

2.0 BUNDANON : AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

This historical overview has been prepared to provide an understanding of the sequence of site development and property boundary change of the Bundanon property, and the house precinct particularly. This sequence has been developed within the framework of the **processes** affecting settlement along the banks of the Shoalhaven River. This discussion of settlement process requires consideration of the adjoining properties in terms of their occupation, land use patterns and the close relationship of the community with the river.

2.1 EXPLORATION AND EARLY SETTLEMENT 1805-1838

The site of Bundanon was first seen by Europeans in 1805 when **James Meehan**, a surveyor in Government employ [recently pardoned], sailed from Port Jackson to the mouth of the Crookhaven River and inspected the Shoalhaven River as far west as the Burrier ford. Although isolated timber getters had explored the hinterland of the Shoalhaven Valley, it was not until the prominent Bong Bong settler **Charles Throsby** came south from Sutton Forest in 1818 that a land route into the Shoalhaven was established. This exploration was assisted by the prior knowledge of the Burrier ford discovered by James Meehan thirteen years before. The route through the Shoalhaven gorge country was mapped by Meehan¹. Subsequently Throsby, guided by two Aboriginal guides, established a pack-horse track from Burrier to the future Jervis Bay. In 1819 the Government surveyors **John Oxley** and James Meehan had explored Jervis Bay, Currumbene Creek and the future site of the Nowra settlement with the intention of finding a practicable overland route. The inland section from Burrier did not offer a way for wheeled vehicles, but the track from Burrier to the coast was confirmed as a land route.

This early exploration enabled **Alexander Berry** and **Edward Wollstonecraft** to become established on their land grant at Coolangatta [at the north of the Shoalhaven] by 1822, quickly followed by other colonists in search of land. On 5th June 1824, 600 acres were promised by **Governor Brisbane** in the District of Illawarra. An advertisement of 1832 in the *NSW Government Gazette of 'lands promised'* included '... No. 47 Richard Henry Browne 600 acres at a quit rent of £4/10/- per annum starting 1st January 1831'.² The conditions of these grants were that 'Within five years 55 acres [were] to be cleared *and cultivated and fences erected*'.³ There appear to have been a number of R.H. Brownes in NSW at this time. Entries in the *Sydney Gazette 1803-1826* suggest that R.H. Browne was a merchant travelling between India and Australia.

The 1830 Huddle/Jacques survey of the Shoalhaven mouth shows 'Coumgatta' [sic], and the surveyor **Robert Dixon**'s 1838 map of the colony of New South Wales clearly shows the holdings of Berry and Wollstonecraft at Coolangatta. In addition, the map recorded the grant to **Mary Reibey** at 'Burriar' in 1824, the grant to **Richard Henry Browne** confirmed in 1837 later known as 'Bundanon', and the land grant at 'Wogamia' to **Richard Glanville**.

Significantly King and Meehan in 1805 had recorded the land in these granted areas as 'good'.⁴

2.2 BUNDANON 1838-1860

Bundanon was sold to **Dr Kenneth McKenzie** on 19th March 1838 for the sum of £400.⁵ The second son of Mr **Murdo McKenzie** of Ardross and Dundonell, Dr McKenzie had arrived in the Colony of NSW in August 1837. On 25th November 1839, writing from Bundanon, Shoalhaven River, McKenzie asked that 850 acres be put up for lease, bounded on the east by Robert Browne's grant of 600 acres, and on the south by the Shoalhaven River. This land formed *'part of land rented by me before and which through inadvertence I am not in possession of this year'*⁶. At about this date, **William Kinghorne** held land at Pulpit Rock [1840], while Dr Kenneth McKenzie extended his holdings by acquiring 'Barringella', south of Bundanon across the Shoalhaven River [1845], adjacent to Mary Reibey's 'Burrier' holding. Both of these properties were located on Throsby's Burrier to Bong Bong stock route.

Despite serious periodic flooding by the Shoalhaven River Bundanon became the McKenzie family 'seat', with the first homestead located above one of only two water sources a short distance west of Haunted Point overlooking the river flats⁷. All Dr McKenzie's children were born at Bundanon in this first homestead: Helen McKenzie was born on 13th June 1839; Mary in 1841; the elder son Murdo in 1843; Hugh on 25th November 1845; and Julia Ann in 1848.⁸

Alexander Berry's Estate at Coolangatta occupied 26,000 hectares by the 1840s compared with the 5,600 hectares of his original grant. Frequent floods on the Shoalhaven River do not appear, however, to have prevented settlement and extension of property holdings.⁹ Most resident landowners appear to have sited their house and farm buildings above the flood level. However a *'number of houses at Bundanon'* were washed away, including that of **Thomas Soper** who had leased land from Dr McKenzie. Thomas Soper had married Dr McKenzie's niece, **Martha Noble**, in 1841.¹⁰ No 'Bundanon' structures have survived from this period with the exception of two collapsed chimneys and stone piers at the first homestead site, and a collapsed chimney and stone piers from a worker's hut. The general pattern of land use would, however, have been well established on the available 300 acres of river terraces. We can surmise that the majority of structures were on the upper terraces away from the better agricultural land and at the river; and that access by boat or punt to Bundanon was already possible, and mandatory, given the poor condition of the road from the west.

The demand for land was reflected in the locally formed 'Land League' of 1851 which resulted in the first land sales at Nowra in 1853.¹¹ *'Country Lots'* were sold at auction in common with other land districts throughout New South Wales. In 1853 **Captain Charles Wardlow** of Darlinghurst, born in Belfast Ireland, selected Portion 101 in the Parish of Illaroo, building a house on the property called 'Riversdale'.¹² Two years later, in 1855, *'Country Lots'* were advertised for sale on the land between 'Eearie' and 'Bundannon' [sic]. Five farms comprised Country Lots 9-13; later re-named Portions 12, 13, 14, 16 and 17 in the Parish of Illaroo. Only Lot 12 was sold to George Lumsden [Portion 12]. The farms were described as lying between 'Bundannon' [sic] and 'Underwood Flat' on Eearie [the river flats were probably named so by T.T. Biddulph, the poet¹³]. The same map clearly shows a reserved road from Burrier via Eearie to 'Bundannon' [sic] but no other improvements between Underwood Flat

and Bundanon. The river flats at Bundanon are described as '*Rich Flats*'. Mr **Thomas Tregenna Biddulph** had arrived in Australia in 1854, preceded by his elder brother **J. Linton Biddulph** who had arrived in 1850¹⁴. By 1855-56¹⁵ the Biddulph brothers were well established at 'Eerie' [sic], which they appear to have purchased from Hughes and Hosking the original grantees¹⁶. Located on the Burrier to Bong Bong track the Eerie homestead consisted of a range of buildings including yards, a house, and sheds by 1859. It would appear that Portion 119, Eerie, was purchased speculatively by Hughes and Hosking, Land Agents, who later purchased land for sale in 1841 in the Jervis Bay area¹⁷. In common with Berry's Coolangatta Estate, farmland at Bundanon appears to have been leased to tenant farmers by the mid nineteenth century. The 1855-56 Electoral Lists for the County of Camden (Maxwell, Roy Crago) show that **Isaac Greer** and **William Pullman**, later of Broughton Creek, were lessees at Bundanon. The leasing conditions were probably similar to other large estates in the South Coast area, in particular those owned by other Scotsmen e.g. **Alexander Berry** at Coolangatta. Berry leased land in small parcels to tenant farmers who undertook most of the clearing and fencing which created productive pasture and agricultural land¹⁸.

By 1859 **James Kennedy**, formerly of Coolangatta Estate, was well established in the river trade and on land along the Shoalhaven River. Kennedy's holdings included Comerong Island¹⁹ and a farm at Long Reach, north of Bundanon on the Shoalhaven River. The land was recorded as occupied by Kennedy in 1859 but had been purchased by Alexander Berry in 1852. The '*Country Lots*' portion map of 1855 clearly names 'Kennedy's Island' in the Shoalhaven River between Eerie and Bundanon, illustrating the importance of Kennedy's river trade to and from Burrier. The disastrous Shoalhaven River flood of 1860 which inundated Numbaa and Terrara impacted dramatically on the landscapes surrounding Bundanon. The river rose 120 feet at Burrier before dropping to 75 feet at Eerie and 50 feet at Kennedy's farm at 'Long Reach'. James Thomson's house at Burrier was covered by nine feet of water, but the house at Eerie was untouched. Wogamia and Bamerang, belonging to Mr R. Glanville, were completely inundated, only the stone buildings above the flood surviving. All these properties suffered the loss of their stock, cattle and pigs, and wheat stored in barns and stacks. Arable land was covered with several feet of sand and other material deposited by the river. Mr Lumsden's house and all his agricultural land were washed away while Captain Wardlow's house, Riversdale, was destroyed²⁰.

We can speculate that the farm, stock and land at Bundanon would have suffered similar damage to Wogamia and Bamerang. The flood may well have led to the eventual construction of the two-storey stone house at Bundanon in 1866, which was also prompted by the need for increased room for the growing McKenzie family which in 1860 ranged from 12 to 21 years of age. Mary McKenzie married James Thomson, Mary Reibey's grandson, as a nineteen-year-old on 20th April 1860, and moved to Burrier. Helen, Murdo, Hugh and Julia Ann remained at home²¹.

2.3 BUNDANON 1861-1879

Free selection, under the 1861 Land Act, placed pressure on land beyond the coastal plains of Shoalhaven. Selection, however, had limited effect on Bundanon and the surrounding properties since there was little land left with the exception of 'reserved' or 'withdrawn' areas to the north and west of Bundanon. The latter areas included portions 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 and land to the south of Portion 15 in the Parish of Illaroo.

Completion of a two-storey stone residence at Bundanon in 1866 by Dr Kenneth McKenzie marked the beginning of the estate we see today. Sandstone houses had already been erected at Bamarang [one storey] and Wogamia [two storeys] on the opposite side of the river. Stone for the construction of Bamarang came from a quarry established by the Moore family²². The new house at Bundanon was built of local sandstone and timber, with lime mortar made from shell deposits collected downstream and transported by river drogher. The house was sited on high ground above the flood level of the river, which took advantage of cooling breezes and provided views across the property. Doors, windows and all internal fine joinery were of locally cut cedar with the exception of the floors which were hardwood. Ceilings were lined with wide planks of red cedar. The house was capped with a low pitched hipped roof with closed eaves giving way on the eastern side to a two-storey timber verandah.

The McKenzie family lived in their new house at Bundanon after 1866. Workers on the property were employed both on the farm and as domestic servants in the new house. **Henry Mottram** senior came to work at Bundanon in the 1860s where he met and married **Philadelphia Wooden**, domestic, daughter of selector

Benjamin Wooden of Saltwater Creek. After their marriage in 1868 they leased Barringella, another McKenzie family property²³. The 1869-70 Electoral Lists for the County of Camden also recorded a **Robert Allars** living at Bundanon²⁴. Changes in the structure of the family were to impact on the running of the McKenzie household. Julia Ann McKenzie married the Reverend Robert Speir Willis on 14th November 1867. The death of Mrs Julia McKenzie in June 1858 had left the McKenzie children without a mother. This role, it seems, was filled by eldest daughter Helen McKenzie, in the traditional manner, until the departure of her father Dr McKenzie in 1869. The death of Murdo McKenzie Snr in 1869 at Dundonnell, in Scotland, had left Dr McKenzie in possession of the family's Scottish estates to which he then returned. Helen McKenzie married John Robertson, a local selector, in June 1870. Murdo never married but Dr McKenzie's younger son Hugh married Bella Biddulph of Earie on 12th January 1876. The close relationship between the Thomson, Biddulph and McKenzie families was to dominate the economic and social life of the area well into the twentieth century.²⁵ The floods of 1870 had even greater impact on the properties of Burrier and Earie; on the newly built homesteads at Bundanon and Riversdale; and on the adjacent properties, than the earlier flood of 1860. A letter written by Hugh McKenzie to one of his sisters following the floods is an important window into the landscape at Bundanon in 1870. In Hugh's words the '*... mother of all floods*' ruined Bundanon.

Fences, yards and buildings were washed away and other buildings severely damaged. The strategically sited main house with its skillion kitchen appear to have been the only structure above the flood level. The letter clearly documents the site and those people living in or near the main house on the night of the flood. Property structures described by Hugh in his letter included a punt, stockyards with gates, a barn, a dairy [with cooling dishes and cheeses], a mangle room, a slab stable with loft, an old workshop, Murphy's hut, a forge, and pig and fowl pens. Geese, turkeys and bees were stocked. Workers resident at the property included a Mr and Mrs Laird, the boys Jim Small and Ben [Murphy?], and Emeline, a servant. Significantly the workers 'huts' remained above the flood level, as did the kitchen and main house²⁶. There is no mention of servants' quarters or of any Bundanon other farm buildings in the letter. However we can safely assume the existence of cow bails given the presence of a dairy, and that the punt referred to was used to cross the river below Bamerang. Given that the orchard at Bundanon provided fruit for the Thomson family at Burrier in 1880, we can also assume that it was well established by the mid-1870s²⁷. This suggests that the dam north of the main house was built by 1870, if not earlier.

In his letter Hugh McKenzie clearly implied that he would not farm the property again in view of the damage. Hugh also clearly referred to 'Lumsden's place' in his letter as being turned upside down on Bundanon. Mrs Elizabeth Lumsden later surrendered the deeds of her property to the Crown and eventually received payment of £300 voted as compensation for the 'floods'. The extent of the disaster was publicly recorded in *The Shoalhaven News* on 5th May 1870. '*... The farm at Bundanon is one mass of clean washed sand, and from thence down both sides of the river by Riversdale and Mr Kennedy's farm.*' Captain Wardlow of Riversdale died five weeks later on 11 June 1870, and was buried on his property.

In spite of the horrendous damage to the farms and landscape, the area continued to support a large community. The Public School inspection for 1876 recorded twenty-three boys and thirteen girls from Burrier enrolled full time; and nine boys and five girls from Long Reach enrolled half time. Instruction was recorded as 'tolerable'.²⁸ Hugh McKenzie's first child Bella Mary was born in 1876 at Bundanon; there would as yet have been no need for a school on the property. Between 1876 and 1901, however, Hugh and Bella were to have eleven children who were taught by a governess.²⁹ Burrier, as the head of the navigable part of the Shoalhaven River, became an important point of contact between timber getters, gold miners and pastoralists. The strategic location of the Burrier property on the only river crossing continued to vindicate its location, when 300 head of cattle passed through from Sutton forest for Etienne de Mestre of Terrara. In 1877 the Thomsons of Burrier were supplying beef to Bundanon and buying stock from Bundanon in addition to considering gold mining prospects at Yalwal, discovered some twenty years earlier.³⁰, and Grassy Gully. The close ties between Burrier and Bundanon were reflected by the attendance of the Thomson and McKenzie families at church at Bamerang on occasion.³¹ The orchard at Bundanon also provided fruit for the Thomson family in the 1880s, while bullocks for ploughing were freely exchanged between the two properties.³² The two Bunyah pines identifying the track to the punt, and other pines

identifying two other entrances to Bundanon Common, appear to have been planted at this time.

Following the death of Dr Kenneth McKenzie on 12th March 1879,³³ Hugh McKenzie inherited the Australian properties, while elder brother Murdo Jnr inherited the Dundonnell properties in Scotland.

2.4 BUNDANON 1879-1917

The Shoalhaven River below Burrier continued to support Aboriginal people into the 1880s; in 1882 *'Ted Biddulph shot a wallaby [at Eearie] and gave it to the blacks'*.³⁴ However two events were to impact on both the Aboriginal population and the established properties along the Shoalhaven River. In 1881 the Argyle, Camden and King Goldfield was declared, including Yalwal and Grassy Gully, and the amended Land Act of 1884 opened the door to further selection with conditional purchase and conditional leasing for the purpose of building a homestead.

Robert Condie Junior applied for Conditional Purchase of Portion 171 in the Parish of Illaroo on 11th December 1884, which was approved on 8th January 1886, and Portion Villa [now Portion 9], formerly James Barron's selection of 1872 north of the Burrier/Cambewarra road. It would appear that Condie also purchased Portions 16 and 17, to the west of Bundanon, prior to the 12th December 1887 sale at Nowra, when Portions 12, 13 and 14 were not bid for. In 1881 the Argyle, Camden and King Goldfield had been declared, with Portions 11, 12 and 13 lying within the goldfield. In 1887 Portions 12, 13, 14 were again auctioned for sale but not bid for. The 1892 survey of Portion 14 shows that Robert Condie's portion 16 was cleared along the river flats towards 'Underwood Flats' with a sapling fence around the river front corn [maize] paddock. Beeweeree appears to have been settled by Robert Condie Jnr between 1884-1887. The adjacent Eerie estate was put up for sale in 1887 by T.T. Biddulph but did not sell.³⁵ Subsequently the property was leased out for three-year periods.

In January 1892 Portions 12 and 14 west of Bundanon were measured for sale. Portion 12 was not bid for in 1892, nor in 1894 when it was measured again for sale in November 1894. Portion 14 appears to have been purchased by Hugh McKenzie in 1892, since he was recorded as the occupier in March 1894. At Riversdale, north of Bundanon, **David Smith Petrie** applied for the conditional purchase of Portions 224 and 227 on 22nd November 1878 and 24th April 1879; C.S. (conditional sale) probably took effect in 1886. No improvements were recorded. Conditional purchase of Portion 13 on 23rd May 1889 was confirmed on 13th November 1889. Improvements recorded included a slab hut at the north east corner [value £20] and 40 acres of cleared land [value £14].

David Smith Petrie, a solicitor from Scotland, had married Sarah Isabella Wardlow in 1869 at Terrara where he had worked for Thomas Marriott. The purchase of Portions 224, 227 and 13 in the Parish of Illaroo was to enlarge Riversdale, the property they had inherited from Sarah's parent's. Petrie was killed by a falling tree in 1890 while clearing land. The Petrie family had four children.³⁶ In 1902 the estate of David Smith Petrie was sold; Robert Condie of Beeweeree purchased 80 acres, the remainder, including Riversdale, being purchased by Charles Wardlow Petrie and David Petrie

Jnr³⁷. Riversdale was farmed by the Petrie family until 1939.³⁸ The floods of 1891 and 1898 may well have resulted in the loss of the second Riversdale homestead built after the 1870 floods. A third homestead was probably built at Riversdale during the 1890s.³⁹ In contrast the main house at Bundanon was to survive the floods which devastated other properties. Although Hugh McKenzie had declared in his letter of 1870 that he would not continue farming at Bundanon, the property continued to employ a relatively stable workforce.

William Hurkwood, Thomas McKay and William Urquhart were living and working at Bundanon in 1888. Urquhart was still there in 1891 but George Green had replaced the other two labourers. George Green had been born at Bundanon on 29th September 1857 only two months after his father George Green Snr arrived from England.⁴⁰ Green was still at Bundanon at the turn of the century but Urquhart had been replaced by Patrick and William Kennedy and George Vidler.⁴¹ Other workers at this time included Parkie Hay and Jim Calligan and Levo Colgro who lived in a slab and corrugated iron 'humpy' at the western end of the property; Jim and Levo grew up as boys on the property and were buried in their hut when they died in the first decade of the twentieth century.⁴² In 1903 the 'Bundanon' property employed three female members of the Kennedy and O'Connor families for domestic duties.⁴³ The apparent sudden change in numbers in the electoral record is misleading, since women were only allowed to vote in 1901. We can assume that at least as many women as men were employed on the property after 1866 since women worked both as domestics and probably on the farm milking. A photograph of the new servants' quarters taken before construction of the hipped roof kitchen and brick water cistern suggests that four domestics, dressed for 'service', were employed by the 1890s. In spite of anecdotal evidence for the existence of Dr McKenzie's surgery [he left for Scotland in 1869] north of the skillion kitchen, this photograph clearly indicates the presence on or near the site of a shingled slab shed, used for curing hams and bacon.

The schoolhouse was of hipped roofed form with a brick chimney suggesting that it was constructed at the same time as the present kitchen.⁴⁴ The prominence of Bundanon as the focus of social and economic activity was displayed in 1894, when a meeting was held at Bamarang with the intention of building a 'steamer for [Clifford] Richards'. Subscriptions for construction of the vessel, promised by some twenty-nine persons, reached £270. By July the new steamer [a drogher] was ready for use and held by J. Glanville.⁴⁵ In effect Hugh McKenzie, as major contributor, owned the new steamship *Buangla* which transported farm produce between Burrier and Nowra. Directors were John Glanville, James Thomson, Henry Mottram and William Strong.⁴⁶

Although a subscription of £2 had been promised towards the *Buangla* by Charles Wardlow Petrie of Riversdale in 1894, but he built his own vessel in 1903. The *Endeavour*, a motor launch, was thirty feet long with a nine-foot beam, flat bottomed, carried five tons and traded between Burrier and Nowra. At that time there were 34 farms sending cream and other produce to market.⁴⁷ The added competition and costs of repair and maintenance resulted in the sale of the *Buangla*

to Walter Elyard in March 1904.⁴⁸ Development of the property under Hugh McKenzie consolidated the land use patterns of the 1870s. By the early 1900s the homestead was the focus of an estate which reflected the self contained nature of the rural community at Bundanon. The ridge of high ground which formed the axis of the farm and homestead complex serviced both domestic and farm activities. Service areas including a smithy, laundry and buggy shed were sited near the western gate to the homestead yard. To the north a range of service buildings, including a curing shed for hams and bacon, were located in treed areas which gave way in the east to large fenced vegetable and orchard plots above the dam. An extensive system of post and rail and wire fences controlled stock movements and defined arable areas planted with maize and lucerne. Other buildings in the homestead yard included stables, stallion shed and maize store with below the homestead fence a 32 cow feed stall and 5 bails. Beyond the Earie [western] gate were stockyards, slab sheds, slab barn and pig pens. The need for quantities of clean water was evident in the number of galvanised iron rainwater tanks associated with the house and working buildings.

The introduction of cream separators in the 1890s increased pig farming in the district since the skimmed milk separating produced was valuable as feed. The Thomsons at Burrier were already farming pigs by 1902 but rebuilt their yards to cope with the extra production. Bundanon also farmed pigs at this time since piglets were regularly purchased by the McKenzies from the Thomsons at Burrier. The orchard provided locquats while new bee hives provided ample honey. A tennis court was well established at Bundanon by 1902 and extensively used by the extended family.⁴⁹ The very social McKenzie family was referred to as the '*Bundanon push*' by Kenneth McKenzie Thomson in his diary in February 1903. Dances were held in the big room at the main house for both the family and farm workers with cricket played regularly on a concrete wicket.⁵⁰ The working of the Bundanon property appears to have been very much in the hands of the younger McKenzies. In September 1904 the '*... three McKenzies [Hugh Snr, Kenneth and Murdo Jnr] took down 92 head of young cattle from [their] Yalwal Station*' and a week later '*Kenzie [Kenneth?] and Murdo Jnr brought a mob of horses from the station*'.⁵¹ Both the Burrier and Bundanon properties stocked Holstein cattle in 1904 and grew corn [maize] on the river flats;⁵² Bundanon also provided mutton to Burrier.⁵³ By 1906 rabbits were well established at Bundanon.⁵⁴ The onset of the First World War in 1914 saw a dramatic reduction in the number of farm labourers and domestic servants; during the war there do not appear to have been any employees. After the war however staff numbers returned to their pre-war level.⁵⁵ T.T. Biddulph died in May 1901⁵⁶ and Hugh McKenzie died in 1917. Bundanon came to be run by Kenneth McKenzie Jnr and his wife Aylene Clayton, and her brother Milton Clayton, also of Sydney.

2.5 BUNDANON 1917-1927

In 1922, Os and Alma McClelland [nee Alma Lumsden, the daughter of James and Elisabeth Lumsden], lived at Bundanon where Os was employed by Kenneth McKenzie.⁵⁷ The death of Kenneth McKenzie and his daughter Helen, who were drowned on 29 January 1922, appears to have resulted in a decline in family

involvement with farming at Bundanon. The working of the property at this time continued the patterns established by the 1880s but appears to have relied on a larger workforce due to the distancing which gradually took place in the social arena. **Clive Emery** worked at Bundanon from 1924 to 1926, when his family lived at Bamarang across the river. Under Kenneth McKenzie, Bundanon was home to between twenty-five and thirty people, including the McKenzie family and five to six farm labourers/servants families. The latter were accommodated in houses and huts on the property including the old homestead; three timber workers' cottages, including the manager's house, were located north of the main house with smaller 'humpies' or 'huts' in the vicinity of the slab barn near the western boundary of the property. The huts included those of employees Levo Colgro and Jim Calligan [who on their deaths had been buried in their hut c.1910] and the McPherson family, who ran the dairy. A singleman's hut or cottage across the lagoon provided permanent accommodation for one person, with a second identical room for overnight visiting workers. Each room held an iron bed and mattress, table, billy can and pannikin, cutlery, tea and sugar and tin of biscuits; a built-in timber cupboard at the side of each fireplace provided storage.⁵⁸ A fourth timber worker's cottage was erected c.1920 adjacent to the western-most slab barn for Claude Boot.⁵⁹ The new cottage may have been erected to replace the old homestead which was lost in a bush fire in the 1920s.

Elinor Dillon [nee Rothwell, and daughter of Julia Edith McKenzie and John Rothwell, born 1907] described the working of the main house in the early years of this century. Downstairs were the 'large' room, a bedroom and a gun room; upstairs were four bedrooms. Food was carried in on trays to the dining room from the kitchen. By the turn of the century a separate kitchen and servants' quarters serviced the main house, and provided accommodation for three or four female domestics. The two roomed 'kitchen' served the main house and provided a separate staff dining room. A large timber skillion with external stone fireplace and chimney housed the 'nursery', scullery, bathroom and a boxroom and provided access via a narrow five-foot wide bridge to the schoolhouse [former surgery]. This skillion was the first kitchen, and it held an iron spit and kettle. It was built in weatherboard and stone as part of the main house, not as an extension. According to Elinor the singleman's hut was originally built for an Aboriginal man who worked on the property.⁶⁰

Due to the nature of the river flats grazing was only moderate to poor in quality but the soil could produce good corn and lucerne crops. In good years some 500 to 600 bags of maize [corn] were held in the large barns west of the stock yards. Teams of ten bullocks pulled the dray with up to ten bags of corn harvested from the lower paddocks near the river. In winter lucerne crops supplemented the feed available to cattle and horses. Three single furrow ploughs were used to prepare the ground for planting, each pulled by two horses on the river flats. There was a slab hut with a galvanised iron roof on 'Haunted Point' for the storage of the horses' harnesses during ploughing. The introduction of super phosphate in 1925 increased production and yields.⁶¹

The dairy herd of Jersey and Illawarra cross cattle was normally milked by three people. Milking took place daily, beginning at 3 am and then again at 3 pm. Milk was

taken to the factory at Bomaderry every day at 7.30 am using the punt. The mail, bread and meat for the property were collected in town. When it was not possible to cross the river, milk was separated into cream and skimmed milk. The latter was fed to the twenty to thirty pigs held on the flats below the bails. There was a punt/cable and a tin shed on the Bamarang side with a sulky or buggy. A bell was rung to attract attention. Later the punt was replaced with a larger version capable of carrying a horse and buggy, and a small boat was left on the opposite side to the punt. Horses were kept for stock work, show and ploughing. Show horses were taken to the Nowra Showground. Draught horses, bred on the property, were kept in the stables. The yard was used to hold stallions and mares which were taken to Yalwal Station for fattening as 'store cattle', before yarding at Moffitts at Saltwater Creek and despatch to Sydney or the local markets.⁶² Charles Petrie's river service was not used at this time since it appears to have been quicker, easier and probably cheaper to use a buggy to take cream and milk to Bomaderry.⁶³ As mentioned above, in 1922 Kenneth McKenzie and his daughter Helen were drowned in the Shoalhaven River at the boundary with Lumsden's land to the west. Helen had been to the Nowra Show with her cousin Jean, and was washing her pony in the river when she was swept away. Kenneth went to her help, but both were drowned. The jacaranda tree in front of the house was planted in their memory.⁶⁴ The McKenzie family left Bundanon in 1926 when 'Bundanon Farm' and 'The Station' at Yalwal were advertised for lease.⁶⁵ For the next 45 years the property was leased out. Earrie was also leased out by Mrs Biddulph on a three-year lease variously to the Hughes, Moffat, Scott and Hampstead families. The property was managed by the Weirs during the 1920s Depression.⁶⁶ The Hughes family left in 1944.

2.6 BUNDANON 1927-1934

Bundanon was leased in 1927 by George and Florence Henry and family. Mrs Edna Condie (nee Henry) has documented the buildings in use. These included a carpenters and blacksmiths sheds, laundry, workshop, stables, buggy shed and a dairy and bails. To the west of the main house Dr McKenzie's former surgery [refer to earlier remarks re photos of 1890s] became the school room for the Henry children and others from nearby properties.

According to Portion Map 12 the area of Portion 12 was leased from 1930 to 1939 as Sp L 28.3 for grazing purposes by Milton Samuel Clayton of Sydney and Roy Seaforth Mackenzie. When this lease expired the land was Reserved from Sale or Lease.

1931 Portion 15 was applied for by George William Carter under the Crown Lands Consolidation Act of 1913 (Portion 15). No improvements were recorded.

In the late 1920s the property appears to have changed slowly. Changes were limited to removal of one of the early slab sheds at the stockyards and the addition of new sheds on the 'common'.

2.7 DAVIS AND MARTIN OCCUPATION 1934-1946

Bundanon was occupied in turn by two families during this period; those of Tom Davis Snr, a local, and John Martin. Tom Davis Snr leased the property 1934-35 and 1945-46. John Martin and his son Fred Martin ran the property between 1935 and 1945. The dam below the main house was lowered c.1945.⁶⁷ Details of the property under the Martin family are to form an addendum to this report following further development of oral history contacts.

Charles Wardlow Petrie died on 6 October 1939 leaving Riversdale in trust for his wife Sarah Petrie. Sarah Petrie died on 22 March 1951 leaving the property to Walter Roy Petrie.⁶⁸ Riversdale was subsequently purchased in turn by Roy Walker (1954) then Colin and Shirley Walker (1963) before being purchased by Arthur and Yvonne Boyd in 1974.⁶⁹

2.8 SCOTT FAMILY OCCUPATION 1946-1957

The Scott family purchased the stock and plant from their predecessors on the property paying some £400 rent per annum to the McKenzie family. With the assistance of sons Don, Bill and Robert, Alf Scott introduced extensive cropping for feed for cattle growing lucerne and feeding huge amounts cut daily for up to 100 milking cows. The Jersey/Friesian cross cattle produced milk richer in butterfat but lower in volume at approximately 200 gallons per day. New cropping areas were developed to the north and west of the homestead with the need to increase production. The river flats were intensively cultivated for corn with over 200 three-bushel bags produced for Kellogg's at £1 per bushel.

Although there was some modification and loss of ancillary working structures recorded in photographs of the 1920s and earlier the property still retained its two remaining worker's cottages, six staff rooms, a well-equipped schoolroom and the singleman's quarters in addition to most early homestead structures. Between 1946 and 1949 Worker's Cottage 1 was extended to the north by the addition of a gabled kitchen. A new barn was built later to replace the two slab sheds west of the western entrance to Bundanon Common. North of the stockyards new enclosures with small shelters were used as pig pens. The pigs were fed with whey from the dairy as was the custom elsewhere in Shoalhaven.

In the 1950s the Scotts bought stock and plant at Earie, setting up eldest son Don on the property. Don did not stay on the property and moved to Nowra. Bill Scott married in 1956 and moved to Wilcannia. In 1958 the Scott family sold stock and plant to Neil Boomer from Kangaroo Valley.⁷⁰ In 1954 Walter Roy Petrie sold Riversdale to George Roy Harrison Walker of Cambewarra for £2,500.⁷¹

2.9 BOOMER AND WARREN OCCUPATION 1957-1969

In 1957 Neil Boomer from Kangaroo Valley leased the property but was soon replaced by the Warren family.⁷² In 1967 Bundanon was sold to Jim Lawrence by Colin McKenzie for \$23,000.⁷³ The Warren family stayed on after sale until 1969. In 1968 Bundanon was sold to Sandra and Michael Anthony McGrath and Francis McDonald, an art dealer, for \$56,000.⁷⁴ Details of the property under the Warren

family form an addendum to this report following further development of oral history contacts.

2.10 MCGRATH AND MCDONALD OCCUPATION 1968-1978/79

Farming operations at Bundanon continued under the new owners. However Special Lease 58-11 over Portion 12 was revoked in February 1969 becoming Conditional Purchase 69-27, of 22 September 1969, applied for by Michael Anthony McGrath and Francis McDonald. On 28 November 1969 Portion 12 was gazetted as Reserve R87526 for Future Public Requirements (refer Portion 12 map).

A 1970s article in *The Australian Home Journal* by Carol Henty entitled 'The Happy Valley' described how '*... a Sydney art dealer ha[d] built a mid-nineteenth century landscape on a grand scale*'. The architectural practice of Allan Jack & Cottier had

been commissioned in 1968 to undertake the necessary work.⁷⁵ In the process of doing so all the nineteenth and early twentieth century working buildings on 'Bundanon Common' were removed, in addition to the former schoolhouse and skillion kitchen to the main house. Before 1968 the landscape setting of the main house was articulated by the river crossing, defined by two Bunyah pines, and the working axis defined by Bundanon Common and the littleused road from Beeweeree and Cambewarra to the west. Under McDonald and the McGraths the landscape setting changed dramatically. Changes included tree planting, a modified 'cottage' garden setting for the house, servants' quarters and kitchen and extensive plantings of American poplars along an adopted track below the feedstalls and dairy to the punt. An island was built in the dam and weeping willows added to the repertoire. Lombardy poplars were planted in the wider landscape as indicators of scale and ownership. In keeping with the 19th century 'vision' the landscape was modified; the stark contrast between the uncleared bush and the paddocks surrounding the house was reduced by selective thinning. With the removal of the majority of working farm buildings there was an urgent need to build modern farm facilities. A new barn and workshops were erected close to Worker's Cottage 1 integrated with the late nineteenth century slab barn.

Although the main house was lived in well into the 1960s, by 1968 the roof was in urgent need of attention. The roof was re-constructed with the original profile but changes were made to the timberwork. Leaking roof sheeting resulted in some damage to the cedar panelled ceilings. These were made good from a source on the property and from material made available by adaptation for bathrooms. In the process of modernising the main house in 1969 a new ensuite bathroom with rooflights was installed upstairs and the remaining space of the former bedroom used for a common bathroom. This required the use of a suspended ceiling at ground floor level in what became the dining room. The building was supplied with electrical services at the same time. The simple character of the buildings interior was further modified in 1971 by the installation of cupboards and library shelving in the downstairs bedroom and sitting room which changed to dining room and study.⁷⁶

In the process of upgrading the main house both the kitchen and servants' quarters were improved and a breezeway erected to link the three buildings. A laundry and bathroom were installed in two rooms of the servants' quarters and a pergola added to the northern side in 1969. New kitchen fittings and storage units were installed in the same year.⁷⁷

Although alterations to the manager's cottage were proposed by Allan Jack and Cottier in 1972 the final changes were carried out in their absence. The former manager's cottage was subsequently used for guest accommodation with up to twenty people accommodated in buildings on the property during social gatherings.⁷⁸ Significantly by 1975 the cedar ceilings had been painted white.⁷⁹ After having lived in England for twelve years, artist Arthur Boyd returned to Australia to take up a Creative Arts Fellowship at the ANU in Canberra. Boyd's visit to Bundanon during the summer of 1971-72 was to re-ignite his interest in landscape painting, and began his interest in the Shoalhaven district. In February 1974 Arthur and Yvonne Boyd purchased Riversdale for £100,000, starting the genesis of Bundanon. The Boyds added two further lots of land and purchased a right of way. Riversdale was now 144 acres.⁸⁰ Although the McGraths and MacDonald wanted to sell the Bundanon property to the State Government, there was no interest and Bundanon was sold privately for \$800,000 to Arthur Boyd.⁸¹

2.11 ARTHUR BOYD 1979

The management of farm operations was handled by David Blackall until 1983 and Rod and Debbie Walker from 1983 until 1993. The latter were to have a great impact on the gardens around the main house which developed as a result in an almost *ad hoc* fashion.⁸² Boyd built a studio in 1981 to the north of the access road, now the main point of access, to the property from the west following the loss of the punt in floods. Works by Boyd in his new setting, incorporating Pulpit Rock and the Shoalhaven River, have taken the landscapes of Bundanon to national and international audiences.

At a memorial service for Sir Sidney Nolan in January 1993, the then Prime Minister Paul Keating announced the Commonwealth's acceptance of Bundanon from Arthur and Yvonne Boyd, and the establishment of the Bundanon Trust a Commonwealth owned company. The gift also included Riversdale and Beeweeree and a large collection of artworks, antiques and archival material.⁸³

2.12 BUNDANON TRUST

The Bundanon properties came under the management of the Bundanon Trust in March 1993 and were opened for the first time to the public in August of that year. Further gifts by the Boyds and the Nolan Estate, with the support of Lady Nolan, have added Earie Park 2 to the Bundanon properties. Arthur and Yvonne Boyd were made artists in residence for life at Bundanon in June 1993. Close members of the Boyd family retain the right to visit the property.⁸⁴ During 1993 the Riversdale access road was upgraded and an artists in residence program begun. In the 1994-95 financial year the **Riversdale Refurbishment Project** was completed and at

Bundanon open days and group and education programs continued; significant improvements were made to some of the cottages and buildings on the property and the water supply improved by excavation on the river flats.

A total of 2,200 metres of new fencing was installed to improve pasture options at both Bundanon and Earie Park, but cattle sales and purchases were severely affected by the drought in New South Wales, and Tonkin Zulaikha Architects of Sydney were appointed in June 1995 to produce a strategic plan for the development of the Bundanon Properties.⁸⁵

In 1995 a \$1 million gift by Sydney businessman Fred Street made possible the Arthur and Yvonne Boyd Education Centre at Riversdale designed by architect Glenn Murcutt.⁸⁶

3.0 LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

3.1 LANDSCAPE COMPONENTS

Landscape components within the briefed area will be discussed in terms of land use patterns and circulation, building groups, and vegetation.

The cultural landscape analysis will be summarised in terms of the attributes of nineteenth century pastoral landscapes in particular those of the Shoalhaven River area. Refer to Sequential Drawings c.1900, 1949 and 1997 at Appendix 2 for the location of landscape elements and the development of the cultural landscape at Bundanon.

3.1.1 Land Use Patterns and Circulation

Settlement for pastoral activity made it mandatory to understand the environment in order to be self sufficient and to make a living from the land. The 600 acres of the original land grant consisted of 300 acres of usable river flats and terraces backed by a line of steep hills defining the line of the river and the northern edge of the grant. Clearly the pattern of flooding which must have been quite obvious to settlers after 1842 and 1852, and which was to repeat itself at roughly ten year intervals, was a controlling factor but not the only one. The three river terraces, formed in part as levee banks, would have provided relatively flat terrain for arable production once cleared.

Although no roads were shown on the 1859 Old Roll Map linking Bundanon with Earie we can assume that a track existed at an early date as a result of the frequent flooding. Both a punt and boat were mentioned in Hugh McKenzies letter of 1870 indicating that the river crossing was in use well before 1870. Given the frequency of flooding there was little choice as to where houses and farm buildings could be located. Although no pre 1866 buildings (the main house) appear to have survived we can safely assume that the land use patterns of 1866 which were in full production at the turn of the century were already well developed. It is possible that the site of the 1866 house was in use before the floods of 1842 and 1852.

The landscape developed into clearly structured spaces by 1900 articulated by the ridge of high ground occupied by the main house and its supporting buildings. The main house characteristically dominated the river flats and approaches. To the east

and south of the house the landscape was a mosaic of ten- to twelve-acre paddocks with boundary alignments defined by the river terraces. A single large field along the Shoalhaven River to the south occupied the lowest river terrace. A well defined track linked the house and farm buildings. A continuation of this track to the east linked with employees huts and farm buildings established at the junction of the cleared land and the hills near Haunted Point. Two, or possibly three dams [presumably built around one or more existing lagoons], established on seasonal water courses, provided an additional resource. The shallow valley between the main house and higher ground provided a sheltered microclimate for vegetable gardens, orchard and fowl house and poultry.

3.1.2 Building Groups

The history of land use patterns and the development of the rural landscape have already been discussed in the preceding **section 3.1.1 Land Use Patterns and Circulation**. **There are** three building groups:

- Main house, servants' quarters and kitchen
- Worker's Cottage 1, slab barn, stockyards, workshop and open barn
- Manager's Cottage and singleman's quarters.

Integrity

Despite the loss of many working buildings after 1968 the extant buildings continue to illustrate the distribution of buildings in terms of land use patterns and social grouping during the nineteenth century.

3.1.3 Vegetation

Parish portion maps of the late nineteenth century over adjacent land holdings give no indication of the extent of clearing at Bundanon, or the nature of the vegetation along the river flats. The rocky higher ground however was covered with Ironbark, Messmate and Bloodwood Bundanon gums and Stringybarks which remain today.

Photographs taken at the turn of the century indicate that the river flats were already cleared with the exception of isolated trees. The limit of clearing against the hills in 1900 was much as we see it today. The extensive clearing of river flats and river banks was still evident in 1949, however with the decline in farm production from 1968 regrowth of acacias and invasive exotics has taken place along the river and creek banks. New plantings after 1968 have reinforced some elements in the landscape but have begun to obscure the once dominant nineteenth century elements.

The extant landscape contains the following dominant layers:

- 19th century; Bunyah pines, Norfolk Pines and Pinus Cookii, Port Jackson Fig, Magnolia and remnant orchard trees (China pears)
- early 20th century; Jacaranda (1922) Robinia pseudo acacia (locust)
- mid 20th century (dairying); Coral trees.
- post 1968; American poplar, Lombardy poplar, Weeping willow and Podocarpus latifolia or elata.

The potential of the native Bunyah pine as a landscape planting was well established by 1870 with specimens growing in the Royal Botanic Gardens Brisbane and at various places in Sydney.⁸⁷ The two Bunyah pines at the southern side of the house appear to be the oldest introduced elements on the site, and reflect completion of the house in 1866 and the need to create an appropriate landscape setting. These two trees defined the major approach to the house from the river and punt until the mid-1970s when loss of the punt changed the approach emphasis from a river crossing via Bamerang to road access from the west via Cambewarra.

This western approach was also identified by two introduced native pine trees planted in the nineteenth century. Historical photographs from the 1890s show a pine tree, similar to those at the western gate, north of the servants' quarters which identified a track towards the singlemans hut. From its height it would appear to have been planted by 1880. This date is probably appropriate for the other native pine trees with the exception of the Bunyah Pines, which may have been planted earlier.

Close to the main house, a large single Moreton Bay fig tree shelters the south elevation. Both introduced and local Illawarra fig trees grow vigorously in the Shoalhaven district climate. Specimens were planted in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries on properties near Milton and at Jindyandy, their spreading canopies providing both shade and shelter. This specimen was probably planted for shade but may have been planted as a memorial; one was planted as a memorial outside the former Numbaa Council Offices in the mid-nineteenth century (see Shoalhaven Heritage Study).

The social importance of the eastern front of the house was expressed in the nineteenth century semi-circular formal garden adjacent to the orchard and vegetable gardens. The remaining elements of this garden include a large Magnolia tree on the northern side. The Jacaranda tree planted in 1922 defines the southern side of the garden adjacent to the house. Extensive mature plantings of Robinia pseudo acacia on the north side of the house relate to the former use of the area between the main house and Boyd's studio, part of 'Bundanon Common', for farm buildings, workshops and possibly poultry yards. Trees of this type were planted as relatively quick growing deciduous plants to provide summer shelter for stock in many parts of New South Wales; their maturity suggests they may have been planted by the turn of the century. The introduction of coral trees to the landscape dates from 1950 at the earliest. Two groups of coral trees on the river flat below the main house would appear to define stock areas and stock activity under either the Scott family who occupied the property to 1958 or their immediate successors the Warren family who ran the property from 1958 to 1968.

The use of coral trees for shade and to define stock and property boundaries was ubiquitous throughout the Shoalhaven district during the 1950s and 1960s. The last major planting phase took place under the McGraths and McDonald from 1968. In the process of creating a 'nineteenth century landscape' American Poplars were used to re-define an existing road to the river, weeping willows were planted at the lagoon/dam and a group of ubiquitous Lombardy poplars was planted on the ridge to the east of the main house. These plantings were characterised by their fast

growing deciduous character which would achieve maximum impact in the shortest time. Close to the main house Boyd's adopted sculpture garden was set out by the McGraths and McDonald to reflect the underlying geometry of 'Bundanon Common' as defined by the western approach road and the northern boundary of the 'Common'. This garden area was progressively implemented and reinforced by Arthur Boyd after 1979.

3.2 CULTURAL LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Oral records, historical photographs and the surviving physical evidence indicate that the landscape patterns established by the late nineteenth century at Bundanon remain essentially intact with twentieth century overlays. The cultural landscape at Bundanon illustrates the principal characteristics of nineteenth century pastoral estates, their social and working structure and the distinctive way of life experienced in the Shoalhaven River valley during the nineteenth century on this and nearby properties. Attributes which clearly illustrate this are; the location of the main house; a range of nineteenth century vernacular buildings; the patterns of land use and introduced vegetation; and the self contained nature of the property.

close association with Dr Kenneth McKenzie who built Bundanon in 1866 as the centre of his family holdings (H1). The cultural landscape setting of Bundanon is regionally important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of nineteenth century pastoral landscapes, their social and working structure and the distinctive way of life experienced in the Shoalhaven River valley during the nineteenth century on this and nearby properties. Attributes which clearly illustrate this are; the location of the house; a range of nineteenth century vernacular buildings; the patterns of land use; and the self contained nature of the property (B2, D2). The property is important at Regional level for its aesthetic characteristics which are implicit in the landscape qualities of the place, the Victorian Georgian house and the associated vernacular buildings (E1).

Bundanon is highly valued by the wider community for; cultural and educational values implicit in the ongoing artists program; social associations implicit in links with local families; and symbolic associations implicit in the wider landscape which featured in the work of international painter Arthur Boyd (G1). In this respect the property is directly associated at national level with Arthur Boyd whose return to Australia and the Shoalhaven, rests on Bundanon (H1).