Robert Haworth - from convict to Esquire.
by Carol Herben

Background.
The stories we hear about Robert Haworth! Where should we start? Are we to believe the stories that have been written about him? Take for instance Frank McCaffrey. In his book, "The History of Illawarra and Its Pioneers", was Robert Haworth a native of Bury, Lancashire, and assigned as a convict to Carruth to look after his pigs and calves on his property "Dunlop Vale" by day and make shoes by night? Then W G McDonald in his book, "Nineteenth Century Dapto", who wrote that in the 1828 census he found Robert Howarth (sic) 26 years old, a Government servant arriving on the "Florentia" in 1828, sentenced to seven years transportation and assigned to John Heaps at Portland Head. Then there is Robert Haworth who arrived on the "Mary Ann" in 1835 after he was tried at Liverpool, UK, when he was 34 years old and assigned to Robert Carruth at "Dunlop Vale" receiving his certificate of freedom in 1842. The Robert Haworth who arrived on the Mary Ann in 1835 would be the correct one.

Site of Tannery.
Frank McCaffrey referred to Robert Haworth's tannery as being near Wollongong Railway Station. According to McCaffrey the widow of Dr John Osborne of Garden Hill found the title to that land defective and claimed it as "her dowry". To settle her claim Robert Haworth found it necessary to walk to Sydney to borrow £33-6-9.

It is known that the story of the "dowry" of Mary, widow of Dr John Osborne, who died in 1850, could have only been myth. Mary Osborne died in 1858 and Robert Haworth was well established in the district during those years. He had already established his tannery on the site of the present Illawarra Performing Arts Centre (IPAC).

No matter what his origins Robert Haworth was a larger than life character in the district.

It is known that his origins in Illawarra began at Dunlop Vale and when free from servitude became a prominent land owner and businessman.
Marriage.
When Robert Haworth was 53 years old he married Thirza Webber, aged 31 years, in 1854. They had four children Robert, Thirza, Frances and George.

Residence.
He constructed a single storey dwelling in lower Crown Street immediately in front of his tannery. Over the years (1845-1880) some of the more prominent citizens of Wollongong settled in that area of Crown Street. Amongst them were Andrew Moran (shoemaker), James Kirby (Alderman), and later Alexander Stewart (father-in-law of James Kirby) and William Croft (tailor).

This section of Crown Street had at the eastern end Elliott's Family Hotel (later Makin's Oxford Hotel), the Temperance Hall and at the western end the Denominational School (now site of Town Hall).

Council Alderman.
The Wollongong Municipality was proclaimed on 22 February 1859 and at the first Council election held on 29 March of that year Robert Haworth was elected as one of the alderman. In 17 years of freedom Haworth had established himself as a worthy citizen of the district.

Kembla Grange land dealings.
"Dunlop Vale" was a promise of a grant to John Wylie in 1829. Through either bad management or over-financing in cattle Wylie was forced to sell out to Andrew Lang and the Carruth Brothers. The deed of grant was finally issued to Andrew Lang in March of 1840. The Carruth Brothers sold their share of 1,000 acres to Gerard Gerard who named the property "Kembla Grange". The remaining 1,000 acres, owned by Andrew Lang, was named "Canterbury". It was Gerard Gerard who eventually sold his holding to Robert Haworth.

Land purchases.
Besides purchasing Kembla Grange in April 1855 he purchased a boarding house in Market Street, Wollongong.
The next known land purchase was in January 1856 the farm of Robert Martin Cole (1788-1869) of 377 acres known as "Mt Kembla Farm" named by Cole as "Nonsuch". All 377 acres were purchased for the sum of £1,500. On that very same day Cole also sold his Fairy Meadow property of 130 acres to Haworth for £2,000.

All these dealings with Cole were financed by a mortgage with the Savings Bank of New South Wales. Due to some financial difficulties Haworth sold the Mt Kembla property one month later to John Blackman.

Haworth then purchased land in the then business district some lots of them of historical significance.

He bought the site of Charles Throsby Smith's original house and schoolhouse/barn. Later he acquired two allotments adjoining the Harp Hotel and 17 lots facing Crown Street, 8 allotments facing Burelli Street and 5 allotments facing Stewart Street.

By the time of his death on 21 December 1875, aged 74 years, Robert Haworth's ownership of land had grown dramatically. His wife Thirza later moved to Summer Hill (Sydney) where she died on 9 January 1912 aged 89 years.

Queens Hotel.
As mentioned earlier Haworth purchased a boarding house in Market Street in April 1855. The premises were erected sometime around 1850, licensed as a hotel in 1862 it became known as the Queens Hotel.

During September 1865 the Sydney Morning Herald carried an advertisement to let the hotel. It was advertised as being in the best part of Wollongong, the garden of the colony. Available in the hotel were a Billiards Table, a Ballroom and water closets whilst the ground floor contained 30 rooms and a superior kitchen. The second floor had 20 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, and a capital yard at the rear containing stables with saddle horses and a saddlery available for guests to look around the area.
It was around the 1880s that James Waterworth's coaches utilised the hotel as a booking office for the Wollongong to Campbelltown Coach Service. The coaches departed Wollongong on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays arriving back in Wollongong on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. At Campbelltown the passengers could then connect with the Sydney rail service. This was a much more time consuming journey compared to the coastal steamer, that was until the advent of the opening of the Sydney to Wollongong rail service in 1887.

It is interesting to note that Robert Haworth's mortgage was with the Savings Bank of New South Wales when he purchased Cole's property Mt Kembla Farm. The Savings Bank of New South Wales was situated in an old weather board building between the Post Office and Queens Hotel and Robert Haworth was the landlord. One must wonder if the landowner of the Queens Hotel and Bank site was the persuader for the mortgage of £3,500 in just one month.

Between the advertisement of 1865 to let the hotel and the sale of the Queens Hotel the building was extended and altered internally.

The area surrounding Market Street, Wollongong, from 1860 to 1880 was a vibrant and lively area with such establishments as the Telegraph Station, (our museum), the Savings Bank of New South Wales, Queens Hotel, the Illawarra Mercury and Waterworth's Coaches.

In later years R T Hayles and Andrew Lysaght were the licensees of the hotel and one of Lysaght's patrons was his own step-brother John Barry.

John Barry was better known as Constable Barry, one of the constabulary, who in November 1879 captured the infamous Alexander George Scott alias Captain Moonlite, the bushranger.
He was born in 1840 in Wollongong the son of James Barry and Johanna, nee Elliott. Johanna Elliott was first married to Patrick Lysaght. The marriage produced four children. Patrick Lysaght drowned at sea somewhere between Wollongong and Sydney c1835-1839. His widow married James Barry in 1839 and the eldest of their nine children was John Barry.

Around 1880 Andrew Lysaght became the licensee. It was at the bar that John Barry was telling Andrew of his adventures with the capture of Captain Moonlite when a journalist became involved in the conversation. John Barry told the journalist that he was one of the Constables who was involved in the capture when a member of the Moonlite gang, Gus Wernicke, shot at Barry killing his horse which then forced him to take cover behind a stump.

Sometime in the early 1880s an extension was added to the western side of the hotel making the side wall abut onto the adjoining property. This new addition contained two upper storeys.

The Queens Hotel served some time as a hospital. As much has been written about this fact it is difficult to determine when and for how long. Whether it would have been during the great pandemic of 1918-1919, one cannot determine.

A new facade of a Moorish design was given as a facelift and the name Queens Hotel was replaced by Queens Hall Flats.

**Auction at Queens Hotel.**

Robert Haworth's association with his hotel and tannery remained until his death.

Henry Osborne MacCabe dated his survey plans of Robert Haworth's allotments 31 March 1886 see pages 40 and 41.

On 28 April 1886 his town lots in Wollongong went under the auctioneer's hammer of John Biggars at the Queens Hotel.
A portion of the auctioneer’s advertisement of Haworth’s estate.
Starting at Queens Pde Post Office, Bank of NSW, Queens Hotel and seven lots.
Described as
All that piece and parcel of land, about 95 feet frontage to Market Street, by a depth of 245 feet more or less, with back entrance from Queens Parade (66 feet in width), upon which is erected the spacious and extensive pile of buildings, known as the QUEEN'S HOTEL, one of the oldest established licensed houses on the South Coast, containing on the ground floor a Bar, 3 Parlours, Dining Room, Billiard Room, Large Kitchen with Stoves, &c, complete; store room &c, 3 bedrooms, side entrance gate, large cellar and underground Tank holding 30,000 gallons of water filling by spouting and gutters from the roofs of the premises.
First Floor-Spacious Broad Verandah round the building 140 feet in length, 3 Visitors' Dining Rooms, Private Bar, 16 Bedrooms, Bathrooms &c, &c. Extensive yards, Stabling for 10 horses, Coach House, sheds &c. These extensive premises have lately undergone a thorough substantial repair and some enlargement, regardless of cost and expense, are fitted with every requisite for a first class superior family and general Hotel business, and has always done the largest trade in the district, being a favourite resort for visitors.

The central position of these premises, and certainty of early completion of railway communications to Sydney &c, must rapidly increase the business of this favourite hostelries and largely increase the value of this fine property.

Further particulars can be obtained from Messrs JONES and JONES, 77 Pitt Street, Sydney, the Vendor's Solicitors or from the AUCTIONEER.

**Auction of further lots.**
Described for the auction sale as

SAVINGS BANK BUILDING.
All that piece and parcel of land having a frontage of 44 feet (more or less) to Market Square adjoining the Queens Hotel on the west, upon which is erected a large WEATHERBOARD BUILDING occupied as a dwelling house and roomy store for many years; used as the New South Wales Branch Saving Bank, with outhouses &c, and a 20 feet lane at rear leading off Queens Parade.
TWO Building allotments in Corrimal Street, next to the Harp Inn with Street frontage of 25 feet each and right of way 20 feet at rear. (These allotments were on the southern side of the Harp Inn. Ed.)

SEVEN Allotments in Market Square near Queens Hotel with frontages of 33 to 45 feet each and right of way 20 feet wide at rear. (The allotments were all facing Market Street which carried onto Harbour Street. The most easterly property on Harbour Street side fence was along Harbour Street. The 20 feet laneway at the rear is today the driveway besides the Bishops House property of the Catholic Church. Ed.)

EIGHT Allotments in Queens Parade having frontages of 33 feet each leading from Market Street to Crown Street.

ONE Allotment adjoining corner of Smith and Harbour Street, having a 63 feet frontage to latter and 50 feet frontage to former street. An admirable business site.

ONE Allotment adjoining the above with 50 feet frontage to Smith Street being 100 feet (more or less) in depth. (The above two allotments were the site of C T Smith's first house. Ed.)

SEVEN Allotments in Barella Street (Burelli Street) with frontages of 28 to 68 feet and long depths.

FIVE Allotments in Stewart Street with frontages of 60 to 72 feet by depths of about 165 feet.

The Auctioneer respectfully invites public attention to these central and well situated fine BUILDING ALLOTMENTS AND SITES, through the past which the whole traffic of the district passes and centres, making them of great convenience and value for any business purposes, or for private residences. The whole of these properties must imperatively be cleared out to highest bidders, to close the Estate accounts, and affords a rare opportunity for the people to acquire valuable lands on a rising market in the best part of the town on most liberal terms.
Lithographs of these Allotments are on view at the principal business places in the district, and can be obtained from the Auctioneer and from Messrs Jones and Jones No 77 Pitt Street Sydney, Solicitor for Vendors, who will give fullest information about these various properties.

**Ghost of Queens Hall.**

It came to light in 1970 after many decades of the buildings being let out as flats that a ghost haunted the old Queens Hotel/Hall site. Many local residents came forth that a person had died when the building was used as a hospital.

To add to the story a local newspaper reported that ghostly activities were happening at the deserted Queens Hall flats. The reporter even went so far as to say that they sat outside of the flats one night with their engine running awaiting for the apparition to appear. Without hesitation a ghostly figure appeared at a cobweb covered window and the reporter wrote that they left skid marks on lower Market Street in their escape from the scene.

By then the land was owned by the Roman Catholic Church, and a Young Christian Workers Group was interested in discovering the truth behind the legend of the ghost. With excavations underway the group hoped that they would find some skeletal remains, but, alas, only old broken bottles and sundries.

Three stories emerged that suspicion was that the ghost was that from modern times of a victim of drugs when the building was flats. The other stories are from the days of the hotel when a barmaid was murdered and buried in the cellar and the last story became a victim of the operating table and again he was buried in the cellar.

Determined to discover the identity of the ghost two Sydney mediums were engaged to identify the spirit. A large audience gathered and two volunteers came forward from the crowd and sat around the table with the mediums. A television crew was present to record the whole of the meeting.
Letters of the alphabet were placed around a table and all hands were placed on the glass. When asked for the name the glass moved and spelt out "Weaver". When asked when it had died the glass moved to the numbers "1861". Asked how it had died the spirit's reply was "unnatural". Asked how old it was it said "14 to 15 years". When asked if they were still here in the building the reply came "no", when asked where the body was the response came back as "Wollongong".

The audience was satisfied that the séance had identified the ghost who haunted the building.

**Demolition of building.**

By August 1970 demolition was underway. It seemed more like a dismantling rather than a demolition in order to save the convict made sandstock bricks. The time to demolish the building seemed to take ages.

![The Queens Hotel being demolished](image)

**Well earned retirement.**

Miss Kathleen Condell, long time member of the society, has retired from the Board as Secretary. We would all like to thank Kathleen for all the work she has done over the many years she held the position.