

A journalist, 'M.E.F.', visiting Campbelltown in 1893 reflected, '*The Australian, it is said, has no reverence for things ancient. Is it not because we have no ancient results of art to revere?*'<sup>1</sup> He referred to Campbelltown as a 'classical' town, and experienced a heritage epiphany after visiting St. Peter's Church and some old convict barracks where he felt a 'flickering' or yearning for the past, something that he thought Australia so 'deplorably' lacked. 'M.E.F' further commented, '*A few bits of hideous old architecture do more to keep the memory alive...than the mere talk of tradition mongers*'.

More than fifty years after this visit, the Campbelltown and Airds Historical Society (CAHS) was formed with a focus on preserving the heritage of the area. This was a significant defining moment considering the area was still recovering from World War II, there were two separate councils for Campbelltown and Ingleburn and the population of the area was a mere 6995<sup>2</sup>. The Society's motto was based on the family motto of Elizabeth Campbell, to 'be mindful'.<sup>3</sup> CAHS's focus was not only on researching Campbelltown's history, but to conscientiously protect heritage buildings and collect artefacts of significance. In fact, one of its first tasks was to recommend the preservation of a number of heritage properties in the district to Council (quite significant as this was decades before heritage legislation) and become the custodians of the 'Old Mill'.<sup>4</sup> CAHS had adopted a understanding of heritage similar to what UNESCO would later adopt as 'cultural heritage', '*the legacy of physical artefacts and intangible attributes of a group or society that are inherited from past generations, maintained in the present and bestowed for the benefit of future generations.*'<sup>5</sup> The continuing preservation of Campbelltown's heritage is even more relevant today as it was back in 1947. Primarily, the current population growth and subsequent housing developments have put a number of heritage properties under threat. Secondly, the area has a rich Dharawal heritage and this is an important component in the ongoing reconciliation movement. Thirdly, Campbelltown's heritage is relevant today as its history is a microcosm of Australian society and its history. The Campbelltown LGA is a vastly culturally and gender diverse area, the diversity reflected of the past may help to promote tolerance and harmony today.

The heritage of the Campbelltown LGA is experiencing pressures from increasing property developments and urban renewals making this a very relevant issue today. In terms of indigenous heritage, one such example is the urban renewal of Bradbury-Airds which put a number of scarred trees in jeopardy. The contemporary relevance of this heritage is evident in the number of community members getting involved to oppose such developments. The proposal by the Anglican Church to demolish St. James Anglican Church (1897) at Minto was

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<sup>1</sup>MEF, 'Campbelltown NSW', *The Gippsland Gippsland Farmers' Journal and Traralgon, Heyfield and Rosedale News*, Friday 7 July 1893, page 2, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/228125301?searchTerm=CAMPBELLTOWN%20CLASSICAL%20TOWN&searchLimits=>

<sup>2</sup> Campbelltown City Council, 'Significant Moments in Campbelltown's History', <https://www.campbelltown.nsw.gov.au/RAC/AboutCampbelltown/History/Campbelltowntimeline#1900s-3>

<sup>3</sup>Bayley, William A., *History of Campbelltown NSW*, Campbelltown City Council, Campbelltown, 1974 ed., 162, 'Be Mindful', *Camden News*, 7 February, 1952, p.1.

<sup>4</sup> 'Old Mill to Be Preserved', *Camden News*, 1 July, 1954, 4.

<sup>5</sup> UNESCO, 2017, 'Tangible Cultural Heritage', UNESCO Office in Cairo, <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/cairo/culture/tangible-cultural-heritage/>

a massive community backlash in 2016 and 2017. After lengthy community action the Council prohibited the demolition. There is also concern about how heritage buildings will be affected by surrounding developments. 'Campbellfield' (1816), the cottage of Dr William Redfern is one of the oldest buildings in the colony. The site is in a state of abandon and due to some non-heritage appropriate renovations the site did not have full heritage protection. It has now been sold and will be redeveloped into a business premises. A similar fate has fallen upon the old St. John's Church (1841) now bought by an aged care facility. Maryfields, the site of the Via Crucis from 1936 is one such case where its heritage-listed statues will be engulfed by a new business park. The emerging high rise apartment blocks in Campbelltown are also a concern for the heritage of the area with sites such as Kendall's Mill and CBC bank set to be dwarfed by modern monstrosities.

The heritage of the Dharawal peoples of the Campbelltown area is essential and relevant to the issues occurring in this community today and require preservation. The Appin Massacre of 1816 was a government sanctioned genocide of the local Dharawal people. Ordered by Governor Macquarie, approximately fourteen Dharawal people were killed and any remaining Dharawal fled the area. By 1830, as historian Carol Liston points out, the Dharawal had 'disintegrated'.<sup>6</sup> While the Campbelltown LGA has a large contemporary Aboriginal community, most of their pre-1788 ancestors were from outside of the Sydney area. Therefore, it is essential to preserve from the few Dharawal Elders such as Ivan Wellington, Frances Bodkin and Gavin Andrews, their oral traditions and culture to ensure this is not lost. This would also include the proper burial of the heads of victims from the Appin Massacre who were collected as scientific trophies and sent to Edinburgh. While the heads have been repatriated to Australia, these remains need to be returned to the Dharawal people.<sup>7</sup> In addition, the annual commemorations of the Appin Massacre which are well attended each year are evidence of how relevant this event is to community reconciliation. Another important heritage item which needs to be preserved is the Bull Cave in Kentlyn. The cave contains Dharawal contact paintings which date to the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century of a bull which must have been from the original Cowpastures flock. The great tragedy is that this painting has been attacked with graffiti by vandals and is now no longer accessible to the public.<sup>8</sup> Similarly the natural areas of Campbelltown, such as Dharawal National Park, are important to preserve today as they once sustained the Dharawal people

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<sup>6</sup>Carol Liston, *Campbelltown – A Bicentennial History*, Allen and Unwin, North Sydney, 1988, p.1

<sup>7</sup> SBS, 'Appin Massacre: Descendants of Dharawal People Renew Calls to Repatriate Remains' 18 April 2016. <http://www.sbs.com.au/nitv/the-point-with-stan-grant/article/2016/04/18/appin-massacre-descendants-dharawal-people-renew-calls-repatriate-remains>

Vera Bertola, 'Ancestors to Rest in Peace in Their Homeland of Appin' 2 February 2015, <http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/newslocal/macarthur/ancestors-to-rest-in-peace-in-their-homeland-of-appin/news-story/70c8ce93fc1928d41d63312821a001d4>

<sup>8</sup>Creative Spirits, 2016 *'Why Australia's Aboriginal Rock Art Will Disappear'*, Creative Spirits, <https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/arts/why-australias-aboriginal-rock-art-will-disappear#axzz4mj85ufd3>

and are connected closely to the Dreaming.<sup>9</sup> For example, the George's River was the life force for the Dharawal providing fresh water, foods such as fish and eels, and its eroded sandstone overhangs provided shelter and it stones tools for grinding and cutting. This is relevant for both indigenous and non-indigenous youth to understand and study. Sites of indigenous importance need to be preserved as only minimal archaeological investigation has occurred in the Campbelltown LGA.<sup>10</sup> The only way to move forward with reconciliation is to come to terms with the past.

Finally, Campbelltown's heritage is relevant today as it encapsulates all aspects of Australian society and is a microcosm of its history. To begin, Campbelltown has one of the oldest churches in the colony (St. Peter's), one of the oldest Catholic Church's on mainland Australia (Old St. John's) and has the oldest independent Catholic girls' school still functioning in Australia (St. Patrick's College). Campbelltown, like Australia, has an overt rural heritage. *The Farmer and Settler* publication in 1951 claimed Campbelltown was the oldest 'dairying' district in the Commonwealth.<sup>11</sup> The existence of silos and mills testify to the area's wheat growing heritage. After all, the 'father of Australian agriculture', James Ruse is buried in St. John's cemetery. Similarly, Campbelltown made an important contribution to Australia's wartime conflicts both at the Front and at home. Over 20 men from Campbelltown were casualties of the Boer War and both World War I and II had large number of casualties from the small town of Campbelltown. The Soldier Settlement Scheme was an important part of Campbelltown's development. In Vietnam, a Victoria Cross was awarded posthumously to Kevin 'Dasher' Wheatley of Campbelltown. The annual Anzac march is well attended each year testifying to how important this heritage means to the people of Campbelltown. In terms of multiculturalism, Campbelltown has a long heritage, for example, the Eckersley pioneers were French brothers Charles and Gustav Frere, there was the Prussian Czarinski of Wedderburn, the Polish Broinowski family, of whom Gracius Joseph Broinowski (1837-1913) was an artist of Australian birds.<sup>12</sup> There was also a Russian orthodox monastery built in Kentlyn 1963 and later a Buddhist temple at Leumeah and Hindu temples in Minto and several mosques in the area. In terms of gender equality, many young women could look up to Rose (Babe) Payten of Woodbine (the famous tennis player), Olive Schofield who was the first woman from Campbelltown to get a university degree or more contemporary women such as Lisa Wilkinson.

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<sup>9</sup> Liston, p. 1-2.

<sup>10</sup> Alan Williams, Matthew Kelly, Ngaire Richards, Department of Planning & Environment, [Greater Macarthur Aboriginal and Historic Cultural Heritage - Gap Analysis and Future Direction 7 October 2015](http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/~media/Files/DPE/Reports/greater-macarthur-investigation-area-aboriginal-and-historic-heritage-gap-analysis-2015-05.ashx), <http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/~media/Files/DPE/Reports/greater-macarthur-investigation-area-aboriginal-and-historic-heritage-gap-analysis-2015-05.ashx>

<sup>11</sup> 'Nations Oldest Dairy District Hold Successful Show - Judges Praise Quality Of Stock At Campbelltown', *The Farmer and Settler*, 6 April 1951, 4.

<sup>12</sup> Liston p.156

Each time I walk past the Georgian terraces on Queen Street or visit Glenalvon, I feel a sense of privilege – these buildings help me to envisage Campbelltown as the little rural hamlet it was – the undulating golden fields dotted with herds of dairy cows, the smoke of the old steam train, the grinding at Kendall’s Mill, the schoolchildren at Quondong and the townspeople in their starched Sunday best outfits visiting St. Peter’s or St. John’s. Essentially, Campbelltown’s heritage is relevant today as it is entwined in the fabric of the Campbelltown LGA. The best example of this is the Fisher’s Ghost Festival which resurrects this historical legend each year. It is inspiring to see the volunteers at Glenalvon or the Soldier Settlement Museum work hard to ensure the heritage of the area is alive and preserved. We are merely the stewards and custodians of this heritage and it is our natural duty to preserve this heritage for future Campbelltownians. Let us hope the next generation will ‘*be mindful*’ of this heritage with the same vigour as the founders in 1947 and current members of the Campbelltown and Airs Historical Society. After all, our material heritage is the silent overseer of our past and our messenger to the future.

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