

Listening to the Past

The context for music at Mugga-Mugga



Heritage Festival recital

Introduction

The project outcomes in relation to Mugga-Mugga are presented as a 20-minute encapsulation in sound-recordings ('sound world') of the years in which the cottage was occupied with family life, c. 1838-1980s. The Mugga-Mugga sound world is based on the house museum's sheet music and gramophone record collections, historical records, oral history and memoirs as well as drawing on previous research into the music of Australian rural life. As such, there is a strong element of informed speculation underpinning the re-enactment and recreation of the musical life of the cottage. I make no apologies for this approach. Music is an art form that takes life from those who perform it. The project has enabled ordinary Canberrans to make music in the spirit of those who did so in an earlier era, using the original instruments (fiddle and piano) and the house music collections. It has connected their memories; their emotions and their stories with those who lived at Mugga-Mugga and with the music repertoire likely to have been heard there. In a 1993 oral history interview with Pip Giovanelli, Sylvia Curley responded to the interviewer remarking that the piano 'needs a tune [up]' that she wanted to get the Mugga-Mugga piano 'cleaned up'. It was clear that she wanted the piano to be in working order, as it had been when the house was occupied. It is safe to assume that she hoped that the restored cottage and the music it could generate would be a way of redefining the importance of community in twenty-first century Canberra.

Description of the Residence

When surveyed in 1912, it consisted of a dairy, buggy shed, fowl house, cattle yards and horse yards as well as the home cottage and detached kitchen. The slab outbuildings listed have not survived. The home buildings are constructed of stone, slab, brick, shingles, machine dressed timber, galvanized iron and asbestos cement, reflecting the Australian tradition in rural buildings of resourcefulness and using the cheapest available materials.

The rooms in which the music recordings have taken place are the Front Room in the cottage which has an adjoining flat, and in the Kitchen in the separate building behind the cottage.

In studying Mugga-Mugga, it has been my intention to investigate what kind of music was made by the generations of families who occupied the cottage; what kind of musical life existed across the Duntroon Estate and what music was played by the Curley family members. There are many brief and tantalizing references to the existence of music in historical records relating to Mugga-Mugga. Like clothing worn, bodily functions, eating and travelling, music-making was so much an automatic, instinctive behaviour that the details were rarely recorded in letters, memoirs and diaries. Music was often the accompaniment to activities that left permanent historical markers, (even if only in the shape of statistics for the quantity of fence posts erected, or the number of sheep shorn) rather than the activity that was documented. For female and male laborers of all kinds, songs provided the rhythm and the momentum to complete dull repetitive tasks but these songs, passed on through oral transmission, often vanished when the tasks were superseded by new laboring practices. In upper class circles, music was often the accompaniment for courtship or for grand social occasions. Newspaper accounts more often provide detailed descriptions of what prominent society ladies wore rather than the evening's musical program.

Home musical performances were occasions when rural workers socialised together, but music also enabled communication between rural workers and their masters. Patrick Curley's fiddle playing was portable and he performed throughout the district, for what we would now call bush dances – and he was invited to Duntroon to play for the Campbell children's dancing classes.

In the era following the 1913 announcement of Canberra as the Australian Capital, the sheet music collection at Mugga-Mugga represents the transition from pioneering oral transmission of music to an era in which the children were taught music formally, with the piano as the musical foundation. Social and economic change shaped domestic musical performance through the influences of increasingly more accessible published music scores; affordable home gramophones and commercial recordings on 78 discs; cheaper radios and the availability of formal music tuition as towns grew.

The Curley Family and Mugga-Mugga

Sylvia Curley's dedication to the biography *A Long Journey: Duntroon, Mugga-Mugga and Three Careers* emphasises the importance of community in the pioneering days of Canberra – and musical performance was a vital ingredient in reinforcing social bonds:

[This book] is dedicated also to the caring, brave families who came from overseas to assist Mr Robert Campbell manage Duntroon Estate. The mutual respect between employer and employees and the loyalty and personal interest taken by the Campbell family has been passed down and remembered by the descendants of the people of those early years.

Sylvia makes it clear that there was a social hierarchy operating in the settlement of the Canberra region. Robert Campbell was the wealthy landowner and he employed workers to assist with the running of the estate. In this case the relationship was a harmonious one, based on respectful exchange of labour for housing and wages –but it was hard physical labour, outdoors in harsh extremes of weather. Workers were also integrated into the social world of the estate wherein the Campbell family home provided a substantial venue for entertainment in the district.

The Curley clan began life in Australia as privately employed farm workers in Morpeth, NSW. Patrick Curley Senior was born at Roscommon, Ireland in 1817 and he married Mary Fahey from Ballinasloe, County Galway. Sylvia explains that ‘two ‘townlands’: Ballymarcurley North and Ballymarcurley South, were the traditional homelands of the Curleys, whose ancient Irish name was Mac Thoirdealbaigh. With their 5-year-old son Thomas, Patrick and Mary sailed from Liverpool on September 28 1841, arriving Jan 18th, and sometime in 1842 they arrived at Duntroon. They were accompanied by Patrick’s sister Catherine and her friends, Anne Kelly, Bridget and Honoria Glennon, all aged 18. The group were classed ‘Bounty migrants’, their fares subsidized by the Australian Government - each adult paying ten pounds and five for the child. A baby, named Michael, was born on board, but died and was buried at sea.

Sylvia Curley relied on her father’s recollections to recreate the story of the family’s arrival on the Monaro. Patrick senior had acquired a large wagon and a bullock team that was used to start a carrier business. The Duntroon Estate used the wagon to transport wool, hides and tallow down the Clyde Mountain to Nelligen to boats that would carry the load to Campbell’s wharf, Sydney. From here, the wool would travel to the Bradford Mills in Yorkshire, and the teams would return to Duntroon with supplies for the station store. Until the railway reached Gunning and later Yass, in the 1870s, the wagons provided the sole transport service to Sydney. Although we have no specific written record of them, we know from historic field recordings in the Oral History and Folklore Collection of the National Library of Australia, that there would have been shouted rhymes and poetic cursing to encourage the bullocks to greater exertion, and music in the camps at night as the loads were carted towards the coast.¹

Sylvia describes the family in a version of the story told to her by her father, re-creating a strong sense of the power of the landscape and the insignificance of the small party of travellers in a vast undeveloped tract of land:

The sun set over the Brindabella mountains and shadows were closing over Mount Ainslie, Black Mountain and Mount Mugga Mugga. The weary travellers had been delayed on the trip by the small son’s sick pony, the only possession the child could bring from his parent’s failed drought stricken farm that they had had to leave. The farm at Cotta Walla near Crookwell in New South Wales, which was later sold, was where the boy had been born on 1 October 1853. The area they had reached was Ginn’s Gap, near the start of the present-day Federal Highway. The small boy was my father. The family was travelling to Duntroon Estate where the Campbells had offered employment to my grandfather.

¹ Warren Fahey Collection TRC 321

I do not think it far-fetched to speculate that in this new environment, the Curley family would have drawn on their cultural heritage for reassurance that they would conquer new challenges, just as they had survived the difficulties of the long voyage from Ireland. Music for Irish immigrants was an instinctive means of connecting with home and drawing courage to face the future. Unfortunately, so intrinsic was the intermingling of music with daily life that few settlers of this era and of the working class documented their musical repertoire in written form. Fortunately, several generations of folk music collectors have preserved a record of Australia's oral traditions, and I have drawn on these archival sources to supplement the information preserved about the Curley family.

When Patrick Curley Senior and his family arrived at Duntroon in 1857, the family lived for nearly two years in the original stone cottage constructed by Mr Campbell's stonemasons at Woolshed Creek. They then moved to the station-named Duntroon in memory of Robert Campbell's family home in Scotland. In 1859, Patrick went to Adelong to try his luck on the gold fields and he never returned to his wife and children who remained on the Duntroon estate.

An old slab hut on the site of the old Ainslie tip was the home of a single shepherd – a Scot called Mr Sinclair. After a flock of sheep had been brought to yards near the hut, Mr Sinclair would wander round the slopes of Mt Pleasant playing his bagpipes with a small boy of 6 years, Patrick Curley following him, enjoying his 'strange music'. Sylvia records that Patrick Curley Junior 'enjoyed the company of the Scotsman and he had a great respect for Mr Sinclair and his music'.

In selecting the kind of early tunes Sinclair would have been likely to play, I have consulted the extensive hand-written music collections of Georgiana McCrae, the illegitimate daughter of the 5th Duke of Gordon who married Andrew McCrae and arrived in Australia in 1840. Much of her music was copied from sources in the library of Gordon Castle, where Georgiana resided after the serious injury and death of her mother in 1836. Her father and his ancestors were patrons of the arts and had commissioned traditional compositions from travelling minstrels such as the celebrated fiddler, Neil Gow. Georgiana's repertoire encompasses many transcriptions of traditional airs, songs and dance music that were part of the music played both by ear-trained musicians and in more formal arrangements by classically educated musicians.

Patrick Curley was one of a large group of children belonging to the second generation of employees on the Duntroon property who grew up together and attended the schoolhouse attached to the Church of St John the Baptist and a night school that was conducted in a room in the dairy house at Duntroon House. These included the Mayo, McPherson, Ginn, McIntosh, Monck, Young and Kelleher families. Children left school and took up full time employment on the property where their fathers worked at the age of 12. Patrick took up his position as shepherd and his brother James worked for George Campbell breaking and training his horses. Two of the carriage horses were named Melody and Music.

In 1866 Patrick Curley Junior aged 13 became a junior shepherd at Mugga-Mugga, the first outstation at Duntroon and he lived in a stone cottage built by Robert Campbell

for his shepherd Ewan McPherson. He lived with the head shepherd - Charles Masters; young Lockie McPherson (son of Duncan) and his sister Kitty McPherson as housekeeper. The youngsters became lifelong friends. A shepherd's duties involved mustering, drafting, counting and recording flocks of sheep as well as helping in the shearing shed and carting the fleeces to the wool presses. Mugga-Mugga was a large property in its own right, incorporating areas looked after by families like the Curley's such as Wilden's Farm where Sylvia Curly's cousin Iris Carnall lived.

It was about the time of his first employment that Patrick received his first violin, and when he was 17, so the story goes, acquired the violin that is in the museum. "Self taught, he would play for hours after work for private home dances and parties." Patrick would ride for miles to play for dances around the district. They danced the waltz, the Quadrilles, the lancers, the Valse Cotillion, the Mazurka, the Polka the Schottische and the Varsoviana. A favourite social occasion was the annual Hospital Ball held after the shearing at the end of October or early November, on the lower floor of the Duntroon woolshed. This event was organized to raise funds for the Cottage Hospital in Queanbeyan - the only nursing facility in the district.

Patrick Curley recalled an occasion around 1872 when the German Governess, to the Campbell children Fraulein Dittenberger and the dancing teacher and friend of Mrs Campbell's, Mrs Henry O'Brien from Duoro, Yass, summoned him to play for their lesson, and there are suggestions that this was a common occurrence.

At the age of 39, Patrick married Annie Elizabeth Tong in 1893 (born at Cuppacumbalong in 1869 and educated at Tuggeranong and the Lone Gully School - went into service at St Johns rectory at the age of 13), housemaid at Duntroon House. Three daughters were born in the cottage on the Duntroon Estate. A late musical recollection from the era when Duntroon had been resumed by the Commonwealth to construct the Defence Force Academy was that of the evening concerts the Curley family attended in the ADFA hall. Jimmy Stewart and Mrs Robert Kay gave stirring performances of Scottish repertoire.

MUGGA-MUGGA - Eras of occupation

The original structure on the Mugga-Mugga site built by James Ainslie (no longer standing) was a one-room slab hut with a door and no windows. It was built to accommodate single shepherds working at the sheep yards, which were situated in Goyder Street, Narrabundah.

Scots shepherds were the earliest people associated with the hut: Ewan McPherson's family; his brother Duncan's family and his brother Donald's family - their son Alex was born at Mugga-Mugga cottage in 1844.

The slab building that remains today was built after 1866 and before 1880 and was originally occupied by James Mayo. The Curleys divided the room into a kitchen and dining room.

Prior to the Curley's occupation, Saturday night dances were organised regularly at Mugga-Mugga by the previous tenants, the Warwick and Wilden families, for their

friends in the district and the staff of the Royal Military College.

THE MOVE TO MUGGA-MUGGA

In 1913, as a result of the resumption of Duntroon, the Curley family moved from their cottage at Duntroon to Mugga-Mugga – where Patrick had lived as a 13 year old as a young shepherd. While the grazing paddocks were leased to Alex McDonald of Hill Station, there was room for the Curley's house cows and harness horses and Patrick would act as overseer for a portion of McDonald's grazing land. The Curleys paid rent to the Commonwealth Government. Sylvia describes her mother's preparations of making chutneys, pickles, sauces and jams – presumably she anticipated a lack of vegetables and fruit at the new cottage until new gardens and an orchard were established.

This was an era of transition, and while the original occupants of the Duntroon estate accepted the dissolution of the station and its structured life bravely, the changes were difficult to accommodate at an emotional level. Miss Eadie Campbell, a disabled daughter of Frederick Campbell of Woden, would drive over on a Sunday afternoon to visit the Curleys and to ask Patrick to play some of the music of the early days: 'particularly Scottish and Irish songs and dances'.

There are references in the Oral History interviews to Patrick working out tunes by ear on the piano, but evidence of names written onto the sheet music and also Sylvia Curley's oral history interview asserts that the piano belonged primarily to Evelyn:

In later years he [Patrick] played my sister Evelyn's piano. This gave him great pleasure to play his old favourite songs and dance music. Many happy hours were spent in our home with music and songs.



St Benedicts c.1890-1900 <http://www.benedicthouse.com.au/history-of-benedict-house/>

Ada attended St Benedicts Convent Queanbeyan and the sheet music *The Liquid Gem* for the pianoforte by Brinley Richards bears the inscription: 'A. Curley Convent'. The Misses Meredith, who provided the dance music for the Duntroon Balls on piano and violins in the early years of the 20th century had also had their musical education at the hands of the nuns at St Benedicts. Evelyn and Sylvia attended St John's school in Reid. Evelyn travelled with mother in the sulky to Queanbeyan for piano lessons at the convent. Her copy of 'The Rose of No-Man's Land' is held in the collection. Sylvia's name is written on most items of sheet music that carry inscriptions. These are primarily settings for violin and accompaniment. For example, the Neue Klassiche Albumblätter für Violine und Klavier von Emil Kross bears her name, Mugga-Mugga and a date - August 17th, 1913 - written in neat cursive script suggesting the hand of a young person. The manuscript bears signs of use and the violin line is annotated, but dates are not evident on the music itself. A data base of all sheet music items is held by ACT Historic Places.

Sylvia spoke fondly of visits to friends' homes and the musical evenings they enjoyed with the Young family who lived on the outskirts of Queanbeyan:

Fred Young and my father, both musical, would get together on a Sunday evening and the young girls, much older than my sister and I, would entertain us singing and playing piano....²

Interestingly there is a connection with the Calthorpes' family in the post WWI era. Harry Calthorpe, aware that the Duntroon Estate outlying lands were to be cut up for soldier settlements, advised Patrick Curley to apply for the 307 acres surrounding the cottage. First rejected, his application was supported by returning soldiers and finally

² Oral History Interview: Anne Clauie-Long

granted, thus saving the cottage from demolition.

The 1920s were difficult years at Mugga-Mugga, with the farmland being resumed in 1925 to be cut up for hobby farms and the low stock prices and general economic depression causing hardship for the Curley family. In defiance of the financial gloom, Evelyn purchased a 1926 Chevrolet sedan and the vehicle was used to ferry out visitors to Mugga-Mugga, 'and, of course, there was always music'.³

Patrick Curley's death in November 1936 resulted in the transfer of the property lease to his wife, who held it for 12 years until she died in 1948 and the lease passed to Evelyn for 37 years and on her death it passed to Ada and Sylvia.

The Mugga-Mugga Piano: German Rinardi

The piano at Mugga-Mugga could be described as a budget price-range piano of the late 19th century. In some ways, this has saved the piano, as economies such as the plastic keys, have actually meant that the piano has been better able to withstand the risks of standing in a vulnerable house, which was broken into on at least one occasion. Ivory keys are more vulnerable to cracking.

It is a soft-voiced piano, and this would have been desirable for an instrument in a confined space such as Mugga-Mugga cottage.

The restoration process involved sympathetic restoration of the piano action and attention to the tuning pins so that the instrument could be tuned.

THE CHOICE OF MUSIC TO CREATE THE MUGGA-MUGGA SOUND WORLD

Musical examples have varied slightly for the 4 performances that I have given at Mugga-Mugga, and I include all of them here with an explanation about why they were chosen.

Introduction

The sound of wind and Australian birdsong begins the soundworld – before George Main –long time tenant of Mugga-Mugga – is heard providing the indigenous meaning of Mugga-Mugga and the significance of the place to the first occupants of the area.

1. Scots Gaelic Airs: Hebriddean Boat Song and A Bhanarach Dhonn a Cruidh; Pibroch

L.F Fitzharding, writing in 1983 stated that 'as late as the 1860's, it was possible for a child to grow to the age of 12 without speaking any language but Gaelic'.⁴ The claim is supported by the fact that on arrival in 1835, Charles Campbell commissioned an immigration agent to procure 12 Highland Shepherds for him at wages of £16 per

³ Sylvia Curley, [A long journey : Duntroon, Mugga Mugga and three careers / Sylvia Curley](#) by Curley, Sylvia, Canberra, A.C.T. : ACT Government, 1998, p.69

⁴ Old Canberra and the Search for a capital, Canberra, C&DHS ACT, 1983 (Second Edition)

annum or £20 if they could shear; a full ration for man and wife and if the shepherd had a reliable son 10 years old, he would be paid £10-14 and full rations. Campbell offered to pay the £25 fare and £4 expenses. With such incentives, it was not surprising that in collaboration with local Scottish Parish Ministers, Highlanders seized the opportunity to escape the Clearances and begin a new rural life in Australia.

I selected two Airs to represent this era in which the predominant music made at Duntroon would have voiced the Scots Gaelic musical tradition. *The Hebriddean Boat Song*, which as the title indicates, originated in the Hebrides and embodies the rhythm of a little fishing boat rocking on a vast ocean. Fishing provides a livelihood for the islanders and the dangers and beauties of the sea inform much of the music from the Highlands and islands of Scotland. *A Bhanarach Dhonn a Chruidh* (The Bonny Brown-haired milk maid) is an old Air I found transcribed in several of Georgiana McCrae's songbooks. McCrae travelled to Australia in 1840 from Scotland and settled in Melbourne, then on a property at Arthur's Seat on the Mornington Peninsula. She brought 4 albums of hand-copied music with her and these precious items enabled her to play and accompany on the piano even in the remote homestead for herself or with passing musicians.

These two Airs were intended to convey the sense of a performance of music from the Old World in a new land intending that the music would recreate a sense of belonging – that despite the long distance from the homeland, a connection with tradition remained.

The Pibroch chosen is an example of the kind of slow, meditative genre used by pipers to hone their phrasing, breathing and ornamentation. It symbolizes the playing of Mr Sinclair, which inspired Patrick Curley as a young boy to play music himself.

Sinclair was also capable of playing stirring marches as is reported in the *Queanbeyan Age* and *General Advertiser*, Thursday, 9.7.1863 in a description of the Hospital Subscription Ball at Gininderra:

The shadows of evening were scarce fallen when the tide of visitors began to pour into Gininderra – Duntroon leading the van with some thirty of its people, at the head of whom was our friend Sinclair, whose pipes loudly (and to some ears musically) proclaimed the fact that “the Campbells are coming”. (p.2)

2. Irish Fiddle Tunes: Taimse im Chodlgh; St Patrick's Day; The Drowning at Bruchless; Cosgrove's Schottische and Charlie's Varsovienna.

Taimse im Chodlgh is an aisling or vision air in which the player and the listeners can look into the realm beyond everyday reality. It is often played at funerals. I have included it because for many leaving Ireland their families held wakes as they believed that they would never see their relatives again in this world. They would only meet again in Tir na nÓg – The far off place. In this context, it is intended to convey the melancholy of leaving family and culture and bringing what can be brought in the form of music to a new life in the antipodes.

St Patrick's Day is a tune played to accompany a popular step dance of the same name

and of course, it is played frequently on the Saint's Feast Day, on March 17th. It is found in the Mugga-Mugga sheet music collection as a violin solo in the Palings violin and piano Album no.17. As Patrick Curley shares his name with the Saint, it seemed appropriate to play this tune on his fiddle. *The Drowning at Bruchless* is a fine example of a tune that carries not just a melody, but also a story of the witch who lived in the village of Bruchless and took her revenge on the fishermen for neglecting her. Such tales were important to preserve in a new country –perhaps in playing the tune, the connection of the musician to the lineage of those who had played it before them in their homeland felt tangible.

Cosgrove's 'Schottische' and Charlie's 'Varsovienna' are examples of dance tunes recorded in the field by Folklorists in Australia from the playing of elderly fiddle players who had learned their tunes by ear rather than from written music. Patrick Curley played primarily by ear and he would have been familiar with both genres of dance tunes. In the newspaper accounts in the *Goulburn Herald*, *Queanbeyan Age* and *Queanbeyan Observer* from 1861 to 1918 of balls and dances in the district, there are ample references to social dances, Irish step dances, comic songs and lyrical ballads.

3. Loch Lommond

A well loved, *Loch Lommond* would have been a familiar piece of music for Patrick and the residents of Duntroon. Many field recordings of Australian traditional music capture this item as a 'standard' in the repertoires of dance musicians and for those riding home after a dance in a high-spirited group. The High Road referred to in the lyrics is of course the road across land- the Low Road is the Low Road of Death, as the narrator must go to his execution. Sung by those at times of parting, *Loch Lommond* also carries a political sentiment in support of the Jacobite revolution and anti-English sentiment that would have been quietly approved of by many amongst the Highlander contingent of farm workers in the district. It was often sung without accompaniment to encourage full vocal participation and the invention of harmonies.

4. Piano Lessons: Stephen Heller's Piano Study Op. 47, No.6 in the 1911 School Examinations of Associated Board of the Royal Academy & The Royal College of Music, Lower Division.

I selected this piano album both for its connections to Mugga-Mugga and for its associations with the catholic nuns who taught so many Australian children to very high standards so that they could sit examinations for English examiners and be eligible for scholarships to attend institutions such as the Royal College and the Royal Academy of Music in London. The album most probably belonged to Evelyn but such Albums were often passed on down the family to each child.

5. The Wind-up Gramophone - Flannagan Brothers

Gramophones such as the cabinet model in the Curley Dining room were popular in the 1920s and 1930s. These machines were used for family entertainment and for dance parties. We know that Patrick Curley used the radio to learn new repertoire by ear on the fiddle and it is highly likely that he would have also learned tunes from the gramophone, as it was easier to lift the needle and memorize the tune in phrases. Most of the 70 discs in the Mugga-Mugga Collection are examples of popular songs and dance tunes from the twenties and thirties; some light opera; some popular classical music and two or three religious popular songs. The example I selected of the

Flanagan Brothers is the kind of record that might have appealed to Patrick. The Flanagan Brothers were an American phenomenon in the 1920s, recording 'lost' Irish tunes at dazzling speeds for the music halls. The recordings went home to Ireland and there started a renaissance for traditional Irish music, inspiring a new generation of young Irish musicians to become more daring - to accelerate the tempo of dance tunes to turn them into virtuosic performance show pieces for a new era of entertainment and recording.

6. Singing Around the Piano -Home Sweet Home

Found in several of the Mugga-Mugga piano albums, *Home Sweet Home* was and is a constant favourite for people of all ages. Although it is often mocked for its sentimentality, when sung, it has an exceptional ability to move both singers and listeners with its lyrics and soaring melody.

Appendix 1.

Newspaper Records

Queanbeyan Leader, Tuesday 18th of December, 1906, p2.

DUNTROON HOSPITAL BALL

Duntroon woolshed was the centre of attraction on Friday last, and from early in the evening, a continual stream of visitors were seen wending their way towards the shed, which, with the shearers and shed hands presented quite a busy appearance. Dancing commenced about half past eight o'clock, and although the night was hot, dancing was kept vigorously going until 11 o'clock when the first division filed out to the supper table, and sat down to one of these spreads for which Mr Theo Gardner is famous. The walls of the wool room were tastefully decorated with greenery. The manner in which the Chinese lanterns were arranged presented a very pretty effect.

The attendance numbered about one hundred couples and the great number of visitors present, was a most noticeable feature of the gathering. Tharwa, Sutton, Canberra, Gininderra and Queanbeyan being all well represented. Dancing was, needless to say, by no means comfortable, but that little detail pales into insignificance, when placed side by side with the gigantic success of the function. No pains had been spared with the floor, which was in excellent order. Ladies were in the majority, an occurrence not at all times frequent at dances held out side of town.

Also the sociability of the gathering could not but attract attention. This paper had in one or two occasions not many we are pleased to say hard things to say of self-styled society, people who had sought to connect public dances in our midst, into exhibitions of their lack of manners, but that element, foreign always to country sociability, was completely absent among last Friday night's throng. Those at the helm conducted affairs with tact and courtesy, and the result was enjoyment all round.

The secretary, Mr. E. E. Hudson, had full control of affairs, and was ably assisted by a strong committee, who generally worked to ensure a most pronounced success. Miss Ethel Hawes presided at the piano, assisted by Mr. William Darmody, violin, and excellent music was supplied to the dancers. Miss Mayo, and Miss Darmody piano, -and Mr.J McIntosh.violin supplied the extras Mr. W Mayo filled the position of MC, and gave entire satisfaction: Mr S Warwick occasionally relieved.

An exhibition of step dancing was given by Messrs. R.Robertson and V.Felton, which was well received. Songs were rendered by Messrs. William Darmody and A. Rowley, both gentlemen received warm applause. Mr. W Mayo, Miss Mayo, Mrs and Miss Butt, Mrs Anderson and other ladies whose names we were unable to obtain are deserving of special praise for their untiring attention to the table. We are informed that the takings at the door amounted to £ '27. d

BUNFROON.

George CAMPBELL, Esq., the hospitable owner of this rich and beautiful estate, having announced his intention of celebrating the nuptials of the royal pair by holding the 11th a high holiday, a large number of his neighbours, tenants, and employes availed themselves of the occasion, and, we need hardly add, to their entire satisfaction.

The rejoicings commenced with a cricket match between thirteen players chosen by Mr. Gibbald, and thirteen by Mr. J. C. Wood. The match, which was an extremely pleasant one, resulted in a tie, Mr. Gibbald's party scoring 143 in their innings, and Mr. Wood's the same. Some fine play was shown. Mr. Gibbald's bowling and batting were excellent, as was also the bowling of Kinchla and Yates, and the batting of J. B. Thompson. On the other side T. Woods, R. Wotherspoon, and J. C. Wood scored well; whilst M. Lachlan and J. Shumac bowled well. The cricket ground was crowded with spectators, including a large number of ladies.

The match over, there was a general adjournment "each to his own tent," we presume to go through the ordeal necessary to a "presentable appearance" at dinner.

The dinner was laid in the barn, which had been tastefully decorated for the occasion by numerous flags (including the National Flag of the sister Kingdoms and Australia) and ever greens. The flags, which displayed great taste, were prepared by Mrs. Campbell and Mrs. Bates, who took the greatest interest possible in the proceedings; whilst the wreaths, decorated letters, festoons, and beautifully arranged evergreens, displayed in an unmitigable manner the scenic taste and artistic finish of Messrs. M. Lachlan and McKay.

Dinner concluded, the healths of the Queen, the Prince and Princess of Wales, Mr. and Mrs. Campbell, Mrs. Bates, Mr. M. Lachlan, and the ladies who superintended the dinner, were respectively toasted with great enthusiasm.

The company then adjourned to witness a somewhat limited but very beautiful display of fireworks.

The bill then opened in earnest, and continued with unabated vigour until morning, when the proceedings were wound up by the company (some 250 strong) singing the National Anthem.

Thus ended one of the most numerously attended festive gatherings these districts have ever witnessed; and too good praise cannot be given to Mr. Campbell, and other gentlemen who like him made "open house to all," this being their motto on the recent occasion of rejoicing. Their liberality, we are persuaded, is thoroughly appreciated; whilst the good feeling engendered by such social gatherings

used, is thoroughly appreciated, whilst the good feeling engendered by such social gatherings will, we venture to say, be co-existent with the reminiscences of the auspicious event in which it originated.

Hospital Ball at Duntroon

A MAGNIFICENT SUCCESS.

THE ball in aid of the funds of the Queanbeyan District Hospital, promoted by the shearers of Duntroon, came off as advertised on Wednesday night and proved a brilliant success. Gatherings of a similar character have previously been held, and although successful, did not come up to the success which attended this year's ball. The night was a beautiful moonlight one, many people travelling long distances to be present at the ball. Shortly after eight o'clock visitors began to arrive and by ten o'clock there must have been fully 100 persons in attendance. Every attention was given to the wants of the guests, and every detail for their comfort thoughtfully provided for by the committee and other interested persons. The ball was held in the spacious woolshed, and upon entering the same one could not but help admiring the taste and skill displayed in the decorations thereof. When it is considered that at 12 o'clock on that day shearing was in full swing the committee and other workers, with the short time at their disposal, worked wonders, and succeeded in completely transforming the interior of the building into a cosy ball room. Suspended from the roof was a number of willow boughs and other greenery, their thick foliage completely hiding from view the overhead portion of the structure. Mingled with this were appropriate mottoes, Chinese lanterns, &c., while the Union Jack formed a prominent feature in the decorations. The floor, too, was in splendid order and, in fact, everything that could be desired was arranged for and the hospitality extended to the guests will long be remembered by those who attended the Duntroon Ball of 1903. Speaking of the decorations we must not omit to mention that this work was carried out under the supervision of Mrs. Hudson (wife of the popular manager of the Duntroon station) who was ably assisted by the following committee of gentlemen, viz., Messrs. E. E. Hudson, J. and E. Waters, B. Scott, J. Keefe, A. Warwick, John Scott, E. White, T. Gardiner, and H. Denne.

Dancing was entered upon at nine o'clock under the directorship of Mr. W. Mayo, this gentlemen being ably assisted in his duties by Mr. B. Scott. The large room proved inadequate to accommodate the number of dancers, but this drawback—if drawback it can be called—in no way interfered with the devotees of the light fantastic. The best of good will prevailed and if no one thoroughly enjoyed themselves the fault was their own.

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Shortly before midnight an adjournment was made for supper. Here again it could be seen that no pains had been spared to make the room attractive. And attractive it was. Two tables the length of the room were provided for the occasion; and upon these were daintily arranged the edibles and summer drinks of every description. The table decorations were a credit to those who undertook the duty, viz., Mrs. Hudson and the committee of gentlemen mentioned above. Interspersed between the viands were some beautiful pot plants and ferns from the Duntroon conservatory, while attached to the walls were fronds of the tree fern, figs, bannisters, etc. The quality of the good things provided was proved by the manner in which they disappeared. The catering was the work of Mr. F. Gardiner, and all present admitted that this gentleman excelled himself in providing such an elaborate spread. After all had satisfied the cravings of the inner man dancing was again renewed and it was not before the lengthy programme of 30 dances was exhausted that the company dispersed.

The dance music was supplied by Messrs. Smithers (Spring Range) W. Snow and W. Hoolahan (Queanbeyan).

At intervals step dances were given by Messrs. W. and A. Howley, W. Mayo and D. Robinson.

The committee wish to thank Messrs. Hayes & Russell, P. C. Hill & Sons, Woodger Bros. and Mrs. F. G. Smith for kindly placing flags, etc. at their disposal for the decorations, and also the following persons who generously donated edibles, etc.:— Messrs. Hungerford, Collett, M. Byrne, J. H. Hudson, A. McPherson, J. M. Coleby, Wm. Pike, Hayes & Russell, P. C. Hill, Woodger Bros. and Mrs. Harrison.

As secretary and treasurer to the movement Mr. Hudson is deserving of much praise as he worked most energetically to bring the ball to the success it turned out to be and as a result a handsome sum should be forthcoming.

Following is a list of the ladies present and a description of the costumes worn by them, some of which were very neat and becoming:—

Mrs. E. E. Hudson, black and red roses.
Mrs. Roberts, black silk
Mrs. G. Blundell, black silk, sequin trimmings.
Mrs. F. Warwick, black lustre, lace trimmings
Mrs. J. Curley, black cashmere, relieved with blue.
Mrs. O. Aldridge, blue floral muslin.
Mrs. E. Woodman, white muslin, relieved with blue.
Mrs. Wm. McIntosh, fawn voile, blue silk trimmings.

Appendix 2.

Chris Leslie's Report on the Restoration of the Mugga-Mugga Piano

Summary of findings and work done to the piano at the Mugga-Mugga Cottage:

The piano, A Renardi German overdamper, was in poor condition with the main problems being the absence of damping. The strings appeared to be fair condition with some corrosion but serviceable looking. The piano was very out of tune as it may not have been tuned for very many years. However, a spot check of random tuning pins suggested that tuning is likely to be possible but some pin tightening might be necessary. The condition of the bridges was fair and serviceable. The action had severe biota damage. In particular, all of the felt dampers were practically non-existent and the mechanical action was stiff. The condition of the keytops and key bushing were fair but covered with debris.

It was decided to remove the action and undertake repairs in my workshop. When the repaired action is re-installed the tuning will be attempted and further action will then be evident.

In the workshop the dampers felt and the wooden mounting blocks were exchanged with another similar second hand set from a similar piano. The stiffness in the damper action was due to expanding corrosion of the lead counterweights causing adjacent damper levers to jam against each other. The expansion was rasped back flush to the wood surface and coated with a sealant to inhibit further corrosion. The sealant was a standard house paint sealer/undercoat. The condition of the hammers were serviceable but poor with much insect damage, However, in the interest of conserving the original tonal characteristics as much as possible it was decided to retain the original felt hammers. The rest of the action was fair and serviceable after cleaning. The hammer rest rail felt strip was replaced with a strip of new felt.

After installing the repaired action in the piano, a time was spent regulating (adjusting) the playing action, in particular the replacement dampers to the strings of the piano, and tuning. I decided to tune the piano to a pitch lower than standard concert pitch in the interest of avoiding string breakage which would require replacement strings. The piano was tuned to A-415. Most of the tuning pins were tuneable with perhaps borderline tightness, but about 12 pins in the bass required tightening. I proposed two treatment methods of tightening the tuning pins. The first is a treatment for the whole piano and involves seeping superglue into the gaps between the pins and the pinblock. The second involved treating only selected pins by removing them and injecting super glue into the pin hole before reinserting the pin. The more conventional treatment of hammering in oversized pins was not used because of the possibility of causing further damage if the pinblock by cracking. Both superglue treatments involve an irreversible change to the pinsblock material, but in the interest of the piano being functional, this compromise was considered a necessary repair. The method used was to individually treat the 12 most loose pins in the bass. It is recommended that if tuning overall does not prove to hold adequately for the

rest of the piano with use and over time then the whole piano treatment will be a future option.

This is a link to a photo album showing the original state of the dampers and the action after servicing.

<http://s1083.photobucket.com/user/Bougainville/library/Mugga%20Homestead?sort=3&page=1>