooklyn operational on its official alignment
- 1856 James Bellamy purchases John Thorne's grant at Thornleigh
- 1883 Government school established at Hookham's Corner (Hornsby)
- 1886 J. Black running coach services from Parramatta to Castle Hill
- 1886 Homebush to Waratah (Newcastle) railway line opened
- 1889 Brooklyn Railway Bridge opened
- 1890 St Leonards to Hornsby railway line opened
- 1892 "Highlands" at Wahroonga built to design of Horbury Hunt
- 1894 Kuring-gai Chase National Park dedicated
- 1895 Water tanks built at Wahroonga initiating local water supply
- 1895 Barker College, Hornsby, opened
- 1901 National Brickworks at Thornleigh commences operation
- 1901 Duke and Duchess of York (later King George V and Queen Mary) visit Brooklyn and plant palm trees
- 1906 Incorporation of Hornsby Shire
- 1913 Maltworks at Thornleigh commences operation
- 1915 Sewerage system operational at Hornsby
- 1924 Baulkham Hills tramway extended to Rogans Hills as railway
- 1924 Hornsby Shire Council electricity supply inaugurated
- 1926 First Residential District proclaimed in Hornsby
- 1928 Electrification of North Shore Railway Line
- 1930 Hornsby Girls' High School opened
- 1932 Rogans Hill Railway closed
- 1933 Hornsby Hospital opened
- 1933 Elouera Bushland Reserve gazetted
- 1935 Muogamarra Sanctuary opened

1938 Work on road bridge across Hawkesbury River near Brooklyn commenced

1945 Hawkesbury River road bridge opened

1946 New railway bridge at Brooklyn opened

1951 County of Cumberland Planning Scheme

1959 Mowll Memorial Retirement Village, Castle Hill, opened

1979 Marramarra National Park dedicated

18 September 1987 Berowra Valley Bushland Park gazetted

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## **THE NATURAL LANDSCAPE - TOPOGRAPHY AND VEGETATION**

The topography and soils of the locality had a distinctive influence upon settlement patterns. Transport was easiest on the tops of the ridges, so that when the major roads were put through the area in the early nineteenth century, they followed the ridge tops. In later years, the railway did likewise. The Homebush to Waratah (Newcastle) Railway line so closely followed the route of the earlier Peat's Ferry Road that it displaced it in numerous instances. The most sought after soils, those weathered from the Wianamatta shales were situated upon the ridge tops, so settlement spread along the ridge tops seeking transport and suitable soils.

### **Topography**

The study area is located on the Hornsby Plateau, an eroded plateau on the edge of the Sydney Basin flanked by the Hawkesbury River in the north. The dominant underlying rock is Hawkesbury sandstone, with shales of the Wianamatta group outcropping on the ridge tops. A central ridge runs north to south which was used later as the route for the railway, and for settlement. In the Old Mans Valley, stands the vent of an extinct volcano filled with igneous rock.<sup>1</sup> A volcanic dyke also passes through Muogamarra Nature Reserve at Peats Crater.

### **Soils**

Soils derived from the Wianamatta group of shales are range generally from clays to clay loams and are mostly found in the southern parts of the study area. These fertile soils were extensively cleared and utilised for orchards.<sup>2</sup> Soils derived from the underlying Hawkesbury sandstone are generally sandy, shallow and infertile which were less attractive to agriculturalists and were only settled recently for residential purposes. Along the Hawkesbury River, occasional pockets of alluvial soil attracted some settlement.

### **Vegetation**

Along the ridge which ran north-south in the southern part of the Shire the vegetation association was the Sydney Blue Gum High Forest. The high demands of the Sydney Blue Gum High Forest for nutrients and water restricted this forest type to the Wianamatta shales which followed this ridge. These forests were dominated by the Sydney Blue Gum and grey ironbark. Lesser trees included angophoras and forest she-oaks. Under this upper storey grew a grassy and thorny understorey which included vines and ground orchids.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Doug Benson & Jocelyn Howell, *Taken for Granted - The bushland of Sydney and its suburbs*, Kenthurst, 1990. 9

<sup>2</sup> Benson & Howell, *Taken for Granted*, 104

<sup>3</sup> Benson & Howell, *Taken for Granted*, 104

In less well watered areas, turpentine-ironbark forests were found, containing angophoras and white and red mahogany. On the poorer sandstone country, vegetation consisted of scribbly gums, banksias and tea trees.<sup>1</sup> The volcanic rock in Old Man's Valley possesses a distinctive association of Sydney Blue Gum (*Eucalyptus saligna*).<sup>2</sup>

## **EARLY SETTLEMENT**

The Study Area was penetrated by white Europeans in two paths, one by land, and the other by water. The first - the arrival of timber cutters prepared the way for permanent settlement by agriculturalists who took up the most fertile land upon the ridge tops and who themselves were the precursors of later residential settlement. The other arc - settlement from the water attracted permanent residents earlier. Yet settlement near the water tended to be thin due to problems of distance and a scarcity of suitable flat land.

### **Timber getters**

The harvesting of the tall and strong blue gums and grey ironbarks which grew upon the ridges was the first economic activity undertaken by white European settlers when they ventured into the area. Originally the land in the southern part of the study area was set aside as the Field of Mars Common to be utilised by nearby settlers for grazing.<sup>3</sup> Governor Lachlan Macquarie located a government sawing establishment in the northern part of the Common, in the area west of the triangle formed by Boundary and Hull Roads.<sup>4</sup> So successfully did the convicts clear the best of the trees from the area, that it gained the name "Barren Ridges".<sup>5</sup> After the sawing establishment was closed in 1831, other private timber getters proceeded to clear the timber further northwards. Merchants Alexander Berry and Edward Wollstonecraft, and timber merchants Aaron Pearce and Thomas Hyndes took up land under lease or grant and proceeded to clear the timber for sale in Sydney. In the Old Mans Valley, the various generations of the Higgins family gradually removed the trees in the valley over the next hundred years for sale to Sydney builders.<sup>6</sup>

### **Forest removal**

The removal of the original forests changed the landscape markedly. The Blue Gum High Forest was almost completely shorn from the ridge tops. Photographs show the survival of some of this vegetation into the early twentieth century.<sup>7</sup> Subsequently, much of the rest of this forest was cleared until only small remnants of the complex vegetation association remain in the

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<sup>1</sup> Benson & Howell, *Taken for Granted*, 106

<sup>2</sup> Benson & Howell, *Taken for Granted*, 108

<sup>3</sup> Claire Schofield, *The Shaping of Hornsby Shire*, Hornsby, 1988. 19; Hornsby Shire Historical Society, *Pioneers of Hornsby Shire 1788-1906*, Sydney, 1983., 48 (Hereafter *Pioneers*)

<sup>4</sup> C. Schofield, *Shaping*, 26

<sup>5</sup> *Pioneers*, 49

<sup>6</sup> *Pioneers*, 202-3

<sup>7</sup> Benson & Howell, *Taken for Granted*, 105

Ludovic Blackwood Reserve at Beecroft and in a small part of Pennant Hills Park whilst individual trees are scattered about the area.<sup>1</sup> The turpentine ironbark association survives at Arcadia in a small area of Fagan Park.

Less prized for timber and for agricultural land, the scribbly gum associations which grew on the Hawkesbury sandstone areas are relatively well preserved in many of the natural reserves in the study area.

### **Settlement along Hawkesbury River**

Settlers were attracted to the Hawkesbury River, which was the major route between Sydney and the farms at Richmond and Windsor for many years before suitable roads were built. At Mullet Island, noted entrepreneur, Andrew Thompson of Windsor, was producing salt by evaporation in 1805.<sup>2</sup> A flour mill commenced operation near Foul Weather Reach about 1820 under the control of James Singleton.<sup>3</sup> At Laughtondale, the Laughton family commenced occupation of a patch of fertile soil which became a site for orchards, boatbuilding yards and stores.<sup>4</sup> By mid century, timber-getters and fishermen, were resident at what is now called Brooklyn.<sup>5</sup>

The most notable settlement however, was at Wiseman's Ferry. Solomon Wiseman, in an attempt to recover from heavy financial losses, had taken up land at Portland Head where he built an inn.<sup>6</sup> Here he prospered, especially when the Great Northern Road was under construction. His unprincipled abuse of his exclusive contract to supply the convicts with rations assisted in the renewal of his fortunes.<sup>7</sup>

### **Notable Early Settlers**

A number of early settlers established themselves in the study area and commenced a presence which has had implications to the present day. Samuel Horne and John Thorn were two constables who were handsomely rewarded for their role in the fatal shooting of John MacNamara, an accomplice of bushranger John Donohue and the capture of other members of his gang in 1830. They were given twin grants in the study area. John Thorn was given 640 acres where Thornleigh was later established whilst Horne was given 320 acres, which he named Hornsby Place. Whilst neither grant was occupied by the grantees, their influence on the later history of the locality was substantial.<sup>8</sup>

Another notable early settler was Thomas Edward Higgins who was the first permanent settler in the Hornsby Valley. He is believed to have found the Old Mans Valley whilst searching for timber. On 18 August 1835, he formally

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<sup>1</sup> Benson & Howell, *Taken for Granted*, 104

<sup>2</sup> C. Schofield, *Shaping*, 22

<sup>3</sup> *Pioneers*, 25

<sup>4</sup> C. Schofield, *Shaping*, 25

<sup>5</sup> *Pioneers*, 32-3

<sup>6</sup> C. Schofield, *Shaping*, 23; *Pioneers*, 24

<sup>7</sup> Grace Karskens, 'Defiance, Deference and Diligence: Three Views of Convicts in New South Wales Road Gangs', *Australian Journal of Historical Archaeology*, 4, 1986, 17-18, 22.

<sup>8</sup> C. Schofield, *Shaping*, 33-6; *Pioneers*, 140-4

claimed land in the Valley.<sup>1</sup> It is likely that he was already in occupation of that land, since on the same day, he signed a conveyance of other land, he held in the Field of Mars, giving his address as "Old Man's Valley".<sup>2</sup> Higgins settled in the Old Mans Valley, cutting down the huge trees, and later selling produce. His family was associated with the valley for decades to come.

James Bellamy was another settler who occupied land on the south side of Castle Hill Road i. e. just outside the study area. He too had an encounter with a bushranger in the wilds of Beecroft, shooting him dead in 1821. Later appointed a constable, he acquired land and stock. One of the properties which he acquired later was the 640 acre grant of John Thorne when it was offered for sale in 1856. His descendants and his land holdings pressed deep into the study area.<sup>3</sup>

Along the route of the Old Northern Road, Thomas Best was occupying land at Dural when the work upon the new road inspired him to establish an inn about halfway between Parramatta and Wiseman's Ferry which was in operation for some years in the early 1830s.<sup>4</sup>

## The River

The earliest transport route in the study area was the Hawkesbury River which served as the lifeline between Sydney and the settlements located at Windsor and Richmond on the Hawkesbury River, settled in 1794. A fleet of small craft plied up and down the river, making it a regular highway and stimulating the settlement of suitable sites along the river. (See above) In time, the river became an obstacle to travellers by land. Ferries operated to carry land traffic across the river before bridges were built. In 1827, Solomon Wiseman received permission to operate a ferry, thus giving the locality its name, Wiseman's Ferry.<sup>5</sup> Other ferries were operational at George Peat's grant near Mooney Mooney Creek during the 1840s.<sup>6</sup> When the railway was under construction in the 1880s, the river was temporarily crossed by ferry until the bridge was completed. Even today, there still remain ferries which transport vehicles across waterways, at Berowra Water and Wiseman's Ferry.

## Early roads

Roads gradually penetrated the area. In 1817 a new route to the Hunter Valley, the Old Northern Road was surveyed as far as Dural. The next section from Dural to Wiseman's Ferry was surveyed in 1825.<sup>7</sup>

In 1829, another road was opened as the New North Road. It later fell into disuse although sections can be seen where it crossed Devlins Creek at Epping and as an embankment in Blackwood Reserve at Pennant Hills and

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<sup>1</sup> *Pioneers*, 201-2

<sup>2</sup> Lease & release, 18, 19 March 1835, in Real Property Application 5394, A. O.

<sup>3</sup> *Pioneers*, 90-3

<sup>4</sup> *Pioneers*, 114-6

<sup>5</sup> *Pioneers*, 26

<sup>6</sup> C. Schofield, *Shaping*, 42

<sup>7</sup> Lorna Ollif, *There Must Be a River - A History of Hornsby Shire*, Sydney, 1975,, 29; C. Schofield, *Shaping* 38

where it crossed Observatory Park, opposite.<sup>1</sup> Remains of an old road and bridge exist at Pyes Creek near New Line Road at Cherrybrook. The site includes the approaches and abutments of a bridge and an adjacent quarry. This was thought to be part of the original New North Road but now it is thought to be an old local access road.

In 1826, a new route to the Hunter Valley, later to be known as the Great North Road was marked out by John Oxley and William Dumaesq.<sup>2</sup> Gangs of convict workmen were later sent to construct the road to a standard suitable for vehicular traffic. Work continued from 1826 to 1831. Stockades, embanked roadways, stone culverts and cuttings still mark parts of this roadway.<sup>3</sup>

Despite the effort expended upon the construction of the Great North Road, it was never as popular a route to the Hunter Valley as had been hoped. Other routes were in use. An unofficial track lead to Mangrove Creek, where a publican named Taylor operated a river crossing.<sup>4</sup> Further east, George Peat had blazed a trail to his grant near Mooney Mooney Creek. After official investigation, this road was accepted by the colonial government as the best route. It was properly formed and made ready for traffic by 1850. It became known as Peat's Ferry Road.<sup>5</sup>

### **Coach services**

With little settlement in the area apart from orchardists and farmers, who largely owned their own transport, there was little call for regular coach services. It was not until the arrival of the railway in the 1880s, that regular coach services were initiated. E. J. Black was running coaches to Castle Hill from Parramatta in 1886.<sup>6</sup> In 1889, a regular coach service ran from Hornsby Post Office along the Great Northern Road, Gordon Road and Lane Cove Road to Alfred Street in North Sydney. It was used to carry mail and small quantities of fruit.<sup>7</sup> In 1897, H. J. Harrison commenced a service between Dural and Hornsby.<sup>8</sup> The Black family continued to run services in the district for many years. Their stables and depot were located at the corner of Middle Dural and Galston Roads.<sup>9</sup>

## **HORTICULTURE & COUNTRY ESTATES**

The suitability of parts of the Study Area for orcharding was instrumental in establishing a stable yeomanry in the district. Communities of small holders

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<sup>1</sup> *Pioneers*, 49

<sup>2</sup> C. Schofield, *Shaping*, 40

<sup>3</sup> Grace Karskens, 'The Convict Road Station Site at Wiseman Ferry: an Historical and Archaeological Investigation', *Australian Journal of Historical Archaeology*, 2, 1984, 17-26.

<sup>4</sup> C. Schofield, *Shaping*, 42; *Pioneers*, 30

<sup>5</sup> C. Schofield, *Shaping*, 42; *Pioneers*, 30, 167-8

<sup>6</sup> Harry Carr, Noelene Pullen & Lorna McCluskey, *Transport in the Hills District 1805-1990*, Castle Hill, 1990., 16

<sup>7</sup> D. Audley, 'Sydney's horse bus industry in 1889' in *Sydney's Transport - Studies in Urban History*, edited by Garry Wotherspoon, Sydney, 1983, 95.

<sup>8</sup> H. Carr, N. Pullen & L. McCluskey, *Transport in the Hills District*, 24

<sup>9</sup> H. Carr, N. Pullen & L. McCluskey, *Transport in the Hills District*, 22

and the key families of those communities expanded from within as larger landholders bought up new land or as younger sons moved onto landholdings divided up upon the deaths of their parents, or moved onto available new land nearby. This localised network proved to be the framework in which the whole locality was developed during the nineteenth century. These communities lent a stability to the district which was only broken with the arrival of the railway and suburban development.

### Orange Orchards

During the latter part of the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth century, the study area was renowned for its orchards. The names of Epping, Carlingford, Thornleigh, Dural and Galston, were associated with the sharp scent of fresh citrus fruits in winter and the soft luscious fragrance of stone fruits at the city markets in the hot steamy days of a harbourside summer.

As early as 1829, the orange orchards of the Pennant Hills along the New Line Road were flourishing.<sup>1</sup> At Carlingford and Epping, citrus orchards were closely associated with the Mobbs family. The founder of the dynasty, William Mobbs commenced the successful cultivation of oranges in the 1820s. From then onwards, the locality was synonymous with oranges and the Mobbs family.<sup>2</sup> Many other growers joined them, but the various branches of the family and the descendants of William Mobbs took up parcels of land nearby for orange cultivation thus continuing the predominance of the Mobbs clan in the industry.

### Orchards

At Galston and Dural, settlers were cultivating grapes, stone and citrus fruits by the 1860s.<sup>3</sup> Orchards later spread into Arcadia and Glenorie. Similarly, the Thornleigh area was occupied by fruit growers by the 1860s. The subdivision of the Horne and Thorn grants placed a number of smaller orchard blocks onto the market.<sup>4</sup> As early as 1850, a petition from the fruit growers of the Pennant Hills appealing against the higher market fees charged for produce from orchardists further away from Sydney revealed a long list of names of local fruit growers.<sup>5</sup>

Until the early twentieth century, most of the subdivisions in the study area were aimed at cutting up large grants into blocks with smaller acreages aimed at purchasers seeking sites suitable for orchards. (See Illustration 1) Such a process continued well into the twentieth century when suitable land away from residential areas was cut up and offered as orchard lots. For example, the Pennant Ridge estate was offered in 1922 as orchard lots as was the Ridlington estate in 1929.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> C. Schofield, *Shaping*, 46

<sup>2</sup> *Pioneers*, 51-2.

<sup>3</sup> *Pioneers*, 121

<sup>4</sup> *Pioneers*, 148

<sup>5</sup> *Pioneers*, 90, 143

<sup>6</sup> HDHS Subd plans



## Plant Nurseries

As well as growing fruit for sale in the Sydney market, local growers also entered the market as suppliers of seeds and seedlings of ornamental and fruit bearing plants. Carlingford and Epping were particularly noted for their nurseries. Lars Rosen, a Swedish immigrant was one grower whose seedlings had gained a favourable reputation by 1900.<sup>1</sup> Vesseys, another renowned Epping grower, were known for their grapevines. Hazelwood Brothers made their reputation as rose suppliers early in the twentieth century from their Epping nursery. Later they moved to Dural where the firm continued operations until 1965.<sup>2</sup>

## Schools

Schooling was provided from early in the settlement. Schools associated with the Wesleyans were operating at Pennant Hills in 1825. Another school associated with St Jude's Anglican Church, Dural was operational in 1827.<sup>3</sup> A Presbyterian School functioning at Thompsons Corner, was converted to a National School in 1838.<sup>4</sup> These were impermanent establishments as was the half time school at Peats Ferry opened originally as a full time school, and later conducted by a teacher shared between Bar Island and Peats Ferry.<sup>5</sup> In Muogamarra Nature Reserve, a temporary school also catered for the children of workmen constructing the Peats Ferry Road.

A more permanent school was formed near the Peats Ferry Road, Hornsby. A tent from Boothtown near Prospect Reservoir which had proved too small for the number of pupils at the Reservoir camp was moved to Hookhams Corner on Peat's Ferry Road in 1883.<sup>6</sup> In 1889, a new permanent building on a site closer to the recently built railway station was operational.<sup>7</sup>

## Rural subdivision

Subdivisions cut up the original grants into ever smaller parcels of land. At first, when these grants were utilised for agricultural purposes, the size of the allotments were substantial. The earliest subdivisions of grants within the study area were amongst family members. Often this occurred on the death of the patriarch, when the holdings were cut up amongst the heirs, or when there was a deliberate attempt before death and taxes to provide for the next generation. James Bellamy purchased the 640 acre grant of John Thorne in 1856. This land and adjacent parcels were subdivided. Some were bequeathed to daughters of Bellamy whilst other parcels were offered at auction and sold.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, Old Mans Valley was apportioned amongst the members of the Higgins family over the years.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> C. Schofield, *Shaping*, 113

<sup>2</sup> C. Schofield, *Shaping*, 207-8

<sup>3</sup> C. Schofield, *Shaping*, 49

<sup>4</sup> C. Schofield, *Shaping*, 53

<sup>5</sup> C. Schofield, *Shaping*, 64-5

<sup>6</sup> *Hornsby Public School Centenary 1883-1983*, 1983, 7

<sup>7</sup> *Hornsby Public School Centenary*, 9

<sup>8</sup> *Pioneers*, 138-9; DP 484; Hornsby Subd Plans, M. L. H7/158

<sup>9</sup> *Pioneers*, 204

Since the landholders of the Hornsby plateau lived and worked within a market economy rather than a traditional subsistence society, the cutting up of holdings for family members was soon overtaken by the deliberate subdivision of portions into sizeable allotments suitable for orchards.

At Dural the grant of George Hall was subdivided and auctioned on 21 November 1881, creating many of the holdings in present day Arcadia.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, Best's Subdivision of George Acres' 1500 acre grant nearby provided allotments, some already planted with oranges and stone fruits, for sale in the late 1880s.<sup>2</sup> Such subdivisions continued into the twentieth century. Yet, rather more representative of the emerging trend, was the Pennant Hills Township Estate auctioned in the 1880s. Land in that estate was offered as villa sites close to the railway at Beecroft, whilst land at some distance was offered as "Orchard Blocks".<sup>3</sup> The Bellamy Estate auctioned on 15 October 1892, on part of G. H. Thorn's grant also offered villa or orchard lots.<sup>4</sup>

## **TRANSPORT - THE ADVANCE OF THE CITY**

The construction of new railway lines through the district changed the focus of transport and altered the existing movements corridors through the area. New areas came into prominence as railway platforms and sidings influenced local movement patterns.

### **Railways**

The district was dragged abruptly into the tighter grip of the city of Sydney, its power structures, its extremes of wealth and poverty and into its nexus of overt political corruption by the construction of the railway line. Two railway lines were involved. One railway line from Homebush to Waratah (Newcastle) was intended as part of a scheme to create an integrated system of main lines. The Homebush to Waratah railway line was intended to join the main Western and Southern system with the Northern lines which commenced at Newcastle. Its cost was budgeted as £2,000,000.<sup>5</sup> Hornsby was but a minor calculation in the scheme. The railway line commenced operation on 17 September 1886. In 1886, a further railway scheme was approved - a line to link St Leonards and Hornsby - which was opened on 1 January 1890.<sup>6</sup> That second line was more consciously planned as a developmental line, routed to open up ideal suburban country for home building.

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<sup>1</sup> 114 (L) LTO Plans Room

<sup>2</sup> 1693 (L), LTO Plans Room

<sup>3</sup> DP 979375, LTO Plans Room; Pennant Hills Subd, M. L. P9/25

<sup>4</sup> DP 2774, LTO Plans Room; Pennant Hills Subd, M. L., P9/1

<sup>5</sup> Robert Lee, *The Greatest Public Work - The New South Wales Railways, 1848 to 1889*, Sydney, 1988, 101.

<sup>6</sup> R. Lee, *The Greatest Public Work*, 111

# 20 CHOICE FARMS ADJOINING HORNSBY LANE COVE.

To be Sold at the Rooms, 112, Pitt Street,  
On Tuesday, February 10<sup>th</sup> 1880.

at 1/2 past 11 o'clock

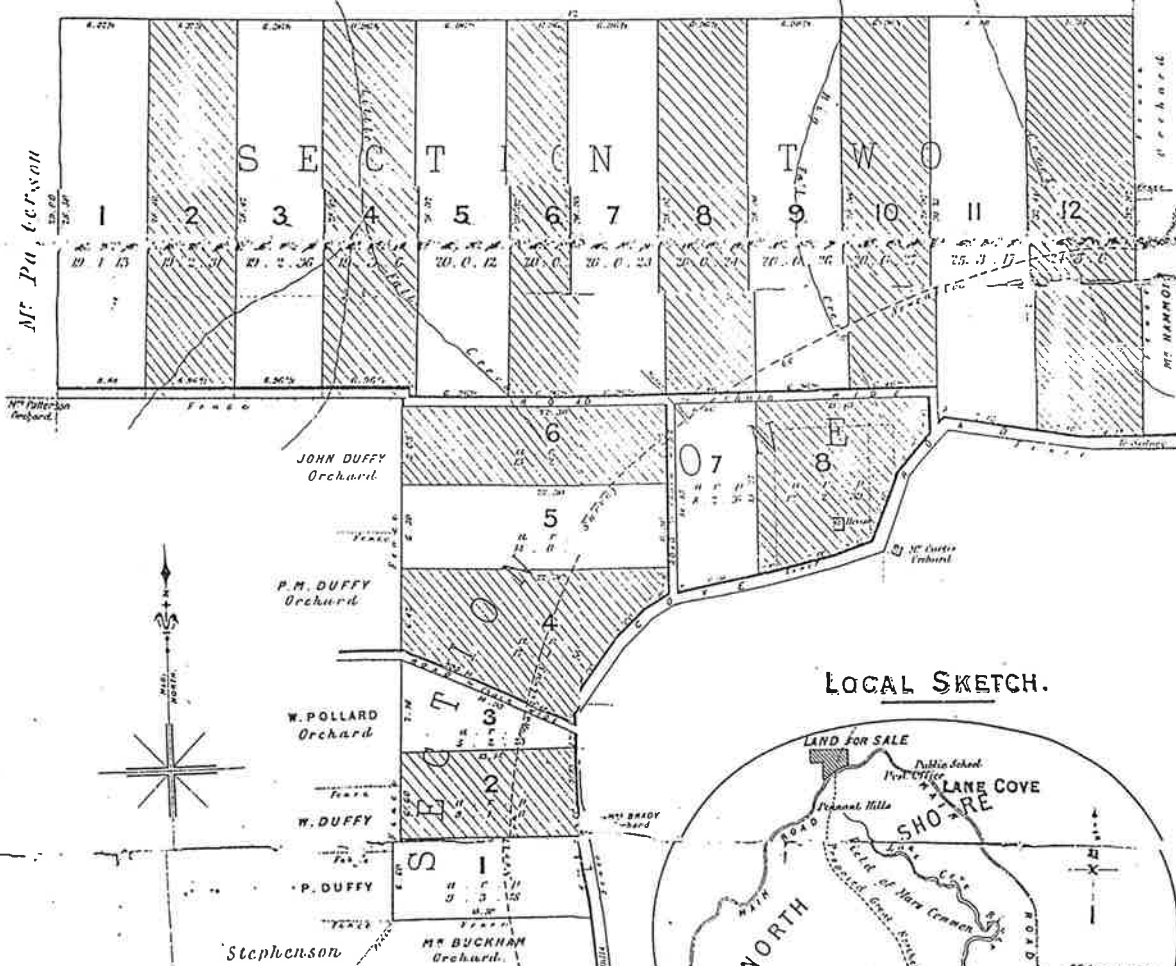
**MILLS & PILE**

TORRENS' TITLE

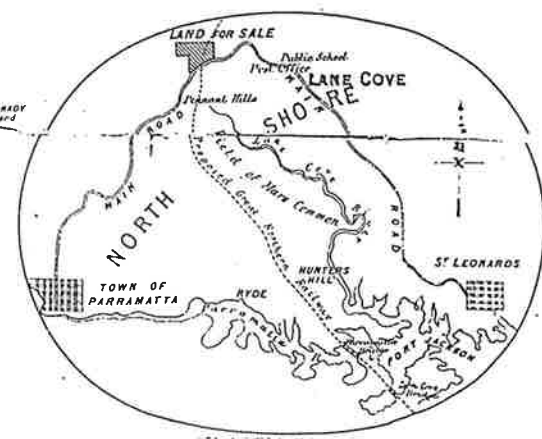
AUCTIONEERS.

TERMS EASY

BURNS, WIERS & SMITH



LOCAL SKETCH.



G. A. ATCHISON, C.E.  
Licensed Surveyor  
(Under Real Property Act  
(Sydney City Council))

Illus 1  
Farmlets, 1880  
David Milson's Grant near Thornleigh was cut up into large 20 acre orchard lots. The proposed railway line snakes across the grant.  
Source: Hornsby Subdivision Plans, M. L. H7/158

## Brooklyn and the Railway

One of the major engineering feats associated with the construction of the Homebush-Waratah line was the crossing of the Hawkesbury River. The crossing was achieved by the use of a steel arched bridge of seven spans. The steelwork was fabricated by the Dalmarnock Iron Works in Glasgow and was assembled on site by the Union Bridge Company of New York. Built to a Whipple truss design, this bridge was the greatest of the early railway bridges.<sup>1</sup> Apart from the steel bridge, another legacy left by the American workmen was a new name - Brooklyn - for the place where the bridge crossed the river.<sup>2</sup> The subdivision of land to form a village adjacent to where the bridge left the mainland was called "Town of Brooklyn" by the vendors and thus cemented the association between name and place.<sup>3</sup>

In later years, the bridge structure failed due to a sinking foundation on one of the pylons. During the Second World War, a replacement bridge was built. It was opened on 2 July 1946.<sup>4</sup>

## Changes

A whole array of changes were initiated in the district after the coming of the railway. A re-awakening of the volcano in Old Mans Valley could not have altered the landscape as profoundly as the railway did. There were changes in traffic flow patterns as orchardists took advantage of the proximity of the railway to freight fruit to Sydney. Initially, a goods siding at Thornleigh captured much of the fruit traffic until competition from another siding at Pennant Hills took away much of its custom.<sup>5</sup>

The railway brought a legion of subdividers, surveyors and auctioneers to the district seeking to cut up as much of the available land as they could for sale to prospective buyers. In their wake streamed the purchasers of allotments, and the builders and tradesmen who erected houses and cottages upon these allotments. The area changed from an orcharding district to one characterised by commuters and orchardists.

The nature of power structures in the city was clearly brought to the notice of residents in the corruption allegations against parliamentarians Robert Burdett-Smith and John Fitzgerald Burns, who in association with George Withers, benefited considerably when unemployed labour was used to form roads through their lands near the newly opened Hornsby station.<sup>6</sup> Claims by officials of the Department of Lands that the roads had been commenced before the railway was complete and that they were intended to provide access to nearby Crown Lands to improve their marketability may have been true but sounded lame when the land owned by Robert Burdett-Smith, John Fitzgerald Burns and George Withers was so markedly improved in value as a result.<sup>7</sup> (See Illustration 2)

<sup>1</sup> Colin O'Connor, *Spanning Two Centuries - Historic Bridges of Australia*, St Lucia, 56-8

<sup>2</sup> C. Schofield, *Shaping*, 80-1; *Pioneers*, 38

<sup>3</sup> DP 1183, Surveyed 29 Jan 1884

<sup>4</sup> C. Schofield, *Shaping*, 195

<sup>5</sup> *Pioneers*, 153, 88-9

<sup>6</sup> *Pioneers*, 220-1; DP 1880

<sup>7</sup> 'Crown Lands (Road at Hornsby)', *V & P. L. A. N. S. W.*, 1888-9, III, 1249-50

Less noticeable but no less suspect was the manner in which parliamentarian Samuel William Gray purchased numerous grants from the Crown in the direct path of the railway line, and subsequently subdivided them for sale.<sup>1</sup> That he managed to achieve a similarly fortunate selection in the Parish of Sutherland where three Portions directly in the path of the line through Como were bought by him immediately before the line was put through, dispels any notion that Fortune may simply have smiled upon Gray.<sup>2</sup>

In 1928, the North Shore railway line was electrified. The Strathfield to Hornsby line was electrified during the following year.<sup>3</sup> The greater ease of travel made the locality increasingly attractive.

### **Rogan's Hill tram**

Steam transport was also made available to residents of the western extremities of the study area in 1924 when the Parramatta to Baulkham Hills tramway was extended as far as Rogan's Hill. In the process, the permanent way was upgraded to railway standard. Steam trains then commenced operating along the new line. Fruit growers utilised the line to send produce to market, but the line was short-lived and closed in 1932.<sup>4</sup>

### **Impact of the motor car**

By the 1920s, the motor car was rapidly taking over from steam and horse drawn transport as a prime transport mode. After the arrival of the first motor lorry in 1908, motorised road transport steadily replaced horse drawn transport, especially during the 1920s.<sup>5</sup> To cater for these vehicles, the newly formed Main Roads Board constructed a new highway from Hookham's Corner at Hornsby to Peat's Ferry, in the late 1920s. Originally called the Great North Road, it was soon known as the Pacific Highway.<sup>6</sup>

In 1938 work commenced on construction of a bridge to carry that road over Hawkesbury River. Numerous engineering difficulties had to be overcome, stemming from the nature of the foundations and the length of the structure. The construction of the bridge was carried on with vigour, since it was a work of strategic importance. It opened in 1945.<sup>7</sup>

Subsequently, the pressure of motor traffic driving through the Shire to Newcastle and further north, was responsible for the initiation of plans to build a freeway through the Shire. Known as the F3 Freeway, the first section to be built ran from Hawkesbury River to Calga (outside the Shire).<sup>8</sup> Other sections were added until the final link was recently completed. It linked the F3 to the

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<sup>1</sup> Portions, 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 22 Ph South Colah: DP 2052

<sup>2</sup> C. T. 591 f. 100, 102-3; C. T. 796 f. 183;

<sup>3</sup> Peter Spearritt, *Sydney Since the Twenties*, Sydney, 1978, 146

<sup>4</sup> H. Carr, N. Pullen & L. McCluskey, *Transport in the Hills District*, 67, 71-2, 75

<sup>5</sup> Lester Hovenden, 'The impact of the motor vehicle, 1900-39', in *Sydney's Transport*, 140, 142.

<sup>6</sup> C. Schofield, *Shaping*, 156-7

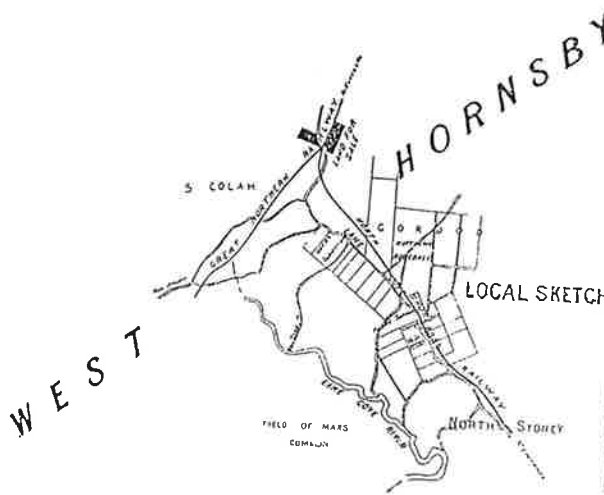
<sup>7</sup> C. Schofield, *Shaping*, 193-4

<sup>8</sup> C. Schofield, *Shaping*, 251

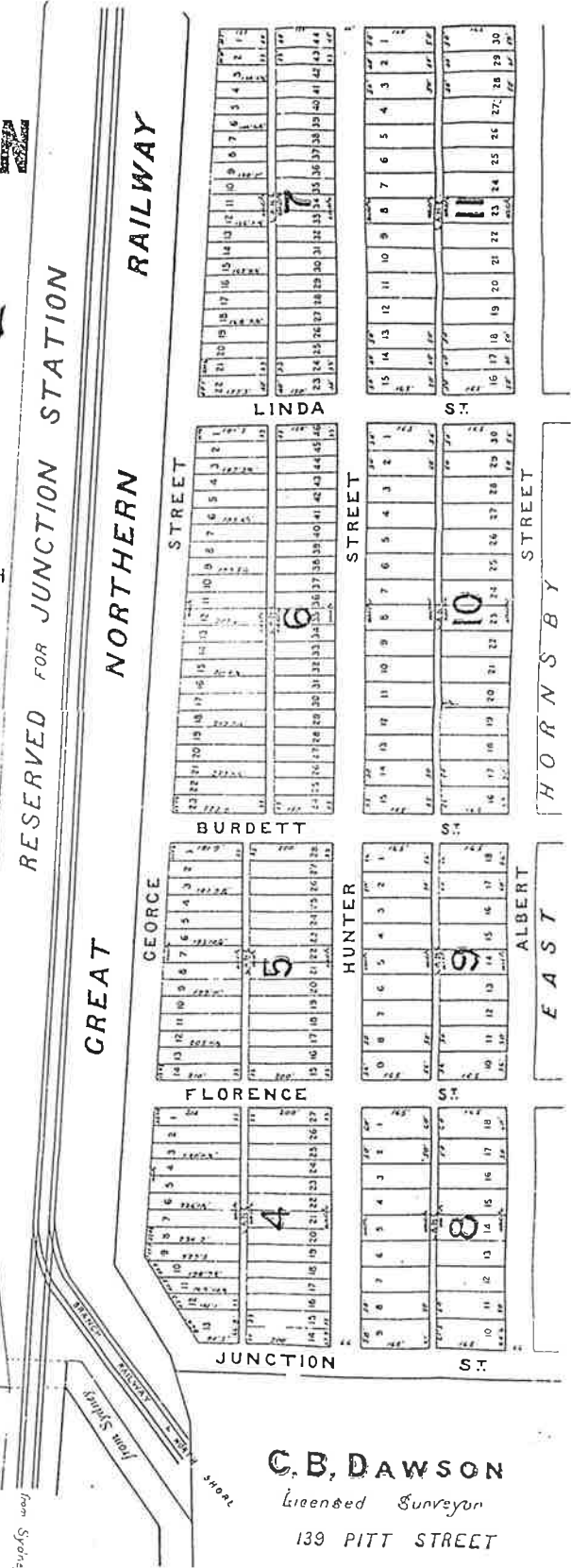
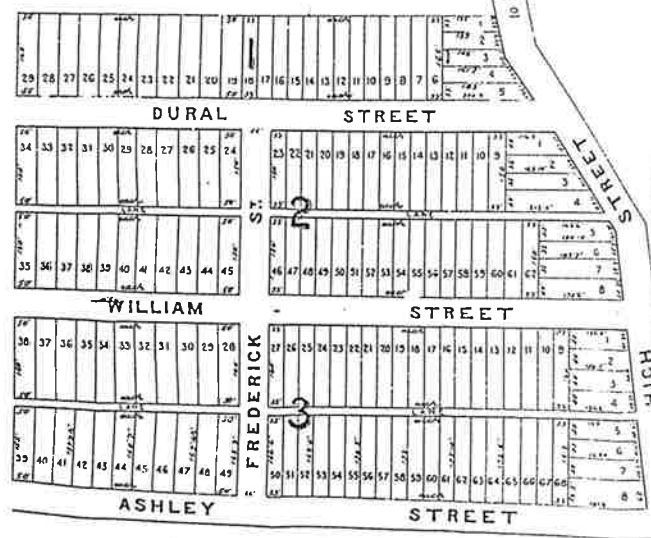
# HORNSBY JUNCTION

FOR SALE BY  
**WITHERS, CALLAGHAN & BROWN**

AUCTIONEERS, PITT ST.



GOVERNMENT RES:



JOHN WOODS & CO LIMITED.

**C. B. DAWSON**  
 Licensed Surveyor  
 139 PITT STREET

**Illus 2**  
**Hornsby Junction, c. 1886**  
 Robert Burdett-Smith, John Fitzgerald Burns and George Withers made an astute choice when they purchased land at Hornsby. The proposed railway platform is shown here adjacent to their subdivision.  
 Source: Hornsby Subdivision Plans, M. L. H7/83

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Pennant Hills Road and the Pacific Highway and by-passed the main shopping centre at Hornsby.

### **DEVELOPING THE UPLAND SUBURBS 1886-1906**

With the coming of the railway, the subdivider and land speculator also arrived in the district. Whereas previously land had been split amongst heirs or occasionally cut up into smaller agricultural lots, suburban allotments drew speculators and house builders. The elevation of the locality proved to be a crucial selling point. Whereas suburban allotments located a similar distance from the city, but south of the Parramatta River on flat land struggled to attract any serious commuter settlement, the Hornsby Plateau attracted a wealthy clientele which sought not just to buy vacant allotments, but also to settle in the district.

#### **Subdivision for Suburban Allotments**

The opening of the railway in 1886 provided the speculative impetus behind numerous subdivisions. The government led the way with its own subdivision of the former Field of Mars Common creating the layout and street pattern of much of Cheltenham and Beecroft. (See Illustration 3) Speculative attention was initially directed at the Hornsby area. After the announcement of the St Leonards to Hornsby railway line, speculators turned their interest to land along the route of the proposed line. There was thus a flurry of speculative activity in present day Waitara, Wahroonga and North-East of the railway line at Hornsby. Subdividers included private individuals, syndicates and Land, Building and Investment Companies, such as the Mutual Provident Land Investing and Building Society, subdivider of "Hornsby Township" which straddled the new line to St Leonards. (See Illustration 4) Scandals associated with parliamentarians taking advantage of prior knowledge of the line has already been noted above.

#### **The appeal of a healthy district**

Accessibility, available building allotments and an expanding concern about health combined to make the Hornsby district an attractive one. Current medical beliefs associated cooler mountain air with a healthy climate, a factor which had made the Blue Mountains so popular. The railway made the Hornsby plateau accessible to those with the money to afford such a move. The earliest settlers of this new wave were members of the city elite, often with some reason to fear for their well-being if they remained in the hot, humid city or out on the low-lying plain west of the city. John Seale took his wife, Maria, to Beecroft in the 1880s seeking a climate which would alleviate her lung trouble and built "Mundaribba" there in 1896.<sup>1</sup> Henry Marcus Clark, a merchant draper from Sydney, built "Mount Wilga" near Hornsby for his retirement, when his health began to suffer.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Helen Barker, & May Elven, *Houses of Hornsby Shire*, Vol 1, *The Large Houses 1886-1926*, Hornsby, 1989, 46

<sup>2</sup> H. Barker, & M. Elven, *Houses of Hornsby Shire*, 96

C. 1107 - 2030

AK 26 000

10/10/1887

PARRAMATTA LAND DISTRICT

**FIELD OF MARS**  
 PLAN OF  
 304 Portions Numbered 481 to 784  
**FIELD OF MARS**  
 and 57 Portions Numbered 121 to 177  
**FIELD OF MARS**  
 PARISH OF  
**FIELD OF MARS**  
 PARISH OF  
**FIELD OF MARS**  
 COUNTY OF  
**FIELD OF MARS**



—All roads in subdivision are six chains wide—

NOTES  
 Transit Theodolite and Steel Tape used in Survey  
 Date of Completion of Survey 29th Dec 1886  
 Marked in accordance with the Regulations published  
 for the guidance of Licensed Surveyors and the  
 practice of the Department of Lands  
 Licensed Surveyors *A. Russell*  
 Surveyed on 29th Dec 1886

Scale 5 Chains to 1 Inch  
 Portions 537 to 543, 545 to 549, 550 to 564, 565 to 586, 700 to 713, 715 to 765  
 Defined by red tint hereon. For Sale on the Ground on Saturday 27th May 1887

**Illus 3**  
**Field of Mars -Government Subdivision**  
 The colonial government also benefitted from the railway line when it surveyed Crown Land near the new line for sale in 1887.  
 Source: NSW - Dept of Lands, "Field of Mars" M. L. Map M3 811.1316/1887/1



Auctioneers of the newly subdivided estates near Hornsby were conscious of the appeal of health to their clientele. For instance, the heading on the auction plan of the Waitara Estate of March 1895 screamed "610 Feet Elevation" and alluded to the locality's "Mountain health giving invigorating air".<sup>1</sup> Further south, near what is today known as Epping Station (then called Carlingford) the government subdivision of the Field of Mars placed many small allotments on the market.<sup>2</sup>

Institutional users were also drawn to this healthy locality. In 1897, the Sisters of Mercy commenced a foundling home in the former orchard of Charles Leek.<sup>3</sup> The Waitara Foundling Home, as it was soon known, prospered drawing donations from a variety of sources even across denominational boundaries. In 1901, the Sisters were sheltering 20 mothers and over 100 babies. Leek's former orchard served a renewed purpose as the Sisters were able to obtain fruit, as well as run pigs and dairy cattle on their holding.<sup>4</sup>

### **Notable large houses**

In consequence of so many members of the city elite seeking to settle on the Hornsby plateau, there was a sharp numerical increase in the number of large villas and mansions in the district. It was a radical departure from the modest farmhouses which had characterised the district prior to the coming of the railway. Thirty of these substantial dwellings are detailed in Helen Barker and May Elven's *Houses of Hornsby Shire*.

Not only were most of these buildings associated with notable and influential citizens of the colony, but many are also notable architecturally. A variety of fashionable architects were engaged to design houses for new residents of the district. Some of them are key examples of architectural design which served as catalysts for shifts in architectural design. These include "Highlands" built for Alfred Hordern, one of the most notable examples of the work of Horbury Hunt, a house which looked ahead to future architectural expressions, and remains a stunningly modern house for its time - 1892.<sup>5</sup> Renowned engineer Norman Selfe designed his own home "Gilligaloola" built on Pennant Hills Road, Normanhurst in 1893.<sup>6</sup>

### **Service nodes**

To cater for the immediate needs of new residents, service centres blossomed near the new railway platforms. At Thompson's Corner on the Pennant Hills Road, there was already an existing retail centre by 1880 with post office and blacksmith's forge, which had congregated around Henry Thompson's store. An adjacent bakery provided bread for the district, whilst carts from Thompson's store delivered goods all over the district.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Hornsby Subd Plans, M. L., H7/36

<sup>2</sup> Higinbotham & Robinson, Map of the Municipality of Ryde, Parishes of Hunter Hill and Field of Mars, M. L. Map M4/811.142/1893/1

<sup>3</sup> C. Schofield, *Shaping*, 121

<sup>4</sup> *Cumberland Argus*, Christmas Number, 19 Dec 1901, 15.

<sup>5</sup> H. Barker, & M. Elven, *Houses of Hornsby Shire*, 20-1; Freeland, 232-3

<sup>6</sup> H. Barker, & M. Elven, *Houses of Hornsby Shire*, 22-3.

<sup>7</sup> *Pioneers*, 101-2; Pennant Hills Subd, M. L., P9/25

# HORNSBY TOWNSHIP

Right at the Junction of the Great Northern and the North Shore R.I. Lines  
 12 MILES FROM WILSONS POINT THE BEST & MOST ADVANTAGEOUSLY SITUATED LAND ON THE

## NEW "ST. LEONARDS"

A Magnificent Opportunity TO BUY Splendid Cheap Land

AS THE ESTATE MUST BE SOLD  
 IN ORDER TO CLOSE THE ACCOUNTS OF THE VENDOR SOCIETY WHICH IS IN LIQUIDATION

THE MUTUAL PROVIDENT LAND INVESTING & BUILDING SOCIETY (IN LIQUIDATION)  
 OFFICE N° 61 ELIZABETH ST. VICTORIA ARCADE

JUNCTION

LEONARD ST

PEATS FERRY RD

NORTH ST

COLAH ST

THOMAS ST

HORNSBY ST

GOVERNMENT ROAD

ASHLEY ST

HORNBY STATION

RAILWAY

ROADWAY TO STATION & COALS SHED

HIGHWAY

NORTH SHORE

ORCHARD

PROPOSED PLATFORM

N.B. THE LOTS SHADDED RED ARE SOLD.

FRONTING THE MAIN Peats Ferry Rd.

FRONTING JUNCTION ST. OVER 66 FEET WIDE

and COLAH ST. JAMES ST. LEONARD ST. THOMAS ST. HORNSBY ST. and GOVERNMENT ROAD ALL 66 FT. WIDE

VENDORS

THE MUTUAL PROVIDENT LAND INVESTING & BUILDING SOCIETY LTD. (In Liquidation)  
 Office, N° 61, Elizabeth Street.

E. W. FOXALL Secretary  
 VICTORIA ARCADE

FORSTER & DODD  
 LICENSED SURVEYORS  
 11, NORWICH CHAMBERS  
 15, WATERLOO ST. SYDNEY.

EASY TERMS  
 DEPOSIT balance with interest at 6% per Annum payable in 12 Quarterly Instalments or purchaser may obtain Transfer at once on payment of the whole of the purchase money.  
 2% DISCOUNT FOR CASH and DEEDS AT ONCE.

**Illus 4**  
**Hornsby Township**  
 Subdivision of the land held by the Mutual Provident Land Investing and Building Society produced a typically lavish auction poster.  
 Source: Hornsby Subdivision Plans, M. L. H7/110

Competition with Thompson's Corner arose from Pennant Hills. The new railway platform at Pennant Hills attracted Eaton's Hotel, a nursery, blacksmith and the Railway Stores.<sup>1</sup> At Epping, Walker's general store, the first in the settlement opened in 1892. In time, Richard Walker added the Dolphin Hall and a butcher's shop.<sup>2</sup> Epping became a thriving commercial centre particularly from 1910 onwards, but the real core of commerce in Epping was located in Beecroft Road, in what was then the Municipality of Dundas (part of the City of Parramatta today)

It was Hornsby, however, which quickly became the centre of the district, its pre-eminence based upon the railway junction. The Railway Hotel and the Hornsby Junction Emporium opened near the station.<sup>3</sup> Other businesses followed. By 1905, a traveller crossing the railway bridge to post a letter at Hornsby Post Office, passed a bootmaker's shop, the Hornsby Butchery Company, James Miner's drapery store which faced J. G. Edward's estate agency across the street. Further on, there was another bootmaker, Mansell's fruit and refreshment rooms, and Carpenter's newsagency. After posting his letter, our hypothetical traveller may have returned down Colah Street (now Coronation Street) passing Smith & Co, bakery and hairdresser's salon, Hobson's pharmacy, Wellington's grocery store, Webb's produce store and the drapery shop of Luce and Company.<sup>4</sup>

## **MANUFACTURING AND WORKERS**

The shopkeepers of Hornsby Junction not only serviced the new elite which had settled amongst the orchards and farmlets of the district. Wage earners also joined the settled farming community of the plateau. Casual labourers earned their living within the community. The railway had brought an influx of wage labourers, who followed the construction work whilst living in makeshift accommodation. One such settlement, "Hall's Camp" was located near Thornleigh where the contractors quarried their ballast.<sup>5</sup> At Brooklyn, after the completion of the railway bridge, a subdivision with narrow 20 feet wide allotments ideal for the erection of city terrace houses, allowed a small community to emerge.<sup>6</sup> By 1909 many of the residents earned their living as fisherman whilst others serviced the emerging tourist traffic.<sup>7</sup>

Population grew markedly during the 1890s despite the depressed economic circumstances. The village of Hornsby grew from 423 residents in 1891 to 1818 in 1901. Wahroonga grew from 52 to 784, whilst the village of "Pennant Hills" grew from 303 to 693.<sup>8</sup> Most of that growth could not be accounted for by the elite of the city moving to the district. Many of these new residents sought work locally.

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<sup>1</sup> *Pioneers*, 88

<sup>2</sup> *Pioneers*, 59-60

<sup>3</sup> *Pioneers*, 222

<sup>4</sup> Hornsby Subd Plans, M. L. H7/13, H7/19B. See also *Pioneers*, 236-45

<sup>5</sup> *Pioneers*, 144-5

<sup>6</sup> DP 1183, LTO Plans Room

<sup>7</sup> *Pioneers*, 39

<sup>8</sup> 1901 Census, 546-7

## Industry

Manufacturing industry attracted some residents. P. A. James commenced a sawmill in Jersey Street, Hornsby, opposite the railway line in 1903, followed in later years by another mill at Epping.<sup>1</sup> The National Brickworks at Thornleigh commenced operation in 1901 serviced by its own rail siding. By 1903, the capacity of the works was 140,000 bricks per week.<sup>2</sup> It was soon joined by Fowler's pottery, at Hookham's corner at Lodge Street.<sup>3</sup> There was another pottery, known as Bullock's in Baldwin Rd, Asquith, which manufactured pipes and firebricks. Bullock's works were closed in the Depression and the land was filled in for a park.<sup>4</sup>

There were two quarries within the study area. One, at Thornleigh, was originally opened by railway contractors, Amos and Co, to obtain stone suitable for ballasting the railway line. To reach the quarry, located in a deep gully in what is now Elouera Bushland Reserve, a complex zig zag railway track was constructed.<sup>5</sup> There was another quarry at Quarry Road, Dural.<sup>6</sup> In time, it was found that the volcanic rock in the extinct volcano in Old Mans Valley, was excellent material for road metal so a quarry opened soon after the shire council was formed.<sup>7</sup>

A maltworks commenced operation in 1913 at Thornleigh opposite the brickworks site. The enterprise was commenced by W. G. Chilvers, an Englishman. It was claimed subsequently to be the largest malt producer in the southern hemisphere.<sup>8</sup> The opening of the maltworks, close to the existing brickworks lead some pundits to forecast that Thornleigh would shortly become a major manufacturing centre.<sup>9</sup> It was a prospect which could only have been viewed with alarm by new residents who sought a home nearby because of the area's healthy climate. The area did not become a major manufacturing centre for reasons which shall become clear later.

There were other small scale manufacturing and processing works as well. Cyrus Homersham, later known as an estate agent, conducted a woolwash at the junction of Asquith and Hornsby Creeks at the foot of Bridge Road.<sup>10</sup> In 1912, there were a total of four abattoirs in Hornsby .<sup>11</sup>

All of these enterprises provided some employment for potential wage earners. In addition, there were other forms of work available,. Some people became waged employees of council or contractors to the shire council newly

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<sup>1</sup> C. Schofield, *Shaping* , 128

<sup>2</sup> C. Schofield, *Shaping* , 143-4; *Pioneers* 191

<sup>3</sup> C. Schofield, *Shaping* , 144; L. Ollif, *There Must Be a River* , 69

<sup>4</sup> L. Ollif, *There Must Be a River* , 69

<sup>5</sup> *Pioneers*, 154-5

<sup>6</sup> C. Schofield, *Shaping* , 109

<sup>7</sup> C. Schofield, *Shaping* , 143

<sup>8</sup> C. Schofield, *Shaping* , 144-5

<sup>9</sup> *SMH*, 30 Aug 1913.

<sup>10</sup> C. Schofield, *Shaping* , 109; *Pioneers*, 238

<sup>11</sup> P. Spearritt, *Sydney Since the Twenties*, 16

formed in 1906, or provided services such as carting. Council sanitary contracts such as that for Brooklyn kept a number of workers employed.<sup>1</sup>

The existence of an economically less favoured population, whether from a rural background or from families where the breadwinner was engaged in poorly paid labouring, can be seen in the number of shoeless children at Hornsby Public School even during the booming 1920s.<sup>2</sup>

### **Cottages Associated with Manufacturing Industry**

To house these workers a different, more modest, grade of housing was provided in the locality. Most of these cottages were part of the growing number of residences in the district, but a few stand out. From 1895 onwards, German emigrant Conrad von Hagen built ten weatherboard cottages in William Street, Hornsby. This assemblage of modest cottages acquired a number of significant associations, due to von Hagen's political and social philosophies. The cottages were constructed with carpenter's work by William Holman, later the NSW Premier and some of the painting was done by William Morris Hughes, later Prime Minister of Australia. The artist George Lambert, painted his renowned painting, "Across the Blacksoil Plains" whilst resident in one of the cottages.<sup>3</sup>

The National Brickworks at Thornleigh provided its workers with accommodation. Married men originally lived in a terrace overlooking the railway. These dwellings were later removed to expand the pit. Single men lived in a boarding house at the corner of Dartford and Pennant Hills Roads.<sup>4</sup>

### **SUBURBANISATION 1906 TO DATE**

Take the train from Milson's Point for the run to Waitara, put book and paper aside and prepare to enjoy it - you will do so, but as the moving picture unrolls to right and left there is so much charm that you will forget that you are getting higher and higher until the name board at Waitara tells you that you are over 600 feet above sea-level and in our northern highlands.

So wrote estate agent, Henry Gorman, when selling "Wallaroooba" at Hornsby.<sup>5</sup> Gorman's efforts to sell what was a large and prestigious residence, came at a time when the market for dwellings at Hornsby was changing. The appeal of a healthy district was as strong as ever, but improved transport and city expansion meant that the locality was the target of a wider range of home buyers. Whilst there were still many large houses built in the area, the trend was towards more modest suburban bungalows.

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<sup>1</sup> See C. Schofield, *Shaping*, 111

<sup>2</sup> *Hornsby Public School Centenary*, 32, 34, 35

<sup>3</sup> C. Schofield, *Shaping*, 123-4; *Pioneers*, 224,

<sup>4</sup> C. Schofield, *Shaping*, 144;

<sup>5</sup> Hardie & Gorman, *Properties and Premises - Real Estate Movements*, 1 March 1919, 3

## Identity

On 7 March 1906, the State Government compulsorily incorporated most of the areas in the state which still lacked local government. Most of these creations were shires. Hornsby Shire was one such Local Government Authority compulsorily created by administrative command, rather than by pressure from local inhabitants. Whether residents desired local government or not, the area now had a focus of power and an identity it had previously lacked. The boundaries of the new Hornsby Shire were precisely defined and only minor adjustments have been made up to the present day.<sup>1</sup>

Incorporation was probably not too premature. There was a solid commercial core at Hornsby. There were a number of prestigious men with sufficient leisure and financial security to accept the burdens of public office. The first President of the Shire Council, O. G. Roberts, was the principal of the jewellers, Fairfax and Roberts of Sydney.<sup>2</sup> There were other signs of the emerging commercial maturity of the area. The Bank of NSW, for example, formed a new local branch at Hornsby and, in June 1910, compulsorily removed many local accounts to this branch from Parramatta which had previously managed most of the accounts for this locality.<sup>3</sup>

## Developers

For potential land buyers and home builders, the appeal of fresh air and a healthy district still dominated. Exaggerated topographical perspective and attractive lithography highlighted the salubrity and bracing climate of Beecroft, when estate agents, Bruntnell & Bannerman auctioned the Mountain Air Estate at the corner of Hull and Hannah Streets on 13 October 1917.<sup>4</sup>

Subdivision of the grounds around the original larger houses was already proceeding as smaller allotments were provided for a different class of purchaser. "Pomona" had been built in 1886 as one of the first of the country villas for gentlemen escaping the city, In 1903 the grounds were first cut up as the Pomona Estate (DP 4169). In 1908, a further part of the grounds were subdivided (DP 4770).<sup>5</sup> Similarly, the grounds of "Ramona" in Beecroft built in 1887-8 were subdivided in 1911.<sup>6</sup>

Prospective returns on the subdivision of orchard lands near the railway line were so great by 1913 that many growers hastened to cut up their blocks for housing lots to profit from the demand.<sup>7</sup> A series of bad seasons in the previous few years hastened the exit of many growers from the industry when they perceived a more remunerative use for their land. Rain had either been insufficient, or came all at once in heavy falls. When fruit was not dry and shrivelled from lack of adequate moisture, it had been battered to the ground by heavy rainfalls.

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<sup>1</sup> Lands Dept, *Local Government - Hornsby No. 130 - County of Cumberland*, 1907. in City Engineer's Dept, Hornsby Shire Council

<sup>2</sup> H. Barker, & M. Elven, *Houses of Hornsby Shire*, 53

<sup>3</sup> Westpac Archives - Managers half-yearly reports

<sup>4</sup> Subd plan, HDHS plan

<sup>5</sup> H. Barker, & M. Elven, *Houses of Hornsby Shire*, 10-1; Pomona Estate plan, HDHS plan

<sup>6</sup> H. Barker, & M. Elven, *Houses of Hornsby Shire*, 13

<sup>7</sup> *SMH*, 30 Aug 1913

One of the more active subdividers was the Intercolonial Investment Land and Building Company, which had cut up the Ramona Estate about 1911 (DP 6280).<sup>1</sup> They subdivided the Blackacre Estate at Pennant Hills (DP 4592) in 1905, and the Golf Links Estate at Normanhurst (DP 8354).<sup>2</sup> Unlike many other developers, the Intercolonial Investment Land and Building Company not only subdivided land, but also sold package deals to buyers in which they built houses on land they sold. Hence, in 1916, the company was building houses in Stuart Ave Normanhurst on its Golf Links Estate for purchasers.<sup>3</sup>

### **Protecting the Quality of Development**

The style of development in any area had originally depended on few controls, but a series of initiatives, some private, others administrative, tightened control over development. Hornsby Shire Council, like other local government authorities had been given the power to ensure that all new buildings were in accordance with standard building regulations. Yet, such control only ensured that the physical fabric of any building was safe from structural failure, especially from fire, and also ensured adherence to basic health regulations.

To protect the style of development, to ensure the exclusive nature of any subdivision and to eliminate unwanted land-uses, such as hotels, brickyards, bottle depots, and noxious industries, subdividers utilised covenants on the land title to specifically nominate a minimum value for houses to be erected upon that subdivision. Estates such as the Blackacre Estate which specified a minimum value of £300 in 1904, the Ennes Estate of 1910 which specified a minimum value of £150, to the Mount Wilga Estate of 1928 which specified a minimum value of £1400, were clearly aimed at a particular class of buyer who wanted an environment purged of dust, smoke, smells and neighbours from the lower orders.<sup>4</sup>

Tighter and more precise control of development emerged from the legislative use of Residential District Proclamations by the Department of Local Government. Residential Districts were gazetted on the request of the local government authority. The proclamations specified a whole range of noxious and undesirable activities which were not permitted in an area gazetted as a Residential District. In Hornsby, the first Residential District was proclaimed on 3 December 1926 and covered Hornsby Station Estate and Mt Errington Estate. They were proclaimed at a steady rate through the 1930s with a total of 19 Residential Districts, two proclamations in 1945, plus a final four in 1960-1.<sup>5</sup>

### **Population growth**

During the twentieth century, the population of the Shire grew markedly. From 1910-20, there was rapid growth in enrolments at Hornsby Public School as

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<sup>1</sup> H. Barker, & M. Elven, *Houses of Hornsby Shire*, 13

<sup>2</sup> Auctioneer's plans in HDHS plans

<sup>3</sup> Hornsby Shire Council, Register of Building Applications 1916 No. 74-7

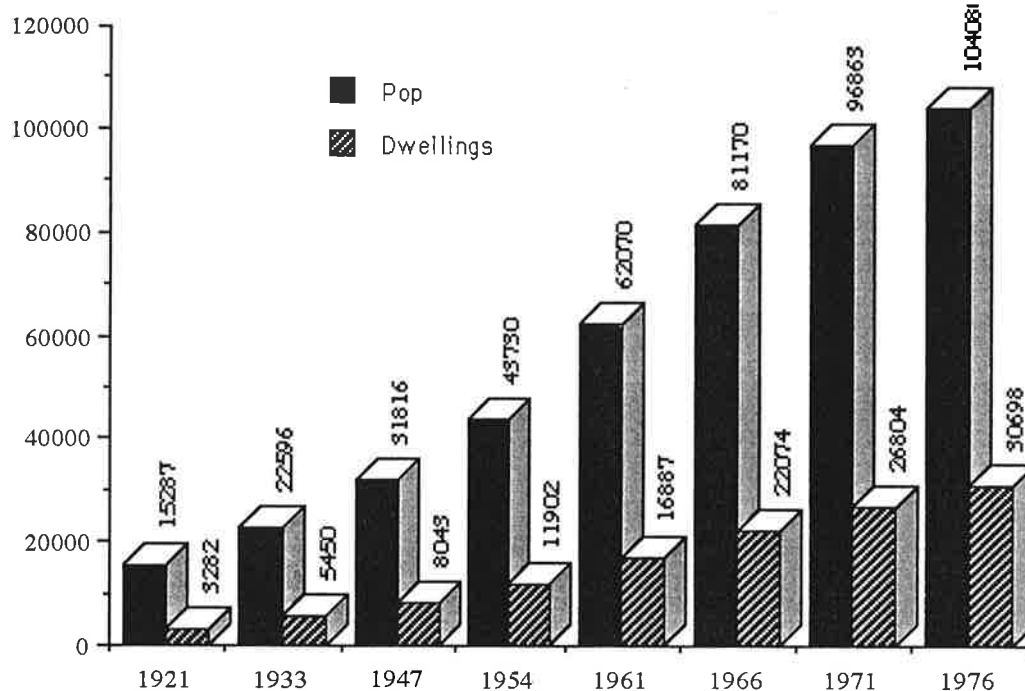
<sup>4</sup> Plans in HDHS plans

<sup>5</sup> Maps of Residential Districts, 1926-1961 Town Planning Dept, Hornsby Shire Council

many people settled near the Junction.<sup>1</sup> This growth was catered for by the addition of a substantial two storey main building in 1914.<sup>2</sup>

Later growth in the Shire is demonstrated in the following graph:

**Population & Occupied Dwellings - Hornsby Shire 1921-1976**



The growth in numbers of new houses is partially shown by the Water Board figures for connections to new houses (of course, not all of the study area had a water supply from the Water Board). From 1920 to 1929, there were 1721 new houses. From 1929 to 1939, there were 1468, whilst the number of new houses from 1939 to 1948 was 2245.<sup>3</sup>

### Home building

Within the study area, the range of housing types was reflected in the retail values of the houses in auction sales by Richardson & Wrench, as analysed by M. T. Daly. In 1915, Hornsby's houses stood in the value range of £684-1208, which was equivalent to the mean value of all houses in Sydney. Waitara, on the other hand, stood just below the mean Sydney value from £160-684 whilst Thornleigh stood in the top rank at over £1733+.<sup>4</sup>

Like much of Sydney, the supply of new houses was dominated by private builders, many of whom were only small scale operators. There were some

<sup>1</sup> *Hornsby Public School Centenary*, 15

<sup>2</sup> *Hornsby Public School Centenary*, 19

<sup>3</sup> P. Spearritt, *Sydney Since the Twenties*, 50

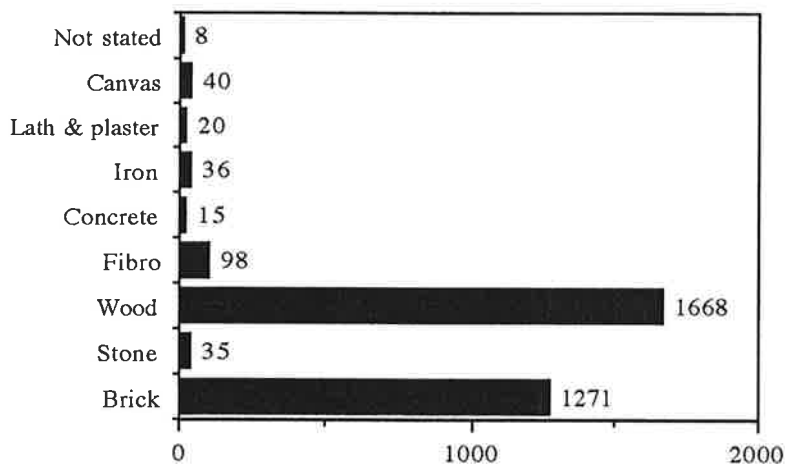
<sup>4</sup> M. T. Daly, *Sydney Boom Sydney Bust - The city and its property market 1850-1981*, Sydney, 1982., 164



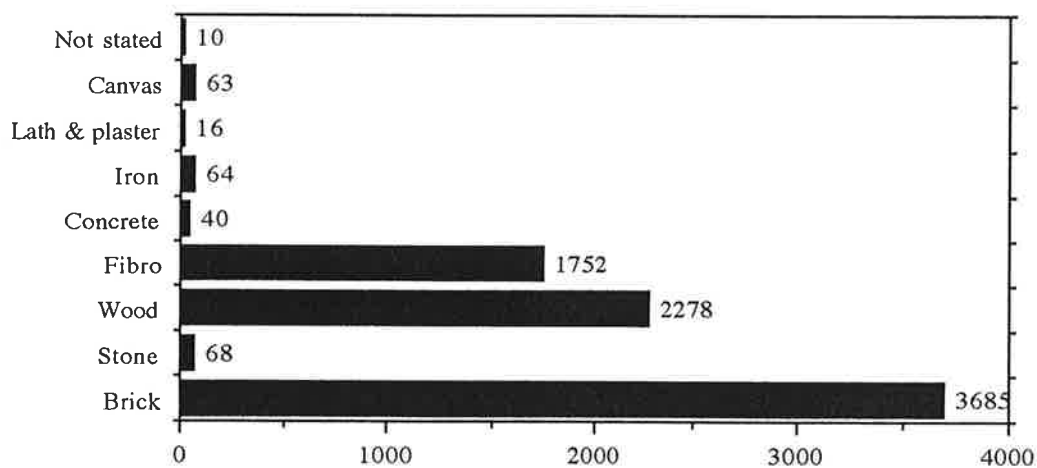
large scale developers such the Intercolonial Investment Land and Building Company.

The nature of the houses built varied, despite the use of protective covenants over many subdivisions. At the census of 1921 there were 1668 wooden walled houses in Hornsby Shire and 1271 brick houses. By 1947, there were 2278 timber houses, as against 3685 brick houses, and 1752 built of fibro. By 1961, the relative numbers were fibro 5227, wood 4715, and brick 6577. This progression can be seen in the following graphs.

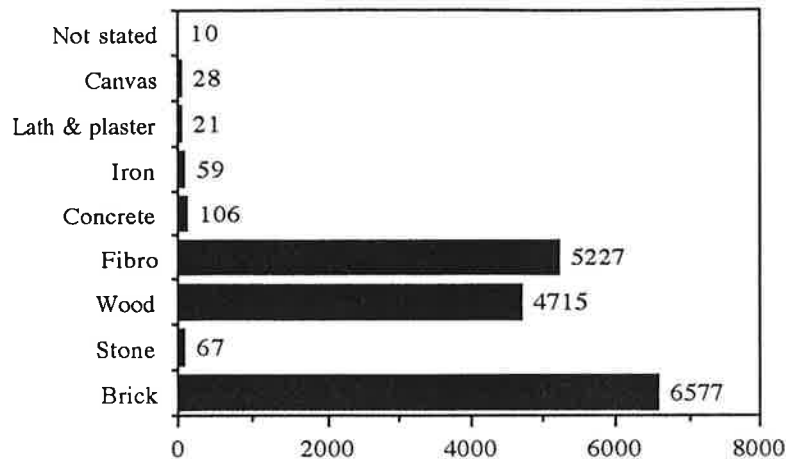
### Wall Materials - Dwellings Hornsby Shire 1921



### Wall Materials - Dwellings Hornsby Shire 1947



### Wall materials - Dwellings - Hornsby Shire 1961



After the First World War, a new element in the provision of housing emerged in the form of the Commonwealth Government's War Service Homes Commission which built houses for returned servicemen. The Commission was active throughout the Sydney area. In Hornsby, examples of the houses built by the War Service Homes Commission can be seen in Fulbourne Ave Thornleigh and in Palmerston St, Hornsby.<sup>1</sup>(See Illustration 5 & 6)

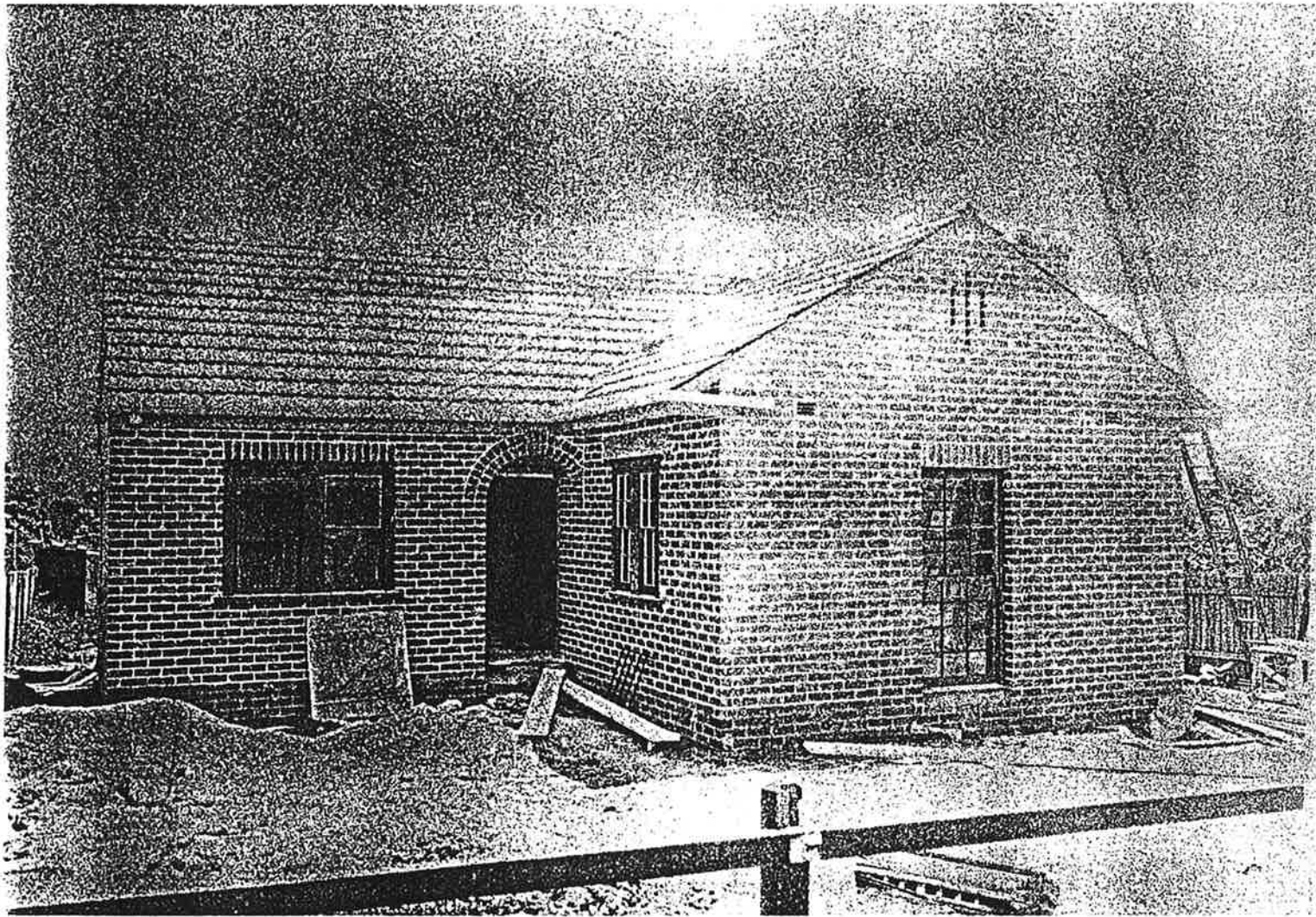
### Settlement patterns - to 1930

Suburban settlement reached beyond the confines of the main ridge in the 1910s. Symptomatic of the process was the subdivision of land along creeks leading into the Hawkesbury River and on the banks of the river itself. As early as 1884, land at Brooklyn adjacent to the railway line was subdivided for sale. From the 1910s, other land was subdivided such as the Milson Point Estate (DP 9231) auctioned in March 1918 and the Silverwater Estate, at Crosslands on Berowra Creek auctioned in April 1926.<sup>2</sup> Settlement did not occur, on any scale until after the Second World War.

Most settlement until the 1930s followed the railway line and generally sought out the flat land along ridge-tops. At Epping, settlement was most intense east of the railway station. At Cheltenham, it was denser west of the railway line and then approximately evenly distributed on both sides of line through Beecroft and Pennant Hills. At Normanhurst, there was patchy settlement south of the line. From Waitara through to Hornsby, the area near the railway was closely settled both north and east of the line. West of the line at Hornsby, a steep drop into Old Man's Valley, meant a small but quite heavily settled area was located there, especially the Mount Errington Estate. Settlement

<sup>1</sup> Government Printer Laser Picture Studio, Image 02826

<sup>2</sup> HDHS plans; NSW - Valuer-General's Dept, Hornsby Shire, Sheet 35

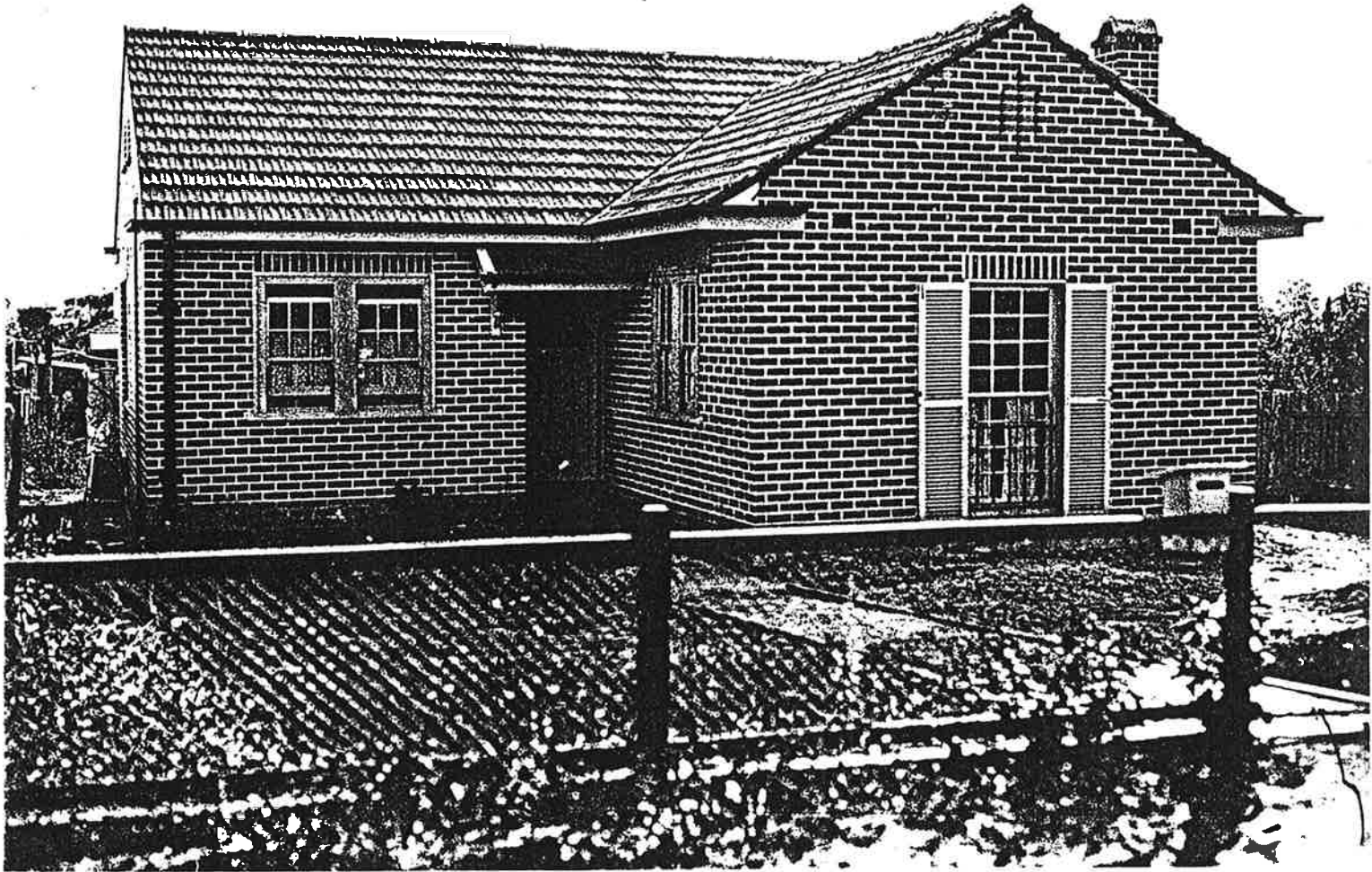


**Illus 5**

**Sherrad's New House, November 1927**

**Builder's rubble and heaps of spoil surround the house being built in  
Palmerston Street for W. T. Sherrad by the War Service Homes  
Commission**

**Source: Government Printer Laser Picture Studio, Image 02564**



**Illus 6**

**May 1928**

**Within a few months, a new letter box and delicate curtains proclaim that Sherrad has taken up residence of his new home.**

**Source: Government Printer Laser Picture Studio, Image 13166**

quickly petered out north of Hornsby.<sup>1</sup> Further west, away from the railway line, west of Pennant Hills Rd, land was mainly in rural use or vacant.<sup>2</sup>

## Depression

By 1930, the effects of the Wall Street Crash were being felt upon building in the Shire. Fewer new houses were built during the early 1930s, and there was marked unemployment in the community. Despite a cushioning of the effect of the Depression by the better-off composition of the Hornsby Shire, there were a number of unemployed. Like many other suburban councils, Hornsby took advantage of government funds made available to engage unemployed workers upon useful public works. The unemployed were engaged in work upon a sports oval at Cheltenham Park and another oval at Rofe Park<sup>3</sup> A major work which had a profound implication for the appearance and salubrity of the Shire was the utilisation of many unemployed men to construct footpaths of concrete slabs throughout the built-up areas of the Shire which had been proclaimed as Residential Districts.<sup>4</sup> (See Illustration 9)

Money raised by local committees for the relief of the unemployed was used to employ them constructing walking tracks through parks and natural areas in the Shire. One notable example was the track now known as Lorna Pass.<sup>5</sup> Some of the unemployed did not accept their engagement on work relief with the servile gratitude expected of them. As an reminder of their role in cutting the track at Lorna Pass, they left a caricature of Bertram Stevens, the right wing NSW Premier of the time, on a nearby rock face.<sup>6</sup>

## Services

An infrastructure of services followed the house builder to provide for the needs of the population. Water tanks were built at Wahroonga in 1895 as the basis for water supply for the new residential districts. From these tanks, water was pumped to Hornsby through a rising main. Thornleigh and Beecroft were supplied by an 8 inch steel branch main coming off that main.<sup>7</sup> In time, further service reservoirs were added at Wahroonga, at Beecroft in 1907 and 1917, at Mt Colah in 1935, at Dural in 1938, and South Dural in 1938, at Berowra in 1939 and at North Cowan in 1939.<sup>8</sup>

Construction of sewerage works was commenced by the Public Works Department in 1911, and then handed over to the Water Board. When completed in 1915, that system served Hornsby and Waitara initially servicing a total of 162 houses.<sup>9</sup> The system was amplified in 1936-7 with the

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<sup>1</sup> M. W. S. & D. B., Aerial Mosaic of Sydney & Suburbs, 1930, A. O. Map 32194, No. 2, Kuringgai Chase; A. O. Map 32200, No. 8, Epping-Wahroonga

<sup>2</sup> M. W. S. & D. B., Aerial Mosaic of Sydney & Suburbs, 1930, A. O. Map 32235, No. 7, Castle Hill

<sup>3</sup> Government Printer Laser Picture Studio, Images 01749, 01753

<sup>4</sup> C. Schofield, *Shaping*, 172-3

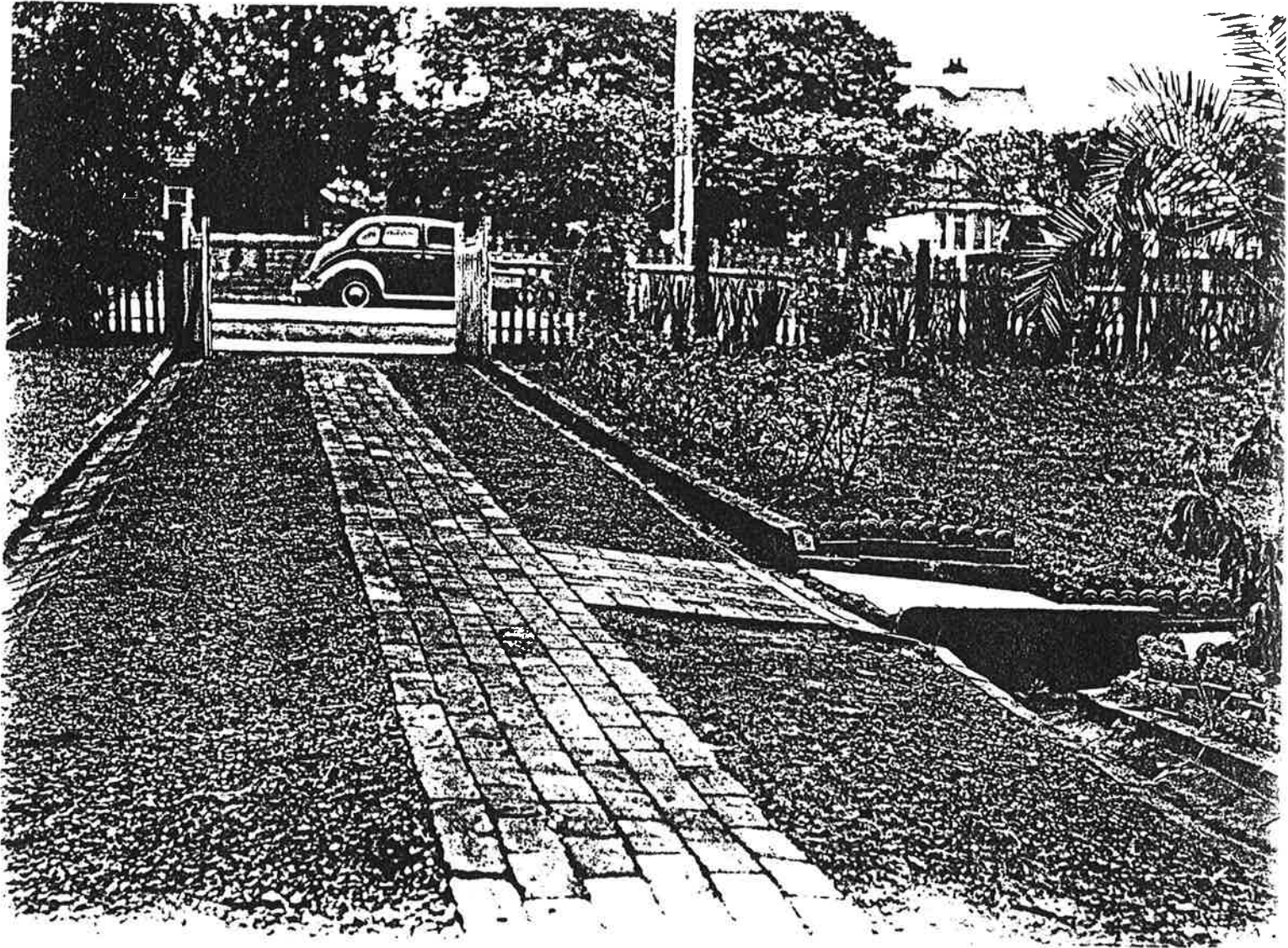
<sup>5</sup> C. Schofield, *Shaping*, 170

<sup>6</sup> C. Schofield, *Shaping*, 170-1

<sup>7</sup> W. V. Aird, *The Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage of Sydney*, Sydney, 1961, 68

<sup>8</sup> W. V. Aird, *Water Supply*, 78-9

<sup>9</sup> W. V. Aird, *Water Supply*, 168

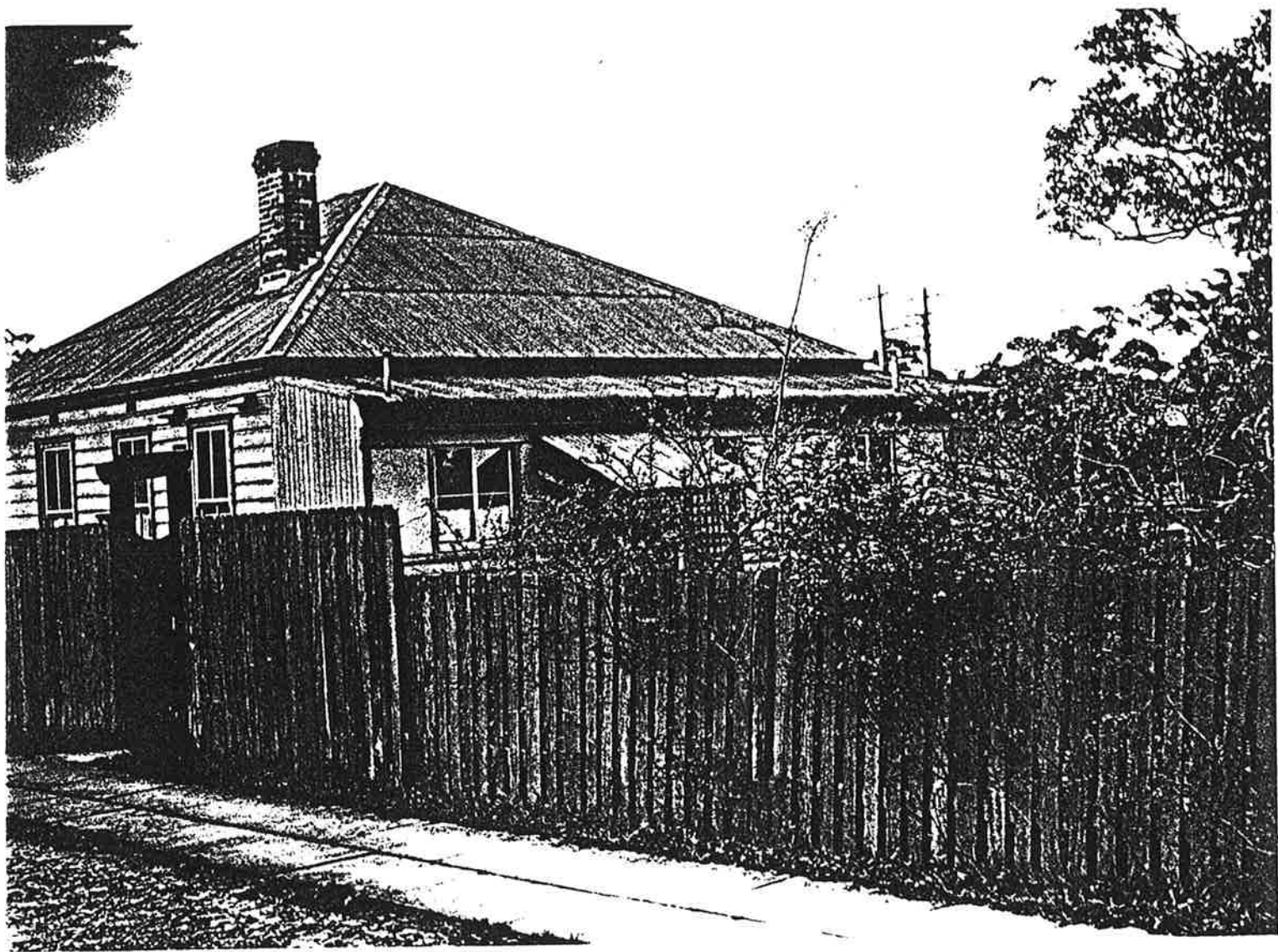


**Illus 7**

**Leafy Cheltenham, 143 Beecroft Road**

**By 1941, the older parts of the Shire were well established. Carefully tended front gardens proclaimed the settled nature of the area.**

**Source: Government Printer Laser Picture Studio, Image 23334**



**Illus 8**

**Cheltenham, 1941**

**More modest cottages also characterised the shire. This plain weatherboard cottage stood at 115 Beecroft Road.**

**Source: Government Printer Laser Picture Studio, Image 23329**

construction of the Spring Gully Creek scheme which included sludge drying beds.<sup>1</sup>

Hornsby Council set up its own electrical supply with power purchased from Sydney City Council.<sup>2</sup> The electrical supply was switched on in March 1924. The first mains were located in Doomben Avenue, Eastwood, and in Cam Street, Wahroonga.<sup>3</sup>

The educational needs of the residents were met by private as well as by governmental schools. As early as the 1910s, the Ogden sisters conducted the Beecroft College for girls in Beecroft Road, Beecroft.<sup>4</sup> Boys were catered for by Barker College situated at Hornsby in 1895. A site was later purchased and after some initial financial difficulties, the school was soon operating on a secure basis with assistance from the Church of England Synod.<sup>5</sup>

To cater for girls seeking an education more elevated than the basic elementary schooling given to the bulk of girls, the Department of Education established Hornsby Girls High School on a site near the railway junction to draw pupils from as many localities as possible.<sup>6</sup> The school was opened in 1930 in architecturally elaborate buildings which proclaimed both the function of the buildings and the prestige of a secondary education.

Other institutions were established to cater both for the needs of the residents and the wider community of Sydney. The renowned healthy climate drew hospitals to the district. Malahide TB Hospital was developed as a private spa by the Red Cross in 1925 at the corner of Bellamy Street and Boundary Road, Pennant Hills.<sup>7</sup> After being utilised for a variety of purposes, Milson and Peat Islands became the sites of mental institutions in 1924.<sup>8</sup>

It may have been a result of the renowned healthy climate on the Hornsby plateau, but there were few private and no public hospitals in the district before the 1930s. Residents seeking hospitalisation had to travel down the St Leonards railway line to North Sydney and Killara.<sup>9</sup> A public hospital built with the fund raising efforts of the citizens of Hornsby was finally opened in August 1933, in Palmerston Street, Hornsby.<sup>10</sup>

Another institution located in the area was the Training School for Girls, at Thornleigh. This functioned as a privilege school for girls from the Training School for Girls at Parramatta which housed young girls judged to be "at risk" who had been removed from their families.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> W. V. Aird, *Water Supply*, 168-9

<sup>2</sup> *Tait's Electrical Directory of Australia and New Zealand*, 1925, 6th edn, Tait, Melbourne & Sydney.

<sup>3</sup> C. Schofield, *Shaping*, 160

<sup>4</sup> C. Schofield, *Shaping*, 178

<sup>5</sup> C. Schofield, *Shaping*, 120

<sup>6</sup> C. Schofield, *Shaping*, 178

<sup>7</sup> C. Schofield, *Shaping*, 141

<sup>8</sup> C. Schofield, *Shaping*, 142

<sup>9</sup> *McConnell's District Guide - Hornsby and Surrounding Districts*, Marrickville, 1923, 20

<sup>10</sup> C. Schofield, *Shaping*, 181-2

<sup>11</sup> Dept of Child Welfare, *Annual Report*, 1950, 24





**Illus 9**

**Depression Works, 1934**

**Queens Road, Asquith was one street graced with concrete slab paving laid by unemployed labour during the Depression.**

**Source: Government Printer Laser Picture Studio, Image 20371**

## Changes in building type and form

By 1945, the effects of depression and war had curtailed the surge in building of the 1920s. A brief and hectic period of growth and building had occurred in the late 1930s. By 1945, Hornsby was ready for further expansion. In that year, the Shire had a low population density overall of one person per four acres. This was the result of large areas with little or no human occupation such as in the nature reserves and National Park. Land devoted to various uses was categorised as "negligible" for Industry, whilst residential land took up 5%, recreational absorbed 10%, rural 20%, and a huge 65% of the Shire was "unused".<sup>1</sup>

As house building revived, material shortages affected the ability of builders to construct much needed housing. Three houses were built on the Pacific Highway from bricks salvaged from the demolished chimney of the Fowler's pottery at Hookham's Corner.<sup>2</sup> Other houses were built of concrete. Clifford Peacock's Monocrete houses with cement walls were popular on the North Shore, and it is likely that a number were built in Hornsby Shire.<sup>3</sup>

The activities of the Housing Commission of NSW in building public housing in the Shire had a more direct impact in changing the tenor of the area. The Commission was active in Palmerston, Burdett and Innes Streets immediately after the War. These houses were mainly single family dwellings built of fibro, with some brick cottages as well.<sup>4</sup> In the late 1940s, a series of flats were built at Hornsby. Prior to 1945, only two flat buildings had been erected in the Shire.<sup>5</sup> The Housing Commission was also building cottages at Waitara in the late 1940s.<sup>6</sup>

The Shire was little affected by the wholesale amalgamation of municipalities and shires undertaken in 1948. A more profound impact emerged from the Cumberland County Scheme. The scheme sought to preserve areas of farmland and bushland as buffer zones between rings of development. This band of restricted land-uses was called the "Green Belt". In Hornsby Shire, the Green Belt was originally a band of land situated west of the railway with an area of bushland on the other side, with rural land-uses further out near Dural and Galston.<sup>7</sup> These controls subsequently broke down under pressure from public authorities responsible for providing the infrastructure for residential development. In Hornsby Shire, about half of the land zoned as Green Belt adjacent to the railway was too steep to develop for housing purposes, so this has remained in non-residential use.

The Cumberland Scheme also allocated land for industry. Within Hornsby Shire, two areas were set aside for industry, one at Thornleigh and another at

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<sup>1</sup> Royal Commission on Local Government Boundaries, 1945-46, Statements of Evidence, A. O. 3/3174

<sup>2</sup> C. Schofield, *Shaping*, 144

<sup>3</sup> *Home*, 7 May 1949, 14

<sup>4</sup> Government Printer Laser Picture Studio, Images 38177-38181

<sup>5</sup> Royal Commission on Local Government Boundaries, 1945-46, Statements of Evidence, A. O. 3/3174

<sup>6</sup> Government Printer Laser Picture Studio, Images 41712, 46946-60

<sup>7</sup> Denis Winston, *Sydney's Great Experiment - The Progress of the Cumberland County Plan*, Sydney, 1957, map

Asquith. In the Thornleigh industrial area, plastics manufacturer, Formica Australia Pty Ltd, commenced operation in Duffy Avenue. At Asquith, the Wrigley's Chewing Gum factory, a large industrial complex set within landscaped grounds, was built.<sup>1</sup> Such complexes in suburban locations, with integrated office and manufacturing plant in landscaped grounds serviced by road transport had first been introduced in the U. S. A. in the 1910s, and had been accepted in Australia by the 1930s, but few such complexes were built before the late 1940s and 1950s.

Another aspect where Hornsby Shire has been at the forefront of development was in the provision of care for the aged. What is claimed to be the first retirement village in New South Wales, the Mowl Memorial Village, was opened in 1959 at Rogan's Hill.<sup>2</sup>

The spatial growth of Sydney was catered for by the release of land for development. At Cherrybrook, an area which had been originally developed as orchards was released for home building. The land was taken up by development companies which provided a complete development package including road design, subdivision and service provision and the design, construction and sale of houses to occupiers.<sup>3</sup> Such a process had become a recognisable feature of the suburban development of Sydney in the 1960s, with the provision of new suburbs at Winston Hills (City of Parramatta) and at Campbelltown.

The influence of the Sydney Region Outline Plan of 1968 also took effect as office development reached Hornsby and Pennant Hills. With the widening of Pennant Hills Road, sufficiently sizeable parcels became available to permit office construction alongside a major and efficient arterial road.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS**

During the first half-century of settlement in Australia, the colonists, largely from British backgrounds disdained the Australian bush and sought to conquer the forests, which represented both rude barbarity and "weird" and "unnatural" forms. With the development of a rising Australian race, unfettered by pre-conceived visions of English beauty, an appreciation of the Australian landscape emerged.

By the late nineteenth century, this appreciation was gaining ground. In Mosman, land for building was purchased with a view to its proximity to the bush and harbourside scenery, whilst public concern was sufficient to cause the reservation of areas along Sydney Harbour and at Royal National Park in Sutherland as public recreation space. Frederick Eccleston du Faur was a leading light in movements to reserve land for National Parks.<sup>4</sup> He successfully prevailed upon the Earl of Jersey, then Governor of NSW, to reserve a large area of land in the Parish of Cowan in 1894. It was named Kuring-gai Chase.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> C. Schofield, *Shaping*, 198-9

<sup>2</sup> C. Schofield, *Shaping*, 209

<sup>3</sup> C. Schofield, *Shaping*, 245-6

<sup>4</sup> *ADB*, 4, 108-9

<sup>5</sup> C. Schofield, *Shaping*, 87-8

Even in Hornsby, the appeal of nearby natural areas, at Ku-ring-gai, was heavily played upon by subdividers and auctioneers selling land in the shire.<sup>1</sup> The solitude of the bush and the value of communing with nature was readily accepted by the early twentieth century. This process of finding self-understanding through reflection and self-reliance was shown by writer Dowell O'Reilly, who remembered eleven days spent on Cowan Creek about 1910:

I was there all day, all night alone, with the sense of innumerable eyes for ever watching me, the feeling of *life* - life just the same as mine - in the creeping tides, the trees, winds, yes, and the great overwhelming hills that shut in my solitary bay. My only companion - the almost human being - that I grew to love, that was always so true, so trustworthy, was my little nine-foot canvas dinghy that I had built myself. Waking in the morning at 4 a. m. with the birds, my first thought was of *her* - how had *she* passed the long night anchored to her little stone kellick.<sup>2</sup>

In later years, the appeal of the rugged sandstone valleys of the Hornsby plateau attracted many admirers. There were a number of reservations of natural areas. In 1933, J. D. Tipper leased 600 acres of bushland from the Crown which he felt was worthy of preservation. In 1935 it was opened as Muogamarra Sanctuary and over time, its area has grown to encompass 2,050 acres (8.3 square kilometres).<sup>3</sup> Another instance of individual initiative was the creation of Koala Park at West Pennant Hills. Noel Bennett, an associate of J. D. Tipper, set up the park to assist in the preservation of koalas which were affected severely by the clearing of their natural habitat for housing.<sup>4</sup>

At the same time, Elouera Bushland Reserve was gazetted on 19 May 1933.<sup>5</sup> Pennant Hills Park has gradually grown from 1893 when part of it was first gazetted as a Trig reserve. By a process of amalgamation of numerous reserves the park has been created.<sup>6</sup> On 18 September 1987, it became part of the larger Berowra Valley Bushland Park.<sup>7</sup> Marramarra National Park was dedicated in 1979.<sup>8</sup>

Today, large areas of Hornsby Shire are still in a natural state, though the bulk of it consists of the poorer rugged sandstone country, which can be spectacular and sublime. Yet, only very few examples of the Blue Gum High Forest which clothed the tops of the ridges where Wianamatta shale based soils were situated have survived. It was the presence of these forests which first drew white Europeans to settle in the area, rather than simply pass by the area. In the last two hundred years of white settlement, almost all of the Blue Gum High Forest has been replaced by suburban development.

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Hornsby Subd Plans, M. L., H7/36

<sup>2</sup> *Dowell O'Reilly from his Letters*, edited by M. O'Reilly, London, 1927,, 15

<sup>3</sup> C. Schofield, *Shaping*, 164

<sup>4</sup> C. Schofield, *Shaping*, 164-5

<sup>5</sup> Ph Map South Colah 1934

<sup>6</sup> Hornsby Shire Council & Hornsby Shire Historical Society, *History Trail and Places of Interest*, c. 1988 (brochure)

<sup>7</sup> C. Schofield, *Shaping*, 221

<sup>8</sup> Hornsby Shire Council & Hornsby Shire Historical Society, *History Trail and Places of Interest*, c. 1988 (brochure)

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## Sydney Subdivision Plans

Hornsby (Ap Cd H7)

Pennant Hills (Ap Cd P9)

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## **PICTORIAL**

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Beecroft

Berowra

Cheltenham

Dural

Epping

Galston

Hornsby

Normanhurst

Pennant Hills

Thornleigh

Wahroonga

Waitara

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## **HORNSBY DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

Subdivision Plan Collection

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Plans, Plans Room

Real Property Applications, 1863 to date.

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## Notable Persons - Shire of Hornsby

<u>Given names</u>	<u>Surname</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Source</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
Betty (Helen Elizabeth)	Archdale		educationalist	Schofield 203	former principal of Women's College, University of Sydney, principal of Abbotsleigh School; noted commentator of educational affairs
Jimmy	Bancks	1880-1952	cartoonist	ADB, 7, 163; Schofield 175-6; Pioneers, 208	Son of railway carriage cleaner; grew up at Hornsby. Cartoons first published in 1911. In 1921 created "Ginger Meggs", a perennially popular comic character, said to have been modelled on his childhood days at Hornsby.
James	Bellamy	1798-1875	constable, landowner	Pioneers, 90-3; Schofield 36	As a constable, he assisted in ridding the district of bushrangers. As a settler, he acquired ever larger areas of land, on which he settled his family and founded a noted local family network.
Marie	Byles		lawyer, pacifist	Schofield 172	Early female graduate (1924) of Faculty of Law at University of Sydney. Active pacifist and enthusiastic conservationist. Built home at Cheltenham, <i>Ahimsa</i> , which has been deeded to National Trust.

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<u>Given names</u>	<u>Surname</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Source</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
James	Channon	1847-1919	businessman	Schofield 119; Barker & Elven 27-8	Wealthy entrepreneur, who settled in Hornsby due to his asmathic condition. Built a splendid house, Pakenham on Pacific Highway in 1894, as well as three houses adjacent for his children
Marcus	Clarke	1860-1913	merchant draper	Schofield 97; Barker & Elven 96	Founder of a very successful drapery store, initially at Newtown, later at Central. Retired in 1911, and built Mount Wilga for his retirement but died before it was completed.
George	Collingridge	1847-1931	artist, historian	ADB, 7, 72-3; Schofield, 67, 100, 182; Pioneers 122, 234	Talented engraver. Took up a property on Berowra Creek. Later moved to Hornsby. Active in promoting locality. Many engravings of area. Enthusiastic researcher on Portuguese discoveries in Pacific. Left house Java-le-Grande now in hospital grounds
Caleb	Gambling	1848-1928	boarding house keeper, farmer	Schofield 99; Pioneers 160-1	Notable promoter of matters cultural at Thornleigh. Promoter of School of Arts, temperance, and Thornleigh.

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<u>Given names</u>	<u>Surname</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Source</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
Jacob	Garrard	1846-1931	trade unionist, parliamentarian	ADB, 4, 234; Schofield, 88-9; Pioneers, 229-31	Noted unionist & parliamentarian from Balmain. Moved to Thornleigh 1891. A key parliamentary figure. Promoted locality through membership on boards of Water Board & Kuring-gai Chase Trust.
Thomas Edward	Higgins	1800-65	timbergetter, farmer	Pioneers, 201-2	First permanent settler at Hornsby Valley. Grantee of Old Mans Valley. Early timbergetter.
Jesse Jewhurst	Hilder	1881-1916	artist	ADB, 9, 292-3; Schofield 122	One of the Heidelberg School of Australian painters. Now recognised as a significant artist. Painted number of his most famous watercolours at "Inglewood", Hornsby, where he died from TB.
Samuel	Horne	1798-1886	constable	Pioneers 137, 140-1; Schofield 34-5	With John Thorn, instrumental in the break up of McNamara's gang in 1830 and 1835. Granted area now occupied by Hornsby.

### Notable Persons - Shire of Hornsby

<u>Given names</u>	<u>Surname</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Source</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
George Washington Thomas	Lambert	1873-1930	artist	ADB, 9, 649-50; Schofield 124	Later a noted artist including official war artist in World War One. In his early years, he painted at Hornsby where he lived in one of von Hagen's cottages, in early 1890s, often using local subjects.
William	Mobbs	1763-1839	orchardist	Pioneers, 51-2; Schofield 46	Early settler in Field of Mars. Noted orange grower who demonstrated the suitability of the area for oranges. Founded a formidable local dynasty.
George	Peat	1792-1870	shipbuilder	Pioneers 29-31; Schofield 41-2	Sydney based shipbuilder who took up land on Hawkesbury River. Established a ferry there. The track to his holding later formed the basis for Peat's Fery Rd
Oscar Garibaldi	Roberts	-1922	merchant jeweller	Schofield 104; Barker & Elven 52-3	Settled in Hornsby in 1890s when he built "Mount Errington". First shire president in 1906.

### Notable Persons - Shire of Hornsby

<u>Given names</u>	<u>Surname</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Source</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
Thomas Ernest	Rofe	1869-1945	financier, philanthropist, solicitor	Schofield 180; ADB, 11, 439	Noted philanthropist, resident at Hornsby. Shire President who actively assisted many local causes and institutions, especially the hospital.
Norman	Selfe	1839-1911	engineer, educationalist	ADB 6, 100; Schofield 74-5; Pioneers, 192-3; Barker & Elven 22-3	Noted engineer who designed many innovative engineering solutions for problem sites. Settled near Hornsby. Lived in Gillagaloola, built to his own design. Tireless promoter of the district. Normanhurst is named after him.
Edgeworth	Sir Tannatt William David	1858-1934	geologist	Schofield 137-8; ADB, 8, 218-21	Renowned geologist. Mapped large areas geologically. Discovered evidence supporting Darwinian theories. Accompanied Dr Douglas Mawson on 1909 South Pole expedition. Retired to Hornsby in 1919. Edgeworth David Ave named after him.
John	Thorn	1794-1838	constable	Pioneers, 137, 140-1, 144; Schofield 33-4	Thorn had a key role in the capture & dispersal of the bushrangers lurking in the district in the 1820s and 1830s. Granted 640 acres which became site of Thornleigh

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John Duncan	Tipper		engineer, field naturalist	Schofield 163-4	Active in 1920s and 1930s in preservation of natural environments in locality. Key role in establishing local Rangers. Created Mugomarra Sanctuary. Influenced N. Bennett to found Koala Park.
Solomon	Wiseman	1777-1838	merchant, innkeeper	ADB, 2, 617-8; Pioneers, 24, 27-8; Schofield 23	Sydney merchant suffering financial hardships who established an inn at a key location on Hawkesbury River. Given control over ferry across the river. Contract to supply convicts working on Great North Road recouped his fortunes.