

Maitland and District Historical Society Inc.

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***The Aims of the Society are to
Discover, Record, Preserve, Advise on and Teach the History of Maitland and the District***

Maitland and District Historical Society Inc.

Cover:

Maitland Courthouse, opened in 1896

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Lecture meeting is held on the first Tuesday of each month from 5:30-7.00pm as a forum
for lectures, talks and presentations

Business meeting is held on the third Tuesday of each month from 5:30-7.00pm

Meetings are held at the Society's rooms, 3 Cathedral Street Maitland

Membership fees : \$15 (single) and \$20 (double / family)

Patron: The Hon. Milton Morris AO

NSW Member for Maitland 1956-1980

NSW Minister for Transport 1965 - 1975

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In the news – Maitland Mercury November 2013

Our city? It's a living museum

By REBECCA BERRY

Nov. 30, 2013



- **RICH HISTORY:** Maitland Historical Society member Val Rudkin.

Maitland city centre is a living museum.

That's the view of Maitland Historical Society member Val Rudkin, who has been researching the stories behind the city's High Street buildings for the past three years. She has been looking at the street one section at a time to study the prominent names, buildings and people that have captured her interest.

Born and raised in Lorn, Mrs Rudkin has always treasured her strong ties to the city. One of her favourite sections of High Street stretches between Hills Chambers and Toyworld in the Heritage Mall.

"It used to be one long building and the original facade still stands," she said.

"My research has focused on the old buildings, what has taken place there and the changes made over decades.

"It is important to record their history – if we don't know about them, they are just buildings."

It was originally the Wolfe, Gorrick and Co building, which was big business in Maitland in 1854, as merchants and importers of drapery, grocery and ironmongery.

A large three-storey building for stores was erected at the back of the building in 1866. The ground floor was for unopened packages of general merchandise, the first floor for flour storage and the top floor for ironmongery and other goods.

The *Mercury* reported Wolfe and Gorrick celebrated the opening of their new ironmongery store in July 1879 by entertaining their employees at a garden ball and supper.

The area today includes Hills Chambers, erected in 1907 on the left of the building.

<http://www.maitlandmercury.com.au/story/1941005/our-city-its-a-living-museum/?cs=171>

Holbeach at Lochinvar - Allan & Lisa Thomas

"Holbeach": A Colonial House and Former Coach Station in Lochinvar, NSW

by Allan and Lisa Thomas



We live in a Georgian style brick colonial cottage in Lochinvar, NSW. The house sits on approximately five acres, now given to trees and grazing, which slope down from Cantwell Road to the Lochinvar Creek. The property comprises Lots 60 through 63 of the 1840 subdivision and sale of Leslie Duguid's (1822) 2000 acre land grant.

Henry "Boshy" Nowland purchased these lots in 1840, along with the other lots along the road, and owned them until 1858. In 1841/2, Nowland had our house built as a coach station. Access to both the Lochinvar Creek and the Great Northern Road was undoubtedly the reason for his interest in these lots.

The son of an Irish convict father and an English convict mother, Henry Nowland was born in 1796 on Norfolk Island. One of the first men to buy land in Muswellbrook, he became an Elector of County Durham. Henry Nowland owned racehorses and hotels, and established a coaching and Colonial mail network which extended from Morpeth to Moreton Bay, now Brisbane.

Nowland's interest in the potentially lucrative Post Office mail service began in the 1840s. Routes were bid on and the contracts awarded annually. In 1847 Henry Nowland successfully tendered for a number of inland mail routes (*Maitland Mercury*, 13 February, 1847):

CONVEYANCE OF POST OFFICE MAILS.

The undermentioned tender for conveyance of the Post Office Mails during the present year, having been accepted, the particulars are published for general information, viz. :—

Henry Nowland—Raymond Terrace and Sawyer's Point, twice a week, by one horse mail cart; Raymond Terrace and Dungog, via Seaham and Clarence Town, twice a week, on horseback; Morpeth and Paterson, daily, by one horse mail cart; Paterson and Gresford, three times a week, on horseback; Morpeth, East Maitland, and Maitland, daily, by three horse coach; Maitland and Wollemi, once a week, by two horse mail cart; East Maitland, Maitland, and Singleton, daily; Singleton, Muswell Brook, and Scone, three times a week, by three horse coach; Scone and Murrurundi, twice a week, by two horse mail cart; Murrurundi, Tamworth, and Armidale, once a week, on horseback; Singleton, Jerry's Plains, and Merton, three times a week, and Merton, Morriwa, and Cassilis, twice a week, by two horse mail cart; Macquarie and Armidale, via Kempsey, once a fortnight, on horseback; Armidale and Alford's Inn, Darling Downs, once a fortnight, on horseback; Brisbane and Alford's Inn, Darling Downs, via Ipswich, once a fortnight, on horseback, for £1,460.

The mail routes dovetailed with Henry Nowland's coaching network. The 1839 Royal Hotel in Muswellbrook was the headquarters for his coaching and carrying business. It was at The Royal that Nowland entertained the then Governor of New South Wales Sir George Gipps, Lady Gipps, and their entourage (2 November 1844, *Maitland Mercury*). It was recorded in the Sydney and Maitland newspapers that the Gipps entourage left Maitland and stopped in Lochinvar before travelling on to breakfast in Singleton, and thence on to Muswellbrook. Although the evidence is circumstantial, we believe that the Lochinvar stop was at our property. The newspapers identified by name all the houses and people that the Gipps party visited on their trip inland. However, no house or family was named for Lochinvar.

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This omission is understandable if they stopped at Nowland's coach station to water the horses, etc.

At one time there were Nowland coach stations along the Great Northern Road and beyond. One of these, Nowland's Half Way House, also known as "Chain of Ponds", built in 1842 between Muswellbrook and Singleton with convict labour, was one of the finest hotels of its time in regional New South Wales.

Henry Nowland's coaching business was sold to Cobb & Co. after his death in 1863.

We believe that the same convicts who built the Half Way House built our house. This is supported by the markings on our house bricks, a selection of which are shown in the following photograph.



Adjacent to the road at the front of our house is a layer of old broken bricks, now covered with approximately one foot of soil. This brick layer is 8 foot wide by 45 foot long, and extends parallel to the house. We believe that this bricked area was constructed in order to allow coaches to stop in front of the building without fear of the wheels becoming bogged. This bricked area would also have facilitated the loading and unloading of passengers and goods.

Henry Nowland ended his property connection with Lochinvar in 1858. The exact reason for this is unknown, but it could have involved the arrival of the rail in West Maitland. In 1858 Nowland sold Lots 60 through 62 to Englishman John Sanger Brown. (Lot 63, known as "Hickey's Purchase", was sold to poundkeeper Thomas Hickey and was not reunited with the other lots until 1905.)



John Sanger Brown, together with his wife Mary and their young family, left England in late 1854 and arrived in Maitland in early 1855. The Browns named the house "Holbeach" after their home town in the district of South Holland in Lincolnshire.

John Sanger Brown was an educated middle class man much given to reading sentimental poetry. He took up bricklaying and, as a contractor, was involved in the construction of several local school, church, and civic buildings, including the Wesleyan Chapel at Oswald, which was completed in 1864, and the public school and teacher's residence at Lochinvar, completed in 1878.

Matilda Kate, one of John Sanger and Mary Brown's daughters, was considered the success story of the Lochinvar area. In 1879 she married a Sydney man of French background, Leopold Hippolyte De La Rue, from a prominent family of Sydney jewellers. Her younger sister, Ellen Georgina, later married Hippolyte's brother Edmond, and their son Hippolyte ("Kanga") had an impressive military career. During World War II, he was air officer commanding, Western Area, with headquarters in Perth, and was made a C.B.E. in 1944. "Kanga" De La Rue was granted the honorary rank of air commodore after he retired.



Matilda Kate in 1883
(from McNeil, 1982)

John's son, vigneron Alfred Edward Brown inherited the property, which he owned until his death in 1912. John, Mary, and Alfred are all buried in the Lochinvar Anglican cemetery.

In 1921 grazier Daniel Jolly of Glendon Brook bought the property from Alfred's widow, and for the next thirty-seven years it was owned by various members of Jolly's family.

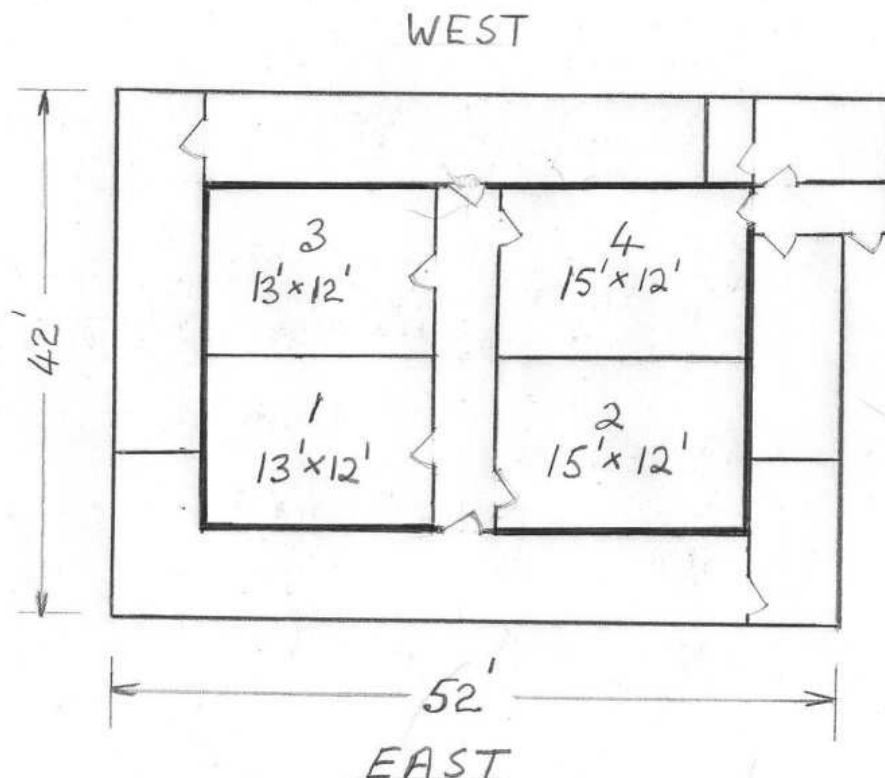
Between 1958 and 1962 our property was owned by the Sisters of St Joseph in Maitland. They kept dairy cows here, so that they had a supply of fresh milk for the 100 or so girls at their Lochinvar boarding school.

Our house is essentially four main rooms (rooms 1 to 4) off a central hallway, completely surrounded by a 7' 6" verandah. The north and south verandahs are bricked in to form narrow rooms. We believe the small northern room may originally have been intended for a servant. The cooler southern room may have been for storage.

There was a door on the southern side of this room, now bricked in.

The following drawing shows the dimensions of the house and the rooms.

The units are given in feet, as all construction would have been done using Imperial units.



The central hallway is 5 feet wide and 28 feet long. A simple brick arch extends across the hallway in line with the room walls. Windows are not marked in this drawing. There are two sash windows on the east side of the house, and two on the west side. There are rectangular transom windows over the east and west doors.

The house has a corrugated iron hipped roof. The roof is supported by round saplings. The corrugated iron verandah roof joins the exterior house wall one foot below the lower limit of the roof. The ceilings in the central house are all of wood and are 11 feet high. These ceilings are of boards in a simple longitudinal design.

In the wooden ceiling of the present kitchen is a manhole which gives access to the space beneath the steeply pitched roof. At approximately 18 by 18 inches, this hatch now allows access by only the slimmest of adults.

The bricks are laid in a Wessex bond pattern. The bricks, although hard on the outside, are as soft as mudbrick in the middle. This suggests that they were fired on the property. The bricks vary in colour from pink through to a medium brown. The brick walls are laid on a course of hewn stones, with a slate damp course between the stones and the bricks.

The stone in the foundations, above and below the windows, on the floors below the exterior doors, and as slabs found to the north of the house are of mudstone, almost certainly from the now exhausted Ravensfield quarry.

The house formerly had a fireplace in each of the four main rooms. These were served by two chimneys, although only one chimney and two fireplaces survive.

The floors throughout the house are of hardwood. Some floors are original and some are later replacements. The floorboards are supported by round tree trunks, typically 12" in diameter and adzed flat on the top. The interior and exterior doors, and all other joinery, are of cedar. The skirting boards are 9 inches deep. The interior doors have four panels. The eastern (exterior) door has six fielded panels.

Several structures would have been present in the 1800s but have now disappeared. These structures included an external kitchen, an external laundry (which may have adjoined the kitchen), an outside toilet, a well, and a stable. Both the well and the outside dunny disappeared within living memory.

Logically, the original kitchen would have been to the north of room 4, separated from the house by several feet *via* a covered walkway. Evidence for this is in the brickwork above the north kitchen doorway. Here there are two connected uprights, which appear to be the remains of the roof anchors of the covered kitchen walkway.



The above photograph, from the Capp family *via* Lindsay Wood, is the oldest that we have seen of our house, and shows the 1892 Lochinvar cricket team posing in the paddock to the west of the house. In this photograph the two house chimneys are still visible. The southern one on the right was later demolished. A smaller third chimney, which was separate from the house, is also faintly visible to the north, which is the left of the photo. This was presumably the kitchen block, which might also have had attached laundry facilities. In the background of the photograph is the almost completed Holy Trinity Anglican Church.

The dominant trees on the property are a 21 metre high Silky Oak (*Grevillia robusta*) at the southwest corner of the house, a 23 metre high Bunya Pine (*Araucaria bidwillii*) towards the southern front of the house, and two 26 metre high Hoop Pines (*Araucaria cunninghamiana*) immediately to the east of the house. An arborist has estimated that they are over 100 years old and are typical plantings from the late Victorian period.

We are indebted to Ian Nowland and Liz Parkinson for the information they provided on the Nowland family.

McNeil. E. (1982). *A Bunyip Close Behind Me: Recollections of the Nineties* (retold by her daughter Eugénie Crawford). Victoria: Penguin Books.

Maitland Courthouse -- Research by Peter Bogan

The Maitland Daily Mercury, Wednesday, 2 September, 1896

COMPLETION OF THE NEW COURT HOUSE, WEST MAITLAND. The new courthouse and lockup at West Maitland, in course of erection during the past fourteen months, may be said now to be practically completed, the work in connection therewith being at an end, with the exception of some polishing in the court-room, the chiseling of the Royal arms on the tower, and a few other trifling jobs. We had a look over the building this week, with the object of acquiring some particulars of the work, which will doubtless prove of interest to our readers. For these we are indebted to the courtesy of Messrs. William Taylor and Sons, contractors, and Mr. W. A. E. Lewis, clerk of works.

The building is a fine structure, designed in the office of the Colonial Architect (Mr. W. L. Vernon), upon whom it reflects the very greatest credit. And a great deal of praise is due also to the contractor, Messrs. William and Charles Taylor, of West Maitland, for the able manner in which the work has been carried out. The building is one of large proportions and commanding appearance; solid and substantial in construction from the bottom of the foundations to the top of the tower. The most skilful workmen were employed, the best materials available were used throughout, and it is evident to the veriest tyro that these gentlemen — so unlike some big contractors in the metropolis that one reads of but too frequently — have not yet learned the despicable art of scamping their work. No large work of this character has, we venture to assert, been more faithfully performed, or given greater satisfaction to any department of the Public Service. From beginning to end the work has been constantly and carefully supervised by Mr. W. A. E. Lewis, and periodically inspected by the Colonial Architect himself, and in this respect these gentlemen are to be commended for the conscientious discharge of their onerous duties.

The contract price for the building was £11,655, and when we state that everything in connection with it will be completed ready for use for an amount well within £12,000, it is proof positive of the care that has been exercised in its construction. Some people are under the impression that the edifice is too elaborate, but in our opinion it is not too good for a town of the importance of West Maitland. For some twenty years or more a constant agitation has been going on for the erection of a decent building in which the administration of justice could be carried out in comfort - and, though successive Governments were approached on the matter, from the time of Sir John Robertson's promise to the late Mr. Joseph Eckford, M.P., that £20,000 would be granted by his Government for the erection of a courthouse, nothing of a definite character was done towards the accomplishment of the object until the present member for West Maitland (Mr. John Gillies) succeeded in 1894 in inducing the Government of Sir George Dibbs to resume the necessary land, to have plans prepared, and to place upon the Estimates a sum of £10,000 for the purpose of erecting a suitable building.

This action, however, was not sufficient in itself to ensure the early erection of the courthouse, because before tenders could be called for the work another Government had

come into existence, and all still depended upon their will as to whether they would carry out the intentions of their predecessors. Tenders, however, were called in the early part of last year by the Minister of Works (Mr. J. H. Young), who accepted one of those sent in, the lowest of which exceeded the amount set down on the estimation in the first instance. So that the people of West Maitland are indebted to the present Administration more than to any other for the new court house, for independent of the continual urging of Mr. Gillies, the influence of the Colonial Secretary (Mr. J. N. Brunner) had without a doubt a great deal



Photo: January 2013

to do with inducing his colleague to go on with the work at the earliest possible moment.

But Governments were not the only ones blameable for the long delay in giving West Maitland a courthouse: it is well known that the people themselves each time there was a fair prospect of getting it, quarrelled about the site, and that quarrel never ceased even after the resumption of the land upon which the new courthouse now stands.

People said, 'You have the land, but the building has yet to be erected,' and there always appeared hope to some that so long as tenders were not accepted there was still a chance that what they considered a better and more suitable site selected. That was not to be; and despite many obstacles and the long years intervening since the first start of the movement, West Maitland is now in possession of a good courthouse, — not too good, only just the thing, — which she fully deserves, considering the inconvenience experienced for the past thirty years in respect to the conduct of police court business, carried on as regards a suitable building in conditions little short of a disgrace to any civilized community.

The land upon which the courthouse has been erected is triangular in shape, having extensive frontages to High and Sempill streets. The building extends a depth of 160 feet to High-street, has 48 feet frontage at the corner, from which it stands back some little distance, and runs along Sempill-street a distance of 148 feet. With the exception of the caretaker's quarters in the rear, the rooms are all on the one floor, and consist of courtroom 50 x 30 feet, and 22 feet 6 inches from floor to ceiling; legal room, 21 x 18; male and female witnesses rooms 18 x 15 each; C.P.S.'s room, 28 x 18, with store room, 6 x 8; magistrate's room, 18 x 16; Inspector's office, 18 x 14; charge room, 25 x 15; men's room, 15 x 15; five cells, exercise and court yards, and very roomy, comfortable, and convenient quarters intended for the lockup keeper. All these rooms and the necessary corridors cover a large area of ground, and the building to go through it shows much more than can be imagined looking at it from the outside. The foundations are of concrete, and run from six to fifteen feet in depth from the floor line, and below that is a good deal of brick and cement work. Under the tower is a square block of concrete fourteen feet square and three feet deep, while it rests on inverted brick arches.

The exterior walls of the building are constructed of solid brick and stone work. Commencing at the ground level with a brick course, a band of stone follows, then brick course again up to the windows, where a string of neatly moulded stone sills is placed. Another course of brick work to the top of the windows is followed by a lintel course of stone, and then separated by a narrow course of bricks in a massive cornice and stone plinth course, then more bricks and a moulded stone coping. Patent pressed bricks manufactured at Enfield have been used in the facings of the walls, with locally made bricks in the inside. The stone was chiefly obtained at Mr. Thomas Browne's Ravensfield quarry, but a small quantity for the steps leading up to the building and which was required to be of a harder nature, was procured at Clarence Town.

Rising from an elaborately designed stone portico in the centre of the building in front is a square tower 80 feet high to the top of the dome, which is octagonal in shape, and finished off with openings on each of its zinc-covered sides, while a splendid weather vane showing the points of the compass in good sized gilt letters springs from this to the height of another ten foot. The shaft of the tower for twenty feet above the portico is all plain brickwork, then comes five foot of stone work in which is a circular clock opening on each of the sides. Above are swag ornaments with carved tops, on which rests the dome constructed of American pine and covered with zinc.

In the construction of the tower were used four cornerstones each weighing four tons, cut from blocks nine tons in the rough, and a little above these are four other stones weighing three tons each. Altogether 150 tons of stone were used in this part of the building alone. Massive pediments each composed of forty tons of stone, face the gable ends of the roof of the courtroom, the one in front, with its heavy stone moulding, showing out harmoniously above the handsome stone, and brick work forming the colonnade on either side of the tower, and finished with a neat stone coping. At each side of the court-room this colonnade, covered by a lean-to, is continued for a distance of eighty feet, the width being eight foot, and the floor is neatly tiled. The roof of the lean-to, in each case, is supported by wooden pillars resting on a stone dwarf wall with stone coping. These do not add to the beauty of the building but we are informed they are only temporary, and have been erected with a view of meeting future additions to the building. In front on either side of the porch the colonnade rises to a height of 21 foot, and is enclosed with stone balustrades, the top being supported by turned columns, and pilasters of stone, and two exterior columns of brick rusticated, the corners being rounded. The porch under the tower giving entrance to the courtroom is all stone work, forming three arches, keyed in the centre, the columns being fluted in front and otherwise ornamented. Above that facing the front are the letters VRI, and the royal arms artistically chiselled in stone.

A flight of six stone steps with brick dwarf wall and stone coping on either side lead up to the front entrance of the courthouse, the floor of which is three feet above the level of ground. All the piers on the outside angles of the building are of brick rusticated, and the walls, at the rear of the courtroom are brought out in circular bays, formed with specially moulded bricks, the caretaker's quarters next being square-shaped. The windows of the court-room are circular-headed, the arches outside being tuck pointed and picked out in red and white. The roofing throughout is slate— purple Bangor specially imported by the

contractors — with lead capping, guttering, and valleys, while cast iron down pipes of an ornamental pattern carry the water from the roof.

Great attention has been paid to drainage and ventilation, the most modern systems being introduced. Turrets in the roof tops are connected with lines of ventilators inside, there being one large one over the court room and three others. Under all the wooden floors are four inches of concrete, to keep the place clean, and as a precaution against white ants. In case of flood-water getting under the building this concrete floor has been made slightly lower at one side than the other so that the water can flow out of its own accord into the drainage system. All the chimney tops have a stone base and are finished with stone ornamental tops, the design being special and very attractive. The ventilators in the brickwork outside are of the Crown pattern.

The present intention, we believe, is not to have the courthouse enclosed, in the front at least. From the kerb to the building line will be tar-paved, while the back of the place will be enclosed with a dwarf wall and galvanized iron fence. In the construction of the building about 600 tons of stone have been used, and 600,000 bricks, half a million of which came from East Maitland brick kilns. The flooring throughout is teak from the Richmond River, this and all other woods in the building being supplied by Mr. James Wolstenholme, of West Maitland.

Entering the courtroom from the front large doors are found to open into a lobby consisting of a panelled wall and ceiling, with cedar folding doors on spring hinges, and provided with panels of embossed glass. From each side of the courtroom ingress and egress is provided for by swing doors which open on to the tiled floor of the colonnade without, while on either side of the bench is a door giving access to and from the rooms at the back. The courtroom 50 by 30 feet, the main walls are 22 feet 6 inches high and the ceiling is very elaborately and beautifully finished with massive ornamental sweeps and groins of colonial cedar, and moulded panels of Kauri pine coved round the windows and walls and beautifully arched in the centre, the whole being varnished. Twelve circular headed windows with lead lights of an ornamental pattern light up the room. For a height of six foot the walls have been pannelled with a dado of rosewood, and the top rounded with a double sunk bead. Above that is white plaster and the ornamental work immediately beneath the ceiling is finished in Keen's cement. Fanlights are provided over the two side doors, above which are large cedar tablets of an ornamental design.

There are two fire places, provided with high-class registered stoves, the mantels being of cedar, elaborately moulded, set off with brackets, Ionic pillars, and caps. The magistrates' bench extends almost from door to door at the end of the room, occupying a space of 18 by 7 feet. A handsome cedar canopy with heavy moulded cornice and supported by four massive trusses on surbases elegantly carved, with back and ceiling panelled, and the front surmounted with the Royal arms, overhangs the bench, which is provided with a desk two feet wide, the whole being raised up by a platform eighteen inches from the floor. The jury box is 18 by 6 feet, reporters' box 9 by 4 feet 6 inches, clerk's desk 6 by 4ft. 6in., and witness box 3 by 3 feet 6 inches. With the exception of the witness box, which is

surrounded with a neat pattern of iron railing with a cedar hand-rail round the top, all the fittings mentioned are of rosewood.

The prisoners' dock in the centre of the room is 10 foot in length and 6 foot wide, raised six inches from the floor, and enclosed with iron guard rail in front and cedar back six foot high with a seat running its whole length. A dividing rail with iron standards, neat iron scrolls, and cedar hand rail, with gateway in the centre and seat in front, runs across the room a little distance behind the dock, and acts as a barrier beyond which none but those having business in the court may go. Light and ventilation in the court room, as indeed they are throughout the building; have been carefully studied. There are ventilators running from the front to the back courtyard, and others in the walls and ceiling are connected with pipes running into the large turret on the roof, so that a current of air is continually passing through.



At the back of the courtroom is a corridor 70 feet long, 8 feet wide and 14 foot from floor to ceiling. At each end are lavatories 9 feet by 6 feet, fitted with marble washstands, basins, etc., and to which gas and water are laid on. The ceiling of this corridor is panelled with colonial beech, moulded cedar cornices giving them a nice set off, while the skirting is of cedar. Heavy side doors, 8ft. by 5ft. 6in., at each end of the corridor, open out onto the side colonnades, and give access to the offices and rooms at, the back, without passing into the court room. To the left of the corridor is a passage way, from which access is gained to the legal-room, 21ft. by 18ft. This room is lighted by a large oriel window, which faces High-street. A door leads from it to one of the lavatories, and it contains a fireplace with marble mantel and grate. Next to this room, and approached from the same passage is the magistrates' room, 18 foot by 16 feet, lighted by a three light window, and provided with fireplace, marble mantel, etc. Further along the passage the caretaker's quarters and back premises are reached by passing to the left, and the courtyard through a door to the right.

Returning again to the corridor at the back of the court-room access is had in succession to the female and male witnesses rooms, which are each 18 feet, by 16 feet 6in., and to the Clerk of Petty Sessions room, the latter being fitted up with a fine cedar counter. At the back it is provided with drawers, and the front is neatly panelled. This room occupies the same position next Sempill-street as the legal room does on the opposite side of the building, and like it is lighted by an oriel window, and has a fire place, gas brackets, etc. Off this room is a store room 6ft. by 5ft. fitted with pigeon holes. From the large corridor a passage four foot wide and 46 feet long leads to the lockup. Before reaching the cells, however, is a smaller passage leading to the right, off which is the men's room (for police men in waiting) 15 feet square, which has a window opening on to the court yard. This yard consists of an area of 35 feet by 31 feet square, tiled with octagonal asphalt blocks and surrounded by fifteen feet of brick walls. By the same passage the Inspector's room is

reached. This room, which overlooks Sempill street, is 18ft by 14ft, , fitted with gas, fire place, and grate. It contains a strong room, the floor of which is tiled over concrete, the walls have iron shelves, and the room closes with one of Milner's patent strong-room doors. Opposite this is the Charge Room, 25ft. by 15ft. It is provided with a counter the full width of the room, fireplace, and a charge dock in one corner is surrounded by an iron railing. Next is the corridor leading to the cells.



Courthouse 1930s. Photo: Pete Smith

Passing from the charge-room to the cells one notices a handsome door screen of cedar with glass panels and fanlights on one side, while on the other it is protected by strong iron guards. The cell passage is 35 feet long by 5 feet wide. At one end in what is known as the associated cell, 18 feet by 10 feet in area, concrete and patent asphalt floor, walls cemented, with air and light openings, three in the walls and two in the ceiling, which is covered with galvanised iron of small corrugation. The cell door is 9 feet by 5 feet, and is protected with a strong iron guard. Next is the padded cell, 8 feet by 12 feet. This cell is padded 6 inches deep on a 11inch wood framing for a height of 6 feet 6 inches up the walls. It has a couple of openings for light and ventilation, and is enclosed by a $\frac{3}{8}$ inch iron door, with inspection hole, and there is also an inspection hole above the doorway. There are three ordinary cells 8 feet by 12 feet, enclosed by iron doors. The walls of the cells are 14 inches thick, and the massive bolts and bars provided for fastenings would defy any Jack Sheppard.

A six inch shaft connected with the main 18-inch ventilator is attached to each cell above the ceiling, and the air discharged through the turret in the roof. At the end of the cell passage nearest High-street is an exercise yard, 18ft. by 22ft. This is surrounded by brick walls 16 feet high and 15 inches thick. The top is covered with a wrought iron framework,

the rods being spaced five inches apart, and a small portion is covered with galvanized iron as a protection from the weather.

The floor of this yard is composed of concrete and patent asphalt. It is also provided with a lavatory bench, with two washing basins, a water closet and urinal. The yard is entered from the cell passage through an iron guard, and an iron door at the opposite side of the yard leads out to another passage from which High-street can be reached. In this passage are conveniences for court officials, magistrates, the public, and police, eleven altogether, while the public conveniences have an additional number of urinals composed of slate. The dry earth system is the one provided, the pans being emptied from the rear of the building. The lockup-keepers quarters are reached from the passage passing the magistrates' room, and also from private entrances at the back and from High-street. Between the passage way and the premises are lavatories, and conveniences for ladies, lighted and ventilated by louver windows of rough plate glass. These, are hidden by a screen in the form of a doorway with side lights and panels of embossed glass. A similar screen separates this department from the private residence of the lockup-keeper, which contains sitting room, four bed rooms, box room, bath room, pantry, kitchen, cupboard under stairs, wash-house, small yard, etc. Every convenience has been provided in the way of water and gas, some of the rooms having marble mantels and grates, the kitchen a "Younger" cooking stove, and the wash-house a copper, washing tubs, etc.

The yard at the back of the courthouse has been filled in to the street level with soil taken from McDougal's Point, some two thousand cubic yards being required for this purpose. It is intended to erect stabling at the rear, which will make the premises complete in every respect.

While the work has been in course of progress the average number of men employed each week was 45, while indirectly for the first few months the number might be put down at 100. It must be gratifying to all concerned to know that no accident of a serious nature occurred from beginning to the end of the work. All those employed on the job were insured against accident in the Employers Liability Company, and would in case of disablement have been entitled to half pay for six months, or in case of death, £50.

The bent glass - in the oriel windows, it may be mentioned, cost 50s a pane, sixteen of them having had to be procured at a cost of £ 40, while the square panes in the other windows cost 15s each. They are of polished glass, three-eighths of an inch in thickness. The iron work in the courtroom was executed by Mr. Geo. Howitt, the polishing by Mr. Henry Bussell, the plumbing and gas fitting by Mr. Geo Howarth, while the Great Northern Hardware Coy., of West Maitland, provided all the mantel pieces, grates and gas fittings. The whole of the mason's work was carried out under the foremanship of Mr. Raymond Dumbrell. Possession of the place will probably be handed over on the 16th of this month.

The Maitland Daily Mercury, Wednesday, 2 September, 1896

PETER BOGAN, December 2013

Glossary of terms

Pediments - Pediments are beautiful architectural embellishments for doors and windows. PLB

Swag -An ornamental festoon of flowers, fruit, and greenery: ribbon-tied swags of flowers or a carved or painted representation of such a festoon: fine plaster swags. PLB

Rusticated - Rusticated masonry is usually squared-off but left with a more or less rough outer surface and wide joints that emphasize the edges of each block. PLB

Bangor Slate - Is regarded as the best quality slate in the world. This slate was quarried from the Cambrian rock in North Wales that includes many quarries in Bangor. It can vary from dark heather, deep purple and plum red in colour. Bangor is a small coastal city in North West Wales. PLB

Pilasters - Pilasters often appear on the sides of a door frame or window opening on the facade of a building, and are sometimes paired with columns or pillars PLB.

Oriel - Oriel windows are a form of bay window which project from the main wall of the building but do not reach to the ground PLB.

PETER BOGAN, December 2013

Upgrade for Courthouse



Maitland Mercury, 7 August 2013

By ANDREW PARKINSON

Work to restore the historic Maitland Court House will begin later this month after a \$1.1 -million upgrade for the site was announced yesterday.

Included in the project will be a replacement roof, airconditioning upgrade, disability access and fire safety improvements, fixing of internal cracks, repainting and carpeting, landscaping and the replacement of underground pipes.

<http://www.maitlandmercury.com.au/story/1687781/upgrade-for-courthouse/>

The Hermitage

On 19 January 2014, Maitland and District Historical Society members were invited to a viewing of "The Hermitage" which is to be auctioned in the near future. We are grateful to Judith Scobie for allowing us into her home, and to her sister Jean for conducting our tour. We also enjoyed afternoon tea in the dining room which was an added treat.



This house stands serenely on large grounds facing Ballard Street. It is aloof from the hustle and bustle of the City of Maitland, yet very conveniently situated to all services. The front entrance driveway circles around one of two huge fig trees which hide the house from the street. It is an elegant house. Two storeys constructed of solid brick walls with a large verandah across the front and along one side. The balcony is adorned with beautiful iron lacework, the frieze having a grapevine pattern which is very fitting for the house. The large front door has a glass skylight above and glass panels at the sides. The front door is positioned slightly off centre, and opens onto a wide hall leading to the staircase. The ground floor rooms are large and have good sized windows to admit light and fresh air. The fireplaces in the sitting room and dining room appear to have been rebuilt at some time, as they are constructed entirely of bricks with a timber mantel. The fireplaces upstairs are still in the original condition with timber surrounds and iron grates. The ceilings are rather plain, with only a simple angular cornice and a decorative ceiling rose in the centre from which the light fitting is suspended. The kitchen is a mix of the old with some modern additions. The brick fireplace which once held a fuel stove now houses an electric stove and the 1970's built-in cupboards are fitted with modern appliances. This room also has a large window on each outside wall.



Upstairs there are two huge bedrooms with french-doors leading onto the front and side balcony. The view is very pleasant from this aspect, looking across the tops of the trees which hide the busy by-pass road from view and filters any noise. The main part of the house on this floor contains four bedrooms, though one smaller one leads off another room which is fitted out with bookshelves and used as a study. These two rooms lend themselves to the making of a perfect parent's retreat.

Another room which is actually on the first floor of the rear section of the house has been converted to a bathroom and is connected to the third large bedroom. It is a spacious bathroom with french doors leading onto the back balcony. This is the only part of the rear section that was shown to us, and it is probable that this area was the original servants' quarters. The wide hallway extends from the top of the stairs to the front balcony with a branch hall that leads to the back balcony. This enables access from the front to the rear of the house at this level. There was a rear staircase mentioned in the sale notice of 1926, though we did not see one on this visit.

The Hermitage is a renovator's dream, it is solid and would need only a little cosmetic surgery. The large rooms are suited to various uses and a sensitive decorating approach could give new life to the house. Some hard work in the gardens with perhaps the return of tennis and croquet courts would see the "Hermitage" regain her sparkle.

The furniture and furnishings are fitting for the period of the house and many items have been in the Scobie family for generations. This gave the visitors a sense of how life was lived around one hundred years ago. The portraits of Robert Scobie (1831-1909) and Mary Scobie (1842-1941), the present owners' great grandparents, adorn the walls of the dining room. The house was purchased for Mary Scobie and her daughters Mary, Janet and May in 1926 by her son and their brother, James Warren Scobie and has been a Scobie family home ever since.

Whilst the house was the main attraction, in writing a review of our visit I feel a little of the earlier history should be mentioned. The Hermitage stands on land that was granted to George Yeomans and which he named "Maitland Grange." The two adjoining portions No. 141 and 147 making around 76 acres. George came to Wallis Plains around 1825.

Apart from the main house, there is a very old stone house which is used as a storage shed. This is probably the first house erected for George and Elizabeth Yeomans. It now backs onto the boundary fence, but initially would have stood alone, allowing for access on all four sides. It is not large and gives the impression it was erected c. 1840 or earlier. The building is a rectangular shape and contained three rooms with a brick fireplace in one room, three exterior doors and three windows. The stone door treads are very worn. It is an interesting building and possibly one of the oldest still in existence in Maitland.





Rough layout of The Hermitage not to scale:

Interior doors, verandahs and balconies not shown.

*When advertised in 1926 the house contained 8 main rooms, bathroom and 4 back rooms.
Large top and bottom balconies at front and rear.*

Size of rooms was given as 21ft x 19ft and 17ft x 19ft. Hall 9ft wide.

The staircase is shown with directional 'up' arrows.

George Yeomans died in 1853 and his property was passed to his wife, Elizabeth. George had a son born in 1824 by a liaison with Mary Lisson (no record found of their marriage.) George married Elizabeth Singleton at Maitland in 1827. The son, Rowland George Yeomans became a successful businessman in Maitland and was his father's only heir.

We do know that a building known as the "Hermitage" was standing on this site well before the 1880's, but finding actual facts to prove this is the same house that stands today is a difficult task. The 1878 engraving of West Maitland by Henry Fullwood shows the "Hermitage" as a single story house with a large barn at the rear. The old stone house is also portrayed. In the 1878 Municipal Council Rate list of Maitland, the owner of the house in Ballard Street was Elizabeth Yeomans, and the occupant was Alfred Vindin. Elizabeth Yeomans owned other land in Ballard Street, and was listed as owner and occupant of a house in Steam Street. Alfred Vindin was married to Elizabeth Yeomans' niece, Mary Ann (nee Lloyd) the daughter of her sister Mary. Her other sister was Emma Vindin, wife of George Vindin.

Maitland and District Historical Society Inc.

Elizabeth Yeomans died at her residence "The Grange." in Steam Street, in 1894 aged 82 years. Rowland George Yeomans died at his residence, Campbells Hill in 1905 and ownership may have been passed to his widow, Maria Yeomans who died in 1911. Mary Ann Vindin was still living at the "Hermitage" in 1907, however she died at her residence, Regent Street in 1912. By this time the "Hermitage" was owned by Hebburn Limited and occupied by the Colliery Superintendent, Mr. Robert A. Harle.

After a great deal of searching, I finally found an entry in the Maitland Mercury to answer at least two questions about this house. When it was built and who had it built.

The Maitland Mercury and Hunter River Advertiser of Saturday 23 February 1889 on page 4 provided this information on "The Hermitage," with an advertisement for a Moonlight Garden Concert to be held on March 8th :

We understand from the church authorities of St. Mary's that another moonlight garden concert will take place on Friday evening, March 8th, this time at "The Hermitage," West Maitland, by the kind permission of the proprietress, Mrs George Yeomans. The proceeds will be for the church tower and spire fund. An excellent programme of music is being arranged for by the conductor, Mr. G. F. King, and the concert will give the public an opportunity of seeing the extensive and beautiful building just erected to the order of Mrs. Yeomans.



During our visit it was noted that the grapevine pattern on the frieze below the balcony was not repeated in the lace ironwork of the balustrade.

We are still wondering

Regardless of what we know to be fact and what we can only surmise about this grand old house, it was a delightful and informative visit.

Review and photographs by Val Rudkin.

Diary Dates

February 2014

Saturday 1st Rooms Open

Tuesday 4th Guest Speaker evening at the rooms 5.30 to 7pm. Gold coin donation

Wednesday 5th 4pm Book launch at McDonald Book Store. "Toil and Trouble from Maitland to Moreton Bay – John Eales' Convicts" by Dr Brian Walsh

Saturday 8th Rooms Open

Fund Raising BBQ at Masters, 7.30 am to 4pm. Volunteers needed, if you are able to go on the roster please contact Kevin 49324292

Wednesday 12th Rooms Open

Friday 14th Maitland Show. The Society has a stall promoting our rich history.

Saturday 15th

Sunday 16th We have an audio visual display of the Maitland Show's 150th Anniversary, we sell these books, and our own stock. Volunteers are required, we work 4 hourly shifts from 10am to 10 pm on Friday and Saturday and from 10 to 12 on Sunday. We are a very friendly group who meet and talk with lots of lovely people at the stall. You will be issued with a free pass.

Tuesday 18th General Monthly Meeting at the rooms commencing at 5.30pm

Wednesday 19th Rooms Open

Public Meeting for Maitland Regional Museum 7pm at the Catholic Hall. High St Maitland

Saturday 22nd Rooms Open

Tuesday 25th Fund Raiser. Inspection of Closebourne Village at Morpeth. Commencing at 10.30 . Morning Tea provided. We need a minimum of 15 people to attend. If you are able to attend please ring Tom on 49335885.

Wednesday 26th Rooms Open

Maitland and District Historical Society Inc.

March

Saturday 1st Rooms Open

Tuesday 4th Guest Speaker evening 5.30 at the rooms. Gold coin donation

Wednesday 5th Rooms Open

Saturday 8th Rooms Open

Sunday 9th Maitland Jewish Cemetery, Louth Park Road Maitland 9am to 12.30.
Announcement of the Jewish Cemetery's NSW State Heritage Register listing of the Maitland Jewish Cemetery.

Wednesday 12th Rooms Open

Saturday 15th Garage Sale for the Historical Society at 3 Cathedral St. Do you have any unwanted items that you would like to donate. If you could drop them into the rooms on Wednesday, or bring them in on Friday during the day as we will be pricing the "for sale" articles. This will be a general sale. There will be a small percentage of history items available.

Tuesday 18th Annual General Meeting at the rooms commencing at 5.30. Supper to follow

Wednesday 19th Rooms Open

Saturday 22nd Rooms Open

Wednesday 25th Rooms Open

Saturday 29th Rooms open

April

Tuesday 1st Guest Speaker evening 5.30
at the rooms.
Gold coin donation.

Wednesday 2nd Rooms Open

Saturday 5th Rooms Open

Wednesday 9th Rooms Open

Saturday 12th to Sunday 20th is Australian Heritage Week and the theme for this year is "Journeys"

Saturday 12th and Sunday 13th **Steamfest**

The Society man the information booth for the Council for this event.



Victoria Bridge

Spanning Wallis Creek, Maitland
Linking East and West Maitland
(1852-1896)