



OUTLINE OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BLACKTOWN DISTRICT AND OUR LOCAL VILLAGE - QUAKERS HILL

On 25th April 1788, Governor Phillip led a party of the early settlers to the Blacktown District seeking better farming country than was to be found near to Port Jackson. In June 1789 Captain Watkin Tench and Surgeon Arndell of HMS SIRIUS led a party further west to the Nepean River. In 1790, Tench conducted another party northwest from the Blacktown area along a route which took them to Marayong, Quakers Hill, Schofields and Riverstone. Thus the affinity of Quakers Hill and the Navy may be said to go back to 1790.

Governor Phillip, Captain Tench and a party of Royal Marines completed exploration of the area in 1792 and it was in that year that he settled deserving ex-convicts as independent farmers in the district. The first 20 of these small farms stretched from Toongabbie Station to the site of the Prospect Reservoir.

These first European men and women suffered desperate privation. Living on starvation rations from the Government store, they tried to build huts and grow crops with only the most primitive implements. Within seven years, all but six of them had been forced to leave their farms.

Around 1800, farming standards had improved at Prospect with better equipped farmers settling there and the district soon became a populous and prosperous area. The first road into the district was a foot track from Parramatta which approximates today's Old Prospect Road. The district's second road now known as the Old Windsor Road, as far as Kellyville led to the Hawkesbury River. From Kellyville that road is now represented by the Windsor Road.

In the early 1800's, what is now known as Quakers Hill consisted of four large estates. The Quakers Hill property was bounded by the Richmond line from Blacktown to Douglas Siding (as Quakers Hill was formerly known) - along Douglas Road to Eastern Creek and thence to Richmond Road, some 2000 acres which was granted to Major West in 1814.

In 1816 the land north of Quakers Hill which later formed the Schofields Air Station and HMAS NIRIMBA was granted to John Pye and Joseph Pye. There seems to have been an attempt to credit the complete grant to Joseph Pye, who was born in 1799, possibly due to the fact that his father John, came to the colony as a prisoner of the Crown. However, the original grant of 85 acres was to Joseph Pye by Governor Lachlan MacQuarie, who granted a further 80 acres which was not selected until the arrival of Governor Brisbane. An additional 500 acres was granted by Governor Brisbane, though this would seem to have been given to the latter. In 1829, Joseph Pye acquired by purchase, an additional 1315 acres adjoining the Eastern Creek property for £2726.0.0 and erected on it a weatherboard and brick house and a substantial group of buildings.

A sawmill owned by Mr Douglas worked at the Douglas Siding for a considerable time. The processing of natural timber in the locality of the Douglas Siding (Quakers Hill) was one of the justifications for the original extension of the railway line to Richmond in 1864. A short wooden platform was erected at the Douglas Siding in 1872. Douglas Siding was renamed Quakers Hill in 1905.

In 1926 the Marayong Station was erected and Quakers Hill lost the 'Hill' which then became part of Marayong - aboriginal for 'The Place of the Emu' - together with the old Quakers Hill homestead.

The sub-division of the original estates resulted in the area becoming the largest poultry farming district in New South Wales.



The Pye Estate straddled the railway line from Douglas Road to Riverstone. East of the railway line and south to Pye Road was the property of Robert Campbell. Matthew Pearce owned the land from Pye Road to Blacktown. Most prominent of these settlers was Matthew Pearce whose grant was named Kings Langley. The Pearces flourished and in the 19th Century their prosperous farmhouses dotted the northern part of the district.

Joseph Pye died on 4th January 1855 and the property passed to his son David Pye. On the death of David Pye, in September 1897, the estate passed to his son Sydney George Pye. Sydney Pye lived on the property until a few years before his death, when he was forced by ill-health to sell the property. Only a few years after the sale, the property was taken over by the Government in 1941.

The first pack of foxhounds in Australia was kept at the Pye Estate and for many years the Sydney Hunt club hunted over the paddocks of the property. The club kept its horses at the Government House Stables (now the Sydney Conservatorium of Music) and reputedly drew crowds of onlookers as they rode to Redfern to entrain for Quakers Hill.

The coming of aircraft to the Schofields Aerodrome during World War II caused the area to become the lowest egg producing zone in New South Wales. Terrified of hawks, the hens crowded into the furthest corners of the sheds with the coming of this new menace from the sky - egg production the last thought in their minds. After a lot of fuss and publicity, a minimum height was set for aircraft. However this achieved little as the glide paths into Schofields' landing fields had to let down aircraft directly over the poultry sheds. The poultry became accustomed to the new sky raiders and egg production improved until the introduction of jet aircraft in 1950. Eventually the poultry became acclimatised even to that modern hazard and the use of the site for light aircraft causes no trouble today.

A flourishing vineyard and winery owned by the Brown family formerly stood near where the main entrance gates of HMAS NIRIMBA are positioned today.

The Hume family settled opposite Kings Langley in 1794. While they were there, their eldest son Hamilton Hume was born. Hamilton Hume won fame as Australia's first native born explorer - the Hume Highway, Hume Weir, etc, commemorate his discoveries.

In 1802 Governor King reserved a large area of Central Cumberland for the Government's cattle and other livestock. This Government reserve was almost identical with the modern Blacktown City's area, having the same northern and southern boundaries and approximately the same boundaries to the east and west. In 1805 King proclaimed an area in the east of this reserve as a Common for the Prospect farmers. The Prospect Common covered most of what is now the City of Blacktown.

For some years after 1802, the Blacktown district was the home of the Government's cattle, horses, sheep etc, and the convict stockmen looked after them. Blacktown itself was the grazing ground for the livestock of the Prospect farmers.

This is one of the reasons why the Hawkesbury and Nepean districts were settled before most of Blacktown; while prospering communities grew around the towns of Windsor, Richmond and Penrith only the administrative centre of Rooty Hill was established in the Blacktown district to control the wandering herds of Government cattle.

The most dramatic event in the district's history was the Battle of Vinegar Hill on 5th March 1804. This was the first time the army in Australia took part in a set battle. On a hillside near the Windsor Road, 233 convicts from Castle Hill faced a mixed force of the New South Wales Corps, militiamen men and assorted volunteers numbering between 70 and 140. The convicts, without a leader and short of arms were forced to retreat towards the Hawkesbury River and between 20 and 40 were killed in the battle. The Government forces did not suffer any casualties.



The battle is believed to commence near Schofields Road about 11.00 am and the fighting continued as far as Rouse Hill where unarmed and fleeing men were being shot down as late as 4.00 pm.

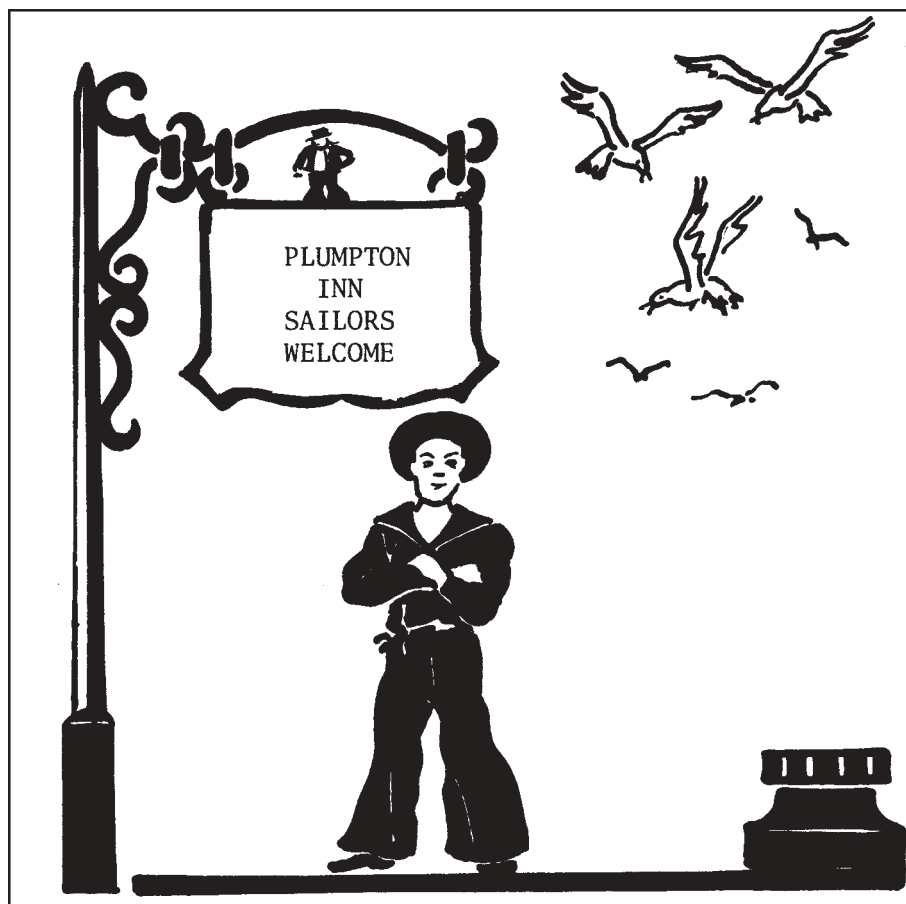
When Governor Macquarie arrived in 1810, he had orders to dispose of such Government lands as the Stock Reserve and the Prospect Common. When his second-in-command, Colonel Maurice O'Connell married Governor Bligh's widowed daughter Mary Putland, Macquarie gave the couple the north-west corner of the Reserve as a wedding present. O'Connell called the grant 'Riverston' after his ancestral home in Ireland. This, with a later grant he was given, makes up the present village of Riverstone.

This set the pattern for the next fifty years, as the Government Reserve was progressively granted or sold in large parcels. The new landholders were mostly Army Officers, senior officials and wealthy immigrants; few of them actually settled on their grants, so there are few colonial mansions in the district.

Macquarie had new headquarters built at Rooty Hill for the Superintendent with accommodation for himself when he was in the district. The Rooty Hill Government House was still occupied in recent years but has now fallen into ruin.

By the 1820's, thirty years of white occupation had destroyed the hunting grounds and tribal order of the district's aboriginals, who were by then the pathetic remnants of the lost tribes of the Sydney region.

The loss of their lands and culture, the introduction of alcohol and white man's diseases had all combined to destroy them. Several well meaning attempts were made by Governors and missionaries to assist them. Their efforts were unsuccessful, as they knew nothing of the aboriginal culture and tried to force this ancient and dignified race into the shape of an English labourer.



The best attempt was the creation of a school and farm settlement for aboriginal adults and children in the Rooty Hill Reserve. This was the Black Town first envisaged by Macquarie. From 1826 the Black Town was conducted by William Hall, a missionary catechist of the Church Missionary Service. The Government had provided a substantial brick building for him, residences for the aboriginals, a chapel and other buildings. The experiment failed and by 1833 the Black Town was deserted.

By the 1850's most of the large landholders were dead and many of their descendants had left the district or showed no interest in it. Small settlers and trades people clustered near the main roads. The chief centres were Colyton, Mt. Druitt, Eastern Creek and Prospect, along the Western Highway. A toll bar and the usual inns for travellers on the Windsor Road existed. The Blacktown Road meandered towards Windsor with just here and there an isolated farmhouse or inn.

St Bartholomew's and St Brigid's churches were built in the mid nineteenth century at Prospect as were Christ Church at Rouse Hill and St Phillip's at Clydesdale.

In the winter of 1860 the western railway line reached the Old Blacktown Road and engineers built the first station west of Parramatta. Since the locality had no name the platform was titled Black Town Road station. By 1862 the 'Road' had been dropped and the Station was simply named Blacktown, the name it bears today.

The railway station brought business to the area and Fitzimmons' hotel soon appeared on the scene. Rooty Hill Station was opened in 1861 and Seven Hills in 1869. Local orchardists could then get their produce to Sydney quicker than the Hawkesbury settlers who still had to rely on water transport

Plumpton, adjacent to Quakers Hill, then known as Woodstock became a famous fruit growing area, keeping two canneries busy. Walter Lamb who established the first fruit cannery on his Woodstock Estate introduced the new Plumpton system of Coursing to the Colonies, on his estate and later sold the grounds to the New South Wales Coursing Club. The area became known as Plumpton.

In 1906, the New South Wales Government resurrected Governor King's Reserve of 100 years before, added the more populous centres of Westmead and Seven Hills and called the result The Shire of Blacktown. The name was historically appropriate commemorating the attempts to improve the lot of the local aboriginals at the Old Black Town that now stood in the heart of the Shire.

The Blacktown Shire Council held its first meeting in the centre of the Shire, Rooty Hill, then transferred its administrative activities to Blacktown.

With the coming of World War II, many Services establishments were set up in the Shire. The Army established camps at Greystanes and Wallgrove, there was a RAAF Depot at Mount Druitt and emergency landing strips were constructed all the way from Blacktown to Windsor. For the first time since 1790, sailors of the King marched through Quakers Hill with the setting of the Royal Naval Air Station HMS NABTHORPE on the Schofields estate. This was the birth of HMAS NIRIMBA, Quakers Hill which began life in October 1944.

Blacktown Shire became Blacktown Municipality in 1961 marking its change from a scattered rural area to an area of massive suburban development. The rate of this development brought about by post World War II migration and expansion is unprecedented anywhere else in Australia. Mt Druitt alone, a village with a handful of residents after World War II now competes in size and population with Canberra and Hobart.

Blacktown became a City in 1979.



Leaders of Blacktown since formation of the Shire have been:

SHIRE PRESIDENTS

	<i>Name</i>	<i>Period of Office</i>
Cr T	WILLMOT	1906-10
Cr R J	SHERLOCK	1911
Cr T	WILLMOT	1912-13
Cr G	BEST	1914-15
Cr A T	PRINGLE	1916
Cr J H S	ANGUS	1917-20
Cr J C	PAGE	1920
Cr G A	LALOR	1921-22
Cr A	MOREHEAD	1923-26
Cr W T	CABLE	1927
		1928
Cr A L	FRANCIS	1929-30
Cr J M	McMURTRIE	1931-32
Cr J C	PAGE	1933-34
Cr A L	FRANCIS	1935-38
Cr T R	STONE	1939-45
Cr J A	FYALL	1946-50
Cr J S	BROOMFIELD	1951-56
Cr W E	PAYNE	1957-58
Cr G A	DRYDEN	1958-59
Cr G A	BARKER	1959
Cr A A	BROWN	1960-61



MAYORS - MUNICIPALITY

Ald A A	BROWN	1961-65
Ald V J	CORCORAN	1966
Ald H	ROBINSON	1967
Ald A A	BROWN	1968
Ald V J	CORCORAN	1969
Ald T C	HOLDEN	1970
Ald A A	BROWN	1971
Ald P R	STONE	1971-74
Ald G	NICOLAIDIS	1974-76
Ald P J	SHINNICK	1976-77
Ald J J	AQUILINA	1977-79

MAYORS - CITY

Ald J J	AQUILINA	1979-81
Ald J P	LYNCH	1981-Current

1982
Alderman Jim Lynch
(re-elected 1983)



HMAS NIRIMBA has a close and lasting affinity with Blacktown and the Council of the City of Blacktown. HMAS NIRIMBA enjoys Freemanship of the City of Blacktown and members of the Ship's Company take an active and continuing part in a wide variety of the affairs of the City of Blacktown.



Captain D R O S Fox AM, RAN - Commanding Officer
presents the RAN's Scroll of Freedom of Entry to Blacktown City - 1981
to the Chief of Police, WO Coxswain Ron Irwin to right of CO