



**Holroyd City**  
*Build Around People*

# **Holroyd History and the Silent Boundary Project**

**Research Report by Michael Flynn**  
**August 1997**

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Some of the important points raised in this report are as follows:

1. Emphasis on the historic importance of the route traversing the Holroyd Local Government Area from Parramatta Park, along Old Prospect Road to Prospect Hill - the route of both “Tench's walk” and “Bennelong's walk” divided into seven districts with Aboriginal names which could be marked or commemorated in various ways.
2. The significance of the Kenyon's Bridge area and Prospect Creek as Bidjigal territory, the site of exploration by Governor Phillip in 1789, the site of the short-lived Portland Place settlement and of the farms of William Sherwin and the Herbert family.
3. A description of the role of Pemulwuy and the Bidjigal clan in the frontier war during the years 1791-1805.
4. A description of local Aboriginal clans in the 1790s and their survival into the 1840s, including listings from the Aboriginal blanket returns of 1834-1843.
5. Emphasis on the historical importance of the Aboriginal-European reconciliation conference held at Prospect in 1805.
6. Detailed profiles of nine First Fleet convicts and their spouses granted land at Prospect in 1791- those whose land falls within the Holroyd Local Government Area and were among the farming success stories of the early colony. The most notable of these successes was the remarkable story of John Herbert and his wife Deborah Ellam. Their marriage, which almost foundered in a messy case heard in the Sydney Magistrates Court in 1788, formed the basis of a long and successful partnership. They died leaving a thriving retail business, prosperous farms and a growing number of descendants.

## **Introduction**

The edge of the trees sculpture in the forecourt of the Museum of Sydney represents the first contact between the indigenous and European cultures at Sydney Cove. Holroyd Municipality also encompasses some important sites of early Aboriginal - European contact. The first Europeans who saw it described the area between Parramatta and Prospect Hill as resembling a vast park of outstanding beauty. Enormous gums grew well apart from one another on an undulating grassland. Drier, scrubbier land to the south gave way to the winding gullies of Prospect Creek.

The Holroyd Local Government Area comprises that was part of the territory of at least three Aboriginal clans. The report will discuss what is known about these clans and their relationship to the wider Darug tribal culture. They were:

The Burramattagal of Parramatta/Granville.

The Cannemegal or Weymaly of Prospect/Greystanes.

The Bidjigal of Merry lands/Guildford/Villawood/Bankstown.

One of the most distinctive features of pre-1788 Aboriginal Sydney was the cultural divide between the inland *paiendra* "tomahawk people" who hunted game and used their stone axes to cut climbing marks on trees and the *katungal* "sea people" who were oriented towards the seafood produce of the saltwater harbour, estuaries and ocean beaches. The katungal people of the harbour and Botany Bay called themselves Eora (which meant "people of this place" or "people here").

The westernmost Eora clan was the Burramattagal, of Parramatta – "the place where the eels sit down" which marked the border between the cultures of the harbour and the inland. West of Parramatta was the Cannemegal clan of Prospect and the Warrawarry of Eastern Creek; to the south were the warlike Bidjigal, who inhabited thick bushland around Prospect Creek, Salt Pan Creek and north of the Georges River. All those clans west and south of the Burramattagal were paiendra.

Governor Arthur Phillip had explored the country west of Parramatta in April 1788. Historians have traditionally believed that on this journey Phillip veered south-west and ascended Prospect Hill. It is almost certain that they were mistaken. Phillip is much more likely to have followed the main course of Toongabbie Creek to the westward through Seven Hills and Blacktown before ascending Bungarribee Hill, at the summit of which is a small park fronting what is now Denis Winston Drive, Doonside, overlooking the mountains and OTC land along Eastern Creek.

A little known letter from Lieutenant Newton Fowell reports a conversation with Phillip on the day of his return:

"he Supposed he had been about 40 mile in Land & that it was all the Way like a Park with Trees about 20 yards Distance from each other - the country in General quite a Plain - the Grass about 3 feet high & pathes all the Way that Natives had made - at about the Distance of about 20 Miles from them when furthest in Land they saw Mountains, the very tops of them can be seen in a clear day from the head of the harbour - Water in Land is in great Plenty - they saw Several Ponds - some of them 200 Yards wide" (*The Sirius Letters*, 1988, p79).

One of these pre-existing trails (not followed by Phillip in 1788) probably connected Parramatta and Prospect Hill, bisecting the modern Holroyd Municipality along a route followed by the First Fleet officer Watkin Tench in 1789. Governor Phillip, accompanied by Lieutenant (later Governor) Phillip Gidley King followed the same route on 9 April 1790. The captured Aboriginal man Bennelong told them of the eight Aboriginal names of the places they passed on their four mile (6.4 km) walk.

When Phillip established 12 ex-convict settlers on the slopes of Prospect Hill in July 1791 this track began to take the form of a road connecting the convict village with Parramatta. It came to be known as Old Prospect Road. It still bisects the modern Holroyd Municipality and should be given priority in any commemoration or interpretation of the history of Aboriginal and early European occupation of the area.

The arrival of the first settlers of 1791 prompted the first organised Aboriginal resistance to the spread of settlement: It marked the real start of a violent frontier conflict in which Pemulwuy and his Bidjigal clan played a central role. They were particularly associated with Prospect Creek, so it would be appropriate to refer to them in any commemoration or interpretation material in the Kenyon's Bridge area.

In contrast to their warlike Bidjigal neighbours, the Weymaly appear to have been quiet and peace-loving. Prospect Hill was the site of an Aboriginal/European conference "with a view of opening the way to reconciliation" for which a group of Aboriginal women and a young free settler at Prospect named John Kennedy acted as intermediaries. At the meeting, held on 3 May 1805, local Aboriginal representatives discussed with the Rev. Samuel Marsden ways of ending the restrictions and indiscriminate reprisals inflicted on them by soldiers and settlers in response to atrocities committed by other clans.

The conference led to the end of the conflict for the Aboriginal clans around Parramatta and Prospect (although those further afield would continue to suffer in following years). Its 200th anniversary in 2005 would be an appropriate time to commemorate the Aboriginal/European conflict in the Holroyd area as well as playing a part in the modern reconciliation process.

Portland Place is the other early site of settlement in Holroyd Municipality to be examined in this report. Governor Hunter established a small public settlement there in June 1797 which was abandoned in 1801. In 1818 however, two farms were granted in the vicinity to Benjamin Herbert (1789-1866) and Joseph Herbert (1795-1886). The two young men were the sons of Prospect settlers John and Deborah Herbert and had grown up on their parents' 1791 grant.

Governor Hunter named the site in honour of the British Home Secretary, the Duke of Portland (William Henry Cavendish-Bentinck 1738-1809), a Whig aristocrat and former Prime Minister who had recently led a large section of the Whig opposition into coalition with Pitt the Younger's Tories. The Duke was the great great grandfather of the present Queen Mother.

The site of the two Herbert grants of 1818, adjoining Kenyon's Bridge, links the spot to the early Prospect settlement. Also granted land in the vicinity was William Sherwin, Parramatta's Chief Police constable. He was a former sergeant of the New South Wales Corps whose wife caused a scandal in the colony by leaving him for one of the most senior officers of the Rum Corps, Major Joseph Foveaux.

The Portland Place settlement was linked to Parramatta by Kenyon's Road, which follows more or less the same route through Merrylands West and Woodpark along Burnett Street, Kenyon's Road and Warren Road. This road traversed what was probably the territory of the Cannemegal or Weymaly of Prospect/Greystanes. The Kenyon's Bridge/Portland Place area was the gateway to the territory of the Bidjigal clan.

As the scene of a series of fascinating episodes of invasion and conflict, settlement and reconciliation, the Holroyd Local Government Area presents a wide range of opportunities for commemoration and interpretation, two centuries after the turbulent 1790s.

## Part 1: Holroyd early settlement history

### 1. Tench's walk to Prospect Hill, 26 June 1789

Watkin Tench, a young officer of Marines on the First Fleet, wrote two books on the early Sydney colony (both recently republished with an introduction by Tim Flannery as *1788*). On 26 June 1789 Tench led a party from Parramatta on a journey of exploration that took them initially to the summit of Prospect Hill, then south-west across rough country to the Nepean River, which Tench and his companions were the first Europeans to see.

Tench's account is the first substantial account of Europeans traversing the modern Holroyd Municipality. His route to Prospect Hill probably followed the track along the Great Western Highway and Old Prospect Road. He probably followed an existing Aboriginal track.

Describing Phillip's first journey up the Hawkesbury River by boat in June 1789, Tench wrote (p153-page nos. from the 1979 edition of Tench's work titled *Sydney's First Four Years*): "*Natives were found on the banks in several parts, many of whom were labouring under the small-pox*". The epidemic had struck in April with terrifying swiftness and killed at least half the indigenous population within three months. In the next paragraph Tench writes of his own departure from Parramatta [then still called Rose Hill] on 26 June 1789:

"At this period, I was unluckily invested with the command of the outpost at Rose Hill, which prevented me from being in the list of discoverers of the Hawkesbury. Stimulated, however, but a desire of acquiring a further knowledge of the country, on the 26th instant, accompanied by Mr. Arndell, assistant surgeon of the settlement, Mr Lowes, surgeon's mate of the *Sirius*, two marines, and a convict, I left the redoubt at day-break, pointing our march to a hill, distant five miles, in a westerly or inland direction, which commands a view of the great chain of mountains, called Carmarthen-hills [the Blue Mountains], extending from north to south farther than the eye can reach. Here we paused, surveying "the wild abyss; pondering our voyage". Before us lay the trackless immeasurable desert, in awful silence.... We continued to march all day through a country untrodden before by an European foot. Save that a melancholy crow now and then flew croaking over head, or a kangaroo was seen to bound at a distance, the picture of solitude was complete and undisturbed" (p153-4).

Tench's quotation alludes to Satan's journey from Eden to Hell. It seems to contrast the park-like landscape he had just crossed with the mysterious, scrubby territory he was about to encounter. The absence of any signs of life contrasted eerily with frequent signs of Aboriginal habitation such as empty bark shelters, possum and bird traps and unattended canoes on the river bank. The quotation paraphrases a passage in Milton's *Paradise Lost* (II, 917):

*Into this wild abyss the warie fiend  
Stood on the brink of Hell and look'd a while  
Pondering his Voyage for no narrow frith  
He had to cross.*

Tench's repeated references to *Paradise Lost* form an interesting subtext to his account of Aboriginal-European contact. His examination of Aboriginal culture does not shrink from portraying its negative aspects and bears an assumption that the indigenous culture would be inevitably subsumed into his own "higher" civilization; nevertheless, it represents an astonishingly modern attempt by an 18th century Westerner to present an objective view which tries to avoid cultural and racial prejudice. He seems to have recognised that Europeans had merely scratched the surface of a complex language and social structure. Most Aboriginal men and women appearing in his account emerge as lively, sympathetically observed individuals. "*I do not hesitate to declare*", he wrote, "*that the Natives of New South Wales possess a considerable portion of that acumen, or sharpness of intellect, which bespeaks genius*" (p281). At the end of his description of Aboriginal customs (p293) he adds:

"To conclude the history of a people for whom I cannot but feel some share of affection: let those who have been born in more favoured lands, and who have profited by more enlightened systems. compassionate, but not despise, their destitute and obscure situation. Children of the same omniscient paternal care, let them recollect, that by the fortuitous advantage of birth alone, they possess superiority: that untaught, unaccommodated man, is the same in Pall Mall, as in the wilderness of New South Wales."

The final version of Tench's second book was probably written in England soon after of the September massacres of 1792, as the French Revolution lurched towards its most violent phase. The looming struggle between Britain and France hovers in the background of his story: "*Whether plodding in London; reeking with blood in Paris: or wandering amidst the solitary wilds of New South Wales - Man is ever an object of interest, curiosity, and reflection*" (p273).

Although Tench warned against idealising Aboriginal life, his allusions to *Paradise Lost* may imply an underlying view of the land as a metaphoric Garden of Eden with its Aborigines representing Adam and Eve, corrupted and driven out by the diseases and civilization of the invading Europeans. This point is not made directly, but is strongly suggested by apparently ironic allusions made by Tench to himself as the Miltonic Satan-the fallen angel who passed through Eden and descended to hell, after bringing about the temptation and expulsion of Adam and Eve.

## **2. Governor Phillip's exploration of Prospect Creek, 7-10 October 1789**

Lieutenant William Bradley gave an account of Governor Phillip's first exploration of Prospect Creek in his journal of the colony's first years (W.Bradley, *A Voyage to NSW* 1969, p178). Phillip and his party had probably walked from Parramatta to Smithfield, whence they traced Prospect Creek's course in a south-easterly direction along the southern boundary of the modern Holroyd Municipality. The branch Bradley mentions as the sight of the fight between Phillip's greyhound and a kangaroo was probably the junction of Prospect Creek and Orphan School Creek in Fairfield. Bradley's account is as follows:

"Wednesday 7 (October 1789]. The Governor went to Rose Hill to trace a piece of water near it, supposed by those who first fell in with it to communicate with the NW arm of Botany Bay.

Saturday 10. He returned [having] fell in with a fresh water River about 4 miles from Rose Hill to the sthward & which had many windings, they followed the course of it down on one side of the banks, not having a boat, as far as the gullies, which they were obliged to walk round would admit of, they found a rise of 4 feet where the water was fresh & some distance below that part they met the salt water, which had every appearance of communicatin with Botany Bay or a small distance to the sthward of it with the Sea, but this for want of a Boat they could not ascertain, being upon the forked part of a branch, at one part of which a Kangaroo was closely pursued by the Greyhound that they had with them & took to the water, the Dog followed & got hold of the kangaroo. The kangaroo attacked the Dog & tore him so much, that one of the people was obliged to go in & cut the Kangaroo's throat to save the Dog."

### **3. European settlement at Prospect Hill, July 1791**

*see below for profiles of 9 settlers of 1791 whose land grants were situated within modern Holroyd boundaries*

In July 1791 Prospect became the western front line of settlement when twelve time-expired convicts (some with wives and children) were placed on farms on the slopes of Prospect Hill, with an area of Crown bushland separating each farm. Collins (I p144) reports that early in the month a large group of armed Aboriginal warriors attacked and destroyed one of the settlers' huts and were allegedly threatening to kill its unarmed occupant when a neighbour armed with a musket frightened them off. Governor Phillip decided to have the bushland between each farm cleared and settled for greater security. Phillip's account of this incident is more detailed (Hunter p355):

"In laying out the different allotments, an intermediate space, equal to what was granted to the settler, was retained between every two allotments, for the benefit of the crown; and as this set them at some distance from each other, and there being a wood between every two settlers in which the natives might conceal themselves, if they were inclined to mischief, several musquets were distributed amongst the settlers, and they took possession of their allotments on the 18th of July [1791], and began to erect their huts, However a very few days elapsed before a large body of natives appeared in the grounds of one of the new settlers of Prospect-Hill, who, alarmed at the sight of a number of natives (by his account more than a hundred,) fired off his musquet and retreated. This, of course, encouraged them, and they advanced and set fire to his hut, which was nearly finished. On hearing the report of a musquet, another settler took up his arms and, running to the spot fired on the natives, who retired to some distance. As soon as the affair was known at Parramatta. a party of soldiers were detached, who, getting sight of about fifty of the natives, obliged them to disperse.

This circumstance induced Governor Phillip to deviate from the royal instructions; which pointed out in what manner the allotments of land were to be made; and, as the only means of enabling the settlers to defend themselves against similar accidents, he granted all those intermediate lands, which had been reserved for the use of the crown, to the settlers. By this means all the land would be cleared of timber, so that the natives could find no shelter, and, in all probability, there would be little danger from them in future. However, a noncommissioned officer and three privates were detached to each settlement, with orders to remain there until the lands were cleared....

When these settlers were placed at such a distance from Parramatta, it was on account of the soil being good, and that their livestock and gardens might not be so liable to depredations [by convicts] as they would have been if nearer the town".

David Collins wrote in January 1794 that Prospect Hill was the most productive of the colony's farming districts. Even there, however, the settlers were subject to pressures experienced by all emancipist farmers in the colony:

“It was found that the settlers, notwithstanding the plentiful crops which in general they might be said to have gathered, gave no assistance to government by sending any into store. Some small quantity (about one hundred and sixty bushels) indeed had been received; but nothing equal either to the wants or expectations of government. They appeared to be most sedulously endeavouring to get rid of their grain in any way they could; some by brewing and distilling it; some by baking it into bread, and indulging their own propensities in eating; others by paying debts contracted by gaming. Even the farms themselves were pledged and lost in this way; those farms which undoubtedly were capable of furnishing them with an honest comfortable maintenance for life”.

Of the nine settlers profiled for this report only five managed to hold their land beyond 1800. This represented, nevertheless, a remarkable achievement for a group of former criminals-especially in the case of John and Deborah Herbert, who died leaving a thriving retail business, prosperous farms and a growing number of descendants.

#### **4. “Their schemes, their hopes, and expectations....” Watkins Tench’s visit to the Prospect settlers, 5 December 1791**

“I determined to visit all the private settlers; to inspect their labours; and learn from them their schemes, their hopes, and expectations.

In pursuance of my resolution, I crossed the country to Prospect Hill, at the bottom of which live the following thirteen convicts, who have accepted allotments of ground, and are become settlers.”

<b>Names</b>	<b>Trades</b>	<b>Acres in allotment</b>	<b>Acres cultivated</b>
William Butler & wife	seaman	50	4
James Castle	husbandman	50	2
Samuel Griffiths & wife?	butcher	40	1½
John Herbert wife & 2 chn.	?	70	?
George Lisk	watchmaker	40 partnership with Butler	
Joseph Morley & wife	silk dyer	50	?
John Nichols	gardener	40	2
William Parish, wife & child	seaman	60	2¾
Edward Pugh, wife & 2 chn.	carpenter	70	2½

[John Herbert & Joseph Morley were still working for Government, their sentences not having expired, but were allowed to work their farms in their spare time. The above details have been adapted from Tench's original list using other sources-and include only those settlers profiled for this report, see below for profiles]

The terms on which these allotments have been granted, are, That the estates shall be fully ceded for ever to all who shall continue to cultivate for five years, or more. That they shall be free of all taxes for the first ten years; but after that period to pay an annual quit-rent of one shilling.

The penalty on non-performance of any of these articles is forfeiture of the estate, and all the labour which may have been bestowed upon it. These people are to receive provisions, (the same quantity as the working convicts) clothes, and medicinal assistance, for eighteen months from the day on which they settled.-To clear and cultivate the land, a hatchet, a tomahawk, two hoes, a spade and a shovel, are given to each person, whether man or woman; and a certain number of cross-cut saws among the whole. To stock their farms, two sow pigs were promised to each settler; but they almost all say they have not yet received any, of which they complain loudly. They all received grain to sow and plant for the first year.

They settled here in July and August last. Most of them were obliged to build their own houses; and wretched hovels three-fourths of them are. Should any of them fall sick, the rest are bound to assist the sick person two days in a month, provided the sickness lasts not longer than two months; four days labour in each year, from every person being all that he is entitled to. To give protection to this settlement, a corporal and two soldiers are encamped in the centre of the farms; as the natives once attacked the settlers, and burnt one of their houses. These guards are, however, inevitably at such a distance from some of the farms, as to be unable to afford them any assistance in case of another attack.

With all these people I conversed, and inspected their labours: some I found tranquil and determined to persevere, provided encouragement should be given: others were in a state of despondency, and predicted that they should starve, unless the period of 18 months, during which they are to be clothed and fed, should be extended to three years. Their cultivation is yet in its infancy, and therefore opinions should not be hastily formed of what it may arrive at, with moderate skill and industry. They have at present little in the ground besides maize, and that looks not very promising. Some small patches of wheat which I saw are miserable indeed. The greatest part of the land I think but indifferent; being light and stoney. Of the 13 farms 10 are unprovided with water; and at some of them they are obliged to fetch this necessary article from the distance of a mile and a half. All the settlers complain sadly of being frequently robbed by the runaway convicts, who plunder them incessantly."

## **5. Portland Place 1797-1801**

Portland Place, named for the Duke of Portland, was established by Governor Hunter as a small government settlement in June 1797. David Collins reported the state of works completed at Portland Place in the three years up to 1800 as follows (II p224):

“Enclosed several stock yards for cattle, and repaired the old sheds at Parramatta, Toongabbie and Portland Place. In the latter district, the timber of 120 acres was cut down, and nearly half (that of 50 acres) burnt off, a small township marked out and a few huts built. Raised also a variety of inferior buildings ..... In the district of Portland Place, a stock-yard, consisting of about 30 acres, was inclosed with posts and rails. It included four chains of fresh-water ponds. Buildings were also designed to be erected within it; and it was meant to continue clearing the ground there, it being remarkably good, and at a convenient distance from Parramatta.”

The exact site of this small settlement has not been located, but it was probably close to Kenyon's Bridge. It was abandoned by Governor King in 1801, but was the site of farms in the Macquarie period (1810-1822) granted to the sons of John Herbert and to William Sherwin.

## **6. Profiles of early Holroyd settlers**

### **sources:**

- Mollie Gillen, *The Founders of Australia: a Biographical Dictionary of the First Fleet*, Library of Australian History, 1989 (edited by Michael Flynn)
- *Old Bailey Sessions Proceedings*, Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW
- Transcripts and indexes of population musters of NSW, 1800-1822, Census of NSW 1828, published by ABGR 7 Library of Australian History

### **The nine convicts granted land in the Holroyd Council area in 1791:**

1. William Butler
2. James Castle
3. Samuel Griffiths
4. John Herbert
5. George Lisk
6. Joseph Morley
7. John Nichols
8. William Parish
9. Edward Pugh

## 1. WILLIAM BUTLER (c1767-1837) & JANE FORBES (c1773-1795)

*William Butler farmed at Prospect 1791-c1799*

William Butler and Andrew Goodwin, both aged about 17, were tried at the Old Bailey in July 1784 and sentenced to seven years transportation for stealing 200lb weight of lead from the roof of a North London house. A suspicious shopkeeper spotted them carrying the lead past his candle-lit shop window in Theobalds Road at 10pm. Butler, an unemployed seaman, told the court he had a sick mother to provide for. He claimed a man had offered them a pot of beer and sixpence to carry the lead. *[see attached copy of printed trial transcript]*

Butler sailed with the First Fleet ship *Scarborough* and in April 1788 he was assigned to a gang of convicts employed carrying shingles cut from bushland near Sydney Cove when he was accused with two others of stealing a fellow convict's meat ration. *[see below for details of this trial]*

At Parramatta on 13 March 1791 Butler, 23, married Jane Forbes, aged about 17. She had arrived as a convict in mid-1790 on the Second Fleet transport *Lady Juliana*. At 14 she had been convicted at the Old Bailey for picking the pocket of a London woman buying meat at a market stall.

The couple were settled on a 50 acre grant at Prospect in mid-July 1791 where their children Ann (1792) and William (1793) were born (both appear to have died in infancy). Jane was buried at Parramatta on 20 July 1795 after her accidental death at the Prospect farm house when she "*fell into the fire while preparing their breakfast and received, such injury that she shortly afterwards expired*".

Butler farmed his land in partnership with George Lisk, who had been granted 40 adjoining acres and married an Irish convict, Rose Burke, in 1793. The men appear to have sold their Prospect grants in the late 1790s. In 1800 they were jointly working a purchased farm in the Hawkesbury district, with 4 pigs, 11 acres in wheat and 11 in maize. They dissolved their partnership and sold the land prior to Lisk's departure for England in 1805. Butler moved to Sydney, where he worked as a carpenter and shipwright. He died at Sydney Hospital and was buried on 4 January 1837.

### **William Butler: defendant in a Magistrates Court case, 30 April 1788**

**comment:** This case, heard only three months after the arrival of the First Fleet, indicates that Butler was a member of a gang of convicts employed carrying shingles used to roof the colony's first huts. They would have been carried either in bags on the convicts' backs or perhaps in a cart which they pulled. The shingle cutters' camp was probably near stands of casuarina trees around Rushcutters Bay or Darling Harbour.

### **Sydney Cove, Wednesday 30 April 1788**

#### **prisoners:**

William Abbott, **William Butler**, Robert Bails and William Hubbard

**charge:** stealing beef and pork from James McDonough.

William "Airs" [Ayres] deposed that *"on the night of Saturday sen'night last I was awaked by some strange voices near my tent at the place where the shingles are making - it was very dark - I saw no one - the noise lasted about 10 Minutes - the other men in the Tent were fast asleep"*.

James McDonough deposed that he was "employed at the shingling making" and that the beef and pork stolen was an allowance for three men for one week, apart from one and a half pounds which had already been consumed. He had no proof that the prisoners were the thieves, but having heard someone say that they had been "out there at that time of night" he complained to Major Ross who ordered them to replace the stolen meat from their own allowance. The prisoners all denied the charge, stating "they had been employed all the evening bringing in shingles" and called their overseer Abrams as a character witness. He said "they have all hitherto behaved very well". David Richards swore that Hubbard had slept in his tent all night.

**sentence:** the men were ordered to repay the stolen meat [from their own rations].

## **2. JAMES CASTLE (c1759-1803)**

*James Castle farmed at Prospect 1791-c1799*

James Castle (sometimes recorded as John Castle(s)), aged about 25, was sentenced to seven years transportation at the January 1784 Old Bailey Sessions. He had been charged with stealing from a man lying asleep in a sheltered part of London's Fleet Market on the rainy evening of 1 June 1783. The victim, John Hanbury, said he was on his way home to Blackfriars from a night's drinking at the Horseshoe public house in Goswell Street. He admitted that he was in a drunken sleep when he was stripped of his shoes, silk handkerchief and silver watch.

Castle worked in a warehouse at Puddle Dock, not far from the scene of the crime, probably as a labourer or storeman. When he and a co-worker tried to sell the watch, handkerchief and shoes they were reported and arrested. The items were advertised by a parish constable and identified by the owner. Castle made a fairly unlikely claim that he had found them while at work; they were lying "all in the mud" in the street, he said. His co-accused was acquitted on the basis of lack of evidence and the suggestion that witnesses had sworn against him falsely to obtain reward money.

Castle was not so lucky, A witness said: "I went to Wood-street compter [a prison] and heard John Castle say that he lighted on a man in Fleet market, and picked his pocket completely, but, says he, my blasted brother blowed me" [meaning denounced him]. Both men had several character witnesses who suggested that their accusers were after reward money. Castle's foreman or "Headman" said he had known Castle "going on three years". "I can say nothing against them", he said, "they worked for me, and I paid them".

Castle seems to have been an immigrant to London from the country (in the colony Tench describes him as a husbandman or farm worker). In 1787 he sailed with the First Fleet transport *Scarborough*. On 2 December 1788 he was charged with burgling the hut of a female convict, Ann Sandlin and stealing a linen gown. He was acquitted on the more serious charge of burglary but had his sentence extended to life for the theft (this additional sentence appears to have been remitted). He seems to have redeemed his character and demonstrated valuable farming skills over the following two years. In July 1791 he was as granted 30 acres at Prospect Hill. He did well and was described by Judge Advocate David Collins as “an industrious and thriving settler” when his house and all his possessions were destroyed in a fire in 1792. Governor Phillip ordered that he be given assistance to rebuild his house.

By the late 1790s Castle had moved to the Hawkesbury district where he purchased a 20 acre farm. He died shortly before 3 July 1803 when his executor advertised his Hawkesbury property for sale, including a farm with standing crops of wheat, barley and maize, a wheatstack, a steel mill, blankets, clothing, two sows, some fowls and a quantity of potatoes. He appears to have remained single in the colony.

### **3. SAMUEL GRIFFITHS (c1751-1821) & ELIZABETH HAMILTON (d.1808)**

*Samuel Griffiths farmed at Prospect 1791-1809*

Samuel Griffiths, a butcher aged about 32, was sentenced to death at the March 1784 Gloucester Assizes and later reprieved to transportation for 7 years. His crime had been to kill a sheep “with a felonious intent to steal the carcase” at the West Country market town of Stroud. He was held on a Thames hulk for several years before being despatched by wagon to Portsmouth for embarkation on the First Fleet transport *Alexander* in February 1787.

He was settled on a 30 acre grant at Prospect in July 1791. At Parramatta on 11 September 1791 he married Elizabeth Hamilton, an Old Bailey convict who had only landed from the Third Fleet transport *Mary Ann* two months earlier. His grant was increased to 40 acres of which by December he had 1½ in cultivation. By mid-1800 the couple had 10 acres sown in wheat and another 10 in maize. In 1802 they were fairly prosperous, recorded holding 60 acres (24 sown in wheat and maize), owning a horse and 12 pigs and employing a servant. The 1806 muster noted that in addition to the 24 acres in grain they had 3 acres in vegetables and potatoes. They remained childless.

Following his wife's death in 1808, Griffiths decided to sell the property. It was advertised for sale in the Sydney Gazette in May 1809 described as a valuable farm, fully cleared with a good farm house, barn and outbuildings and a fine orchard with apple, shaddock, quince and peach trees. He moved to Sydney and married Elizabeth Padgett a middle aged convict woman. Described as a householder of Kent Street in 1820, he was buried at Sydney on 22 August of the following year.

### **4. JOHN HERBERT (c1760-1832) & DEBORAH ELLAM (1765-1819)**

*John Herbert farmed his Prospect grant from 1791 until his death in 1832*

John Herbert, aged about 25, was sentenced to death for highway robbery at the March 1785 Devon Assizes at Exeter in south west England. With three others he had stolen a watch with a tortoise shell case, a pruning fork and some money from an innkeeper and his wife at Plymouth. Three of his companions were discharged marines and there is a possibility that John Herbert was the man of this name who had been a servant to future Governor Arthur Phillip on HMS *Europe* up to May 1784. Like many others, this man was discharged when the British Navy was downsized following the end of the American War of Independence.

Herbert sailed for the colony on the First Fleet transport *Charlotte*. At Sydney on 2 April 1788 he married Deborah Ellam, aged about 20. She had been sentenced to seven years transportation at Chester in 1784 for the theft of 2 gowns and some cloth, sailing on the First Fleet transport *Prince of Wales*. Their Sydney home was at Farm Cove, the site of today's Botanic Gardens (as indicated by the case from 14 May 1789 reproduced below). They had been allocated a garden plot to care for near what is now Domain Creek (the stolen pruning fork comes to mind). Theirs had been one of the very early convict marriages in the colony and, as the case reproduced below indicates, it was not without its problems. Extremely hot, humid summer weather reported for the first half of December 1788 in Sydney may have strained their patience with one another.

The couple's marital dispute was heard before the Magistrates Court on 5 December 1788 (see below). John was alleging the existence of a former or existing relationship with an unidentified "gentleman" among the colony's officers. His wife's alleged threat to go and "blow her Gentleman up" may well be an ancestor of the modern expression "blow-job". Her feisty outburst in court bears the unmistakable hallmark of an assertive personality.

A combination of factors - a defiant attitude before the magistrate, neglect of her duty in protecting the garden and apparent sexual infidelity-earned her what was a very severe punishment in comparison to sentences meted out to other women at the time (not to mention its flagrant sexism when viewed from a late twentieth century perspective). Reconciled soon afterwards, the couple were allocated 70 acres at Prospect in mid-1791. They worked the land in their own time until early 1792 when the expiry of John's sentence allowed him to take possession of the property as a free man.

By mid-1800 the couple were moderately prosperous, cultivating 5 acres in wheat and 6 in maize and owning 2 horses and 12 pigs. Two years later, with 35 acres cleared they had 29 acres in wheat and maize. In 1806, employing a free man and a convict, they owned 5 horses, 7 cattle, 56 sheep, 2 goats and 12 pigs. With horses still relatively uncommon and prohibitively expensive, the possession of five of these animals was a sign of growing wealth. The Herberts went on to raise seven children, extended their landholdings by purchase, bought several houses in Parramatta township and settled their sons on land in the Prospect and Nepean districts. Two farms on Prospect Creek granted to their sons Benjamin and Joseph in 1818 were sold to Joseph Kenyon two years later.

Deborah Herbert died in June 1819 and was buried in St Johns Cemetery, Parramatta where her headstone still declares that she was "universally respected by her numerous friends and acquaintances". John Herbert remarried and set up as a shopkeeper and dealer in Parramatta. He died on 1 April 1832 leaving his original Prospect grant and other property to his children. It remained in the family until 1873.

Their 1788 spat long forgiven (if not, perhaps, forgotten), John Herbert was buried with his first wife under a tombstone that still bears the pithy epitaph:

**“If I had faults, who is without?”**

**John & Deborah Herbert’s marital dispute, Magistrates Court, 5 December 1788**

**Sydney Cove, 5 December 1788    magistrate:** David Collins

**prisoners:** Deborah Herbert & John Herbert

**charge:** accuses her Husband of beating her without Just cause.

Deborah Herbert told the magistrate that the previous morning her husband got up before 4am. Before his return some pigs had got into their garden and destroyed some plants, for which he beat her. She declared: *“I struck him, & I would strike him again were he as big as a Side of a House - if, he struck me”*.

**John Herbert** stated that when he came home to find his garden plants destroyed his wife was not at home. She was at a neighbour's house:

*“I called to her to come Home - she did not come - when she did not come I heard her say that she would go & blow her Gentleman up - I told her if she attempted to do so, I would beat her - she provoked me very much with her Tongue - I then struck her, she struck me again - this continued for some time - she went away & left me - she was absent all night, & I found her this Morning in a hut in the other Camp - I drove her Home & then we agreed to separate”*.

**sentence:** D.Herbert to receive 25 Lashes & to return to her Husband.

**John Herbert, witness for a Magistrates Court case, 14 May 1789**

**comment:** The “farm” referred to here was almost certainly the government farm on the site of the modern Botanic Gardens at Farm Cove, Sydney. Scarcely a year after the establishment of the colony there had been no time to grow real hedges. The “hedge” referred to was possibly a makeshift fence made from sticks and undergrowth.

**Sydney Cove, 14 May 1789    magistrates:** David Collins & Augustus Alt

**prisoner:** William Chafe

**charge:** stealing one pumpkin belonging to John Archer.

**John Herbert** stated that the previous evening just before dark...

“having been in town (I live at the Farm) on my Return, I was at my Supper with my wife & the Prisoner - having supped I went over to my opposite neighbour to learn what news there might be - leaving the Prisoner & my wife in the House - While I was speaking to my Neighbour, my wife came in, on which I went out, having a suspicion that the Prisoner had stolen our Flour the preceding Evening - I went to the corner of my Garden Hedge & saw the prisoner come out & look about him - I observed him walk to the place where the pumpkins were growing in Archer's garden, saw him jump over the Hedge, observed him stoop down, & appeared as if he lost something off the ground - I watched him returning & stopped him, asking him what he did there - on searching him a Pumpkin (produced) was found hid under his jacket”.

John Archer related that he had been called out by Herbert and identified Chafe and the pumpkin.

**sentence:** 150 lashes on his bare back.

## **5. GEORGE LISK (c1759-?)**

*George Lisk farmed at Prospect 1791-c1799*

George Lisk, aged about 24, was sentenced to seven years transportation for highway robbery at the Old Bailey in September 1783. A frail, elderly man had been knocked over at 11pm by two men and held by the throat in the docks area of Wapping, east London. The thieves took 9 shillings from his pocket and threw him into a ditch. Struggling out with the aid of a tree root the old man called out for help. A mob pursued the muggers and Lisk was seized as he ran.

Lisk told the court he had just recovered from five weeks' illness and had been out looking for work to earn money for his rent. Meeting some people who worked for his landlord he went drinking with them (probably spending what little money he had). He said he had been on his way home from the pub rather intoxicated (“I was very much entangled in liquor”) when the cry of “Stop thief” went up. He claimed to have been wrongly identified as one of the culprits. His three character witnesses had gone home, tired of waiting all day for his trial to come on.

In quaintly old-fashioned language the old man asked the judge and jury to spare young Lisk from a probable death sentence. Asked to confirm his identification, the old man said:

“Yes, that is the man, but I would not have him hanged neither, because I have children of my own, and I do not know what they may come to; there is nothing too hard for God to do, he may make a good man of him yet”.

Lisk was described as wearing seaman's clothes when arrested and may have been pressed into the Navy during the American War of Independence. He told Tench in 1791 that he had once worked as a watchmaker; but if this true, he had probably been unemployed for some time. He was held on a Thames hulk for more than three years before embarking on the First Fleet transport *Scarborough* in February 1787.

Lisk appeared as a witness in a Magistrates Court case at Sydney in July 1791 (see below), just before taking up a 40 acre grant in partnership with William Butler, an adjoining landholder. By May 1793 Lisk was living on the farm in a de facto relationship with an Irish convict named Rose Burke. In that month, in the course of a drunken quarrel on the streets of Parramatta, Burke was shot in the arm when Lisk's gun discharged, allegedly by accident. Her arm was shattered and had to be amputated at the elbow. Burke appears to have been a forgiving woman. She told the authorities the wound had been accidental and the couple were married at Parramatta several months later. They remained childless.

Lisk and Butler appear to have sold their Prospect grants in the late 1790s. In 1800 they were jointly farming a purchased farm in the Hawkesbury district, with 4 pigs, 11 acres sown in wheat and 11 in maize. They dissolved their partnership and sold the land prior to Lisk's departure for England in 1805.

### **George Lisk, witness for a Magistrates Court case, 8 July 1791**

**comment:** This case is of particular interest. It is heard only ten days before the Prospect settlers are sent to camp on their farms in tents to begin construction of their houses and clearing and cultivation of their land. Lisk was one of these settlers, as was a John Williams, although there were several men of this name in the colony at the time. The case does not indicate whether Lisk was living at Sydney or Parramatta at the time. A callavance was a kind of vegetable.

**Sydney, Friday, 8 July 1791   magistrates:** David Collins & Rev. R. Johnson

**prisoner:** John Williams

**charge:** Suspicion of stealing; a Box containing Provisions & Powder & shot from Richard Cheers, on Sunday the 5th Instant.

“Richard Cheers relates... On Friday Night last, on going Home, I missed a Box containing Provisions (Flour, Beef & Callavances) & four or five charges of Powder, 3 Balls & 18 or 20 Buck Shot, I found my Box in the Woods, but have not seen any part of the Property.

**George Lisk** relates... On Sunday last the 3rd Instant the Prisoner came to my House & asked me to buy some Ammunition - he had a Bag in his Hand with 3 Balls in it, & some Buck Shot - & some Powder, I did not buy them of the Prisoner, he went away.

John Dawson relates.... Having received Information that the Prisoner had been offering Ammunition for sale, I took the Prisoner to a Man of the name of Turner, to whom he had offered it & said he had got it from R.Ryan, but Ryan said the Prisoner had offered it to him. The prisoner said then, a Soldier of the new Corps gave it him to sell for Tobacco, but on being taken to the Barracks, he could not find him out. He also said he had returned it to the Soldier at 9 o'clock, & between 10 & 11 he was offering it for sale. The ammunition has not been found.

The Prisoner denied the offence,”

**sentence:** 100 lashes for having stolen property in his possession – Forgiven.

## 6. JOSEPH MORLEY (c1760-1822) & MARY GOSLING (c1745-?)

*Joseph Morley farmed at Prospect from 1791 until his death in 1822*

Joseph Morley, a silk dyer aged about 23, was sentenced to death with three others for highway robbery at the March 1783 Hampshire Assizes held at Winchester in southern England. They had assaulted a man and stolen a bundle of muslin and other items. He was embarked on the America-bound transport *Mercury* in 1784, but escaped when the convicts mutinied and forced the ship ashore on the south coast of England. Remanded to his former sentence, he sailed with the First Fleet transport *Friendship* in 1787.

Morley was acquitted on a charge of neglect of work in December 1788 (see below). He escaped conviction on that occasion but was not so lucky in July 1789 when he was ordered 150 lashes for buying rations from a Marine.

By 1791, however, he was deemed a suitable candidate for a land grant and was settled on 50 acres at Prospect. At Parramatta on 19 December 1790 he had married Mary Gosling, who had been tried at Warwick for shoplifting and arrived on the Second Fleet transport *Lady Juliana* in June 1790. She was at least 15 years his senior and remained childless. In 1792 Morley was among the signatories to a petition requesting that a Roman Catholic priest be sent to the colony. By 1800 he had been appointed District Constable (he appears to have been dismissed from this post in 1820 for drunkenness).

The couple prospered rapidly on their Prospect grant. By 1802 they had 23 acres sown in wheat and maize and owned 16 pigs and 53 goats. By 1806 they had 104 goats and employed a convict and a free man. In 1807 Morley sold his grant to his younger cousin and namesake, a Sydney publican who had arrived as a convict on the Second Fleet. The elder Morley continued to farm the property until his death in 1822.

### **Joseph Morley: defendant in a Magistrates Court case, 27 December 1788**

**comment:** In this case Collins appears to have been prepared to accept the word of usually well behaved convicts against that of a marine who may have been unreasonably harsh with them. There were at least four marine privates named Brown in the colony, but the two of the convicts are easily identifiable. Joseph Morley, aged about 28 (his thick accent sometimes caused his surname to be interpreted “Marlow” or “Mawley”), had been convicted of highway robbery in Hampshire; in later years he would become a prosperous, if hard-drinking emancipist farmer. William Mariner, 26, who had been convicted of sacrilege after burgling Magdalen College Chapel, Oxford; he would abscond from the colony within three years. “Bryan” was one of four First Fleet convicts named Bryant who cannot be identified here without a christian name.

**Sydney Cove, 27 December 1788 magistrate:** David Collins

**prisoners:** Marlow [*Joseph Morley*], Mariner, Bryan.

**charge:** neglecting their work (Bryan was also charged with being drunk).

Private Brown stated that the previous evening he “gave Marlow & Mariner leave to go for water - they staid away an Hour & better - when they returned I told them a few Lashes would be of service to them - Marlow answered - his character was too good to get him flogged. Mariner said nothing - I sent Bryan home because he was, or I thought he was, in Liquor - Marlow & Mariner have worked with me for a considerable time & have always behaved very well”.

The men said in their defence that the delay occurred when the rope they used to get their water broke. Bryan said he had been very ill with a pain in his bowels.

**sentence:** none - discharged.

## **7. JOHN NICHOLS (c1760-1822)**

*John Nichols farmed at Prospect from 1791 until shortly before his death in 1822*

John Nichols, aged about 23, was employed as a servant and porter’s assistant by a London hair and perfume wholesale merchant when sentenced at the Old Bailey to seven years transportation in April 1784. His young wife and children were living at Leominster at the time of his conviction. He had been charged with pilfering a large quantity of razors, scissors, soap, ribbon, hair and powder from his employer over an 11 week period after starting work with the firm of West & Thomas. He was employed on the recommendation of his brother, William Nichols, who was already working there as a porter. When John Nichols disappeared, his employer traced him through a box booked in his name for transport to his native county (Hertfordshire). An address on the box led to his arrest in Worcester, where he was found carrying the stolen items in a basket, hawking them around shops in the town. He claimed to have paid for the things himself, but was not able to say how and from whom.

A constable who gave evidence at the trial said he had made enquiries among people who had known Nichols in Worcester town, “*They speak very well of him*”, he said, “*that he was a very honest lad; his master in the country was a very bad master*”. He was transported on the First Fleet transport *Scarborough*.

At Sydney on 24 March 1788 Nichols married Mary Carroll, aged about 36, a First Fleet convict convicted at the Old Bailey; but they seem to have separated and she was sent to Norfolk Island in October 1788. Nichols seems to have worked initially at Farm Cove (see case below) and was settled alone on a 40 acre grant in July 1791, described as a former gardener. He and his convict hutkeeper were robbed and terrorised by runaway soldiers in August 1793. Undeterred by this setback, he purchased William Parish’s nearby farm in the late 1790s and was very prosperous by mid-1800 with 52 acres sown in wheat and maize, 110 sheep and 28 pigs. By 1802 he also owned a horse, a sign of growing status. He married a recently arrived convict woman, Ann Pugh, at Parramatta in 1803. She bore him 12 children. He appears to have retained ownership of the Prospect grant until at least shortly before his death at Sydney in December 1822.

### **John Nichols, witness for a Magistrates Court case, 21 October 1788**

**comment:** The garden in which Eccles worked was probably at Farm Cove. Eccles, a convict in his late 50s, was a highly skilled professional gardener. Nichols, it seems, was also a skilled gardener.

**Sydney Cove, 21 October 1788**

**magistrate:** [before one unnamed magistrate]

**prisoner:** Thomas Eccles

**charge:** *“being in Liquor, contrary to orders & carrying vegetables out of the garden he worked in”.*

**John Nichols** stated that the previous Saturday and Sunday he had seen Eccles carrying vegetables in his apron from the garden to *“the other side of the Water”* [meaning Tank Stream]. He had particularly noticed him carrying radishes and had seen him hand a few cabbage plants over the hedge to a woman. He added that Eccles had been *“in liquor”* in the evening.

Thomas Yarsley stated that he had seen Eccles take radishes out of the garden and had seen him drunk.

Eccles said in his defence that: *“for looking at Capt. Shea's Garden & giving him a Slip of Fennel, he gave me a Tumbler of Rum & Water. I did not know there was any Harm in giving away a few Radishes - I never took any Cauliflower plants - only a few leaves”.*

**sentence:** dismissed from the garden and sent to the brickfields.

## **8. WILLIAM PARISH (c1764-1817) & PHEBE NORTON (c1756-1820)**

*William Parish farmed at Prospect 1791-c1799*

William Parish, a seaman aged about 20, was sentenced to death at the Old Bailey in October 1784 for highway robbery. He had put a pistol to the throat of a man in a by-road at Chelsea, threatening him with the memorable words: *“Your money or your life you buggerer, or I'll blow your bloody brains out!”* The victim put his hands in his pockets as if to take out the money, but hit Parish instead, *“I cut at his belly and than I laid hold of the pistol, a scuffle ensued, he said he was very much hurt, and he would resign to me. I let him up and he ran”*, When chased and caught, Parish begged: *“For God's sake give me a good licking and let me go!”* Reprieved to transportation for seven years he sailed on the First Fleet transport *Alexander*. He sometimes used the alias surname Potter.

At Sydney on 13 February 1788 Parish married fellow First Fleeter Phebe Norton (see attached Old Bailey trial record); she was at least ten years his senior. Their son Charles was baptised at Parramatta in September 1790. In mid-1791 they were settled on 60 acres at Prospect. Two more sons were born to the couple, but they did not stay on the land. Perhaps discouraged by a sentence of 150 lashes for insolence in 1792 (see case below) and a robbery committed by runaway convicts in 1795, Parish had sold his farm to John Nichols by 1800. The couple drifted to Sydney where Parish worked as a labourer until his death in 1817. His widow died there in 1820.

**William Parish, defendant in a Magistrates Court case, 9 January 1792**

**comment:** This case illustrates the plight of recently emancipated convicts who remained subject to harsh discipline and limited civil rights in the colony. Parish's seven year sentence had expired a few weeks before this case. His attempt to assert his new status as a free property holder was met with a harsh response. The case was heard against a background of increasing tension in the colony, with worsening food shortages and malnutrition following the influx in 1791 of 2,000 convicts from the Third Fleet. News was also spreading of the French Revolution and the stir caused in Britain by the publication of the first part of Tom Paine's *Rights of Man*.

**Parramatta, 9 January 1792**

**magistrates:** David Collins & Rev. R. Johnson

**prisoner:** *William Parish*

**charge:** *"behaving insolently and with much abuse to Mr Thomas Arndell, assistant surgeon at Parramatta, with threatening the life of the said Mr Thomas Arndell & with insolence and abuse to Mr Thomas Clarke on Sunday the 1st & Tuesday the 3d of this instant January".*

Dr Arndell told the magistrates that the initial incident had taken place in the Parramatta store house on 1 January [probably while Parish was collecting his rations there]. Arndell told Parish his wife should come in to Parramatta to have their new baby christened. Parish replied that she was very ill. Arndell suggested that he visit her and if she was ill he might have her sent to the hospital at Parramatta. Parish said that *"she should not come to such a lousy place"*. On this and another occasions Parish became involved in arguments with Arndell about rations he felt he and his wife were entitled to. A second argument at the Parramatta dispensary also involved Superintendent Thomas Clarke, who said he had beaten Parish with a stick, claiming the former convict had been brandishing an axe shouting that he was a free man and *"if ever I catch you on my ground at Prospect Hill I'll kick you off of it!"*, while promising to complain to Captain Nepean about being stuck by the superintendent. Parish admitted to the magistrates that he had abused Dr Arndell but claimed he had only raised his axe to ward off blows from Clarke's stick, *"When passion gets the better of me I don't know what I'm doing"*, he said, Judge Advocate David Collins sentenced him to receive 100 lashes *"there not being any other Mode of punishing a Person of his Description & of so properly checking that spirit of Disobedience & want of Subordination which appears in his Conduct."*

## **9. EDWARD PUGH (c1765-1837) & HANNAH SMITH (c1765-1826?)**

*Edward Pugh farmed at Prospect 1791-1800*

Edward Pugh, a carpenter aged about 22 and born in Shropshire, was sentenced to seven years transportation at Gloucester in October 1784 for the theft of a greatcoat. He sailed on the First Fleet transport *Friendship* and married Hannah Smith at Sydney on 15 June 1788. She had been convicted with the black convict Daniel Gordon for stealing clothing at Upham in Hampshire and sailed on the First Fleet transport *Charlotte*. She bore Pugh five children. The couple were self-supporting by 1795, but in 1800 Edward Pugh decided to join the NSW Corps. In 1808 he was described as aged about 50, born in Shewsbury, 5'6" tall, dark-complexioned with hazel eyes and light brown hair. He was discharged when the Corps was recalled to England in 1810 and worked as an itinerant labourer in the Hawkesbury district during the 1820s, having apparently sold his grant. Hannah Pugh died in 1826. Edward Pugh died a pauper at Windsor Hospital on 30 November 1837.

## LATER PROSPECT SETTLERS:

### WILLIAM SHERWIN (1763-1822)

William Sherwin was not among the first Prospect settlers, but his story is of particular interest. He was baptised at Ockbrook, near Derby, England on 22 May 1763, the son of William and Mary Sherwin. Arriving as a corporal in the NSW Corps on the *Pitt* transport in 1792, he was promoted to sergeant in 1793 and was discharged from the army in 1801.

Sherwin's story was a remarkable one. His wife Ann sailed with him to the colony in 1792. Also on the ship was Captain Joseph Foveaux, a bachelor and one of the most senior NSW Corps officers. Some time after landing (probably by 1794) Ann Sherwin left her husband for Foveaux, returning with him to England in 1810. Their marriage there in 1815 appears to have been technically bigamous.

Foveaux's poaching of Sherwin's wife caused a scandal, even in the context of the rather relaxed sexual and marital mores of Botany Bay. Sherwin was said to have been treated shabbily by an officer, who abused his position of power to seduce Mrs Sherwin (although there is every reason to believe that she readily consented to the arrangement). The incident was recalled by the emancipist Robert "Buckey" Jones in his memoirs written in the 1820s. Margaret Smith in recalling injustices in the early days of the colony for Caroline Chisholm in 1844 made a clear allusion to this incident when she said that a "Gentleman" had once taken a soldier's wife away (see Flynn, *The Second Fleet* p 164).

Meanwhile William Sherwin was transferred to Norfolk Island in March 1794, probably to keep him out of the way. He returned to NSW in 1799 and purchased 200 acres in the Hawkesbury district and a 50 acre farm near Parramatta originally granted to Simon Burn (who was murdered in 1794). Sherwin was probably based at Parramatta or nearby from 1799. His position as storekeeper under the anti-Bligh regime was confirmed by Macquarie in February 1810. He held the post at his death in 1822. Sherwin's Parramatta house backed on to the river, just east of the modern ferry wharf and close to the public storehouse.

In 1814 he was recorded living with Mary Duggin or Duggan (born c1783, *Marquis Cornwallis* 1796) and six children. She was the daughter of a NSW Corps soldier and had come with her parents to the colony from Ireland in 1796. Her first child by Sherwin appears to have been born prior to 1809. In 1815 he was granted 400 acres fronting Prospect Creek, on or near the Portland Place site. He named the property "Ockbrook" after his birthplace.

Under Macquarie, Sherwin also acted as Chief Constable at Parramatta. On 2 June 1821 he gave evidence at the trial before the Parramatta Bench (AONSW ref.COD 487 p21) of John Carbine, a convict attached to Mr Thompson's road party. Sherwin's evidence read as follows: "*Mr Sherwin states that about Half past Eight o'clock on Sunday Night last, he met the Prisoner Carbine in the street - He jostled against Complainant, and he asked him who he was? he said, he was an Englishman, and as free as complainant was. He asked who he belonged to? but he would give no satisfactory answer. He told Gurrey a soldier who was in company to take hold on him, and see who he was - when he put himself in a fighting posture and Gurrey struck him and he would not walk. He abused Complainant and called him all the Grey headed Buggers he could all the way to the Gaol. He kept calling out - is there no free men in Parramatta to see me, that Parramatta was Damn'd and lost to see a man used so, and he would serve him the first time he caught him amongst the Gang*" Carbine was ordered 50 lashes.

William Sherwin died on 27 March 1822, aged 58, and was buried in St Johns Cemetery on the 29th, where a headstone marks his grave. His mother-in-law Mary "Duggin" died on the same day and was buried on the 29th as well. She has her own headstone in St Johns (decorated with a crucifix, which suggests that she was an Irish Catholic). Sherwin's widow married an emancipist William Wells (*Fortune* 1813), who was described in the 1828 Census as a publican of Parramatta. His wife was said to be aged 45 with 7 children said to be aged 5-18 (including a set of 8 year old twins). Mary Wells died on 28 June 1857 and was buried with her first husband.

### **The cattle duffers of 1813: Michael Murphy & Eleanor Lawler**

Michael Murphy had arrived as an Irish convict on the *Friendship* in February 1800, having been court martialled for desertion from the army in 1797 and sentenced to transportation for life.\*

\*Care has been taken to distinguish this Michael Murphy from his namesake (c1758-1823) who arrived as a free Marine on the First Fleet's HMS *Sirius* in 1788, transferred to the NSW Corps, was granted land at Georges River/Bankstown in 1800 and held a beer licence there in 1811. The first fleeter transferred to the 73rd Regiment in 1810, was stationed at Parramatta in 1814 and died at Windsor in 1823, leaving five daughters and one son.

In 1801 Michael Murphy (identified as an assigned convict per *Friendship* 1800) was recorded working for Michael Dunnavan or Donovan (b.c1765, *Boddingtons* 1793, tried Tipperary) in the Hawkesbury district. Donovan was a successful Irish emancipist who had purchased a farm there and was recorded in 1800 with a woman and two children, 15 hogs, and 12 acres sown in maize and 2 in wheat. The woman with him was an Irish convict, Eleanor Lawler (b.c1768, *Marquis Cornwallis* 1796, tried Limerick). They were described as a married couple when their son Michael (born 10 May 1797) was baptised at St Johns, Parramatta in July 1797 (although no record of a marriage has been traced). Dunnavan seems to have been in favour with Governor King and was granted 49 acres at Prospect in March 1802, taking his wife, children and Murphy with him [probably moving onto the land during 1801]. Also with Donovan at Prospect in 1801 was John Callaghan (*Britannia* 1797, tried Meath). At the 1802 muster Donovan was recorded with 50 acres at Prospect (13 in wheat, 12 in maize), owning one horse and 4 hogs and supporting a woman, 2 children and 3 assigned convicts.

In 1806 Lawler was recorded with 4 illegitimate children (2 male, 2 female). She and Murphy were still with Donovan, who was recorded on his apparently flourishing Prospect farm in 1806 with 6 cattle and supporting a woman, 4 children, 2 convicts and 5 free men. Donovan gave evidence at a Sydney trial in December 1808, but left the colony for Europe soon afterwards, probably before the end of 1809. He sold his farm and arranged an amicable separation with Lawler, leaving her with one daughter and £207 in cash (he appears to have taken the other three children with him). She immediately took Michael Murphy as her de facto husband and invested the money in improving and stocking the 200 acres Murphy was granted in November 1809 on the Prospect Road between Parramatta and Prospect [he appears to have received a pardon from his life sentence by this time]. The farm fronted the south side of Old Prospect Road, probably in the vicinity of modern Cumberland Road, Greystanes.

The couple built a house on the land, but lived in the township of Parramatta, leaving an overseer to supervise the day-to-day running of the farm. Prior to September 1809 the couple occupied the house next door to Thomas Halfpenny's in Parramatta township, fronting George Street and close to the river, near the site of the modern Charles Street wharf. Murphy may have operated some kind of shop or workshop or perhaps a public house on this prime commercial site near the wharf and military district.

In March 1813 Lawler was described as the de facto wife of [she "co-habited with"] Michael Murphy at Parramatta when both were sentenced to 14 years transportation for receiving stolen cattle (see summary of trial evidence below ref. AONSW ref. 5/1120-1). The trial evidence suggests that Lawler played a strong role in her partnership with Murphy, negotiating on an equal basis with the cattle thieves. In his evidence the Rev, Samuel Marsden suggested that she had played a key role in the affair, repeating Murphy's claim that: "*he had done all he could to prevent her from having anything to do with them but she would not be governed by him*".

Lawler and Murphy were both sent to the penal settlement at Newcastle during 1813. Lawler was back at Parramatta by the October 1814 muster, described as a single woman with 5 children. She was sent back to Newcastle in January 1815, returned to Sydney and was sent back to Newcastle in January 1816. Returning to Sydney again in August 1816, she went to Newcastle once more in March 1817.

Meanwhile Murphy had been allowed to return to Parramatta by December 1814 and was pardoned in January 1815. He was buried at St Johns, Parramatta on 5 May 1819, age given as 49. Murphy's will left his entire estate to Lawler's four daughters, to be divided equally between them when they had reached the age of 21. At St Johns, Parramatta on 28 August 1820 Lawler married William Burke (per ship *Admiral Gambier*) a convict still under sentence who at 32 was about twenty years her junior. Lawler was recorded in the 1822 muster as a Parramatta district resident with two children aged 12 and 10. In February 1824 Lawler sent a memorial to Governor Bourke requesting his intervention in her dispute with Murphy's executor, John Tarlington. Telling the story of her life in the colony (omitting any mention of her 1813 conviction), she complained that Tarlington had sold part of the land against the terms of the will and without her consent as holder of the title deeds and without giving her financial assistance to raise her two younger daughters (the two elder girls had married). A year earlier she had been compelled by financial difficulties to place the younger girls, Bridget and Catherine, in the Female Orphan School at Parramatta. The Colonial Secretary advised her to take legal action against Tarlington. The outcome of the case and Lawler's subsequent fate have not been confirmed (source for above AONSW Col. Sec. Index & Correspondence under Murphy/Lawler)

### **Trial 9 March 1813**

#### **of Richard Berry, Patrick Malony for stealing government cattle & Michael Murphy & Eleanor Lawler for receiving the stolen cattle**

At the trial crown witness James Parker said that last May he went to Murphy's house at Parramatta. Murphy said he would buy a couple of cows if they would bring them to his yard. *"The same night Berry and I took the cows down to Murphy's yard we went down to his house at Parramatta"*. They had something to eat & drink there & Murphy agreed to pay £10 for each cow. He actually paid for one cow as the other escaped from Murphy's yard [almost certainly at the Prospect farm].

Berry & Malony were sentenced to death. Murphy & Lawler were sentenced to 14 years transportation.

source: AONSW 5/1120 p283 9 March 1813

### **Trial 9 March 1813**

#### **Timothy Hector, Richard Berry Patrick Malony for stealing 6 government cattle & Michael Murphy & Eleanor Lawler for receiving the stolen cattle**

Crown witness James Parker, overseer at the South Creek government stockyard, says that after selling the 2 cows mentioned in the previous trial he had been at the store at Parramatta when Hector and Joseph Suttor (since dead) told him Murphy wanted to see him. At the house Murphy said he would take more cattle. They drove 6 cattle from South Creek to Murphy's farm situated between Prospect & Parramatta. Murphy & Lawler negotiated jointly. Lawler mentions her daughter [not named in the evidence]. They used the brand EL. Stephen Colter, a free man. was overseer at Murphy's farm. Lawler signed a confession with her mark, Rev. Marsden states that Murphy told him *"he had done all he could to prevent her from having anything to do with the them but she would not be governed by him. With respect to Timothy Hector I consider him to be a man of extreme poverty and very weak intellect: and that he was the mere tool of the others - He is an extremely ignorant man"*. William Cox says that he has known Hector, his former stockman, for 10 or 12 years. *"I also know him to be a very ignorant and inoffensive man & think if he was left alone he would not do wrong. but I believe he has fallen into error from designing persons who reap the benefit from what he has done"*. Hector Berry and Malony were sentenced to death. Murphy & Lawler were re-sentenced to 14 years transportation.

notes: at the trial (March 1813 p290) of Richard Berry, Patrick Malony, Hugh Burn & John Marney, John Jamieson Principal Superintendent of Stock said Malony had worked under him 2½ years, Berry for 5 years, Marney for 9 or 10 years. Joseph Suttor was the crown witness murdered on the orders of the wealthy butcher, farmer and grazier Matthew Kearns who had been tried with Hector on a similar cattle theft charge. Kearns, his son and brother and two others were hanged for the murder of Suttor. Clearly Murphy was implicated in the cattle duffing ring of which Kearns appears to have been a ringleader, (source: AONSW 5/1120 p283, 290).

## Part 2 Holroyd Aboriginal history

### 7. Bennelong's walk with Governor Phillip to Prospect, April 1790

Only limited progress had been made by the Europeans in learning the Aboriginal language from Arabanoo in the five months prior to his death in May 1789. With Aboriginal attacks causing increasing problems for the settlement Phillip ordered the kidnapping of two men so that the process of language acquisition could continue. In November 1789 Colbee and Bennelong were lured to a boat in what was probably Manly Cove by Marines and seamen holding out fish. Colbee made his escape from Sydney soon afterwards. Bennelong was held at the settlement for six months prior to his escape in May 1790. He made considerable progress in learning English and teaching elements of his own language to his captors. After Phillip was wounded by a spear in September 1790 Bennelong commenced negotiations for the establishment of peaceful Aboriginal-European contact. Soon he was living at Government House, eating at Phillip's table and calling him *bianga* (father). He developed a close friendship with Phillip, who built him a small brick house on what is now Bennelong Point, the site of the Opera House. This was an important site for Sydney Aboriginal people, who called the point *Too-bow-gu-liè* (Collins I p492) or *Tubow-gule* (Hunter p324).

Phillip took Bennelong to London in 1793 where he met King George III, Sir Joseph Banks and many prominent people. He travelled about the city by carriage, swam, played shuttlecock, wore expensive clothes and went to the Covent Garden theatres, returning to Sydney in 1795. His first wife Barangaroo and her child died and his second wife Goroobarrooboollo left him for another man while he was in England. He returned to traditional Aboriginal life and was involved in many ritual battles. By his third wife he had one son, Dickie (c1803-1823). Bennelong died at Kissing Point, Sydney on 3 January 1813, aged about 50 (see M. Flynn, *Settlers and Seditious*, 1994, p. ix).

Cadigal territory stretched from South Head to what is now the Sydney CBD. The area on the south shore of the harbour west of Darling Harbour was Wangal territory. Goat Island (known as Mel-Mel, Me-Mel or Mattawunga), near the eastern border of his clan's territory had particular significance for Bennelong and he and his family were often camped there. P.G.King (Hunter p275) describes the Wangal land as extending from Long Cove [later known as Cockle Bay and then Darling Harbour] to Parramatta. There is good reason to suppose that Parramatta itself was outside Wangal territory as suggested by the following passage in King's journal (Hunter p326):

"It is rather singular that none of the natives like Rose-Hill, probably because fish is seldom procured there. Both Arrabannu and Bannelong, whilst they lived with Governor Phillip, always appeared to dislike going there, and after the first day would be continually pressing him to return to Sydney".

This passage refers to the period around 1789-91 when Bennelong clearly did not feel that Parramatta was his "country". Later, however, he was much more comfortable visiting Parramatta, as reflected in a comment by Collins (I p492-3):

"Having strolled down to the Point named *Too-bow-gu-liè* [Bennelong Point], I saw the sister and young wife of Bennilong coming round the point in the new canoe which the husband had cut in his last excursion to Parramatta".

This passage (undated, but possibly referring to 1795-6) indicates that Bennelong was willing to visit Parramatta for a particular purpose. It is not clear whether his visit was specifically to cut bark for a new canoe, or whether the bark cutting was incidental to the journey. It is of particular interest in the light of the tentative identification of Aboriginal scarred trees in Parramatta Park (reported on for Parramatta City Council by Dr Val Attenbrow, March 1994). Why there were no suitable trees within his own clan territory remains unclear-possibly because extensive clearing may have already taken place around Sydney or because the trees at Parramatta were taller and straighter. Writing from Parramatta in May 1805 the missionary and schoolmaster William Pascoe Crook mentioned that Bennelong “*visits the settlement now and then, is very polite, begs a loaf and departs*” (source: Crook quoted in K. Willey, *When the Sky Fell Down*, 1979).

Phillip mentions that in early May 1791 Aborigines [such as Bennelong] who had been spending much of their time around the Sydney settlement were now absent for several days at a time because: “*they found plenty of fish towards the head of the harbour*” [i.e. the western end towards Parramatta, see Hunter p349]. This suggests a seasonal fishing and foodgathering pattern and, interestingly, coincides with the eel harvesting time mentioned by Collins as taking place in April. Bradley had mentioned an overabundance followed by a sudden scarcity of harbour fish in April/May 1788.

Referring to the first half of September 1790 Phillip wrote (Hunter p312) that “*The weather being now very dry, the natives were employed in burning the grass on the north shore opposite to Sydney, in order to catch rats and other animals, whilst the women were employed in fishing: this is their constant practice in dry weather*”. This is a valuable observation of the use of fire by Sydney Aboriginal hunters - a practice which probably contributed to the grassy landscape around Parramatta. An insight into Aboriginal firing practices at Parramatta appears in Phillip’s account (Hunter p336) of the heatwave there on 10-12 February 1791:

“The weather was very close and sultry, and the natives having fired the country for several miles round, the wind, which blew strong on the 12th, was heated to a very extraordinary degree, particularly at Rose-Hill, where the country was on fire for several miles to the northward and southward. Great numbers of parroquets were picked up under the trees, and the bats, which had been seen frequently flying about Rose-Hill soon after the evening closed in, and were supposed to go to the southward every night, and return to the northward before day broke, now appeared in immense numbers. Thousands of them were hanging on the branches of the trees, and many dropped down, unable to bear the burning winds... from the numbers that fell into the brook at Rose-Hill, the water was tainted for several days, and it was supposed that more than twenty thousand of them were seen within the space of one mile.”

Philip Gidley King’s account of his visit to Parramatta on 9 April 1790 (quoted below - Hunter p269-75) is one of the earliest descriptions of the beauty of the area.. Walking four miles with Governor Phillip to Prospect he saw undulating grassland interspersed with magnificent trees and supporting a substantial population of kangaroos and emus (during his visit King spotted a mob of several dozen kangaroos). His passing reference to eight Aboriginal place names hints at the complex web of story and song attached to the land.

King mentions that at this time [April 1790] Bennelong “*walks about constantly with the governor*” (Hunter p269). He goes on to mention that “*when walking one night, from Prospect-Hill to Rose-Hill, we frequently stumbled against the roots, and he [Bennelong] exclaimed ‘Wère Wadè’ and ‘Wadè Wèrè’, [meaning] bad wood or bad roots*”(Hunter p270). Taken together, these two passages make it almost certain that it was Bennelong who informed King of the eight place names between Parramatta and Prospect as they walked there after dinner on 9 April 1790 (given that King was only in NSW 4-17 April 1790 en route from Norfolk Island to England). Although, as mentioned above, Bennelong did not like to stay at Parramatta for long because it was not his clan’s “country”, there is no reason why he should not have visited the Burramattagal on ceremonial occasions prior to 1789 and learned their place names and those of their near neighbours. He often visited the North Shore and Botany Bay clan territories. According to Tench the Burramattagal spoke the coastal dialect. Presumably they had a greater cultural affinity with Bennelong than those a little further inland.

King's description of the walk is as follows:

“After dinner, I accompanied the governor from Rose-Hill to Prospect-Hill, which is about four miles distant: we walked through a very pleasant tract of country, which, from the distance the trees grew from each other, and the gentle hills and dales, and rising slopes covered with grass, appeared like a vast park. The soil from Rose-Hill to Prospect-Hill is nearly alike, being a loam and clay. It is remarkable that although the distance between these two places is only four miles, yet the natives divide it into eight different districts.”(Source: Hunter, pp269-75)

As they walked Bennelong told them of the names of places they passed. The meticulous Dawes recorded the timing of their walk in relation to the place names (of which he gives two versions of each, apparently meant as a guide to pronunciation):

*Wau-maille*

*Malgray-matta*

*Era-worong*

*Carra-matta*

*Boolbane-matta*

*Carro-Wotong*

*Mar-rong*

“*In going to the Westward from Rose Hill you walk in ten minutes to War-mul, in nineteen to Mal-gra-mattar, in seven to A-rar-woo-rung, in eighteen to Car-rar-mattar, in five to Bul-barn - mattar, in twenty nine to Kar-rar-wo-tong & in seventeen to Murrong - Prospect Hill.*”

Lieutenant Dawes was an intense, solitary man with a passionate interest in Aboriginal culture. He left Sydney for England in December 1791. With expertise in astronomy, engineering, surveying and mathematics, he was the nearest thing to a scientist and intellectual in the colony. His method of measuring distances on these expeditions is related by Watkin Tench in an account of a journey to the Hawkesbury in April 1791 (Tench, 1979, p224):

“Our method, on these expeditions, was to steer by compass, noting the different courses as we proceeded; and counting the number of paces, of which two thousand two hundred, on good ground, were allowed to be a mile ..... we always knew exactly where we were, and how far from home: an unspeakable advantage in a new country, where one hill, and one tree, is so like another, that fatal wanderings would ensue without it. This arduous task was always allotted to Mr Dawes, who, from habit and superior skill, performed it almost without a stop, or an interruption of conversation: to any other man, on such terms, it would have been impracticable.”

Their route from what is now Parramatta Park to Prospect Hill would have taken them on a course roughly followed by the Great Western Highway and Old Prospect Road. The track bisects the modern Holroyd Council area and should be given a high priority in any commemoration or interpretation of the history of Aboriginal occupation and early European settlement of the area.

Parramatta blanket returns of the 1830s and 40s show surviving members of a Prospect “tribe” known as the Weymaly. This is almost certainly a form of the place name “Wau-maille” given in 1790 as a place west of Parramatta in the Dawes list. On the basis of this inference it might be appropriate to speculate that their clan territory extended as far east as Mays Hill.

## **8. The Darug and Eora clans of the Sydney region**

Early British commentators referred to the extended Aboriginal family units of up to about sixty people as “tribes”. These groups are more properly called bands or clans. Each clan was named after the area of land on which they normally lived and to which they had traditional links. The suffix “gal” for a man and “galleon” for a woman was added to the place name to denote a person from a particular clan area; “gal” is used here as a non-gender-specific term used to refer to all members of a clan of both sexes. Sydney Cove (*Waran*) was in the clan territory of the Cadigal.

J.Brook and J. Kohen (in *The Parramatta Native Institution and the Black Town*, 1991) write that the Sydney language (Darug, Dharug or Dharruk) was spoken by all Aborigines of the area covered by modern suburban Sydney as far south as Botany Bay and Georges River, south west to Appin, west to the Blue Mountains and north west to the Hawkesbury River. The existence of a single language spoken in most of the area of modern metropolitan Sydney is supported by linguist Jakelin Troy in *The Sydney Language* (1994). Troy prefers to describe the language as “*The Sydney Language*” in preference to the term D(h)arug. It seems clear, however, that there were significant differences between the inland and coastal dialects.

As already mentioned, the coastal clans who shared a common dialect and culture are generally referred to as the *Eora* or *Iyora*. They inhabited the shores of Sydney Harbour, the north shore of Botany Bay and the ocean beaches and headlands from South Head, at the mouth of the harbour, to Cape Banks, the northern headland at the mouth of Botany Bay.

Within the language area were two distinct sub-groups who differed in both dialect and culture. One comprised those who lived by the coast and harbour, whose main food supply was fish and other types of seafood - called the *katungal* (from the word for the sea: *katung*). It seems that the western extent of the harbour tide and the parts of the fresh water stream that now fall within Parramatta Park may have formed the boundary of the Burramattagal, the westernmost Eora clan. The *katungal* probably also trapped ducks and other wildfowl and collected eggs in the extensive wetlands on the south shore of the harbour and in the freshwater lagoons and swamps near Parramatta. Tench (p 231) states quite clearly that the coastal dialect was spoken by the Aboriginal people of Parramatta. Theirs was undoubtedly a borderline culture. This cultural frontier is emphasised by the use of a spot just west of Parramatta as a meeting point for inland and coastal people where they fought ceremonial battles and held corroborees as late as 1833. The same site was near the path traversed by Dawes when he recorded the eight Aboriginal place names in 1790 and approximated what became the main road to Prospect.

The other Sydney language sub-group included all those who lived inland - the *paiendra* (from the word for tomahawk: *paien*), who used stone tomahawks to cut climb marks and hunt possum in the trees. Collins was himself somewhat ambiguous on this point, referring to "*The natives who live in the woods and on the margins of rivers*". By this he appears to mean those living inland and on the banks of the Hawkesbury (and those living in inland forested areas between Parramatta and the Georges River). They climbed trees to catch "*the opossum and flying squirrel*" and trapped small animals and birds and ate roots, yams, berries, ants, worms and grubs, as well as fishing in the inland lagoons and rivers.

The people of the coastal and inland parts of the Sydney region have been lumped together by European ethnographers and linguists as members of the same "tribe" because they spoke dialects of the same language. This tribal designation given by 20th century Europeans may have its origins in a desire to fit a tribe within the boundaries of the 19th century County of Cumberland. The absence of any surviving native speakers in the 20th century has made precise identification of dialect, tribal and clan boundaries problematic. Brook and Kohen (1991, p3) speak of them as "two distinct sub-tribes", but group the coastal and inland people together as members of a Darug (or Dharug/Dharruk) tribe. The coastal people are identified by Kohen as Darug for linguistic reasons, not for any cultural or political tribal affiliation. The term Dharruk was the name given for the language by the linguist R.H. Matthews in 1903 in his grammar and vocabulary of the Sydney language compiled "*from the lips of old natives acquainted with the language*". In *The Sydney Language* (1993) Jakelin Troy states that the language spoken in the area bounded by the Hawkesbury River, the Blue Mountains, Georges River, Botany Bay and the sea should be regarded as a single language with several dialects.

In an essay titled "Tribal and Linguistic Boundaries: a Reassessment of the Evidence" (in G. Aplin, ed., *A Difficult Infant: Sydney Before Macquarie*, 1988, p54-71) Ann Ross argues that too much weight has been given to linguistic evidence collected by 18th and 19th century amateurs. She suggests that this emphasis may have resulted in the delineation of erroneous tribal boundaries and that consideration should be given to recognising the distinct tribal identity of the coastal Eora, who had more in common with their northern neighbours than those inland.

There is considerable uncertainty over the northern boundary of the Sydney language. The rugged and still largely unsettled country between Narrabeen and Bobbin Head might have presented a natural boundary. The Kuringai language was spoken by the Carigal clan based on the south side of Broken Bay, and by clans in the Gosford/Wyong area. Anne Ross argues that the coastal Eora should not be considered as a tribal sub-group of the Darug because they shared a common culture with the Kuringai. For example, Bungaree (c1775-1830), a Kuringai man from Broken Bay, was a well known identity in Sydney Harbour in the last twenty years of his life. In 1823 he acted as co-leader of the Eora when they fought the Liverpool and Wollongong clans in a ritual conflict at the Sydney Race Ground [then at Vacluse] (K.V.Smith, *King Bungaree*, 1987). It is events like this, not linguistic evidence, which give the strongest clues to tribal affiliations as Aboriginal people saw them. The separate Eora/Darug identities are reflected in the Aboriginal communities that survived into the twentieth century near Windsor (Darug) and Botany Bay/La Perouse (Eora and their southern neighbours).

Whether the Cammeraigal of Middle Harbour and the Gayimai (or Kayimai) of Manly also spoke Kuringai, or spoke the Eora dialect remains unclear. But it seems very unlikely that the Cammeraigal spoke a different language to their neighbours on the south side of the harbour. They were in constant contact with the Cadigal, who treated them with respect and a certain amount of deference. Early European commentators make no mention of a language difference and state that the Cammeraigal were the most numerous, robust and muscular of the harbour clans (Collins p453). They supervised many Cadigal ceremonies, including tooth extraction and other initiation ceremonies, some ritual combat or payback contests, as well as performing medical and shamanic functions. Bennelong, whose clan territory was in the south west harbour, was captured at Manly, to the north east in 1789, and travelled there to participate in an initiation ceremony in 1790.

South of Botany Bay a different language, Dharawal, was spoken which extended to Wollongong and Jervis Bay. They were occasionally at war with the Eora and even Europeans readily recognised their differing appearance and customs. So the Sydney language area began in a narrow neck of land between Sydney Harbour and Botany Bay (probably including the harbourside areas of the north shore and perhaps the northern beaches), spreading in a widening arc towards the Blue Mountains, encompassing an enormous cultural diversity in a relatively small area.

The hostility between the coastal Eora and the inland Eora Darug is well illustrated by the attitudes of two harbour men, Colbee and Baluderri who accompanied Phillip on a journey of exploration to the Hawkesbury in April 1791 (Tench p224-9). Both men became disoriented as the party moved northwest from Parramatta and had never seen the Hawkesbury River. They referred to the inland people in hostile terms and Baluderri maliciously destroyed one of their unattended huts. In 1800 Collins (II p215) wrote that: *“The natives of the coast, whenever speaking of those in the interior, constantly expressed themselves with contempt and marks of disapprobation.... there was not any doubt of their living in a state of mutual distrust and enmity.”*

## 9. Rebel Clan: the Bidjigal

The list of place names given in the Dawes manuscript of 1790 (SOAS ref. MS41645a-b) carries the annotation that the Bediagal clan were “The people who inhabit the last district”. By this Dawes appears to have meant Mar-rong (Prospect Hill). This may be based on a rather vague statement from Bennelong: it may be taken as identifying the Bediagal/Bidjigal with Prospect Creek, which flows south east from Prospect Hill into the Georges River and forms part of the “head” of Botany Bay and would provide a possible motive for the clan’s anger at settlement along the creek in 1791. Prospect Creek may have been the western boundary of a territory that included what is now Bankstown, Salt Pan Creek and the north side of the Georges River possibly as far east as Hurstville.

The Bidjigal first came to notice when their leader Pemulwuy speared Governor Phillip's game shooter John MacEntire in December 1790. Phillip ordered Tench and Dawes to lead a punitive expedition which scoured the Bankstown, Hurstville, Rockdale area (Tench p207-14).

There has been considerable confusion over the identity and location of the Bidjigal. It has been suggested that Castle Hill was part of their territory. This assertion should be treated with caution. It appears to be based on a statement made by Colbee and Baluderi as they passed through the Castle Hill area with Phillip’s April 1791 journey of exploration. They said that: *“this part of the country was inhabited by the Bidjigals, but that most of the tribe were dead of the small-pox”*. Both of these Aboriginal men were in unfamiliar territory and may have been disoriented (the statement seems to appear in one source only: Phillip's account in Hunter p340). Tench wrote of Colbee and Baluderi on this journey: *“At a very short distance from Rose Hill, we found that they were in a country unknown to them; so that the farther they went, the more dependent on us they became, being absolute strangers inland”*. They had never seen the Hawkesbury River before and were amazed when the party reached it. *“Their total ignorance of the country, and of the direction in which they had walked, appeared, when they were asked which way Rose Hill lay; for they pointed almost oppositely to it”* (Tench p225-6).

The Dawes evidence would appear to support the identification of the Bidjigal as a clan associated with Prospect Creek and would explain the close association of Pemulwuy and Tedbury with Parramatta, which was close to the northern border of their territory. Tench's search route indicates that they were mainly east of Prospect Creek and north of Georges River. In the grammatical section of the list Dawes records Pemulwuy's name with the explanation “Bediagal-Tugagal-Tugora”, giving no translation. It is possible that Tugagal is a general term meaning bush or forest people [translated by Collins as “wood tribe”], rather than the name of a separate clan. Tugora probably means bush or forest country or place. A possible translation for the Dawes entry might be *“Pemulwuy, he's from the Bediagal clan, they're bush people, they live up there in the bush”*. Some historians have linked the terms Tugagal or Tugora with Toongabbie; this appears to have been an inference only, without support from an original source.

The Bidjigal people played a central role on the frontier conflict which raged intermittently around Parramatta in the years 1791-1802. By May 1795 Collins (I p348) was using the term Bidjigal (“Bediagal”) to refer to the “wood tribe” who were believed to be responsible for most attacks on settlers. It may have developed a more generalised sense - meaning all disaffected inland Aboriginal people of the Sydney region who joined Pemulwuy in thickly forested, inaccessible areas and made periodic raids on farms. Undoubtedly Pemulwuy harried the settlements at Rydalmere, Dundas, Toongabbie and Prospect (probably assisted by men from local clans), but his own “country” was to the south, east of Prospect Creek, around Georges River and Salt Pan Creek, towards Botany Bay.

## 10. Pemulwuy's guerilla War 1797-1802

In March 1797 a major confrontation took place following a series of raids by “*a large body of savages*” on the Northern Boundary Farms near Parramatta in which a European man and woman were killed. A group of armed settlers searched for the attackers and came upon their camp at dawn, finding 100 Aboriginal people who fled, leaving behind stolen corn and other property. The settlers tracked the Aborigines to the outskirts of Parramatta where, says Collins (II p 20):

“being fatigued with their march. they entered the town, and in about an hour after were followed by a large body of natives, headed by Pe-mul-wy, a riotous and troublesome savage. These were known by the settlers to be the same who had so frequently annoyed them; and they intended, if possible to seize upon Pe-mul-wy; who, in a great rage, threatened to spear the first man that dared to approach him, and actually did throw a spear at one of the soldiers. The conflict was now begun; a musket was immediately levelled at the principal, which severely wounded him. Many spears were thrown, and one man was hit in the arm; upon which the superior effect of our fire-arms was immediately shown them, and 5 were instantly killed.”

The “high noon” aspect of this confrontation on the streets of the town is remarkable. Collins's account suggests that Pemulwuy and his followers decided to force an open confrontation with the settlers with no regard to the inferiority of their spears to guns.

Pemulwuy was hospitalised at Parramatta with seven pieces of buckshot in his head and other parts of his body. While recovering he escaped from the hospital with an iron on his leg and was seen near Botany Bay in May 1797. In the same month a farmer and his wife at Kissing Point were seriously wounded and their house burned in an Aboriginal raid. Pemulwuy was still at large in March 1798 when Collins wrote (II p 70):

“A strange idea was found to prevail among the natives respecting the savage Pe-mul-wy, which was very likely to prove fatal to him in the end, Both he and they entertained an opinion, that, from his having been frequently wounded, he could not be killed by our fire-arms. Through this fancied security, he was said to be at the head of every party that attacked the maize grounds; and it certainly became expedient to convince them both that he was not endowed with such an extraordinary exemption”.

Pemulwuy was probably involved in an Aboriginal attack at Toongabbie in February 1798 in which, wrote Collins (II p66), one man was killed and three others seriously wounded. Two more men were killed nearby several days later. The conflict appears to have been escalating: Collins wrote that: “*It became, from these circumstances, absolutely necessary to send out numerous well-armed parties, and attack them wherever they should be met with; for lenity or forbearance had only been followed by repeated acts of cruelty*”. In June several well established farmhouses in the Northern Boundary district were burned in an Aboriginal raid (Collins II p 83),

There appears to have been a lull in hostilities until 1 May 1801 when Governor King took drastic action (in response to an alleged attack on a government stockyard), issuing a public order requiring that Aboriginal people around Parramatta, Prospect Hill and Georges River should be “*driven back from the settlers’ habitations by firing at them*”. Aborigines from Sydney and Parramatta Road [the latter were probably Bennelong’s Concord people] were specifically exempted from this sanction (quoted in Willey, *When the Sky Fell Down*, p 173).

An important Parramatta observer of this conflict was the botanist George Caley, whose letters to Sir Joseph Banks reflect a sympathetic view of the Aboriginal side (see G.Caley [C.Currey, ed.], *Reflections on the Colony of NSW* 1966, p49, 91, 140). On 25 August 1801 Caley wrote to Banks:

“While I was away in the Lady Nelson, a variance happened at Parramatta betwixt some of our people and the natives whereby the latter killed one of the former and wounded a few others, and also plundered some homes. I believe the Governor gave strict orders to shoot them, and the military went in quest of them; however these bush natives have not returned into the camp ever since, though they used to be continually one or another in before. They are not far off in the woods, and the uproar is almost over. Let them behave indifferently to our people, it will not do for me to fall out with them. I have every reason to believe that the whites have been the greatest aggressors upon the whole. At other places in the colony the natives adjoining frequent the inhabitants. I mean to keep a bush native constant soon, as they can trace anything so well in the woods, and can climb trees with such ease, whereby they will be very useful to me and shall gain a better knowledge of them”.

The May 1801 proclamation and Caley's August 1801 letter are of particular interest. They identify Aboriginal people around Parramatta, towards Prospect and Georges River, as “bush natives”. It remains unclear whether Kissing Point clan were regarded as belonging to Parramatta, or whether they were seen as harbour people, more closely linked to the Sydney clans. By 1816 they were firmly associated with Parramatta. The word “camp” used by Caley was a colonial term for “town” - a label left over from the days when Parramatta was a military-style tent settlement.

In a later letter Caley (p91) referred to the causes of the 1801-2 “war” in more detail:

“the greatest alarm was seemingly to be apprehended from the natives, who plundered some of the settlers, robbed people upon the road, and spearing some few; and they threatened, as it was said, to set the growing wheat on fire. Strict orders were given forbidding all persons from harbouring or having any intercourse with them. At times nothing was heard of them; then all was silence. When they appeared again, then there was a hue and cry. This sort of war lasted for about 12 months, at which time [June 1802] an order arrived from England respecting their behalf, and then the scene was reversed, for instead of shooting or killing them, orders were given for no-one to molest them unless they were committing some depredation. The cause of this war began about some sheep which the stock-keepers said the natives had speared. Accordingly war was declared without much deliberation, and by the natives finding that we were bent upon hostility it was not long before they revenged themselves by killing one of the stock-keepers. This affair ought and might have been settled at first, which would have prevented many of these depredations that were committed, and the inhabitants freed from that dread which incurred in their minds. In some attempts that we made to take them by surprise, they completely duped us. I shall not hesitate to say that had they been bent for to do us as much injury as we would have done them, the matter would not have ended so well, for it was in their power for to have done us an almost irreparable injury by fire, as the colony was so badly off for provisions. Whether the natives were guilty of what was laid to their charge I shall not say; but there has been proof of the stock-keepers losing a part of their flock and laying the charge to the natives, when at the same time they were innocent”.

Caley's letter seems to suggest that Governor King's Aboriginal policy was characterised by savagery and repression. The whole Aboriginal population around Parramatta was held responsible for the actions of a few individuals, or, as Caley suggests, they were unjustly accused of killing sheep by convict stock-keepers.

King's edicts appear to have encouraged a shoot-on-sight attitude whenever any Aboriginal men, women or children appeared. Caley suggests that highly developed Aboriginal bush skills enabled the fugitive clans to avoid being seen or captured most of the time. But the need to hide would undoubtedly have disrupted hunting and foodgathering. By this time most Aboriginal family groups in the Parramatta area would have been supplementing traditional food sources with food donated by Europeans or earned by working on a casual basis for settlers.

This conflict escalated in November 1801 when King issued a proclamation outlawing Pemulwuy along with the runaway convicts William Knight and Thomas Thrush who were said to be aiding and abetting him. The fresh proclamation was implemented by Rev. Samuel Marsden in his capacity as Parramatta magistrate. Caley and his trusted assigned convict servant had been establishing links with Aboriginal people whose knowledge and skills were essential to assist Caley's explorations and botanical collecting.

Marsden, accompanied by a party of soldiers, came to Caley's servant in the evening and ordered him to help them *"to apprehend the natives by force in the night"*. After the servant refused to obey Marsden had the convict thrown into gaol the next morning. Caley fully supported his servant's action. He wrote to Banks that when he remonstrated with Marsden the minister addressed him angrily:

*"He then told me that he was of the opinion that I and the man were connected with the natives. This I denied, but he repeated the same several times, and said what was my nonsensical pursuit to the lives of the stockmen and stock... This gentleman said there never- would be any good done until there was a clear riddance of the natives"*. This passage gives strong support to the widely held view that Marsden developed a very unchristian contempt for the Aboriginal people and diverted all his energies to building a missionary empire in New Zealand and the South Pacific Islands.

As mentioned earlier, a home government directive arrived in June 1802 which pardoned the murderers of 1799 and placed limitations on King's repression of Aborigines. Also in June 1802 Caley (p140) wrote to Banks:

*"I should have been able to forward you the skins that you are in want of had not the Gov. been at variance with the natives. Since he has permitted me to bring one into Parramatta several have ventured to come to me. I do not suppose that the Governor will molest them, but allow them all the privilege of coming among our people. When I was at sea in the Lady Nelson no person was allowed to harbor any of the natives belonging to this part of the colony. This eruption has been much against me. I shall always strive to be upon good terms with them, which may be done by giving them small axes.... and by filling their bellies - by doing so, I can make myself popular among them and gain information"*.

On 30 October 1802 King wrote to Lord Hobart that Pemulwuy “*an active daring leader*” had raided many farms, killed four white men and had “*cruelly used some of the convict women*” [an expression often used as a euphemism for sexual assault]. The recent attacks had taken place on the edges of the Parramatta and Toongabbie farming districts. This probably resulted in the resumption of the ban on contact with Aboriginal people around Parramatta. King went on to report to Hobart that several Aborigines had pleaded to him that they had been forced by Pemulwuy to assist in his guerrilla activity. King said he had responded with an appeal to their own cultural values: “*as it is a practice strictly observed among the natives that murder should be atoned by the life of the murderer or someone belonging to him, the natives were told that when Pemulwye was given up they should be re-admitted to our friendship*”. By this time King’s Aboriginal policy seems to reflect a partial easing of the savage repression of 1801-2 and a willingness to negotiate with individual Aborigines. After quoting King, Keith Willey (p167) goes on to state that Pemulwuy was shot dead by two settlers (giving no reference). This assertion is at variance with a report in the Sydney Gazette (24.6.1804) that Pemulwuy’s “*assassination was voluntarily undertaken by themselves*” [the Aborigines]. Pemulwuy’s head is said to have been sent to Sir Joseph Banks in England. Enquiries made by the Sydney Morning Herald in late 1994 failed to locate its whereabouts.

Pemulwuy’s death marked the effective end of Aboriginal resistance in the Parramatta area. As a reward for his killers Governor King relaxed restrictions on Aboriginal people in the district, permitting them to come to Parramatta freely. Pemulwuy’s son Tedbury was arrested in 1805 and 1809 for robberies, but was held only for short periods on both occasions. In February 1810 Edward Luttrell was arrested for shooting and wounding Tedbury at Parramatta. This case is of particular interest as another attempt to enforce equality before the law for Aboriginal people.

## 11. Cultural survival in a settler society

As early as February 1791 the surviving clans of the Sydney area were staging traditional ceremonies which Europeans were allowed to witness. It is highly likely that they performed these ceremonies on sites which had been used for similar purposes prior to European occupation and which had not been built on or farmed. Many ceremonies were connected with birth, initiation, marriage and death. But most striking, and most commented on by European observers, were the payback rituals in which the relatives of an injured party punished or fought the perpetrator and his relatives.

Aboriginal women and children, as well as men, participated in these conflicts, which followed carefully delineated traditional patterns, but were adapted to the new situation. They soon became a gladiatorial blood sport for increasingly large numbers of European spectators. Although occasionally deplored by educated observers, they were not banned - probably because prohibition would have been strongly resisted by the Aboriginal people, who undoubtedly saw the contests as an affirmation of their culture and identity. While focusing on the violence of the rituals, many European observers failed to mention the corroborees featuring dance, song and storytelling which preceded or followed the contests.

On 16 December 1804 the *Sydney Gazette* reported that a boy had almost lost an eye after being struck by a spear: “*The accident was sustained from a play fellow with whom he was sportively engaged in combat. This is not the only instance of serious injury to children consequent on permitting them to indulge in dangerous .sports*”. The boys appear to have been European children imitating Aboriginal warriors. The incident is an interesting example of a reverse cultural influence exercised by Aboriginal people on the children of the settler society.

The European commentators were often puzzled by the contrast between the ferocity of the fights, and the friendliness shown to each other by many of the participants after the contests were over. Eventually the Aboriginal clans around Sydney seem to have allowed the Europeans a role as referees who would prevent the conflict from getting out of hand and ensure that a doctor was on hand to treat wounds. This was the case in December 1797 when soldiers intervened to prevent Colbee being killed when he was immobilised by assailants in a payback conflict. Bennelong, who had been watching from the sidelines, flew into a rage and speared one of the soldiers. Collins regarded Bennelong's act as erratic and inexplicable: "*On a sudden, he chose to be in a rage at something or other*". The Irish Provost Marshal Thomas Smyth stepped in to protect Bennelong after angry soldiers beat him with a rifle butt and threatened to shoot him. When Smyth dragged him away Bennelong was still "*boiling with the most savage rage*". His anger seems to have been related to cultural interference by Europeans in the payback ritual - but it was a puzzling anger because Bennelong had himself requested assistance from soldiers when he had threatened with payback spearings.

The first newspaper report of one of these conflicts appeared in the Sydney Gazette in its first year of publication (2 Oct 1803):

"Another of the Natives died on Saturday the 24th instant, in consequence of two wounds in the body from jagged spears, which he received in punishment, as being related to the man by whose hand one of another family was accidentally slain; nor is this rancour to subside but with the extirpation of all the relatives of the aggressor, to whom the other was but a distant kinsman. Ten spears were thrown at him, five at a time, one of which at each flight pierced his body. Mr Jamieson rendered every surgical assistance the poor creature was capable of receiving, but he expired shortly after they were extracted. By an unconquerable attachment to these barbarous usage, and an utter dislike to civilised customs, this savage race of men are principally intent on the work of depopulation, which has not, since the fate of Pemulwuy, extended beyond their own wild haunts".

This payback appears to have been held at Sydney. The report, although typically unsympathetic, is a very early comment on the process of Aboriginal depopulation. It was somewhat hypocritical, given the number of European "gentlemen" in the settlement who had taken part in the equally savage practice of duelling. It also carries the implication that shootings by Europeans had been a significant cause of Aboriginal depopulation prior to the death of Pemulwuy.

Another payback contest was reported in the Gazette only two weeks later. It had taken place at "the upper end of Pitt's Row", almost certainly in or very near what is now Hyde Park, *The Gazette* was again hostile: "*The exercise of merciless barbarity on this and similar occasions strongly characterizes this wretched race of men, who, but for their barbarous and irreconcilable usages in cases of homicide, would wholly extirpate their already thin and scattered handfuls*".

The *Sydney Gazette's* racist hostility to Aboriginal people was often expressed in terms of ridicule and sarcasm, exemplified in its 18 December 1803 report on the death of the Hawkesbury elder "Bench":

“A visitor from Hawkesbury mentions the death of Bench, an ancient Native, who we believe was but little known at Sydney. This veteran had for many years past presided with supreme authority over his tribe, from whom he received a species of homage which approached to adoration. In fact, the straggling subjects of this sooty Chieftain, have been frequently heard by the Settlers resident nearest the foot of those inaccessible Mountains, to ascribe to him the power of agitating the elements, and of causing floods, rains, &c.&c, a finesse probably constructed purposely to impress us with awe and reverence for a being possessed of such extensive qualifications. That the Mythology may in some degree owe its existence to similar causes, we shall not argue, but had this inky venerable been known to those imaginary existences, little doubt can be entertained but his complexion would at least have recommended him to a seat in the infernal regions, where, in the course of time, he might have become a compeer with the august Pluto”.

The sense of crisis and paranoia in the colony following the Vinegar Hill uprising of Irish convicts in March 1804 may have fuelled anti-Aboriginal feeling. In June 1804 there was a resumption of hostilities at the Hawkesbury following Aboriginal attacks on the Everingham and Howe farms in the Sackville Reach area. A party of soldiers was despatched and several skirmishes followed. Most of the attackers appear to have been from clans around the newly settled areas on the Hawkesbury. Those nearer Richmond and Windsor remained peaceful and on 1 July 1804 the *Gazette* reported that Dr Thomas Arndell and Rev. Samuel Marsden had met with them and given them presents of food and clothing to ensure their continued peaceful demeanour.

In late 1804 Governor King met with three Aboriginal representatives in the Hawkesbury area, King wrote that after being asked to state their grievances the men had:

“..... very ingeniously answered that they did not like to be driven from the few places that were left on the banks of the river, where alone they could procure food; that they had gone down the river as the white men took possession of the banks; if they went across white men’s grounds the settlers fired upon them and were angry; that if they could retain some places on the lower part of the river they should be satisfied and would not trouble the white men. The observation and request appear to be so just and equitable that I assured them no more settlements should be made lower down the river, With that assurance they appeared well satisfied and promised to be quiet, in which state they continue” [King to Hobart 20.12.1804, HRA ser 1 vol 5 p166].

The Governor's assurance was duplicitous.

## **12. Conflict and reconciliation at Prospect & Parramatta**

In April 1805, following the murder of another Hawkesbury settler, King again ordered that “*no Natives be suffered to approach the grounds or dwellings of any Settler until the Murderers are given up*” (Sydney Gazette 28.4.1805). The order was to apply to the “out-settlements”, including the Parramatta district as well as the Hawkesbury. In the ensuing hostilities several stockmen were speared. and the Seven Hills stockyard and boats on the Hawkesbury were attacked. The paper reported on 5 May that “*The implacable disposition for some weeks manifested by the natives has at length provoked the adoption of coercive measures on the part of the settlers, and which, tho' determined on with reluctance, were yet unfortunately necessary to the preservation of their lives and property*”. Parties of soldiers and armed settlers hunted Aborigines around the “out-settlements”. But the same issue of the paper (Sun.5.5.1805) reported an important development for the Aboriginal people of the Parramatta hinterland:

"It being intimated to the Reverend Mr.Marsden on Wednesday last that the Natives of Prospect wished a conference with him, with a view of opening the way to reconciliation, that Gentleman readily undertook the mission, and repaired without hesitation or delay to the appointed place of rendezvous. On his arrival the only persons visible were three native women, by whom he was informed that the men desirous of conversing with him were then in the woods, whither they had betaken themselves with a design of summoning a more general consultation on the subject; but that immediately on their return, a deputation composed of three persons would be dispatched to Parramatta to report the result of their errand. Three men in consequence waited on Mr.Marsden on Thursday, under the guidance and protection of Mr John Kennedy, a settler. Declaring a speedy reconciliation to be the desired object of their embassy, Mr.Marsden kindly assured them of the general anxiety for the acceleration of the event; and acquainted them with the only terms upon which it could be ventured on, namely, the surrender of those who were principally active in the recent horrible enormities; explaining at the same time that until this demand should be complied with, none of them could be admitted on the grounds of any settler. Without starting objection to the demand, they appeared to be somewhat concerned at their inability to render information of more than one of the chief aggressors; but nevertheless pledged themselves that upon the following day he should receive every necessary information from a party at or in the neighbourhood of Prospect; and some of whom they doubted not would readily engage in the pursuit of the murderers. Mr.Marsden was exact to this appointment also, and on Friday met them again at Prospect, where though they were scattered in prodigious numbers through the surrounding wood, yet not more than twenty approached near enough to be conversed with. The information insisted on of the names of the principal murderers was extorted by degrees from the division inhabiting the Cow-Pasture Plains; but all positively resisted the demand of aiding in their apprehension, until Mr Marsden in a determined tone forbade their hopes of reconciliation until the terms insisted on should be complied with; when one advancing, volunteered himself for the expedition, upon which 6 of the military were detached, accompanied by Warby, and a second native who afterwards offered his joint assistance as a guide. The names of the persons accused by their own tribes are, **Talboon, Corriangee, & Doollonn**, Mountain natives; **Moonaning & Doongial**. Branch natives; and **Boon-du-dullock**, a native of Richmond Hill."

This conference at Prospect on Friday, 3 May 1805 is a landmark in Aboriginal-European relations. Macquarie's "Native Feasts" held at Parramatta from 1814 followed the precedent set in 1805. Of particular interest is the role of Aboriginal women as intermediaries, and the relative sophistication of the process of diplomatic negotiation initiated by the Aboriginal people themselves. The *Sydney Gazette* report of the meeting is notable for the absence of the sneering tone which characterised its earlier coverage of Aboriginal matters. Marsden's powerful secular position is reflected in his leadership of the European side. His inflexibility and preparedness to use terror as an instrument of policy are as apparent here as in his dealings with Irish convicts (but his willingness to achieve a settlement should be noted).

The Prospect/Parramatta people were effectively held responsible for the actions of individuals from more distant areas. But Marsden was offering the prospect of peaceful co-existence and survival. It seems clear that the clans desperately needed the right to approach the towns and farms of the settlers to obtain food which they could no longer always rely on from traditional sources in the dry, scrubby, less productive areas to which they had been forced to retreat. The meeting also provides an early example of the official use of "black trackers" to assist in the capture of Aboriginal outlaws.

John Kennedy, who helped to guarantee the safety of the Prospect clan, was an English free settler in his mid-twenties (in 1805) who farmed with his father and other family members at Prospect. He had arrived in the colony on the ship *Surprize* in 1794 (see M. Flynn, *Settlers and Seditious: the people of the convict ship Surprize, 1794*, 1994, p83).

The use of the word “reconciliation” in the 1805 *Sydney Gazette* report has an important resonance for the 1990s, when the term has been widely used in the context of Aboriginal issues. The *Sydney Gazette* carried a public order signed by Governor King’s acting secretary, Garnham Blaxcell in Sydney on 5 May 1805, which declared:

“A Number of Natives, composed of Families Well known about Prospect and Parramatta, with some Strangers from Cow Pastures having put themselves under the protection of the Magistrates at Parramatta, and are **sit down** at the Brush between Prospect and George’s River, they are not to be molested in that situation; some of them having accompanied a party to apprehend the Murderers of the two Settlers and the two Stockmen”.

The use of the term “sit down” is an unusual appearance of a pidgin expression (probably meaning to camp) in an official document.

While the Prospect and Parramatta people were under government protection, a savage conflict continued during May. Aboriginal attacks were reported at the Hawkesbury, Seven Hills and at Isaac Nicols's Concord property, Major George Johnston and Rev. Samuel Marsden led an armed party of settlers and constables to North Rocks and Pennant Hills where they captured Tedbury, the son of Pemulwuy, who confessed his involvement in most of the recent robberies around Parramatta. On the way back to Parramatta the party “*fell in with a small cluster, one of whom, called **Bush Musquetta**, saluted them in good English, and declaring a determination to continue their rapacities, made off*”

Another public order was published in the Gazette on 9 June 1805:

“The Natives having solicited to return to Sydney and Parramatta, no molestation is to be offered to those frequenting the above places, provided they behave quietly: otherwise they are to be reported to the Magistrate, who will order them to be confined. The natives about Hawkesbury and George’s River still continuing their depredations, the General Order of the 27th of April is to continue in force respecting those places; and it is hoped the apprehension of the Native Musquito might effectually prevent any further mischief in those quarters”.

### 13. The capture of Mosquito

A series of Aboriginal attacks and robberies, mainly at the Hawkesbury were reported during June 1805, and a several fires at Hawkesbury farms were found to have been set by an Aboriginal girl who had lived with a European family since infancy. The 13 year old arsonist appeared to have been encouraged to secretly burn the farmhouses by a “wild” Aboriginal boy who had befriended her.

On 7 July a breakthrough was reported in the Gazette:

“Last week several Natives suspected of being concerned in the late Outrages, were committed to the Parramatta Gaol by the Rev. Mr Marsden; but were liberated on Tuesday last on a promise to use their utmost endeavours to apprehend the Native called MUSQUITO, who has been reported by the Natives themselves, and also by the White Men who have gone in search of them, as the Principal in all the wanton acts of Cruelty they have perpetrated. We are happy to add, that they fulfilled their promise, and the above Culprit was last night lodged in Parramatta Gaol.”

Mosquito and a fellow Aboriginal offender named Bulldog attempted to break out of Parramatta Gaol (*Sydney Gazette* 11.8.1805):

“During the night of Monday last two Natives confined in Parramatta gaol as the most active in the late unprovoked barbarities attempted to break from custody, but were prevented by a prisoner, who overhearing them alarmed the turnkey. They had ingeniously contrived to loosen some of the stone work by the help of a spike nail, having previously avowed a determination to set fire to the building, and destroy every white man within it. They attacked the man who had occasioned their disappointment, but were secured without mischief; and in consideration of his good conduct in preventing the escape of two criminals whose turpitude might have engendered new excesses, the informer was set at liberty by order of the resident Magistrate”.

Mosquito and Bulldog were transported to Norfolk Island on HMS *Buffalo*, leaving Sydney on 22 August 1805 and reaching the island on 5 September. Governor King wrote to Captain Piper that: “*having been given up by the other natives as principals in their late outrages [they] are sent to Norfolk Island where they are to be kept, and if they can be brought to labour will earn their food - but as they must not be let starve for want of subsistence - they may be victualled from the stores*”. In 1810 both men were employed in the tedious work of charcoal burning (for Mosquito and Bulldog see R.Wright, *The Forgotten Generation*, 1986, p29-34).

Although an Aboriginal warrior, Mosquito resembled, in many ways, the later bushrangers [note also this usage of “bush” in its modern Australian sense in the nickname “Bush Mosquito” and Caley’s use of the term “bush natives” as early as 1801]. The use of the term “outrages” to describe Aboriginal attacks has a political aspect. It reflects an unconscious comparison of the “Aboriginal problem” with the “Irish problem”. Attacks on British interests in Ireland by secret nationalist organisations were usually termed “outrages”, meaning “terrorist attacks”.

In January 1813 Mosquito was transferred to Hobart Town, Van Diemens Land [Tasmania] where he worked as a stockman and as a tracker for police searching for runaway convicts. He was arrested after striking a convict who insulted him and led a gang of Tasmanian Aboriginal warriors in guerrilla attacks on farms. After five years on the run he was captured and hanged in Hobart Gaol in 1824.

A poignant statement made by Mosquito in Hobart Gaol said to have been taken down by the gaoler there bears a strong similarity to the pidgin English used by Bennelong in a letter dictated in 1796, Mosquito's statement reads:

“Hanging no good for black fellow.... very good for white fellow, for he used to it ...I stop wit white fellow, learn to like blanket, clothes, bakky, rum, bread, all same white fellow: white fellow giv'd me. By and by Gubernor send me catch bushranger - promise me plenty clothes, and send me back Sydney, my own country: I catch him, Gubernor tell too much a lie, never send me. I knockit about camp, prisoner no liket me then, givet me nothing, call me bloody hangman nose. I knock one fellow down, give waddie, constable take me. I then walk away in bush, I get along wid mob....mob rob the hut....mob make a rush, stock-keeper shoot plenty, mob spear some. Dat de way me no come all same your house. Never like see Gubernor any more. White fellow soon kill all black fellow....” (Mosquito quoted in K.Willey, 1979, p182)

On 7 July 1805 a NSW government order was published in the *Sydney Gazette* which marked the end of the conflict in the whole colony. It preceded a meeting at Parramatta between Governor King and Aboriginal representatives from most areas of settlement:

“GENERAL ORDER

*THE NATIVES, after giving up the Principal in the late Outrages, having generally expressed a desire to COME IN, and many being on the Road from Hawkesbury and other Quarters to meet the Governor at Parramatta, NO MOLESTATION whatever is to be offered them in ANY Part of the Colony --- unless any of them should renew their late Acts, which is not probable, as a RECONCILIATION will take place with the Natives generally,*

*By Command of His Excellency.”*

The reconciliation was followed immediately by a resumption of ritual combat at Sydney. On 14 July 1805 the Sydney Gazette reported:

“**Plutonic Games** - Last Tuesday the natives resumed their **sports** at Farm Cove; and Bennelong and Coleby were matched in single combat. The former, incensed at his opponent’s bearing off the widow of the deceased **Carraway**, determined to appease his **manes** by dispatching the violator for the Court of Minos; but half-a-dozen spears flying responsively without effect, their numerous seconds interposed, and here ended the affray”.

Tedbury had apparently been detained in Parramatta Gaol when his companions were released. On 4 August 1805 the *Gazette* reported:

“Young Tedbury was set at liberty yesterday se’nnight, at the intreaty of the friendly natives who assisted in the capture of **Musquito**, each having pledged himself to bear every severity that any mischief on the part of Tedbury should expose them to. The lenity extended to them at all times when the spirit of destruction ceases to predominate, must sooner or later have its natural operation in convincing them how little their safety depends upon their own ability, and consequently how much they are indebted to the liberal clemency of our Government”.

A ritual combat at Botany Bay was reported on 10 November 1805, followed by a second contest at Sydney reported in the *Gazette* on 8 December:

“Prodigious numbers of natives have flocked into Sydney and its environs, for the purpose of inflicting punishment on a tribe from the southward, by **one** of whom it was the fate **of young Baker** to be wounded. Some of our Sydney and Parramatta intimates already brandish their mischievous weapons **in terrorem** and testify their entire approbation of the impeachment by frightfully barbing and preparing their spears for incurable laceration”.

The conflict was reported in the *Gazette* on 15 December 1805:

“The different tribes of natives met yesterday se’nnight at the Brickfields for the **trial** of two **malefactors**, of whom **Bennelong** was the principal. He withstood innumerable flights of spears with his accustomed **sang froid**; but narrowly escaped **translation**, as seldom less than three were thrown at once, and most of his adversaries peculiarly skilled in the **deadly sciences**. **Young Tedbury** was afterwards wounded through the thigh by a visitor from Botany Bay; who in turn submitted to a similar destiny; when a cessation of arms took place **durante noctis**”.

Yet another contest at the Brickfields was reported on 22 December 1805 following the funeral of Carrawaye (the second man of this name to die in 1805). The combatants included Blewit, Young Baker and Old Whitaker. Hostilities continued the following month (*Sydney Gazette* 12.1.1806) when Mosquito (apparently another man of this name) fought Young Mirout in front of the Sydney Military Barracks after the former had wounded Pigeon. After the fight Mosquito was murdered by Ploge (also known as Blewett). The *Gazette* commented that:

“It is far from pleasing a reflection, that these evils with their yet unfinished consequences to an unhappy race of the least envied beings in existence, are all derived from the thoughtless impropriety of those who put the means of intoxication within their reach”.

The *Gazette*'s comment suggests that as the Aboriginal warriors fell more under the influence of alcohol, their ritualised fights became more violent and more likely to result in serious injury or death, presumably in contrast to the more traditional contests which were rigidly controlled by codes of behaviour. The payback ritual was held with official or unofficial permission on what was almost certainly the military parade ground, before a crowd of white spectators.

Several more payback ceremonies took place at Sydney up to March 1806. After this date few reports of the conflicts are recorded. Whether the newspaper had lost interest, or whether the incoming Governor Bligh banned the traditional fights is unclear. There are no reports of Aboriginal attacks on farms in the inner settled areas of Sydney-Parramatta-Hawkesbury during 1806 and 1807.

Two, further payback fights at Sydney were reported. One, “opposite the new Military Barrack” on 25 December 1808 involved “Crewey”, “Cudgear” and “Punmama”. The other, “at the back of the Dry Store [Sydney]” on 15 January 1809, involved an Aboriginal man named “Phillip”, who was to be ritually punished for causing the death of Collins [Ngunga Ngunga]. The identity of “Phillip” is uncertain, but this man may possibly be identified as Bennelong, who is known to have taken Governor Phillip's name according to Aboriginal custom. The *Gazette* reported that Collins had actually died from natural causes, but his brother had been blamed for superstitious reasons.

Meanwhile, an anonymous letter printed on 28 July 1810 gives a relatively sympathetic account of the position of Aboriginal people in the colony:

“Formerly our intercourse with the natives was much greater than at present; they frequented the settlements in numbers, and performed their exercises, most of which were hostile to each other, frequently among us; they were then familiar, almost every one was known as well by an European name, which he assumed, as by his native appellation:-but that intimacy has subsided; for as the elders have fallen off, the younger, not receiving the encouragement their parents met with upon our first acquaintance, seldom come among us; and from hence it is some of us entertain a notion that their race is upon the decline - merely because we are less accustomed to their visits than before. This growing distance between us I particularly mention, because it tends to embarrass the prospect of their civilization; for if nothing could be effected when we were honoured with their friendly intercourse, less can be expected until that intercourse is re-established. To what causes precisely to attribute their gradual renunciation of our acquaintance I cannot altogether judge; but I should rather consider that their repeated skirmishes with us, in which several have been killed, have rendered the rising generation timid, and here I am sorry to remark, that if these poorly provided people be allowed an idea at all, their good opinion of us upon our first appearance must have considerably declined, when they were given to understand by our unseasonable and unfeeling interferences in their quarrels, that we had a relish for sanguinary cruelty, and that instead of evincing a superiority of mind by humane endeavours to prevent their conflicts, they found among their white spectators many who were debased by cruelty; who could wantonly endeavour to irritate and to provoke their rancour against each other, and who, by an unseasonable display of tempestuous mirth, seemed gratified at the infliction of a wound, which the difference of complexion could not divest of its torture”.

This valuable commentary indicates that Sydney Aboriginal people were continuing to follow a traditional lifestyle in 1810. The absence of contact was only a temporary phenomenon, but may, as the report suggests, have reflected a movement among the younger generation to re-establish the old ways. The central position of Parramatta/Prospect for Sydney Aborigines was established with the conferences of 1805 and consolidated under Governor Macquarie and subsequent Governors.

#### **14. Ritual Conflict & Corroboree, Old Prospect Road, 1833**

An account appears in Rev. James Hassall's *In Old Australia* (p17), published in 1903 when he was 80, recalling his memory of an Aboriginal ritual combat and “Native Feast” which he attended while a student at the King's School, Parramatta seventy years or so earlier in 1832-35. The feast he witnessed was almost certainly that of either 1832 or 1833 (probably 1832). 1833 was probably the last Parramatta feast at which tribes from all over the colony gathered for the feast. It was referred to as the “*Annual meeting at Parramatta of the Chiefs and Tribes of the Natives*” (or elsewhere as the “Conference”) in Governor Bourke's 1833 memo (AONSW 4/6666B.3).

note: Feasts held in the period 1823-33 are described by Brook and Kohen in *The Parramatta Native Institution* (pp91-102),

Hassall's figure of 700-800 Aboriginal people gathering near Parramatta seems to be confirmed by the 1833 memo ordering 800 blankets. The memo also reflects anxiety at the expense of the feast and the issue of blankets and clothing and concern at the temptation to barter the goods for rum at Parramatta. He proposed to vary the system by issuing the blankets in regional centres, while still issuing clothing at the 1833 feast. Forms and benches for the feast were to be supplied by the Surveyor General's Department. Knives, forks, platters and drinking cups were to be lent by the Female Factory. The dinner was to be arranged by the Committee of the Factory.

“The clothing given at the feast is usually bartered for Rum before the Natives leave Parramatta”, wrote Bourke, “A cheap Jacket and trowsers for the Men & Bedgown & petticoat for the women will be quite sufficient... The advertisement will not answer as it is not proposed to give blankets at the feast nor do I desire to encourage the attendance of the Natives, I wd much rather give them clothing as well as Blankets at the several Stations of the Tribes - but as it has been so long customary to give these Articles at the Feast I do not like to disappoint them by omitting both on the approaching occasion. The blankets being the most useful gift I wish those to be delivered at the stations where there is least chance of their being bartered for Rum”.

A concern for cost-cutting appears to have influenced Bourke's decision to have the blankets distributed by local magistrates in regional areas. The change is reflected by the existence in the State Archives of blanket issue returns supplied by the magistrates from 1833-1843, containing valuable information which amounts to an informal census of surviving Aboriginal people living in the settled districts in this period.

The blanket returns for 1834-1843 list between about 15 and 25 persons receiving blankets who were actually from the Parramatta hinterland (including Concord, Kissing Point, Prospect and Eastern Creek). Whether the Parramatta magistrates continued the practice of providing a feast after 1833 has not been confirmed. It seems likely that the adult Aboriginal population of this area was larger, but persons in employment or farming land (including Maria Lock) were not included.

The Rev. James Hassall's description of the 1833 ritual combat closely resembles accounts of similar contests at Sydney in the 1790s and reflect a surprisingly strong persistence of this aspect of Aboriginal culture in the early 1830s after 45 years of settlement. The site of the event was somewhere near Old Prospect Road:

“On one occasion, it being a holiday, the boys were allowed to pay a visit to the blacks’ camp, some distance out of Parramatta, towards Prospect. The blacks had assembled from various parts of the colony, for the annual feast given them by the Governor, and to receive a blanket apiece. The latter gift is still customary wherever any blacks remain.

Before the feast came off, quarrels had sometimes to be adjusted, and on this occasion a fight took place, which we had the opportunity of witnessing.

There were probably six or seven hundred blacks assembled at their camps. The women of each party had first to be placed at a safe distance. The men painted themselves with white pipe clay and red ochre and thus, without any clothing, the two parties advanced towards each other in a half circle, in ranks three and four deep, armed with spears, boomerangs, nullah-nullahs, waddies, and shields. When within a hundred yards or so of each other, the battle began. The spears flew across the half circle in great profusion but were well parried by the shields. Then came the boomerangs, striking the ground first, and then rebounding in all directions among the enemy. These are dangerous weapons and cannot be warded off so well as the spears. After a little time, the contending parties closed in, and a hand-to-hand fight with their nullah-nullahs or waddies ended the affray. Three blacks were killed and a number wounded. Next day, notwithstanding, both parties assembled at the feast together and made friends”.

Macquarie's native feast seems to have followed a pattern established by Rev. Samuel Marsden and Governor King in their Aboriginal conferences of 1805. But the idea of a "meeting of the tribes" predated this conference. As described in part one of this report (p34), a meeting of Aboriginal clans [apparently unrelated to negotiations with Europeans] took place at Parramatta in December 1804 which included ritual combat. It may not be unreasonable to speculate that the 1804 meeting may have been a continuation of a tradition which predated European settlement. The Irish exile Joseph Holt (*A Rum Story*, p70) gives a detailed description of Aboriginal ritual combat, which he describes as an annual "time of war" which he had almost certainly witnessed at Parramatta several times during the years 1800-1810.

## 15. Other Aboriginal sites

Thomas Fowle's *History of Granville* (1918) mentions two important Aboriginal sites at the gateway to the Holroyd municipal area in Union Street, Granville and Carhullen Street, Merrylands. They provide important evidence for the identification of the Aboriginal people of the area as *paiendra*, members of the inland culture who specialised in hunting possum. This evidence suggests that, although members of the Darug tribal and language group, they had links with the Dharawal and Gundungurra tribes of the south and south west. The relevant passages are as follows:

"In those early days [of the colony] the blacks had a camping place near the junction of what is now Union Street and Dog-trap-road [Woodville Road]. This site long continued to be the camping ground when they came yearly to receive their dole of blankets. Those coming from the south chose this spot and those from the west camping near where Camellia Station now stands.

During those visits they indulged in great revelry and held corroborees nightly. They were patronized and visited by many of the youth of Parramatta till they became a public nuisance and had to be moved on. Those yearly visits of aborigines gradually became less in numbers as they died out - till by the close of the seventies they had ceased to come....

The last relics of the blackfellow days were removed during the opening years of this century. These were a few old gnarled apple-gum trees near Carhullen House. Their hollow trunks and branches no doubt formed a perfect harbour for opossums. The marks of the blacks' tomahawks in the pursuit of this elusive game could still be traced well into the [eighteen] seventies...."

## 16. The Parramatta Aboriginal Blanket returns, 1834-1843

It seems that most survivors of the Parramatta and Toongabbie clans were wiped out in the 1789 smallpox epidemic and the sporadic Aboriginal-European conflicts of 1791-1805. The Parramatta blanket returns for the years 1834-1843 provide a kind of Aboriginal census for these years. In *The Darug and their Neighbours* James Kohen has identified modern residents of Sydney who can trace their ancestry back to Aboriginal people listed in the Parramatta blanket returns.

A notable feature of the returns is the gathering of clans from the opposing coastal and inland Darug subcultures who spoke different dialects and were traditionally hostile to one another. To some extent their lumping together reflects the European administrative arrangements which placed the coastal people of Kissing Point, Duck River and Concord along with the inland people of Prospect and Eastern Creek under the control of Parramatta Magistrates. But the gatherings may have had a function in the context of Aboriginal culture in providing a framework for ritual conflict, inter-clan corroborees and a means of obtaining wives. As suggested earlier, the December 1804 gathering at Parramatta may indicate that such gatherings predated European settlement.

A return of 1827 lists a total of 49 Aborigines receiving blankets at Parramatta (21 men, 13 women, 15 children) - none are named (source: Sainty & Johnson, *Census of NSW 1828* p15). All individuals are named in returns for the period 1834-43.

The 1834 blanket return for Parramatta records tribal remnants from Duck River ("Watergoro tribe"), Prospect, Kissing Point and Breakfast Creek (the modern suburb of Marayong).

The 1837 Parramatta blanket return includes members of "tribes" from Duck River, Concord, Prospect ("Weymaly tribe"), Eastern Creek ("Warrawarry tribe"), South Creek and a visitor from Georges River (as discussed in part one of this report "clan" is now the preferred term to "tribe"). It is likely that these "tribe" names in the blanket returns are actually place names given by Aboriginal people to the traditional land of their clans. In the Sydney language clan names usually ended with the suffix "gal".

The 1839 Parramatta return comprises mainly Weymaly and Warrawarry people giving their place of residence as Bungaribee [the land around Eastern Creek and Bungaribee Creek in modern Doonside and Rooty Hill], Although the Black Town Native Institution had closed in 1829, the general area remained a focus for the remnant Aboriginal communities of western Sydney. The Institution was actually north west of the modern suburbs of Doonside and Blacktown [which derives its name from "Black Town Road" which led to the Institution]. It was sited on the junction of Bells Creek and Richmond Road in the vicinity of what are now the suburbs of Hassall Grove and Colebee.

The Native Institution adjoined land which had been granted by Macquarie to Colbee and Nurragingy in 1819. William Hall, who had been Master of the Blacktown Native Institution 1826-29, was still living in the area in 1839. The Weymaly appear to have temporarily moved from their own land at Prospect to join the Warrawarry at Eastern Creek in 1839. The move may reflect efforts by Hall to encourage them to settle there, but this is speculation only. It may also have been owing to encouragement by some other benefactor such as the owner of Bungaribee Station, or it may have simply reflected the nomadic Aboriginal lifestyle.

The 1839 return is also important for its inclusion of an Aboriginal name for the South Creek "tribe" – "Winnematta" - a term which occurs almost nowhere else in surviving written records. In *The Parramatta Native Institution and the Black Town* (p36) Brook and Kohen record the clan name of the Prospect clan as "Cannemegal" and the South Creek people as "Gomerrigal-tongarra" (the original source for these appellations is unclear). The "South Creek Tribe" were usually included in Windsor blanket returns, but various individuals appeared occasionally in Parramatta returns.

By 1840 the Weymaly and Warrawarry people were living at both Eastern Creek and South Creek, although several individuals were back in the Prospect area. By 1841 most Weymaly were back at Prospect and retained a fairly strong presence there in 1842-3, while the Warrawarry remained at Eastern Creek, although diminishing in numbers. The 1843 issue of blankets at Parramatta was also attended by Aboriginal people from Berrima, Bong Bong, Cowpastures and Liverpool.

A noticeable feature of the blanket returns after 1837 is the disappearance of Aboriginal recipients from Kissing Point, Duck River and Concord.

It seems almost certain that the "Concord" tribe would be the remnant of Bennelong's Wangal clan. The origin of the Duck River or Watergoro "tribe" is problematic. No other record of this term has been traced, but it may be the Darug name for Duck River or its surrounding area. As mentioned previously the Aboriginal tribe names given in the returns are place names, not clan names (which ended with the suffix "gal").

There is a strong possibility that the Duck River people were a remnant of the Burramattagal driven east by the spread of settlement at Parramatta to the banks of the Duck River. Bennelong seems to have stated, quite clearly that the Burramattagal were immediately to the west of his Wangal people. The "tribes" appearing on the blanket returns reflect the upheavals caused by the smallpox epidemic and the disruption caused by the frontier conflict and the spread of farming settlement.

Apart from Quoidar, no Kissing Point/Duck River/Concord people appear in the blanket returns after 1837. It seems extraordinary that the 14 individuals of varying ages named in the 1837 return could have all died by 1839, leaving only Quoidar. But this scenario is suggested by the response of Parramatta Police Magistrate Gilbert Elliot to a circular letter from the NSW Legislative Council Select Committee on the Condition of the Aborigines in 1845, Elliot wrote:

"From enquiry we find that the last of the Aborigines of this district died three or four years ago: about half a dozen of the aborigines from other districts occasionally come into this district."

The land boom of the 1830s, combined with large numbers of immigrants landing in the second half of the decade, probably put additional pressures on surviving Aboriginal groups in the Sydney area. More intensive use by the settlers of land and resources undoubtedly made traditional hunter-gatherer activities more difficult. From the 1790s settlement was closer around the western shores of the harbour - there were smaller holdings on the north side between Lane Cove and Parramatta, while large Gentlemen's estates (particularly those of Macarthur, Blaxland and Wentworth) dominated the south side. The larger number of Aboriginal survivors around the eastern shores of the harbour and the coast (notably at La Perouse) might be attributable to the retention of large swathes of uncleared bushland and moorland, much of which was not developed until the twentieth century. Some members of the Prospect clan probably survived beyond the 1840s.

The increasing influx of European immigrants in the 1830s undoubtedly brought new diseases. The effect of epidemics is illustrated in Rev. James Hassall's *In Old Australia* in a quotation (p 185) from the 1834 *Sydney Almanack* describing the NSW influenza epidemic of 1820 which killed his grandfather, Rowland Hassall at Parramatta:

“The complaint was general, many of the inhabitants were consigned to the grave in a few days, from the violence and fury of the attack, and some few have to this day the remains of the visitation still as a painful companion. Great numbers of the poor aborigines fell victims to this novel and severe distemper”.

The response of the Windsor magistrate to the 1845 Select Committee circular states that the Aboriginal population of the Windsor district fell by 40% in the period 1835-1845. Both Mahroot (the Aboriginal fisherman from Botany Bay) and Archbishop Polding attributed Aboriginal population decline after the frontier conflict to the twin problems of alcohol addiction and infertility in Aboriginal women caused by sexually transmitted diseases contracted from the overwhelmingly male European population.

The wave of racism in the colony accompanying the hanging of the European men responsible for the Myall Creek massacre in 1838 should also be considered as a factor adversely affecting Aboriginal people in the Parramatta area. Hostility, arising from this case may have adversely affected opportunities for employment and barter which were further reduced by the harsh economic recession of 1842-45.

The blanket distribution system was under threat in May 1842 when Governor Gipps wrote a tart memo on a letter on the subject from Magistrate Faunce at Queanbeyan: The Police Magistrate seems to think that Every Person who asks for a blanket is to have one. Inform Mr Faunce, that it is my intention to abolish presents to the Natives altogether as quickly as possible - and that no person is to have a blanket gratuitously who is able to obtain one by working for it (AONSW 4/1133.3).

The last blanket distribution at Parramatta took place in May 1843. The Police Magistrate's statement that the last of the Parramatta Aborigines had died by 1845 probably referred to the last of the older generation of tribal people who had gathered to collect their blankets every year. James Kohen's research indicates that a number of Aboriginal girls from the Sydney area married European or Aboriginal men between the 1820s and 1840s and successfully raised large families. Many of these maintained an Aboriginal identity - most notably the descendants of Maria Lock who died in 1878 and is buried at St Bartholomews, Prospect. Her descendants were living on land granted to her brother by Governor Macquarie until at least 1914.

**TRANSCRIPT OF PARRAMATTA ABORIGINAL BLANKET RETURNS: 1834, 1836, 1837, 1839, 1840, 1841, 1842, 1843:**

**Parramatta Blanket Return 1834**

Return of Aboriginal Natives taken at Parramatta on 23rd June 1834

source: AONSW Colonial Secretary 4/6666B.3

English name	Native name	age	wife Children	tribe	place of usual resort
Will Will	- Mosquito	30	1w	Watergoro	Duck River
Larry	- Larry	30	1w 1m 2f		Prospect
George	- George	25	1w 1m		Prospect
Tom	- Tom	20	1w 2f		Prospect
Mandy	- Mandy	25			Prospect
Bine		30	1w 1m 1f		Prospect
Jackay	- Jackay	20			Prospect
Moran	- Moran	50			Prospect
Neddy	- Neddy	15			Prospect
Bidgee Bidgee	- Bidgee	45	no wife 1f		Kissing Point
	- Puchamere	25	1w		Kissing Point
	- Benning	60	1w		Kissing Point
	- Woromat	60	1w		Kissing Point
Johnny	- Johnny	22	1w 1m 1f		Breakfast Creek

### **Parramatta Blanket Return 1836**

Return of Aboriginal Natives taken at Parramatta - May 1836 issue of blankets source: AONSW Colonial Secretary 4/2302.1

English name	Native name	age	wife Children	tribe	place of usual resort
	Bidgee Bidgee	35	no wife 1f	Kissing Point	Kissing Point
William Wilson		40	1w	Kissing Point	Kissing Point
Sophy	- Buckendah	30	1f	Kissing Point	Kissing Point
Mary	- Bollan	50		Kissing Point	Kissing Point
	- Navvell	50		Kissing Point	Kissing Point
Jenny	- Ingally	50		Kissing Point	Kissing Point
Rosa		10		Kissing Point	Kissing Point
Kitty		8		Kissing Point	Kissing Point
Kitty	- Cava Cava	20	2f	Duck River	Duck River
Clara		13		Duck River	Duck River
	- Maryan	10		Duck River	Duck River
Polly	- Marley	25		Duck River	Duck River
Jem	- Boyne	30	1w	Concord	Concord
Jemmy	- Ahouri	30	1w	Concord	Concord
Davy	- Conowah	50		Concord	Concord
Billy	- Billy	25	1m	Concord	Concord
Fanny		16		Concord	Concord
	- Cooman	30	1f	Concord	Concord

Thomas	- Tommarah	40	1f	Botany	Botany
Steven	- Goorabun	30	1w	Georges River	Georges River
Charly Moran		51		Weymaly	Prospect
Larry	- Barto Ally	35	1w 2f	Weymaly	Prospect
Simon	-Cherile	25	1w 1f	Weymaly	Prospect
Tommy		8		-	
Larry's wife					
Cherile's wife					
Johnny	- Warrawanny	35	1w 3m 1f	Warewarra	Eastern Creek
Betty Cox (Johnny's wife)		30		Warewarra	Eastern Creek
Betty		20	1m	Warewarra	Eastern Creek
Tommy		14		Warewarra	Eastern Creek
Joseph		12		Warewarra	Eastern Creek
Harriett		15		Warewarra	Eastern Creek

[signed] Henry Bailey  
Clerk of Petty Sessions, Parramatta

# **Parramatta Blanket Return 1837**

Return of Aboriginal Natives taken at Parramatta May 1837

source: Colonial Secretary AONSW 4/1133.3

English name	Native name	age	wife	tribe	place of usual resort
Children					
William Wilson		41	1w 1m		Duck River
Mary - Bollan		51			Duck River
Kitty - Cava Cava	21				Duck River
Marian		11			Duck River
George					Duck River
Polly	- Marley	26			Duck River
Emma					Duck River
Jonathan					Duck River
Jemmy	- Ahouri	31	1w		Concord
Billy	- Boogare	26			Concord
	- Big Cooman	31			Concord
	- Little Cooman	31			Concord
Charley Moran	- Boorin	52		Weymaly	Prospect
Larry	- Barto Ally	36		Weymaly	Prospect
Martha	- Burraga	18		Weymaly	Prospect
Sarah		10		Weymaly	Prospect
Janey		7		Weymaly	Prospect
Johnny	- Warrawanny	36	1w 3m 1f	Warrawarry	Eastern Creek

Steven	- Goorabun	31		Georges River	Georges River
Jem	- Boyne	31		Concord	Concord
Molly		25		Concord	Concord
- Maundy		40		Weymaly	Prospect
Sarah	- Bunburra	19		South Creek	
Stephen	- Goolan	14		South Creek	
Name unknown					
Name unknown					
Name unknown					
Simon	-Cherile	26	1w 1f	Weymaly	Prospect
Maria	- Bargiddy	25		Weymaly	Prospect
Clara		14		Weymaly	Prospect

### **Parramatta Blanket Return 1539**

Return of Aboriginal Natives taken at Parramatta on 6th May 1839

source: AONSW Colonial Secretary 4/2433.1

English name	Native name	age	wife Children	tribe	place of usual resort
Larry	- Bardo Carry	21	1w 2f	Weymaly	Bungarrabee
Johnny	- Woorerroonde	38	1w 3m 3f	Werweraway	Bungarrabee
Musquito	- Will Will	32	1w	Weymaly	Bungarrabee
Jem	- Quoidar	30	1f	Ehoi	Kissing Point
Bobby	- Bobby	39	1w 2m	Werweraway	Bungarrabee
Galaoín [?]	- Muromenes [?] Bungarrabee	42			Werweraway
Billy	- Bunburrea	20	1m	Werweraway	Bungarrabee
Jackey	- Bellagellick	17		Werweraway	Bungarrabee
Stephen	- Mulla	15		Weymaly	Bungarrabee
Polly	- Polly	25	1m 1f	Weymaly	Bungarrabee
Betty Cox	- Betty Cox	31		Werwerarray	Bungarrabee
Betty Brook	- Betty Brook	22	1m 1f	Werwerarray	Bungarrabee
Martha	- Martha 30	2f		Weymaly	Bungarrabee
Rozey	- Rozey	15		Weymaly	Bungarrabee
Nancy	- Gin Bullen	30	1m 2f	Weymaly	Bungarrabee
	- Rabbell	50	3m	Weymaly	Bungarrabee
Eliza	- Eliza	10		Weymaly	Bungarrabee
Jemmy	- Nargingui	35	1w 2m 1f	Winnematta	South Creek
Tom Dargin	- Cat Bowder	45		Winnematta	South Creek

Tommy	- Tommy		Weymaly	Bungarrabee
Mary	- Mary		Werwerarry	Bungarrabee
Jemmy	- Jemmy		Werwerarry	Bungarrabee
Thomas	- Thomas		Weymaly	Bungarrabee
Charley	- Charley		Werwerarry	Bungarrabee
Stephen	- Goulburn	21	Weymaly	Bungarrabee
Charlotte	- Mumrigan [?]		Weymaly	Bungarrabee
Ginny	- Bonny		Weymaly	Bungarrabee
Johnny	- Johnstone		Weymaly	Bungarrabee
Frederick	- Frederick		Werwerarry	Bungarrabee
Emma	- Emma		Weymaly	Bungarrabee
Georgy	- Drumwooa		Weymaly	Bungarrabee
Mary	- Nambul	53 1m 1f	Werwerarry	Bungarrabee

## **Parramatta Blanket Return 1840**

Return of Aboriginal Natives taken at Parramatta on 5 May 1840

source: AONSW Colonial Secretary 4/2479.1 [accompanied by a covering letter from Charles Forbes, Police Office, Parramatta dated 13 May 1840 - not transcribed here]

English name	Native name	age	wife Children	tribe	place of usual resort
Johnny	-Worroroonda	39	1w 3m 3f	Worwerawy	South Creek
Larry	- Bargo Carry	22	1w 2f	Weymaly	Prospect
Jemmy	- Collavare	30		Weymaly	Salt Creek
Jem	- Quoider	31		Ehoi	Bungarrabee
Thomas	- Thomas	18		Weymaly	Bungarrabee
Jemmy	- Jemmy	13		Worwerawy	South Creek
Betty Cox	- Betty Cox	33	3m 3f	Worwerawy	South Creek
Martha	- Martha	31	2f	Weymaly	Bungarrabee
Mary	- Buggaroin [?]	30	1m 1f	Worwerawy	South Creek
Sally	- SalIy	10		Worwerawy	South Creek
Mary Ann	- Mary Ann	55	1m 1f	Worwerawy	South Creek
Sally	- Sally	15		Weymaly	Prospect
Jane	- Stillion [?]	12		Worwerawy	Bungarrabee
Charley	- Charley	9		Worwerawy	Bungarrabee
Mary	- Mary	11		Worwerawy	Bungarrabee
Catherine	- Catherine	9		Worwerawy	Bungarrabee
Jemmy	- Jemmy	4		Worwerawy	Bungarrabee
Jane	- Jane	11		Worwerawy	Bungarrabee

**Parramatta Blanket Return 1841**

Return of Aboriginal Natives taken at Parramatta on 1st May 1841 source: Colonial Secretary AONSW 4/1133.3

English name	Native name	age	wife Children	tribe	place of usual resort
Larry	- Bargo Carry	23	1w 1m 1f	Weymaly	Prospect
Sally	-Sally	16	1m	Weymaly	Prospect
Martha	- Martha	32	2f	Weymaly	Prospect
Gallo	- Gallo	20		Weymaly	Prospect
Polly	- Polly	35	2m 2f	Weymaly	Prospect
Molly	- Molly	30		Weymaly	Prospect
Emma	- Emma	13		Weymaly	Prospect
Jane	- Jane	15		Weymaly	Prospect
Nancy	- Gimbond	35	3m 1f	Weymaly	Prospect
John	- Burrohie	32	1m 1f	Weymaly	Prospect
Martha	- Martha	17		Weymaly	Prospect

[Signed) Sydney Cotton P.M.

**Parramatta Blanket Return 1842**

Return of Aboriginal Natives taken at Parramatta 2nd May 1842

source: Colonial Secretary AONSW 4/1133.3

English name	Native name	age	wife Children	tribe	place of usual resort
Johnny	-Woorrerwuda	40	1w 3m 3f	Werweraway	Eastern Creek
Betsey	- Betsey	33		Werweraway	Eastern Creek
Tommy	- Tommy	18		Werweraway	Eastern Creek
Mary	- Mary	30	2f	Werweraway	Eastern Creek
Joseph	-Joseph	18		Werweraway	Eastern Creek
Larry	- Bargo Carry	25	2f	Weymaly	Prospect
Martha	- Martha	33	2f	Weymaly	Prospect
Sally	- Sally	17		Weymaly	Prospect
Jane	-Jane	16		Weymaly	Prospect
Stevy	- Stevy	20		Weymaly	Prospect
Tommy	- Tommy	18		Weymaly	Prospect
Jimmy	- Jimmy	16		Weymaly	Prospect
Freddy	- Freddy	13		Weymaly	Prospect

Children - 3 1/2 blankets delivered to them:

Mary	- Mary	5
Sarah	- Sarah	4
Kitty	- Kitty	3
Jane	-Jane	3
Jimmy	- Jimmy	4
Charly	- Charly	4

[signed] Sydney Cotton, Police Magistrate



**Parramatta Blanket Return 1843**

source: AONSW Colonial Secretary 4/1133.3

"Return of Aboriginal Natives taken at Parramatta 1st May 1843"

English name	Native name	age	wife Children	tribe	place of usual resort
Bunda	- Bunda	30	1w 1m	Bunda	Liverpool
Johnny	- Woorewoor	30	1w 3m 4f	Woorrewarry	Eastern Creek
Betty	- Betty	35		Woorrewarry	Eastern Creek
Jenny	- Jenny	20		Bunda	Liverpool
Jackey	- Wullarang	30	2w 2m 3f	Bunda	Liverpool
Jemmy	- Jemmy	25	2w	Threaval	Bong Bong
Kitty	- Kitty	25		Threaval	Bong Bong
Mary	- Mary	35		Threaval	Bong Bong
Charley Crumlin - Crumlin		25	1w 1m	Muringong	Cowpasture
Mary Ann	- Mary Ann	20		Muringong	Cowpasture
Charley	- Emmagankley	30		Bunda	Berrima
Billy	- Parrot	25		Bunda	Sydney
Freddy	-Freddy	15		Bunda	Bunda
Plowright	- Plowright	30		Bunda	Bunda
Sarah	- Sarah	12		Bunda	Bunda
Charley	- Charley	10		Bunda	Bunda
Mary	- Mary	10		Bunda	Bunda
Catherine	- Catherine	4		Bunda	Bunda
Phoebe	- Phoebe	6		Bunda	Bunda

Betsy	- Betsy	5		Bunda	Bunda
Jemmy	- Jemmy	16		Bunda	Bunda
Tuckham	- Tuckham	9		Bunda	Bunda
Jane	-Jane	5		Bunda	Bunda
Elizabeth	- Elizabeth	3		Bunda	Bunda
Selina	- Selina	1		Bunda	Bunda
Larry	- Bargo Carry	30	1w 2f	Wergarly	Prospect
Martha	- Martha	25		Wergarly	Prospect
Betty	- Betty	25	2w 2m 2f	Wergarly	Prospect
Sally	- Sally	18	1m	Wergarly	Prospect
Jane	-Jane	17		Wergarly	Prospect
Sarah	- Sarah	25	1m	Wergarly	Prospect
Margaret	- Margaret	30	2f	Wergarly	Prospect
Polly	- Polly	40	1m	Wergarly	Prospect
Jenny Garland	- [same]	18		Wergarly	Prospect
Stephen	- Stephen	16		Wergarly	Prospect
Jonathan	- Jonathan	16		Wergarly	Prospect
Joseph	-Joseph	20		Wergarly	Prospect
Jemmy	- Jemmy	8		Wergarly	Prospect
Phoebe	-Phoebe	6		Wergarly	Prospect
Jane	-Jane	3		Wergarly	Prospect
Charley Stanley - [same]		3		Wergarly	Prospect

[signed] Gilb. Elliot, P.M.