

# THE PICK OF THE GREAT NORTH ROAD

## Pick Volume 2:4

### Great North Road, Five Dock

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The waters of the Parramatta River were surveyed as early as 1788 by Captain John Hunter in the HMS Sirius. In 1794 the area of the eastern section of the District of Concord was granted to members of the NSW Corps by Major Francis Grose for farming.

However as difficulties arose these grants were cancelled and 600 hectares ( 6,600 acres) to be known as Five Dock Farm became the property of Dr John Harris. Access to this farm was by water or Parramatta Road.

The first surveys for the Great North Road were made in 1826 by Surveyor General John Oxley. After his death in 1828, Major Thomas Mitchell continued his work and recommended a punt crossing of the Parramatta River two miles east of Kissing Point, be constructed as such crossing to Abbotsford Point is only 220 yards. Governor Darling agreed with Mitchell's submission. This would reduce the distance by 23 miles for goods and food transported by road from Wollombi via Wisemans Ferry, Dural and Parramatta. The construction of the road was completed by the 8th October, 1829. However, the punt was not ready as Hard Wood for sheathing of her was unavailable and to expedite the construction she had to be 'coppered with patent felt underneath'.

The Colonial Secretary Alexander McLeay on 26 March 1832 was requested to see that the punt and small boat for foot passengers be sent to Bedlam Point, together with 'all such other ropes and requisites as may be necessary'. James Bardsley had leased this ferry but little had been done at the Dock Yard.

In 1836 Dr Harris sold Five Dock Farm to Samuel Lyons and he at his own expense built several roads eg. Blackwall Point Road, Lyons Road, Kings Road, and Iron Cove Road. (now Barnstaple Road). This greatly assisted the selling of 133 lots of the subdivision.

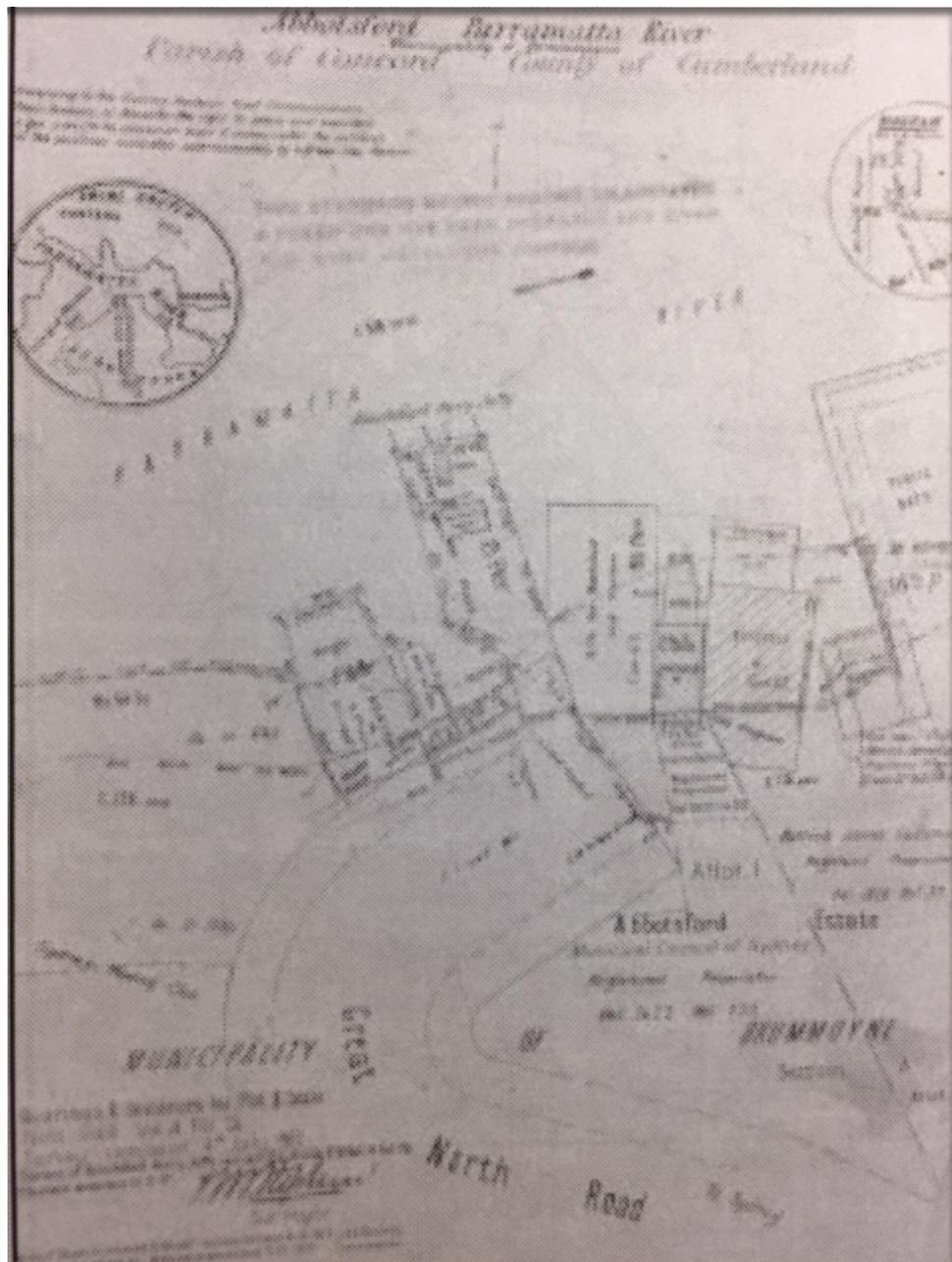
Late 1846 a petition from Five Dock residents to Governor Fitzroy requested repairs to Bedlam Ferry Road which was impassable for carriages. As a result of a following letter from Brent Clements Rodd suggesting he, with James Sheppard and S Deliotte form a committee, and with financial assistance of £100 could do the repairs. A grant of £75 was given.

Throughout the 1840s further land sales occurred until the estate of Samuel Lyons (1851) was settled. In the 1850s two events affected the increase in population. Firstly, the discovery of gold at



Bathurst and secondly, the opening of the Railway in 1855 from Sydney to Parramatta.

Responsible Government was established in New South Wales in 1856 and although Five Dock was considered a 'backwater' many of the residents with large holdings were very influential and in October 1870 petitioned to have Five Dock classified as a municipality. A counter petition was submitted on 22 February 1871 and defeated.



Five Dock was declared a municipality on the 25 July 1871. On the 7 January 1876 Five Dock Railway Station was opened but due to confusion with the suburb the name was changed to Croydon.

With the opening of the first Gladesville Bridge in 1881 and the first Iron Cove Bridge in 1882 this provided another access road to Parramatta and consequently there was no further need of the punt crossing at Abbotsford to Bedlam Point.

The North Ward of Five Dock Municipality requested in 1886 a separation and to be classified as the 'Borough of Drummoyne'. Separation was proclaimed on 18 January 1890. The Parramatta Steamers called at wharfs at Cary Street, Birkenhead, Thompson Street and a horse drawn omnibus ran to Ryde and Gladesville via the bridges. Meanwhile a steam tram began to operate from Leichhardt Tmrn Hall through Haberfield to the terminus at the junction of Great North Road and Lyons Road. This line was extended to Abbotsford in 1893 and in 1905 with the changeover to electric traction from Sydney to Abbotsford.



Abbie Day is a member of Drummoyne & Districts Historical Society

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: *Drummoyne - Western Suburbs History* by Eric Russell *Brief History of St Albans Anglican Church Five Dock* by Joan Francis. *History of Cinemas of Drummoyne* by Kevin J Cork. *NSW Tramcar Handbook 1861 - 1961*.

Maps: Fivedock Farm subdivision map [SLNSW]; 1900s fivedock map [The Waterways Authority]

