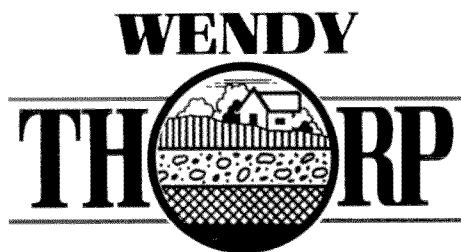


WENTWORTH PARK

HISTORICAL

CONTEXT

REPORT



HERITAGE CONSULTANT • HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGIST

HISTORICAL CONTEXT REPORT

WENTWORTH PARK

SYDNEY

August 1990

CONTENTS OF THE REPORT

1.0	Summary . . . . .	.2
2.0	Preface to the Report . . . . .	.4
2.1	Parameters of the Investigation . . . . .	.4
2.2	Initiative for Investigation . . . . .	.4
2.3	Objectives . . . . .	.4
2.4	Methodology . . . . .	.5
2.5	Constraints . . . . .	.5
2.6	Authorship and Acknowledgements . . . . .	.5
2.7	Abbreviations Used in the Text . . . . .	.5
3.0	Historical Context for the Development of Wentworth Park . . . .	.7
3.1	Phase I: 1788 - 1876 The Swamp - An Open Drain . . . . .	.8
3.2	Phase II: 1876 - 1914 Reclamation and a New Park	10
3.3	Phase III: 1914 - 1923 The War Effort - A Lingering Presence . .	14
3.4	Phase IV: 1923 - 1932 New Sports, New Directions, Desperate Measures	16
3.5	Phase V: 1932 - 1940 Going to the Dogs	19
3.6	Phase VI: 1940 - 1946 Over Here and Over Paid - Occupation . .	21
3.7	Phase VII: 1946 - 1955 Rebuilding	23
3.8	Phase VIII: 1955 - 1990 Gone to the Dogs - Decline	24
4.0	Subsidiary Documentation	26
4.1	Footnotes to the Text	26
4.2	Bibliography	29
4.3	Chronology	31

SECTION 1.0

SUMMARY

Wentworth Park commenced life as a creek and swamp variously known, from the 1830s, as Black Wattle Cove, Swamp, Brook etc. Between the 1830s and 1860 various noxious industries were established along the shore, including, and in particular, abattoirs and boiling down works. The pollution from these works so befouled the swamp that, even after the removal of these establishments from the area, the local council lobbied to have the area infilled because of the stench that continued to arise from the water and mud.

Infilling the creek and head of the swamp commenced in 1876 and continued until 1880. Silt dredged from the harbour was used to carry out the process and numerous sea walls and dykes were constructed as part of the programme. When the area was filled Trustees were appointed to manage the new park and a competition was announced to design the new facility. After numerous complaints regarding the management of this competition the construction commenced and, by 1882, opinion had turned favourably to the new ovals, greens, paths, lakes and other facilities offered in the park, now named Wentworth after the politician of the same name.

Throughout the 1880s and 1890s the park came to serve as a focus for community activities including concerts, celebrations, moving pictures and, in particular, sport. The commencement of hostilities for WWI led to a downturn in patronage of the park's amenities although community functions, such as stretcher drills and polling, were carried out here. The main effect of WWI was the introduction of a large number of timber sheds used to store wool for the war effort. These sheds lingered on at the park for a number of years after the war.

The early years of the twentieth century saw the beginning of the removal of the nineteenth century landscape features. The lakes were removed in 1910 and the construction of the wool sheds led to the removal of the northern sports ground. During this period the railway also contributed to this trend; the rail was run through the park on a viaduct thereby cutting off the northern end of the park.

After the war the Trustees began to experience serious financial difficulties; income was limited and expenses were considerable. Various avenues were explored to remedy the situation including speedway proposals, tin hare coursing, fun park proposals and the lease and sale of various sections of the park. Naive handling of these arrangements, as well as the onset of the Depression, led to the eventual failure of most of these ventures and one legal case. The speedway, however, did get off the ground and continued through to the later 1930s.

In 1932, however, greyhounds made their first appearance at the park and from then onwards the facilities supporting this activity assumed greater importance to the detriment of the rest of the park.

The commencement of WWII caused the alienation of the oval and most of the open space. It was used by the American army as a camp. They remained for the duration of the war. The rest of the park was again taken over by Wool Stores. The only section remaining in direct control of the Trust was the playground associated with a kindergarten established in 1916.

After the war the Trust acted to remove the Wool Stores and relandscape the area. This was not successfully completed until the 1950s. Meanwhile, the park facilities continued to decline with rooms and amenities made in the infilled aqueduct arches being subdivided to create more space.

The NCA facilities, however, were constantly upgraded causing considerable resentment amongst the local population. This resentment reached a height in the early 1980s with the construction of the multi-million dollar grandstand. In contrast to this new luxurious facility the rest of the park was run-down and lacked new and adequate facilities. The situation remains constant.

SECTION 2.0

PREFACE TO THE REPORT

2.1 Parameters of the Investigation

This research relates to that portion of land bound by Wattle Street, Pyrmont Bridge Road, William Henry Street and Park Road. This is now known as Wentworth Park but, before reclamation, was variously known as Blackwattle Swamp, Blackwattle Cove, Blackwattle Brook etc. It is in the Parish of Petersham, County of Cumberland.

2.2 Initiative for Investigation

This research was undertaken on behalf of Godden Mackay Pty Ltd. It is one component of a management plan being prepared for the site.

2.3 Objectives

The following objective was defined for this work:

to provide an historical reference document which defined the development of the place and the elements within it.

The brief for the work requested documentation of:

- the early use of Blackwattle Bay
- infill
- original design and use
- history of the park
- history of the greyhound club
- 20th century and contemporary history

To achieve this objective the following were seen to be the principal tasks:

- to locate existing research on the site

- to undertake new research, where necessary, to comply with the brief
- to locate plans and maps which illustrated the development
- to prepare a report on the work.

This report fulfills the last objective.

2.4 Methodology

Original research was supplied by Mr Max Solling. This primarily documented developments on the site up to the early twentieth century with specific reference to sporting associations using the facilities. Mr Solling was also able to provide useful illustrative material.

The primary lapse in documentation was found to be the twentieth century period of occupation. The improvements carried out for this period of use have had such a fundamental effect on the current appearance and use of the park that it was considered necessary to carry out new and primary research to address this phase.

To this end considerable time was spent in researching the Minute Books of the Trustees of the Park (1901 - 1965). In addition, research was undertaken in the Lands Department, UTA Archives and the MWSDB Archives.

2.5 Constraints

The limited time and budget available for the work severely constrained the material that could be researched and decisions were made with respect to the priorities of research. Those that could not be researched, and which it is considered will yield much useful information, are the Sydney City Council Archives and Plan Room, the State Archives Authority of NSW records and the records of the Public Works Department of NSW. It is more than likely that these sources will provide the information for the development of the park during the 1970s which is, in this report, largely undocumented.

2.6 Authorship and Acknowledgements

This report has been prepared by Wendy Thorp who also undertook all the primary new research. Mr Max Solling generously allowed access to his file notes on the park and provided copies of his article which appeared in the Glebe Society Bulletin. I would also like to thank Mr Roger Burns from Wentworth Park for his assistance and co-operation and for generously allowing me access to the surviving Trustees' Minutes.

2.7 Abbreviations Used in the Text

LD Lands Department of NSW

MWSDB Metropolitan Water Sewerage and Drainage Board

NCA National Coursing Association

UTA Urban Transport Authority

SECTION 3.0

HISTORICAL CONTEXT FOR WENTWORTH PARK

This discussion on the historical development of the park has been arranged in a number of phases. These phases represent major phases of development or use within the park. The phases are:

- Phase I: 1788 - 1876 The Swamp - An Open Drain
- Phase II: 1876 - 1914 Reclamation and a New Park
- Phase III: 1914 - 1923 The War Effort - A Lingering Presence
- Phase IV: 1923 - 1932 New Sports, New Directions, Desperate Measures
- Phase V: 1932 - 1940 Going to the Dogs
- Phase VI: 1940 - 1946 Over Here and Over Paid - Occupation
- Phase VII: 1946 - 1955 Rebuilding
- Phase VIII: 1955 - 1990 Gone to the Dogs - Decline

3.1 Phase I: 1788 - 1876

The Swamp - An Open Drain

The earliest plans of Sydney, up to 1836, do not show the area that later became known as Wentworth Park. Darling Harbour was the limits of the Sydney urban sphere until that time. In 1836, however, Basire's plan of Sydney with Pyrmont (1) shows Black Wattle Bay bound on one side by Dr Harris's Estate (Ultimo) and, on the other shore, the estates of Lyndhurst and Glebe coming down to the water. The creek draining into the bay is shown as reaching Parramatta Road where it was bridged. The shoreline is largely shown as unoccupied.

However, by the 1830s, Blackwattle Bay had become the focus for a series of noxious industries that had been forced out of the, then, inner city area. Slaughterhouses, in particular, used the bay for a source of water and as an open drain. In consequence the waters of the creek and swamp became fouled and a public nuisance. Jevons, writing in 1853, described the area between Bay Street and the Creek:

"It contains the slaughterhouses which supply Sydney with almost the whole of the butchers' meat...these border the creek, the waters bear away all the filthy refuse of the slaughter, becoming thereby thickened and coloured a light coffee brown tint. The foul mud deposited in the channel, giving off a fearful stench renders this place as unhealthy and disgusting to one and all the senses as can well be conceived... Yet on one side area number of small streets and alleys, thickly built up with small cottages, situated but a few feet above the water; they are almost entirely, as might be expected, of the third class and of a considerable age." (2)

Other local industries which utilised the waters of the creek and swamp were the brewery of John Tooth, situated at the head of the creek in the early 1830s, and the sugar refinery located on the adjoining Blackfriar's Estate.

During the 1840s Depression at least one boiling down works was established on the bay, that of W. Bell Allen. Allen manufactured tallow here and advertised that he was ready to receive any number of sheep or cattle for immediate rendering (3). Mr Allen also contributed to the open drain that Blackwattle Bay was rapidly coming to be. By 1843 the area was known as Black Wattle Cove (4).

In 1848 a Parliamentary Enquiry carried out to investigate the situation of the Sydney slaughterhouses recommended the removal of these establishments from Blackwattle Bay (5). By 1854 the area had undergone another change of name to Black Wattle Swamp Cove (6).

By 1860 the slaughterhouses had been removed and relocated at Homebush. However, the pollution from those former establishments continued to be a nuisance from the stench still arising from the swamp. In 1868 the former creek was recorded as being an "open sewer" (7). Glebe Council sought to end this situation by reclaiming the waters of the swamp (8). In 1869 ten thousand pounds were placed on the

Government Estimates for this reclamation work (9).

Earlier, at least by 1866, Pyrmont and the Glebe had been linked across Black Wattle Cove (as it was then called) by a bridge (the later site of Bridge Road) (10).

In 1873 the Blackwattle Bay Reclamation Act was passed (11).

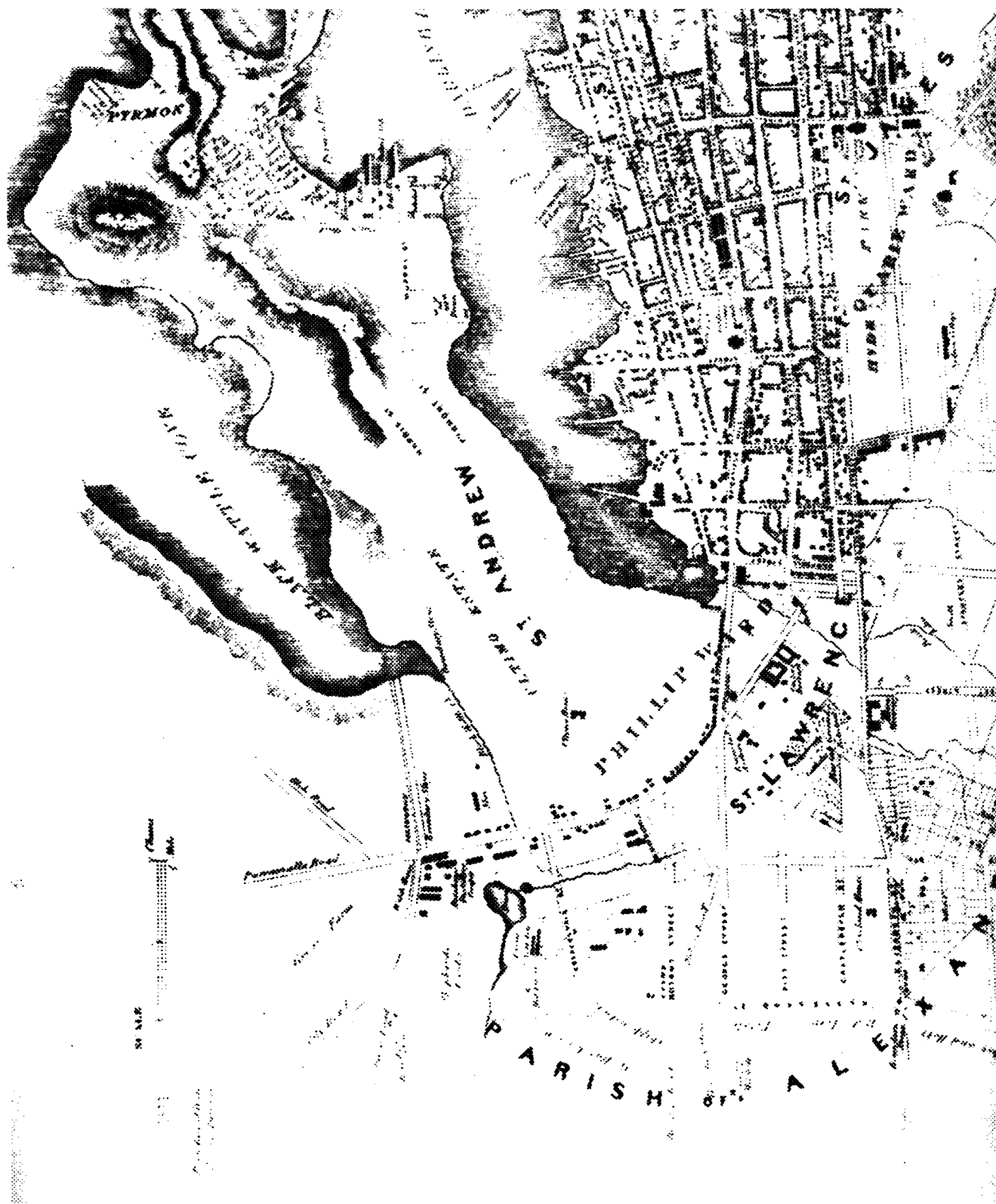


Figure 2: Black Wattle Cove, 1843

Wells Map of the City of Sydney in Kelly and Crocker., 19



Figure 3: Black Wattle Swamp Cove, 1854

Woolcott and Clarke's Map of the City of Sydney in Kelly and Crocker., 21



Figure 4: Black Wattle Cove, 1866

Illustrated Sydney News January 12, 1866 in Kelly and Crocker., 30

3.2 Phase II: 1876 - 1914 Reclamation and a New Park

Between 1876 and 1880 the former swamp was filled with silt deposits dredged from the harbour bed. Dykes and seawalls were created as part of the programme (12). Trustees were appointed to manage the new park and, in 1880, they announced a competition for the best design for the layout of it as a public recreation ground. A first prize of fifty pounds was offered and a second prize of twenty-five pounds (13).

The competition did not run smoothly. By September complaints were voiced over the manner in which the Trustees handled the affair, having called for new designs when the first set received revealed certain items left out in the Trustees' original brief (14). This pattern of management by the park's Trustees foreshadowed a long history of similar difficulties. No decision had been reached by December of that year.

In the following year, 1881, public calls were made for the government to resume the adjoining land to Wentworth Park to be incorporated into it. The land was considered too low and unhealthy for human habitation (15). This was not followed up.

The winners of the competition are unknown. However, by the middle of 1882, substantial progress had been made on the development of the former swamp. Public reaction was favourable to the new amenities offered in the park.

"The operations at Wentworth Park towards giving it an appearance worthy of its name are being fast proceeded with. The ground is nearly all leveled and walls are being made in various directions. An ornamental pond is also in a forward state and a cricket ground which, it is asserted, will be equal in point of completeness to anything of the kind near the city, is to be provided. It is not yet grassed over but the certainty is felt that it will be suitable for playing on before the spring. Some of the other improvements are a bowling green, which now requires only rolling and mowing, and grounds which are intended for archery, lawn tennis, croquet and other games of a similar character and which are expected to be completed next summer. The Trustees intend that each game permitted to be played on the park shall proceed under the direction of a Committee and that persons desirous of participating in it shall only do so under certain restrictions...

It is considered that certain difficulties may prevent the erection of buildings of any character on the land; but even though these provide insurmountable the present operations when completed will impart to the park an appearance which so far as beauty is concerned will be a marked contrast to that it presented when known as Blackwattle Swamp. Trenching is being proceeded with for the purpose of planting trees but from the peculiar nature of the ground the question of their flourishing is problematical it being apprehended that the effect of the salt water which flowed over the swamp before it was reclaimed may prove prejudicial to

their success." (16)

The success of the park was in no small way due to the substantial sums made available for improvements. Between 1880 and 1887 subsidies of five thousand pounds were spent on improving the park (17). In 1882 a city guide described the newly formed park as

"an extensive reclamation made by the City Corporation from Blackwattle Swamp, once a fertile source of miasmatic diseases, but now gradually assuming a healthy character." (18).

In 1884 the bowling green was opened and in 1885 the park was formally gazetted (19). A plan of the area in 1888 (20) shows the bowling club located immediately adjacent to Pymont Bridge Road, a large football ground taking most of the space between the club and the cricketing oval (the two intersecting at a spot in line with Fig Street), the cricket oval encompassing the space between the football oval to a line with Quarry street. At the intersection of the two ovals were two lakes and paths meandered around the main features. Entrances were from all four sides. A contemporary description described it as;

"... originally a sea-swamp over which the high tide sluggishly flowed; it had become greatly befouled by the drainage from the early abattoirs, from the sugar refinery on the Blackfriar's Estate and from the houses on the slopes of the surrounding hills. It was reclaimed by deposits of silt raised by the harbour dredges, and this silt was covered with good soil. Instead of a nuisance it is now a promising park of about twenty acres lying between the suburbs of Pymont and Glebe; young trees are growing luxuriantly; a cricket oval has been formed in the centre and a local bowling club has made an excellent ground in one corner." (21)

A more detailed plan from 1891 (22) shows all the above features with two islands in the lake and trees and shrubs dotted all over the park. From its inception the park was established as an important part of the community acting as a focus for local pride in sporting activities. Local elevens played cricket there during the 1880s as part of the Jones and Furness Cup competitions and it became the centre of district cricket when, during the 1890s, the Sydney based district competitions were established. Huge crowds were reported at the matches (23). Local baseball and lacrosse teams played on the oval in the 1890s (24) and rugby was played on the adjoining ground. After the disqualification of the rugby club in 1908 the oval became one of the main grounds for the newly emerged rugby league and Solling states that,

"By 1911 Rugby League in Glebe had a tremendous following and there emerged a League sub-culture as all embracing as any religious sub-culture. It helped further a kind of local consciousness." (25)

The new league also appears to have established some traditions at the time. The local groundsman noted at one match of 29 May 1909,

"Footballers were inclined to settle a dispute by a fight..." (26)

The Glebe club abandoned the ground in the 1922/3 season because of the oval's poor condition. The bowling club ("pavilion, fence etc") also left the ground in 1901. The facilities were demolished (27).

An insight into the use and tenor of the park at the turn of century is provided by one of the Trustees' surviving Minute Books. It records the work and patrols of a groundsman employed by them to maintain the park. The groundsman's main activities concerned gardening, spreading ashes over the walks, pruning etc. The constant danger in the pursuit of these activities was the local larrikins.

There are constant references to "stone throwing" boys (generally the targets being innocent passers-by in Quarry Street) and on various occasions he enlisted the help of the local police to break up untoward activity. For example, on January 30 1909, the groundsman and the police

"broke up a number of young men near the band pavilion who we suspected were playing cards." (28).

Other nefarious activities included two-up, illicit foot ball games and small fires;

"a number of boys piled up a big heap of cut branches dangerously near two trees - had a big fire which I put out the fire with several buckets of water. While doing so got struck on the arm, back and leg with stones - had to get police protection until I finish putting out the fire about 8 p.m." (29)

By 1906 the Trustees were in serious financial difficulties. They requested the government to assume responsibility for the park. Moves were made to make Glebe Council responsible but these proved unsuccessful. At this time the Trustees described the park as an "eyesore", insufficient funds being available to maintain it (30).

In 1907 some assistance was provided by means of a grant of one thousand pounds which was used for urgent repairs such as the fence around the caretaker's house (31). The latter was located in the extreme north-eastern corner of the park at the intersection of Wattle Street and Pymont Bridge Road.

The situation had improved by the end of the year; the newly reconstructed oval was opened in August (32).

In the following year the Trustees again faced financial problems. Attempts were made to raise a grant of 5000 pounds for the purpose of improving the park by means of mending the bandstand, lighting the park, improving the paths, making flower beds and providing seats around the bandstand (33).

The bandstand was a particularly popular feature with many people coming to listen to the local bands. Another popular entertainment that appears to have commenced

in 1909 was the introduction of "moving pictures" which screened on Monday nights at 7.00 p.m. The larrikins of course took advantage and the groundsman,

"cut down a cypress tree near the ponds where the boys used climb up at nights to view the moving pictures..." (34).

In the same year plans and specifications were drawn up for the construction of a new grandstand. The work was designed and carried out by the local firm of G. Hudson and Son and cost 750 pounds (35). Additional paths were constructed in the following year.

The first major change to the nineteenth century design of the park occurred in 1910. In that year the two lakes were drained and filled (36). The park was lit by electricity in the same year, officially commencing on 6 September (37). A plan of the park, which purports to be from 1904, shows the park as it appears to have been after this work was carried out. The railway is shown as present and the football field was also missing; the plan should perhaps be dated to c. 1924. It shows the improved cricket oval surrounded by three main pavilions and a small number of sheds, the bandstand, tennis courts and a fenced area which probably relates to the playground or kindergarden to the south-west of the oval.

Just prior to the war new improvements were carried out and planned including the opening of new tennis courts in 1912 (38) and the approval, in 1913, for the construction of a playground at the Bay Street end of the site (39).

CLEBE MUNICIPALITY

PARISH OF PETERSHAM
COUNTY OF CUMBERLAND

1888

PUBLISHED BY J.J. BYRNE & CO.
SURVEYORS & DRAFTSMAN,
SYDNEY.



Figure 6: Wentworth Park, 1888

J. Byrne Map of Glebe Municipality ZM4 811.1823/1888



Figure 7: Wentworth Park, 1891

Higginbotham and Robinson Map of the Municipality of The Glebe etc M3 811.182/1891/1

3.3 Phase III: 1914 - 1923

The War Effort - A Lingering Presence

It was not until 1916 that the war made any impact on the park. Prior to that year, in 1914, the Trustees had given a half acre to the Wentworth Free Kindergarten (40). The site for the establishment had still not been settled on by the end of 1915 (41). By 1917, however, the finished building was being used as a polling booth suggesting that it had been constructed during 1916. This site was located to the south-west of the oval (not on the site of the present kindergarten).

In 1916 the Trustees noted that patronage of the various facilities provided in the park had "*fallen off due to the war.*" (42). However the Minute Books provide evidence of the variety of community uses to which the park was put through these years including celebrations, war-related activities and other services, for example celebrations for the Prince of Wales Birthday, stretcher drill for the St Johns Ambulance, as a site for polling booths and for the moving pictures.

In the same year, 1916, plans were submitted by the Railway Department to the Trustees indicating where the railway would run through the park on its way to Glebe Island. The Trustees were adamant that the railway should not interfere with the pedestrian use of the park and requested that it be run on a viaduct (43). The proposal was accepted and the railway, running on a viaduct through the northern end of the park, was completed in 1919. This was the second great alteration to the nineteenth century design of the park.

The major effect of the war years was the construction of a number of sheds to stockpile wool for the war effort. The long term outcome of this occupation, which lingered through to 1923, was the removal of the northern football field and the construction of a new bandstand and paths.

In 1918 the Trustees accepted a proposal that an area of about fifteen acres in the north-western part of the park be set aside and made available for the Central Wool Committee for a period of five years at a rental of 250 pounds per annum, the money being used to restore the park after the occupancy was complete (44).

This occupancy was completed in 1921 and the Wool Committee offered 650 pounds to the Trustees to make good the damage and build a new bandstand and paths (45). (These are seen on the supposed 1904 plan). In 1923 the wool sheds were still on the park, the only improvements to the site made in the intervening year being new toilets and connections made to the sewer (46).

The Wool Shed question became the major concern of the Trustees throughout 1923. The effect on the park was overwhelming; there were at least eleven major sheds located between the oval and the viaduct. The Wool Committee wished to dismantle and sell the materials and the Trustees were invited to make an offer if they wished. However, being in financial difficulties again, the Trustees suggested the Committee make a gift of at least some portion of the old works.

The problem generated considerable arguments amongst the Trustees, the Wool Committee and created much local interest, suggestions being made to create gymnasiums etc in the old buildings (47). By June the stores were in the course of demolition and in July many had already been dismantled, the foundations being left in the ground and covered with soil. New fencing was in place but one shed, purchased by the Railway Department, remained on site. In November 1923 the Committee provided money for a new bandstand and paths.

The wool stores incident highlighted the increasingly difficult financial position of the Trustees. As they noted, their major source of income was generated by leases of the site to cricket and football clubs. Suggestions were made to lease the area between the viaduct and Bridge Road, a piece of land considered by the Trustees now to be "*fairly useless*" (48). The escalating cost of the park with the same minimal economic basis goes a long way to explaining many of the problems that beset the Trustees in the next decade.

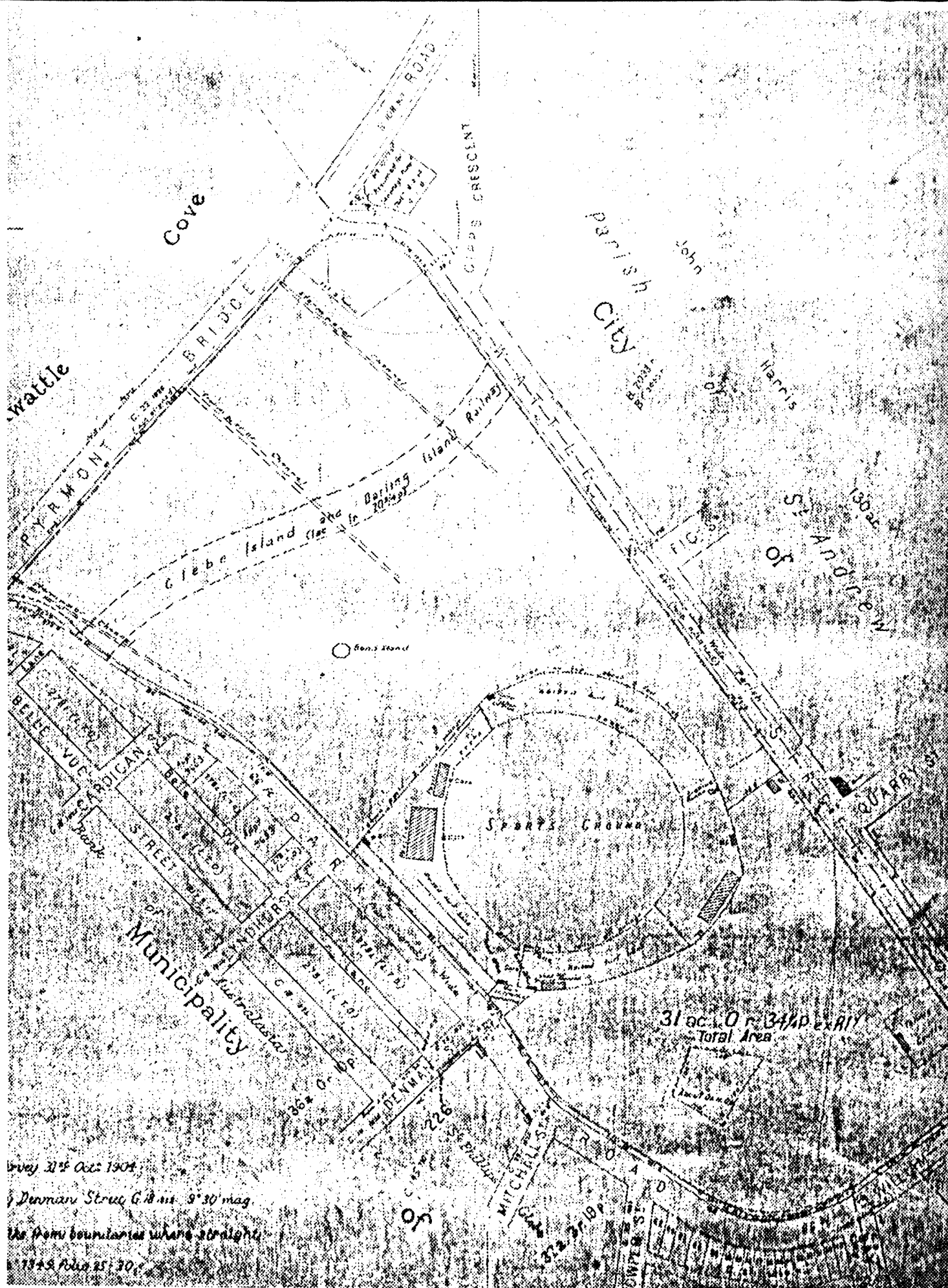


Figure 8: Survey of Wentworth Park dated 1904 (more likely to represent c. 1923)

3.4 Phase IV: 1923 - 1932

New Sports, New Directions, Desperate Measures

The first solution that offered itself as a means of securing increased finances occurred in 1923. A proposal was put to the Trustees to use the oval for "coursing" at night. This proposal was accepted by them and a draft agreement was prepared in November (49). However the plan fell through.

In 1924 one pavilion on the oval and the toilets were dismantled and new toilets and "change boxes" were constructed. Part of a large room under the grandstand was altered to serve as accommodation for the caretaker and his family. During the year there was much agitation for a new sports ground to be built and for new planting to be carried out, however, the Trustees only agreed to the planting (50). At the end of the year major drainage works were undertaken and some renovations on the small pavilion next to the oval. In the same year the first proposal was made by the Trustees to the Railway Department to enclose arches on the viaduct for use as dressing rooms. The suggestion underlines the eye to the budget the Trustees constantly maintained (51). As another possibility to cover improvements using external sources the Trustees pursued the idea of offering advertising space to large firms if those firms would construct large brick or concrete walls around the oval. The idea did not come to fruition (52).

After the "coursing" proposal fell through the next major idea to utilise the facilities for a profit, and one that occupied the Trustees' time and energies for many years in various forms, was the concept of renovating the oval for motor cycle racing. In 1924 a developer approached the Trustees with a plan to renovate the oval at a cost of 5000 pounds by installing a raised wooden and concrete track to support races at 100mph. Not suprisingly, the company maintained that the old facilities were obsolete and that cycle racing was about to experience a boom. The Trustees would benefit by charging parking fees to the oval (53).

The Trustees agreed to the plan with the provision that the track did not encroach on the oval more than seventeen feet. An agreement was finally signed in April 1925 but the proposal fell through (54). The only developments on the oval during this year were the demolition of the old tennis courts and the refurbishment of existing facilities (55).

In 1926 another speedway proposal was presented to the Trustees. This was a much larger proposal than that offered previously; it was accepted and a draft agreement worked out to be presented to the Minister for Lands for approval. This was denied (56). In the following year the Sydney Municipal Council offer to take over the park but the Trustees declined listing as the improvements made to the park during their tenure as even cricket pitches, three football areas and numerous landscaping (57).

1927 was not a good year for the Trustees. A new proposal for "tin hare coursing" was received and the developer tried to use the past coursing proposal agreement signed by the Trustees in 1923/4 to force the issue. An alternate trotting proposal was rejected in favour of the hare proposal. By September of 1927 the Trustees were embroiled in

a number of past agreements they had made which were all invalid. The solution favoured was to ignore them all and consider a new offer from the Australasian Coursing Club. An agreement was drawn up but the Club found it to be unacceptable. Yet another agreement for a similar activity was made with a Mr Morris in place of the ACC agreement. The government, this time, vetoed this agreement until its policy on tin hare racing was sorted out (there was some question of the legality of racing after a mechanical hare) (58).

The following year resolved some of the complications of the previous year. The Morris tin hare proposal was rejected in April (59) and another cycle racing proposal was rejected by the Minister for Lands, although the Trustees had wanted to enter into it immediately, until a formal presentation and plans could be provided (60). Finally, this cycling lease was approved on limited conditions in May and a new sporting activity entered the park after five years of discussions. The Sydney Municipal Council again requested control of the park soon after, in June, and were again politely rejected (61).

Another proposal emerged in this year that was also to occupy the Trustees' attention for many years to come. In July a proposal was put to them which outlined a scheme to erect a fun-park along the lines of an existing park in St Kilda, Victoria, known as "Luna Park". The developers were prepared to spend 40,000 pounds but required certain favourable conditions. The Trustees were immediately favourable but the Minister for Lands was not. His suggestion was to allow the Department of Lands to resume the land on the Bay Street side and the Trustees could use this money, rather than that from the fun-park, for ongoing commitments (62). At the same time another cycle racing proposal was received. Not suprisingly the Minister required the Trustees to sort out all the pre-existing arrangements they had made before they entered into new agreements (63).

However, it was too late. The previous bike racing developer decided to sue the Trustees for various ill considered acts. By August 1929 the police were involved (64) and the case dragged on through 1930. Meanwhile, the newest bike racing proposal had been approved by the Minister but negotiations were called off by the developer in May (65). The fun-park proposal had been approved by every one, including the Minister, but required the Crown Solicitor's advice. It was not to be; an admission price could not be charged to land that was essentially public property (66).

The developers, still keen, accepted this set back and agreed not to charge an admission price. An agreement was signed in October (67). A site for the proposed "Wonderland City" fun-park was investigated in May 1930 although the Trustees noted that there was "*very strong opposition*" from the locals (68). They required an immediate start on the development. By this time the developer was in serious trouble. He noted that his investors were concerned by the decision not to charge an admission price and that the economic market was beginning to be unstable although he was intending to "*wait until the market lifts which I think shall be in September*" (69). An offer was made to pay rent on the site in the interim but, finally, as the country went into the Depression, the lease was cancelled in August 1930 (70).

In 1930 another, similar proposal for a fun-park was received from the Auckland Amusement Park Co. The proposal was approved by the Minister in August but,

although they were keen, the worsening economic situation foiled all attempts to get the project off the ground. After various suspensions of the start time the project was finally cancelled in 1933 (71).

Throughout all these negotiations the Trustees pursued alternative means of funding. A proposal was made in 1929 to sell the land north of the viaduct but this did not eventuate (72). Another bike racing proposal was received and it operated on a nightly licence until the Minister finally approved the licence with "Auto - Thrills". By October 1929 the company was in operation (with complimentary tickets for the Trustees (73)). In 1931 the agreement was cancelled because "Auto-Thrills" were found to be in breach of contract (74). A new company was formed out of the old and a provisional license was granted in December 1931. The lease was confirmed in January 1932 but the project fell through later in the year (75).

By the end of the Depression the Trustees had no tin hare coursing, no speedway and no fun park. They still had rising costs.

3.5 Phase V: 1932 - 1940

Going to the Dogs

Greyhounds, so firmly established an identity with the park, first made an appearance in 1932. The Australasian Greyhound Club wrote to the Trustees requesting permission to race greyhounds in the park. The Club was offered a six month lease for 100 pounds but preferred a shorter, less expensive, option. A three month lease for thirty-five pounds was offered to and accepted by the Club. By October the greyhounds were racing; the lease was extended for another three months in December (76).

At the same time another speedway proposal was granted a weekly tenancy in September 1932 (77). Another, similar licence was granted in 1934 (78). A bicycle club was granted a two night/week lease from November 1933 (79).

Throughout the 1930s the two sports of greyhound racing and bike racing dominated the facilities at the park. During 1933 the greyhound club licence was consistently renewed making it the most successful venture the Trustees had entered into. In the same year the Greyhound Racing Control Council enquired about the possibility of tin hare racing on the oval (80). In 1936 a syndicate approached the Trustees with a proposal to install a mechanical hare on the track for the purpose of training the dogs (81). In 1938 a resolution was passed to apply for a greyhound racing licence for the park (82). By August of that year a draft agreement had been prepared between the Trustees and the National Coursing Association (NCA) to allow it the use of the oval for greyhound racing on twenty-six Saturday nights of the year. The NCA was also to have the parking rights (83).

The final agreement was not signed until May 1939 (84) but in the interim the NCA surveyed the oval and proceeded to erect three brick walls around the track. By July a portion of the grandstand had been demolished and the rest was condemned. The first estimate of work to convert the oval to a Totalisator Track included the cost of construction of the Tote buildings, out-houses and the track. The amounted to 27,000 pounds. The track was officially opened on 28 October 1939 (85).

While the greyhounds surged ahead the speedway gradually declined. In 1936 a new agreement had been reached with Wentworth Midget Car Speedway Ltd (86). By 1938 it was noted that this form of entertainment no longer attracted good crowds. Questions were raised as to the likely longevity of this form of entertainment (87). The answer was not long; by 1939, with the popularity of the dogs on the increase, the speedway phase of Wentworth Park finally ceased.

With most of the Trustees' attention now centred on the oval the rest of the park was left much as found. The major changes centred around the kindergarten. In 1934 permission was requested to extend the building (88). This was the earlier site to the south-west of the current kindergarten. In the following year, 1935, the Kindergarten Union requested the provision of an additional area for use as a children's playground. An agreement was reached on an area 60 x 30' near the roadway near the school (89). The school then requested permission to erect a small brick building (90).

It was not until 1939 that an area of the park was finally secured for the playground and this was only to be developed as funds became available (91).

The only other development during the years preceding the war was a submission to build a petrol station on the Wattle Street frontage. This occurred in 1937 (92). During 1938 the Sydney Municipal Council again made an offer to assume management of the park. This was again declined. At the beginning of the new decade the Trustees were engaged in carrying out minor repairs to existing facilities, including the caretaker's cottage, and in continuing to improve the landscape, for example by grass plots and flower beds near the old grandstand (93). The NCA continued to improve the facilities by erecting shelters in the "paddocks" and by causing a bore to be sunk in the oval to locate water which would supply the track's needs. This was successful and a pump and hose were later attached (94).

However, the commencement of the Second World War meant that the park was to be used again for the war effort. Like the measures taken during the First World War the Wool Committee again arranged a lease, tentatively during 1939, of a portion of the park for the purpose of erecting wool storage sheds. This was for a tenancy of 500 pounds per annum (95). However, apart from this function, Wentworth Park was to serve more actively during this new war than it had during the previous hostilities.

3.6 Phase VI: 1940 - 1946

Over Here and Over Paid - Occupation

During 1940 the Wool Committee made a firm agreement with the Trustees to rent 4 1/2 acres at the kindergarten end of the park for 350 pounds per annum with an agreement to restore the place after the period of their occupancy. The site was to be fenced and stores erected. The lease was signed in August (96). During July the army made its first appearance on the park using it for drill practice (97). This was a foretaste of events in the near future.

Prior to these, however, in 1941, the NCA made plans to build new dressing sheds but these were scrapped and a new plan emerged to build storage facilities at the corner of Wattle Street, at the viaduct end. After tenders were received and the plans changed a number of times the project was shelved (98). During this period the licence for the NCA was continually renewed by the Trustees.

The kindergarten, meanwhile, was undergoing extensive renovations. The work was completed in 1941 (still on the old site) and the resultant school was said to be the second best of its kind in Sydney (99). The Trustees were then asked to set aside some additional land behind the school for development as a children's playground. By December the new facility was nearly complete, however, the Kindergarten Union complained because of the possibility of truancy from the school to the very close playground. Nothing material came from this protest (100).

In 1942 the Trustees were informed that the Minister for Lands had granted the Army permission to use the park for the duration of the war. The army, in this instance, declined the invitation (101). However, in 1943, officers from both the Australian and American armies inspected the park and informed the Trustees that it was very likely that it would be used for a camp (102). The original intention was for the Army to have only a limited area available; the remaining open area of the park and the "leger" section. The oval was still to be available for dogs and children (103). However, the American army informed the Trustees finally that they would require all the park and its facilities. The occupation was to commence on April 25, 1943 and was to be indefinite. Compensation was to be paid at the end of this occupation (104).

By June 1943 the American army had commenced its occupation of the park. By the following month more buildings had been erected on the concrete apron of the oval and an officers' shower was located just inside the gate leading to the rear of the old grandstand. Huts were erected on the oval. By the end of the year all the buildings in the park, except those housing the totalisators, were used by the army as well as those they had built themselves. The greater part of the park was devoted to the wool stores. The only portion remaining in the control of the Trustees was the playground and a small open area from Bay Street to the main entrance (105).

Throughout the war years the Trustees continued their landscaping work. Little else, other than that directly related to the wool stores or army occupation occurred. For example, in June 1945, a large recreation hall was built for the troops (106). Like the events of the preceding war, however, the memories and buildings of this war were to

linger on at the park for some time. Plans of 1940 indicate the extent of, for example, the wool store occupation.

3.7 Phase VII: 1946 - 1955

Rebuilding

At the end of the war the Trustees considered buying some of the buildings and equipment left by the army (107). The army did conduct an auction of buildings and materials on the oval on June 19 1946. By December little remained except one of the old army buildings which was allotted to the Trustees (108). They noted that it was going to be expensive to restore the oval.

The main remnant of the war years occupation was the wool stores. The Wool Committee was reluctant to relinquish the sheds and it was not until 1947 that the Committee was prepared to consider the removal of some of these buildings. By the end of that year the majority of the park remained occupied by sheds although several had been demolished and others were in the course of demolition (109). It was not until the end of 1954 that the final wool store was removed from the park (110).

Dog racing recommended at Wentworth Park on 26 December, 1946 (111). The NCA heralded its re-occupation by planning to considerably refurbish its facilities including redeveloping the old grandstand and creating two dressing rooms, and rooms for the ambulance, police, committee and the like (112). In 1947 plans were put forward for a press room (113).

During 1948 a suggestion was made to erect stands, as Harold Park was then in the course of doing, because it was noted that there was no shelter of any kind (114). However, the difficulty of obtaining building materials in the immediate post-war years limited the amount of work that could be carried out. This problem continued through to the early 1950s.

During 1949 only minor additions were made to the park including new turnstiles. An application was made to create two new sheds by infilling the viaduct arches. However, concern was expressed at the haphazard growth evident in the park and calls were made to create a "Master Plan" to govern its redevelopment. This did not eventuate (115). The major activities of the park development during the early 1950s were the removal of the old wool stores and the re-landscaping associated with this demolition. In 1953, though, the NCA was in the course of constructing new accommodation. This was completed in the following year (116). It included, on the ground floor, a large lunch room and kitchen, bar, President's Room, police, ambulance and two dressing rooms and a Trustees Room. On the first floor was a large assembly room, kiosk and bar.

The facilities in the rest of the park, however, continued to receive less attention. For example, the dressing sheds in the viaducts were subdivided, in 1953, to increase the numbers (117). This was a trend consolidated in the following years.

3.8 Phase VIII: 1955 - 1990

Gone to the Dogs - Decline

The improvements made to the park during the last forty years have been, almost, exclusively related to the greyhound racing facilities. Whatever else remained has been made to "make do" for any other interest group that might use the park. This commenced, in 1956, with yet another arch of the viaduct being enclosed for a club-room (118). In contrast, in the following year, the NCA completed an "impressive" shelter on the concourse of the paddock and was in the process of constructing a similar shelter on the St Leger section on Wattle Street (119). These were completed by the end of 1958. In 1957 Bullen's Circus first used the northern end of the park. Other uses were the Vacation Play Centres established on the oval during the school holidays.

The same trends continued throughout the 1960s. Some renovations were carried out in the caretaker's cottage in 1960 (120) however the only other works noted, outside the greyhound track, were the planned removal of the kindergarten to another site (July 1960) and plans to finally close the children's playground (1962).

In contrast the track was constantly improved. During 1960 the NCA painted most of the buildings and a new brick refreshment room, replacing an earlier timber building, was nearly complete. In the following year the NCA was allowed to recondition the one remaining army hut left in the park with the condition that it was to be demolished within two years. New stands were constructed, jointly funded by the NCA and the Harkoah Soccer Club, allowing thousands to view the events.

In 1962 plans were approved to build a new structure on the oval to house a totalizator. This was completed by the end of 1963 and plans were prepared for a brick kiosk (121).

Documentation for the 1970s is unfortunately lacking; it is only clear that the new and current kindergarten was constructed on the Wattle Street side of the park. Later reports make it clear that, during this period, local residents had organized spasmodic protests against the continual decline of the park. In 1979 an application was lodged to construct a new grandstand on the track.

The construction of this new, very large grandstand was nearly complete by 1983 although it was not to be until 1985 that it was finally finished with government assistance.

The construction of this building focussed the local resentment of the alienation of the park from local use to a specialist group. Newspaper articles noted the decline of the facilities, for example the toilets in the aqueduct, and the lack of action to provide community facilities while the NCA enjoyed easy terms and great support. It was also noted that, when the dog track first came to the area, it was a working class sport that enjoyed considerable local support, however by the later 1980s, the supporters of the sport were coming from outside the community (122). One reporter noted that;

*"the grassed areas are open to the public although few local residents use them. The park is flat and empty; it looks grubby."
(123).*

Nothing has greatly changed.

SECTION 4.0

SUBSIDIARY DOCUMENTATION

4.1 Footnotes to the Text

1. J. Basire. "Plan of Sydney with Pyrmont NSW" in Kelly and Crocker., **Sydney Takes Shape** 17
2. Jevons, W. quoted in F. MacDonnell **The Glebe Portraits and Places.**, 10
3. Quoted in **Ibid.**, 76
4. Wells Map of Sydney, 1843. reproduced in Kelly and Crocker **Op Cit.**, 19.
5. M. Solling, "Wentworth Park" **Glebe Society Bulletin** October 1985.
6. Woolcott and Clarke's Map of Sydney in Kelly and Crocker **Op Cit.**, 21.
7. Plan of Blackwattle Bay 4 August 1868 **LD 2287 - 3000**
8. M. Solling **Loc Cit**
9. **Ibid**
10. S.T. Leigh **Handbook to Sydney and Suburbs.**, 59
11. M. Solling **Loc Cit**
12. **Ibid.**
13. **Sydney Morning Herald** 20 May 1880., 7
14. **Ibid.**, 21 September 1880., 3
15. **Ibid.**, 13 August 1881., 6
16. **Ibid.**, 5 June 1882., 5
17. M. Solling. **Loc Cit**
18. Gibbs and Shallard **An Illustrated Guide to Sydney** 1882., 35
19. M. Solling **Loc Cit**
20. Byrne, J.J. and Co. **Map of Glebe Municipality 1888**
21. Historical Sketch of NSW 1888 from the **Picturesque Atlas of Australasia.**, 90.
22. Higginbotham and Robinsons **Map of the Municipality of Glebe, Camperdown etc** 1891
23. M. Solling **Op Cit**
24. **Ibid.**
25. **Ibid.**
26. **Trustees Minute Book July 1901 - May 1918.**
27. **Ibid.** 19 August 1901
28. **Ibid.**
29. **Ibid.**, 19 July 1909
30. *Minute Book of the Trustees July 1901 - May 1918.*, 19 February 1906
31. **Ibid.**, 18 March, 1907.
32. **Ibid.**, 3 August 1907.
33. **Ibid.**, 17 February 1908.

34. *Ibid.*, 10 February 1909
35. *Ibid.*, 2 March 1909
36. *Ibid.*, Correspondence May - June
37. *Ibid.*, 6 september 1909
38. *Ibid.*, 13 April 1912
39. *Ibid.*, 14 August 1913
40. *Ibid.*,
41. *Ibid.*, 16 December 1915
42. *Ibid.*, 16 March 1916
43. *Ibid.*, 21 September 1916
44. *Ibid.*, 2 April 1918
45. **Minute Book of the Trustees 20 June 1918 - 10 April 1930.**, 15 December 1921.
46. *Ibid.*, 18 May 1922
47. *Ibid.*, Correspondence February - June 1923
48. *Ibid.*, 15 February 1923.
49. *Ibid.*, Correspondence October - November 1923
50. *Ibid.*, Correspondence March - July 1924.
51. *Ibid.*, 23 October 1924
52. *Ibid.*, 18 September 1924
53. *Ibid.*, 18 December 1924
54. *Ibid.*, Correspondence January - June 1925
55. *Ibid.*, Correspondence February - december 1925.
56. *Ibid.*, Correspondence May - July 1926
57. *Ibid.*, 21 July 1927
58. *Ibid.*, Correspondence August - December 1927
59. *Ibid.*, 19 April 1928
60. *Ibid.*, 20 March 1928
61. *Ibid.*, 21 June 1928
62. *Ibid.*, Correspondence July - December 1928
63. *Ibid.*, 6 December 1928
64. *Ibid.*, Correspondence February - August 1929
65. *Ibid.*, Correspondence March - May 1929
66. *Ibid.*, 19 September 1929
67. *Ibid.*, 10 October 1929
68. *Ibid.*, 12 June 1930
69. *Ibid.*, 12 June 1930
70. *Ibid.*, 14 August 1930
71. *Ibid.*, Correspondence 1930 - 1933
72. *Ibid.*, Correspondence July 1929
73. *Ibid.*, Correspondence August - December 1929
74. *Ibid.*, 12 November 1931
75. *Ibid.*, Correspondence November 1931 - July 1932
76. **Trustees Minute Book 1930 - 1940.**, Correspondence August - December 1932.
77. *Ibid.*, 8 September 1932
78. *Ibid.*, 8 March 1934
79. *Ibid.*, 9 November 1933
80. *Ibid.*, 6 April 1933
81. *Ibid.*, 19 March 1936
82. *Ibid.*, 10 February 1938

83. *Ibid.*, 4 August 1938
84. *Ibid.*, 11 May 1939
85. *Ibid.*, Correspondence July - November 1939
86. *Ibid.*, 8 October 1936
87. *Ibid.*, 14 July 1938
88. *Ibid.*, 10 May 1934
89. *Ibid.*, 10 October 1935
90. *Ibid.*, 14 November 1935
91. *Ibid.*, 9 November 1939
92. *Ibid.*, 14 January 1937
93. *Ibid.*, 9 May 1940
94. *Ibid.*, 14 November 1940.
95. *Ibid.*, 9 November 1939
96. *Ibid.*, 8 August 1940
97. *Ibid.*, 11 July 1940
98. *Ibid.*, Correspondence March - June 1941
99. *Ibid.*, 30 June 1941
100. *Ibid.*, Correspondence May - December 1941
101. *Ibid.*, 13 December 1942)
102. *Ibid.*, 14 March 1943.
103. *Ibid.*, 11 April 1943
104. *Ibid.*, 9 May 1943
105. *Ibid.*, Correspondence August - December 1943
106. *Ibid.*, 10 June 1945
107. *Ibid.*, 1 November 1945
108. *Ibid.*, Correspondence May - December 1946
109. *Ibid.*, Correspondence April - September 1947
110. *Ibid.*, Chairman's Report 30 September 1954
111. *Ibid.*, Chariman's Report 30 September 1947
112. *Ibid.*, 11 April 1946
113. *Ibid.*, 5 June 1947
114. *Ibid.*, 10 December 1948
115. *Ibid.*, 13 January 1949
116. *Ibid.*, Correspondence September 1953 - September 1954
117. *Ibid.*, Chairman Report 30 September 1953
118. *Ibid.*, Chairman's Report 30 September 1956
119. *Ibid.*, Chairman's Report 1957
120. *Ibid.*, Chairman Report 1960
121. *Ibid.*, Chairman's Reports 1960 - 196
122. "Heres An Excellent Place for a Murder" SMH 23/2/1983., 7 and "Cleary Steps in With an Extra \$1 Million" SMH 20/4/1985., 76
123. "Heres An Excellent Place for a Murder" SMH 23/2/1983.

4.2 Bibliography

Books

Gibbs, Shallard and Co.
An Illustrated Guide to Sydney 1882
Gibbs and Shallard. Sydney. 1882.

Kelly, M. and Crocker, R.
Sydney Takes Shape.
Doak Press. 1979.

Leigh, S. T.
Handbook to Sydney and Suburbs.
S.T. Leigh. 1867,

MacDonnell, F.
The Glebe Portraits and Places
Ure Smith. 1975.

Historical Sketch of New South Wales
Lansdowne Press.
Sydney. Reprint 1886.

Journal Articles

Solling, M. "Wentworth Park"
Glebe Society Bulletin October 1985

Miscellaneous

Solling, M. File Notes re Wentworth Park

The Sydney Morning Herald 20 May 1880., 7 21 September 1880., 3 24 September 1880., 5 8 December 1880., 7 13 October 1881., 6 5 June 1882., 5 20 April 1985., 76 23 February 1983., 7

Minute Books of the Trustees of Wentworth Park 1901 - 1965

Plans

John Armstrong 32 Allotments Comprising St Phillips Glebe 1842
M2 811.1823/1842/1

Plan of Blackwattle Bay 4 August 1868
LD 2287 - 3000

PWD Plan of Wentworth Park 1887
MWSDB

J. Byrne Map of the Glebe Municipality 1888
ML Z4 811.1823/1888/1

Higginbotham and Robinsons Map of the Municipality of The Glebe etc 1891
MI M3 811.182/1891/1

Plan of Wentworth Park, 21 July 1916
LD 2280 - 3000

Plan Showing Part of wentworth Park to be Leased to the Central Wool Committee"
21 November 1918
LD 5200 - 3000

Plan of Portion of Wentworth Park 27 June 1930
LD 7914 - 3000

PWD Plans of Wentworth Park 1939 - 40
MWSDB

4.3 CHRONOLOGY: WENTWORTH PARK

1836

- Area known as Black Wattle Bay. During the 1830s slaughter houses situated here supplied Sydney with half of its beef and mutton. John Tooth's Brewery situated at the head of the creek also used the creek as a water supply.

1843

- Area known as Black Wattle Cove

1848

- Parliamentary enquiry into state of the slaughter houses recommends their removal.

1854

- Area known as Black Wattle Swamp Cove

1860

- Black Wattle Cove slaughter houses gone however the pollution from the former use continued to offend through the smell arising from the swamp. Glebe Council sought to have the swamp reclaimed to remove the nuisance.

1869

- Ten thousand pounds placed on government estimates for the reclamation work.

1873

- Blackwattle Bay Land Reclamation Act passed.

1876 - 1880

- Swamp filled in with deposits taken from harbour bed. Dykes and seawalls created.

1878

- Glebe Council request Trustees to set aside part of park as a cricket and quoit ground. Agreed to.

1880

- The Trustees announce a prize for the best design received for laying out the new park as a public recreation ground (May).
- Complaints over the manner in which the Trustees handled the competition. Called for new designs when they found they had left out certain details (September).
- Complaints that no decision had still been made by the Trustees over the second set of designs (December).

1881

- Calls for the Government to resume more of the "unhealthy" ground adjoining Wentworth Park and incorporating it into the park (August). 1882 Praise for the development in the new park, still in progress, including walls, a pond, cricket ground, bowling green. No buildings because the ground was unsuitable (June).

1880 - 1887

- Subsidies of 5000 pounds spent on improving the park.

1884

- Bowling Green opened.

1885

- Wentworth park formally gazetted.

1901

- The building ("pavilion"), fence "etc" of the defunct Glebe Bowling Club, located in the park, demolished - decision recorded 19 August.

1906

- Trustees in financial difficulties - request the Government to assume responsibility. The park and "eyesore". Moves to have Glebe Council take over, but were unsuccessful. First moves made during June 1905 and continue through to end 1906.

1907

- One thousand pounds approved for urgent repairs including a fence around the caretaker's house (March). Miscellaneous other repairs during the year including painting.
- Newly reconstructed oval opened (August).

1908

- Trustees try and raise a grant of five hundred pounds to improve the park by mending bandstand, lighting the park, improving the paths, making flower beds and providing seats around the band stand. The latter was noted as a particularly popular feature with many people coming to listen to the bands (February).

1909

- References to the "pictures" (movie) shown in the park
- Plans and specifications for a new grandstand drawn up by G. Hudson and son at a cost of 750 pounds (March).

1910

- Two new paths made from Fig Street to Quarry Street and from ? to William Henry Street (January).
- Bandstand demolished and lakes drained and filled. More toilets constructed (May - July).
- Assorted repairs carried out throughout year and moves made to have park lit by electricity. This officially occurred on 6 September.

1912

- New tennis courts opened (April).

1913

- Glebe Council approach Trustees with a plan to construct a play ground for children in the park. The idea was approved and it was to be located at Bay Street end (August).

1914

- Trustees give a half acre to the Wentworth Free Kindergarten.

1915

- The playground still under discussion. Department of Education to view possible sites (December).

1916

- Patronage fallen off due to war. However the Minutes note the great use of the park for a variety of celebrations, war-related activities and other community functions, for example, celebrations for the Prince of Wales birthday, St John's Ambulance stretcher drill, polling booths, moving pictures.
- Plans submitted by Railway Department indicating where the railway would come through the park on the way to Glebe Island. Trustees wish to have it run on a viaduct so that pedestrian use of park would not be effected (September).

1917

- The kindergarten building was used as a polling booth

1918

- Trustees accept a proposal to lease c. 15 acres in the north-western portion of the park to the Central Wool Committee for a period of five years for 250 pounds/annum. The money was to be used to restore the park after the termination of the occupancy (April). Wooden sheds to be erected.
- Repairs in park included painting the two big pavilions (April), fences struttred, lockers fixed etc (May).

1919

- Railway completed.

1921

- The Wool Committee wishes to finish its occupancy and have offered 650 pounds to be used for erecting a bandstand and paths (December).

1922

- New toilets built and connections made to sewer.

1923

- The Wool Sheds still on the park and the Committee wants to demolish and dispose of the material. Trustees invited to offer (February). Considerable arguments with the Trustees wishing them to be gifted and the Committee wishing to sell. Notes that there are at least eleven sheds between the railway and the oval.

Also notes that the area between the Railway and Bridge Road "fairly useless" and considers renting it out. Question of the use of the park and re-use of the old stores generates much local interest and involvement. Demolition of sheds in progress by June.

- By July many sheds demolished and foundations covered by six inches of soil. New fencing made around park, new paths but one shed remained which had been purchased by the Railways. In November the Committee provides money to erect a new bandstand and paths.
- First proposal to use the oval for "coursing" at night (October). The Trustees accept the idea (November) and draft a detailed agreement.

1924

- Pavilion and old toilets dismantled and new toilets constructed and "change boxes". Part of a large room under big grandstand altered to accommodate the caretaker and his family. Much agitation for a new sports ground to be built and for new planting. Trustees agree only to planting (March - July). At the end of the year major drainage works are carried out and renovations to the small pavilion (November).
- First proposal by Trustees to Railway Dept to enclose the arches of the viaduct for use as dressing rooms (October).
- First proposal to renovate the oval for motor cycle racing which the developer said would boom. Developer to spend 5000 pounds including installing a raised wooden and concrete track. The Trustees to gain revenue by charging parking fees in the park (December).

1925

- Trustees agree to motor cycle plan so long as the track did not encroach on the oval more than 17' (January). Negotiations continue through the year with an agreement being signed in April. Work was to commence in October but the proposal fell through.
- Minor repairs during year including upgrading existing facilities and demolishing the tennis court.

1926

- New speedway proposals presented to Trustees. Much larger than the last including taking in all of the sports ground (May). A tender accepted in July and an agreement worked out to be presented to Dept of Lands asking for permission to go ahead. Denied.

1927

- The Sydney City Council offer to take over the park but the Trustees decline; they list their improvements which include seven cricket pitches and three football areas as well as landscaping etc (August).
- A proposal for "tin hare coursing". Past agreements signed by Trustees (but vetoed by Government) used to try and force issue. The tin hare proposal (as opposed to an alternative trotting proposal) favoured (August). By September the Trustees were embroiled in a variety of past agreements they had made, all invalid. Decide to ignore them all and considered an offer from the Australasian Coursing Club. An agreement was drawn up but was found to be unacceptable to the Club. Another agreement with a Mr Morris accepted in its place. However the Government vetoed this until its formal policy on tin hare coursing sorted out (December).

1928

- Another cycle racing proposal presented and the Trustees want to enter into it immediately but the Dept of Lands refused until a formal presentation and plans could be made (March). The Morris tin hare proposal also turned down (April). The cycling lease was approved but on limited conditions (May).
- The Sydney Municipal Council again requests control and the Trustees again declined (June).
- A proposal received to erect and run a fun-park along the lines of the "Luna Park" at St Kilda in Victoria. The developers prepared to spend 40,000 pounds but require long leases etc. The Trustees were favourable and report to Minister (July). The Minister did not approve and suggested the Trustees allow the Department to resume to land on the Bay Street side and use this money rather than built the fun park (August).
- Another proposal for bike racing received; the Minister instructs the Trustees to sort out all the pre-existing agreements before they move on another (December).

1929

- Trustees informed that a previous tenderer to sue (February). Police involved by August. The newest bike racing proposal approved by Minister but the Trustees want changes in the agreement (March). The negotiations eventually called off by tenderer (May). The Luna Park proposal agreed to by Trustees who then send it to Lands (April). The Minister approved on but had to wait advice from Crown Solicitor.
- Minister requested the land between Viaduct and Bridge Road should be sold not leased (July). The Trustees agree to sale of land bound by Bridge Road, Wattle Street and Park Road extending to the Viaduct but want adequate compensation and another caretaker's cottage built. They also wanted a base for the fun park, south-east of the kindergarten (July).

- Another bike racing proposal received and approved (August). Until it was approved by the Minister the proposal was operated as a nightly event on licence (September). The Minister disallows the fun park proposal but the developers wish to go ahead - will not charge admission (the problem as seen by the Minister). Minister agrees (September). In the same month the Minister agrees to the lease with "Auto - Thrills". By October the company is operating its speedway (with complimentary tickets for the Trustees). The fun park agreement accepted in October.

1930

- The legal case still being pursued (January). A site for the fun park "Wonderland City" to be investigated in park (May). "Very strong opposition" to the fun park proposal noted by Trustees (June); they, therefore, want to start as soon as possible. The developer by this time in financial trouble because the investors are concerned by the non admission price and the economic market is starting to slide. Offers to pay rent in the meantime which is accepted (June), however, The lease was cancelled in August.
- A new fun park proposal from Auckland NZ Amusement Park Co. The Trustees to consider it if they can start immediately (August). The Minister approved on the proposal in November.

1931

- Auckland Amusement Park Co, still keen but because of the Depression they are unable to proceed immediately. Trustees grant a three month suspension (May). Further extension granted to 1932 (October).
- Auto-Thrills lease cancelled because of breach of agreement (November). A new company formed out of the old and a provisional lease granted (December).

1932

- New racing company lease confirmed (January). Amusement Company granted another suspension in February, another in June.
- New tenders received for a speedway (July). Fall through. The Australasian Greyhound Club writes asking to race greyhounds in the park (August). An agreement is reached to stage boxing in the park a couple of nights a week (September). The Greyhound Club is offered a six month option for 100 pounds. The Club wanted a shorter and less expensive option. Offered three months at 35 pounds. At the same time the T. E. Waters Speedway granted a weekly tenancy (September). By October the Greyhound Club was racing. The ease was extended for another three months (December).

1933

- Greyhound lease extended to June 1933 (April). The Greyhound Racing Control Council enquired about the possibility of tin hare racing on the oval. The dog

racing lease was extended to October (September) and then again to December (October). Another bicycle club was granted a two night/week lease (November).

1934

- A further speedway racing licence applied for and granted (March). Kindergarten requested permission to extend their building (May).

1935

- Minor repairs. Kindergarten Union requests the provision of an additional area as a children's playground (September). An agreement was reached for an area 60 x 30' near the roadway near the existing kindergarten (October). The Kindergarten then wished to erect a small brick building which required the Ministers approval (November).

1936

- Syndicate approaches with proposal to install a mechanical hare on the track to train dogs (March). In the same year another concrete cricket pitch created (September) and an agreement was made between the Trustees and Wentworth midget Car Speedway Ltd to rent the oval (October).

1937

- Proposal to construct a petrol station on the Wattle Street frontage (January).

1938

- Resolution to apply for a greyhound racing licence (February). It was noted that bike racing was not drawing good crowds any more (July). By August a draft agreement had been prepared between the Trustees and the National Coursing Association. This allowed the NCA to have the use of the oval for greyhound racing twenty-six Saturday nights of the year and to have parking rights.
- Sydney Municipal Council makes another offer to take over control of the park; the Trustees decline (September).

1939

- The NCA had still not signed agreement but requested permission to survey oval and to proceed to erect three brick walls around the track. The Minister approved (January). The licence was signed in May allowing a three year and three month lease.
- By July a portion of the grandstand had been demolished and the rest was condemned. The first estimate of work to convert the oval to a Totaliser Track was received in October. It included the cost of construction of the Tote buildings,

outhouses and the track for 27,000 pounds. Greyhound track officially opened 28 October 1939.

- The Wool Committee formed a tentative agreement with the Trustees to build stores on the park for the war effort for 500 pounds/annum (October).
- By this time an area of the park had been secured for the playground construction (November). It was to be developed as funds became available.

1940

- Various repairs noted as necessary for existing facilities: cottage was in poor repair and dirty requiring a complete overhaul (April); a new entrance was needed to the park from Bay Street (May). A tender accepted for cottage repairs (May). Efforts were also made to beautify that portion of the oval near the old grand-stand with flower beds and grass plots (May).
- Further NCA plans produced i.e shelters to be erected in paddock (June). In November the NCA caused a bore to be sunk in the oval to find water. This was successful and a pump and hose was to be installed (November).
- First use of park by army for drill practice (July). The Wool Committee offers to rent 4 1/2 acres at the kindergarten end of the park for 350 pounds/annum. This was to be fenced and stores erected. They offered to restore the place at the end of their occupation (July). The lease was signed in August.

1941

- NCA proposes to build new dressing sheds on site of old grandstand (March). However, by April, this idea was shelved and their architect was instructed to design a plant for the corner of Wattle Street at the viaduct end. The sketch was prepared and then enlarged (May). Tenders were received but were found to be too expensive. The plan reduced (June). A new tender arrived and was accepted (June) but it was deferred again in August. Plans for the construction of a garage prepared in September.
- At the same time the kindergarten building (the Ellen de Saille Kindergarten) was in the course of renovations (May). The renovations were finished by June and the kindergarten was said to be the second best of its kind in Sydney. The Trustees were asked to set aside some land behind it as a playground (June). Additional accommodation for the kindergarten was planned as early as September 1941. The Trustees made a grant of 200 pounds. Tenders for leveling and turfing the childrens playground were received in October. However the Kindergarten Union complained about the proximity of the ground to the school causing truancy amongst the children (December). However, by this time, the facility nearly complete.

1942

- NCA granted a further three year licence (August).

- Air raid shelters to be built for kindergarten. The Department of Lands informed Trustees that it had reluctantly given permission to the army to use the Park (December). However, the Army declined the invitation.

1943

- Officers of Australian and American armies inspect park and inform Trustees that it would likely be used as a camp (March). The Trustees note that the Army is to get all the open area of the park and the "leger" area but the oval could still be used for dog racing and by children (April).
- American Forces inform Trustees that all the enclosed area of the park would be taken over on 25 April the occupation to be indefinite. The oval was also to be lost to the Trustees (May).
- By June the American Army had commenced its occupation. By the following month more buildings had been erected on the concrete apron of the paddock and an officers shower was located just inside the gate leading to the rear of the old grandstand. Huts were on the oval (August). Claims for compensation from the Army were fixed at 306 pounds/annum. By the end of the year all the buildings on the park except those housing the totalisators were used by the army as well as those they built themselves. The greater part of the park was taken over by the Wool Stores. The only part remaining under the Trustees control was the playground and a small open area from Bay Street to the main entrance.

1944

- Wool Committee wished to extend lease which was granted for five years (November). By the end of the year many large wool stores occupied the park, as did the army but the tree planting, lawn creation and beautification programme continued.

1945

- Large recreation hall for troops built on the paddock section (June). By September the Trustees were hopeful that the park would be restored to them as there were few remaining troops although all the facilities remained on the park (September). The Trustees considered acquiring some of the buildings and equipment left by the army (November).

1946

- The NCA planned to considerably refurbish its facilities including redeveloping the old grandstand and creating two dressing rooms, an ambulance room, reports room, police room, committee room etc (April). The Trustees noted that it would be expensive to restore the oval (February).
- The Wool Stores still remained on park and they did not wish to relinquish them at the time (May). The Army to conduct an auction of buildings and materials on

the oval on 19 June. By December one of the old army buildings had been allotted to the Trustees (December). Dog racing recommenced 26 December.

1947

- The Wool Committee finally prepared to vacate six of the former stores in the near future (April). However, by the end of the year, the major part of the park was still occupied by the stores although several had been removed and others were in the course of demolition (September).
- Plans produced for a proposed press stand at the track (June).

1948

- At the end of this year Harold Park applied to erect stands; the Trustees felt that Wentworth Park should do the same because it was noted that there was no shelter of any kind (December). By the end of this year the stores between the viaduct and Bridge Road had been removed but the bulk of the park still occupied by stores.

1949

- Call for a Master Plan to govern the redevelopment of the park. Note the unsatisfactory and haphazard growth of the facilities (January). Application made to create sheds in two arches of the viaduct (February). Minor additions for NCA including new turnstiles at entrance and a small addition to main paddock totalisator building (March).
- The Trustees resolve to try and get the rest of the stores demolished as quickly as possible and continue to relandscape the park (July - November).

1950

- More stores demolished between the viaduct and the oval but not anticipated that it will be complete until 1951 (September).

1951

- Four wool stores still standing at viaduct end. To be demolished when restoration of viaduct complete. (September).

1952

- By the end of the year four stores still remained and temporary dressing sheds accommodation had been provided. It was noted that building restrictions were still in force and some materials were hard to come by (September).

1953

- By the end of the year three wool stores were being demolished. The dressing shed accommodation was still found to be a problem but an NCA building in the course of construction expected to help ease the situation. Those dressing sheds housed under the viaduct were subdivided and equipped with showers (September).

1954

- The last wool store was demolished by the end of the year and the new NCA building had been completed (September).

1955

- The new NCA building included on ground floor a large lunch room and kitchen, bar, Presidents room, police, ambulance and two dressing rooms and a Trustees room. On the first floor was a large assembly room, kiosk and bar.
- By the end of they year the wool store area had been landscaped (September).

1956

- By the end of the year another arch of the viaduct had been enclosed for a clubroom (September).

1957

- During this year Bullen's Circus use the park for the first time and many landscape improvements were made.
- By September the NCA had almost completed an "impressive" shelter on the concourse on the paddock and was in the course of constructing a similar shelter on the St Leger section in Wattle Street (September).

1958

- The two NCA shelters had been completed by the end of the year.

1959

- Minor repairs noted. The oval used as a Vacation Play Centre during the holidays.

1960

- Concrete cricket pitch in oval taken up. Plans approved for a new refreshment room (March). Renovations carried out on the cottage (July). A suggestion made to remove the kindergarten to another site in the park or perhaps out of the park (July). By the end of the year the NCA had painted most of the buildings and the

new brick refreshment room (replacing a timber one) was nearly complete (September).

1961

- Plans to let NCA recondition an old army hut still standing in the oval for use as refreshment and general purpose room. Approved but had to be demolished by 1963 (June). Request to move the kindergarten and playground to a site near the Bay Street end (May). News stands on the oval allowing thousands to watch events were built jointly by the NCA and Hakoah Soccer Club.

1962

- plans approved of a new oval building to house a totalizer on the perimeter (May). By the end of the year it was noted that the playground was not used by children as much as the Council playground and it was resolved to close it (September).

1963

- By the end of the year the brick totalizer building had been completed and plans prepared for a brick kiosk (September).

1979

- Application by NCA to build new grandstand. Much local opposition.

1983

- New \$ million grandstand nearly completed. Newspaper reports note the influence of the racing fraternity on the park and how the facilities in the rest of the park have gone downhill. Notes the local resentment (February).

1985

- Government provides further funds to complete the grandstand (April).