offered considerable opportunities for corruption, as it required the collection of rents in the market place. Gibbons never seemed to make money "on the side," just doing his job honestly.

When Governor Macquarie came he selected Gibbons as one of only twenty to be allowed liquor licences in Sydney, as part of the clean-up of morals in the colony. The loss of an infant and possibly homesickness took the Gibbons family back to England for a time, but the return of Matthew junior and the romance of Esther, the second daughter, brought them back in 1821.

Esther married Thomas Smith and settled in Hobart; Matthew Junior married Charlotte Hutchinson and became a cooper in Sydney. Matthew senior had to start a new life and find a job. Old friends got him back into the civil service as a storekeeper to the Civil Engineer, in which position he remained until 1832. While he gave loyal service, he saw his two senior officers, Dumaresq and Wilson, involved in controversy resulting in their departure; Wilson duped Gibbons of money.

Gibbons' abiding worry was security for his family, and he desperately wanted a good grant of land for each of them. He particularly wanted Wattamolla because of its natural harbour, into which he sometimes took his boat; but he was given "Little Bullie," which he renamed Stanwell Park, to the south. He was not greatly impressed and tried to lease the land back to Wattamolla, but could not afford it. So he was left with a beautiful valley—the grant included Coalcliff as well—but was unable to use it, so inaccessible was it.

Gibbons even had to fight for Stanwell Park, promised to him in 1824 but not finally granted to him until 1833. By that time he had two more mouths to feed, the children of his son Matthew, who died in 1832. William and Jesse put more strain on his resources, strains which followed him to his grave in 1835. But he was to leave good property in Kent Street, on the Nepean, and at Stanwell Park.

At his death Gibbons was seventy, a good age for those days. Margaret, his wife, survived him another five years. She left Stanwell Park to her daughter Esther Smith, whose husband Thomas met Sir Thomas Mitchell on his last exploring expedition towards Port Essington and subsequently sold him Stanwell Park.

Matthew John Gibbons was a necessary pillar of the early colony, whose penal character made such men as him all the more valuable to maintain some order and honesty. Little wonder that he died a respected member of the community. —MICHAEL ADAMS.


SOME NOTES ON OLD DAPTO
(By Mrs. Eileen IRWIN, nee MORAN)

I have heard at times that in early days the Main Road was not as we know it in our lifetime; that at Kembla Grange it wound out around West Dapto and across paddocks to the Bong Bong Road; that in places it was corduroyed; and that it rejoined the Main Road as
we know it now at Fairley's Corner. That could all be true—otherwise, why the little settlement around there in early days?

In the small space between the Main Road and the railway gates there was an old house in which the Wright family lived long years, and last century I believe two ladies named Phillips kept a shop. Over the railway along the straight stretch there was the roughest looking hotel, really a bush shanty with rooms stuck on here and there. It was conducted by a man named Marceau, a French-Canadian. I only saw the old place once. It was then used by Wongawilli miners from other places, who camped there during the working week. Some time later it was demolished. Farther on was the original Catholic Presbytery, a two storey place. Then the St. Joseph Order of nuns were sent there, and the parish priest had a small cottage built on the church land donated by the widow of Richard Mallon. It was and still is divided into two fields. One contained the Catholic Church and the graveyard where so many of the grand old pioneers, including many of my own clan of Moran, sleep their last long sleep.

In the front portion the cottage was situated, and for the time being the upper floor of the two-storey place on the way to Kembla Grange was used as the convent and the ground floor as the school. Later, in front of that, there was a fine brick or stone house which I believe was the new convent, which was used until Dapto grew and the then parish priest Father Thomas Hayden (later first Bishop of Wilcannia-Forbes and later still Archbishop of Hobart) secured land in the expanding town. A convent, a fine church and a school were built there, with more land nearby for further expansion. The nuns and school came to Dapto in 1900.

Near the old Convent in West Dapto the road took a curve over a creek. Now, since I have never heard of the Presbyterian family of O'Brien locally, might it be that in those early days that creek was called North Creek and those O'Briens had their land on the western side of the road?

[Alexander Stewart says that after crossing Charcoal Creek near Unanderra station, the first road to Dapto "went at the back of Mr. George Lindsay’s store and joined the new road (afterwards) to the south-west of the Farmer’s-Arms, a slab and bark hut on the slope of the hill going down to Kembla Grange. It then ran through Wyllie’s flats till it crossed Mullet Creek by a ford near the present (1894) showground. From Mullet Creek to Macquarie River the old track and the present (again 1894) Main South Coast Road are practically the same."

However, Mitchell’s 1834 map of Illawarra seems to show two old roads in the Kembla Grange-Dapto area, one corresponding with Alexander Stewart’s description and the other pursuing a very erratic course to the west of Mullet Creek, then coming back to join the road described by Stewart about two miles south of the Brownsville ford.—Ed.].

A Merry Christmas and a Very Happy and Prosperous New Year