

THE APPIN MASSACRE

A COLLECTION OF STORIES & HISTORICAL EVENTS

Our Need

"We need to have our sites in order to teach the kids, a picture's not the same, just talking about it's not the same. How are we going to teach the kids without our places?"

Aunty Edna Watson,
Darug elder and artist, 1999.

Our Hope

"But all is not lost! Despite this deep unevenness in the historical landscape, and in our ways of seeing heritage, the histories of places ARE recoverable. We can reconnect places with their pasts, conjure the lost landscapes, structures and peoples, tell true stories of the struggles over contested ground, of the strategies to control and subdue, of quiet subversion and outright rebellion, of evasions and accommodations, of landscapes changing beyond recognition."

Excerpt from Making
Early Sydney by
Grace Karskens,
2008.



the appin massacre and our memorial



THE APPIN MASSACRE OF 1816

During early British settlement, the land of the Macarthur region was shared between the Dharawal, Darug and Gundungurra people. This was their home, the place that they raised their children and the land of which they had felt a part through countless generations. However, within 25 years of the original discovery of the area by British settlers, the majority of local Aboriginal people were dead.

The start of British settlement locally can be traced back to 1795, when Governor John Hunter crossed the Nepean River at Camden and first glimpsed "The Cowpastures" the area began to open up to settlers after 1805, when the Macarthur family was given the Camden Park land grant. The first permanent settlement in the Campbelltown area (then the Airds district) and at Appin began in around 1809.

The process of Aboriginal people being forced off their traditional lands began as the number of local farms increased from 1809. The spread of disease, particularly smallpox, had already begun to ravage the local Aboriginal population. However, historian Carol Liston traces the start of low-level warfare between settlers and Aboriginal people to 1814, when a widespread drought in New South Wales forced more Aboriginal people into the Macarthur area in search of food. In May of that year, soldiers fired on a group of Aboriginals gathering corn in a field and a series of killings and counter-killings began.

In April 1816, Governor Lachlan Macquarie ordered the military to apprehend all Aboriginals in the southern districts and the Hawkesbury because of the increasing attacks on settlers. Any Aboriginals who resisted were to be shot and the bodies of the men hung from trees as an example to others. Any women and children killed were to be buried. A regiment was sent to the Macarthur area, to round up the local Aboriginals. After following a few rumoured sightings, they received word that many local Aboriginals were camping in Cataract George. The regiment attacked by night and, according to the regiment's own account, only two women and three children survived. The rest were shot or jumped to their deaths over the gorge's cliffs.

MASSACRE REMEMBERED

We might not have been there to witness the terror and confusion but on every year we remember those who were killed in the Appin Massacre. It is a blight on the area's history when the historical record tells us that 14 Aboriginal men, women and children were killed in the Appin area on April 17, 1816.

Some were shot by soldiers, others forced to their deaths over nearby cliff tops.

A special memorial service is held each year on the Sunday nearest to the actual massacre date (April 17) so that today's generations remember the massacre victims, acknowledge the descendants of the survivors, and reconcile the past with the present so that such horrible events can not occur again in the future.

For Gavin Andrews the Appin Massacre is not only a significant part of Australian history, but his family history as well.

Mr Andrews is a descendant of the Dharawal people who lived in Appin. The attack was under the command of Captain John Wallis of the Royal British Marines.

Captain Wallis was given orders to eliminate the nuisance to the south- west; in the Airds and Campbelltown area a squad of soldiers marched from Liverpool to Appin in April 16 and attacked the Dharawal people at nightfall.

Mr Andrews said those who weren't shot in the attack fled in terror and fell to their death.

MASSACRE ON THE FRONTIER

The start of European settlement of Appin and surrounding districts after 1810 led to conflict with local Aboriginal people. This increased in 1814 as Aboriginals began to eat the farmer's crops. The first violence broke out in May 1814 on the farms of Milehouse and Butcher at Appin. In a series of skirmishes over two days, an Aboriginal woman and three children were killed, and three Europeans died in retaliatory raids. These deaths created greater tension and in June 1814 the Jervis Bay Aboriginals assembled in the district while white settlers formed an armed guard to protect Andrew Hume's farm at Appin the attack instead came on William Broughton's farm where two servants were speared to death.

Further Aboriginal attacks resulting in deaths occurred in Bringelly in June 1814. It was generally believed that the violence was committed by Gundungurra people from the west rather than the local Dharawal people. Two years later the Gundungurra returned from the mountains in search of food. Four men were killed at Nepean and three at Mrs Macarthur's Camden property. Governor Macquarie ordered the military to round up all Aboriginals in the Hawkesbury and southern districts.

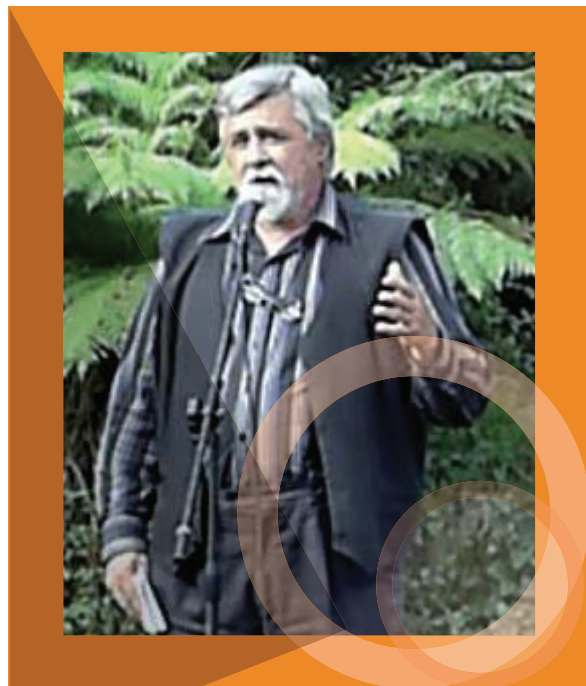
Captain James Wallis of the 46th Regiment was in command of the soldiers sent to Airds and Appin. For a month Wallis and his soldiers marched around the district between Glenfield and Appin, guided by Dharawal men Budbury and Bundle. Wallis later complained to the governor about the support for the Dharawal people by the local settlers which had frustrated his efforts to round them up. When Wallis reached Appin he found that several

Five children between the ages of four and 11 were taken captive and put in an institution to 'civilise' them", Mr Andrews said.

One of those children was a young boy named Naala, son of Bundall. Naala was taken captive and put in a school in Parramatta to be civilised. He soon escaped and returned to his traditional lands where he joined his uncle D'haramuoy deep within the Nattai Valley area.

Later on Naala married a south coast woman and had a daughter named Naali. As a young woman she became known as Ellen or Nellie. She died at the age of 103 in the early 1930s and is buried in the Camden area. "Naali is my great, great grandmother" Mr Andrews said.

Source: Gavin Andrews



Aboriginals were sheltering at Kennedy's farm, including two men whose families had previously been killed. Yellooming and Bitugally. Kennedy and Hamilton Hume argued that they would take personal responsibility for the men and persuaded Wallis and the soldiers to leave.

Wallis then travelled to William Redfern's property. Chasing rumoured sightings of Aboriginals there, only to find that there was no one at the property. He spent several days searching the George's River in Minto and Ingleburn before receiving word that seven outlawed Aboriginals were camped at Broughton's farm. He marched his soldiers through the night only to find a deserted campsite.

Hearing a child's cry and a barking dog in the bush Wallis lined up his soldiers to search for the fugitives. In the moonlight they could see figures jumping across the rocky landscape. Some of the Aboriginals were shot and others driven off the cliffs into a steep gorge. At least fourteen were killed and the only survivors were two women and three children. Among those killed were the mountain chief Conibigal, an old man called Balyin. A Dharawal man called the Dunell, along with several women and children. Heads of two of the Aboriginal men were removed and sent overseas. The skulls have recently been repatriated back to Australia. The event which occurred on the 17 April 1816 was to become to history as the Appin Massacre.

Source: Appin The Story of a Macquarie Town
by Anne Maree Whitaker.

REPATRIATION OF REMAINS

In the early hours of April 17, 1816, soldiers under orders from Governor Lachlan Macquarie found an Aboriginal camp above the Cataract River at Appin.

They drove inhabitants over the gorge, where they were shot or jumped. At least 14 men, women and children were killed.

The skulls of Kannabi Byugal and the two other men are in safekeeping at the National Museum of Australia in Canberra after being returned by the Edinburgh University's anatomy department in 1991 and 2000.

Kannabi Byugal's skull remained in Edinburgh for 175 years before being returned to Australia.

The Federal Government of Australia acknowledges the significance for Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander peoples that the return of ancestral remains back "to country" is the first step towards recognising the dignity of their ancestors.

A spokeswoman for the Ministry of Arts said the indigenous Repatriation Program allowed ancestors the restoration of their rightful place as Elders, mothers, fathers, grandmothers, grandfathers, uncles, aunts, brothers and sisters.

"It acknowledges the wrong done to them and allows the ancestors to finally rest in peace in their homelands," she said.

"It recognises the unbreakable bond, customary obligations and traditional practices between the living, the land and the dead."

Vera Bertola Macarthur Chronicle Campbelltown



The orders that preceded the Appin Massacre are recorded in Governor Macquarie's diary (10th April, 1816) which is kept at Sydney's Mitchell Library.

"I therefore, tho, very unwillingly felt myself compelled, from a paramount sense of public duty, to come to the painful resolution of chastising these hostile tribes, and to inflict terrible and exemplary punishments upon.

"I have this day ordered three separate military detachments to march into the interior and remote parts of the colony, for the purpose of punishing the hostile natives, by clearing the country of them entirely, and driving them across the mountains.

"In the event of the natives making the smallest show of resistance - or refusing to surrender when called upon so to do - the officers commanding the military parties have been authorised to fire on them to compel them to surrender; hanging up on trees the bodies of such natives as may be killed on such occasions, in order to strike the greater terror into the survivors."

By Anne-Maree Whitaker

For more information about the history of this tragic event or to get involved with any of the groups/persons mentioned in this publication please see contact list below.

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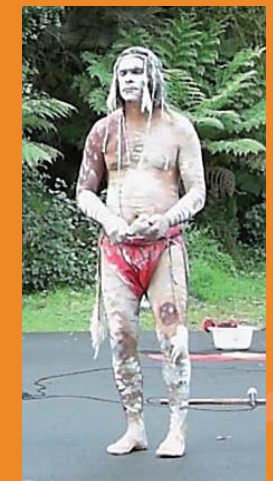
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Special thanks to the following for their input and assistance:

- Dharawal Descendents and Knowledge holders' Council.
- Campbelltown City Council
- Sydney Catchment Authority
- Cubbitch Barta Native Title Claimant Aboriginal Corporation

Disclaimer: The stories and statements expressed in this brochure are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views, position or opinion of Wollondilly Shire Council.



In Sydney's local places, there are small things, words, gestures and monuments signalling a sea change in attitudes and interest, minds and hearts. Appin Memorial site is one such place



We are
deeply sorry, we
will remember
them.



The Appin Massacre and
what it means to Dharawal
people and the Macarthur
Community Today and
beyond.

Gavin Andrews and Fran Bodkin,
Appin Massacre Descendants,
Dharawal Knowledge Holders:

“We have been involved in the memorial ceremony now for the since 2000, but prior to that we used to come down to the actual site of the attack every year on 17th April and scatter flowers around. With the involvement of Winga Myamly, we chose Cataract Dam for the memorial site, because it is close, safe and central to where the killings occurred.”

“Perhaps, one day, the truth of the massacres will be revealed and we will all be able to stand together and say ‘We understand.’” Fran Bodkin 13/3/2009



Winga Myamly,
Reconciliation Group

“Winga Myamly” means “to sit down and talk” in the “Wiradjuri” language. This is the name given to the Minto Reconciliation Group which brings together Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal People from the Macarthur Region. This group formed in Minto being the original place the soldiers passed through.

The main objective is to raise awareness of issues and promote partnerships for change.

We do this in a very laid-back way and meet over a shared lunch where children are welcome. We discuss events and issues of a local, State or Federal nature.

For those who are not Aboriginal, the group is a wonderful way to meet Aboriginal people and listen to their stories. The group officially formed in 1993 and are members of NSW Reconciliation Council.

The meetings began to happen monthly during which time friendships were formed and strong partnerships developed. The original hopes and goals for the group were to raise awareness in the community of injustices still occurring towards our Aboriginal population, these original hopes still form the basis for the group and their work.

Over the years a focal point for the group’s discussions has been acknowledging the local Aboriginal history of the area, from this the group began to think of how best to remember the Dharawal People that were killed in the Appin Massacre of 1816.

Two Memorial Plaques:

CATARACT DAM:

The massacre of Men, Women and Children of the Dharawal nation occurred near here on 17 April 1816. Fourteen men were counted on this day, but the real number may never be known. We acknowledge the impact this had and continues to have on the Aboriginal People of this land. We are deeply sorry, we will remember them. Winga Myamly Reconciliation group, sponsored by Wollondilly Council.

In acknowledgment of other massacres Wollondilly Aboriginal Advisor y Committee (WAAC), laid a plaque at Razorback.

“The Wollondilly Community in the Spirit of peace and reconciliation honours both black and white, whose lives were taken throughout the land following Aboriginal resistance to colonisation by Britain from 1788.”



After lengthy discussions and consultations with Dharawal descendants, local Land Councils, Janagalee Elders, Wollondilly Shire Council and Campbelltown City Council as well as the wider Aboriginal Community it was decided that a site near Cataract Dam would be best suited for a place of memorial. The aims of the Appin Massacre Memorial Ceremony were:

- To pay respect and acknowledge the Dharawal People, the traditional owners of the land around us.
- To bring about a greater awareness in the wider community of what happened in 1816.
- To create an opportunity for Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal People to come together and to get to know one another better- Reconciliation.

However, the actual site of the massacre is on land along the Cataract River, downstream from the Cataract Dam.

Wollondilly Shire Council was able to offer a small grant under a community project scheme which was used to produce the plaque that stands at Cataract Dam today.

Through negotiations between Wollondilly Shire Council, Wollondilly Aboriginal Advisory Committee and the then Sydney Catchment Authority, an agreement was struck to place a memorial plaque commemorating the Dharawal people who died this land.

The Wollondilly Aboriginal Advisory Committee, Wollondilly Shire Council and the greater community acknowledge and appreciate the full support of the Sydney Catchment Authority in providing a safe and appropriate place for the memorial plaque.



A bipartisan apology is eagerly anticipated by the Dharawal people, to acknowledge their ancestral Elders who were so brutally murdered at Appin, in the early colonisation of Australia. An apology will help to open the way to listening to Aboriginal people, developing respect and meaningful relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians. Acknowledging what happened, through an apology, is essential to reconciliation.

Ally Dench
Executive Director
Wollondilly Shire Council



Uncle Ivan Wellington is a member of the Winga Myamly Reconciliation Group and has been involved with the Memorial Ceremony since the beginning and has welcomed everyone each year to the gathering with his traditional Smoking Ceremony and is the Master of ceremony on the day. Uncle Ivan Wellington has a blood relationship with Gavin Andrews through their ancestry from BUNDLE a Dharawal man (c.1781 - c.1844), a colourful and important figure among the Aborigines of the Dharawal area who was originally referred to as ‘Young Bundle.’



Below - Close up of the Cataract Plaque in 2009

The Massacre of men, women and children of the Dharawal Nation occurred near here on 17th April, 1816. Fourteen were counted this day, but the real number will never be known. We acknowledge the impact this had and continues to have on the Aboriginal people of this land.

**We are deeply sorry.
We will remember them.**

Winga Myamly Reconciliation Group
Sponsored by Wollondilly Council.

The Appin Massacre

This very tragic event has been lost from our teachings for far too long. It is a day in our history that changed the lives of entire communities, especially the Dharawal community.

The Dharawal Aboriginal people were the original inhabitants of the Appin area. By July 1813, Europeans began to settle across the Dharawal land. The event coincided with a time when it is believed many other Aboriginal communities moved onto the land due to drought, custom or displacement—that apparently occurred every 20 years or so. The land around what we now call Macarthur was fertile, with abundant resources. To the Europeans, this area was known as the Cowpastures. The availability of land and food for the Dharawal people was under considerable pressure.

Governing the settlement of the area was Governor Macquarie, who had endeavoured to honour his instructions from the British Government to ensure that British settlers attempted to live “in amity and kindness” with the indigenous population. Between 1814 and 1816 relations between the Dharawal people and the settlers became tense. In May 1814 three members of the British military fired upon Aborigines at two farms, which resulted in the death of one Aboriginal boy. This caused reprisals by the Aboriginal people, which in turn resulted in further violence. The hostilities escalated over the next two years until March 1816, when a group of Aborigines attacked the settlers, killing some and destroying property.

As a consequence, Governor Macquarie ordered that “terrible and exemplary punishments” be served on the Aboriginal people in the area. He ordered three military detachments of the 46th Regiment, under the command of Captain Shaw, Captain Wallis and Lieutenant Dawe, to be dispatched to Windsor, Liverpool and the Cowpastures to deal with the Aboriginal community by “punishing and clearing the country of them entirely and driving them across the mountains.” Captain Wallis was assigned to the Airds and Appin areas known as the Cowpastures. Early one morning Captain Wallis and his men came upon the Dharawal men’s camp at Appin. They attacked the men, killing all. While Captain Wallis returned to Sydney, civilians remained and continued to hunt down the Dharawal people.

They found the camp where families were staying and shot or trampled them to death with their horses and then drove the remainder of the Dharawal people over the cliffs at Broughton Pass on 17 April 1816.

Phil Costa

“I congratulate the Winga Myamly Reconciliation Group on organising the Appin Massacre Memorial Ceremony annually to commemorate the lives, the cultural link and the resilience of the Dharawal people.” – The Hon. P. Costa, MP for Wollondilly, NSW State Parliament 14/5/08.

Glenda Chalker, Dharawal
Descendant:

Glenda Chalker, a descendant of Giribunger who belongs to the Cubbitch Barta Clan, known locally as the Cow Pastures Tribe, tells that along with the Gundungurra People, the Cubbitch Barta where victims of the massacre of 1816. Glenda Chalker’s descendants who survived the Appin Massacre still live in the Macarthur Region and beyond today.

The Cubbitch-barta Native Title Claimants Aboriginal Corporation was formed in August 1998 and have appeared in the Federal Court to prove their ancestry and claim back some of what was once theirs.

The chairwoman of the Cubbitch-Barta Native Title Claimant Aboriginal Corporation, Glenda Chalker, says children are capable of learning about the gruesome event.

“I think kids need to know the truth, I mean, even I was taught that Captain Cook discovered Australia and Aboriginal people were here a long time before Captain Cook came to Australia,” she said.

“So it’s all about the truth now about Aboriginal history in Australia and I think that might lead to a better understanding of Aboriginal people in the community today.”

Glenda Chalker

Reconciliation
artwork by
Wollondilly
students



Above, Cataract Dam as it is today.