



## Scots who made their mark on.....

### *The History of Australia 1: William Paterson*



#### A Rum Do

Lt-Col William Paterson, F.R.S. the son of a gardener, born near Forfar in 1755, had crisis management thrust upon him when for just under two years beginning in March 1806 he was called from a relatively peaceful posting as Governor of Northern Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) where he was indulging his consuming passions of colonial exploration and botany to take over as Governor of New South Wales.



As a member of the N.S.W. Corps he had previously helped to run the territory in two separate spells of around eighteen months — in the mid 1790's as right hand man to the first Governor Captain Arthur Phillip and at the turn of the century, as Lieutenant-Governor to Governor Phillip King. The first of these roles was a difficult apprenticeship for Paterson with tensions between the army and navy men exacerbated by the Scot's somewhat haphazard granting of land, convict manpower and influence to military commanders.

His third period of responsibility for the welfare of N.S.W. was necessary because of The Rum Puncheon Rebellion in which the sitting Governor-General, the notorious and controversial William Bligh (of mutiny of *The Bounty* fame) was forcibly removed from office by subordinate officers and officials. Bligh had become Governor in August 1806 and welcomed by military and free settler representatives but soon after he began his tenure there was trouble over provisions following major flooding. Bligh received orders from London to prevent the use of spirits as barter for other goods: rum was effectively the currency used by the free settlers. This was followed by a series of major errors of judgement which led one of his officers Major George Johnston to write a formal letter of complaint in 1807 regarding Bligh's abilities and tyrannical demeanour. Bligh also fell out with free settler leader John Macarthur, whom he prohibited from selling cut-price wine to the N.S.W. Corps.

Bligh accused Johnston of treason to which Johnston responded by arresting him in January 1808, claiming great support for such action from the people and effectively placed him under house-arrest for the rest of the year. Johnston's superior officer was Paterson to whom he wrote regarding the bizarre series of events as Paterson was in Tasmania at the time, but he reluctantly returned to N.S.W. only in January 1809. Because of his own failing health and drinking bouts he put effective power in the hands of Lt-Col Joseph Foveaux. Paterson was however, fit to make the decision from Government House in Parramatta, Sydney, that all three main players in the Rum Rebellion—Johnston, Macarthur (with whom he had once fought a duel) and Bligh be sent home for trial. The first two were to be despatched quickly but Bligh was given charge of *HMS Porpoise* by Paterson and ordered to sail home. Unsurprisingly he did not do so but sought support in Hobart, Tasmania though he ended up being marooned on board ship in harbour for many months.

Paterson himself left Sydney for England in May 1810 on *HMS Dromedary* but died nine days later as his ship rounded Cape Horn. This was a little ironic as he had made his name as a botanist when he was sent to the Cape to collect plants in the late 1870s by the Countess of Strathmore and it was said that

on four expeditions he penetrated further into the African interior than any other European explorer had done. His discoveries which he presented to the Royal Society earned him a Fellowship in 1798 and he had the honour of having the genus *Patersonia* named after him. Notably he was the first person to display giraffe skin in Britain.



After some time spent on scientific study in India, Paterson then went to the Antipodes where he was firstly posted to look after convicts sent to Norfolk Island which lies between Australia and New Zealand and then helped to govern N.S.W. (as above). He tried without success to find a route through the Blue Mountains to the West of Sydney but at the start of the new century led an expedition into the Hunter Valley which runs for more than 100 miles North from its entrance 75 miles North of Sydney. He discovered a river and a valley later named in his honour and introduced several varieties of fruit including a peach which is still exported from Australia to this day.

Four years later Paterson was exploring the River Tamar near Port Dalrymple in Tasmania where the North and South Esk Rivers merge. This city is now called Launceston, was for a while called *Patersonia*, but renamed by the Scot himself in honour of a Governor of N.S.W.

During his posting in Tasmania, Paterson continued to send home specimens to the famous naturalist Sir Joseph Banks. There was little doubt that Paterson was entirely committed to scientific research and he was openly criticised for his priorities. The pink flowered *Lagunaria patersonii* also known as Hibiscus *Patersonia*, the Cow Itch Tree, Primrose Tree or the Pyramid Tree preserves his name (*Norfolk Island 1984*). Its tree can grow to a height of 25ft and is seen in gardens and streets of many parts of E and S-E Australia and in Norfolk Island.



Either through disinclination, a lack of diplomatic or effective management skills, Lt-Col Paterson was not a great success as a colonial administrator and his reputation relies much more on his work as an explorer and botanist. The Scot who replaced him in 1809 in N.S.W., Maj-Gen Lachlan Macquarie, said that he was "good-natured" but "thoughtless" and he seems to have been out of his depth when crisis called for firm handling.

There is a memorial to him in Kinnettles Parish Church in Angus.

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## Scots who made their mark on..... *The History of Australia 2 : Lachlan Macquarie*



### "The Father of Australia"

Major-General Lachlan Macquarie (1761 – 1824) a Scot born on Ulva, a small island in the Inner Hebrides, effected a paradigm shift in attitude to time-served offenders transported to the penal colonies of New South Wales like the one at Botany Bay, just south of Sydney, which early in the Nineteenth Century had become a place of hopelessness and squalor and the land around it a decaying wilderness. *He was commemorated in 1970 in the Famous Australians series*



The inhabitants of N.S.W. then were either the indigenous aborigine, voluntary settlers, convicts or time-served convicts with no means of returning to Britain. The last two groups were regarded with suspicion and very little sympathy by the free settlers, understandably so but they were cruelly exploited and used as slaves.

One of Macquarie's controversial big ideas was the rehabilitation into society of the convicted persons in order to create a new society as he believed their continued ostracism could lead only to further unhappiness and strife in society at large. This approach, naturally, encountered much prejudice both in N.S.W. and amongst the colonial authorities in London.

As an accomplished soldier who had seen service in North America, India and the Middle East Lt-Col Macquarie at the age of 48 arrived in late 1809 as Governor of the colony with a mandate to put down the incipient indiscipline amongst various groups which a series of previous governors (all Naval Officers) had been unable to deal with effectively. The previous Governor-General William Bligh (notorious because his part in the Mutiny on *The Bounty*) had been subjected to the "Rum Rebellion" which was effectively a military coup by subordinate colleagues.



Another Scot William Paterson, (*Australia 1953*) who had been Lt-Governor in Tasmania for five years had been called in on a temporary basis to restore some kind of order. It was he who had sent Governor Bligh home to meet his fate before Lachlan Macquarie took over the reins of power.

Adopting a solution oriented approach – namely, if one approach isn't working, try another – Macquarie set out to improve social justice, but his intelligent "soft glove" approach was supported by a big stick in the shape of his 73<sup>rd</sup> Regiment of Foot, soldiers with a proud history as a Highland regiment though now attracting men from other parts of the Empire.

Macquarie used his troops to execute any recalcitrant convicts who were offering violence to settlers and on one occasion sent some of his troops to catch such men who had "gone bush" and hang them literally "up a gum tree". However he is remembered more for establishing infrastructure, supervising the building of roads, market-places, schools, banks, churches and an equitable justice system. One of Macquarie's major achievements was the establishment of civil courts in 1814 which brought about the country's Second and Third Charters (*Australia 1974*) of Justice in 1814 and 1824 respectively.



Within four years as Governor of N.S.W. Macquarie had restored order to the coastal strip and created a series of small settlements to which he gave Scottish names, such as Argyll and Glencoe, the plans for which he laid down himself. The newly established security of the area then made it possible for exploration of the interior to begin. For example in May 1813 he commissioned Gregory Blaxland, W.C.Wentworth and William



Lawson (*Australia 1963 and 1973*) to cross the Blue Mountains which lie 40 miles west of Sydney. Previously this sandstone plateau with astonishing gorges and rock formations had been known only to the aborigines and to settlers they were thought to be impassable and a means of retaining escaped convicts. Macquarie rewarded the trio of explorers with a grant of 1000 acres each and six months later sent a further expedition led by surveyor George Evans to corroborate the discoveries and to determine if the land beyond was good for farming and settlement. By July of the following year Evans and his party had identified a number of rivers, one of which was named after Macquarie and the site of what was to become the city of Bathurst, the oldest interior settlement 115 miles from the coast. Macquarie then commissioned the building of a road across the mountains which was completed early in 1815 by convict labour. This road facilitated both settlement and the transporting to the coast of the area's rich resources such as coal and shale. Macquarie commissioned other surveyors to set out in different directions to look for places which could be settled, including Tasmania where he called for more order in the development of the City of Hobart.. One of these surveyors, John Oxley, went on to discover and survey sites in what is now Queensland.

Ten years into the new century there were more ex-cons than free settlers in the coastal strip east the of the Blue Mountains. Macquarie insisted that they be regarded as equals in the fledging colony and appointed several of these "emancipants" to official government positions. Macquarie was also responsible for officially recognising the new name of the colony for although Matthew Flinders, the first man to circumnavigate the island continent had suggested the name, meaning Southern Land, Macquarie was the first to write it into an official document, in 1817.

Although sent to rectify problems and be imaginative with solutions, Macquarie undoubtedly adopted controversial approaches and his policies and programmes were expensive and resented by the Colonial Office in London, who were loathe to provide funds from Britain for his projects.. His written belief that freed convicts made better Australians than the free white settlers did not go down well. However, an enquiry by the Select Committee on Transportation in 1812, demanded by these Exclusives (the free whites) into Macquarie's enlightened approach to treating convicts cautiously approved his methods and these were to be tested with a large influx of both kind of settlers following the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815.

Prominent Exclusives continued to lobby against him at Westminster and following a further investigation into conditions in the colony—in the form of a Royal Commission of Enquiry by English Judge J. T. Bigge, Chief Justice of Trinidad, begun in 1819, Macquarie's tenure as Governor was forced to an end. He returned to London as the longest serving Governor in the history of N.S.W. Very much dismayed by London's reaction to his enlightened work and denied even a baronetcy, far less a deserved peerage, the superannuated Macquarie tried to argue that he had been misrepresented but died a disappointed man in 1824. His body was buried in his native soil and the inscription on his headstone in a remote Hebridean location—see photo of his mausoleum opposite—declares that he was "The Father of Australia".

History has been kinder to Lachlan Macquarie than contemporary estimations both in NSW and London, attested by wide philatelic recognition since the 1960's. He is seen by many as a man who saw the future Dominion of Australia not just as a dumping ground for criminals but as a new country of many talents where every settler irrespective of how he or she had arrived there was welcome to participate in its development and, having paid their debts to society and being willing to behave, was to be regarded with equanimity.

Many places in Australia have been named in his honour, some commemorated on stamps....



*The Ross Bridge in Tasmania over the Macquarie River (2004), one of several rivers named after him.*



*Macquarie Lighthouse (1968 below and 2002) - Australia's first lighthouse, operational since 1818.*



*Left Coalport Plate from Governor and Mrs Macquarie's dinner service (1995)*



*A.A.T. 1983 Macquarie Island Shag. The island is 1000 km S-E of Tasmania.*

*(A 2002 A.A.T. stamp—not shown—shows a Wandering Albatross at Macquarie Base)*



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