Bulletin of

Maitland and District Historical Society Inc.

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Affiliated with Royal Australian Historical Society and

Museum and Galleries Hunter Chapter

Henry Chamberlain Russell

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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

Cover: The image was supplied by the author.

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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.
Committee meetings are held on the third Tuesday of even months from 5:30-7.00pm.
General 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 : $25 (single) and $35 (double / family)

The rooms are open between 11 and 3 on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

Patron: Dr AC Archer AM

Current Office Bearers :

President : Kevin Short OAM **Vice President :** Janece Mcdonald
Treasurer : Jennifer Buffier **Secretary:** Steve Bone

Bulletin Editor : Lisa Thomas **Consultant Editor :** Kevin Short OAM

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

Editor's Notes:

The May Bulletin included part 1 of Peter Woodley's comprehensive biography of Henry Chamberlain Russell. Part 2 appears in this edition.

James Waddell has written on the fascinating history of St Peter's Denominational School in East Maitland.

Judy Nicholson's article on mourning wear reminds us of a time when women's clothing was strictly circumscribed by social expectations, particularly during bereavements.

In a sad coincidence, we must report that Graham Claud Dark OAM died last month after a long illness. Graham had been the president of the Society. He had also been a Maitland councillor, and he was an active and long time member of many organisations including the Scouts, Lions, PCYC, the Maitland Labor Branch and the U3A. Graham made a lasting and positive impact on our region. Vale.

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Ladies in Black

By Judy Nicholson

The collection of the **Australian Museum of Clothing and Textiles (AMCAT)** ranges from the delight of infants' christening gowns to the sombre attire of mourning wear from the late Victorian period, and it is to the latter that attention is being drawn to in this article.

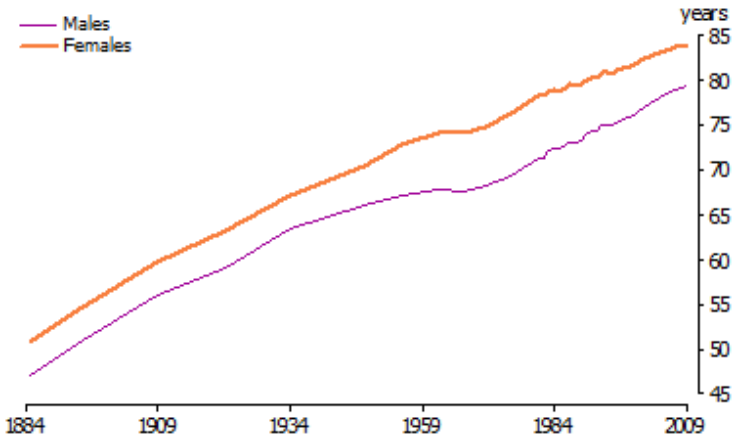
This 1890s mourning dress is from the **Cintra** collection.
Bodice has ruched crepe attached at armholes (front) and extend down centre front.
Lace jabot and lace at cuffs.

It was accompanied by a mourning bonnet - a headpiece made from buckram covered in black crepe, with a pinched crepe trim. Black ribbon ties under the chin. Pinched nylon long veil attached to crown of hat. Short tulle and pinched nylon veil overlaying long veil.

Another dress from the Cintra collection is this maternity mourning dress – just take a moment to consider the possible implications for the life of the woman who wore this garment.

The dress has a high buttoned neckline, full gathering across the upper bodice, with hook and eye fastenings through to hip level. Outer back bodice gathered across back yoke.

The existence of these garments can be considered in relation to advertising by Maitland retailers from 1880 to the 1890s, which demonstrates that mourning wear was a significant and prevalent part of business and life.



For context, this simple graph from the ABS demonstrates the statistical reality of life expectancy from 1884.

Retail therapy

Owen and Beckett set the scene in June 1880 with their large display advertisement emphasizing mourning dress goods:

OWEN & BECKETT

HAVE MUCH PLEASURE IN DIRECTING ATTENTION TO THEIR LARGE AND FASHIONABLE STOCK OF

WINTER DRAPERY

In DRESS GOODS we especially solicit Inspection, having JUST OPENED some CHOICE MATERIALS of sterling quality, a few of which we enumerate— ALL-WOOL FRENCH SERGERETTES, Poplins, Satin Cloths, Beige, Pompadours, Cashmeres, Costume Cloths, Athole Lustres, and Homespuns. These DRESS MATERIALS in all the NEW COLOURS, and a Large Stock to select from.

MOURNING DRESS GOODS.

BLACK FRENCH MERINOS, Cashmeres, Persian Cords, Russell Cords, French Poplins, Satin Cloths, Alpaca Lustres, Parramatta Cloths, Crape Cloths, French Twills, Silk Velvets, Velveteens. The above Goods, for variety and choice are not to be surpassed.

By comparison a very simple text advertisement for "Harrison & Co. Ironmongers, glass, crockery, mourning wear, sewing machines and agricultural equipment" in February 1881. Advertising for regular domestic goods and mourning wear was included as a regular domestic requirement.

Frankfort House, however, really drew attention in a prominent manner and seems to be just thrilled with new stock for their extensive mourning department.

FRANKFORT HOUSE,

WEST MAITLAND.

New Arrivals per s.s. Cuzco and Delcomyn.

WE HAVE much pleasure in announcing to our *Clientele* that WE ARE OPENING LARGE SHIPMENTS out of the above "Orient Liners," comprising all the LONDON AND PARISIAN NOVELTIES FOR THE ENSUING SEASON.

Mourning Department,

AN EXTENSIVE LINE,

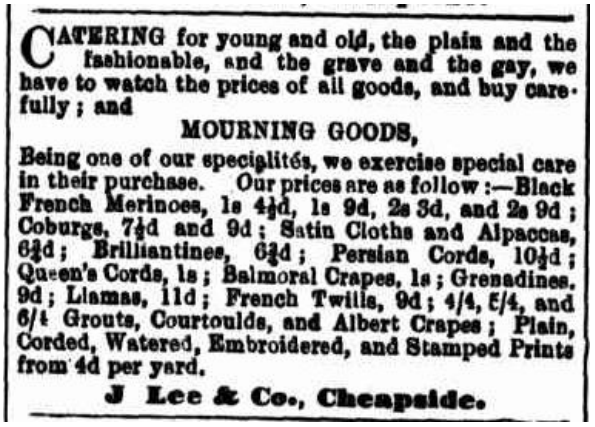
CONSISTS OF A VAST CHOICE OF BLACK GOODS,

COMPRISING—

FRENCH MERINOS, Cashmeres, d'Ecosse, Parramattas, Persian Cords, Lustres, and Demi Lustres. From the ever increasing demand for these Goods, and the universal want of A WELL-SELECTED STOCK in the Northern District, we are determined to make this Department a leading feature in our establishment; and we have no hesitation in soliciting an inspection of our present importations, which have been commissioned and manufactured for the particular requirements of our own business.

Feb 1881

Victoria House, Mitchell Arcade put in a bid with their "large assortment of mourning goods" while John Lee and Co. provide a long list after declaring mourning goods as one of their specialties. March 1882


CATERING for young and old, the plain and the fashionable, and the grave and the gay, we have to watch the prices of all goods, and buy carefully; and

MOURNING GOODS,

Being one of our specialités, we exercise special care in their purchase. Our prices are as follow:—Black French Merinoes, 1s 4½d, 1s 9d, 2s 3d, and 2s 9d; Coburgs, 7½d and 9d; Satin Cloths and Alpaccas, 6½d; Brilliantines, 6½d; Persian Cords, 10½d; Queen's Cords, 1s; Balmoral Crapes, 1s; Grenadines, 9d; Llamas, 11d; French Twills, 9d; 4/4, 5/4, and 6/4 Grouts, Courtoulds, and Albert Crapes; Plain, Corded, Watered, Embroidered, and Stamped Prints from 4d per yard.

J Lee & Co., Cheapside.

Not as well-known as the larger department stores was Mrs. Morey:


MRS. MOREY,

COSTUMES, MANTLES, MILLINERY, BABY LINEN, AND UNDER-CLOTHING WAREHOUSE,

(OPPOSITE MR. ROURKE'S, SADDLER)

HIGH-STREET, WEST MAITLAND,

Wedding and Mourning Orders Promptly Attended to.

Wedding and mourning! The good old circle of life right there at Mrs. Morey's, promptly attended to.

H. Stevens Central House at East Maitland stocked "mourning goods in various materials" March 1885.

Purchased fabric could be sewn at home (a pattern by Madam Weigel, acquired via Poulton's Book Arcade in High Street, could be used) or by one of Maitland's dressmakers such as Mrs. Brown or Miss Whipps whose names appear in the Country Trades Register of 1898.

Of the 16 Departments listed by Beckmann & Sons, mourning dress comes in at number three.

Their illustrated advertisement indicates ladies' fashionable dress in 1886.

By 1889 Savidge and Little Frankfort House advised "Family mourning a specialty", while mourning dresses at James Kerr provided "special value".

Mourning jewellery may also be required and John Hart could supply "black enamelled bracelets, lockets and brooches, set with pearls, onyx goods etc." October 1883.


BECKMANN & SON'S GENERAL CLEARING SALE

COMMENCED

Saturday, January 23.

IMMENSE REDUCTIONS

THROUGHOUT

16 Departments

SILK DEPARTMENT
DRESS
MOURNING DRESS
FANCY
GLOVE AND RIBBON
UNDERCLOTHING
HATS
COSTUME
MILLINERY
MANTLES
MANCHESTER
HOSIERY
CARPETS
FURNISHING
HABERDASHERY
READY-MADE CLOTHING

Free 'Bus Fares Between East and West Maitland. Train Fares, within the Radius of 20 Miles, Refunded.

Parcels Forwarded Carriage Free.

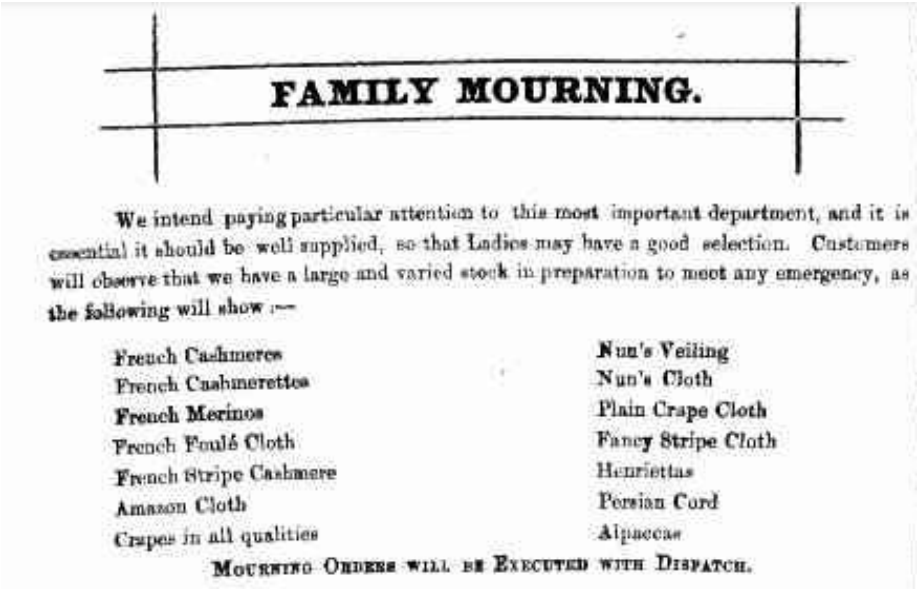
Mourning etiquette

Regarding the code of etiquette for mourning attire, the *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate* of November 1907 provided the following advice:

The regulation time for a widow to wear weeds is a year and a day, and at the end of that period it is quite permissible for her to lay aside crepe and wear dull woollen materials, such as cashmere, crepe cloth, etc.

Publications such as the *Australian Town and Country Journal* included articles on mourning attire, appropriate behaviour and the time periods of mourning (February 1896) but fashion in dress was not laid aside.
Mourning cape Jan 1899

A final word from Wolfe and Gorrick in April 1890, assuring ladies that they have a large stock to select from, 'family mourning' being 'this most important department'.



FAMILY MOURNING.

We intend paying particular attention to this most important department, and it is essential it should be well supplied, so that Ladies may have a good selection. Customers will observe that we have a large and varied stock in preparation to meet any emergency, as the following will show :—

French Cashmeres
French Cashmerettes
French Merinos
French Foulé Cloth
French Stripe Cashmere
Amazon Cloth
Crapes in all qualities
Nun's Veiling
Nun's Cloth
Plain Crape Cloth
Fancy Stripe Cloth
Henriettas
Persian Cord
Alpaccas

MOURNING ORDERS WILL BE EXECUTED WITH DISPATCH.

Wolfe, Gorrick, & Co.,
MAITLAND.
(Established Nearly Fifty Years.)

Through these commercial advertisements, the *Maitland Mercury* captures the commonality of mourning in the late 19th century in a manner which is no longer seen today.

More items from The **Australian Museum of Clothing and Textiles** collection can be viewed on their eHive site:
https://ehive.com/collections/206550/australian-museum-of-clothing-and-textiles

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ST PETER'S DENOMINATIONAL SCHOOL, EAST MAITLAND

By James Waddell

A historical enigma in East Maitland which for half a century has confounded historians, including the present writer, has been solved.

It has now been established that St Peter's parish hall, a historic brick building fronting Banks Street, East Maitland, was built in 1867-68 as a denominational school, i.e., a primary school conducted by the Church of England pursuant to the Public Schools Act of 1866, and was used as such for 14 years.

Previously, the parish hall was thought to belong to an earlier period. As it was known to have been a denominational school, some mistook it for a building erected in 1829 as a School House; but the School House of 1829 has been identified as a separate and distinct structure which stood near the crest of Stockade Hill. Others supposed that it must have been built about 1840; but that was unlikely because its construction would have coincided with the completion of the old St Peter's Church, and the financial exertion required would only have been sufficient to build and pay for one building at a time.

The historical clues that allowed the enigma to be solved seem clear enough in retrospect. In 1867 the denominational school in East Maitland had for many years been conducted in a small School House of brick, with a shingle roof, situated on "a finely elevated spot in the reserve" (at what is now the corner of Brisbane and Park Streets) which was separated from the old St Peter's Church by a route "winding through the bush".[i] The number of pupils had decreased "owing to the unfavourable position of the school-room, and the opposition of other schools in more favoured situations."[ii] To reinvigorate the school, it was decided to build "a new school-room, near the church"[iii] which stood lower on the hill than the present church. The new school-room was situated at the rear and to one side of the old St Peter's Church, with a master's residence at one end fronting Banks Street.

Until recently, however, the location and identity of the new school-room had been obscured by the following report in the *Maitland Mercury* of 2 November 1867:

> We have much pleasure in noticing the erection of a new school in connection with St. Peter's Church, in Day-street, East Maitland. The building will be of brick, on a base-course of stone; the ground plan is in the form of a capital H. A master's residence, containing three rooms and entrance hall downstairs, with three bed-rooms and a landing on the first floor, will front Day-street, and form one of the sides of the H. The school-room, a roomy apartment, 74 feet in length, will be at the rear. Ample provision is made in it for lighting and ventilation; there will be sixteen windows, and three door openings, and each window sash will be hung by lines and sash weights. The brick-work, which has proceeded as far as the window frames, seems to be of the best description. The building is estimated at present to cost £1100, of which £400 has been advanced by the Council of Education. The contractor for the entire work is Mr. J.S. Brown, builder, Lochinvar. We shall be glad to congratulate our Church of England brethren of East Maitland on the possession of a really well-arranged and commodious school-room.[iv]

For many years the present writer took that report at face value, and believed that such a building had once existed in Day Street. But recently, on re-reading it critically, he noticed that the description given corresponded precisely with the structure of St Peter's parish hall in Banks Street as it would have been before later modifications and additions were effected such as bricking up old window and door recesses and opening new ones. Until recently the reference to Day Street, which is erroneous, was a distraction that prevented the inevitable conclusion from being drawn that the building described is in fact the present St Peter's parish hall in Banks Street, East Maitland.

Other clues were found which supported this conclusion. For example, in September 1868 on the occasion of the annual feast of St Peter's Sunday School, 152 children "assembled at the new school-rooms, whence, having been marshalled and arranged by their superintendent and teachers, they marched into the church, where an appropriate service was performed."[v] The procession of the children would not have been described in this way if the school-rooms had not been proximate to the church. There was also a clear statement in 1897 that St Peter's school-room in Banks Street had once been used as a denominational school.[vi]

Now the true story has been discovered in correspondence between the Bishop of Newcastle and the Council of Education. Bishop Tyrrell maintained a regular correspondence with the Council and its predecessor, the Denominational School Board, which paid for school masters and mistresses and provided grants for the erection and repair of school houses throughout his diocese, and much else.

From 1848 education in New South Wales had operated on a dual system, under which each major religious denomination conducted essentially its own education department, in competition with public (national) schools run by the National School Board. Churches had long jealously regarded the education of their youngest members as their own exclusive preserve and responsibility, and not as being the role of the State. From 1848 to 1882 the Churches fought a gradually losing battle against the withdrawal of State aid for denominational schools.

On 20 June 1864 Bishop Tyrrell sought a grant from the Denominational School Board towards the intended outlay of £1200 to build a new denominational school in East Maitland. As there was already a School House in East Maitland (on Stockade Hill), Tyrrell argued a special case:

> Our present school buildings at E. Maitland are very old & dilapidated, & situated out of the Town on a high clayey hill. So that parents, who are members of the Church of England lament they cannot send their children to this School, but promise they will do so, if the proposed new School buildings are erected. We have an excellent Master & Mistress, both trained in England, & considering the situation of the School, it is well attended – but No.s would soon be doubled, & the Master & Mistress thus receive their due encouragement, if the new schools can be erected.[vii]

At its meeting on 14 July 1864 the Board voted the sum of £400 as a grant towards the new school buildings, being one-third of the intended outlay.[viii] But it remained as a pledge, to be honoured if and when the building was completed.

The story now became one of unexpected twists and turns, as described by Bishop Tyrrell in a letter on 4 June 1867:

> This grant of £400 was made by the late Denominational Sch. Board, as far back as July 14th 1864. In the early part of 1865 a contract was entered into with Mr. J.S. Brown, Builder, of Lochinvar, to erect new School buildings at East Maitland, exactly similar to those which he had previously built for me at Singleton, and was then also completing at Christchurch, Newcastle: while he was told, that he could not commence his work, until the site was surveyed by a Government Surveyor, & granted, as the late Denoml. Sch. Board required, specially for School purposes.
>
> The proposed site was part of an old grant of full size from the Government to the Church of England, for Church purposes, without any particular portion being set apart for Church, or Parsonage, or School: and much correspondence, involving long delay, took place, before a Government Surveyor was instructed to measure & mark out the proposed half acre for the Schools. This was at last done near the close of 1866.[ix]

The Board required assurance that the site for the school within the Church Reserve had been granted for school purposes; but it had not been. The reserve of two and a half acres had been appropriated and set apart in 1836 as the site for a church, but not specifically as the site for a school; and no formal grant had yet been issued.[x] A solution evidently acceptable to the Board seems to have been for the bishop to ask the Surveyor General to have part of the Church Reserve measured and marked out as a site proposed to be dedicated for school purposes, which would take effect as a condition on the grant when it was eventually formalised.

Accordingly, Licensed Surveyor D.M. Maitland on 10 August 1867 transmitted to the Surveyor General a plan of that part of the Church Reserve in East Maitland "proposed to be dedicated as a site for a School in connection with the Church of England".[xi] It was a rectangular block of 2 roods (half an acre) parallel to Banks Street along whose boundary it ran for 369 links (about 243 feet). While the proposal remained inchoate, it had been sharply defined in the survey and had been entered in a register kept by the Surveyor General that recorded the survey plans of all land allotted for churches, parsonages, schools, glebes and burial grounds.[xii]

However, the proposal to dedicate the site in Banks Street for school purposes was never given legal effect, as the circumstances on which it was premised changed before any grant was issued. As late as 1891, a survey plan of the Church Reserve depicted "the Church and School Sites" in Banks Street,[xiii] but the school had closed in 1882. When the long-delayed Crown grant was finally issued in 1894 there was no longer any point in dedicating any part of the churchyard for school purposes, so the proposal was allowed to lapse.

In December 1866, as soon as the school site had been surveyed, Bishop Tyrrell wrote to the contractor to request that the building should be erected with as little delay as possible; but Brown was busy on another contract. In March 1867 Tyrrell again urged the immediate commencement of the work, but this time Brown responded that he was unable to commence the schools before July.[xiv] Reporting the progress of building works throughout his diocese, Tyrrell noted in July 1867 "the beautiful new school building now in course of erection at East Maitland".[xv] The architect has not been identified; but the design was "exactly similar" to denominational schools previously erected by Brown at Singleton and Newcastle.

Having gone to the trouble of surveying a rectangular school site in Banks Street, it is strange that the school-room was laid out and erected on a transverse angle to the site, so that part of it protruded beyond the school site and into the churchyard. In other words, the length of the school-room stood athwart the width of the surveyed site, so that one end of the school-room overlapped the boundary. One can only surmise that such configuration was considered, belatedly, to be preferable; and perhaps the bishop believed the survey had already served its intended purpose of securing the pledged grant of £400 towards the cost of construction. Elsewhere in the churchyard, the first St

Peter's Church had been built of stone in 1838-40 in the centre of the Church Reserve, and behind and to one side of it the parsonage (now St Peter's rectory) had been built of brick in 1859-60.

The new school-room in Banks Street was completed and opened as a Sunday School on 23 February 1868, except for the master's residence which was not quite finished. The denominational school was due to open in the new premises on 1 April 1868. The school-room was "an apartment of noble dimensions, and every convenience for comfort has been provided both for pupils and teachers."[xvi] And again:

> The structure is roomy and airy within, and is of an exceedingly ornamental design. It is replete with every convenience, and is an ornament to the town.[xvii]

A visitor on being shown the interior of the Episcopalian school-house at East Maitland "was pleasingly surprised to find so large and well-appointed an establishment."[xviii] It was inspected by an architect, G. Allen Mansfield, who reported to the Council of Education:

> The building is quite completed and is exceedingly well built. The walls are of 14 in. brickwork on good stone foundations – the roof is shingled.
>
> The building is T shaped on plan, giving one compartment 40 feet x 20 feet and one 54 feet x 25 feet. The teachers residence attached contains six rooms.[xix]

A separate report on the teacher's residence by the inspector of schools noted that it was constructed of brick and shingles. It had "six rooms: all fair size and very comfortable." The general appearance was "comfortable & respectable", and the state of repair was excellent.[xx] The school-room and master's residence had been completed at a cost of £1300, which was paid off in 1872.[xxi] It is interesting to note that even today the wooden shingles are still in place under the galvanised iron roof.

The first teachers to live and teach in the new building were Mr and Mrs Swan, nominated in March 1868 for the positions of Master and Mistress by the Local Board of the Church of England Denominational School at East Maitland.[xxii] David Swan was a native of Montrose, Scotland, and had been educated at Edinburgh University. He was brought out to Australia in 1857 by Bishop Tyrrell to take charge of the denominational school at Dungog, and was married at Morpeth in 1861. [xxiii] He was afterwards transferred to the Hinton Certified Church of England Denominational School where he and his wife were Master and Mistress before coming to East Maitland.

In 1869 the parochial committee "congratulated the parishioners upon the opening of the church school, and its efficient and prosperous condition under the management of Mr. and Mrs. Swan and assistant teachers".[xxiv] By 1870 the Day and Sunday Schools at St Peter's, East Maitland, had increased in numbers, and by means of an excellent staff, under able superintendence, things were going well.[xxv] The attendance of children at St

Peter's Day School was "greater in number during 1873 through the earnest application of the teacher."[xxvi]

David Swan became an "ardent supporter" of St Peter's Church for the next 40 years or more, being a churchwarden, representative on the Newcastle Diocesan Synod, and a member of the committee for building the new St Peter's Church. He died suddenly on 8 August 1911 during a church meeting in St Peter's School Hall, aged 75, while he was in the act of speaking.[xxvii] His dramatic death caused a stir and was widely reported in the press throughout Australia. A carved oak seat was later placed in St Peter's Church as a memorial to David Swan,[xxviii] who had been a churchwarden for 27 years. One of his sons, Herbert Swan, had been organist of St Peter's Church from 1882 to 1896.[xxix]

Bishop Tyrrell actively sought to engage young, qualified schoolteachers to emigrate to Australia in order to teach in the denominational schools in his diocese. Another member of this cadre was George Gill, offered an appointment in 1863 at St Peter's school, East Maitland, at the old School House on Stockade Hill. A Yorkshireman born in Wakefield, Gill had begun as a pupil teacher at the model school at Bradford. After two years of study at the Metropolitan Training College in London, Gill went to take charge of a school in Penistone, Yorkshire.[xxx] At East Maitland, Bishop Tyrrell regarded Gill and his wife as "an excellent Master and Mistress".[xxxi] They resided in the teacher's residence next to the old School House, but resigned suddenly in 1867 in order for Gill to take charge of St Philip's denominational school, Sydney. Later still, Gill became a headmaster and inspector of schools in Adelaide.

On 13 August 1867 the incumbent of St Peter's Church informed the Council of Education that the Certified Church of England Denominational School at East Maitland had been closed on account of the sudden removal of its late Master, Mr Gill. He explained "that the Local Board of this School, considering how greatly the number of scholars in attendance had been reduced by the wretched state of the approaches to the School, even under the able superintendence of Mr. Gill, have decided not to nominate any fresh Master for appointment, until the new school buildings now being erected in a more central position, are completed or at all events until the approaches to the present school have been greatly improved."[xxxii]

In 1876 a large pipe organ, built by Willis of London, was erected in St Peter's school-room where it was opened at a grand concert.[xxxiii] The instrument was too large for the old St Peter's Church, so it remained in the school-room for 10 years until it was re-erected in the present St Peter's Church which was nearing completion.[xxxiv]

At the annual examination and distribution of prizes at St Peter's School, East Maitland, in December 1879, Canon Tyrrell spoke highly of the progress of the pupils and complimented the master, David Swan, on the efficiency of the school.[xxxv] In 1881 Swan joined the public service as a school-attendance officer, and the vacancy left at St Peter's School was filled by the appointment of Mr Stoddart, "a young man of considerable

ability and experience in teaching."[xxxvi] But the death-knell for denominational schools had been sounded by the Public Instruction Act of 1880, under which all state aid to denominational schools ceased on 31 December 1882, their place being taken by an expansion of the existing public schools.

The original *raison d'etre* for St Peter's school-room in Banks Street was thus terminated by the operation of Government policy; but ironically the Government soon found a new one for it. The regulation, alienation and management of Crown lands in New South Wales was reformed and decentralised under the Crown Lands Act of 1884, which made necessary the opening of Land Board Offices in regional centres. It was possible that the central office for several Land Districts would be in Maitland, where a large staff of officers from the Lands Department in Sydney would be re-located.[xxxvii] Deft manoeuvring by the District Surveyor, Joseph W. Allworth, and the MLA for East Maitland, James N. Brunker, helped to identify the school-room as a suitable premises for a Land Board Office, and a meeting of the Cabinet on 3 December 1884 determined that the land office for the Hunter River district would be at East Maitland.[xxxviii] Allworth and Brunker were both members of the committee engaged in building the new St Peter's Church.

The outcome of their manoeuvring was later recited as follows:

> The Lands Offices were first opened for business at East Maitland on January 1st, 1885, the Crown Lands Act having been passed by the Stuart Government on the 17th October of the previous year, and the first day on which conditional purchases could be made was 6th August, 1885. For the purpose of carrying on business, the school-room in Banks-street, once used as a denominational school, was leased from the authorities of St. Peter's Church of England, and in this up to the present the business has been conducted.[xxxix]

The land area administered from the temporary office in St Peter's school-room was vast, comprising the Land Districts of Cassilis, Dungog, Maitland, Muswellbrook, Newcastle, Paterson, Port Macquarie, Raymond Terrace, Scone, Singleton, Stroud, Taree and Wollombi. Headquartered at East Maitland were James Vernon, Member and Chairman of the Local Land Boards for those districts;[xl] Joseph W. Allworth, District Surveyor for the same districts;[xli] Thomas Harvie Lewis, Chief Draftsman;[xlii] H.A. Fitzpatrick, Clerk in charge and secretary to the Land Board; and their respective staffs.[xliii] From 1890 the Land District of Gosford was added to those already administered from East Maitland, while the Land District of Port Macquarie was removed.[xliv]

St Peter's school-room was used as a Land Board and Survey Office for 12 years. The large room, divided by a few partitions,[xlv] was occupied by a large staff of officers, including clerks and draftsmen.[xlvi] It was also a venue for the conduct of Courts of Inquiry under the Act for the Land District of Maitland.[xlvii] From 1892 a ranger was also

headquartered there.[xlviii] The school-room was used for these purposes until March 1897, when the Department occupied its magnificent office, designed by Walter L. Vernon, which had been built in a corner of the old Church Reserve at the junction of Banks Street and Newcastle Road.[xlix]

The Lands Department had evidently coveted that part of the old churchyard for its permanent office, as a survey of the Church Reserve was made on 6 June 1891 in prospect of resuming 2 roods and 1 perch (a little more than half an acre) at the corner for that purpose.[l] However, there could be no resumption without a prior grant, and despite having been set apart as early as 1836 the Church Reserve in its entirety was not granted until 1894;[li] so preparations for resumption were premature. In the event, powers of resumption were not resorted to; and the Church sold the corner block to the Lands Department in 1895,[lii] with the proceeds of sale helping to pay down the building debt for the present St Peter's Church.[liii]

Following the closure of the denominational school in 1882, the Sunday School had continued to occupy St Peter's school-room; but it was displaced in 1885 and was forced to assemble in the Mechanics' Institute during the 12 years in which the school-room was being leased by the Lands Department.[liv] When the Department occupied its new office on the corner in 1897, the old school-room reverted to the uses of the parish and was converted for use as a Sunday School. It was kalsomined (whitewashed) and much improved, gas was laid on, and four incandescent gas burners were fitted.[lv] A stage was erected in the school-room in 1898,[lvi] but at the opposite end of the room to the present one. In 1905 the school-room was being used by Miss Barker to conduct a private school called "Rydal".[lvii]

For most of its subsequent history, St Peter's parish hall has been used for Sunday School classes and for numerous activities connected to the parish including church fetes, fairs and bazaars, flower shows, balls and dances, concerts and plays, dinners and tea meetings, film nights, euchre parties, socials, lectures, meetings and conferences. It has also been used for the regular activities of numerous church-affiliated organisations such as the Church of England Men's Society, Women's Guild, Mothers' Union, Church of England Boys' Society, Boy Scouts (St Peter's 3rd East Maitland), Girls' Auxiliary, and the Girls' Friendly Society. In addition, it has been the venue for numerous community gatherings including political meetings, private functions such as wedding receptions and 21st birthday parties, and regular meetings of Lodges and the Rotary Club.

At each extremity of St Peter's parish hall, and at right angles to its longitudinal axis, is a discrete wing having its own separate roofline between gables at opposite ends. These wings give the whole structure an external appearance of symmetry. But the symmetry is deceptive, as each wing functionally serves a different purpose. The wing fronting Banks Street was a self-contained residence intended for the schoolmaster, with attic rooms above lit by dormer windows facing the street. The wing at the opposite end of the

longitudinal school-room, on the other hand, was entirely open to and formed part of the school room, its exposed roof trusses conjoining with those of the longitudinal room. A stone bell-cote surmounts the north-west facing gable of this wing, while a brick chimney surmounts the apex of the opposite gable. At the other end of the school-room, each gable on the master's residence summits at a brick chimney. Originally there was no internal access to the school-room from the master's residence.

The bell which hung in the bell-cote and which once called children to their lessons was removed to the branch church of St Mark in Bruce Street, Eastville, dedicated on 12 February 1961. Cast into its shoulder was the date 1826, so it is likely to be identical with a bell supplied by the Church and School Corporation in 1829 for the old School House on Stockade Hill. St Mark's Church was closed in 1976, and the bell has been returned but not restored to the bell-cote.[lviii]

Additions and alterations to St Peter's parish hall were made in 1935, including the building of a new stage at the south-east end, being the opposite end of the room to the stage erected in 1898 which was dismantled. The work also included fitting out a kitchen for the more convenient arrangement of refreshments for the Church's social activities.[lix] Various weatherboard extensions have been added at the sides and rear of St Peter's parish hall over time, such as a kindergarten Sunday School room and parish office built in 1959.[lx] In the former schoolmaster's residence at the Banks Street end of the building the original staircase, which must have been in the hallway, has been removed, probably to enable the former residence to be connected to the school-room (the main hall) by a new doorway opened in the rear wall. A third dormer window facing Banks Street, between the original two, has been added to the former residence to illuminate the attic hallway. A laundry for the residence was added in 1925.[lxi]

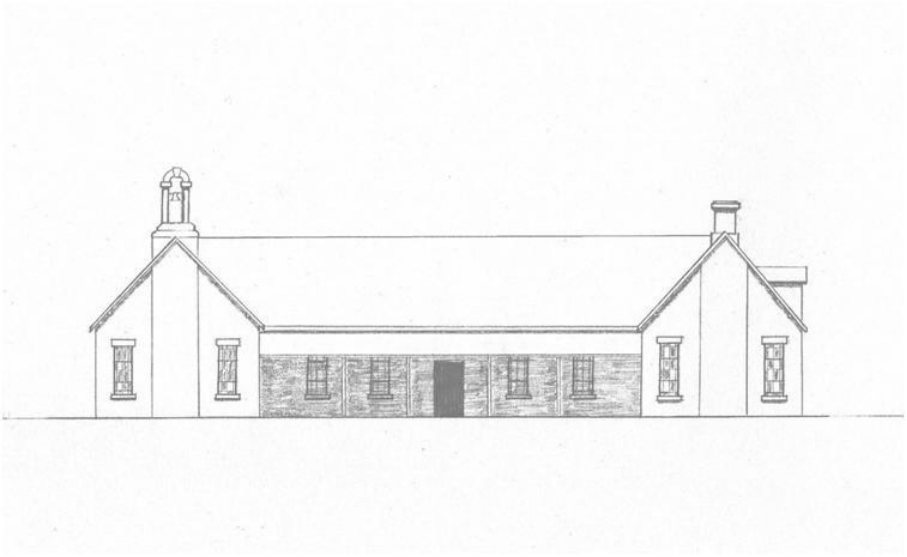
Until his death in 1932 the residence was occupied by the verger of St Peter's Church, William Wardle.[lxii] Later it was occupied by Tom Pritchard, organist of St Peter's in the period 1949-61. At times it was divided into multiple flats for the accommodation of parish staff, such as in 1962 when the Rev. Lewis Nyman, assistant curate at St Peter's, lived in a tiny downstairs flat opposite the kitchen, made even smaller because a modern staircase had encroached on its space; while Mrs Booklass, the church cleaner, occupied the more spacious flat in the attic, and did so for many years. They had to share a common bathroom. The tiny downstairs flat was barely habitable and was eventually turned into a storeroom, but the attic flat above has since been occupied by others.

The long history of diverse usage of St Peter's parish hall has included times of national or local crisis. In the 1939-45 war it was taken over by the National Emergency Services (air raid wardens) as a First Aid Post, displacing the Senior Department of the Sunday School.[lxiii] In the dark days of March 1942 the State Governor, Lord Wakehurst, made a tour of N.E.S. facilities in Maitland, including control rooms and First Aid Posts. In East Maitland, His Excellency visited the No.1 post at St Peter's Hall and the No.2 post at St Stephen's Hall, where he congratulated the nurses and staff on the work they were

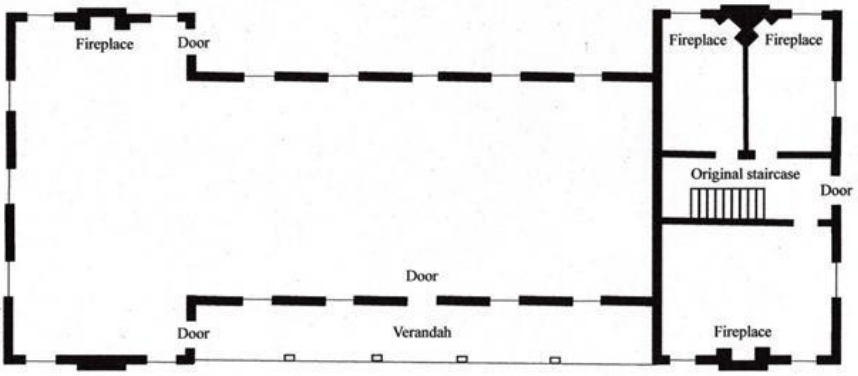
doing.[lxiv] An air raid shelter trench for N.E.S. personnel using the parish hall had been dug nearby in the rectory grounds; but by December 1943, when the war had taken a turn for the better, a meeting of the St Peter's Vestry resolved to ask the Chief Warden to fill it in.[lxv] In February 1944 the Church authorities expressed the hope that the N.E.S. would relinquish its use of the parish hall in the near future; but in February 1945 this was still yet to occur.[lxvi]

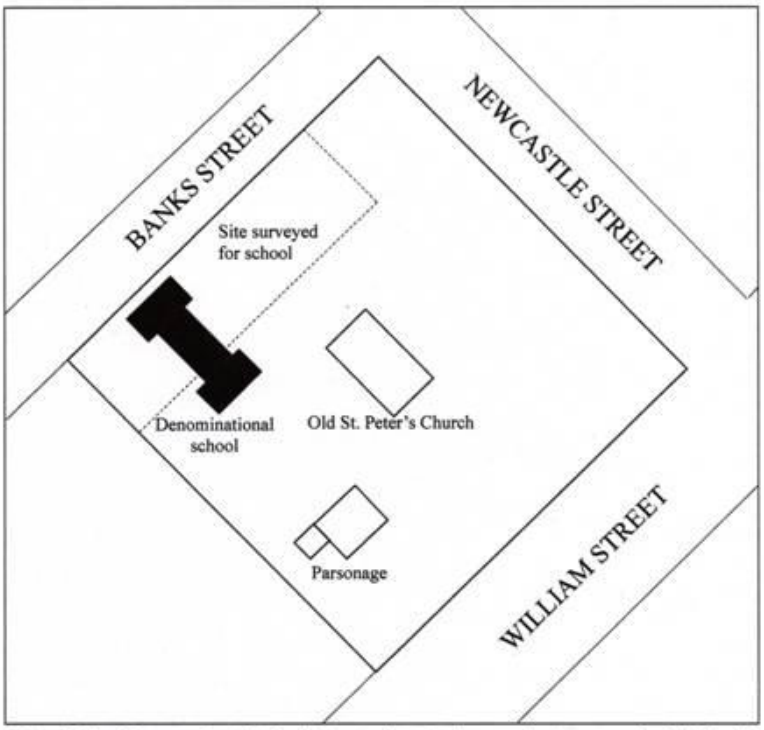
During the flood of June 1950 St Peter's Hall was used as a refuge for families forced to flee their homes;[lxvii] and flood evacuees were "billeted" there.[lxviii] In the flood of February 1955 it was pressed into service as a food depot and eating house, where hot meals were provided for both victims and rescuers, including surf boat crews. At the peak of the crisis, an estimated 1500 meals were being served daily in the parish hall by the women of the parish.[lxix]

While not as old as previously believed, St Peter's parish hall remains a significant example of a colonial building erected for public purposes. As a denominational school, government office and courtroom, wartime First Aid Post, evacuation and relief centre in times of flood, and as a venue for the religious instruction of generations of children and for countless social and cultural activities, it has played an extraordinarily diverse role in the history of Maitland.



Elevation and plan of St Peter's denominational school, East Maitland, with master's residence and attic rooms overhead facing Banks Street





Plan of Church Reserve, East Maitland, showing disparity between the site surveyed in 1866 for the denominational school and the site on which it was actually built in 1867.

[i] *Maitland Mercury*, 7 November 1861, p.3 ("St. Peter's, East Maitland").
[ii] *Maitland Mercury*, 9 March 1867, p.4 ("East Maitland Parochial Association").
[iii] *Maitland Mercury*, 9 March 1867, p.4 ("East Maitland Parochial Association").
[iv] *Maitland Mercury*, 2 November 1867, p.4 ("Church of England School at East Maitland").
[v] *Maitland Mercury*, 26 September 1868, p.3 ("Sunday School Feast, St. Peter's, East Maitland").
[vi] *Maitland Daily Mercury*, 8 March 1897, p.3 ("The New Lands Offices at East Maitland").
[vii] Letter of 20 June 1864 from the Rt. Rev. William Tyrrell, Bishop of Newcastle, to C.E. Robinson, Esq., Secretary, Denominational School Board, in NSW State Archives NRS-3709, [1/319], miscellaneous letters received by Denominational School Board 1863-64.

[viii] Minutes of meeting on 4 July 1864 in Denominational School Board minute book May 1864 to 1866, in NSW State Archives NRS-3711-2-[1/307].
[ix] Letter of 4 June 1867 from Bishop Tyrrell to the Secretary, Council of Education, in NSW State Archives NRS-2621 miscellaneous letters received by Council of Education, [1/746], SR Reel 1790.
[x] Noted on Crown Plan C60-730, being a sketch by G.B. White dated 13 October 1835 showing the Reserves in the Township of Maitland ordered for the sites of the Church, Court House & Gaol.
[xi] Noted on Crown Plan C185-1984, being a Plan of 1 rood (sic, actually 2 roods) in the Town of East Maitland, Parish of Maitland, County of Northumberland, proposed to be dedicated as a site for a School in connection with the Church of England. Neither the letter of 10 August 1867, nor the Surveyor General's instructions to which it was a response, have been located.
[xii] Lands Department Register of Plans for Churches, Cemeteries, etc., p.23, in NSW State Archives NRS-13874-1-[4/6187].
[xiii] Crown Plan 388-3070, being a Plan of Area to the resumed for Local Land Board and Dist. Survey Offices, Town of East Maitland, Parish of Maitland, County of Northumberland, being Subdivision of Church and School Sites, Section 33, representing a survey made on 6 June 1891.
[xiv] Letter of 4 June 1867 from Bishop Tyrrell to the Secretary, Council of Education, in NSW State Archives NRS-2621 miscellaneous letters received by Council of Education, [1/746], SR Reel 1790.
[xv] *Maitland Mercury*, 20 July 1867, p.4 ("Newcastle Church Society").
[xvi] *Maitland Mercury*, 27 February 1868, p.3 ("The New School Building in connection with St. Peter's Parish, East Maitland").
[xvii] *Maitland Ensign*, 26 February 1868, p.2 ("New school").
[xviii] *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 November 1869, p.5 ("The two Maitlands").
[xix] Memorandum to Secretary, Council of Education, by G. Allen Mansfield, architect, dated 9 April 1868, on East Maitland C.E. building, in NSW State Archives NRS-2621, miscellaneous letters received by Council of Education, [1/782].
[xx] Inspector's report upon Teacher's Residence at the Certified C.E. Denominational School, at East Maitland, dated 19 October 1868, in NSW State Archives NRS-2621, miscellaneous letters received by Council of Education, [1/782].
[xxi] *Short Account of Church Work, Diocese of Newcastle, 1868 to 1878*, bound volume in Anglican Diocese of Newcastle Archives, University of Newcastle Library, B7791-B7794, reports for East Maitland parish for 1868 and 1872.
[xxii] Letter of 13 March 1868 from the Rev. Lovick Tyrrell (nephew of Bishop Tyrrell) to the Council of Education, in NSW State Archives NRS-2621, miscellaneous letters received by Council of Education, [1/782].
[xxiii] *Maitland Weekly Mercury*, 12 August 1911, p.4 ("Obituary").
[xxiv] *Maitland Mercury*, 27 February 1869, p.2 ("St. Peter's, East Maitland").
[xxv] *Short Account of Church Work, Diocese of Newcastle, 1868 to 1878*, bound volume in Anglican Diocese of Newcastle Archives, University of Newcastle Library, B7791-B7794, report for East Maitland parish for 1870.
[xxvi] Ibid., report for East Maitland parish for 1873.
[xxvii] *Maitland Weekly Mercury*, 12 August 1911, p.4 ("Obituary").
[xxviii] *Maitland Daily Mercury*, 18 May 1912, p.4 ("The Late Mr. David Swan").
[xxix] James Waddell, *A History of St. Peter's Church, East Maitland N.S.W.*, published by its author in 1996, p.123.
[xxx] *The Advertiser* (Adelaide), 29 June 1908, p.10 ("The Education Department").
[xxxi] Letter of 20 June 1864 from the Rt. Rev. William Tyrrell, Bishop of Newcastle, to C.E. Robinson, Esq., Secretary, Denominational School Board, in NSW State Archives NRS-3709, [1/319], miscellaneous letters received by Denominational School Board 1863-64.
[xxxii] Letter of 13 August 1867 from the Rev. Lovick Tyrrell to the Secretary, Council of Education, in NSW State Archives NRS-2621 miscellaneous letters received by Council of Education, [1/746], SR Reel 1790.
[xxxiii] *Maitland Mercury*, 5 September 1876, p.4 ("St. Peter's New Organ").
[xxxiv] *Maitland Mercury*, 31 July 1886, p.4 ("St. Peter's Church, East Maitland").
[xxxv] *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 December 1879, p.3 ("School Holidays"). Canon Lovick Tyrrell was the incumbent of St Peter's Church, and a nephew of Bishop Tyrrell.
[xxxvi] *Maitland Mercury*, 23 July 1881, p.4 ("St. Peter's C.E. School, East Maitland").
[xxxvii] *Maitland Mercury*, 6 November 1884, p.5 ("The Administration of the Lands Act").

[xxxviii] James Waddell, *A History of St. Peter's Church, East Maitland N.S.W.*, published by its author in 1996, p.64.
[xxxix] *Maitland Daily Mercury*, 8 March 1897, p.3 ("The New Lands Offices at East Maitland").
[xl] Government Gazette No.5, 2 January 1885, p.195.
[xli] Government Gazette No.16, 9 January 1885, p.336.
[xlii] *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 December 1884, p.9 ("News of the Day").
[xliii] *Daily Telegraph*, 12 December 1884, p.5 ("The new Land Act appointments").
[xliv] Government Gazette No.411, 31 July 1890, p.6061; and No.454, 22 August 1890, p.6578.
[xlv] *Maitland Daily Mercury*, 8 March 1897, p.3 ("The New Lands Offices at East Maitland").
[xlvi] *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 15 December 1884, p.2 ("The Land Office at East Maitland").
[xlvii] See, e.g., *Maitland Mercury*, 31 March 1885, p.5 ("Land Court, District of Maitland").
[xlviii] Government Gazette No.469, 28 June 1892, p.5239.
[xlix] *Maitland Daily Mercury*, 8 March 1897, p.3 ("The New Lands Offices at East Maitland").
[l] Crown Plan 388-3070, being a Plan of Area to the resumed for Local Land Board and Dist. Survey Offices, Town of East Maitland, Parish of Maitland, County of Northumberland, being Subdivision of Church and School Sites, Section 33, representing a survey made on 6 June 1891.
[li] Land grant in old form Torrens register, Book 1143, No.153, dated 28 September 1894.
[lii] Certificate of Title in the name of Queen Victoria in old form Torrens register, Book 1158, No.112, of 23 March 1895, following the transfer of 2 roods and 1 perch by the Bishop of Newcastle. A new Certificate of Title for the residual portion of the original churchyard was issued to the Bishop of Newcastle on 19 October 1895 (old form Torrens register, Book 1176, No.217).
[liii] James Waddell, *A History of St. Peter's Church, East Maitland N.S.W.*, published by its author in 1996, p.65.
[liv] James Waddell, *A History of St. Peter's Church, East Maitland N.S.W.*, published by its author in 1996, p.64.
[lv] *Maitland Daily Mercury*, 13 April 1897, p.2 ("St. Peter's Sunday School").
[lvi] *Maitland Daily Mercury*, 29 July 1898, p.2 ("Ball at East Maitland").
[lvi] *Maitland Daily Mercury*, 18 December 1905, p.3 ("The Christmas Vacation"). On 29 June 1980 Mr Frank Treasure told me that in 1904 he had attended Miss Barker's school in St Peter's parish hall. It was essentially a pre-school, from which children proceeded to the public school. He recalled that someone lived in the front of the building adjacent to Banks Street. He told me he was born on 21 May 1900.
[lvii] James Waddell, *A History of St. Peter's Church, East Maitland N.S.W.*, published by its author in 1996, p.38.
[lviii] *Maitland Daily Mercury*, 20 July 1935, p.10 ("Lasting Memorial"). Tenders were called in the *Maitland Daily Mercury*, 24 July 1935, p.10 ("Tenders").
[lxi] James Waddell, *A History of St. Peter's Church, East Maitland N.S.W.*, published by its author in 1996, p.110.
[lxi] *Newcastle Sun*, 7 September 1925, p.3 ("East Maitland").
[lxii] *Maitland Daily Mercury*, 6 April 1932, p.2 ("Obituary").
[lxiii] Annual report for 1943 presented at meeting of parishioners of St Peter's Church, East Maitland, on 28 February 1944, in Annual Meetings minute book for St. Peter's Parish, East Maitland, 1935-66, Anglican Diocese of Newcastle archives, B6375d, University of Newcastle Library.
[lxiv] *Newcastle Sun*, 10 March 1942, p.10 ("Lord Wakehurst at Maitland").
[lxv] Minutes of a meeting of St Peter's Vestry on 13 December 1943, in Minutes of St Peter's Vestry, East Maitland, 1936-44, in Diocesan Archives, University of Newcastle.
[lxvi] Annual reports for St Peter's Church, East Maitland, presented at meetings held on 28 February 1944 and 26 February 1945, in Annual Meetings minute book 1935-66, Anglican Diocese of Newcastle Archives, B6375d, University of Newcastle.
[lxvii] *Newcastle Diocesan Churchman*, 1 August 1950, p.122.
[lxviii] *Newcastle Sun*, 20 June 1950, p.1 ("Evacuations Continue At Maitland; 1200 Homeless").
[lxix] *Newcastle Diocesan Churchman*, May 1955, p.37.

Henry Chamberlain Russell: An Australian Life in Science (part 2)

By Peter Woodley

The Observer Must Stand Aside

Behind Russell's public role as an administrator and advocate for science was his keen awareness of the technological revolutions reshaping astronomy in the late 19th century. He was not merely a participant in the era's scientific progress — he was an early adopter, particularly in recognising the potential of photography to transform astronomical observation.

The birth of astrophysics was being driven by two transformative tools: photograph**y** and spectroscopy. Both began entering regular astronomical use in the 1860s. Photography had been evolving as a celestial technique since the 1840s, when the first photographs of the Moon began to demonstrate a capacity to resolve details of the lunar surface with a surprising degree of clarity. Spectroscopy, meanwhile, offered a way to analyse the light of stars and planets — breaking it into spectral lines to reveal composition, temperature, and physical properties. Together, these tools promised to move astronomy from observation to explanation.

Russell was an accomplished photographer of his local surroundings, but it was his use of photography for scientific observation that placed him among Australia's genuine pioneers. In doing so, he helped give Australian science a new presence in the international community.

Russell's photo of Rain Clouds from the Sydney Observatory

A major breakthrough came with the adoption of dry gelatin photographic plates, which replaced earlier wet-plate methods. These new plates were highly sensitive and could be exposed for longer periods, allowing far more light, and thereby far more distant celestial objects, to be captured. Suddenly, stars down to the 14th magnitude could be photographed: a dramatic extension beyond what the human eye, even with a telescope, could perceive.

Russell embraced these developments. In the decade that followed, he continued to experiment with photographic techniques (Bhathal 1991, p.10), producing images that were striking for their time. He spoke at length about these advances in his 1893 Presidential Address to the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science. Titled *"The Progress of Astronomical Photography"*, his address captured the scale of change:

"*…in many cases the observer must stand aside while the sensitive photographic plate takes his place…. I feel sure that in a very few years the observer will be displaced altogether."— Russell, 1893*

Two years earlier, in an 1891 address to the Royal Society of New South Wales, Russell had already described the capabilities of the Star Camera recently installed at the Sydney Observatory. He reported that the camera could capture stars to the 14th magnitude, and shared examples of re-photographed objects — including the Magellanic Clouds — that appeared with striking new complexity. Some images were resolved at 18 times the size of earlier versions (Russell, 1891).

A selection of these photographs was later published in the *Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society* in England (Orchiston 2014). They were recognised as groundbreaking contributions to the emerging field of celestial photography from the Southern Hemisphere, and highly regarded when displayed before the Society.

Russell also briefly engaged with spectroscopy. In 1881, he conducted what appears to have been his only spectroscopic analysis, on the comet visible that year. His observations, recorded in *"The Spectrum and Appearance of the Recent Comet"*, were presented to the Royal Society of New South Wales on 6 July 1881. Though not sustained, this effort showed his awareness of spectroscopy's potential as a scientific tool.

Mapping the Heavens

As photographic technology advanced, it opened not only new frontiers of observation but new ambitions.

A project which captured this sense of possibility was the *Carte du Ciel* (or Mapping the Heavens)— a bold international effort launched by the Paris Observatory in 1887 to map the entire sky photographically and catalogue the millions of stars captured .

The initiative coincided with a critical moment in Russell's career, and the commitment he made on behalf of Australia would shape the work of Sydney Observatory for decades to come.

Advances in astronomical photography — particularly the dry gelatin plate process, which allowed long exposures and high sensitivity — had begun to revolutionise observation. Inspired by this momentum, the Paris Observatory proposed an ambitious international project: the creation of a complete photographic star map and accompanying *Astrographic Catalogue*, under the banner of the *Carte du Ciel* — "Mapping the Heavens."

Russell, already deeply engaged in astronomical photography following his work on the eclipse expedition and the transits of Venus, recognised both the scientific significance and the

opportunity for Australian participation. He was nominated to attend the conference on behalf of the Australian observatories — a remarkable gesture of recognition, and accepted invitations for Sydney, Melbourne, and Perth to take part Each observatory was assigned a specific zone of the sky to photograph, becoming part of a global effort involving eighteen observatories worldwide (Barker 2009).

Russell also contributed practically to the project's realisation. While the optical components of Sydney's astrograph were ordered from Europe, Russell himself designed the telescope's moving parts, mountings, and an innovative electrical control system — all manufactured locally.

The scale of the project was vast. An estimated 22,154 photographic plates would be produced globally, each capturing between 400 and 5,000 stars. Special grid lines were imprinted on each plate to enable precise positional and brightness measurements, forming the foundation of the Astrographic Catalogue.

It was an idealistic and visionary enterprise, truly international in scope, born from an era that placed deep faith in scientific progress and global cooperation. Australian participation reflected a growing presence in international science, and underscored Russell's stature at home and abroad.

Yet over time, the project has perhaps left an ambiguous legacy for Russell. The *Carte du Ciel* has come to represent both the hopes and the limitations of its era. While the photographic phase was completed relatively quickly, the cataloguing of star positions and magnitudes proved far more laborious. Originally intended for central processing in Paris, the task was eventually devolved back to each contributing observatory — greatly increasing the workload.

Well-funded observatories in Europe managed to complete their contributions within a decade. But at Sydney Observatory, where the early years of the project coincided with a severe economic downturn in New South Wales, progress was slower. The project placed a heavy strain on staff and diverted attention from the emerging field of astrophysics, delaying other forms of innovation.

Nonetheless, Sydney made a major contribution. Its allocated region of sky contained some of the densest portions of the Milky Way, and the observatory recorded more stellar positions than any other participant. The work continued for decades and offered employment to many, including a significant number of women.

The final volume — number 53 — was not published until 1971, long after Russell would have foreseen ...

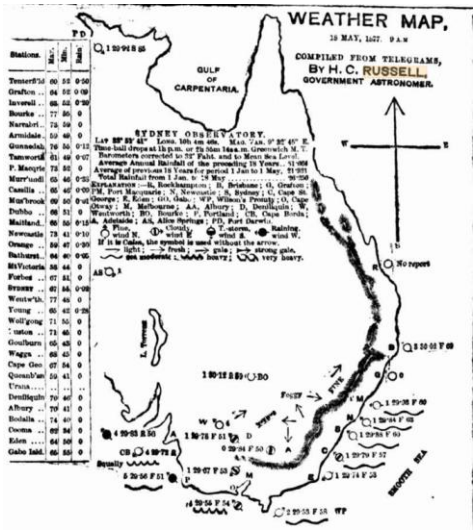
The *Carte du Ciel* was both of its time and out of its time. As an expression of late 19th-century scientific idealism, it reflected a powerful belief in what could be made visible, recorded, and known. Yet as photography and computing advanced, the project's original methods soon

appeared outdated. Its sprawling execution and uneven publication made it difficult to present as a coherent scientific whole.

Even so, the project helped to cement Russell's role as a leader in the creation of a distinctively Australian scientific identity. By embracing internationalism, advocating for intercolonial collaboration, and committing to global science at scale, he helped science in Australia push beyond colonial boundaries — and positioned its practitioners on the world stage.

A Half Science

When checking the daily weather map , it is one of Henry Chamberlain Russell's innovations that you are looking at. He had published the first synoptic map in the Sydney Morning Herald in 1877.



A weather map 1877

At the time, meteorology as we understand it today was a new and evolving discipline, still attempting to establish a credible framework based on consensus about standards of measurement, methodology and analysis.

Across cultures and throughout history, observation of weather cycles and natural phenomena has long informed belief systems as well as agricultural, social, and cultural practices. Longstanding traditions and celebrations remain deeply embedded in most societies to this day.

Meteorology, however, stems from the methodological framework of Western science—built on observation, measurement, and deduction—the tools providing a powerful model for generating knowledge

As European powers expanded their colonial reach, this framework was carried with them. In many cases, it became both a means of systematically recording unfamiliar environments, and a tool used to assert intellectual and cultural authority over them.

As evidence of this the 1853 Brussels Maritime Conference marks an important step towards establishing standards for collecting, recording and interpreting data from weather and marine observations. Though principally addressing its application for maritime conditions it would be important for urban and agricultural issues as well. and In fact, the growth of meteorology would show the interconnectedness of systems over both land and sea

In Australia , meteorology, expressed through recording and collecting data about temperature, rainfall, atmospheric pressure, wind directions and the like was taken up early by the colonial governments, and it continued to inform the work of the Observatories. It was, however, still largely a local concern.

Australia, however, was quick to adopt the electronic communications revolution and construction of the In 'Overland Telegraph' provided the means for information such as weather recordings to be transmitted quickly and efficiently across the land. Charles Todd wrote that this communication is "…*to the meteorologist what the telescope is to the astronomer*." (Todd, 1893*)*

The means by which meteorology could be taken more seriously as a national concern was now in place.

It was certainly a concern for the NSW government, which was concerned with supporting and encouraging the pastoral interests on whose success a large part of the prosperity of the colony rested. Pastoral expansion was driven by settlers pushing out from coastal settlements, opening up larger areas of land to farming and stock raising.

Land holders and residents of settlements experienced first-hand the challenges of drought and floods, prompted by unpredictable rainfall or unfamiliar water flow patterns from inland water sources.

It has even been suggested that competition over water resources may have been an aggravating factor in frontier conflict (Gammage quoted by O'Gorman 2014).

Russell understood the responsibility he had as Government astronomer to use the resources of the Sydney observatory for meteorological purposes and it can be seen that he clearly developed a genuine research interest in the topic. One of his first actions in the post was to greatly increase the number of weather recording stations throughout the state , and he was known to strongly insist on prompt and accurate reporting. O'Gorman situates Russell in the important "…*transitional period in meteorology from half science …to fully accepted scientific area of study*…" (O'Gorman 2014 p.180).

As part of this transitional period, questions about the capabilities and the limits of what meteorological science could do were still to be resolved. The most optimistic perspectives hoped that understanding meteorological research would create sufficient environmental knowledge to predict with some certainty weather cycles and give assurance to the land-based industries which underpinned economic development.

On the other hand, others wrote derisively of the 'weather prophets' whose observations were suppositions.

The 'Weather Prophets' Bulletin 29 March 1890

With this background Russell attempted to distil his research and ideas in a paper presented to the Royal Society of NSW in June 1896 entitled '*The Periodicity of Good and Bad Seasons'*. In this paper he depicted a series of weather events, based on observations he had assembled, to argue for a nineteen-year weather cycle. This claim was met with mixed response, but it demonstrated his attempts at a synthesis of data sets in pursuit of science that would serve the ends of scientific discovery and serve the utilitarian ends of economic development.

When Russell delivered this paper NSW in particular was in the midst of the calamitous 'Federation Drought' which had devastating impacts on colonial society. 1896 was a particularly brutal year, stretching to the limit marginal farming communities and overall economic well-being. Russell's paper was an attempt to provide a scientific basis for managing these particular challenges.

However, the nineteen year cycle suffered from the shortcoming of not having sufficient long term data to support such a broad conclusion. Even so , recognising the need to find patterns, and predictability in environmental and weather phenomena was forward thinking. As Miller has noted , although Russell's theory is not now considered a lasting contribution to climate cycle theory it "…*demonstrated innovative thinking about the global connectedness of climate that would bear fruit….later*". (Miller 2014)

Ad with other aspects of his work, such as demonstrated in the Eclipse expedition and the Transit Observation project, the longer term impact of Russell's thinking was shown to be more substantial later than its immediate impact suggested.

In such writings as *'Moving Anticyclones In The Southern Hemisphere'* , he brilliantly anticipated the understanding of hemispheric movements of weather systems, and more locally, in writing about the puzzling levels of water in the Darling River in Western NSW, he foreshadowed hydrological interpretations if the Great Artesian Basin (Russell 1879 and 1889).

In 1879 Russell chaired the first Intercolonial Meteorological Conference, a significant step in creating an institutional framework for a coordinated, national, approach.

Taken together these initiatives show Russell as not just an observer, but as a builder, and someone who grasped that environmental knowledge was a form of national development.

A Fractured Relationship : Russell and Tebbutt

Through his collaborations with Ellery in Victoria and Todd in South Australia, Russell demonstrated his standing and connections in major Australian scientific networks. However, within Sydney's scientific community, tensions were rising between two leading figures: Henry Chamberlain Russell and his contemporary, the celebrated "amateur" astronomer John Tebbutt.

Tebbutt, renowned nationally and internationally for his achievements in observational astronomy and his erudite publications, never held a position at the Sydney Observatory. Nevertheless, he maintained a keen interest in its work—though not always in a way that the Observatory, and certainly not Russell, welcomed.

Initially, the relationship between Tebbutt and Russell was cordial. Correspondence between the two reveals mutual regard and generosity in the years immediately following Russell's appointment as Government Astronomer (Orchiston, 2017). Over time, however, tensions developed, and the relationship deteriorated to the point where it was perceived as a feud within the local scientific community.

Born in 1834, Tebbutt had completed his formal education by the age of fifteen (Orchiston, 2004) and began working full-time on his father's farm at Windsor. Despite this early end to formal schooling, he was impressively self-taught in algebra, calculus, and trigonometry. Turning his attention to astronomy, he combined patient observation with a flair for writing and communication, cultivating a direct and prolific style that conveyed the excitement of his discoveries to a broad public. As Orchiston observes, Tebbutt's discoveries earned him "*considerable kudos—and kudos was important to Tebbutt*" (Orchiston, 2004). Tebbutt was remembered in the twentieth century by having a moon crater named after him in 1973 and being memorialised on the Australian 100 dollar note in 1984.

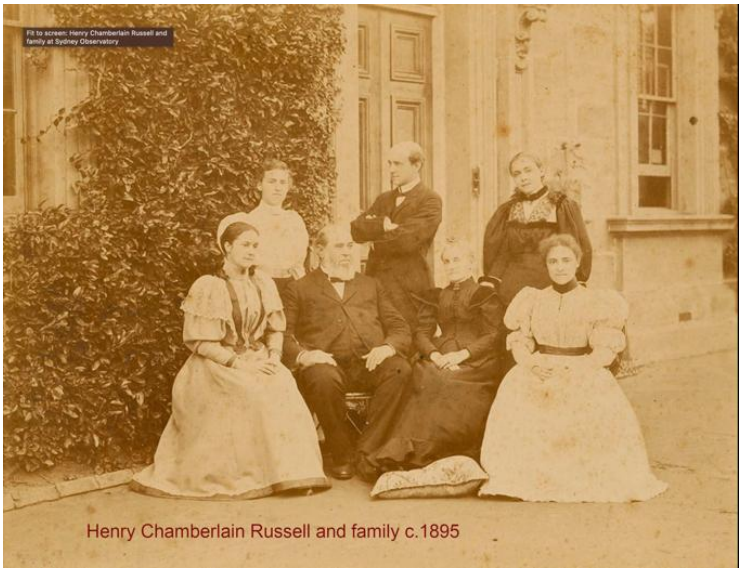
His reputation was firmly established when he became the first to observe the Great Comet of 1861, an achievement recognised internationally as one of the great astronomical discoveries of the nineteenth century. He continued to build his renowned observatory at Windsor, where he spent the rest of his life studying variable stars, double stars, planetary orbits, eclipses, weather phenomena, and maintaining a particular focus on the discovery and tracking of comets.

Tebbutt, in short, with his private observatory was free to devote his attention to his chosen interests.

By comparison, Russell's instinct for discovery sat alongside the accountability he faced

before the colonial Parliament for conducting his role and responsibilities as Director of the Sydney Observatory.
Russell's belief in the primacy of the Observatory (and possibly by extension himself) in the astronomical and meteorological life of New South Wales reflected a changing balance, where the professional astronomer was challenging the traditional role of the amateur.
Despite early warmth, the relationship between Russell and Tebbutt gradually deteriorated. Tebbutt's sensitivity to perceived slights, and Russell's apparent capacity to cause them (perhaps inadvertently), caused minor irritations to harden into serious tensions.
The situation worsened when Russell, in writing *Astronomical and Meteorological Workers in New South Wales 1788–1860*, inexplicably failed to mention Tebbutt at all—an omission that must have seemed like a calculated snub.
The real breakdown, however, came when Tebbutt, already dissatisfied with the Observatory's priorities, decided to go public with his grievances.
In 1891, he wrote a forthright letter to the *Sydney Morning Herald*, criticising the Observatory's focus on meteorology at the expense of astronomy, and offering further sharp observations about its expenditures and publications.
When the *Herald* declined to publish the letter, Tebbutt instead self-published a pamphlet, *The Sydney Observatory and the Sydney Morning Herald: A Plea for Astronomy in New South Wales*.
After outlining his reasons for taking a public stand, he reproduced the full text of his original letter.
The dramatic step ensured immediate attention, and public response to the pamphlet revealed a surprising degree of sympathy for Tebbutt's position.
Tebbutt particularly criticised the way meteorological work had interfered with astronomical research, even suggesting that the two departments be separated.
He also touched a nerve with his criticisms of the Observatory's publishing delays.
Only the following year did the Government produce a handsomely bound edition of observations from the 1874 Transit of Venus—eighteen years after the event—which, pointedly, omitted any mention of Tebbutt's contributions.
Russell followed this by excluding any reference to Tebbutt or his Windsor observatory when delivering the Presidential Report to the Royal Society of New South Wales in 1892.
By then, the breakdown between Russell and Tebbutt was being felt across Sydney's astronomical and scientific community (Orchiston, 2002).
This falling out developed over a number of years, and at the distance of decades it is difficult to fully understand why it occurred.
It may simply have reflected a clash of personalities: both men were known to be prickly, exacting in their expectations of others, and mindful of their own reputations.
Beyond that, however, their paths—though not immediately distinct—gradually diverged.
As a public official, Russell understood the demands of working within a colonial government. He pursued specific outcomes, using scientific systems to tackle practical problems while also supporting discovery. His work centred on gathering data, systematising knowledge, and building frameworks for others to develop further. He

also recognised the value of networks and collaborations in strengthening the broader scientific effort.
Tebbutt, meanwhile, remained a champion of independent discovery. Patient and meticulous, he saw communication as central to the scientific enterprise, striving to broaden public understanding of astronomy. He valued autonomy above institutional status and notably declined several invitations to succeed Scott at the Sydney Observatory.
In the end, both made distinctive contributions to Australian scientific life. Their complex relationship offers a window into the different ways science could be pursued—and into the varied legacies that such work can leave behind.



Conclusion and Evaluation

Henry Chamberlain Russell was a consistent participant in both public and intellectual life. Beyond his scientific and governmental roles, he was instrumental in establishing technical education in New South Wales and served as Vice Chancellor of the University of Sydney from 1891 to 1892. His writings — which included works such as *The Physical Geography and Climate of New South Wales* and *A Climate Handbook of Sydney* — reflected both the breadth of his interests and a desire to communicate science to a broader public, especially on subjects about the local environment.

His career unfolded during a period of immense technological, institutional, and political change in Australia and across the world. He embraced new tools of observation, such as photography and spectroscopy, and applied them with confidence and purpose. The tensions between Russell and Tebbutt, were not just personal, they were portents of a broader transformation, where institutions matured, scientific authority was no longer based solely

observations by individual technical observations, but increasingly on networks, advocacy and managing relationships with governments and funding bodies

Perhaps nowhere was this more evident than in meteorology and environmental science. Russell understood these as national challenges requiring shared data, coordinated networks, and institutional support. His role in standardising observation and using the intercolonial telegraph to share results helped break down state boundaries. His leadership in the Intercolonial Meteorological Conference and the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science foreshadowed not just scientific collaboration, but political federation itself. It is telling that Section 51 of the Australian Constitution gives the federal government the power to legislate for "*astronomical and meteorological observations*." , lending itself to the notion that science was an integral to the idea of national governance.

Ironically, this would later hasten the decline of state observatories — a reality the generation after Russell had to confront when debates about creating the Bureau of Meteorology were being conducted before its establishment in 1906.

Russell's life and career coincided with a transitional period in Australia's history — from a collection of colonial outposts to a federated nation. The study of colonial science is a complex and contested one. Simple narratives of a linear and staged evolution of science are being examined and questioned more closely. The institutions of nineteenth century Australian science emerged within a framework of British imperial settlement, and Russell's achievements though considerable, operated within, and sometimes reinforced those systems of thought. However, this is not to detract from or call into question his achievements. The pursuit of science reflects the times and context in which it operates.

Russell became ill in 1903 and retired two years later, remaining — with typical resolve — in residence at the Sydney Observatory even after his successor was appointed. He died on 22 February 1907. Public notices at the time remembered him as a distinguished scientist and a dedicated public servant.

Epilogue

Jane Foss Russell graduating

During the latter part of Russell's life, other significant changes were taking place. His daughter, Jane Foss Russell, born in 1864 was raised under the dome of the Sydney Observatory. In 1881, when the University of Sydney admitted women, Jane was among the first to be enrolled. She later became only the second woman awarded a Master of Arts. Among other things she helped to found the Sydney University Women's Society, advocating for women's place in intellectual life. Today, the Jane Foss Russell Building stands on the university campus as home to the Students Union .

The Russell family name lives on.

Appendix: Who Tried to Assassinate the Government Astronomer

On the afternoon of 8 September 1877, Henry Chamberlain Russell returned to his office at the Sydney Observatory to find a neatly wrapped parcel on his desk — one that hadn't been there fifteen minutes earlier. What followed was one of the strangest and most unsettling episodes of his career: an apparent assassination attempt, involving a home-made explosive device.
He had some difficulty in attempting to open the parcel but when he partially did so and looked inside, he saw an amount of what he understood to be coarse-grained blasting powder. He carried the box out of the building and with his son managed to empty the box of the powder and investigated further.

This revealed that the package contained powder, a stoneware ginger beer bottle, along with several matches on a piece of wood glued to the box and some sandpaper fixed to the lid. This was an ingeniously constructed device in which the matches would rub against the sandpaper and ignite the powder.

Understandably, Russell secured the box and went straight to the police.

After some investigation by the police suspicion quickly fell upon a worker at the Observatory - George William Faithful , employed as a general assistant whose duties including basic upkeep of the premises and a variety of menial tasks including some light carpentry. He was arrested on suspicion and soon went to trail.

It didn't take long for the trial to reveal that the relationship between Russell and Faithful was not good, and that Faithful had a strong sense of grievance over his treatment.

Russell often had to reprimand Faithful for his work and attitude, whilst according to the testimony of others, Faithful had been outspoken in his opinion of Russell. (On one occasion Faithful referred to Russell as "… a d_____d tyrant…" The *Sydney Morning Herald* helpfully reported). He was also allegedly upset that he had not been assigned major carpentry duties at the Observatory, considering himself a very capable carpenter

At about 2 p.m. on the afternoon of the incident, Russell had left his office and seeing Faithful in the hallway took the opportunity to speak sternly to him about an outstanding matter,

before leaving the building. Russell testified to the police that immediately afterwards he saw Faithful enter the workshop outside the Observatory building but thought no more of it.

Upon being questioned by Russell and by police, Faithful admitted that he had taken the parcel to Russell's office but only after it being handed to him by a young man at the Observatory gate.

Pressed for further details he described the alleged young man as about 19 years old with a dark complexion, a dark hat and a dark coat,

This must not have sounded terribly convincing, because a Police Gazette report of the case carried the blunt observation "*Identification of the offender doubtful*".

Furthermore no one, neither the gardener nor the compositor, saw or heard anyone come to the gate, or Faithful in the vicinity. But a box and screws very similar to those used in the bomb were readily identified as being seen in the workshop a short time previously.

It also transpired that Faithful had recently borrowed a gluepot and had access to address labels from Russell's wastepaper bin.

Faithful pleaded his innocence and conducted his own defence without representation. He was astute enough to point out that the case against him was entirely circumstantial and not conclusive whilst also claiming that none of the witnesses could absolutely guarantee that no one came to the gate with a package. He further maintained that the materials used in the box could be found in any carpenter's shop in Sydney. Warming to his task, he claimed he would not deliberately put himself in danger from an explosion. Even so he must have understood the precariousness of his position because he concluded by simply hoping the jury would take an understanding approach.

The jury went to consider their verdict and returned a few hours later. They announced their verdict of 'not guilty', to the great astonishment of the presiding judge.

Justice Manning, in his conclusion was barely able to hide his bewilderment at the outcome as he said to Faithful "*The jury have taken a merciful view of your case, but I have a very strong impression myself that you are guilty*", before releasing the prisoner.

So Faithful went free, no doubt thankful for the existence of the jury system. And despite the trial judge's obvious misgivings, no one was ever convicted of attempting to assassinate the Government Astronomer.

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