

OLD ILLAWARRA HOUSES: "NEWTON", KEMBLA GRANGE.

This house was built in 1845 for David Williamson Irving, youngest son of John Irving, of Edinburgh, who was Writer to the Signet and a schoolboy friend of Sir Walter Scott. David was the second son to come to Australia.

John, the eldest, came first. After six years as a midshipman he left the Navy to obtain experience on a sheep run, went into partnership with David Waugh at Goulburn. He afterwards selected a run at Delegate. However, in the depression of 1842 he rejoined the Navy and was appointed to H.M.S. Favourite in Sydney. In 1845 as Lieutenant he accompanied Sir John Franklin on his expedition to find the North West Passage and the North Pole, and along with the rest of the expedition perished within the Arctic Circle. More than twenty years later the remains of the expedition were found and his body identified. In 1881 his bones were buried in Edinburgh.

David, his younger brother, on arrival in Sydney was employed as Agent to William Howe Esq., of "Glenlee", Campbelltown, and within a year he had married Jane Howe. He rented and stocked land at Terrara, on the lower Shoalhaven, from 1840-45, when he moved to Sutton Forest, but almost immediately bought land in the Illawarra area and called it Newton, after his uncle Lord Newton. On it he built the house, which still stands, and is at present owned by Dr. Maude. It came about this way. He received a letter from his father suggesting that, as John wanted to realise on his property before he sailed with Sir John Franklin, and he, John Irving the father, wished to set David up with a home and farm, Lieutenant John's property be realised on in Australia and the money used, up to £1,200, to buy a place for David while his father would pay John £1,200 before he went away.

The house, which still stains its original appearance, is built of brick, cement rendered with inside woodwork of cedar and slate roof, now replaced with tiles.

The Irving family lived in the house until the 1860s. David Irving accepted an appointment as Police Magistrate at Forbes in 1862. He had no difficulty letting the farm, but selling or letting the house was not easy. His wife wrote to him at Forbes on July 26th, 1863, that the house was still not disposed of, but that she hoped to be able to send him some news in a few months time.

From this time on the house had many different people in it until the present owner, Dr. Maude, bought it in 1947. He and his wife have restored the house and, while modernising the kitchen and bathrooms, have endeavoured not to alter its character. It is indeed one of the most beautiful of our old homes in this area. — M. M. EVANS.