

Bulletin of Maitland and District Historical Society Inc.

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A well-dressed Maitland man

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*The Aims of the Society are to
Discover, Record, Preserve, Advise on and Teach the History of Maitland and the
District*

Maitland and District Historical Society Inc.

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Location: 3 Cathedral Street Maitland (opposite Bishop's House)

Lecture meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month from 5:30-7.00pm as a forum for lectures, talks and presentations.

Committee meetings are held on the third Tuesday of even months from 5:30-7.00pm.

General meetings are held on the third Tuesday of odd months from 5:30-7.00pm.

Members are invited to attend all monthly meetings.

Meetings are held at the Society's rooms, 3 Cathedral Street Maitland.

Membership fees : \$25 (single) and \$35 (double / family)

The rooms are open between 11 and 3 on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

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Bulletin contributions are being sought. Please contact the Society via email
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Editor's Notes:

In the 1800s it was generally accepted that respectable women were only ever mentioned in newspapers and other public documents on a few occasions, such as when they were born, when they married, and when they died. A version of this respectable anonymity persisted long into the twentieth century: a married woman tended to be known through her husband's name and not her own. That is, Mrs John Smith rather than Mrs Jane Smith.

Respectable anonymity was prohibited to convict women. Their lives, as long as they were unfree, were matters of public record.

In this Bulletin we look at the life of one particular convict woman, who, for most of her life, was known as Ann Glass. My husband and I had first come across her while researching our 2019 book *The Centenary of Trinity House Lochinvar 1919 – 2019*. We have recently taken up the story of her life once again.

The Bulletin finishes with two articles, versions of which have appeared in the *Maitland Mercury* Our Past series.

The Ex-Convict Ann Glass

By Lisa and Allan Thomas

Ann Glass lived a life which was out of the ordinary. Of her early identity the only precise thing that can be said is that her name was Ann. Her surname has variously been given as Hubbard or Hibbert, and official documents record that she was born in Shropshire in 1796. In 1811 Ann was convicted of housebreaking at the Stafford Assizes and was sentenced to seven years imprisonment. In 1813 she was transported on the convict ship the "Wanstead". She was identified as a country servant.

In 1815 Ann was a prisoner in the Newcastle area and was sent to Sydney for medical attention. By 1818 Ann was assigned in the Windsor area.

In 1818 34 year old convict Thomas Wright, who was also in Windsor, petitioned the Colonial authorities to be permitted to marry Ann. Permission was granted, but there were apparently cracks in the marriage.

In 1823 Thomas Wright was transferred to Port Macquarie and that April he successfully petitioned for his wife Ann Wright to be able to join him there. Ann, however, would not go.

On 5 May 1824 Thomas Wright reported to the Colonial authorities that his wife was living in adultery near Windsor with a convict named John Glass. John Glass had been convicted at the Warwick Assizes and had arrived in the colony in 1814 on the "General Hewitt" with a 14 year sentence.

Despite the accusation of adultery, on 5 July 1824 Ann Wright obtained her Certificate of Freedom.

On 17 June 1825 Wright petitioned to have his wife "dealt with" as she was still living with John Glass. Whatever "dealt with" meant, nothing happened. In 1827 Thomas Wright died. He was buried in the Newcastle Christ Church Cathedral burial ground.

At some point Ann Wright and John Glass moved to the Maitland area. In 1828 John became a free man and in 1829 he and Ann legitimized their relationship in a Church of England ceremony at Luskintyre. Ann now had the surname Glass.

For years Ann and John, who was a sawyer, lived quietly. Together they worked for various settler families in the area, including for the Ogilvies at Merton.

Something altered in the 1840s, however.

In 1843, at the age of 49, Ann was convicted of the theft of money at Singleton and was sentenced to hard labour at the Parramatta factory.

In 1856, when she was 62, she was again convicted, this time of the theft of a quantity of flour and sugar. Her sentence was two months in Maitland gaol, although she was transferred to Newcastle.

A third theft occurred in May 1859. The circumstances of the theft and the subsequent trial were reported in the *Maitland Mercury* of 8 November 1859.

Ann had begun employment as a washerwoman at the Lochinvar Church of England parsonage. The Lochinvar priest at that time was the Rev. Lovick Tyrrell, the nephew of the Newcastle bishop. Ann was accused of stealing money from the moneybox of a gentleman named John Jacobs who had been staying with Lovick Tyrrell.

It was subsequently noted that Ann had paid down money that she had owed to two Lochinvar shopkeepers.

A search warrant was executed at Ann and John's house in Lochinvar. The kitchen was searched and then the bedroom. In the bedroom between the weatherboards and a batten money was uncovered, which Jacobs identified.

Ann and John Glass were both taken before a magistrate and, after being cautioned, Ann confessed to taking the money. John ultimately was not charged.

Ann, who was now 65, was convicted in the Maitland Quarter Sessions after a jury deliberation of fifteen minutes. She was not defended. She was sentenced to 12 months hard labour in Darlinghurst gaol.

The official account proves that Ann's husband John was still alive in 1859 and that the two were living together in Lochinvar in straightened circumstances.

Ann's later years are a mystery. There is no record of where she might have been living between 1860 and 1875. It might be supposed that she and John reunited after her release from gaol but after 1859 John Glass disappears from all documents. There is no evidence he is buried in Lochinvar.

Ann Glass died in Lochinvar in 1875 at the age of 80 (NSW BDM). She is buried in the Lochinvar Anglican cemetery. Her gravestone has her age, erroneously, as 74.

Who might have paid for Ann's burial and her headstone? There are no official records which show that Ann and John ever had children. Had Ann managed to save enough money? One possible benefactor might have been the Rev. Charles Walsh, the Lochinvar priest at the time of Ann's death. Whoever was responsible, Ann Glass had a decent Christian burial and a small headstone.



The headstone of Anne Glass in the Lochinvar Anglican cemetery. Photograph taken by Allan Thomas, 2024.

Dresses and Dressmaking in Colonial Maitland

By Lisa Thomas

Maitland women in the 1800s wanted to be as well-dressed as they could afford. No woman wanted to be unfashionable or behind the times, although being fashionably dressed was not always easy,

Throughout the colonial period Australian fashion took its lead from England and France. Knowledge of the latest fashions arrived by ship from periodicals such as "The Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine", and from immigrants and letters.

Of course, by the time Maitland women became aware of the latest styles those styles might have been over a year out of date.

During the 19th century dressmaking fabrics generally had to be imported. They were then brought up to Maitland from Sydney by merchant ships, which arrived in the local area as early as the 1820s.

In 1828 the storeship "St Michael", which was moored in Morpeth, carried both light weight cottons and heavier fabrics. In 1866 Robert Little ("late of Sydney") advertised in the *Maitland Mercury* that he was selling materials suitable for dresses including prints, muslins, and coburgs. In the 1868 *Mercury* local merchants Wolfe and Gorrick offered the most "recherché" dressmaking fabrics including Japanese silks and French muslins.

For much of the 1800s all dresses were made entirely by hand, and might actually have been hand sewn at home, for the ability to sew was then an essential female skill. Most women would have been able to sew a simple dress and the underslips which went beneath it.

It is difficult to know how many dresses a woman might have owned. Even middle-class women might have had only one or two new dresses a year. Fabric was expensive, so dresses were regularly adapted and reused. When styles changed, dresses were frequently unpicked and resewn in the new style. Old dresses were also cut down and reused for children's clothing.

Throughout the 1800s a dress was usually composed of a close-fitting bodice with a natural waistline and a full, near-floor length, skirt. Initially a skirt's fullness was achieved by numerous starched or horsehair petticoats which were fastened onto a waistband,

In the 1850s and 1860s, the skirt was widened by a steel wire crinoline “cage”, which held the skirt away from the legs. The cage weighed less than the many previous petticoats and increased freedom of movement.

The new crinolines, which were either imported from England or were manufactured in Sydney, were quickly taken up by Maitland women. Wide skirts later gave way to the bustle.

For the women who could afford their services, professional seamstresses were available to make special or complicated outfits. In 1843 only one Maitland woman was identified as a professional seamstress. By 1878 this number had risen to twelve.

Professional seamstresses usually employed several girls as apprentices. They also took on untrained girls who were assigned tasks such as ironing, hemming, and sewing on buttons.

A good seamstress, with a top-quality apprentice to help her, could sew only three ordinary bodices a week, and only two if the bodice was elaborate. Skirts would take roughly the same time to complete.

After 1880, home dressmaking was simplified when both dress patterns and practical sewing machines became locally available. In the 1890s the Singer Sewing Machine Company had an agent in East Maitland. The Singer Company later opened its own store in the High Street.



Dress with crinoline



Dress with bustle

Those Magnificent Maitland Men on Their 2-Wheelers

By Allan Thomas

The Tour de France bicycle race began in 1903. In Maitland cycle racing started much earlier.

The “modern” bicycle arrived in Australia in the 1860s. Cycling was a recreational activity for men and women. It was also taken up by workers such as miners and shearers who needed to travel for work. It was not long, however, before cyclists began to compete amongst each other.

In 1885 a group of bicycle enthusiasts formed a cycling club in Maitland. Its first road race was held in March 1886.

Twelve cyclists entered, and seven were given time handicaps. Trophies were donated by merchants Wolfe and Gorrick, bookseller R. Blair, and S. Fitzgerald.

The race attracted over 200 spectators, and each cyclist had a crowd of supporters.

The race was reported in the *Maitland Mercury* on 27 March 1886.

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The course was from nearly opposite the residence of John Gillies jun., to the Victoria Bridge, thence round the Trappaud Road into the Louth Park Road, up that thoroughfare into Rose Street; then up the Cattle Track to South Maitland, into Regent Street, where a flag was posted to turn; thence back the same route into the Cattle Track, finishing opposite the High Street Railway Station. The course was 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ miles as measured by Mr J M White, surveyor... Each rider was dressed in very neat and appropriate costume.

P.S. Deane was the first to be set going by the starter, Mr Brierly, and he got so far away in his 180 seconds that it was thought he would never be caught...

When turning into Louth Park Road, Deane came into violent collision with a cart in the roadway, and came a tremendous cropper, cutting his hands greatly, and otherwise bruising himself. He, however, pluckily remounted, but as his "byke" was out of gear he got another fall. He was in front at the time and going well. Y. Bonthorne also came down but escaped almost scathless.

(Only four cyclists finished the race.)

In 1892 the Maitland Bicycle Club was joined by the Belmore Bicycle Club. Newcastle, Singleton, and Muswellbrook also formed clubs, and they frequently competed against each other in both track and road races.

In 1899 the Maitland Bicycle Club had 78 members, including men from many of the city's leading families such as Gillies, Dimmock, Cohen, and Cracknell.

Track racing at the sports ground was hugely popular with cyclists and spectators. A 1901 race day had 173 entries, many coming from as far as Sydney.

The Maitland road race courses included Lorn to Woodville and return, Maitland to Kurri Kurri and back, East Maitland to Belmore bridge via Largs, Campbell's Hill to Black Hill and back, and twice around Campbell's Hill to the Old Toll Bar. Races frequently attracted 25 or more cyclists.

A race was held in 1899 from the Belmore Hotel through Lochinvar up Harper's Hill and then back to Lochinvar. Perhaps the competitors were aware of the poem "A New Lochinvar", printed in the *Sydney Evening News* (16 May 1896).

Oh, young Lochinvar has come out of the West
Of all patent bicycles, his was the best...
His envious rivals would have to look far
To find a bike-rider like young Lochinvar...
"They follow, of course, but they'll follow afar,
For I've punctured their tyres," said young Lochinvar.



A cyclist *circa* 1900 (From the Maitland Library collection)