

The Edith and Joy London Foundation: A Concise History

by Richard E. Barwick (1998)

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The Property

This block of land lies 46 road kilometres north of Batemans Bay, immediately north of the village of Kioloa in the Shire of Shoalhaven, N.S.W.

Its eastern boundary follows the coast, commencing 30 meters above mean high water mark whilst the north and south boundaries run parallel inland, to form a rectangle 1.4km from north to south and about 2.5km from east to west. The boundary also encloses a narrow strip of land extending out along Nundera Point to the north of Shell Beach.

Immediately to the east of the beach and between Murramarang Road, lies a densely vegetated area, mainly dunes with coastal heath and scrub. Near the southern boundary there is a small lagoon, Butler's Lagoon, behind the sand dunes.

Behind the coastal sand dunes, to the west of the road are about 85 hectares of flatter land, which together with lowest slopes of the hills have been cleared for grazing and agriculture.

The forested land, occupying about 200 hectares, rises from the flats to about 120 metres above sea level at the western boundary which joins the Kioloa State Forest.

The property (portion 1. Parish of Kioloa, County of St Vincent) has good views of Belowla Island just off the eastern boundary which is listed in the Register of the National Estate as a Nature Reserve (The Australian Heritage Commission 1981: 2/162-3).

Aboriginal Settlement

The value of the prehistoric resources on the Edith and Joy London Foundation were recognized from its inception and in general the property has been managed with sympathy to these cultural resources.

The Foundation lies close to a major south coast archaeological site, Murramarang Point, which was subject to an initial archaeological investigation in 1967–68 by Dr Ron Lampert. He also excavated a shelter site at nearby Lake Burrill at that time. Three oldest habitat levels at Lake Burrill gave radiocarbon dates of over 20,000 years (Lampert, 1971). The local area has been the subject of a number of investigations by a number of archaeologists including PhD and honours students of several universities (see Kioloa theses and papers). In 1982 Dr Marjorie Sullivan completed a PhD thesis entitled "Aboriginal Shell Middens in the Coastal Landscape of New South Wales".

Immediate local archaeological survey results have been summarized by Sarah Titchen (1986). The Nundera Point Midden has been an object of interest since 1975, (Appendix 2, Table 2 lists the sequence of research, stabilization and work at Nundera Point.)

In November 1978 an exposed human skeleton at Nundera Point was reported to the Management Committee. This find was covered with sand and reported to the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS). An extensive delay of many weeks on their part resulted in the independent report to the local police by an overseas visitor to the Foundation. The local police excavated the skeleton, which was duly handed over to NSW NPWS.

In 1979 an eroding dingo skeleton was excavated by Brown and Gollan (ANU). This was eventually reported as the oldest dingo then recovered in Australia, at 6000 years of age. In March 1981 the skeleton of a young adult male was examined by NPWS officers and returned to the local Aboriginal community for reburial at the Jerringa cemetery.

The wide distribution of Aboriginal traces such as shell middens and widely distributed silcrete flakes on the forest tracks suggest that any disturbed ground on the Foundation is likely to disclose evidence of Aboriginal occupation. The University is well served with advice from the Department of Prehistory and Archaeology and the role that the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service plays in the conservation and preservation of archaeological sites.

The Nundera Point blow out, which has resulted in exposure of Aboriginal burials, has been subjected to continuing efforts at stabilization until the present day. Recent efforts have met with some success and continued work is required in conjunction with the NSW NPWS.

European Exploration

Captain Cook approached the Australian coast during his first voyage in the 'Endeavour'. He noted Brush Island in his journal on 21 April 1770, two days after his landfall on the east coast of Australia on Sunday the 22nd April 1770 near Point Upright (which he named) and observed the smoke of fires. In the evening of the 23 April he took a looping course north of Nundera Point probably adjacent to Racecourse Beach and south of Bullpup Beach, steering along the beach in a gentle southwest breeze. He observed several people on the sea beach who 'appear'd to be of a very dark or black colour but whether this was the real colour of their skins or the C[lo]thes they might have on I know not.'

This is the first observation made by Cook of the Aboriginal of Australia. Almost certainly they were the inhabitants of Murramarang near Brush Island. Cook also named Mount Dromedary and Pigeon House during this part of his voyage before he sailed north to land at Botany Bay.

The surveyor Thomas Florance reached Murramarang by 31 May 1828, he wrote across his sketch map of the area "very open excellent land". In December 1829, Robert Hoddle surveyed the land later granted to the first two settlers at Murramarang, Sydney Stephen and William Turner Morris who was a farmer from the Romney Marshes. Stephen's original grant was 2560 acres, and Morris' was 1820 acres.

European Settlement

The land of The Edith and Joy London Foundation an area of 862 acres (348 hectare) was apparently originally bought by William Carr in 1842, who was a solicitor with the firm Carr, Rodgers and Owen of Darlinghurst. Previously, in May 1838, Carr had purchased the Murramarang and Willinga blocks to the north, from Sydney Stephen.

Carr held these blocks until his death in 1854. Little is known of Carr, indeed he may have never lived at Murramarang. Edward Green managed the property for him, and Green may have built or finished the building of Murramarang House on the Murramarang block (Hamon 1964).

Following the death of Carr, the 5340 acre (2163ha) property was purchased by William Yates and John Evans I for £5874. Evans bought out Yates in 1857. The block of land now comprising The Edith and Joy London Foundation remained in the Evans family until 1906 when a settlement amongst the heirs resulted in the 860 acre block being sold to Mrs McKenzie in 1910 by 'the trustees for the descendants of John Evans I'. (A much fuller account of the history of the land holdings in the area is given in Hamon, 1994).

Saw milling in this region of the south coast had started in the 1880s and 1890s. A sawmill at Redhead (now called Bendalong) owned by Goodlet and Smith a Sydney firm, was moved to Kioloa in about 1884. A Scot, William Pearson was the original manager and he continued to operate the mill when it was set up on O'Hara Head, near the boat ramp at the south end of the Kioloa Beach. The mill hands and their families lived on the hillsides close to the mill.

The first mill may have been slightly further inland than the later Kioloa mill. The original mill ceased operation in 1893 and milling was not resumed at Kioloa until 1912, when a new mill was built by Hepburn McKenzie.

This mill was

'... described at the time as the largest saw mill in the southern hemisphere, and was capable of cutting up to 100,000 super feet of timber each week. It was destroyed by fire about 1916, but re-built soon after and operated until the buildings were destroyed by another fire about 1926. Operation during this period was not full-time. The mill closed due to log shortage in 1918, and for unspecified reasons during 1916 and 1922. The mill was closed at the time of the 1926 fire. (Hamon 1994, p38)

In the 1920's the Kioloa mill employed 72 men: mill hands, log fallers, bullockies, teamsters, blacksmiths, line and truck maintenance men. There were 19 bullock teams and 42 horses, and the mill cut about 5000 super feet (11.6 cubic meters) of timber a day. (Hamon 1994, p 34)

The Walker family came to Kioloa in 1910, and had a significant influence in the district. William Walker was a cousin of Hepburn McKenzie - who bought the 860 acre Kioloa property from William Evans for £3100, in the name of his wife 'Helen Mary McKenzie' (Hamon, 1994).

Hepburn McKenzie had:

... asked William Walker to run the property for him, and to be 'bush manager' for the new mill, that is to supervise the cutting and hauling of the timber.

William and Maud (1878-1967), nee Brown) Walker and their two eldest children Lillian and Rowland moved down to Kioloa in 1910. The house being built for them at the top of what was later called 'The Avenue' was not ready, so they stayed about three months with the Evans's at Murramarang House after first rejecting an old and bug-ridden hut near the mill site - the only building left over from the days of the Goodlet and Smith mill. . . .

... When they moved into their own home Mrs Walker found the surrounding bush oppressive, so trees were cleared from a strip running east from the house, giving a view of the sea over the sand hills. About six houses were built soon afterwards along one side of the strip and facing south. These

housed some of the employees for the new mill, and the area became known as "The Avenue". (Hamon 1994, p55)

The houses down The Avenue were used to house senior mill hands such as the foremen saw-bench hands and boss-loggers (Joy London - pers comm.) Recently an historical study of South Coast logging, with particular emphasis on the Bawley-Kioloa area has been carried out by Mr. Michael M. Tracey of the Department of Prehistory and Archaeology of the ANU.

The Moore Family

The Moore Family purchased the Kioloa property from William Walker in 1929 (presumably, he had inherited it from his aunt, Helen Mary McKenzie - known to the Walker family as 'Auntie Nellie').[1]

Joy London first came to Australia in 1922 when she was 10 years old, she was born in Croydon, Surrey. Her father had recently died on the Gold Coast of West Africa and her mother and grandmother decided to emigrate to New Zealand taking her older brother, her cousin and herself. They were stranded in Sydney by a shipping strike and decided to stay in Australia. The family stayed in Sydney for a couple of years. Miss London's brother Charles Humbert Moore, came out to join them from Southern Rhodesia.

When her grandfather Edward James Moore, who was still in England, fell ill in 1925 the whole family decided to return to England. They stayed for about three years and when Edward Moore had regained his health the family decided to return to Australia, in search of a healthier climate. They went first to Sydney and Edith London then toured the coast for a while and spent time in Braidwood. After a chance hearing of the Kioloa property from a bank, Edith inspected the property, 'fell in love with the place and bought it'.

Shortly after taking over the property the family built a road out to the main road, 12 miles away, which followed old bullock tracks used in the past for extracting logs from the forest. The road was call 'Danger Board Road' after a signboard which warned of the of the danger of the timber trolleys which had used the old trolley lines. Joy and her uncle assisted by a bullock team and a few neighbours worked every day for four months building the new road which probably followed an older track. Despite the new road, the trip to Termeil was still very difficult as it involved a long climb up Mt Agony. In 1932 the local residents donated money to open up another route and build a bridge over the northern boundary creek.[2] This bridge was not replaced until 1971 when the present concrete bridge was built.

The other big task undertaken by the family was the enlargement of the house. Humbert Moore pulled up some of the old wooden trolley tracks and used them to enlarge the house. The land was further cleared and trees ring-barked to make room for cattle and horses. Indeed, photographs from this period, taken near the old tennis court site show the standing skeletons of many dead trees.

Originally there were at least eight cottages along The Avenue. Two of these were said to be prefabricated cottages made in Canada.[3] One of these cottages met its end when as Joy London recounted:[4]

The grocer left his truck at the top cottage while he delivered his goods to the house. He turned round and there was his truck bucking off down the hill. It hit one of the cottages right in the front, and demolished one room and went into the second. We had to dismantle the whole thing. I can see the grocer now , chasing the damn thing down the hill trying to stop it, . . .

The cottage demolished once occupied the gap lying west of the Collins house near but closer to the road than the present laboratory. In early photographs of the Avenue the roof of this building can be seen, it was much larger, T-shaped with two gables at right angles and was of a design distinct from the surviving cottages. The second of the Canadian prefabricated cottages, reportedly, became heavily infested with termites and fell down of its own accord. The schoolhouse now occupies the space left by this cottage.[5]

Charles Humbert Moore ('Hum') was a car fanatic and had run a garage at Coulsdon, Kent. About 1911 he had built a 'car' which was upholstered by his younger sister 'Bobby'. His mechanical interests seem to have persisted most of his life and he was responsible for the farming of Kioloa for many years and the installation and maintenance of the generator plant. He was assisted at times by the Evans brothers, Windsor and Neil. Neil Evans became the manager of the property after Hum Moore died in 1966.

The Collins family lived on the property and Reg and Innes Collins found employment fencing on the property and in the district. The Collins family originally came to manage Frances Guy's Willinga property in 1919 and stayed there until 1931 they then moved to occupy one of the cottages on the Avenue. Innes Collins still lives there. His brother Reg Collins died in 1997. Apart from a short period of six weeks, spent in Queensland, Reg and Innes Collins have lived in the district all their lives.

The Kioloa Post Office was at the homestead from 1910 until its closure in 1980. It was first manned by the Walker family. William Walker ran the office and a small store until 1929 when Miss 'Bobby' Moore, Joy London's aunt took over as post mistress. She ran the post office until 1970 when Joy London became postmistress.

The Post Office was very busy in those days as there was a 17-subscriber manual exchange through which all local calls passed. 'The phone used to ring night time, day time, anytime. We never kept to set hours - if it rang we answered it,' Miss London said.[6]

The exchange went automatic in about 1974 but mail and other services continued until 1980. Mail was delivered to Kioloa Post Office on horseback until 1949, regularly on Monday, Wednesday and Friday except during World War II when it was only twice a week.

The Edith & Joy London Foundation

After lengthy negotiations, conducted principally by Mr Ross Hohnen, then Secretary of the University, the 348 hectare property was formally handed over to The Australian National University on March 1 1975. A short agreement between Miss Joy London and the University set out the conditions of the gift, stressing that the property "was to be used primarily for teaching and research in the field sciences". In accepting the gift and naming the property in honour of Miss London and her mother, Edith London, the University agreed to preserve the land in its entirety in its natural and present state as far as is possible "consistent with the purposes for which it was given".



Attendees at the official handover, March 1 1975. A management committee was set up by the Council of the Australian National University to manage all aspects of the property. Miss London continued to live on the property and, with her farm manager, Neil Evans, took responsibility for the farming of the property. Miss London continued to hold the timber and honey rights which only reverted to the University on her death in July, 1995.

At the time of hand-over many of the cottages were in a very poor condition. An assessment of the structures showed that the damage caused by time, salt and white ants extended to the internal frames of cottages 2, 4, 5 and 6. There were insufficient funds at that time to replace these buildings and it was felt that they could be brought up to a useable condition with some effort and provide accommodation for students for a few years before their condition became critical. Those responsible at that time believed that the buildings were unlikely to survive for more than five to ten years despite these efforts.

Regular maintenance and pest control treatment since 1975 have kept the cottages in use for much longer than expected. A comprehensive building inspection in 1994 by the Senior Projects Officer of the Buildings and Grounds Division, Mr Bulley, advised that 'Outwardly they (the buildings) appeared

to be in a reasonable state of repair. A detailed audit revealed structural and cladding problems that were not obvious at the first casual examination. This was particularly evident in the accommodation cottages; Groper, Peter's, Frankels, Walshs and Collins.

The NSW Mining Act

At the time the University received the property a post on the north east corner of the beach, adjacent to the mouth of the creek draining Prosser's Gully still carried a mining claim notice.

As part of the development program, the fore dunes and the car park were fenced off to protect the beach area from vehicles in 1976. The fore dune was being continuously mined by local residents for building sand since they could easily drive to the fore dune across the new car park. Local pressure was being exerted on the University to keep the old public road open (particularly by the then secretary of the local progress association!).

This road was probably part of the original track to Kioloa which traversed the dunes and crossed the estuary and lagoon mouths from Meroo south. The old road bed passed through the present beach car park and onto the fore dune bounding the eastern side of the car park. The committee found that the road had been moved inland a number of times across the years but the old road bed had not been re-zoned to the property as promised by the shire so technically it was still a public road.

It was suspected that the pressure was being exerted to keep access open for future sand mining. With research considerations in mind the Management Committee decided to seek an exemption from the New South Wales Mining Act. Support was given by the University of Sydney and the University of New South Wales.

The exemption was sought and gained without too much fuss on 9 February 1977. This exemption gives the Foundation protection from mining but carries the restriction that we are unable to remove substantial quantities of building sands or other material from the property. There is an old quarry on the western border of the Foundation at the top of London's Cutting, which was used for road-metal extraction many, many years ago.

The Public Car Park and Northern Boundary Access to the Beach

In 1975 the Shoalhaven Shire indicated that it might resume about eleven acres of land adjacent to the foreshore to serve as a public car park and give public access to the beach. A somewhat more limited counter-proposal was made to the Shire by The University which would not involve great expense to the Shire.

As the result of the negotiations, which took several years to complete, the University eventually donated to the Shoalhaven Shire two portions of land: the area of approximately one and a half acres which presently comprises the car park on the beach side of Murramarang Rd. Its south entrance, c.a. 250m north of The Avenue entrance, is the old access track used by locals to mine sand; and a 4m-wide walkway on the northern boundary of the Foundation extending from Murramarang Rd. to Racecourse Beach just north of Shell Point Creek. This walkway, although fenced off by the Foundation, remained unopened until late 1997. After some negotiations between the Shire and the proprietor of the Racecourse Beach Camping Ground the walkway has been opened to public access and some minor associated works such as small bridges completed by the Shire.

A condition of the agreement precluded any major buildings from the car park and placed height limits on any minor structure such as a toilet-block.

Transferring public land is not an easy process and it greatly added to secretary Colin McGregor's problems. The papers had to be signed by the Governor General before the transfer was completed.

Water Supply

Early in the history of the Foundation it was apparent that one of the main management problems was the provision of a reliable water supply for the high numbers of short term residents. Mr E. Simmonds (then University Engineer) designed the basic water supply system and established the policy which has served the Foundation well, even during drought periods. The modifications to pre-1975 buildings dictated by water supply needs have consisted of renewal of existing galvanized iron roofs, replacement of galvanized iron guttering with plastic guttering, additions of new plastic drain pipes and replacement of decaying galvanized iron tanks with larger tanks.

Almost every building, new and old, has new or replacement water tanks added nearby. These have usually been 5000 gallon tanks, in concrete or plastic. The individual tanks on the building are all connected to plastic pipes linking these tanks to one of two major tanks - either the 20,000 gallon main header tank, adjacent the machinery shed or the 20,000 gallon main bottom tank at the of the system near the fireshed. Water from the tanks below the homestead can be individually drained into the main bottom tank and then pumped up to the header tank at the machinery shed. Total drinking water storage is approximately 100,000 gallons.

More recently, some of the ablution and toilet facilities have been separately supplied with non-potable water drawn from the Spring Dam. The Spring Dam when full contains about 1,250,000 litres but it is currently heavily affected by the current severe drought. This dam was greatly enlarged in the mid 1980's when it was re-excavated, a substantial dam wall constructed with a spillway at the northern end. A moderately reliable spring augments this dam which has a modest uphill catchment. The dam supplies cattle troughs in the lower paddocks.

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Appendix I to the thesis, of approximately 120 pages, lists aboriginal and historical sites on the Foundation known in 1986. but this list is known not to be complete. Appendix 2 Lists the buildings on the site at the time the thesis was written.

A more extensive list of theses and documents relating to the foundation can be found at Theses and Reports.

Appendix 1

Captain Cook's Journal of the Voyage of the Endeavour

(Sunday April 22nd to Tuesday April 24th,1770)

In the PM had a gentle breeze at SBW with which we steered a long shore NBE and NNE at the distance of about 3 Leagues, saw the smoke of a fire in several places near the Sea beach. At 5 o'clock abreast of a Point of land which on account of its perpendicular cliffs I call'd Point Upright (Latde 35deg.35') it bore from us due west distant 2 Leagues and in this situation had 31 fm water a sandy bottom. At 6 o'clock falling little wind we hauld off ENE, at this time the Northermost land in sight bore NNE E. At Midnight being in 70 fathom water we brought too until 4AM at which time we made sail in for the land and at day light found ourselves nearly in the same place we were at 5 o'clock in the evening, by which it was apparent we had been drove about three Leagues to the Southward by a Tide or Current in the night, after this we steerd along shore NNE having a gentle breeze at SW and were so near the Shore as to distinguish several people upon the Sea beach.

They appear'd to be of a very dark or black Colour but whether this was the real colour of their skins or the C[lo]thes they might have on I know not. At Noon we were by observation in the Latitude of 35deg.27' and Longde 209deg.23'. Cape Dromedary bore 28deg. West dist 19 Leagues. A remarkable peaked hill laying inland the top of which look'd like a Pigeon house and occasioned my giving it that name, bore NW distt 2 or 3 Leagues.

Variation of the Compass 9deg.50'E. When we first discover'd this Island in the morning I was in hopes from its appearance that we should have found shelter for the Ship behind it but when we came to approach it near I did not think that there was even security for a boat to land, but this I believe I should have attempted had not the wind come on shore, after which I did not think it safe to send a boat from the ship as we had a large hollow sea from ye SE rowling in upon the land which beat at every w[h]ere very high upon the Shore and this we have had ever since we came upon the Coast. The land near the Sea coast still continues of a moderate height forming alternately rocky points and Sandy beaches, but inland between Mount Dromedary and the Pigeon house are several high Mountains, two only of which we saw but what were covered with trees and these lay inland behind the Pigeon house are remarkably flat atop with steep rocky cliffs all round them as far as we could see. The trees in this Country hath all the appearance of being stout and lofty. For these two days past the observe'd Latitude has been given by the Log which can be owing to nothing but a Curre[n]t setting to the Southward.

MONDAY 23rd. In the PM had a gentle breeze at East which in the night Veer'd to NE and North. At past 4PM being [a]bout 5 Miles from the land we tackd and stood off SE and East until 4 AM at which time tackd and stood in, being than about 9 or 10 Leagues from the land, At 8 o'clock it fell little wind and soon after Calm. At Noon we were by observation in the Latitude of 35deg.38' and about Six Leagues from the land, Mount Dromedary bearing S 37deg. west distt 17 Leagues and the Pigeon house N 40deg. west, in this situation had 74 fathom water.

TUESDAY 24th. In the PM had variable Light airs and calms until 6 o'clock at which time a breeze sprung up at NBW. At this time we had 70 fathom water being about 4 or 5 Leagues from the land, the Pigeon house bearing N 40deg.2 West, Mount Dromedary s 30deg. West and the northermost land

in sight N 19deg. East. Stood to the NE until noon having a gentle breeze at NW at which time we tack'd and stood to the westward being then by observ Latde of 35deg.10' and Longde 208deg.51' W. A point of land which I named Cape St George we having discover'd it on that Saints day, bore West distant 19 Miles and the Pigeon house S 35deg.19' West, the Latitude and longitude of which I found to be 35deg.19' S and 209deg.42' West. In the morning we found the Variation to be by the Ampde 7deg.50' East and by several Azimuths 7deg.54' East.