

Lachlan Macquarie (NSW Governor, 1810-1821) and explorers Evans, Throsby & Oxley

by Tony Butz

[Part V in a GDHS series on early NSW governors and explorers and their impact on the settlement of the Gerringong area]

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Background

The four NSW governors who preceded Macquarie were all British Navy officers who were given marines (soldiers) to protect the colony and guard the convicts. From the outset, many NSW Corps officers refused to co-operate with the governors and were more interested in pursuing their own business interests and acquiring land for themselves, culminating in a showdown between Governor Bligh on the one hand, and the NSW Corps and wealthy settlers on the other, in 1808. There was no official currency in the colony, the trade in rum and other spirits had caused huge inflation in prices of all goods imported to NSW, the buildings and roads had been neglected, there were no permanent hospitals, banks or schools. Escaped convicts caused repeated disturbances with the indigenous populations, attacking Aborigines or joining them in attacks on European settlements. Traditional animosities between different Aboriginal groups had elders asking Europeans to side with them against their enemies. Exploration for settlement and farming was limited as governors had to deal with both the internal politics of Sydney Town and the tyranny of distance from England. There was no proper judicial system and this had led to the farcical rebellion in which the military deposed the governor in 1808.

Sir Joseph Banks, Cook's botanist, had become an expert on the colony and had influence in both the Admiralty and British Parliament; so, he held a crucial middle ground in decisions made by the Colonial Office in London. It was he who saw the need for a NSW governor who was a military man, with his own established regiment to support him, in restoring order to a colony in chaos. That man was Colonel Lachlan Macquarie, commanding officer of the 73rd Highland Regiment.

Appointment as NSW Governor

Viscount Castlereagh, Secretary of State for the Colonies, instructed Macquarie to improve the moral and social conduct of both the convicts and free settlers, to moderate the consumption of spirits and to support pastoral and agricultural expansion so that NSW would become self-sufficient. The colony was still seen in England as little more than a gaol, and the governor as little more than the head gaoler. Macquarie was the son of a poor Scottish farmer; he had joined the military at age 15, had served in Nova Scotia, Jamaica, India, Ceylon and in Egypt against Napoleon; but, (concerned that, at age 47, he was the oldest Lieutenant-Colonel in the British Army), he hoped that the NSW governorship would be seen as a promotion. If he could last eight years as governor, he could expect to be granted a retirement pension for life. Castlereagh had already sent out a detachment of Macquarie's 73rd Regiment in August 1809, to replace the troublesome NSW Corps, and Lachlan Macquarie, himself, arrived in Sydney on 28th December 1809. On board the store-ship *Dromedary*

with Macquarie and his second wife, Elizabeth, was also the newly-appointed Judge-Advocate Ellis Bent, described by Castlereagh as “a barrister of some eminence”.

Macquarie was sworn in by Ellis Bent as governor of the colony of NSW on 1st January, 1810. In the summer heat of Sydney, and with both the remnants of the NSW Corps and the first contingent of the Highlanders assembled, he called for his troops to do their duty faithfully and without favour, stressed the need for everyone in the colony to be sober and socially responsible, and called for all people, including Aborigines, to be treated with respect. He expressed his wish for “a more becoming spirit of conciliation, harmony and unanimity among all classes and descriptions of inhabitants”. In February, one month into his role, he declared that he found the colony “barely emerging from an infantile imbecility”, divided by factionalism, under the control of wealthy land owners and military officers, the people almost starving, morals in “the lowest state of debasement”, and the public buildings, roads and bridges in a bad state of repair. Even the imposing and hard Governor Bligh had been unable to break the Rum Corps’ monopoly on the economy; but Macquarie, only four days into his governorship (4th January, 1810), dismissed those officials appointed since Bligh’s removal, reinstated those removed by Macarthur and Johnston, and nullified all the trials, land grants and gifts made to members of the NSW Corps. Next, he banned working on Sundays, even for convicts (so they, too, could attend church services and have a day of rest) and he appointed emancipist Andrew Thompson as a justice of the peace and chief magistrate of the Hawkesbury, to show his belief in the value of the emancipation system.

On 12th May 1810, Macquarie sent ex-governor Bligh, Lieutenant-Colonel Paterson, Judge Atkins and Provost Marshall Gore back to England on the *Hindostan* (which had accompanied *HMS Dromedary* out here), to attend and give evidence to the court-martial of Johnston. *[Bligh had sailed back to Sydney from Van Diemen’s Land on HMS Porpoise, arriving 16 days after the new governor was sworn in, but Macquarie kept him largely confined to the ship until his departure in May. Bligh, from the outset, insisted he was still the legal governor of the colony and that he planned to arrest all those involved in the Rum Rebellion, but Macquarie stated that his orders were that Lord Castlereagh had taken this complex problem completely out of his hands, pending the trial of the leaders in London. Although he treated Bligh with respect, Macquarie also described him as a “great plague” and a constant source of trouble.]* Paterson died on the voyage back to England, aged 54, preventing the presentation of much of the evidence about Macarthur’s blackmailing and treachery; but the evidence from Bligh, Atkins and Gore was sufficient for the court martial (on 2nd July, 1811) to find, in a remarkably calm trial, that Johnston was guilty of mutiny. *[Bligh gave a very cool, dispassionate account of events that collapsed the defence case, and caused Johnston to be merely discharged from the army – a lenient sentence that reflected the court’s view that Macarthur was the instigator of the mutiny. For his part, Macarthur was aware that, if he returned to Sydney, Governor Macquarie would arrest him, but Lord Bathurst in the Colonial Office banned him from returning to NSW for eight years, anyway.]*

With great energy and dedication, Macquarie threw himself into making the changes that the colony desperately needed. Indeed, he achieved so much in his twelve years as governor that it is difficult to summarise all his achievements briefly, but a short summary is necessary to give space and context to his role in opening up the Illawarra and South Coast for settlement in later years.

Social reform

In addition to his orders to improve the morality of the colony, Macquarie had a vision of his own for NSW, and that included a more egalitarian social structure that dispensed with class privilege and made the colony a land of opportunity, of new beginnings, for both settlers and emancipated convicts alike. His views were strongly influenced by his two religiously devout wives and by William Wilberforce, all of whom opposed the slave trade. Wilberforce succeeded in getting Britain to abolish slavery in 1807, the year Macquarie married Elizabeth, who also insisted that all human beings were equal in the sight of God. It caused Macquarie to see the convict system not as a punitive regime but as a program for regeneration, and Aborigines as people the colony could learn from, as they, in turn, learned European ways. He even named a new settlement on the Hawkesbury River “Wilberforce in honour of, and out of respect to, the good and virtuous William Wilberforce, Esq., M.P. – a true patriot and the real friend of mankind”.

With this mindset, Lachlan Macquarie introduced new regulations for granting tickets-of-leave, even rewarding some ex-convicts with government commissions. He met opposition from the outset, mostly from those who had established themselves as the new landed gentry in the colony, and those who were profiting from rum. It took magistrate Reverend Samuel Marsden (who was rivalling John Macarthur at developing fine wool from merinos) only 3 months to object to Macquarie’s appointment of emancipists Simeon Lord and Andrew Thompson to government positions, and he refused to serve with them on the judiciary. *[Both Lord and Thompson were regarded highly by Governors Hunter, King and Bligh, the last having made them overseers of his own cattle on the Hawkesbury, and Macquarie even had Thompson as a guest at Government House].* The brother of Judge Advocate Ellis Bent, Senior Judge Jeffrey Bent, refused to have emancipist lawyers in court and convinced his brother also to oppose Macquarie on this matter, causing the courts to be closed for two years. The governor asked England to dismiss both of them in 1815, but, before this could happen, Ellis Bent died, aged only 32, from “dropsy of the chest”. Macquarie took steps to look after Bent’s widow and 5 children. Jeffrey Bent was dismissed as senior judge and recalled from NSW on 11th December 1816, being replaced by Judge Barron Field who arrived on 2nd February 1817.

While this looked like a victory for Macquarie, it came with a ruling from London that convicts freed by the governor’s pardon could not maintain personal action at law, nor acquire property. Macquarie had already shown that the emancipist system worked: Andrew Thompson became a magistrate; Francis Greenway was made an architect for government buildings; William Redfern was made doctor to the governor’s children. Many ex-convicts became successful farmers, traders, builders and public officials; but both army officers and free settlers objected because they were also competing for these positions. The matter would come to a head later on, concerning William Redfern, once John Macarthur was also back in the colony. But Macquarie was a man of high principles and was concerned even for his opponents like Bent. In June 1818, he helped found the Benevolent Society of NSW and became its patron, as did his wife, Elizabeth, who also helped with the Female Orphan School and the Native Institution. In 1820, he laid the foundation stone for the School for the Education of Children of the Poor (at Hyde Park). Macquarie also believed that kindness and encouragement would overcome the hostility of some Aborigines, so he set up an Aboriginal school in Parramatta to educate them in “habits of industry and decency”, but by mid-1815 half had been, as he put it, “decoyed away” by their parents.

Controlling the rum trade

There was an urgent need to find a balance between encouraging trade and diminishing the social evils that excessive alcohol had caused in the colony, amongst convicts, the military and free settlers. By July 1812, Macquarie had convinced the Select Committee on Transportation to NSW, in London, to recommend: that the governor's authority be supplemented by a council and a Supreme Court; that the emancipation of convicts continue; and that the importation of liquor remain open but with a high import duty of 3-4 shillings/ gallon. With the additional urgent need for a bigger and more permanent hospital, but with London refusing to fund it, Macquarie had (in November 1810) allowed surgeon D'Arcy Wentworth, merchant/pastoralist Alexander Riley and trader Garnham Blaxcell to import 110 000 gallons of spirits in return for building a new general hospital. Hence it became known as the Rum Hospital (and subsequently the site of Sydney Hospital, NSW Parliament House and the Supreme Court of NSW). It gave them a virtual monopoly of the rum trade outside of government imports, but still under the control of the governor. The hospital's foundation stone was laid by Macquarie on 23rd October 1810. Wentworth himself was an emancipist. Tried three times for highway robbery in England, he was acquitted when he offered himself for service as assistant surgeon on the First Fleet in 1788, tendered to the medical needs of both the Macquarie and Macarthur families, and even rose to the position of superintendent of police. Previous governors appointed him to various civic positions before Macquarie appointed him principal surgeon on 31st May 1811. The replacement of the NSW Corps by Macquarie's Highlanders destroyed much of the rum trade monopoly, but left the colony without a viable currency for trading. As the wool trade was developing rapidly, along with the cedar and sealing industries, a more stable commercial system was needed in NSW.

Currency and banking

The main form of currency in NSW, apart from rum, was promissory notes issued by individuals and re-used many times over until exchanged for cash from the person who had signed it. However, fraud was easy, and Macquarie complained that even convicts were issuing them. Governor King had tried to limit promissory notes to only those printed on the government press, but this was not successful. The Home Office turned down Macquarie's request for a government bank, in April 1810, so the governor imported £10 000 worth of Spanish silver "dollars" (coins of 8 reales) from Madras, India, through the East India Company. He employed a convict forger, William Henshall to strike out the middle of each coin, producing the outer ring to be valued at 5 shillings (which became known as the "Holey Dollar") and the central piece worth $\frac{1}{4}$ as much, at 1 shilling and 3 pence, (called the "dump"). Converting the 40 000 coins into 80 000 took more than a year to complete, and they went into circulation on 30th January 1814 as Australia's first official currency. Henshall was granted an absolute pardon in 1812, six months before his sentence was due to end.

[Macquarie provided Henshall with the basement of a building used by Government Printer George Howe, near the corner of Bridge and Loftus Sts, making it, effectively, our first mint. By stamping "New South Wales 1813" and "Five Shillings" on the rings, and "fifteen pence" on the dumps, and by making their combined nominal value 25% more than the value of a Spanish dollar, Macquarie made it unprofitable for the coins to be exported from the colony. British Sterling coinage was introduced in 1822; it saw the holey dollars recalled, and demonetised in 1829, most being melted down into bullion. Most of the Spanish coins seem to have been minted originally in Mexico. Only about 300 holey dollars (and about 1 000 dumps) remain and are highly

sought after by coin collectors. The last one sold in Australia was in 2015, and it fetched over half a million dollars. The Holey Dollar is also now used as the logo of Macquarie Bank].

Macquarie had previously banned all promissory notes in order to have the coinage recognised and established, but Judge Ellis Bent had overturned this decision, recognising the notes and creating much confusion. Macquarie now called a meeting of magistrates, merchants and other businessmen and they agreed both to accept only silver sterling as official currency and to establish a bank with their own resources, since England would not. They were finally granted a charter of incorporation to form the first public company in Australia: the Bank of New South Wales (opening on 8th April 1817). Not forgetting the ordinary citizens, in 1819, Macquarie also opened a Savings Bank “for the receipt of Savings of the Industrious Poor of the Colony”. The first banknotes, from the Bank of NSW, were also printed in 1817. The Bank of NSW flourished, and the staff declared an annual bank holiday on 31st January to celebrate “Governor Macquarie’s Birthday – the Establisher and Promoter of the Bank”.

Buildings

Central to Macquarie’s building program was his recognition of the talents of emancipist Francis Greenway. As an architect in Bristol, he had been found guilty of forgery and sentenced to death, later converted to 14 years’ transportation. Greenway arrived in 1814, followed by his wife and three children, and soon criticised the poor building techniques being used on the Rum Hospital, winning Macquarie’s attention and approval. On 30th March 1816, Macquarie appointed Greenway Civil Architect of NSW, and paid him 3 shillings a day. Despite Lord Bathurst’s demands to reduce expenditure on public works, Macquarie announced churches, designed by Greenway, to be built in Sydney, Liverpool and Windsor, a new factory and female convict barracks in Parramatta, a lighthouse at South Head, a new civil courthouse and houses for chaplains at Liverpool, Parramatta and Castlereagh. In 1817, Greenway directed the building of Hyde Park Barracks, Government House stables (now Conservatorium of Music), Fort Macquarie (Opera House site) and St Matthew’s Church of England in Windsor. In 1819, Greenway was given a full pardon by the governor. In addition to these buildings, Macquarie also had constructed 276 miles of roads, as well as bridges, wharves and quays, windmills, granaries, telegraph stations, tollhouses and guardhouses – earning him the title of the “governor-builder” of NSW.

Aboriginal relations

Keen to establish new settlements and to find a way across the imposing Blue Mountains for more farmland, Macquarie was also very aware of the way some Aboriginal groups would oppose this encroachment into their territories. Contrary to populist claims, from the outset, in 1788, most Aboriginal groups had lived harmoniously with the new settlers, while a few had opposed them. Settlers in the Hawkesbury and Emu Plains were raided by escaped convicts and the “mountain blacks” (Gundungara) who also beset the Dharug and Dharawal groups, causing their elders to request, from all the early governors, protection against Gundungara raids. Macquarie had a duty to protect all the inhabitants of NSW from each other, but London was already trying to cut costs by reducing the number of soldiers stationed in the colony. Macquarie looked for ways of recognising which Aboriginal groups were peaceful and co-operative, and which were oppositional and troublesome. For their own safety and well-being, he banned Aboriginal groups from coming within a mile of any settlement without permission, organised annual gatherings to distribute food and

clothing, and established farms so they might learn agriculture. He set up schools for the children of those who wanted to learn European ways, medical assistance for the many wounded in native battles and domestic violence, feasts for the many different language groups, and recognition of those elders who helped keep the peace and who acted as guides for exploration.

At the second feast day, in 1816, nearly 200 Aboriginal people attended, and Macquarie presented selected men with brass breastplates, modelled on the gorgets often worn by military officers and engraved with the recipient's name and the title of "chief" or "king". The first had been to Bungaree nearly two years earlier in 1815. *[Macquarie had seen British officers award gorgets to chiefs of Native American tribes while serving there in Nova Scotia, and incorrectly assumed that a similar tribal structure, under a chief, applied to Australian aboriginal groups. His intention was to provide European settlers and Aboriginal groups alike an indication that this person was recognised and welcomed by the governor].* But, in 1816, there also occurred an event for which Macquarie is often criticised: hostile Aborigines again attacked settlers along the Hawkesbury-Nepean River. Macquarie reluctantly sent a punitive military expedition with orders to take prisoners where possible, but to shoot those who resisted or attempted to escape, and hang their bodies from trees as warnings to others. Officially, fourteen Aboriginal men, women and children were killed. Aboriginal attacks continued, so Macquarie proclaimed ten known offenders to be outlaws and offered a reward for them dead or alive. What isn't often reported is that the raids were by Gundungara who had also slaughtered many men, women and children in the Dharug and Dharawal camps along the way, and had a reputation amongst Aboriginal groups as cannibals and kidnapers.

[The Dharug living in the lower Blue Mountains were sworn enemies of the Gundungara in the upper mountains, shared little commonality in language and didn't invite Gundungara when they got together with other groups for ceremonies and corroborees. Bennelong, a Wangal man from the south side of the Harbour, told Governor Phillip that the governor, by having a combined corroboree in December 1790, had made peace between the Wangal and their enemies, (both the Gweagal from Botany Bay and the Cameragal on the north side of the harbour, whom Bennelong had earlier asked Governor Phillip to attack and kill). In June 1814, Macquarie was informed by the Sydney Eora Aborigines that the Gundungara had asked the Jervis Bay Aborigines, the Dharawal-Dhurga, to join them in fighting the white settlers. Cogy, a Cowpastures [Murrumbidgee] Dharawal elder, also advised that Cannabayagal, a Gundungara warrior from Burratorrang, was repeatedly trying to get the Murrumbidgee to attack the settlers in Appin].

Macquarie also settled 16 men and women under the leadership of Bungaree, on the north side of the harbour where they could learn farming. He supplied them with huts, clothing, seeds, tools and a fishing boat, but they soon gave up on the practice and it failed, as did similar attempts to "civilise" at Blacktown and Elizabeth Bay. Nevertheless, the Eora, Dharawal and Dharug people generally kept on friendly terms with the newcomers, whether to avoid more trouble or to get the obvious benefits of food, clothing, blankets and other provisions, while the Gundungara and some other groups continued to resist the encroachment of European settlement onto their traditional lands.

NSW economy

The NSW economy under Macquarie was booming, due to controlling the rum trade, the continued arrivals of new settlers and traders, the growing wool and sealing industries and the many emancipated convicts turning to productive new lives. By 1818, NSW had 14 500 acres of wheat farms, 11 700 acres of maize and 1 250 acres of potatoes. There were 66 000 sheep, 34 000 cattle and 11 400 pigs. *[By 10th August 1805, the total white population, including 1747 children, was 6 980 (made*

up mostly of 2 077 convicts, 641 military and civil workers, 617 settlers, 916 freemen and 854 free women). In addition, there were about 760 in Van Diemen's Land and 700 on Norfolk Island. By 1811, the estimated population was: NSW – 10 287; Van Diemen's Land – 1 588, a growth of 70% in 6 years. By 1820, it was over 23 000, and in 1821 nearly 40 000.]

Samuel Marsden, who had received a Spanish merino ram and ewe at the same time that John Macarthur had, sent the first bulk supply of wool (more than 2 tons) back to England in 1811, and Elizabeth Macarthur sent more than 4 tons in 1813, while her husband used his detention time in England to attract British manufacturers to NSW wool. Things were going so well that too many of Macquarie's own regiment wanted to leave the army to become farmers or wool growers and they expected land grants for their service. On 31st July 1813, Macquarie sent a despatch to Earl Bathurst asking that his 73rd regiment be replaced by the 46th from Ceylon and that future regiments be allowed to stay only 3 years. The 46th arrived aboard the *Windham* on 11th February 1814 under Lieutenant-Colonel George Molle, who was also appointed lieutenant-governor of NSW.

George Evans' exploration from Jervis Bay in 1812

The increasing population, and instructions from London, saw the need for more land to raise cattle, sheep and crops. In 1803, Governor King had forbidden access to the Southern Highlands west of Cow Pastures (Camden) in order to protect government cattle there and to minimise administration difficulties; but many settlers had ignored this, moved in without permits, and built modest houses and gardens there. Macquarie now set about exploring in all directions from Sydney: west to Bathurst and the Lachlan and Macquarie Rivers, north to New England and south-west to the Murrumbidgee, transforming NSW from a penal colony into a self-supporting colony. Then, in 1817, he introduced the land grant system to encourage permanent settlement and pastoral development in these outlying areas, including the Illawarra and Shoalhaven.

The land between Port Jackson and Jervis Bay was reported as being an almost impenetrable region of thick bush, soaring cliffs and wide rivers; the amazing trek of survivors from the wreck of the *Sydney Cove* in 1797 had borne that out. But trips by sea to the Shoalhaven River had shown the area had promising stands of cedar and river flats, as well as deposits of coal, so, in 1812, Macquarie commissioned surveyor George Evans to sail to Jervis Bay on the *Lady Nelson*, survey the land around the bay, and find a land route back from there to Sydney via the settlement of Appin.

[The Appin area had been explored in 1807 by botanist and naturalist George Caley, and named by Macquarie in 1811 after the birthplace of his wife in Argyleshire, Scotland. It became the fifth village of the colony, and in 1811 Macquarie had also granted 1 000 acres there to William Broughton ("for faithful and honest public service"), who named his part of it Lachlan Vale, after the governor. It was, therefore, a good place to finish the expedition before returning to Port Jackson.]

Accompanying Evans was a Dharawal Aborigine named Bundle (or Bundal, or several other spellings) who had been on expeditions as a boy, even to Norfolk Island with Captain Hill, and who spoke several dialects. They set out on 26th March and spent four days completing a survey of Jervis Bay's foreshore, during which time Evans was bitten by a venomous snake and the party also experienced bad weather. For the next twelve days, they bashed their way through thick bush which tore their clothes to shreds, and crossed rivers in bark canoes made by Bundle (including Currumbene Creek at Huskisson and Shoalhaven River at Cabbage Tree Flat, west of Nowra). On 7th April they climbed Good Dog Mountain (just north of the present Cambewarra Lookout), spent the next two nights on

Mt Tapitallee, and tried to climb more of the Cambewarra Range (near Berry), but hours of bush-bashing forced them to descend into the valley at Bundewallah Creek and proceed north nearer the coast – through today’s Gerringong, Kiama and Wollongong. They became the third group of Europeans to pass through Gerringong district (following the survivors of the *Sydney Cove* and *Cumberland* wrecks in 1797). By 10th April they had almost run out of food, but camped somewhere near Towradgi Creek on 12th April. Exhausted, Evans’ notes from here on are very brief, but it seems he left the coast and headed up over the range somewhere near where Mt Ousley Rd rises over the escarpment. Several men were injured, Evans had cracked ribs from a fall into a river and was still in pain from the snakebite, but on 15th April they arrived at the Appin settlement.

*[Here read from Evans’ journal and explain why Jervis Bay is often incorrectly pronounced **Jarvis** Bay].*

Dr Charles Throsby

With the successful crossing of the Blue Mountains in 1813 by Blaxland, Lawson and Wentworth, Macquarie wasted no time in having a road built across it, and then sending Evans to explore south of Bathurst where he discovered the Lachlan River in 1815. The Illawarra, at that time, already had illegal cedar cutters operating there, and the area was dotted with grazing cattle and stockmen’s huts. Cedar was being taken out by bullock drays to Lake Illawarra and then to Sydney. Armed with knowledge from Evans’ expedition, that a coastal route east of the range was too difficult, Dr Charles Throsby wanted to find a land route from his property, Glenfield, near Liverpool, to the Illawarra and thence to Jervis Bay. *[Throsby had arrived in NSW as a naval surgeon in 1802, was appointed surgeon at Castle Hill and then Newcastle, and served as a magistrate under three governors and through the turbulent times of the Rum Rebellion – a post he fulfilled with energy and integrity. He was one of the first settlers in the Illawarra and in Sutton Forest].* With the assistance of Aboriginal guides, Cookoogong and Dual, he drove his cattle down the Bulli Pass to the Illawarra (then still called Five Islands) to good grazing land in 1815, and two years later, with friend Hamilton Hume as his guide, explored for a route from Glenfield to Bong Bong (near Sutton Forest and Moss Vale).

So, when Macquarie, in 1818, initiated an expedition under Surveyor-General James Meehan to find a road route from Sydney to Jervis Bay, Throsby asked to go along and to bring Hume and a local bushman, Joseph Wild, as well. They set out from Liverpool on 3rd March, and, nine days later, reached the flooded headwaters of the Shoalhaven River, causing them to retreat west (to near Marulan). They then decided to split the party into one group of Meehan, Hume and four others, and another group led by Throsby with Aboriginal guides (including one of his workers, Billy Broughton – whose Aboriginal name was Toodwick/ Toodwit/ Tooodoo – and Evans’ guide, Bundle). Meehan’s group discovered Lake Bathurst and Mulwarree Ponds, then returned home via Bungonia. Throsby’s party went down through Kangaroo Valley via Bundanoon Creek (where he had to leave his carts, and where he met two other Aborigines known to him – Mamaa and Timelong – who guided him through Meryla Pass (in what is now Morton National Park). Three days later, they reached Jervis Bay.

[Timelong was a regular visitor to Denham Court, home of Captain Richard Brooks, the first man to have cattle in Kangaroo Valley. Like so many Aboriginal elders he was given a title, “King of Kangaroo Ground”. Joseph Wild knew the Kangaroo River began near Carrington Falls, and he also knew several of other Aborigines they met along the way].

Although neither party found a suitable road route to Jervis Bay, their discoveries opened up a stock route, between Bong Bong and Kangaroo Valley that was used for over a century. Under Macquarie's instructions, Throsby had the South Road built from Cowpastures to beyond Bong Bong, for which service Macquarie granted Throsby land at Bong Bong and 1 000 acres south of Minto, that Macquarie himself named Throsby Park. In May 1821, Throsby reported finding three new rivers surrounded by excellent pasture for sheep and cattle. Leaving from Lake George, he found the Murrumbidgee to be very long and winding westwards, stating that if it did flow into a sea, it was not the Tasman. He also returned to the Shoalhaven in 1821, and appears to have been the first European to use the name Nowra – writing it as “Nou-woo-ro”. Despite all this exploration, a coast road south of Sydney still remained an elusive dream, due to the rugged escarpment, the extensive gullies, swamps and forest land of huge trees.

John Oxley

Oxley was a lieutenant in the navy and was on board the *Porpoise* in 1809 when Paterson allowed the deposed governor, William Bligh, to leave Sydney. Bligh sailed to the Derwent River in Van Diemen's Land, instead of England, and stayed there while Oxley wrote lengthy reports on the settlements there. Back in England in 1811, he retired from the navy and applied for the position of surveyor-general of NSW under Governor Macquarie, who was keen for Oxley to do as much exploring as he did surveying. Everyone wanted to know if the Lachlan and Macquarie Rivers flowed into the sea or an inland lake, so the governor had Oxley explore both rivers in 1817-18, leading to the discovery of the rich Liverpool Plains, the Hastings River and a fine harbour which he named Port Macquarie. The governor was also aware of a deficiency of 5 000 acres between what had been promised and what had been surveyed and made ready for occupation. Only land to the south of Sydney could fill the void, so he sent Oxley to survey the Illawarra in 1815, in order to find land to make up the deficiency.

Following Throsby's discovery of a land route from western Sydney to the Illawarra, in 1815, Oxley surveyed the northern Illawarra to enable the first land grants to be taken up in December 1816, and enabling both Throsby and Oxley to pasture their cattle, from the Liverpool area, in the Illawarra, and becoming thereby the first legal European settlers there. It wasn't haphazard; selection was made very carefully after inspection by potential landholders, who first had to meet Oxley “at Mr Throsby's hut” to inspect the land. Macquarie had also ordered that land holdings must exclude all major waterways; and he did not even disapprove of Major George Johnston claiming land at the southern end of Lake Illawarra. In addition, in 1819, commissioned by Macquarie, deputy surveyor-general James Meehan, set out from high above the Illawarra, in a difficult descent down the escarpment, through country filled with cedar, sassafras and cabbage tree palms, past Throsby's hut near lake Illawarra and as far south as the Minnamurra River (which he spelled “Mimemurra”). Meanwhile, Oxley set out from Minnamurra to the Shoalhaven River which he found difficult to enter because of the surf, so he sought shelter in Crook Haven. Back in 1811, Macquarie had landed on Bowen Island in Jervis Bay and had recommended the bay for settlement. Oxley, however, now reported Jervis Bay as being too big for a harbour and the area around as barren and marshy, but noted a good amount of cedar and possibly 10 000 acres of useful land along the Shoalhaven. Oxley's largely negative report caused Macquarie, in February 1820, to withdraw his recommendation for a settlement at Jervis Bay.

Macquarie's opponents

While Macquarie was achieving so much in the colony, he had his critics (mostly those who resented his emancipist policies and instead wanted a classed system in the colony, similar to that in England), and they nearly got the better of him. The first thorn in his side was the return to NSW of John Macarthur from his 8-year exile in England, with two of his sons, William and James. He was allowed back to NSW on condition that he take no role in public affairs. The second was the court stalemates resulting from the Bent judges' opposition to serving with emancipists. The third was a repeated instruction from those in the Home Office in London to cut expenses in the colony, especially for roads and public buildings, and their concerns about the continued viability of NSW as a penal colony. *[As early as 1789, London's Colonial Office had instructed Governor Arthur Phillip to grant extra land to junior officers in order to make the colony more self-supporting. They failed to realise this would lead to officers competing with the governor for control of colonial commerce – a conflict that culminated in the Rum Rebellion, and which was still unresolved at the time of Bigge's reports.]* On 1st December 1817, Lachlan Macquarie offered his resignation, due to mounting criticisms of his governorship, both in NSW and in England. London's response was to send out Commissioner John Thomas Bigge to investigate every aspect of colonial life in NSW.

John Macarthur, on his return from exile, was quick to join Samuel Marsden and other exclusionists in complaining to Lord Bathurst about emancipists being given government jobs. Bathurst had already expressed his opposition to such "ill-considered compassion for convicts". Judge Barron Field, who arrived in 1817 to replace Judge Jeffrey Bent in the Supreme Court of NSW, ruled that surgeon William Redfern, being an emancipist, was not entitled to own property (the 40 acres granted to him for exemplary medical and public service, and which later became the suburb of Redfern) nor to serve as a magistrate, because his pardon was from the governor, not London. Macquarie continued to clash with Bigge and the exclusionists, during the 18 months of gathering evidence for Lord Bathurst, and when the Commissioner left for England to prepare his report, in February 1821, Macquarie knew it would be scathing of his governorship.

The Bigge Report

Commissioner Bigge knew he was expected to support the Colonial Office, so his report was, indeed, opposed to Macquarie's land policies, which envisaged NSW as a collection of towns surrounded by small farms, each with their own school, church and courthouse, as in the English countryside. Bigge, however, sided instead with the colony's large landholders, sharing with them a vision of NSW as an antipodean Virginia where large tracts of land would be controlled by wealthy gentry who would use convict labour to produce the raw materials for sustaining not only the colony but an industrialised Britain as well. This policy would significantly shape what happened in the Illawarra and Shoalhaven for decades afterwards.

But, just as importantly, Bigge sided with John Macarthur, Samuel Marsden, Judge Bent and the other exclusionists, in opposing Macquarie's appointment of William Redfern to the magistracy on 30th October 1819. Macquarie argued that 90% of the population had been the offspring of convicts and that they had proved themselves better subjects and citizens than "the free settlers who have fattened themselves on the labours of convicts". Lord Bathurst, in England, however, sided with Commissioner Bigge and ordered Macquarie to strike Redfern's name from the list of magistrates. In October 1821, William Redfern and Edward Eagar sailed with a petition, signed by 1 368

emancipated colonists and endorsed by Macquarie, to the King's Bench in London, pleading for the reinstating of their rights to hold both land and public office which had been granted to them by the governor. It was this issue and the different views about land grants and allocations that caused Macquarie to, again, feel that he could not govern in the best interests of the colony when London and the exclusionists opposed him constantly. His replacement as governor of NSW, Sir Thomas Brisbane, arrived in Sydney on 1st December 1821. Macquarie stayed in Sydney to see in the new governor, until 15th February 1822, when (in front of huge crowds, the harbour filled with decorated boats, and with a 19-gun salute) he sailed for England aboard the *Surry*, after 12 very fruitful but frustrating years in NSW, and in failing health.

Macquarie's achievements

Lachlan Macquarie's achievements as governor were immense, turning the colony that he found in "infantile imbecility" into one that was thriving when he left. His completion of roads, bridges and public buildings, his establishment of a hospital, schools, library and a stable currency are all concrete reminders of the "governor-builder". But, perhaps even more impressive were his moral and social influences on the colony: the banks for both rich and poor, his patronage of institutions to look after the destitute, his curbing of intemperance and his providing of opportunities for a new life for emancipated convicts in a more egalitarian society, and his opening up of new lands for a growing population with the means not only to feed itself but to trade for prosperity in its own right. His policy toward indigenous peoples was one of genuine conciliation, always paying respect to their elders, and effecting genuine peace between some warring groups. He felt a moral duty to compensate them for the attacks by escaped convicts and for being (as he put it) "driven by the progress of British industry from their ancient places of habitation". He was also the first governor to actively encourage the arts, including local "Australian" literature, and was the first to use the word "Australia", and recommend its use, in official government documents, on 21st December 1817. The British Admiralty used the name on its maps and charts from 1824 onwards.

Before leaving as governor, Macquarie took a 3-month tour of Van Diemen's Land, to inspect its extensive progress under his governorship and to recommend further action. He also toured south from Sydney, only a month before departing for Britain, visiting the Illawarra in January 1822, and leaving a written record of his tour [*Historical Records of Australia, vol.IX, p.713, "Journal of a Tour", held in Mitchell Library, Sydney. In the party, from Appin onwards, was Cornelius O'Brien, "the founder of Bulli", who managed a property called "Athlanlin" (now Yallah) for his uncle, and who, the previous year, had secured from landowners funds to build a road from Figtree to Appin*]. Descending a mountain which he knew that Charles Throsby had first descended in 1815, Macquarie named it Regent Mountain, and noted its vast quantity of cabbage tree palms and fern trees. Near the foot of the mountain, he had breakfast at a stream, naming it Throsby's Creek (but now known as Slacky Creek), then continued to the coast, crossing the entrance to Tom Thumb's Lagoon and to a Mr Allan's farm at Red Point where about 100 Aborigines welcomed him, some having walked from Jervis Bay to do so. The next day, 16th January, the party set out to explore the country to the south, visiting several farms on the way, before heading back towards Appin. The governor also noted here that at least 20 000 acres of land remained unallocated in the Illawarra - land which he had described in 1817 as "possessing Many

Advantages and Capabilities for the Grazier and Agriculturist”, and which he would now leave for his successor, Governor Brisbane, to allocate and develop.

Conclusion

Lachlan Macquarie served as Governor of NSW, for 12 years – far longer than any of his predecessors had managed to do. So, it is not surprising that the world outside of NSW saw many changes during his governorship. The wars between Britain and France finally came to an end in 1815 with the defeat of Napoleon; explorer Matthew Flinders was finally freed from his 6½ years of imprisonment by the French on Mauritius, and returned to England to send have his maps and accounts published; and the deaths of Sir Joseph Banks, Bennelong, Matthew Flinders, Arthur Phillip, William Paterson, Francis Grose, Richard Atkins and William Bligh all occurred during his time here. In NSW, Macquarie brought enlightenment to the conflict between Sydney’s indigenous peoples and Europeans, and to the convicts who had served their time and wanted to build a new life for themselves and their families. He steered Sydney from a tent town to its beginnings as a future city, re-aligning and naming its major roads, including George, Macquarie, Liverpool, Argyle, Elizabeth, Murray, Harrington and Collins Streets, as well as establishing five new regional towns and roads to them, and the first road across the Blue Mountains.

Most histories view Macquarie as a remarkable man – the governor-builder – who took NSW from a penal colony to a self-sufficient one renamed “Australia”. Some histories of Macquarie, however, written since the early 1970’s, have described Macquarie variously as “a terrorist”, a “colonial imperialist” and a “butcher”, largely because of the 1812 “Appin Massacre”. These, however, are less histories than they are politically-motivated examples of postmodernism that conveniently ignore primary sources and the historical evidence that is an inconvenient truth. Like Commissioner Bigge before them, these writers are conscious of serving other masters whose favour they must curry, even if it means misrepresenting the facts. Fortunately, Macquarie’s achievements and character are far bigger than this. Governor Lachlan Macquarie deserves to be remembered as he is represented on his statue’s inscription in Hyde Park:

“He was a perfect gentleman, a Christian and supreme legislator of the human heart”.

Soon after his departure from NSW, a new song was doing the rounds of the taverns and workshops of the colony, recognising his contribution to NSW and his officially establishing the name of the land as Australia:

Macquarie was the Prince of Men!
Australia’s pride and joy!
We ne’er shall see his like again.
Bring back the Old Viceroy!

Finally, Macquarie’s grave has an inscription that is more succinct, describing him simply as
“The Father of Australia”.

[Post script: Commissioner Bigge recognised the difficulties of governing NSW, but his unbalanced reports devalued Macquarie’s real achievements. When he arrived in London, he met with Lord Bathurst who praised his successes in agriculture, trade and the economy, but implied that Macquarie had failed to make NSW a

place of punishment to deter criminals. Macquarie delayed making a reply to Bigge's first report until the other two reports had been presented, eventually presenting Bathurst with a 43-page vindication of his policies in October 1823. With his wife's health and his own health failing, and beset by financial difficulties, Lachlan Macquarie died on 1st July 1824. Elizabeth was offered a pension of £400 a year, but refused to accept it until Parliament agreed to publish the governor's answer to Bigge's reports. She died in 1835, still defending her husband's reputation]. #

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