

14 - Wednesday 11th May, 1988

# Camden Haven History

## THE MUMFORD FAMILY STORY continues...



### Mumfords Store at Krambach

I was about ten or twelve years old then so I've forgotten what knocks were sustained, but I do know that none of the three of us broke anything because the Harly got us home.

The next building up the street on the left was an abandoned fruit and vegetable shop. In my time it housed a European pensioner. He spoke English. Correction. He didn't speak English. The man was faded by years as was his clothes. He would come into the store and demand forthrightly: "Jam. Plum. Open."

He didn't even own a tin opener. Further along the road still resided the Church of England clergyman. And at the top of the street can be seen the steeple and bell tower of the Church of England where we children attended Sunday School.

The sight was the point of the crossroads. To the left the road led to Longworth's mills and the southern farming district: and the right hand road led out of the hamlet passing the Laurieton Hotel and Longworth's opposition store, fanally terminating Kew (and Kendall) where it joined the north coast road.

Diagonally opposite the church can be seen

the public school. And opposite, facing the church was the School of Arts used for dancing and other social requirements. Each of these three building stood immediately on the corners of the crossroads. An adjacent vacant block of land on the fourth corner.

The large trees growing at the top right, were pines in the school grounds and the area set aside for the headmaster, Mr Debenham's home ground.

We children Glen, Dorothy, Ted and Joyce attended this school, but Tom, Jack and Nancy were too young. Brother Frank was born during this time.

As was usual in those days, I was born in a home --my maternal grandmother's. She lived, then, in what was called Rockwood. But now when Frank came along things were different. He was born in a hospital --Port Macquarie.

My birth certificate shows Rookwood as my place of birth.

The huge ground of the Rookwood cemetery, at that time was served by steam trains.

They brought the hearses to one of the four stations called Morturay 1,2,3 and 4. Rookwood was the largest necropolis in the southern hemisphere.

Because of what the locals thought: the cemetery was a stigma on thier locality they changed the name of their suburb. But this happened after I was

In order to honour two of their alderman, one named, if I remember rightly Liddel, and the other Larcombe (the descendants of the Larcombes, still reside there as stone masons). The locals took the Lid out of Liddel and the Combe out of Larcombe and came up with Lidcombe.

But the outcome of all this that relates to me is this:

As a seafarer signing articles to join a ship my birth certificate used to cause some humorous remarks. This was when I gave my place of birth as Rookwood, the well known cemetery. In order to keep the humour rolling I would back with this one:

"And my wife also was born in a cemetery; slap bang in the middle of one".

After some raised eyebrows I would enlighten them: (about that time an illegitimate birth had taken place there). And as well at times some fun and games went on then.

"My wife's father was the Ground Manager of the Church of England section at Rookwood cemetery and the authorities built a comfortable manager's home near the office of the necropolis.

While living in Laurieton I used to take all my holidays with my grandparents, maternal, at Lidcombe or maternal, at Granville. City life for me was a rare change, but I always looked forward to my return to the lovely Camden Haven with its beloved bush and shanty buildings, farms and homesteads and shantytowns.

I knew well a shanty building: The bulk store. This shanty was the original Laurieton store. Because of the shortage of money, newspapers were often used for wall paper. And so our bulk store was lined with newsprint to stop wind and rain blowing through the cracks between the slabs of the orugh bush cut timber. The glue was made from flour and water. And at night an army of mice would come out and indulge themselves on sun baked dough. And as well the "kangaroo dogs" (rats landed with the ships' cagoes) would fleece our produce. Sometimes our feet or hands came to grief in the traps set for these monsters as well as the little monsters.

I too well remember the long spans of bullock teams which brought the huge trees down from the mountains into Longworths' mills. And as well the millers owned a fleet of paddle wheel steamers. These punts were used for the transport of lumber down from the two lakes: Watson Taylor and Queen's which emptied into the Camden Haven. There is another one too; also a very small sheet of water

was a tidal basin which joined the river near its mouth. I wonder who was the early settler who named it Goolgies Creek.

But we do know that it was Captain Cook who named this one, also unusual: The North Brother Mountain that stands behind the town.

As well as being sawyers, the Longworths' owned the opposition store, but employed a manager. And I suppose with this point in view was why my father emphasized another point to me (I was expected to carry on the Mumford tradition of storekeeping): "Never, never employ a manager in a country store," he said.

It was a sad day for the Longworth brothers when Bob Longworth, the elder of the two came to My father whose speed was running them off their feet in the country store area.

"You're a better storekeeper than me, Mr Mumford".

Their meeting resulted in the Longworths selling out to Mumford because the speedy opposition pressure of Arthur was too fast in this field and the Longworths stuck to being sawyers.

Furthermore, even as the cheque was being written out, Arthur's mind speeded on.

And so the up-and-coming Arthur gave birth too, to an up-an-coming idea.

He stripped Longworths' premises of stock, hired some bullock teams and great logs. Then his men got to work and rolled the empty store off its block and down along the Kew Road, then into Laurie Street and finally down an incline at the river graded for the approach of the vehicular punt. There an engineer loaded the store on two of the paddle wheelers which took their load up the river to Kendall. There the men rolled it onto the bank. And is so doing Arthur Mumford set up another general store.

These paddle wheelers were different from the usual Australian steam vessels. They were driven by a port and starboard paddle wheel. Longworths' fleet was designed on a similar line to that of the Mississippi River boats in the USA. A huge paddle wheel the breath of the punt, and immediately behind the large wheel house propelled it at a fairly fast pace.

I have forgotten how long our family lived in Laurieton. But when our father sold out he took a spell in Epping a suburb of Sydney.

### KENDALL PLAYGROUND NEWS

I'm sure you are all aware of how hard it is to et a piece of carpet suitable for children to use. Well I'm pleased to say that thanks to Mr Proudfoot of Camden Head we some carpet for our children to use.

We would also like to thank John and Peter McGann of McGann's Tipperary Holdings and their offsider Wally for the use of their truck to pick up and deliver the carpet for us.

We are going to transfer the funds being raised to purchase the carpet to purchasing some Educational toy books etc from our Learners World Demonstration coming up soon. Date to be advised soon.

If you wish to purchase tickets in our hamper, they are available through KENDALL BUTCHERY and through our Playground parents. Tickets are 50 cents or 3 for \$1.

Playgroup meets each and every Tuesday morning at Kendall Community Hall from 10am till noon. All it will cost is \$1, a piece of fruit and drink for morning tea. We also hold a small weekly raffle.

For further information please don't hesitate in contacting me.

VICKI MCGANN  
(065) 594 422

### A BACKGROUND TO WHAT A PLAYGROUP IS

Playgroup is for children from birth to school age.

What is a playgroup?

A playgroup is a place where children, along with the parents, can learn through play, develop skills and get to know other parents within their own community.

Why Join a playgroup?

Your children get to make friends and learn new skills and become more confident with other children and adults. They learn to value themselves as individuals.

You will enjoy the company of other parents while having the chance to observe your child developing new skills.

What happens at playgroup?

We have lots of exciting activities such as playdough, painting, glueing, storytelling building with blocks, singing and music and outing and so much more.

Please if you wish to come along don't hesitate or feel you don't know any one who attends because once you're there we are all your friends.

Playgroup is held at Kendall Community Hall on Tuesdays from 10am till noon. It cost only \$1, and we request you bring a piece of fruit and a drink for morning tea.

Hope to see you soon,  
VICKI MCGANN  
CO-ORDINATOR  
(065) 594 422

### TEA TREE RESEARCH UP-DATE

Research work carried out in the Tea Tree industry will be discussed at a special field day later this month.

Organised by the Department of Agriculture and the Australian Tea Tree Industry Association, the field day has been designed for the benefit of people with bush stands and those who have plantations.

Senior Research Scientist with the Department of Agriculture, John Murtagh, said that the field day will reflect the increased interest in growing and harvesting Tea Tree on the North Coast.

It will be held on Wednesday, May 18, starting at the North Coast Agricultural Institute, Wollongbar, at 9.30am. Distillation Methods, Quality Control and Components of Tea Tree Oil will be subjects for discus-

LEADER CLASSIFIEDS  
CHEAPEST  
AND  
REST

# Camden Haven History

## CONTINUATION OF THE MUMFORD FAMILY STORY

After selling the Krambach store Dad took a short rest. The family went to Katoomba and stayed in Mr McCormack's weekender (Auntie Nancy's father's). The new baby Nancy now made a family of seven children.

After sometime at farming Arthur found it timely to replenish the cash register. He moved to Laurieton on the Camden Haven river.

Laurieton was a beautiful untouched land in 1918. But the 'writing was on the wall' even then.

During the summer months people came from afar in sulkies and horseback to enjoy camping under the stars in the warm nights at South Beach and other scenic spots around the Camden Haven environs.

These holiday makers crossed the river in the vehicle ferry to travel along a grey sand pad out to an area where acres of Christmas Bells thrived. These beautiful blooms formed a gigantic gold and red carpet over a large flat area near South Beach.

But alas, these campers were ruthless.

I have seen them with their horses hames, bridles and in fact all the harness heavily decorated with bells. The desecrators poked them in where ever they could make them hang and then heaped them up on loads in their sulkies. The Christmas Bell plant possesses a hard stork; so to save time and trouble a lot of these people pulled at the plant and rooted out storks, blooms, roots and everything that came under their hands.

Nowadays I would hate to look at what was nature's paradise of blooms in my day.

Although protected now, I think most of this kind of destruction could not have gone on for long without total destruction to one of our finest native floras in this area.

As well too, when driving out of the hamlet one could see waratahs which I will never see again. They bloomed in numbers alongside the seven miles of stony, dirt road.

Dad bought out the Laurieton store as shown in the photograph. The business was owned by Robertson and Rose.

At the time of this photograph Dad had not had his name painted up. It was quite some time before he had the premises re-painted.

Behind our store stood a large bulk store, the original Laurieton store which had been owned by the Laurie pioneers. They were honoured when the settlement was named. And behind

the bulk-store again stood our residence. The shop property reached down to the river where Dad indulged himself in the recreation of building sailing boats. Then a young man he belonged to a yacht club on Sydney Harbour.

Opposite the shop one can see a corner of the Post Office. While at the back of the cameraman flowed the Camden Haven river with Laurie Street running down to the government wharf, where the steamship Allenwood and Jap tied up to unload the town's cargo. Only once in say twelve months did a passenger come up from Sydney. I did the trip in a gale and was terribly sea-sick. There was a young lady stewardess aboard who answered my cries. I must have looked a sorry sight: A boy sitting on the 'throne' crying out:

"I'm sick, I'm sick."

But the tough mate who was not only not at all concerned with a sorry sight, for he was trying to recover some sleep after his hard watch in which he had been fighting the gale. He bawled back at my cries in the night in the good old tough, sail man's manner. Yes, he bawled into the night, all right:

"Then be bloody-well sick. And shut up!"

Anyway Mum gave the kindly little stewardess a handsome gift out of the shop for her efforts.

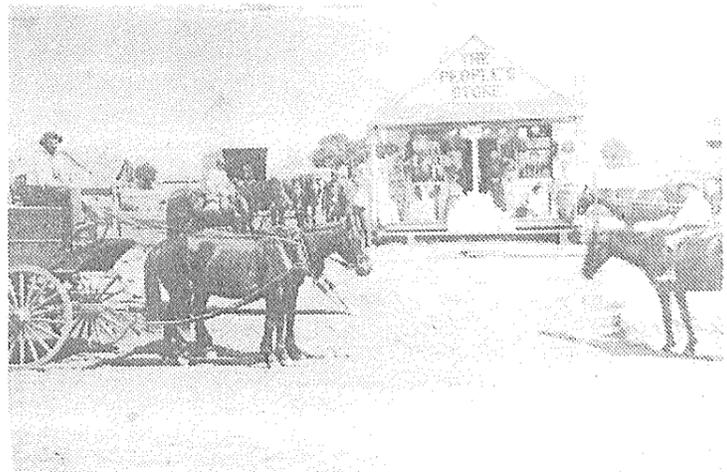
These steamers made the return passage loaded down to the 'line' with timber back-loaded from Longworth's mill to Port Jackson (Sydney).

Even at that time I knew the tall ships. (But I knew them later on when I signed articles on the Burns Philp-South Sea Company - SS Mona, a tops' little schooner out of Betio, Tarawa, in the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony, as supercargo).

A sailing ship called the Phyl Forbes plied between Port Jackson and the north coast calling at Laurieton.

Immediately adjacent to the wharf was the hand-driven vehicular traffic punt operated by man-power. The passenger of course, always jumped down from his saddle, cart or sulky to lend the ferryman Bushy a hand. Two handles were fitted to a wheel about six feet in diameter. Over the circumference ran the cable. One end of the wire was attached to the west bank of the river, and the other to the east bank.

Should only a pedestrian need to make the crossing, Mr Bushy was equipped with a fairly large, and I might say although stout boat, a



heavy one.

Our ferryman was an old salt and it was he who said to me when once I was yarning to him about the sailing ship Phyl Forbes at his tiny room near the wharf (the room was not much longer than his six foot length bunk, with a tiny fireplace and the shack was only about the width of the doorway. He slept and ate there most of his time):

"In my day, they were the days of iron men and wooden ships. Now they are wooden men and iron ships."

This old sailman was now too old to furl a foremast top gallant or a main mast royal in a gale and too proud to take on a peggy's job after fighting elements from the top of tall masts.

He settled down ashore. But his sail days still hung about him. His legs were bandy. He wore neither boots nor socks. Furthermore he always had his trousers rolled up to the calves of his legs as though about to prepare to go on deck in a gale, howling like demons out of hell, with the ship in a heavy leaboard list. Moreover there was no mistaking what he had been for his still walked with a Western Ocean roll.

I don't remember whether Bushy had been AB, mate or master in sail. But he had collected a little cash with which he bought a home on a small property where his wife and daughter lived.

This daughter was a fair girl. She was nineteen or twenty when I knew her.

Miss Bushby was a true bush girl but she always looked smart in her riding habit. I never saw her out of it that I can remember, she wore saddle breeches, well cut. Another thing, mounted she was every bit a part of the horse. And there is one more thing about this girl: she loved life and to use the newly coined phrase of the day, this is the way she would speak.

When asked something such as this: "Going to the hop tonight?" She

would bring the new formed phrase into use quickly enough: "You bet you sweet life, I am."

You see at this time a lot of the lads were coming back from the Great War, making dancing more than the mode of the day, before television and radio and fast motor-cars and good roads, had made their impact on society.

To honour these boys who had enlisted, the residents planted a tree for each digger. These trees were four years old when this photograph was taken in 1918.

When my brother Frank and I revisited Laurieton some years ago I noticed that two of the soldiers' tree guards were still there. They were made of iron, the other trees were guarded by wooden enclosures but still there no doubt that their dust was still there - transformed into a new wood in the new, old trees.

There too can be seen in the photograph a horse and cart which brother Ted and I drove delivering groceries around the town, or in helping to lump cases and sacks from the steamers.

There were no bowzers then, so kerosene (widely used in lighting) came in four gallon tins, two to a case, and they were heavy too for an eight and a ten year old. Similarly with the benzine.

Dad poured benzine directly from the tin into his motor bicycle.

You see Dad being a gadget man he could not resist a "stink buggy" of some sort. He settled for a motor bike, maybe the first in Laurieton, a Harley Davidson. The doctor, if I recollect correctly ran a motor car. This petroleum came in pine crates shipped directly from Texas USA.

Arthur Mumford had a good reason for buying this machine.

When he started his business up in Kendall, travel by horseback or sulky was too slow and the roads were slow, terribly neglected. This is an example of the state of the roads.

The council, in those days, of course had little money.

I remember one night when Dad and I were coming home from working in the Kendall store when we ran into an accident. The front wheel of the Harley Davidson struck a wash-away.

This happened about half-way home on a dark night.

The wash-away was at the bottom of a small rise where the rain had rushed down the dirt road. Because of lack of maintenance over a long period of time, rain had formed wash-out drop, of about two or three feet and say a foot or more in width. The motor vehicle's lights were poor then. Just as Dad was accelerating to climb the hill the front wheel hit this wash-out. Dad went over the handle bars and I went sailing out over the side-car.



CONTINUED NEXT WEEK

# A Centenary of Federation historical highlight

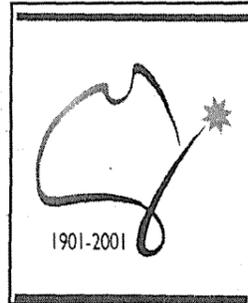
Laurieton RSL sub-branch member Eileen Hanley was a member of the 3rd Australian Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battalion and her experiences and ability as a writer resulted in the article "Behind Enemy Lines" recounting her days with the battalion in New Guinea which was published in "Una Voice."

This account led to correspondence from Harry Morris from Nedlands Western Australia, detailing his New Guinea experiences, but more interestingly his discovery and love affair with our "Lost Haven".

Harry Morris was Shire Engineer of Hastings Shire in the late 1940's, when the Laurieton waterfront consisted of seven little weatherboard houses in all. "In the face of such progress I had the honour of converting the hand operated ferry across to Dunbogan, into a super modern hand operated ferry, by the addition of a small petrol driven motor to improve its performance," he wrote. "The worthy citizens came to boggle and cheer, and the Shire President turned on drinks all round. In fact, we had a keg right there on the deck. Not the least surprised was myself that the innovation worked.

"It was indeed progress of a high order, setting the stage for my mate - Surveyor/Developer Bob Dulhunty of Port Macquarie - and the fine bridge that you now have there today"

Following is Harry's account of his 'discovery' of the Camden Haven - a story named "Our Haven" that just popped out at a meeting of the writer's club of which he belongs



It all started in 1946 on a little Coral Island, when the world was young and innocent and if you believed hard enough your wishes always came true. World War 2 had just ended and there was my wife and I, still with the stars in our eyes from our recent Service wedding, with a little band of other hardy souls trying to re-establish civil government on behalf of the British Colonial Service in the war torn Central Pacific. My job was that of Engineer and Surveyor. Although we lived in a little house made of palm thatch and had no electricity, running water or sanitation, we were nevertheless radiantly happy despite the isolation.

As regards isolation, we could possibly lay claim to being in one of the remotest places in the world. Sadly the place that we lived is no more. Our Atlas no longer shows "The Gilbert Islands" but now describes the little group of atolls as "Kiribati." Our particular location in the universe was a tiny islet named Bairiki in a hidden corner of Tarawa Atoll. Around us the Pacific Ocean rolled on forever.

There was no air service and our only contact with the rest of the world was by a scheduled ship every three months from Fiji, or perhaps with luck an occasional schooner from Ocean Island every six weeks or so. As there was no TV or video, no moving pictures and radio was still a matter of morse code and dots and dashes, our sole communication with outside events were the newspapers that arrived on those seldom, but auspicious, shipping occasions.

Accordingly our daily edition of the Sydney Morning Herald Newspaper was delivered to us in bundles of perhaps 50 or 60 at a time. These we sorted into date order and positively devoured Monday's paper on Monday and Tuesday's, right throughout the week, although actually three months after the date of their headlines. We had nothing else to read. They were our only link with Australia and after we had digested every scrap of news, we studied the commentaries and advertisements right down to the last word. In such case the most precious of all was a long running daily serialisation of Best Selling Book "LOST HAVEN" by an Australian author, Kylie Tennant.

Much as we loved the ongoing story we never cheated. Patiently we waited until tomorrow for the next instalment and every word was a treasure. For months, with very little else to preoccupy us, we lived and breathed the air of LOST HAVEN, so that when it finally concluded the place and the characters were as real to us as any other aspect of our life in our secluded island. We even filed the daily instalments in book form which we still continued to read, telling ourselves that one day we would find our own such HAVEN in Australia and settle down forever.

The fabric of the story related to a small settlement somewhere on the Australian coast and such was the skill of Kylie Tennant as a story teller

that thousands of miles away in the centre of the Pacific Ocean it all

came true and sight unseen we fell in love with the village life that was portrayed. We loved the settlement's own special environment and its people with their laid back lifestyle and we became one with the scenery and the local activities. We shared the sea the coast and the sand hills with them; the river, the tides, the sand bar and the inlet; the estuary with its hand operated ferry; the swamps and the bulrushes; the few houses, one or two shops and the occasional sources of employment. We also shared the fresh salt air and the fishing boats; and every aspect of life of the small and isolated population, miles from anywhere, totally contented with their surroundings and way of life.

The years passed and we left our little atoll with its white beaches and palm trees and next found ourselves in Wauchope, on the central coast of New South Wales, for an interview with respect to an advertisement for Shire Engineer to the Shire of Hastings. But unfortunately in 1949 the environment of the depressed little timber town of Wauchope was hardly that of a coral island and although the Shire Council offered me the position, I asked for a few days grace while I looked around the Shire to see if there were more attractive surroundings than Wauchope in which to live. This brought me to a very small holiday town named Port Macquarie at the mouth of the Hastings River, with a few streets of mainly timber houses and a little row of shops down near the water front, behind the river training wall.

Amongst these shops was a survey office where I was fortunate to meet an extremely helpful and congenial fellow survey named Mr Bob Dulhunty. He was an English gentleman both by nationality and in all other respects - polite, affable, well spoken and very well educated. He radiated cheerfulness and genuinely loved the Port Macquarie area, which he described as being a place of unlimited potential. He told me not to be down hearted with the shabby appearance of Wauchope, but to accept the job and to count my blessings at the many other attractive features that the area had to offer, should I choose to live there. Then, ever one to oblige, he took the afternoon off and invited us to take a drive with him to see the better things that the Hastings area had to offer.

Our trip southwards along the coast was breathtaking in its beauty. Although the roads were rough and at times not much better than tracks, Mr Dulhunty had no difficulty in firing my imagination that with better access the area had enormous potential for development and that with a capable Shire Engineer providing proper roads; people would simply flock into the area for its attractive climate and lovely surroundings. Thus we talked until our trip brought us to a river with an estuary and a sand bar; with swamps and bulrushes and a hand operated ferry; and a small

## Our Haven

fishing boats and the occasional tourist.

Reveling in the fresh salt air I exclaimed to Mr Dulhunty "Bob, I must be dreaming. I feel that I have been in this place before" - to which he instantly replied "Have you ever read a book called LOST HAVEN by Kylie Tennant?"

That was it!! The river was the Camden Haven River: the village was Laurieton; and Kylie Tennant was the wife of the local schoolmaster. We had immediately recognised the surroundings from her artistry as a writer. If there is no monument to her talent already in existence, suffice to say that it would be very fitting for such recognition to be given.

Thus I became Shire Engineer of Hastings Shire and watched the district grow. Although Port Macquarie in itself was an independent Local Government jurisdiction, the town was so small that it boasted only a two room Council Chamber with a staff of one Town Clerk and three outside workers. As the Council had no Engineer, they retained me as an Engineering Consultant at a fee of one hundred pounds a year (\$200) to attend to an occasional road or drainage problem, or as Building Surveyor to see that the occasional house that was built conformed to reasonable standards of construction. But I had other interests in Port Macquarie as well. In a very short time it had become our own particular "haven." We lived two streets back from the ocean front in a little cottage that we rented from Mr Dulhunty who had become my very good mate "Bob." From the cottage we roamed, swam and rode our

surf boards, and fished for flathead on the other side of the river at

the harbour mouth. We were very happy - even happier perhaps than on our coral island, especially when our first child was born.

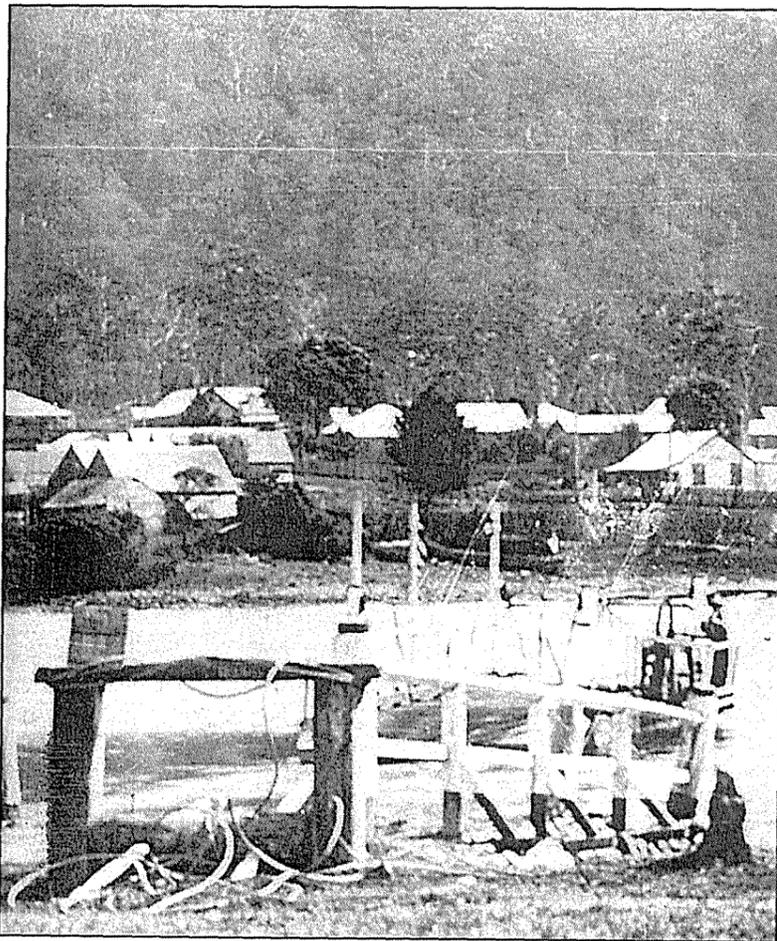
But just as Mr Dulhunty predicted, the area with its many charms and possibilities suddenly took off. The rest of Australia became aware of a place named Port Macquarie and retirees and developers flocked in. Bob himself was overwhelmed with work. In addition to his surveying practise he also capitalised on his other sideline of operating a Real Estate Office. Thence as Surveyor Dulhunty he would receive Survey's fees for subdividing a farm into residential allotments, after which he would receive commission as Land Agent Dulhunty for selling the same lots. And then as houses were built and sold on the same land the Banks would pay Surveyor Dulhunty a related mortgage "Ident Fee" to substantiate the title of the land and related position of improvements. He and his family went from big to bigger and thereafter from great to greater, becoming developers in their own right and even operating their own airline agency as Port Macquarie grew and prospered.

But as Port Macquarie grew in size we became stifled and the Islands called us again. We left for New Guinea to build roads and wharves and bridges and so that many years were to elapse and we were in our old age before we returned to the Hastings Area a year or two ago. Sadly we could no longer recognise Port Macquarie or anything about it. The town had grown to such an incredible degree that we could not even find the place where our

cottage used to be. Vaguely we deemed that there was now a six story building where we once lived, but we could not be sure. It was the same all the way down the coast to Laurieton. Mile after mile of houses and gardens where before there had just been trees and sea coast. Saddest of all at Camden Haven there was no longer a "LOST HAVEN." The hand operated ferry which as Shire Engineer I had modernised with a petrol driven motor had long since given over to a bridge and Dunbogan was a thriving township.

A way of life had passed. The era was over. Probably there are few who remember, but to those of us who do, the memories are sweet.

But it is comforting to know that Kylie Tennant's book can still be read and that their characters were real people in a real situation. So real in fact that after we returned from New Guinea and we were living in Cooma where I was working with Snowy Mountains Authority, I noticed that the Authority's librarian had a sign on her desk "Miss Bess Longworth," which for some reason brought back from my sub conscious the name of "Longworth's Mill" which featured in the book "LOST HAVEN" itself. Casually I asked Bess if she ever had any relatives in northern New South Wales as I had once read a book where a "Longworth's Mill" was mentioned. She was radiant. Yes indeed. Although now in her middle age she herself had lived as a child in northern New South Wales, in a little village named Laurieton and Mr Longworth of Longworth's Mill was her uncle! And miracle of miracles, at times KYLIE TENNANT HERSELF HAD ACTUALLY BEEN HER TEACHER!!!



The old Laurieton/Dunbogan ferry prior to the building of the Dunbogan bridge

# LAKEWOOD LINES



Lakewood woman Essie Hughes was born in Laurieton in 1928. She grew up on her parents' property which is now known as Deauville. Her father, Sep Gulliver, hauled logs off North Brother Mountain via bullock teams to the mills at Laurieton. Her mother, Ethel, was one of the pioneering Startin family. After attending Laurieton Primary and Taree High School, the Gulliver family moved to Tamworth in 1941, and from there to Sydney in 1950. In Sydney Essie married and had three sons, Tony, John and David. She returned to Laurieton in 1971 for four years before moving back to Sydney. In 1979 she again returned to Laurieton and has remained here since. Her early years in Laurieton were happy ones and the opportunity to talk to and write a history of Laurieton through the eyes of one of the early families has given her immense pleasure. "Sam Buckman Remembers" is a fascinating look at early life in this small fishing village and its subsequent growth.

## 'SAM BUCKMAN REMEMBERS'

If you look down the main street of Laurieton today you will see a long bitumen road, kerbed and guttered. Dozens of parked cars form a continuous line on either side, and behind them are rows of shops that sell almost everything necessary for today's modern style of living.

Can you imagine a time when this was just a gravelled, tree lined street, with seldom a car in sight? Sam Buckman can remember when this was so.

On January 7, 1919, Sam was born at Lord Street, Laurieton in a house that has since been pulled down. Except for time spent in the army during the last war, he has lived in Laurieton all his life.

His parents, William and Eliza Buckman, had eight children, two of whom were stillborn. In order of ages, the children were Jack, Bob, Syd, Sam, daughter Laurie, and Noel. On Sam's fifth birthday his ten years old brother, Bob, drowned in Gogleys lake.

After that tragedy Sam's father and his uncle, George Buckman, taught the remaining children to swim at the old baths that were situated south of the present Dunbogan bridge, on the western bank of the Camden Haven River. Uncle George was a champion underwater swimmer, but said he found it difficult to swim on top of the water!

Sam's grandfather, Ted Buckman, was born at Raymond Terrace in England. After coming to Australia, he lived for some years at Bungwhal on the Myall Lakes. While there he had married Alice, daughter of Billy Bramble, whose descendants operate a large transport business. Later they moved to the Camden Haven and the family was living at Kew when Sam's father was three years old.

William Buckman shifted to Laurieton where he worked for his father, Ted Buckman, and Frank Setery, who were shipwrights. They were a timber family and most members worked with timber all their lives. Sam himself still does so, making carved tables and models of men and animals.

One great grandfather was Joe Jabez, a blacksmith from the Rhine, who migrated from Germany to England during the Thirty Years War.

Sam's father William married Eliza, daughter of William (Billy) Porter and his wife Ellen (nee Park). Eliza was born at Caboolture, near Brisbane.

As a young man, Billy Porter had come to Australia from Gosforth, Cumberland, England, going straight to Townsville,

Queensland. He had two brothers and one sister, Anna, already living there, and married Ellen Park soon after his arrival.

Billy and Ellen later moved to the Tweed River in New South Wales and in late 1897, when he was 45 years old, Bill left Tweed Heads by dray, leaving Ellen and the children to follow on later. He was accompanied by two men, one of whom was Griff Edwards.

Billy Porter worked as a foreman for the Public Works Department and helped to oversee the building of the breakwater at the entrance to the Camden Haven River at Laurieton. Initially, he was in charge of the job of preparing the quarry on the mountain behind Laurieton. The land had to be levelled and the surface cleaned off ready for quarrying the stone. This quarry was operated by Griff Edwards and de Fraine.

When these jobs were finished Billy went to Crowdy and helped build the Manning River breakwater.

Work on the breakwater began in 1900 and the steam engines and equipment were located in Laurieton.

In the same year, Ellen Porter and the children came to live at Laurieton. Billy and Ellen had 13 children but four died either at birth or when very young, leaving eight living. They were Hannah, Lance (killed in Belgium during the First World War), Sam, Mary, Margaret, Eliza, Nell, Jack and May.

A steam winch and steam engines were taken up to the quarry by horse teams. The winch was eventually taken to the Herons Creek mill when no longer needed at Laurieton. The quarried stone was moved down to the wharf by an endless wire and then transported by punt to the wall.

In recent years the northern wall has been extended one hundred and fifty yards beyond its original length. The southern wall was at first only about sixty yards, but this has also been made longer. The subsequent building of the loop wall has made the bar much safer.

There have been accidents to boats going over the bar. The Idant was wrecked on the bar in the early 1930s, when four or five men lost their lives and their graves are near the Pilot Station. Idant Street at Camden Head commemorates this event. The Prince of Wales was another ship that was wrecked.

One of the early snapper boats, owned by a Mr Russo, floundered at the entrance. In more recent years, Bill Poole's boat

overturned. Dave Scott swam out and rescued Bill, but never received any medal or award for this act of bravery.

In Sam's opinion, building the breakwalls has only helped to silt up the bar and river. Once there were no sandbars in the river. There was, however, the small Oakey Island which suddenly and inexplicably sank just before the last war.

Many years ago the sea used to come into The Hope (Gogleys) where the water was 40 feet deep and sailing boats waited there before taking on timber from the mills.

By the way, the body of water we now know as The Hope. Fishermen dubbed it that because, if they had failed to make a decent catch of fish in Queens Lake or Lake Watson Taylor, they had one more place to try as their last hope — "The Hope".

What is now Pilot Beach was once covered by the sea. There was a 30 foot cliff at Paynes Point, where two little houses used to be.

Wash House Beach went from the Pilot Station to the rocks, and got its name from the men who worked on the quarry and used to do their washing there, with water that came from a natural spring. In later years Jack Donaldson and Sam's father boxed in the runoff from the spring and it was a natural shower to rinse off the salt water after swimming.

The headland known now as Diamond Head was named Indian Head by Captain Cook because he saw aborigines (called indians in those days) standing on it as he sailed past. It is well known that he named the Three Brothers Mountains, but years ago we called North Brother (our mountain) Big Brother. Indeed, some of us still do. Strangely, the aborigines also called the same mountains the Three Brothers and have an interesting legend as to how they got that name.

Much has been written and said about the timber industry in Laurieton and the surrounding district, but it is not proposed to go into detail about that here. The timber on the mountain was brought down by bullock teams and, when all the mills were operating, 32 teams were working. Since then the mountain has been worked out twice with caterpillars.

In the heyday of the town there were six mills working at the same time. Over the years, mills were owned by Laurie, de Fraine, Bibby and McKay, Rodger and Longworths had two mills. Dunn and Bogan had a mill at the spot that now bears their names — Dunbogan.

Jack Rodger's mill had an iceworks attached. At one time part of Laurieton was known as Rodgerstown, and there were three rows of mill houses. Each mill had its own shop and if a man worked in a certain mill then he had to buy at that mill's shop.

The mills gradually closed until, during the depression, the only one operating was Longworth's which was situated on the site of the present Apex Park near Dunbogan bridge. Just below the mill there was a wharf, from which the timber was loaded onto the boats; one of these being the Allenwood. There is a street of that name at Camden Head. This mill closed about 1957 or 1958.

Punts (or droghers) brought the timber down the river from Kendall, Herons Creek and Johns River. Some of the men who worked the punts were Breckenridge, McGinness and Reg (Buck) French who was known as "Captain Stickfast" because he was always getting stuck in shallow water.

With just one mill working and the only other industry fishing, the population of Laurieton would have been at its lowest just before the last war — say from 600 to 1000 people.

But the general feeling of the place before the war was much as it had been since the real early days. People had to be as self sufficient as they could and, in such a small community, depended on each other for their mutual welfare. They helped build houses for their friends. When someone died, the wreaths were homemade and the coffin was made by either Wally or Joe Southwell, from timber supplied by the mill. Friends dug the grave.

During the depression the dole was twenty five shillings per fortnight for a whole family. At one stage the mill closed down for 18 months, so many more men were out of work. Fish were caught and sold for one shilling and sixpence per box. If work was available on the breakwater, where cement was mixed by hand, the pay was eight shillings per day. The men who rolled it out in wheelbarrows were paid four shillings per day.

Wallabies were shot for food and prawns were caught in chaff bags. Together with his brothers and friends, Sam caught lobsters at Diamond Head and Grants Head, where they were cooked and then sold around the town for sixpence each. Occasionally a tourist might pay two shillings for a large one.

One hears different stories as to whether or not the fish and lobsters were more plentiful then than they are now. Sam thinks

that their numbers have declined.

Most families kept chooks and had a flourishing vegetable garden, and oysters off the rocks cost nothing, as did fish and prawns if you caught them yourself.

But life could be gay and happy too. There were picnics to the beach, swimming and house parties. Dances for the adults and juveniles for the children were held in the School of Arts, as were concerts organised by Miss Vic Longworth and her sister, Mrs Dorrie Jackson. Balls in the School of Arts were held by the churches, the school and the fishermen, with music provided by local bands.

In the early days, Claude Debenham and Teddie Duck each had a band, as did Claude Delves, Fleming, Ernie Setterfield and Gordon Scott (together with his mother). Aunt Nellie Buckman played the piano for Ernie Kesby's band. Another band belonged to Paddy Scott (no relation to Gordon) and Bill Carruthers. Paddy played the piano and Bill the saxophone.

Reg Fenton was the M.C. for most of the dances, balls and juveniles. He was very strict at the juveniles to ensure that

adults danced only with children and so teach them the steps. Two adults could dance together only when he gave them permission to do so, otherwise he would order them off the floor. The smaller children could sleep on rugs in a corner of the hall.

When attending a ball, couples left their children in the reading room, which is now the library. Older children, the elderly or non dancers would look after them and parents would pop in from time to time to see that they were all right. Sam remembers that, when he was old enough, he minded the smaller children and gave babies their bottles.

The first telephone was connected to the Pilot Station and the line came from Taree, over the plains near Diamond Head; then it was taken across the river to the post office. The sailing boats had to go under the cable which stretched across the river.

The Dunbogan bridge was built about 1960, but before that we crossed the river by punt. Some of the puntmen were Bob Bushby, Danny Bell, Kendall, Fagan, John Twomey, Taffy Thomas and the Taylor brothers.

The old identity of Laurieton was Jack Flood,

who worked in sawmills and had walked all the way from Tea Gardens to Laurieton. Along the way, he had spent some time in Taree where had a shop.

At that time Taree consisted of little more than the main street, with a butcher shop, post office, vegetable shop and stables.

He lived at Laurieton in a house by the river, but when it burnt down Sam and Nell looked after him and he lived in a shed behind their house. Although nearly blind, he was fiercely independent and sewed on his own buttons. Sam's little daughter, Sue, would thread several needles for him so that he always had the thread handy. This was about 1944 and he stayed for 12 months, when he moved into a little house built for him by Jack Southwell. He was over 100 years old when he died in 1959 at Port Macquarie hospital and was buried at Port.

At the time the Second World War broke out there were four shops in Laurieton, owned by Bill Adams, Ernie Setterfield, George Bonser and Reg Southwell. Copyright Essie Hughes and Sam Buckman 1988. "Sam Buckman Remembers" is continued in the next edition of the Camden Haven Courier.

Camden Haven Courier 24.2.88

# A fascinating look at early life in a small village

Lakewood woman Essie Hughes was born in Laurieton in 1928. She grew up on her parents' property which is now known as Deauville. Her father, Sep Gulliver, hauled logs off North Brother Mountain via bullock teams to the mills at Laurieton. Her mother, Ethel, was one of the pioneering Startin family. After attending Laurieton Primary and Taree High School, the Gulliver family moved to Tamworth in 1941, and from there to Sydney in 1950. In Sydney Essie married and had three sons, Tony, John and David. She returned to Laurieton in 1971 for four years before moving back to Sydney. In 1979 she again returned to Laurieton and has remained here since. Her early years in Laurieton were happy ones and the opportunity to talk to and write a history of Laurieton through the eyes of one of the early families has given her immense pleasure. "Sam Buckman Remembers" is a look at early life in this small fishing village and its subsequent growth.

If you look down the main street of Laurieton today you will see a long bitumened road, kerbed and guttered. Dozens of parked cars form a

continuous line on either side, and behind them are rows of shops that sell almost everything necessary for today's modern style of living.

Can you imagine a time when this was just a gravelled, tree-lined street, with seldom a car in sight? Sam Buckman can remember

when this was so.

On January 7, 1919, Sam was born at Lord Street, Laurieton in a house that has since been pulled down. Ex-

cept for time spent in the army during the last war, he has lived in Laurieton all his life.

His parents, William and Eliza Buckman, had eight children, two of whom were stillborn. In order of ages, the children were Jack, Bob, Syd, Sam, daughter Laurie and Noel. On Sam's fifth birthday his ten-year-old brother, Bob, drowned in Googleys Lake.

After that tragedy Sam's father and his uncle, George Buckman, taught the remaining children to swim at the old baths that were situated south of the present

Dunbogan bridge, on the western bank of the Camden Haven River. Uncle George was a champion underwater swimmer, but said he found it difficult to swim on top of the water.

Sam's father William married Eliza, daughter of William (Billy) Porter and his wife Ellen (nee Park). Eliza was born at Caboolture, near Brisbane.

Billy Porter worked as a foreman for the Public Works Department and helped to oversee the building of the breakwater at the entrance to the Camden Haven River at Laurieton. In-

itially, he was in charge of the job of preparing the quarry on the mountain behind Laurieton. The land had to be levelled and the surface cleaned off ready for quarrying the stone. This quarry was operated by Griff Edwards and de Fraine.

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A steam winch and steam engines were taken up to the quarry by horse teams. The winch was eventually taken to the Herons Creek mill when no longer needed at

Cont. P38

## Sam Buckman remembers

From P36

Laurieton. The quarried stone was moved down to the wharf by an endless wire and then transported by punt to the wall.

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Cont. P38

24th April 1919

# 'SAM BUCKMAN REMEMBERS'

*A continuation of Sam Buckman's history of Laurieton as told to Essie Hughes.*

Many years ago there had been two shops situated roughly opposite the post office, on Joseph Laurie's lease; his home was built behind the shops, that is, to the south. One shop was operated by de Fraine, the other by Laurie and, after his death, by Mrs Laurie, and managed by a Mr Earp. Later there was only one shop and the subsequent owners were Mumford, White, Perkins, Adams and Fury. It was eventually pulled down and the site is now vacant land.

Frank Stave, and then Ernie Setterfield, owned a shop in the main street opposite the present Shoeyes, but moved it to the southern end of Bold Street. The shop has been occupied ever since, renovated and enlarged. It is now known as the Convenience Store, owned and run by Bruce and Olive Macklyn.

The Foursquare Supermarket in Bold Street now stands on the site of the original shop owned by Mrs Perrott, who sold it to Sam's grandmother, Alice Buckman, for 50 pounds. This was for the freehold of shop, with stock and everything included. Before readers say "but that is only \$100," think of

inflation and the scale of wages then and now. That was a lot of money in those days, equal in purchasing value to many thousands of dollars today.

This is a point that seems to be totally lost on many people who write or say that, for instance, bread was only sixpence a loaf 50 years ago. They translate that six pence into six cents, forgetting that sixpence then would buy goods for which we probably pay about \$1.20 today. It must be especially confusing for young people to read such nonsense. Everything goes up more or less on the same scale, with some goods and services costing perhaps a higher percentage of the average wage today, but sometimes we get better value for our money.

The fourth shop was on top of the hill in Bold Street, in the front room of Reg Southwell's house. They sold sweets, groceries and bicycles. Reg and Daisy Southwell still live in that same house.

Some of the boys who attended the local primary school gave the teachers a hard time. Sam hated school and wagged it whenever he could to go out into the bush and chop wood. For him that was a

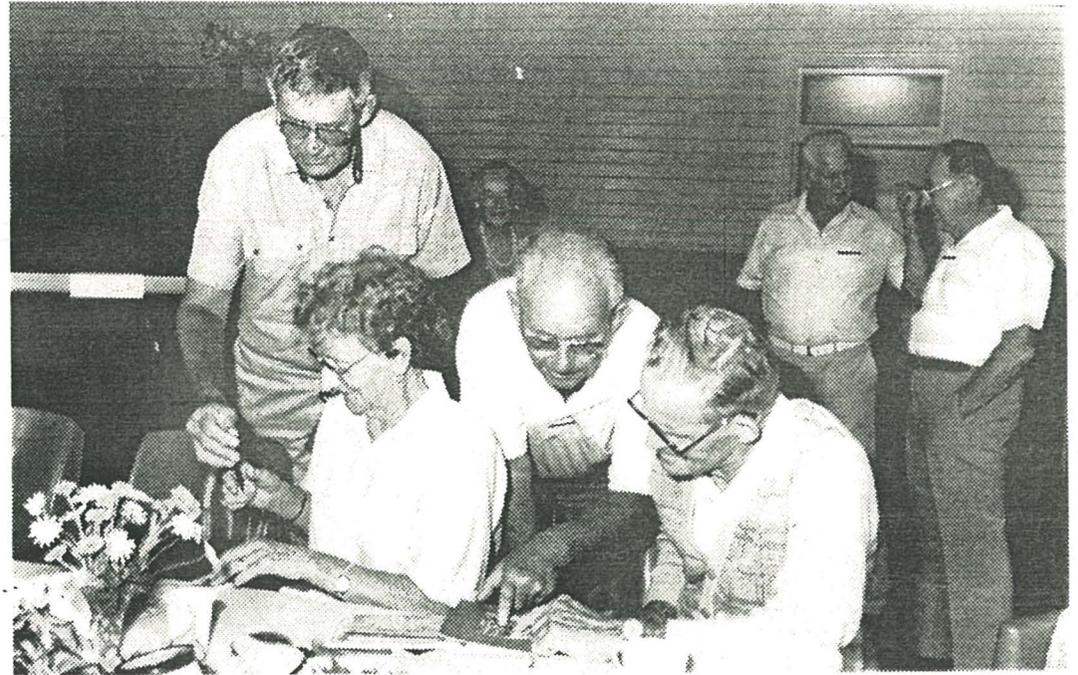
much more profitable way to spend his time.

Headmasters at the school included Debenham, Marley, Archer, Carter, Murphy, Rodd (Kylie Tennant's husband) and, in later years, Dickson, Miller, Fifiel, Martin and Terry Miles.

Mr Murphy had a bush house full of wonderful orchids from the mountain, and a vegetable garden in which the boys often worked on Friday afternoons instead of playing sport. For punishment, the boys were sometimes given the task of pulling out so many Paddy's lucerne, a weed that grew in the grounds.

After leaving school Sam worked in the timber industry and over a period of four years, from the age of 16, was a part time jockey.

The first race course was a straight track at Diamond Head and later a circular track was constructed behind John Longworth's house at Concord, near the present road into Dunbogan. Horses were brought from as far away as Newcastle. There was much racing activity in 1921, during the 1930s, especially 1938, and also



*From left, John Jackson, Beryl Bonser, Sam Buckman and Dudley McGilvray discuss some old photographs at a Camden Haven old-timers reunion held late last year.*

during the war. Very few meetings were held after the war and, of course, we no longer have a race track.

During the war Sam served in the Middle East, New Guinea and Borneo; and was injured in a fall.

In 1941 he married Nell Crossman and they have five children and several grandchildren.

Nell was born on

February 2, 1920 at Nulla Nulla near Bellbrook on the Upper Maclay River.

Her parents were John Henry and Lylie Louise (nee Woolford) Crossman and their children are Nancy, Ted, Nell and Alice. Mr Crossman was born at Sofala, near Bathurst.

The family moved to Laurieton in 1928, buying a riverfront farm from Mrs Sarah Wrightson. The pro-

perty formerly belonged to Sarah's mother, Mrs Sarah Carruthers, who inherited it from her father, William Wade. It was next door to Sep Gulliver's property Glenbank, which is now known as Deauville.

Sam and Nell live in Bold Street, Laurieton and their house is a mecca for visitors wanting to have a yarn about the good old days. Like any other period

of history they were both good, and bad, days. People will always experience tragedy and happiness during their lifetimes and change is as inevitable as night and day.

No matter what the future holds Sam, Nell and other old-timers will always remember the past and have interesting tales to tell those who care to listen.

Camden Haven Courier 2.5.88

# Florence Webber . . . donning her thinking cap

There would be some people in the Camden Haven area who would remember when their grocery supplies were brought from Sydney by boat. They would be able to recall the punts, used to ferry people and vehicles across the Camden Haven River.

But the numbers of elderly early settlers are diminishing and memories of times past are fading. It is with thanks to Florence Webber of Laurieton that a part of her life can be recalled and recorded



for readers and those concerned with Australian history during the early part of the 19th Century.

It is in this way Australians may become aware that we do have an interesting heritage; that we owe a great deal to those who came before us who underwent extreme hardships and pioneered the country for future generations.

They did this literally by settling in out of the way places such as the Camden Haven area, bringing up their families in what we would call today hard times and building the foundation of a settlement, which in the future would become a thriving area for both residents and tourists alike.

"My father was the first white baby to be born in Rogertown", said Florence Webber, "that's what Laurieton was called then. His mother and father came from Taree originally and my father, Jim Gill, was a fisherman. My mother, Amelia had five children and we lived in Rogertown. The house was pulled down later and we moved here.

I was the eldest of the children and of course helped mother look after the others when I was growing up. I was six when I went to school and helped to plant the big tree that still stands at the front of the Laurieton school.

There was a Post Office and the school, no telephones, they made their own tanks for water, there were no bridges and no doctors around here then. Those were the hard times.

I went to school with dark kiddies and they were very good to us. There were a lot of black people living here and when one of my sisters got real sick, this black woman said: 'I can cure her for you.'

She lived in the bush and went and collected sarsparella seeds and a lot of other different seeds, boiled them all up, made a drink for my sister and that cured her. They were very good to us.

My father had to use home made things as a fisherman and his nets had to be tanned to preserve them. When we weren't at school we used to have to keep the fire going.

He had a tan pot, it was called. He would get the salt water, boil it up with bark off the trees, soak the net in it and make the net go brown. This would preserve the net and he used to get up early of a morning and when he was out fishing, we used to have to keep the fire going 'til he got back.

The boat used to take the boxes of fish to Sydney. The boats used to come in at the Government wharf, down the end of Laurie Street and father went to Sydney a couple of times.

I wasn't game to go on the boat. No fear. It did take passengers and we used to get all our groceries and other things, mainly groceries, brought up from McIlwraiths. You would write to them to send up what you wanted by boat and about once a month whatever you ordered would arrive. It was happy and exciting when the boats came in. They also used to take timber from the Longworth's Mill at Rogertown to Sydney.

My father was the third man to get a car in Rogertown and weren't we excited. Mr. Longworth was the first, Mr. Gibson the second and then my father. We children had to run along in front of the car, throwing all the stones off the road. It was more like a Ford and we were all so excited.

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Frank

I have written my war memoirs with Qantas.

During my era Qantas broke a number of records and created a number of firsts too.

These men were second only to Kingsford Smith to cross the Pacific from the U.S.A. to Australia. But the record of Qantas lies in the fact that their fliers crossed it nineteen times not once. They made a record in aircraft delivery too. Furthermore they were only two engined aircraft and the first foreign kites into Sydney.

Now Smithy in his Southern Cross had three engines to comfort him, we only had two engines in the Catalina PBV.

I made two of these crossings. Bill (P.G.) Taylor, who later became Sir Gordon, was our navigator on both my crossings.

I submitted this manuscript to the Penguin Book Publishers but they said their commitments were too full at that time. I may give it to Qantas for their archives.

I too was on the Qantas survey flight across the Indian Ocean and I flew on the first service. The Indian Ocean project was considered a great achievement, done on two engines.

Anyway I'm enclosing a run-down on the eleven parts in case you have sufficient interest in aviation. -- the copy I sent to the publishers.

Frank, in the manuscript I mentioned by brothers and sister (all A.I.F)

I shall probably touch up the manuscript a bit so if you care to take the trouble I would be pleased to have yours and Fred's history: battles, dates and major movements so that my records will be detailed and authentic.

P.S. I hope that which I wrote complies with your wishes.

Glen

4/9 Wycombe Road,

Neutral Bay, 2089.

23/3/88

Dear Frank,

It was good to hear <sup>your voice</sup> after all these years. Remember me kindly to your family. My, my, they were all children when I last saw them, Frank.

Nancy has the chronological order of our family movements, dates and etc. But I couldn't get hold of her on the telephone. She's been away for a fortnight. It appears that a speeding young girl ran into Tom's car. Her automobile was a total write-off, but she came out of it bruised only. One of the front wheels of Tom's car will need repair. Tom himself, was not hurt. Nancy now has volunteered to help him in his shift back to his old home; hence her absence from Colaroy.

I am unable to find that snap-shot when we were five in the family at the time Dad put us up at the Laurieton Hotel, while he was buying into the Robertson & Rose store. But I do have a photograph of that shop. I shall write a separate article on Laurieton circa 1918.

Also I've enclosed some war-time stuff in which you may be interested. If not it doesn't matter. Don't return the Qantas papers, but I would like you to return the snap-shots of Krambach and Laurieton. They hold close memories for me.

By the way if you ever visit your library, look up a recent publication called CHALLENGING HORIZONS by John Gunn, page 134. My photograph appears in it beside the famous O.P. Jones, the senior British Airways captain.

Frank, I thought Krambach would be of interest to you and that perhaps one day you may care to take a run down there and compare today with those days before the Great War when we lived there.

The first picture:

This shot is taken from Krambach Hill. Behind the observer and about a mile (at least ~~it~~ seemed so from a six year old's aspect at the time) lay Mr Lyons's public school where I received my first schooling and was terrorised by Fred Chapman, the son of the previous storekeeper. He was a Tiger Kelly type from Ginger Meggs fame. Fred was a heavily built eleven or twelve year old when I was just six years old.

The vehicle is the old Cobb and Co. style coach that brought our mail and occasional passenger in from the 'big smoke' or elsewhere and took bush-whackers out of the isolation of the bush to see a bit of life.

Immediately on the left is Dad's and Uncle Edward's store, the Excelsior (see picture three). Because Auntie Nancy had no children she lived in the quarters behind the store. Opposite on the right and the first house is where we lived (note my nappies hanging on the line).

Going down the road on the left now, is where Mr Neatte, the manager of the Bank of London lived. Next to it is the bank itself. The shacks you see next (near the line of trees)

were pulled down later to build Dad's two story 'emporium.' These Iron Bafks had grown up when he built the new shop years later.

The next business house at the end of the tree line is Gallagher's Hotel. And next door is what we called the "Deer's Old Place".

My memory goes back as far as this when a toddler. I crawled out into the middle of the road, Mum ran out to rescue her babe from "a wild colonial boy" who after a beer or two decided to do a gallop on his charger down the only road about Krambach then. Here too I remember the peppercorn tree under which Dad garaged his 'pride and joy': the KRIT motor-car. It was the first "stink buggy" in the district. This 'Rolls Royce' was a four seater, wooden body, no doors and two kerosene lights carriage. Dad covered his treasure with a bluish-green tarpaulin.

Somewhere down there too, the blacksmith plied his trade of shoeing horses and doing all manner of iron work.

On the back of the card you will see that Mum tells all. In order to wag school, I used to help Dad sometimes on the lice-nced dealer's waggon. Dad would go around the farms, in some cases, on the basis of the barter business, taking in eggs, potatoes and so forth from some farmers in exchange for groceries. There was precious little money then and I think not a little of Dad's debts were paid in this fashion during drought, and hard times. Sometimes after Dad left Krambach one proprietor renting Dad's premises did go broke.

Dad being the stronger of the two brothers did the hard yakka, such as bringing our good up from Nabiac, landed there by the ship DROGER.

Arthur Mumford continued storekeeping stoically in the bush when later, Auntie Nancy decided to do a swank. In those days <sup>of anyone who tried to be anyone</sup> anyone who was anyone would take a trip HOME. Because of the number of British immigrants, Home was England. For example Arthur Mumford's parents came from the U.K. And the term took on whether the user was British or colonial. I remember using it quite naturally myself right up until I was a young man.

Dad was the quick, rough and ready one. Uncle Edward the gentleman and he was neat to boot.

Dad got things done, and done quickly. For example he would smartly open up a case of jam or fruit and chuck it into the shelves. Uncle would come along later and neatly turn the labels out. But it also came to Dad's lot to do the heavy outside lumping and such like.

Picture Two:

This one tells its own story on the reverse side.

Picture Three:

This is a snapshot of our new built, two story store. Note the beautiful new Page motor-car.

After the Krit came the Model "T" Ford, the first electric lights in Krambach. When climbing a hill the lights of the Ford would dim to a red-hot glow in the utter blackness of the bush; but <sup>when</sup> this "T" raced down the other side of

the hill the lights would light up again. You see there were no batteries on "stink buggies" in those days.

Now the Page was a fine heavy automobile. This one was equipped with carbide lamps which lit up the Australian bush like George Street, Sydney. The picture shows, I think Justy Lynch pushing the Page. Justy used to drive the cars when Dad was busy. Folk who like<sup>d</sup> the horse races, hired the cars for a days run to the Gloucester race course, or others would want only to enjoy the pure exhilaration of a joy ride. You see there were few cars in Australia then.

Also note the carbide gas light over the top of the shop's verandah. In the back-yard stood a Mount Vesuvius where Dad discharged the used carbide slush. I remember when it was like a snow cover mountain near a great gas generator cylinder. This monster was fed with rocks of carbide that turned to a viscous mess. In those days it was common custom to have a back-yard that looked like a rubbish tip. So our backyard<sup>d</sup> was nothing out of the ordinary; in fact the yard was something in the very ordinary.

Now the chronological order of the Mumfore family's movements which were many.

Arthur and Edward Mumford were bachelors when they bought their first country store from F.O.Chapman in the year 1907 ( I was born in 1908). They stayed in Krumbach for ten years.

First Edward stayed on while Arthur returned to Sydney for his wedding. Then it was Edward's turn to marry.

They bought the store at the Taree end of the hamlet: the first building on the left in photograph one. This store, I think was financed by grandma Mumford's brother, 'Big' Uncle Jack Sheridan.

Later they built onto the store.

In 1910 they sold out to F.O.E.Chapman and bought out Kirshaw and Gleeson, the Post Office Store at the far end of the town. Edward became the postmaster. These premises were known as the "The Deer's Old Place". Kirshaw & Gleeson were in this store only for twelve months.

Later Arthur bought Edward's interest in the shop when he and his wife Annie went for a trip to England in 1912. Then Arthur became Postmaster. At the end of 1913 Arthur built the two story shop and residence on top, calling it Mumford's Premier Store. He moved into the new building in January 1914.

Because of his move from Deer's old place, the Post-Office Store, the postal authorities built a new office up the street near the Bank and Miss MacPhellamy was installed as post mistress.

In 1917 Arthur sold out to Appleton and Ploughman.

After it had changed hands a number of times the proprietors, Ross and another man, went into liquidation. The receivers were called in as Ross hadn't paid rent for sometime. Mum and Nancy went up there to run it and regain the rent.

From Krumbach, the family moved to Katoomba where Nancy was born; then to the Duddas farm, then to Laurieton.

## LAURIETON.

After selling the Krambach store Dad took a short rest. The family went to Katoomba and stayed in Mr McCormack's week-ender (Auntie Nancy's father). The new baby Nancy now made a family of seven children.

After sometime at farming Arthur found it timely to replenish the cash register. He moved to Laurieton on the Camden Haver river.

Laurieton was a beautiful untouched land in 1918. But 'the writing was on the wall' even then.

During the summer months people came from afar in sulkies and horseback to enjoy camping under the stars in the warm nights at South Beach and other scenic spots around the Camden Haver environs.

These holiday makers crossed the river in the vehicle ferry to travel along a grey sand pad out to an area where acres of Christmas Bells thrived. These beautiful blooms formed a gigantic gold and red carpet over a large flat area near South Beach.

But alas, these campers were ruthless.

I have seen them with their horses hames, bridles and in fact all the harness was heavily decorated with bells. The desecrators poked them in where ever they could make them hang and then heaped them up in loads in their sulkies. The Christmas Bell plant possesses a hard stork; so to save time and trouble a lot of these people pulled at the plant and rooted out storks, blooms, roots and everything that came under their hands.

Nowadays I would hate to look at what was nature's paradise of blooms in my day.

Although protected now, I think most of this kind of destruction could not have gone on for long without total destruction to one of our finest native *floras in this area.*

As well too, when driving out of the hamlet one could see waratahs which I will never see again. They bloomed in numbers alongside the seven miles of stony, dirt road.

Dad bought out the Laurieton store as shown in the photograph. The business was owned by Robertson & Rose.

At the time of this photograph Dad had not had his name painted up. It was quite sometime before he had the premises re-painted.

Behind our store stood a large bulk store, the original Laurieton store which had been owned by the Laurie pioneers. They were honoured when the settlement was named. And behind the bulk-store again stood our residence. The shop property reached down to the river, where Dad indulged himself in the recreation of building sailing boats. When a young man he belonged to a yacht club on Sydney Harbour.

Opposite the shop one can see a corner of the Post Office. While at the back

of the cameraman flowed the Camden Haven river with Laurie Street running down to the government wharf, where the steamship ALLENWOOD and JAP tied up to unload the town's cargo. Only once in say twelve months did a passenger come up from Sydney. I did the trip in a gale and was terribly sea-sick. There was a young lady stewardess aboard who answered my cries: I must have looked a sorry sight: A boy sitting on the "thrown" crying out:

"I'm sick, I'm sick."

But the tough mate who was not only not at all concerned with a sorry sight, for he was trying to recover some sleep after his hard watch in which he had been fighting the gale. He bawled back at my my cries in the night in the good old tough, sail man's manner. Yes, he bawled into the night all right :

"Then be bloodwell sick. And shut up!"

Anyway Mum gave the kindly little stewardess a handsome gift out of the shop for her efforts.

These steamers made the return passage loaded down to the "line" with timber back-loaded from Longworth's mill to Port Jackson (Sydney).

Even at that time I knew the tall ships. (but I knew them later on when I signed articles on the Burns Philp--South Sea Company -- S.S. Mona, a tops'l schooner out of Betio, Tarawa, in the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony as supercargo).

A sailing ship called the PHYL FORBES plied between Port Jackson and the north coast calling at Laurieton.

Immediately adjacent to the wharf was the hand-driven vehicular traffic punt operated by man-power. The passenger of course, always jumped down from his saddle, cart or sulky to lend the ferryman Bushy a hand. Two handles were fitted to a wheel about six feet in diameter. Over the circumference ran the cable. One end of the wire was attached to the west bank of the river, and the other to the east bank.

Should only a pedestrian need to make the crossing, Mr Bushy was equipped with a fairly large, and I might say although stout boat, a heavy one.

Our ferryman was an old salt and it was he who said to me when once I was yarning to him about the sailing ship PHYL FORBES at his tiny room near the wharf (the room was not much longer than his six foot length bunk, with a tiny fireplace and the shack was only about the width of the doorway. He slept and ate there most of his time):

"In my day, they were the days of iron men and wooden ships. Now they are wooden men and iron ships."

This old sailor was now too old to furl a foremast top gallant or a main mast royal in a gale and too proud to take on a peggy's job after fighting the elements from the top of tall masts.

He settled down ashore. But his sail days still hung about him. His legs were bandy

. He wore neither boots nor socks. Furthermore he always had his trousers rolled up to the ~~claves~~ of his legs as though about to prepare to go on deck in a gale, howling like demons out of hell, ~~with~~ the ship, in a heavy leeward list. Moreover there was no mistaking what he ~~had~~ been for he still walked with a Western Ocean roll.

I don't remember whether Bushy had been, A.B., mate, or master in sail. But he had collected a little cash with which he bought a home on a small property where his wife and daughter lived.

This daughter was a fine girl. She was nineteen or twenty when I knew her.

Miss Bushby was a true bush girl but she always looked smart in her riding habit. I never saw her out of it that I can remember, for she always rode horse-back to town on a fine animal. Disdaining side-saddle, she wore saddle breeches, well cut. Another thing, mounted she was every bit a part of the horse. And there is one more thing about this girl: she loved life and to use the newly coined phrase of the day, this is the way she would speak.

When asked something such as this: "Going to the hop tonight?" She would bring the new formed phrase into use quickly enough: "You bet you sweet life, I am."

You see at this time a lot of the lads were coming back from the Great War, making dancing more than the mode of the day, before television and radio and fast motor-cars and good roads, *had made their impact on society.*

To honour these boys who had enlisted, the residence planted trees for each digger. These trees were four years old when this photograph was taken in 1918.

When my brother Frank and I re-visited Laurieton some years ago I noticed that ~~few~~ of the soldiers' tree guards were still there. They were made of iron, the others trees were guarded by wooden enclosures but still there no doubt what their dust was still there -- transformed into new wood in the new, old trees.

There too can be seen in the photograph a horse and cart which brother Ted and I drove delivering groceries around the town, or in helping to lump cases and sacks from the steamers.

There were no bowzers then, so kerosene (widely used in lighting) came in four gallon tins, two to a case, and they were heavy too for an eight and ten years old. Similarly with the benzine.

Dad poured benzine directly from the tin into his motor bicycle.

You see Dad being a gadget man he could not resist a "stink buggy" of some sort. He settled for a motor bike, maybe the first in Laurieton, a Harley Davidson. The doctor, if I recollect correctly ran a motor car. This petroleum came in pine crates shipped directly from Texas U.S.A.

Arthur Mumford had a good reason for buying this machine.

When he started his business up in Kendal, travel by horse back or sulky was too slow and the roads were slow, terribly neglected. This is an example of the state of the roads.

The council, in those days, of course had little money.

I remember one night when Dad and I were coming home from working in the Kendal store when we ran into an accident. The front wheel of the Harley Davidson struck a wash-away.

This happened about half-way home on a dark night.

The wash-away was at the bottom of a small rise where the rain had rushed down the dirt road. Because of lack of maintenance over a long period of time, <sup>rain had formed</sup> the wash-out drop, of about two or three feet and say a foot or more in width. The motor vehicle's lights were poor then. Just as Dad was accelerating to climb the hill the front wheel hit this wash-out. Dad went over the handle bars and I went sailing out over the side-car..

I was about ten or twelve years old then so I've forgotten what knocks were sustained, but I do know that none of the three of us broke anything because the Harley got us home.

The next building up the street on the left was an abandoned fruit and vegetable shop. In my time it housed a European pensioner. He spoke English. Correction. He didn't speak English. The man was faded by years as was his clothes. He would come into the store and demand<sup>h</sup> forthrightly:

"Jam. Plum. Open."

He didn't even own a tin opener.

Further along the road still resided the Church of England clergyman. And at the top of the street can be seen the steeple and bell tower of the Church of England where we children attended Sunday School.

This sight was the point of the cross-roads. To the left the road led to Longworths' mills and the southern farming district; and the right hand road led out of the hamlet passing the Laurieton Hotel and Longworths' opposition store, and finally <sup>terminating</sup> at Kew (and Kendal) where it joined the north coast road.

Diagonally opposite the church can be seen (at the top right of the picture) the public school. And opposite, facing the church was the School of Arts used for dancing and other social requirements. Each of these three buildings stood immediately on the corners of the crossroads. An adjacent vacant block of land stood on the fourth corner.

The large trees growing at the top right, were pines in the school grounds and the area set aside for the headmaster, Mr Debenham's home ground.

We children Glen, Dorothy, Ted and Joyce attended this school, but Tom, Jack and Nancy were too young. Brother Frank was born during this time.

As was usual in those days, I was born in a home -- my maternal grandmother's. They lived, then, in what was called Rookwood. But now when Frank came along things were different. He was born in a hospital -- Bort Macquarie.

My birth certificate shows Rookwood as my place of birth.

The huge grounds of the Rookwood cemetery, at that time was served by steam trains.

They brought the bearses to one of the four stations called Morturay 1,2,3, and 4. Rookwood was the largest necropolis in the southern hemisphere.

Because of what the locals thought: the cemetery was a stigma on their locality they changed the name of their suburb. But this happened after I was born.

In order to honour two of their alderman, One named, if I remember rightly, Liddel, and the other Larcombe (the descendants of the Larcombes, still reside there as stone maspns). The locals took the Lid out of Liddel and the Combe out of Larcombe and came up with Lidcombe.

But the outcome of all this that relates to me is this:

As a seafarer signing articles to join a ship my birth certificate used to cause some humorous remarks. This was when I gave my place of birth as Rookwood, the well know cemetery. In order to keep the humour rolling I would come back with this one:

"And my wife also was born in a cemetery; slap bang in the middle of one."

After some raised eyebrows I would enlighten them: (about that time an illegitimate birth had taken place there.) And as well at times some fun and games went on there.

"My wife's father was the Ground Manager of the Church of England section at Rookwood cemetery and the authorities built a comfortable manager's home near the office of the necropolis."

While living in Laurieton I used to take all my holidays with my grandparents, maternal, at Lidcombe or maternal, at Granville. City life for me was a rare change, but I always looked forward to my return to the lovely Camden Haven with its beloved bush and shanty buildings, farms and homesteads and shantysteads.

I knew well a shanty building. The bulk store. This shanty was the original Laurieton store. Because of the shortage of money, newspapers were often used for wall paper. And so our bulk store was lined with newsprint to stop wind and rain blowing through the cracks between the slabs of the rough bush cut timber. The glue was made from flour and water. And at night an army of mice would come out and indulge themselves on sun baked dough. And as well the "kangaroo dogs" (rats landed with the ships' cargoes) would fleece our produce. Sometimes our feet or hands came to grief in the traps set for these monsters as well as the little monsters.

I too well remember the long spans of bullock teams which brought the huge trees down from the mountains into Longworths' mills. And as well the millers owned a fleet of paddle wheel steamers. These punts were used for the transport of lumber down from the two lakes: Watson Taylor and Queen's which emptied into the Camden Haven. There was another one too; also a very small sheet of water called the Lake of Good Hope. This was a tidal basin which joined the river near its mouth. I wonder who was the early settler who named it Googlies Creek.

But we do know that it was Captain Cook who named this one, also unusual: The North Brother Mountain that stands behind the town.

As well as being sawyers, the Longworths' owned the opposition store, but employe

a manager. And I suppose with this point in view was why my father emphasized another point to me ( I was expected to carry on the Mumford tradition of store-keeping): "Never, never employ a manager in a country store," he said.

But it was a sad day for the Longworths' brothers when Bob Longworth, the elder of the two came to my father whose speed was running them off their feet in the country store area.

"You're a better storekeeper than me, Mr Mumford."

Their meeting resulted in the Longworths selling out to Mumford because the speedy opposition pressure of Arthur was too fast in this field and the Longworths stuck to being sawyers.

Furthermore, even as the cheque was being written out, Arthur's mind speeded on.

And so the up-and-coming Arthur gave birth too, to an up-and-coming idea.

He stripped Longworths' premises of stock, hired some bullock teams and great logs. Then his men got to work and rolled the empty store off its blocks and down along the Kew road, ~~then~~ into Laurie Street and finally down an incline at the river graded for the approach of the vehicular punt. There an engineer loaded the store on two of the paddle wheelers which took their load up the river to Kendal. There the men rolled <sup>it</sup> onto the bank. And in so doing Arthur Mumford set up a another general store.

These paddle wheelers were different from the usual Australian steam vessels. They were driven by a port and <sup>a</sup>starboard paddle wheel. Longworths' fleet was designed on a similar line to that of the Mississippi River boats in the U.S.A. A huge paddle wheel the breath of the punt, and immediately behind the large wheel house propelled <sup>it</sup> at a fairly fast pace.

I have forgotten how long our family lived in Laurieton. But when our father sold out he took a spell in Epping a suburb of Sydney.

# GENERAL INTEREST FOR THE RECORD

When G. and J. Eggins commence to build their new shop, they will pull down one of the oldest shop sites in Laurieton.

The old building has been standing and has been used as a store and shop for almost eighty years.

It is situated in the middle of Bold Street Shopping Centre and over the years has been the meeting place of countless thousands of people.

The story of the old shop has a great human interest appeal and we have approached various owners and occupiers who are still around the Camden Haven, and this is the story of a fine old building.

It was built by a Mr. Jim Franklyn on land purchased from Messrs. John and Robert Longworth. Timber used in the structure was fine red mahogany rusticated boards, eight inches wide and one inch thick.

Mr. Jim Franklyn met with a domestic setback and decided the shop was no use to him, so he sold it to Mr. and Mrs. David Jones, grandparents of Mr. Les Jones, of Laurieton Bakery.

Mr. David Jones opened a bicycle and soft drinks shop and specialised in selling water melon at 1d per slice. Melons were supplied by the Shoemith family and it is reported one melon almost filled the show window.

He was also a keen bicycle rider, and 20 miles was just a small workout before breakfast.

Snakes were another side issue. He killed one carpet snake which took almost a week to cross the track, and that long to die! It was quite a tourist attraction for the week—people came from far and near to see it. The biggest snake ever seen or found in the Camden Haven, I am told.

Mr. and Mrs. David Jones then sold out to Mrs. G. Perrott, affectionately known throughout the district as "Nannie Perrott." Her family are still around the Kendall area and all parts of Camden Haven. She married Mr. Alf Gibbins and when she left the district sold the shop for £10 to a Mr. W. Taylor who carried on a small business for some time.

Mrs. Alice Buckman bought the shop from Mr. Taylor about the year 1900 and she went in for hot pies and home-made ice-cream, cordials and smallgoods.

The ice-cream was made in a good old wooden churn and everyone who came to the shop took their turn at the handle.

Mrs. Buckman's daughter married Mr. George Bonser who was quite a man around town in those days, and they finally took over the shop.

The Bonser shop was known far and wide, and was the chief meeting place for all. Many lovers' quarrels were ironed out at "Bonzers"! Roads were built and super fish stories hatched—in fact, it was the Mecca of all local news, controlled by the genial George and his good wife.

They had the first refrigeration on the river, and it was a great day when the Railway was opened and they were able to obtain their ice-cream in churns from the Newcastle Milk and Delicacy Co., packed in salt and dry ice. They then went a step further and put in the first groceries in the shop. Tables and chairs were purchased and it was a great day when the first tea room and restaurant was opened—they served tea and sandwiches, pies, ice-cream, and cool drinks.

Everyone gathered at "Bonzers"—infants, young and old, and I should imagine there would be many people who can even say today, "I first met her" or "He asked me to go out" or even "He proposed to me" at "Bonzers"! Plans for picnics, fishing excursions, fishing excursions, balls, outings, sporting fixtures, concerts, were all discussed and planned and it served as meeting and stamping ground for all.

Mr. and Mrs. George Bonser had a daughter, Beryl, who also helped when she left school, and when they sold to Mr. and Mrs. Ron Hull the George Bonser family built a beautiful home in Norman Street, Laurieton, where they still live and Beryl is a most reliable and efficient Secretary at Laurieton Fishermen's Co-op.

Mr. Ron Hull built extensions onto the old shop and opened up an entirely new modern shop.

The old building was then taken over by Mr. and Mrs. E. Vaughan, who had just been married, and came to Laurieton to open up a pharmacy business. It was the first chemist's shop in Laurieton, and was opened in the old section of the building.

Mr. and Mrs. Ron Hull lived in the other section and used it as a private residence, as it was just next door to the new shop and extensions.

Mr. E. Vaughan then moved across the street to new premises built by Mr. Dowling, and opened a nice new chemist's shop.

Mr. Roy Deas took over the old shop as a radio distributing centre, and he built his new radio and furniture shop next door.

The old small shop was then converted into a hairdressing salon by Mr. A. A. Baker, and he remained there as the local barber until he moved out when they began to demolish the old place.

Mr. Ron Hull sold the residence and shops to Messrs. McLean & Coad, who, in turn, sold to Wright Bros.

On 1st November, 1954, the shops and residence were sold to G. & J. Eggins who have carried on a flourishing newsagency and general business ever since.

Today the old shop and residence has been demolished, and the mahogany boards stacked for further use.

The contractors have taken over and the site is a hive of industry.

Discussing further plans with G. & J. Eggins, I was laughingly told "The new shop will be a monument to the Eggins as they will die paying for it!" However, that is not our idea, and we hope to keep you posted with further details for the record.

THE LATE MRS. WHITBREAD

## HER GRANDFATHER GAVE LAURIETON ITS NAME

The death of Mrs. Marie Josephine Whitbread, on December 28th, 1962, recalls the early days of Laurieton, for that progressive seaside village was named after her grandfather — the late Joseph Laurie.

The late Mrs. Whitbread was born at Laurieton on 28th October, 1886, and was the daughter of the late Mr. and Mrs. Robert Kelly, of Lorne.

The late Mr. Joseph Laurie began sawmilling at Laurieton in the early part of last century.

He made a trip to England, taking with him samples of local hardwoods and induced such interest that on his return he became the first exporter of Australian hardwood to England.

The late Mr. Laurie held extensive land interests on the Camden Haven and Manning River areas; also at Gloucester.

Some of these holdings are still with his descendants.

The late Mrs. Whitbread grew up in the Camden Haven district, and at Taree on May 15, 1906, she married the late Clement George Whitbread.

After a few years in Taree, they moved to the Bulga in 1916, and were amongst the earliest of the settlers in that area.

In 1940, they moved to Port Macquarie and settled

at Shelley Beach, where the late Mrs. Whitbread won renown for her lovely flower garden.

Here she made a very wide circle of friends and was affectionately known as "Gran" to a great many people.

Always of very cheerful disposition, the late Mrs. Whitbread accepted the ill-health which was her lot during the last few years of her life; she passed away after a period of eight weeks in the Hastings District Hospital.

Of their large family of nine, the eldest daughter Edna passed away at the early age of 12 years, and she is survived by her other four sons and four daughters.

There are 25 grandchildren, and 12 great grandchildren.

In her family, the late Mrs. Whitbread had three sisters and four brothers, and only one brother Mr. Russell Kelly, of North Haven survives.

The interment was made at Port Macquarie on December 29th, Rev. Bruce Napper conducting the service.

12th August 1987

# Courier Focus . . .

## A LUCKY LIFESTYLE AFTER WAR-TORN HOLLAND

In December 1952 Mary Opdam, husband Henk, and their seven children aged from 1 to 11 years old, stepped off the old steam train at Kendall, bound for Laurieton and the start of a new life in their adopted country, Australia.

The Opdams were part of Australia's initial Immigration scheme and, like several other Dutch families, chose the Camden Haven area to carve out a new lifestyle for themselves and their family.

Greeting the train at Kendall was Sonter's bus, driven by Mrs Thel Sonter, containing 20 other 'Dutchies', both family and friends of the new arrivals who gave them a rousing, enthusiastic welcome.

During a rare quiet moment on the 35 minute trip from Kendall to North Haven, Mary considered the seemingly endless miles of bush, bush and more bush outside the bus window and the badly potholed state of this main road into Laurieton and fleetingly considered that perhaps the whole move had been ill advised.

Her thoughts returned to her native Holland and the atrocious events of the Second World War which had prompted their decision to make Australia their new home . . .

During the German occupation of Holland in 1940 most towns, including Mary's own town

were positioned at blocks over the many surrounding rivers which formed boundaries separating neighbouring villages.

All men in the country between the ages of seventeen and forty were picked up by German patrols and taken to work as forced labour on German prisoner of war projects.

All Dutch Jews and other Jews who had fled from Germany were captured and held together at local schools, with only a mattress for comfort in near freezing conditions, before being sent to concentration camps.

It was during one such capture Mary very nearly became a war casualty. She was simply watching a group of Jews being escorted down the road whilst on her way to collect her coupon rations.

A German soldier pointed a pistol at her and told her to follow the group, with another soldier close behind.

Knowing the layout of the town, Mary slowed her pace and on reaching a narrow alleyway, quickly turned and fled for her life. The memory still haunts her

thousand Jews were taken from Holland during the war years, 100,000 of them didn't come back.

Mary and a girlfriend became inseparable during those fearful times.

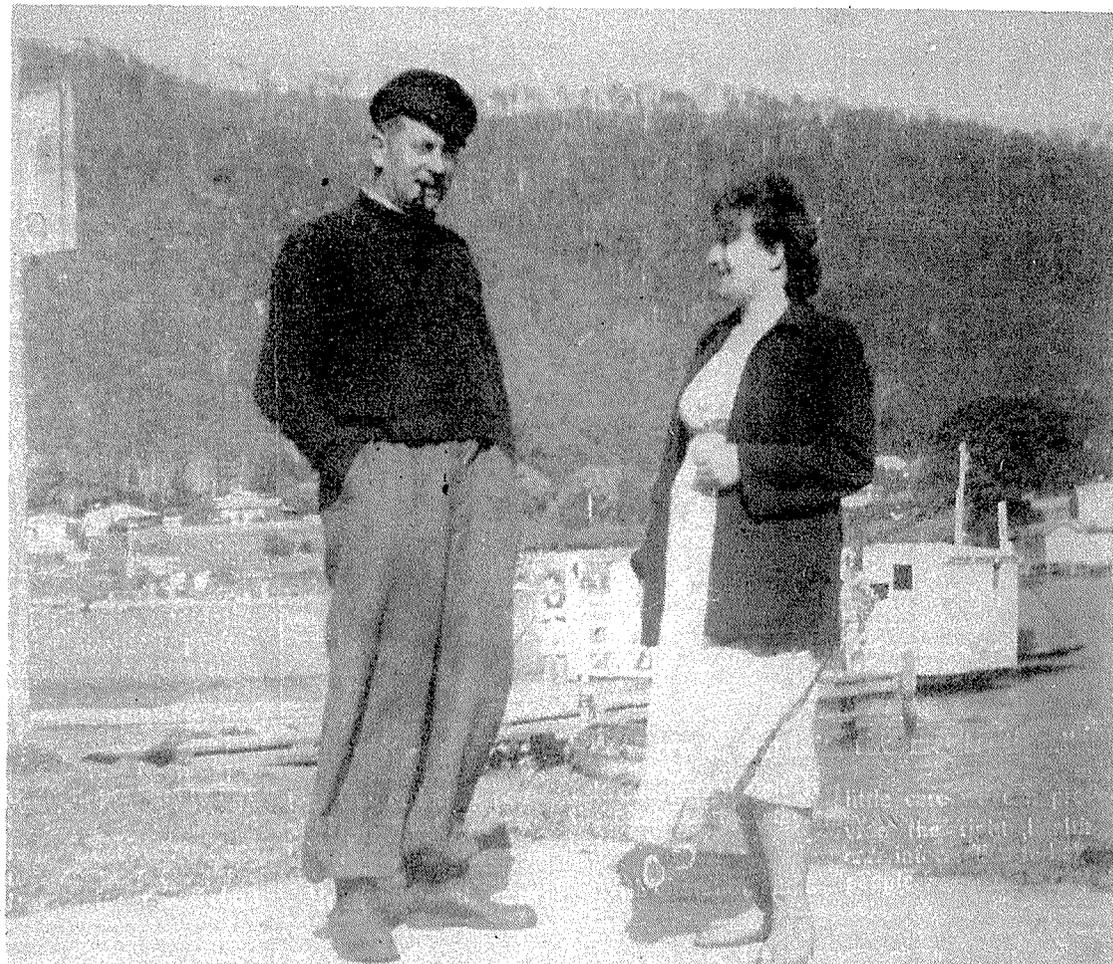
There was no gas, electricity or transport and food was rationed by a coupon system, which permitted an allocation of only 1,000 calories per day.

Mary and her friend became expert at cutting wood with a blunt saw and axe to help warm the family home. Wood was in short supply and the backyard tree only had a limited life.

They resorted to scavenging used coals cast aside by the Germans from the steam engines which transported their soldiers overland. It provided some warmth, and with two young children it was indeed necessary.

Mary's girlfriend was even more cautious when it came to avoiding the soldiers. Her husband had gone underground at the time of the German occupation and remained hidden for the entire length of the war.

Mary recalls the time when a fellow member of the underground shot a



Henk and Mary Opdam as locals knew them pictured in front of the old Dunbogan punt.

"He and ten other people were dragged out and shot in the market and all homes in the block in which he lived, which was next to ours, were burnt to the ground."

It is with much sadness that Mary also relates the story of her girlfriend's husband.

"After surviving the war years and much hardship underground, he was killed at the beach by a mine while getting some kids out of a bunker in 1945.

death and deprivation it became a part of our lives," she continued.

With her strong Christian faith, Mary survived the hardships. Her third baby was born in this period in the middle of the night and delivered by midwife amongst Christmas candles for lighting. Her girlfriend found some oil and this was poured sparingly on some water with a home-made wick to provide ten minutes of lighting nightly for feeds.

ration was down to 450 calories per day, and Mary and her family used animal fodder and sugar-beet to supplement this meagre hand-out.

To keep up Mary's strength after the birth of her child, husband Henk, on his return, slaughtered a dog for food.

The war years claimed 285,000 Dutch people's lives. Fifteen thousand of them died from starvation.

Relief eventually came in the form of Red Cross

aid from Sweden. Pea soup was delivered to the starving thousands. However, this proved too rich for their deprived condition and many more deaths occurred.

Army biscuits were then delivered to feed the starving and wean them back onto proper and nutritious foods.

The story of Mary Opdam's life in Australia continues in next week's Courier.

# A fascinating look at early life in a small village

Lakewood woman Essie Hughes was born in Laurieton in 1928. She grew up on her parents' property which is now known as Deauville. Her father, Sep Gulliver, hauled logs off North Brother Mountain via bullock teams to the mills at Laurieton. Her mother, Ethel, was one of the pioneering Startin family. After attending Laurieton Primary and Taree High School, the Gulliver family moved to Tamworth in 1941, and from there to Sydney in 1950. In Sydney Essie married and had three sons, Tony, John and David. She returned to Laurieton in 1971 for four years before moving back to Sydney. In 1979 she again returned to Laurieton and has remained here since. Her early years in Laurieton were happy ones and the opportunity to talk to and write a history of Laurieton through the eyes of one of the early families has given her immense pleasure. "Sam Buckman Remembers" is a look at early life in this small fishing village and its subsequent growth.

If you look down the main street of Laurieton today you will see a long bitumened road, kerbed and guttered. Dozens of parked cars form a

continuous line on either side, and behind them are rows of shops that sell almost everything necessary for today's modern style of living.

Can you imagine a time when this was just a gravelled, tree-lined street, with seldom a car in sight? Sam Buckman can remember

when this was so.

On January 7, 1919, Sam was born at Lord Street, Laurieton in a house that has since been pulled down. Ex-

cept for time spent in the army during the last war, he has lived in Laurieton all his life.

His parents, William and Eliza Buckman, had eight children, two of whom were stillborn. In order of ages, the children were Jack, Bob, Syd, Sam, daughter Laurie and Noel. On Sam's fifth birthday his ten-year-old brother, Bob, drowned in Googleys Lake.

After that tragedy Sam's father and his uncle, George Buckman, taught the remaining children to swim at the old baths that were situated south of the present

Dunbogan bridge, on the western bank of the Camden Haven River. Uncle George was a champion underwater swimmer, but said he found it difficult to swim on top of the water.

Sam's father William married Eliza, daughter of William (Billy) Porter and his wife Ellen (nee Park). Eliza was born at Caboolture, near Brisbane.

Billy Porter worked as a foreman for the Public Works Department and helped to oversee the building of the breakwater at the entrance to the Camden Haven River at Laurieton. In-

itially, he was in charge of the job of preparing the quarry on the mountain behind Laurieton. The land had to be levelled and the surface cleaned off ready for quarrying the stone. This quarry was operated by Griff Edwards and de Fraine.

Work on the breakwall began in 1900 and the steam engines and equipment were located in Laurieton.

A steam winch and steam engines were taken up to the quarry by horse teams. The winch was eventually taken to the Herons Creek mill when no longer needed at

Cont. P38

Historical Anecdotes & Miscellany

15th May 1986

## NEW LIBRARY BUILDINGS

Laurieton Branch Library  
Robyn Hardman  
Chief Librarian  
Hastings Municipal Council

Laurieton is a growing town at the southern end of Hastings Municipality on the Mid-North Coast of N.S.W.

Camden Haven has a population of 4,385, 45% of whom are 60+ years. Laurieton is the centre of this community. From 1980, when amalgamation of the Shire of Hastings and Municipality of Port Macquarie occurred, the Library at Laurieton grew at an incredible rate.

The Library was housed in the old School of Arts building in one room – then two and three – but as the building has a heritage conservation order very little structural alteration could be made.

The new Library was commenced in June 1991 and completed in October 1991. It was a relatively hassle free project with excellent working relations with enthusiastic architects and local tradesmen. Even the weather was favourable with no delays caused by rain.

The building has been designed to blend into its historic surroundings, nestling as it does at the foot of North Brother Mountain and neighbored by the School of Arts (1911) and the Anglican Church (1899). The new Library has an Australian heritage appearance with a large bull-nosed verandah and a complementary colour scheme throughout.

The circulation desk is a feature, designed for smooth traffic flow and allows much of the work of a busy branch to be performed there. Staff also have sight of every section of the library building from this desk.

Within one week of opening several design faults were evident. As a result the young adults collection is now in the A.V. room and the large print collection takes up entirely what was the young adult room. Lack of storage was also a problem, especially for the council office who did not allow for any at all! The staff room was full of garbage bins, compost bins, signs and vials of immunization serum.

The move was completed with a minimum of disruption and a lot of hard work by the staff. The Library was only closed for two days for the stocking of shelves. For twelve months we had been stockpiling new books and these had to be shelved after delivery from the many storage depots around the Municipality. As none of the stored books were in any sort of order the whole shelving procedure was a major undertaking. About half of the existing collection was weeded as it was very old, musty and in poor condition.

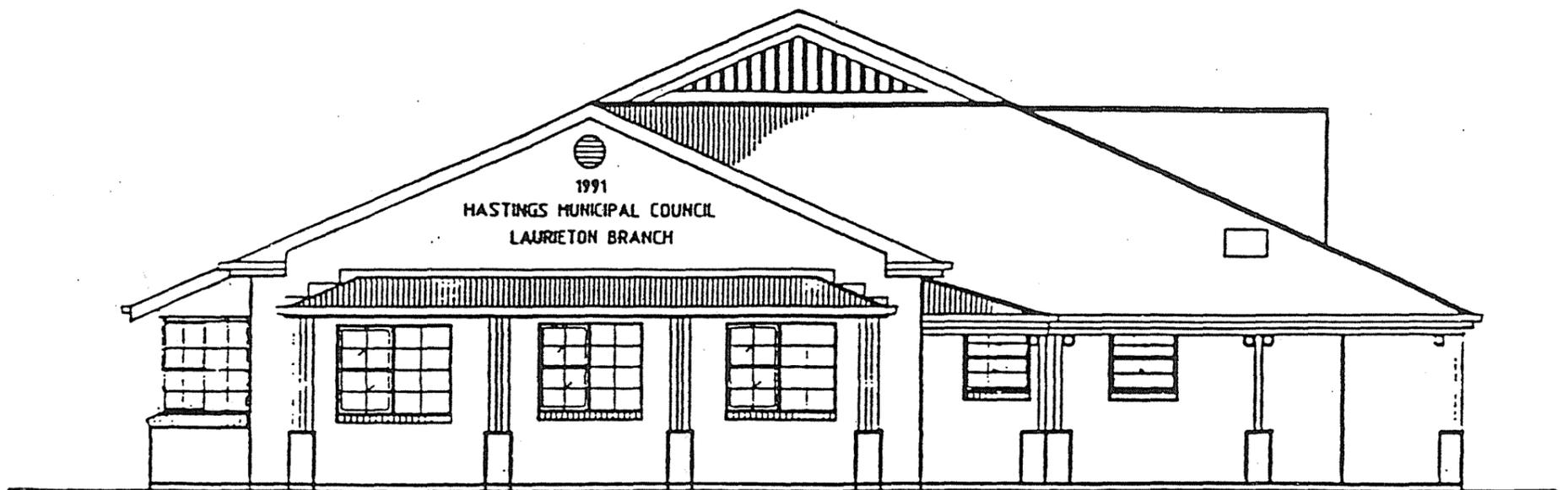
The Library is open from 9.30am – 5pm Monday to Friday and 9.00am – 12 noon on Saturday. There are two full time staff and occasional casuals. They issue 12,000 items per month.

Considering there used to be one stool for staff, one chair for the public and no toilet facilities for anybody, anything would have been an improvement. Customers and staff have been full of praise for the Library and the comfortable conditions now provided.

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### HASTINGS MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

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### LAURIETON BRANCH LIBRARY

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The "Courier" in a recent issue asked for information re the early days in Camden Haven, and the following details have been sent in by Mr. and Mrs. A. Jackson and Mr. and Mrs. W. S. McGilvray, of Laurieton. The information deals with early ships and shipping on the Camden Haven River, together with the names of sailing vessels and steamers which traded to and from the river.

There were at least six saw mills working at the time these vessels put in and out to sea, and timber, fish and oysters and general cargo was shipped to Sydney.

There was no railway to carry goods, therefore the ships on their return trip brought back freight and all classes of general cargo.

Often, when bad weather held up shipping and they could not cross the bar on account of the rough seas, the cargo of fish would have to be dumped and fresh supplies taken aboard.

Two tug boats were on the river, and these were used to tow the ships over the bar. They were the tug "Old Unique" and "The new Unique".

Captain Nissen was a well known captain and colourful personality on "Tug Unique", and will be remembered by many old identities of Camden Haven.

Then there was the well known "Tug King Fisher", and this small busy tug towed the quarry punts up and down the Camden Haven during the building of the North and South Wall near the entrance.

The quarry punts carried all the ballast and stone etc. for the construction of the North and South Wall, which is a grand feature and great fishing wall each side of the river.

It is hoped some day in the near future to extend these two walls. They are a great attraction to visitors to both North Haven, Dunbogan and Laurieton.

It is reported that the ship "Alma Doepel" was a beautiful 3-masted sailing vessel, with very high masts. She had a handsome figurehead, the beautifully carved head of a woman.

The "Amelia White" met her fate and was wrecked crossing the bar, and a similar fate befell the "Prince of Wales".

The "Idant" was wrecked in the river near Klondyke and is used to the day as a marker for the favourite flathead fishing grounds.

"Our Elsie" was built by Mr. Alf Settree just down by the Fish Co-op.

"The Jap" was later converted into a steamer and it traded up the river to Kendall.

Well known captains on the river at one time were:—

Captain Tanglon of "The Bellingier"; Captain Richard Lucy of "Comboyne"; Captain Benson of "The Jap"; Captain Rasmussen of "Tuncurry"; Captain Pugh of "The Myll".

Other ships and vessels which traded and were well known in the early days on the river were:

"Mary Laurie", "Alice May", "Dolly Walmsley", "Edith May", "Ettie", "Rock Lily", "Amelia White", "Hennie-De-Fraime", "Isabella-De-Fraime", "Tuggerah", "Violet Doepel", "Nella", "Lizzie Taylor", "Eleda". Also there were Candidate, Galgabba, Lady Smith, Phil Forbes, Hilda, Sa Haywood, Myall, Wave, Zingara, Australia, Defender, Alfred Fenning, Jap, Bellingier, Ellerslie, Wootton, Comboyne, Wandara, Allenwood, Our Jack, Idant, Our Elsie, Tuncurry, Boambee, Myll, Bergalia, Bermagui, Euroka, Ben Bolt, Express and Billie Barlow.

# Early History of Laurieton

To lift the cloud of uncertainty surrounding Laurieton's early history we delved into enquiries here and there and from an old identity unearthed the following notes which we pass on to readers as they were given.

When we remember that Laurieton is built at the foot of a mountain that was discovered and named by Captain James Cook on the 12th May, 1770, it is fitting to supply some of the history of how a town came to grow here on the banks of the Camden Haven river—its early settlers and their strivings.

Beginning with Captain Nissen's stay in Laurieton, the notes refer to early shipping in this chapter and are as follows:

Captain William Nissen was of Danish nationality until he came on the coast of New South Wales around the 1880's to 1890. He appeared in sail in small 60 Milers in the Timber Trade to the Manning River as Master of such small ketches as the Ellen, Maggie, Eleanor, who traded to the Sawmill at Lansdowne bringing cargo of foodstuffs etc. and ballast of sandstone, then manually loading each stick of timber into the hold, for the return to Sydney.

When loaded, often these small coasters were warped down stream on the tide until the tug boat took them over the bar to favourable winds.

Captain William Nissen was then married and often visited the home of the Savilles, who were No. 1 Selectors in the Lansdowne area, the friendship formed was remembered even long afterwards when the Nissen family settled at Laurieton, when the Captain took over the tug boat S.S. Unique, about 70 tons register, owned by the firm of George de Fraine & Sons, was painted green with a black funnel.

George de Fraine & Sons then owned the Hotel (licensee John Convery), Store Butchery (about opposite the Post Office) managed by one, Jon Saudeman. The Bakery was somewhere near the Newsagency and I believe still stands. The Sawmill was near to where the Co-operative Fishery Works is now situated, in fact just east of the site, because on the site of the offices of the Association, a ship was mostly in the course of building. About the time about which I write, one, the Cobar, was being built for a Gentleman's Yacht (Longworth of Cobar Mine fame), and it is worth noting that this fine ship built exclusively of Camden Haven timbers is still registered in service, has been sold 2 years past out of the Ferry Service on Wellington, N.Z. Harbour.

Just east of the Sawmill was a retaining wall of sandstone (ships ballast) on which was set a boiler that had exploded out of the mill, and near this was the wharf where the S.S. Unique tied up, it being her home station. Capt. William Nissen, Engineer George Seaman, Fireman Arthur Griffiths. Her mission was the towage of vessels in and out of the Port.

Those times, Capt. John Leonard was the Harbour Master and was in constant touch by telephone with his son-in-law, Alexander Thompson, who was for many years Postmaster and actively associated with town progress and activity.

Two steamers traded to Laurieton those days, S.S. "Kincumber," owned by de Fraines and S.S. "Bellinger," owned by Allen Taylor & Co., many small ketches, two fore and aft rigged, owned by Taylors interests, some owned by the Atkins and Dopell families were regular callers for timber.

This period comes to the turn of the century, when the Sir John See interests clashed with Taylors and Camden Haven saw the coming of the Red Funnels in the Paddle Wheeler Euroka and others, but in agreement retired from here to leave the field to Allen Taylor interests as about this time the de Fraine interests were sold to Taylors and the S.S. Unique was wrecked, replaced with another painted white with the funnel of Taylors colours. She had a wonderful siren to which Capt. "Bill" could give vent, especially on Picnic Day when the tug boat crew took all and sundry to the Heads for the annual School picnic.

We marched from School to the Government Wharf near the ferry and boarded the tug, which when ready to go, Capt. Bill let go these mighty blasts on the siren and after passing Dunbogan, we passed over to where North Haven is now (then only the Longs and Winterbottoms) then a right turn towards the east through where the training wall now is (Klondyke then was a bed of pipeclay with a dredge and gear to cut a channel through it). The tug, well loaded with families and gorgeous bunting flying, passed across the bay that exists east of the wall near Gogleys to the near neck of land that joins the headland to the mainland, skirting the shore to a wharf that then was situated inside the bay west and south from the Pilot-mens two houses.

The main Pilot boatshed was on the beach near where the signal station now is and the channel through which ships sailed was round the Headland on which the two boatmens houses stand, the bar being off the point north from the Signal station, but south east of the present bar. The whole pattern of Camden Haven altered when the two parallel walls were built and a gap was cut through Klondyke to straighten up the river to give more run of water to wash out the Bar.

Well, after watching the "Unique" sound the bar at the tide and the day's sports all were rounded up by that siren and taken home to Laurieton and when landed on the wharf, we would sing "For they are jolly good fellows" and three cheers for Captain Nissen and his crew. They were jolly good fellows, too, they took us year after year for our annual school picnic.

Captain William Nissen always dressed as a Mariner Captain, with his black dog "Carlo" resided somewhere behind the Store in front of the Hotel. George Seaman, Engineer (22 stone), near the Bakery Newsagency (he rocked the boat when he stepped aboard). Arthur Griffith (Fireman Deckhand) resided where the Fishermen's Co-operative Office now stands.

Many times I went over the bar in both "Uniques" with the crew mentioned and later when Richard "Dick" Bibby replaced Arthur Griffith, the art of slicing and cleaning a fire was imparted to me by that son of GRANNY Bibby, of Scotch name and fame. She produced fine Scotch oatcakes. I used to carry in the fire (stove wood) and was always rewarded with a cake.

The last trip that I went supercargo on the "Unique" was to lay out salvage gear at Urunga, the occasion being that two of Allan Taylors steamers were aground there. S.S. "Ellerslie" across the wall with her back broken (Commander Captain Triburg) (Fighting Mick) and the other the s.s. "Uralla" (Capt. R. Hunt) which we towed out of the Bellinger River and headed south at 7 in the evening. At about 9 a howling easterly sprang up with tall seas and the "Uralla" was throwing the deck cargo overboard with water over the main deck and the "Unique" was to stand by to tow her into the Macleay River. That being impractical, tug and "Uralla" headed for Camden Haven, reached about noon next day. The sea very rough and big rollers were flattened a bit by heavy torrential rain, a line had to be got to the Uralla well down in the water. Captain Nissen had been brought from his sick bed for this trip and he had to manoeuvre his ship close to the waterlogged Uralla in heavy seas. (I was practically holding up the Captain in the wheelhouse) but he took the bar with the result her nose went down and the water ran forward and there she stuck, but the old Unique held on and with a few extra pounds of steam (produced quick smart) by Dick Bibby, was eventually pulled over the bar in fresh water running out on top of the tide (muddied the ocean over the whole of the Bight). The Uralla was beached on the



BAKER'S CARTS ... OR COFFINS

# *Pioneer builders were men with many skills*

by  
RAY COOPER

In the early days of settlement, men had to be skilled in several different crafts. Many of these were self-taught skills, some brought out from England, Ireland and Scotland and continued in their new land.

The baker's cart referred to in a previous article was built by a very experienced craftsman living in Laurieton. He was Sam Evans.

He made all his own coffins, being an expert carpenter. Due to the lack of customers, Sam had to diversify into other trades. He built most of the bullock drays or bullock wagons for the local trade. He was also the local wheelwright, making all the wheels for these wagons.

He did the coach work on the baker's cart but the hubs were forged by the Longworth's blacksmith, Walter Kesby. The wheels were mounted on timken bearings and axle-machined by Arthur Gibson.

The fellies were made of flooded gum, which was considered to be the best timber for the purpose. It did not shrink as much as other timber that was stronger but shrunk too much and allowed the iron tyres to come loose. The hubs into which the forged iron hubs were inserted were made of iron bark. This timber was often thrown into a loft for 12 months, or put into a stream of water for the same period to weather and season. The best timber for sulky fellies was American hickory. Spokes were made of flooded gum.

Usually a wainwright would build the wagons, as this was his trade, but Laurieton was too small a settlement to support this trade, therefore it fell to Sam Evans to build these wagons.

Sam also built the Laurieton School of Arts, Laurieton Post Office, Kendall Post Office as well as a number of the early houses and shops in Laurieton.

When Robert Longworth commenced his timber tramway operation, he called on Sam Evans to build

his timber wagons for the railway, but due to inexperience these failed and it was back to the drawing boards until, finally, Sam came up with the right design. His wagons ran for many years on the tramline.

Robert Longworth later installed a "log hauler" at the end of his timber tramline at his property, "Cataract", near Lorne. He called on Sam to build him a timber overhead water tank to supply water to the boiler attached to the log hauler. It was built of planks similar to the planking on a timber ship and was caulked with hemp and sealed with pitch. It remained in use for years, very seldom leaking and was considered a masterpiece by the locals.

He was often called upon to repair the boxes that contained blocks of ice packed in sawdust sent from Sydney, to be used to return the fish caught in the Camden Haven. Some of these "ice boxes" got knocked about in being transported from Sydney in rough conditions on the small coastal ships.

## BLACKSMITH KESBY

Another of the early identities of Laurieton was Walter Kesby. He was employed by the Longworth brothers, Robert and John as their blacksmith.

He was used in the repairs to the sawmills owned by the firm. When Robert Longworth decided to build his railway (timber tramway) from Kendall to Lorne to supply his mills with the raw material, he was well placed with skilled tradesmen to build the various parts.

Walter was given the job of forging the thousands of "Ubank" spikes, (straight pieces of half-inch steel) used to secure the timber rails to the wooden sleepers of the tramway.

He had to make up the ironwork for the log wagons. (Iron was preferred to steel as it was considerably cheaper and less liable to rust). Walter was to later hand-manufacture the thousands of dog spikes used to secure the steel rails on to the sleepers as the timber rails replaced the wooden railway lines.

## "FARDIE" GIBSON

Arthur "Fardie" Gibson was the son of Harry Gibson, who had built the Dun and Bagan mill and was well-known as a good engineer in the Camden Haven.

"Fardie" had left the Camden Haven to further his education. He learnt his trade with the Budge Engineering Company in Sydney. He later obtained a marine engineer's ticket and was very experienced in refrigeration.

Robert Longworth enticed him to return to the Camden Haven, with the wage of £2.10 per week to convert several log punts to paddle-wheel droghers.

After completion of these conversions, his experience in refrigeration was put to good use in constructing the ice works for Longworth's. This was a great breakthrough in the transport of fish and other perishables for the Sydney market. As mentioned above, prior to this, all perishables were shipped in ice which had been packed in sawdust and conveyed from Sydney by the coastal ship.

Wheels for the tramline wagons had been imported, but the axles for the wagons were turned up on a lathe by "Fardie". This lathe is still located at the rear of Gibson's Engineering at Kendall.

Mannie Gibson, son of "Fardie", was to continue in the family tradition of engineering, especially in the construction of timber mills. The firm exported sawmills to Fiji as well as many other locations in Australia.

It has been a great industry for the Camden Haven, one which has been interwoven with the development of the district. The employment generated by the Gibson family over the years has been greatly appreciated by the people of the Camden Haven. The generous attitude to their workers by the three generations of the Gibson family, Harry, Arthur, "Fardie", and Mannie, has been that of a great pioneering family.

# 'Granny' Bucton . . . a true Florence Nightingale

Nurse Mary Bucton, known as "Granny" by most of the Camden Haven District people, was born at Dingo Creek near Wingham.

She was the daughter of Henry Hope and Ann Smith, one of the oldest, respected, and well known early settlers in the district.

The Henry Hope/Smith family was a big family, being sixteen all told — eight boys and eight girls — all of whom grew up in the Camden Haven district, married and settled there.

Mary Bucton came to the Camden Haven from Wingham with her parents when she was eight-years-old as they had selected land for a homestead about two miles from where Kendall now stands.

In those days it was all bush and they made their tracks themselves.

The Smith family came from Wingham, in bullock cart, in the 1870's. The first night they arrived there was nothing but bush, so the parents made a bed, under the dray, on the ground for the children to sleep for the night.

There were then seven children in the family.

The next day the father and a friend who travelled with them from Wingham, cut some bark from trees nearby and made a rough shack until they could build a better one.

Mary Hope married Jim Jim Bucton on May 13, 1880, at Kendall at the old Smith homestead.

For their wedding breakfast he rode a horse to Cundletown and with the help of a pack-horse, brought back, with other things, 24

loaves of bread so they would not have to bake bread for the wedding.

In those days, everyone had to bake their own bread and Cundletown was the nearest bakehouse.

There were a few more families settled in the district, and everyone was invited, — a wedding was a big event.

Jim Bucton had selected some land for a

doctor and very little conveniences of any kind.

It must be remembered there was no electricity or cars in those days. There were only bush tracks, so you either had to walk or ride a horse.

Many a time she had to swim her horse through a flood to save a mother and bring a baby into the world.

In the early 20's she found she could not get

hospital.

By that time she had become a registered nurse and with the help of her daughters, she could look after the women better at her own home. Also in those days, people had very little money and could not afford to go from their families.

Because of this, she often had some of the youngest children to look after, as well as the mother, till after the baby was born at the hospital.

Nurse Mary Bucton had a big family of her own — eleven in all.

But that did not stop her from helping others. She was a wonderful person and a good friend to everyone.

It made no difference what color the skin, or their creed. If they wanted help, in any way, she would be there.

When she died on August 10, 1946, at the age of 82 years, her funeral was the largest in the district to that time.

The church sermon at the service was on the story of the Good Samaritan, which was very fitting for a wonderful woman who had only one day's schooling in her life.

The Bucton name is famous throughout the Camden Haven district. This is the story of the person who made it famous — Nurse Mary "Granny" Bucton. It was compiled by her daughter, Mrs. Ella Davis, of Kendall.

homestead where Bucton's Bridge now stands, and that is where they made their home.

As there was no doctor for miles in those days — the nearest doctor being at Taree or Port Macquarie — the old settlers had to help one another.

That's how Mary became a midwife, as they were called in those days, and many a woman and baby owed their lives to the wonderful woman. She brought many babies into the world without

away from her home for long periods as her husband became very ill with heart trouble. So she registered her own home as a maternity

# LAURIETON — NORTH HAVEN

## Laurieton and its flourishing timber industry

Laurieton, North Haven and the surrounding Camden Haven district is stepped in history, especially in the timber industry.

In the Port Macquarie News on October 1, 1973 an article was published which appeared in the Mail in June 8, 1903.

It was about Laurieton's flourishing timber industry.

To co-incide with this historical feature

The Express has re-printed this article for readers.

A thriving part of the north coast

About 30 years ago three brothers, Joseph, Andrew and Alexander Laurie came to the Camden Haven district and erected the first timber mill at a place they named Laurieton, which was at the time a thickly-wooded country, without a habitation for miles round.

They found that the quality of timber was second to none on the

northern coast and despite the scarcity of suitable vessels to carry the sawn product, these pioneers did a good trade, and were followed two years afterwards by Mr John Hibbard, who built a mill at Camden Haven Heads, but who, owing to the trouble experi-

enced in getting teams to draw logs, removed his plant to the Hastings River, where he is still known and respected as a shipowner and sawmiller.

Mr John Rodger was the next to try his fortune by building at Laurieton the Newholm Mill which was destroyed by fire between six and seven years ago. It was rebuilt and with the Laurieton mill is still in full working order.

Later on Messrs. Shipman and Fitzmaurice erected a mill at Kendall, at the head of the Camden Haven River (this mill is now running in the interest of Mr E B Perrett) and Messrs. Dun and Bagan erected what is now called the Dun Bagan mill on land selected on the opposite shore from Laurieton by Robert Dun. This mill is now running in the interest of Mr George De Fraine.

About eight years since the Australia Timber Company was formed, and erected a large mill at Kew.

This was afterwards purchased from the official liquidator by Messrs Longworth and Co. and removed to Laurieton adjoining another and smaller mill which that firm had erected a year or two previously. These two mills are directly opposite Laurieton on the other bank of the river.

Sixteen years ago Captain George De Fraine started to trade to Camden haven with his small ketch the Ethel B T and carried the output of the Dun-Bagan mill.

High charges for towing on the river induced him to purchase the steam tug Unique, action which caused the reduction of the charges from six pounds to four pounds per vessel.

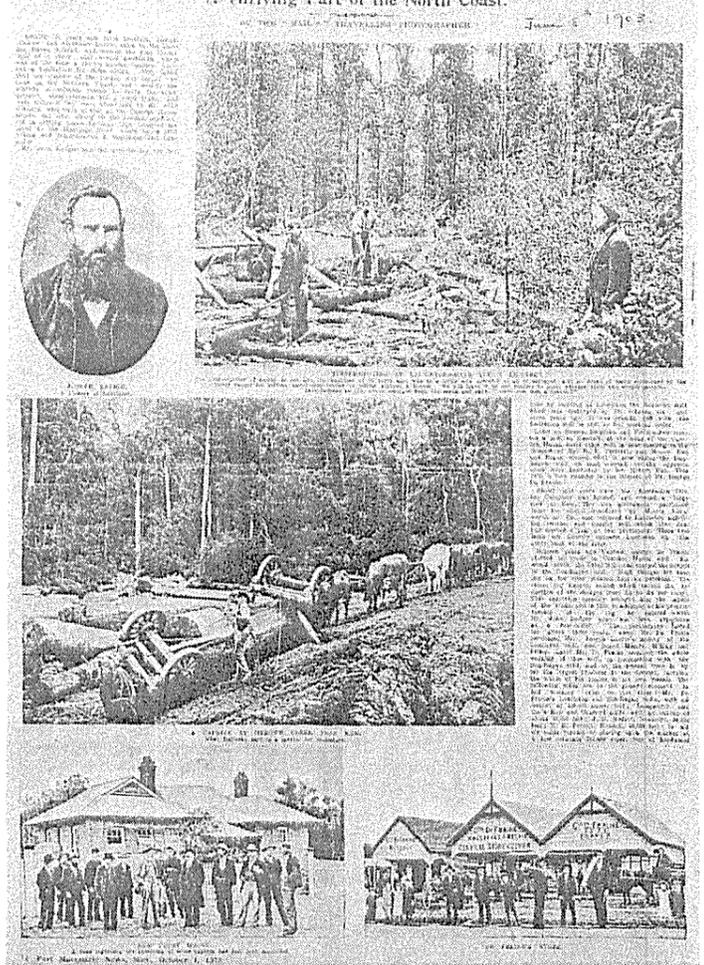
This reduction speedily brought him the whole of the trade and in 1893, in addition to his proprietorship of the tug he entered with Mr John Rodger, upon his first experience as a saw miller.

The partnership lasted for about three years, when Mr De Fraine purchased Mr Joseph Laurie's moiety of the Laurieton mill and joined Messrs. M'Kay and Bibby.

Later Mr De Fraine acquired the whole of the working of this mill in conjunction with the Dun-Bagan Mill and at the present time is by far the largest producer in the district, carrying the whole of his timber in his own vessel.

The following mills are at the present moment in full working order on this river:-Mr De Fraine's Laurieton and Dun-Bagan Mills; Longworth and Cos.

### LAURIETON AND ITS FLOURISHING TIMBER INDUSTRY.



A copy of the article which appeared in The Mail on June 8, 1903.

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Camden Haven Courier 24th June 1967

LAURIETON...

# Side-Lights Of History

(By G. Clinch and Gordon Dennes, Research Scholars)

In July, 1875, the residents of a portion of the Camden Haven district, called Peach Orchard, sent a petition to the postmaster General asking that a post office be established there. They pointed out that there were over 50 adult male inhabitants within a radius of two miles and that there were two large sawmills in course of erection.

At the time they had to travel about 7 miles to Camden Haven Post Office, which they complained was not centrally situated and entirely off the road, being surveyed between Cundletown and Port Macquarie.

The petition was signed by Joseph Laurie, junior. In a postscript he suggested that if a small punt could be placed at Peach Orchard, it would become the mail route from Cundletown to Port Macquarie, and stated that the telegraph line already went that way.

The Postmaster General J. F. Burns, approved of the new office being opened at Peach Orchard, "which place can be called Laurieton."

Joseph Laurie, who was a timber merchant was appointed postmaster on a salary of £12 per annum, plus a commission on the sale of postage stamps. His sureties were Andrew Laurie and Alex Laurie, both from the Gloucester district.

A tender was accepted from Frank Marrin, of Camden Haven to carry the mails between Camden Haven and Laurieton twice a week.

Laurie left Laurieton for the Nambucca and was succeeded by Robert Kelly on 16th November, 1878.

About 1879, Laurie returned to Laurieton and again took charge of the post office on 7th July, 1879. His sureties were Kelly and Francis Longworth.

In July, 1880, a deputation saw the Postmaster General and asked that the telegraph line, which passed by a house which Joseph Laurie was prepared to make available as premises for a telegraph office, should be led into Laurieton.

The telegraph office was opened on trial on 24th January, 1881, in charge of Leslie Butler, a junior operator. After six months Butler applied for a transfer, stating that he had practically nothing to do.

**The revenue for six months was only £10.10.6 so the office was closed on 10th October, 1881.**

Representations were made to the Postmaster General and it was re-opened on 22nd June, 1882, in charge of Chas. Champion.

Joseph Laurie had resigned as postmaster as from the 1st December, 1881, and John S. Robinson, the public school teacher at Laurie-

ton, then took charge of the post office also.

When Robinson was moved to the telegraph office and Champion took charge of each as from 11th May, 1883. It is thought that the premises were still rented from Joseph Laurie, free of charge.

By 1884, the Laurieton office was still being run at a considerable loss. The whole annual revenue was only about £90, not sufficient to pay the salary.

It was decided to close the telegraph section of it, but again political influence saved the day.

The premises were reported in October, 1884, as being in a deplorable state. There were cracks one and two inches wide in the timber, and the limewash on the interior was constantly falling.

**One of the duties of Champion was to climb up a high tree and disengage and later re-adjust the wires, whenever a vessel passed up the river.**

On the 10th January, 1885, Alex Thompson succeeded Champion as officer in charge.

Money order facilities were granted on 2nd May, 1887. About 1889 a probationary operator was appointed to the office on a remuneration of 2s.6d. per week. In May, 1892, he was still only receiving this amount, and this fact being brought under notice, was granted an extra 15s. per week.

About 1884, Joseph Laurie had erected shingles-roofed premises for the Department, consisting of 2 rooms — one as an office and the other as living quarters. This building, erected by Mr. Laurie was on government ground. He provided it free of cost, and rent free to the Department. This he did because he provided 75 per cent of the telegraph revenue, which was so small that the office would have been closed otherwise, and so handicap Laurie's timber business.

In 1890, a four-roomed weatherboard cottage was erected by the Department at a cost of £131.3.10, as a residence for the postmaster, on a site specially dedicated by the Lands Department.

The building donated by Mr. Laurie was moved to this site and placed 6 feet from the cottage adjoining

which a kitchen with covered way was erected in 1891 at a cost of £29.12.0.

Late in 1897, J. and R. Longworth carried out alterations to the building. An additional room to be used as an office was provided, and the old chimney — part brick and part wood was replaced by a full brick one. The old office erected by Joseph Laurie was given to him for removal.

The new office was occupied in January 1898. Thomson was still postmaster in 1910.

So all the early history of Laurieton that is available at present on this subject in particular and has been set down and presented to readers.

## ADDENDA

### Telephone:

The telephone system came to N.S.W. in the early 1880's, but it was some years before the country districts obtained the benefit of this service.

One of the earliest records of the telephone in this district was recorded in 1890, when a telephone was provided at Camden Haven Heads. The following year, on 20th June, a telephone was installed at Camden Haven. In 1914, it was reported that a telephone was installed at Camden Haven Heads, "on a continuation of the Taree-Port Macquarie - Moorlands telephone line." It would appear that the first telephone exchange at Laurieton was established early in 1920. However the first entry for Laurieton in the telephone directory appeared in the April, 1920 publication, as follows:

Laurieton  
9 to 6  
Public Telephone-Port  
Office

Longworths' (Laurieton Ltd) .....5

In the 1921 Directory A. H. Laurieton ..... No. 6 had been added to the entry.

In 1922, the list of subscribers was: Gibson, A. No. 3; Longworth's (Laurieton Ltd.) No. 5; Mumford A. H. Laurieton 6.

The following year the 1922 list was changed by the inclusion of No. 4 as Laurieton Hotel (S. Mitchell Propr.), and No. 6 was in name of "White, Bert, Strkpr.

### Status:

It is known that in 1927 approval was given for the status of the office to be reduced from official to allowance office, and for Mrs. Irene M. Sullivan, the widow of the former official postmaster to be appointed as postmistress on 17th May 1927. Other non-official postmasters appointed after Mrs. Sullivan were: Jas. W. Hodgins 22nd August, 1935, Frederick C. Plunkett 1st October, 1935.

On 27th May, 1939, a robbery occurred at the post office. As a result of meritor-



# LAURIETON DURING THE FIRST WAR

Courier  
November 9th, 1956

A now historic article taken from old files relating to Laurieton pays tribute to two points of originality of which the town holds claim to this day.

Written in 1918, the interesting narrative gives Laurieton credit for being the first town to plant trees in its main street to commemorate fallen soldiers. Also the late Mr. Joseph Laurie (after whom the town was named) is stated to be the first man to take samples of Australian hardwood to England and the continent, thereby opening up the vast export timber trade which followed in later years.

The article states:—  
"Laurieton is a prettily situated village on the banks of the Camden Haven River, two miles from the sea, and at the foot of what is known as the Northern Brother Mountain.

Kendall is 7 miles and Taree 40 miles distant.

Laurieton was originally called "The Peach Orchard," but about the year 1874, when the late Mr. Joseph Laurie headed the movement to have a post office established here, the authorities paid the founder of the town the compliment of calling the place after him—Laurieton.

In this little town two important movements were originated, which have spread their influence

far and wide. The late Mr. J. Laurie was the first man who took samples of Australian hardwoods to England and the Continent, and thus was the means of opening up the now large export timber trade which is carried on between Australia and other parts of the world.

Laurieton claims, too, to be the first town in the Commonwealth to have trees planted in its streets in honour of soldiers who enlisted for active service in the present war.

The first tree-planting day was on 19th August, 1916, when 157 trees were planted. Mr. R. Longworth was the originator of this movement, which has been imitated in hundreds of towns since.

It is about twenty years since the breakwater was commenced, and so far as it has been completed, has proved to be one of the few successes in this particular work.

The bar is probably the safest on the coast. The Public Works Department might well be proud of this work, carried out under its supervision.

The ocean beaches and headlands—Grant's Head to the North and Diamond Head to the South—both accessible from Laurieton, are good camping grounds and picnic spots. The lakes—Queen's Lake south of the town, and Watson-Taylor Lake, a little north of the town—are fine stretches of water, and attract all tourists who come to the district.

The Northern Brother, with its fern gullies, stands up majestically at the back (west) of the town.

Until the North Coast Railway was opened up as far as Kendall, the only way of reaching Laurieton was by steamer direct. Now, however, that the train passes through Kendall, only 7 miles from here, it is more convenient to come by the faster mode of travelling.

Tourists could arrange a round trip from Sydney to Laurieton via Kendall by rail, and after touring the district return from here by steamer. Good accommodation may be had at the hotel from 6/- to 8/- per day.

The sporting attractions for the tourist are numerous. Flock and other pigeons and wild ducks in season are in abundance, while brush turkey may be had within a few miles. Beach fishing is excellent, while schnapper abound outside.

Mr. Stead, supervisor of the State Trawling Industry, considers the principal grounds for schnapper on the coast are to the north of the Manning, on a large gravel patch, lying between 30 to 70 fathoms, and extending over at least 300 square miles. Fine hauls of fish are to be had in the lakes and river in season.

Surfing also is an attraction which has many lovers. The south beach, the favourite surfing ground, is quite safe.

Those fond of mountain climbing may take a trip up the Northern Brother, from the top of which may be seen the surrounding country and sea for miles.

The chief industries are timber, oystering and fishing. Between four and five million feet of sawn timber are despatched from here annually, whilst about 1,200 bags of prime oysters are sent to the Sydney market each year. These are considered to be the best that reach the metropolis. Almost 6000 boxes of fish are sent to Sydney and Newcastle yearly, and although not as large as some of the other fishing grounds in the State, ranks nearly first as far as results are concerned.

There are a few fine up-to-date buildings in Laurieton, chief of which are the School of Arts, one of the finest north of Newcastle, which was built in 1913; the post office and public school. The first school was established in 1877. The Church of England and Presbyterian Church are also fine buildings.

The chief pleasure resorts are North and South Heads, Diamond and Grant's Heads, whilst a river trip from Camden Haven Bridge to the head of navigation, winding round the mountain, passing through the Watson-Taylor Lake, is a trip well worth seeing. A trip to Herons Creek, passing through Queen's Lake, from which may be viewed much natural beauty, is also well arranged.