

Maitland and District Historical Society Inc.

Bulletin of Maitland and District Historical Society Inc.

(Established March 1977)

Affiliated with Royal Australian Historical Society and
Museum and Galleries Hunter Chapter



Erin Sweetman Playing the Mindaribba Waltz

Volume 28, Number 3

August 2021

*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: The photograph was taken in Sun Street Studios in Maitland on 12 June.

Correspondence : P.O. Box 333, Maitland NSW 2320

Telephone : 0468 438 990 note this is a new number

Email : maitlandhistorical@gmail.com

Website : <http://www.maitlandhistorical.org>

Location: 3 Cathedral Street Maitland (opposite Bishop's House)

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

Business meetings are held on the third Tuesday of even months from 5:30-7.00pm.

Committee meetings are held on the third Tuesday of odd months from 5:30-7.00pm.
Members are invited to attend all monthly meetings.

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

Membership fees : \$20 (single) and \$30 (double / family)

COVID 19 update: The rooms are normally open to members between 11 and 3 on Wednesdays and Saturdays. We are currently in COVID lockdown.

Patrons: The Most Reverend Bill Wright, Bishop of Maitland-Newcastle
Dr AC Archer AM

Current Office Bearers :

President : Kevin Short

Vice President : Allan Thomas

Treasurer : Jennifer Buffier

Secretary: Steve Bone

Bulletin Editor : Lisa Thomas

Consultant Editor : Kevin Short

Bulletin contributions are being sought. Please contact the Society via email
maitlandhistorical@gmail.com

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Editor's Notes: Since November 2020 we have highlighted Harry Hyndes and his composition the "Mindaribba Waltz". On 12 June 2021, at a musical soirée held at Sun Street Studios in Maitland, Erin Sweetman played the Mindaribba Waltz and received a standing ovation. Erin played on a circa 1840 Collard & Collard pianoforte. Val Rudkin has further identified the instrument as a German made Collard & Collard Artcase Romantic Concert Grand Rococo Louis XV.



In this edition we have an article by Val on a pioneer who deserves wider renown. Also a treat for all train enthusiasts - three articles by Lawrie Henderson on early Maitland rail initiatives. Enjoy!

ISAAC GORRICK (1812-1899): A WORTHY PIONEER OF MAITLAND

By Val Rudkin

Recognised as one of Maitland's early pioneers, Isaac Gorrick was a man of integrity, who was respected and praised by his fellow men.

Isaac, the son of Thomas Lisson and Ann (nee Bradwell), was born at Wilberforce on the Hawkesbury River, 12 August 1812 and named Isaac Lisson. When his father died in 1827, his mother formed a relationship with Isaac Gorrick. It appears that young Isaac Lisson then took the name of Gorrick.

Isaac married Eleanor Lyons in 1835 at the Presbyterian Church, Hawkesbury District. In 1841 he was residing at Wilberforce and recorded in the census that year as a publican and landholder. He lived with his wife, two daughters and two sons.

The family moved to Maitland around 1845, and it was there that their son Jacob

was born and died in 1846, his burial taking place at the Glebe Cemetery.

Isaac Gorrick is credited with the building of the Fitz Roy Hotel which stood on the corner of High and Elgin Streets. The first licensee of this hotel was Henry Reeves when the license was issued in April 1847. Henry Reeves had been the publican of the Albion Inn and that license was transferred to the Fitz Roy. By 1851 the Fitz Roy license was held by Isaac Gorrick.

He had joined with Alexander Munro in December 1850 in the operation of running three or more horse coaches, from and to Morpeth, East Maitland and Maitland, and East Maitland, Maitland and Singleton daily, for the sum of £99.

The Rutherford Boiling Down Establishment was another of Isaac Gorrick's business ventures. In November 1851 he advertised that his establishment was ready to receive stock to be boiled down; and trusted, from the manner in which the business was conducted in the previous season, to merit an extended patronage.

Isaac devoted his attention to his business interests and to providing assistance to the community. In July 1851 it was reported in the *Sydney Morning Herald* that he was taking one of the two parties on the search for gold in the upper part of the district. The search was with the view of securing for the towns on the Hunter a share of the new traffic.

Although he was still the proprietor of the Fitz Roy Inn, the license was transferred in 1855/6 to George Hammond and a year later to Eleanor Hammond. Isaac became an established Stock Agent and advertised auctions on behalf of clients. One of his sons joined him in this business which carried the name of Isaac Gorrick and Son.

When the Fitz Roy Hotel ceased operation as a public house, Isaac converted the ground floor into office space. His residence was on the first floor, and he conducted his Horse and Carriage Bazaars in the grounds at the rear of the building. One of Maitland's most revered Medical Practitioners, Dr. R. J. Pierce, who had moved from Muswellbrook, opened his practice in another of Isaac Gorrick's properties, just a few doors along.

Isaac Gorrick was a good businessman and a good citizen of Maitland. He was heavily involved with the running of the Maitland Hospital. In 1893 when *The Maitland Mercury* recorded details of the Maitland Hospital Annual General Meeting it made a number of references to Isaac Gorrick, one being that ill health had prevented him from attending meetings. The President stated that the hospital would always be in need of monetary aid, and though a certain sum has been forthcoming, that should not deter other persons from subscribing. He

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said that through the efforts of their old and highly respected friend, Mr. Isaac Gorrick, a certain sum had been secured. He was included in the names for a committee for the coming year. In a later Maitland Hospital report *The Mercury* stated that Mr. Gorrick was present, but unable to get out of his buggy to attend the meeting.

His wife Eleanor Gorrick died at the age of 84 in 1898. Her death was reported in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, which stated she had been a resident of Maitland for 60 years and was the wife of one of the pioneers of Maitland.

Isaac Gorrick died at his home on 31 March 1899 aged 87. *The Maitland Daily Mercury* published his obituary on April 1st, titled "The Late Mr. Isaac Gorrick - An Old Maitlander Gone". In this report it stated he had come to Maitland in 1845, when he was 33 and had remained there ever since. In 1858, when his brother Jacob required eye surgery, Isaac travelled with him to England. He was presented with a solid silver salver and an address signed by hundreds of residents of the Hunter districts before his departure. The great feature in the life of the late Mr. Gorrick was his great benevolence. For years he was an earnest and devoted worker in connection with the Maitland Hospital, of which he became a life member. The Hospital presently holds the sum of £8000 in a fixed deposit, which is greatly due to Mr. Gorrick's exertions and careful management. He supported the Pierce Memorial Nurses' Home; he served as an alderman in the early days of the borough and was active on the Maitland District Council. He took a great interest in the School of Arts and participated in the debates. He was one of the oldest Freemasons in the district and was one of the first Royal Arch Masons in Maitland. At time of flood, he was always one of the first to initiate relief.



Photo of the Gorrick Building which had housed the Fitz Roy Hotel, commercial offices and for his daughter and grandchildren the premises of Wolfe & Co.

Isaac's own words may be read in the following *Maitland Mercury* letter printed on Thursday 21/1/1858 (p2).

THE GORRICK TESTIMONIAL

A meeting of the friends of Mr. Isaac Gorrick was held at the Fitz Roy Hotel, on Monday evening, pursuant to advertisement, for the purpose of taking into consideration a letter, which had been received from that gentleman.

(the letter)

Maitland January 13th 1858

Sir - You will please to inform the gentlemen appointed a committee on Monday evening last, to make the necessary arrangements to give me a public dinner and testimonial previous to my departure for England, that I most sincerely thank my friends for their kind, generous, and friendly feeling towards me, but that my position at the present time is peculiarly afflicting. I have an aged and kind mother almost on the brink of the grave; I have an affectionate brother - the father of a very large family - partially blind, whom I purposely intend to accompany to Europe for the benefit of his health; to do this I must leave my wife - the early and faithful partner of my toils, the mother of my children - to care for, and watch with maternal solicitude, the interests of our little ones during my absence. It is therefore severe trial and a great responsibility for me to impose upon my wife; it is also truly painful and sorrowful for me to contemplate to be separated for so long a time from my family and friends; but it is the generosity of my friends and not my good acts or deeds, that has induced them to honor me in such an exalted way as was proposed.

My great and most anxious desire, under present circumstances, is to leave my native land for a season, in a quiet and peaceable manner, with good will to all men, and without ostentation or excitement. And whilst I courteously but positively decline to accept their friendly invitation to a public dinner and testimonial as contemplated, I will carry with me, and cherish beyond treasures, the kind opinions of my friends as expressed at their meeting, and as published in the Northern Times of this day's date. And should the great architect of the universe still continue to protect and watch over me, I will not fail to join them on my return to Australia, in my humble way, with fresh energy and delight in assisting to carry out those works of charity and benevolence so generally responded to by the people of the Northumberland Boroughs.

I have the honor to be, sir, your obedient servant,

“Isaac Gorrick.”

(NB The medical treatment Jacob received saved his sight.)

The first moves to establish a rail link from Newcastle to Maitland

By LAWRIE HENDERSON

On 20 April, 1853, a meeting was held at the Royal Hotel, Sydney, for the purpose of establishing a company for the formation of a railway line between Newcastle and Maitland.

Invitations to attend the meeting were sent to prominent businessmen in Sydney and a number of members of the NSW Parliament. Those attending were W C Wentworth (Chair), Sir Charles Nicholson (Speaker of the House), W Bradley, C Cowper, T W Smart, Captain King, RN, Dr Douglas (all parliamentarians) as well as Captain W Russell, J Gilchrist, T Holt, J B Darvall, T S Mort, J E Ebsworth, C Kemp, S D Gordon, David Jones, Dr Mitchell, John Croft, J F Josephson and "a number of the most respectable commercial men in Sydney".

The purpose of the meeting was to incorporate a company called 'The Hunter River Railway Company' with capital of not less than £100,000, amounting to 20,000 shares at £5 each.

Applications for 50,000 shares were subscribed on the day. The company's office was to be in Mort's Buildings, Pitt Street and the railway was to run between Newcastle and Maitland, with sea communication to Sydney.

Controversy began almost immediately. An opinion piece in the *Maitland Mercury* of 8 June, 1853, queried the way in which the shares had been distributed. The citizens of Newcastle and Maitland were, it said, denied a say about a railway within their region.

However, the company was unconcerned and Norton, Son and Barker, the appointed solicitors, went ahead with preparing an application for incorporation to be made to the Legislative Council. The application was received and on the third reading of the Bill on September 30 the Act of Incorporation was passed.

The first general meeting of shareholders was held on 8 November, 1853 and no time was lost in commencing operations. Plans were purchased from Mr Lundie, who had surveyed the route about ten years previously, and Mr Wallace, engineer-in-chief of the Sydney Railway Company, was appointed as Consultant Engineer.



The "Ellenborough"

The first orders and remittances (£17,000) were sent to London by the Great Britain to their agents, Messrs P W Fowler and Co, for 500 railway labourers and a quantity of rails and plant. Mr Higham was contracted as surveyor and Mr J N Gale was appointed resident engineer. Mr Wright's tender for building the earthwork and bridges between Newcastle and Hexham was accepted.

The ship Ellenborough, under Captain Thornhill, arrived from Southampton on October 31 after a difficult 107-day voyage with 399 immigrants, 100 of whom were labourers for the railway.

Part of her cargo consisted of 10 pick shafts, 7 crab winches, 35 bundles of iron, 4639 chairs, 1023 rails, 164 bundles shovels, 3 casks picks, 534 bars of iron, 1201 pieces of iron, 16 pieces of machinery, 80 axle boxes, 3 castings, 14 pairs and 149 barrels wheels and axles, 23 casks, 12 cases, for the Hunter River Railway Company.

The first sod for the railway was turned by the chairman of the Company on 8 November, 1854. There was no ceremony apart from three cheers from all those present.

The Great Northern Railway – The Railway Comes of Age

By LAWRIE HENDERSON

After the first sod was turned on 8 November, 1854, railway construction began from Newcastle towards Hexham. But the Hunter Valley Railway Company fell into financial difficulty and a meeting was held on the 4th January, 1855 in order to dissolve the Company and dispose everything to Her Majesty's Government for the fully paid amount, plus 7%. On 23 April, the railway was sold to the Government and the shareholders eventually recovered their capital and 5% in debentures.

Ships were arriving from Britain with workers and material for the Hunter Valley Railway and the construction continued under the watchful eye of the Railway Commissioners.

The Governor General of the Australian colonies, his Excellency, Sir William Thomas Denison, paid a visit to the Hunter on 17th March where he inspected the public works around Newcastle. Monday was taken up with delegations, speeches and dinner, and on Tuesday, went up river on the Tamar to Morpeth. Thence, with a mounted escort, to East Maitland and West Maitland, where he spent the night. The next day, he returned to Newcastle on horseback, inspecting the line of railway works.

On 3 July, the first sod was turned on the second section of the railway, from East Maitland to Hexham. In contrast with the Newcastle start, this occurred with great ceremony. Dignitaries from Newcastle were escorted from Morpeth wharf to the Brickfields, East Maitland by a brass band. People on foot, horseback and cabs arrived from East and West Maitland. Major Crummer, to loud cheering, used the spade to turn the turf, whereupon the dignitaries retired to the tent to partake of refreshments, toasts and speeches. Outside the tent, the navvies working on the railway were provided with a hogshead of London stout. As they had some difficulty in broaching the cask, they simply knocked in the head, and dipped their pannikins in.

The end of the line was at "the hill at the back of the East Maitland gaol", where a temporary terminus had been built prior to the selection of a permanent station. Rivalry arose between the people of East and West Maitland as to where the permanent terminus would be. Petitions from both sides were sent to the Governor General.

The GG, Sir William Denison, an engineer and seeing the bigger picture,

informed them that there would be no terminus, as the line would continue up the country.

By late December, things were happening rapidly. Three locomotives and a number of carriages and other rolling stock had arrived by ship, along with turntables and other machinery.

The grand opening of the railway was held on Monday, the 30th March, 1857. The Governor General arrived in Newcastle after an overnight trip from Sydney on the Collaroy. The train with the Vice Regal party and dignitaries from Newcastle arrived in East Maitland to be welcomed by a crowd from East and West Maitland and Morpeth. After a number of speeches, the GG named it the "Great Northern Railway" and declared it open.



The first locomotive on the Great Northern Railway. (Picture: Newcastle Herald Archives).

THE RAILWAY EXTENDS AND MAITLAND'S GRANDEST PARTY

By LAWRIE HENDERSON

The grand opening of the railway on 30 March, 1857, had been declared a public holiday for residents of the Maitland and Newcastle districts. Several gentlemen of West Maitland arranged to finish the railway holiday with a friendly

dinner. That evening, about 25 gentlemen sat down to a table at Mr Fulford's Rose Inn and enjoyed a most satisfactory repast and many toasts.

After the opening, work on the extension to West Maitland stalled. People and businesses began to become frustrated and a *Mercury* article of 5 May, 1857, stated that: this neglect is the more inexcusable. Meanwhile, shipping to Newcastle was still discharging "railway iron" for the GNR.

In due course, a notice appeared in the *Mercury* of 9 July calling for tenders for the construction of two miles and sixty-seven chains of railway between East and West Maitland.

The contractor for the extension was Mr. Mark Faviel and the first turf was turned on 14 September, at East Maitland. Work also commenced at the West Maitland end of the line. At the same time in Newcastle, the railway was being extended from the terminus at Honeysuckle Point to the Queens Wharf (the steamer wharf) opposite the Sand Hills.

Progress at East Maitland was slow. It was only by mid-November that preparations for the bridge over Melbourne Street (Morpeth Road) had commenced. By early January, 1858, it was only half completed. By 18 March, the Newcastle extension had been completed and dissatisfaction at the pace of progress of the West Maitland extension was being vented in the newspapers.

The closing of Abbott Street, cutting off Louth Park, caused some concern among the residents and a public meeting was held in the Waterloo Hotel on 23 January, 1858, and a petition was sent to the railway commissioners. (On 22 June, the commissioners informed the residents that there will be level crossings at Abbott and Devonshire Streets).

On 22 March, Mr. Bell, the engineer, and Mr. William Wright of Newcastle marked out the ground for the West Maitland station at the foot of Elgin Street. In a personal communication with Maurine Osborn, it is thought her ancestor, John Wright, won the contract to build the station building and the goods shed. He also built the station master's house in Steam Street.

In early May, the mouth of Wallis Creek was closed and a new cutting to the river was made to facilitate the alignment of the railway. Unfortunately, the cut was not deep enough to accommodate the volume of water flowing from the catchment. Heavy rain soon after the cut was made, caused a rise in the creek and the restriction at the new Wallis Creek bridge caused inundation of the farm land on the upstream side of the railway. During the night of 11 May, the pent up waters rushing under the bridge eroded the bed, deepening the cut. A petition of the farmers and land proprietors of Louth Park, Dagworth, Ravensfield, Fishery

Creek, and nearby places was sent to the railway commissioners requesting that the creek bed be lowered to its previous depth to save them from ruin. The cutting was subsequently made three feet deeper.

By 26 June, the line was nearing completion and preparations were in hand to declare a general holiday and a grand celebration for the opening. 22 July was the date selected and a letter of invitation was sent to the Governor General.

By the end of June, 1858, ballasting of the line had been completed beyond the High Street crossing and by 13 July, the West Maitland Railway Station and goods shed were complete. The *Mercury* of that day gave a lengthy word picture description of the railway between East and West Maitland.

On the day of celebration, the Governor General arrived in Newcastle at 5:30am on the steamer Paterson, and after the obligatory welcoming speeches and replies, he and his entourage boarded the train and proceeded to Maitland.

The town had been decorated with flags, flowers, greenery and triumphal arches, and about 4000 people crowded around the station to welcome his Excellency. The band of the 12th Regiment (from Sydney) entertained the throng. The train arrived at 12 o'clock and the band struck up Rule Britannia as the Vice Regal party alighted, being greeted with "vociferous cheering, which he courteously and graciously acknowledged".

Various addresses were read to his Excellency, from local institutions and "the children of Maitland and its neighbourhood" and the Odd Fellows (of which he was a brother), to which he graciously replied to all. He then left for the Northumberland Hotel, to rest before the next engagement. At one o'clock he held a Vice Regal reception where he was introduced to the district notables and an hour later, taken, by carriage, to the School of Arts for a luncheon.

The hall had been tastefully decorated, principally of flowers and foliage and the gallery above housed part of the band of the 12th Regiment to provide musical entertainment. The luncheon, punctuated with speeches and toasts, was considered excellent.

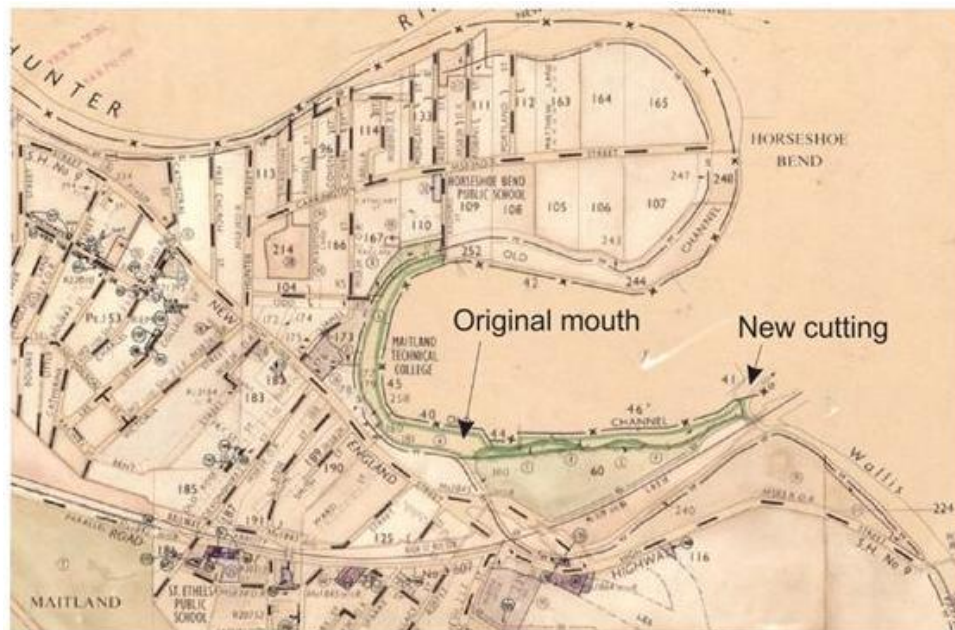
The Navvies had their own dinner in the goods shed. Two long tables seated 200 workmen, "whose good humoured and happy faces were sufficient adornments to the building". Speeches were made, toasts were drunk and Mr. Wright, the contractor, praised the workers for the job they had completed. The navvies were eager to take the line on to Singleton and Armidale.

Festivities continued on into the evening and many businesses and residences displayed lighted decorations and "transparency" pictures in their windows. A fireworks display was staged "and many were the ejaculations of delight uttered

in witnessing them”.

The Railway Demonstration Ball was held at the School of Arts, where a temporary dance hall was constructed at the rear. The 12th Regiment Band provided the music and the hall was converted into a supper-room. His Excellency, accompanied by his private secretary, his aide-de-camp, and Captain Ward arrived at 9pm and dancing began about 10 o'clock. At about half past eleven his Excellency left the ball room, was driven to the West Maitland station, and farewelled by members of the committee and about 100 citizens.

The railway continued on to Singleton, Tamworth and Armidale, and reached Wallangarra, on the Queensland border in 1888. The following year, the Hawkesbury rail bridge was opened and the GNR became connected to Sydney.



Wallis Creek showing the original confluence with the Hunter River and the new cutting in relation to the railway. Map: NSW Land Registry Services Historical Maps



The first West Maitland railway station at the Elgin Street crossing, circa 1877. (Picture: Newcastle Herald Archives).