



THE PICK OF THE GREAT NORTH ROAD

Pick Volume 1:2

Patrick Doolan: Innkeeper

By Kenneth Conrad Marheine

Patrick (James) Doolan arrived in Sydney Cove in the ship *Three Bees* on May 6, 1814 after sailing from Falmouth in England on December 8, 1813. He had been convicted at Trim, County Meath in July 1812 where he was sentenced to transportation for a period of seven years. He was a labourer, 33 years of age, 5 feet 7.5 inches tall, of dark complexion, black hair and hazel eyes. His native place was Meath.

The voyage to Australia was a disaster. The *Three Bees* had nine deaths and 55 survivors required treatment for scurvy. Similar conditions prevailed on the *General Hewart* and the *Surrey*, which arrived at the same time, so that Governor Macquarie ordered a thorough inquiry and obtained from Dr Redfern a detailed report on the conditions of each ship.

Upon arrival in Sydney Cove, the *Three Bees* had not seen the end of its misfortunes as it caught fire with all of its cannons primed and ready to fire. It was released from its moorings where it drifted down the harbour with the tide, accompanied by fire from the cannons. The citizens were in fear of their lives although they crowded the harbour shores to watch the burning ship.¹

Five days after the arrival of the *Three Bees* on May 11, 1814, a dispersal of the men took place with 15 convicts being sent to Parramatta for distribution, 10 to Liverpool and 20 to Windsor, of which Pat Doolan was the last. Who he was assigned to in the next nine years has not been recorded. However, in an affidavit regarding the loss of his Certificate of Freedom in 1821, when employed as a harvest man by William Howe at Minto, he said he was then residing in the district of Cornwallis.²

In 1821 Pat Doolan met and married Eufan (Effie) Burnet³. Euphemia Burnett together with her small daughter had come out in the *Maria*, a convict ship from Deal, which arrived in Sydney Cove on September 17, 1818 after sailing from Deal on May 15, 1818. She had been tried on September 1, 1817 at Perth Court of Justiciary and received a seven-year sentence of transportation. She was a



native of Scotland, a servant and 30 years of age. Euphemia Burnett and her small daughter were listed among women disembarked from the Maria and forwarded to the Female Factory at Parramatta on September 26, 1818.⁴

On November 6, 1820 at Parramatta the Rev G A Middleton wrote to the Governor forwarding a list of 13 couples seeking permission to have their names published in church in order to be married. Besides their names he gave the names of the ships they arrived in.⁵ At this stage the Governor had not ordered the name of their intended master to be supplied. Then on February 14, 1821 a similar letter was sent to the Governor from Parramatta by the Catholic priest, John Joseph Therry, to which a reply was received on March 5, 1821. It read:

Accompanying this I have the honor [sic] to transmit to you His Excellency, the Governor's approbation of your uniting in marriage the parties specified in your letter of 18th inst. according to the rites and ceremonies of the Roman Catholic Church.⁶

Clearly, two different clergymen applied on two different dates to marry the same two people. Perhaps Pat Doolan was dragging the chain about marrying Euphemia so she approached the Anglican J A Middleton and received permission to marry. Then, when she informed Pat they could be married, he must have replied, "Well, if we are going to be married it will have to be in my church." A copy from a Transcription Agent of N.S.W. Marriages (Early Church Records) gives St. Mary's Cathedral Roman Catholic Marriage Applications 1821 but the date of marriage is not stated. "Patrick James Dowling⁷ free married Euphemia Bernard".

It appears that initially the marriage was not a bed of roses as less than a year later on January 5, Euphemia was charged at the Magistrates Court at Parramatta with drunken riotous conduct in the town and "ordered to the Factory till further orders - wife of P. Dooling." A similar case, the same day saw Mary Hutchinson, free charged with drunken and disorderly conduct to pay "5 pound and to be reposed in the stocks for one hour." Despite this difficult start the marriage survived.

The next time we hear of Pat Doolan is in 1827⁸ when he was appointed, "an Ordinary Constable, ... to be stationed at the Wallumby [sic] Brook, between the Farms of Mr. Campbell and Mr. Finch". Finch's farm was at present day Laguna and Campbell's eventually became known as Cessnock. The Great North Road had not then been built along the section of road for which Pat Doolan was responsible but nevertheless it attracted a great amount of traffic from both foot travellers and horsemen. A month later, Pat Doolan as pound keeper was advertising in the Sydney Gazette the impounding of five head of cattle and if not claimed within one month from that date, they would be sold to defray expenses⁹.

A letter from Doolan to Governor Darling¹⁰ written November 2, 1828 was a memorial regarding an application for land that he could farm. He was at the time living on a Government reserve and was possessed of all farming utensils, together with eleven head of horned cattle, pigs, poultry etc. He requested the Governor to take him and his "little family into his kind consideration so far as to Grant him a proportion of land such as His Excellency would deem meet." The Colonial Secretary, in a letter dated November 11, 1828 informed Doolan that his application for land could not be



complied with.¹¹

Doolan, although disappointed, was not downhearted. Less than two months after that knock-back he again wrote, stressing that he was free by servitude and had been appointed as a constable on the Wollombi Road about two years before. He stated that this road was continuously:

... in use by travellers to Sydney from the district of Newcastle, Wallis', Patterson's and Patrick's Plains and his cottage is situated at such a distance from a Settlement as to induce travellers to remain for rest and refreshment for themselves and cattle (if any). It has invariably been his study and that of his wife and family to accommodate them in the most comfortable manner his circumscribed means will allow.¹²

After stating the number of cattle, pigs and poultry he possessed, along with agricultural implements suitable to commence the business of cultivation of land, he continued:

... that the numbers of travellers to Sydney having mostly increased along with herds of cattle owing to the new land now forming. Petitioner now humbly requests that Your Excellency will be pleased to grant him such portion of land in this present station to enable him to erect a suitable House of accommodation thereon as Your Excellency in your known liberality may be pleased to bestow upon him.¹³

Two other letters¹⁴ exist that bear the same date - 12 January 1829. One is to Archdeacon Scott from Pat Doolan with a request that he intercede on Doolan's behalf and seek from the Governor a portion of land for the purpose of an inn.

Archdeacon Scott replied to Doolan's letter by himself writing to the Colonial Secretary, Alex McLeay, and saying that he had stopped on his last visit, both coming and going, that he was particularly struck by the advantageous position for such a house. Doolan, he said,

...was of good character and his wife a most active and industrious woman, quite qualified to undertake the management of such an establishment and the great advantage which would arise from an inn at this spot.

Continuing, he wrote that he was a stranger to Doolan's character but if the local magistrate would certify it favourably, he would not hesitate to recommend him to the Governor's consideration. The next page of Archdeacon Scott's letter contains the signatures of Robert Scott, JP from Glendon, Alex McLeod, JP of Lurkintyre and V Wright, JP. A further page bears the signatures of George Wyndham, JP of Dalwood, William Harper, a surveyor, and William Phillips, with a note from each about the number of years that they had known Doolan.

In the usual manner, the Surveyor General had written across the corner of the back of the sheet that there was vacant land near Baker's station on the Wollombi Brook but he does not know where Doolan has erected his hut but as [he is] well acquainted with the farms in that neighbourhood [he] can point out a suitable spot which could answer his purpose. It is, I understand a considerable



thoroughfare.

To this the Governor had added, "Let him have ten acres".

Alex McLeay wrote to the Surveyor General on March 14, 1829 that, referring to his report on the 6th Inst. on the application of Patrick Doolan for a piece of land on which he might erect a house for the accommodation of travellers between the Hawkesbury and Hunter's River, he:

... had been directed by His Excellency the Governor to inform you that on Doolan notifying to you the situation of the spot he applied for he will be allowed 10 acres for this purpose of which he has been duly apprised - you will of course include in your Half Monthly Abstract.¹⁵

In The Australian of May 1, 1830 in a list of Government Acts, Bills, Orders, Notices, Advertisements etcetera, it was reported that "Thomas Budd, free, to be constable and pound keeper, vice Patrick Doolan, dismissed for neglect of duty".

Doolan's land was on the Wollombi side of the present day Millfield Bridge and about 200 yards from it. Directly south of Doolan's land is Sweetman's timber mill and a small cemetery where the Anglican Church once stood. In a letter to the Governor, Doolan explained that his land was on forest land and an area of 50 acres adjoined which he was asking the Governor to add to the 10 acres already granted. The 50 acres was between Single's and Thomas Pendergrass's land. His house, he wrote, "... is situated immediately on the line of road formed from Maitland to Sydney and distant twenty seven miles from the nearest settlement or place of accommodation" and that "... travellers who were not accustomed to the road would be frequently benighted had they not [his] house to make use of as asylum for themselves and cattle".¹⁶

Doolan was particularly fortunate as on July 10, 1831 a person named Farrell wrote to the Governor asking for a license as he hoped to take over the frame of a house for a period of years, belonging to a person named Pendergrass. The land was right alongside the road opposite Doolan's grant. However, Farrell received a license for Port Macquarie.

The Colonial Secretary in a letter dated September 11, 1830¹⁷ referred to a petition of July 6, 1830 in which Doolan had stated he had erected an inn and was applying for a license. He was advised to state the nature of the accommodation, the number of rooms, their dimensions and descriptions and transmit a certificate signed by a magistrate or other respectable person.

December 17, 1830 saw the Colonial Secretary pen a letter to Mitchell, the Surveyor General, regarding Doolan's application for the additional 50 acres. He asked him to call on Mr. Finch (Assistant Surveyor) to visit and report on the accommodation provided by Doolan and whether it was fit for the accommodation of respectable travellers. It is questionable whether tired, saddle sore horsemen or foot travellers with aching legs and blistered feet would have required much more than a place to shelter and a spot to lie down.

Mitchell obeyed the order from the Colonial Secretary and wrote to Finch on December 22, 1830: Sir, I have to request that you will visit and report to me if the inn on the road near Ellalong



kept by Patrick Doolan is fit for the reception of respectable travellers and if not the nature of its accommodations.¹⁸

Finch replied to Mitchell that he visited the house and found it consisted of two rooms, floored and plastered with a stone chimney to the outer room. The family lived in the house so it could not be fit for respectable travellers but Doolan had made arrangements with a carpenter to add two additional rooms and a workman was at the time building a temporary stable.

Such, however as the accommodations are, a house of entertainment is much wanted between Maitland and the neighbourhood that many persons of respectability are induced to pass the night at this house and I believe are generally satisfied with Doolan's endeavours to accommodate them.

Mitchell replied to the Colonial Secretary on January 11, 1831 saying that, among other things, the 10 acres occupied by Doolan should have the 50 acres now applied for added to it. Darling wrote on the back corner of Mitchell's letter, "approved, it being very desirable that a good house should be established at that place".¹⁹

On August 25, 1831 the Colonial Secretary informed Doolan that the Governor had been pleased to order: ... that your application of 6 July 1830 for 50 acres adjoining the 10 acres authorised for you on the Wollombi Road for the erection of an inn shall be complied with for which purpose the Surveyor General has been instructed to report upon for same, for final approval when possession will be duly authorised for the whole sixty acres.

The Surveyor General was also informed of the Governor's approval of the grant so that it could be included in the next abstract for final approval. A further letter to Mitchell said that Doolan had received permission to take possession of the 60 acres of land

... to be held agreeably to the late regulations as a Special Reserve for the purpose of erecting an Inn, paddocks and other suitable buildings for the accommodation of respectable travellers.²⁰

Two late references for Doolan were made out on the same sheet of paper on the same date by James Glennie of Dulwich (Patrick Plains) and J Mudie, a JP of Castle Forbes near Singleton. The date was December 5, 1831. Glennie said he had known Doolan for nearly six years, he was "... industrious and his house is well situated for a Public House and is sufficiently commodious to entertain travellers". Mudie said he had known Doolan for some years and he believed him to be an industrious character and "begged leave to recommend him to the consideration of the Government".

A further reference was provided for Doolan by F Allman JP when Doolan petitioned to have the cost of a liquor licence waived²¹. On April 4 1832, Doolan wrote:

...That your Petitioner received from His Late Excellency Governor Darling a grant of land on the New Road to Hunter's River the 10 October 1831 No. 31/2794 and is there in stated for the purpose of erecting an Inn, paddocks and other suitable buildings for the accommodation of respectable travellers and for which his late Excellency was pleased to promise a "Free" Spirit licence for 3



years.

That your petitioner accordingly finished a house containing 5 apartments exclusive of those required for the use of the family, a 10 stall stable and a paddock of 10 acres for cattle.

Your petitioner having been at a great expence now feels that in consequence of the traffic on the road having been almost closed by the accommodation of steam boats he is unable to pay the expence of a licence and trusts that your Excellency will be pleased to take his case into consideration and confirm the intention of the late governor with respect to the licence and your petitioner respectfully refers to the accompanying recommendations in his favor.

To Doolan's petition was added: I have known the above statements to be facts and I also know that General Darling intended giving Patrick Doolan a licence gratis for three years. The house has been a great accommodation to respectable travellers for several years under all the circumstances of the case. I must respectfully recommend that a licence be granted to the petitioner gratis for three years. F. Allman. JP

Several other letters of recommendation and reference were written on Doolan's behalf, one by Thomas Crawford, an early settler at Congewai who had married a daughter of Solomon Wiseman. Thomas Crawford's brother Robert had been chief clerk at the Colonial Secretary's Office. Crawford wrote:

Wollombi 16 April, 1832 I hereby certify that I have known Patrick Doolan as resident in this district for some years and believe him to be an industrious character and beg to recommend him to the notice of the Government.

Another letter was written by Patrick Campbell who was an Assistant Surveyor responsible for much of the work on the Wollombi Road.²² He stated that Doolan had been known to him for five years, and he regarded him as worthy of any indulgence.

Yet another from F Allman JP, and J Blackburn JP, dated June 29, 1832 noted that "...Patrick Doolan of the Wollombi has been promised a free licence..." and that "he has for long afforded to travellers to and from Sydney being the only house of that nature between Young Wiseman's and Maitland a distance of nearly 50 miles".

Doolan wrote to the Colonial Secretary on June 28, 1832: Sir. In answer to your letter I have to state that the promise given me by His Late Excellency was a verbal one but in the presence of Lieut. J. Blackburn J.P. Superintendent of the Mounted Police and at the same time His Excellency visited that District. The accompanying certificate will no doubt satisfy His Excellency the Governor with respect to the same. I am Sir Your obedient servant Patrick Doolan.

On the front of this letter to the Colonial Secretary, the governor has written "This states only will be of a promise of a free licence but not for three years". On the corner of the back of the page the governor has written "It can not be discerned from these papers that a promise for three years was given by the late governor."²³



The Government Gazette of October 15, 1833 declared: Village of Wollombi Allotment for Sale

His Excellency the Governor directs it to be notified, that the Plan for the Village of Wollombi having been approved, copies of the same are deposited for the Public inspection at the Office of the Surveyor General in Sydney, and with the Clerk of the Bench of Magistrates at Maitland.

Persons, therefore, desirous of purchasing Building Allotments are requested to apply at the Office of the Surveyor General where every information will be afforded them to enable them to make their applications in the prescribed form, in order that, if approved, the ground may be put up for sale according to the Regulations.

Pat Doolan did not let the grass grow under his feet for only four days later he submitted his application for "half an acre in the Township Reserve of Wolombi [sic]- at present occupied by the Road Station Huts."³¹ George Boyle White re-surveyed the land, taking particular notice of the huts, the surveyor's cottage, the kitchens, the stables and the store but noted that Doolan had applied for an acre. The site applied for was where the Endeavour Museum now stands. It would have been ideal for an inn as the travellers from Broke and Jerry's Plains would have to pass the door as well as those travelling to/from Newcastle, Maitland and Patrick's Plains. The people from Broke and Jerry's Plains would make up for the loss of business due to the steamboats travelling between Sydney and Newcastle.

By February 4, 1834 Pat Doolan consented to purchase the acre of land but by May 31 Surveyor General Mitchell notified George Boyle White that the governor had decided that the buildings on the land were to be retained. A letter of August 6, 1834 to Pat Doolan informed him that the governor could not allow the subject land to be sold as the buildings were required for the Mounted Police and "...You will accordingly consider your application cancelled."²⁴

Doolan was given a female assignee in 1831. Among the list of 19 people who had been assigned from Newcastle Gaol to masters on the Hunter River was one assigned to Patrick Dowling. This was Honora Harington, per the *City of Edinburgh*, who was then 16 years of age. She was Catholic, single and came from Cork. She was a nurse girl and a housemaid and was sentenced for stealing jewellery. She had been sentenced to seven years transportation on April 2, 1828 and dispersed to Mary Reynolds of George Street. She received either a Ticket of Leave or a Certificate of Freedom.²⁵

The 1837 Muster showed that Patrick Doolan had applied for two further assignees and had received one. The person was David Wade, who arrived in the *John* at the age of 27 years. He was a Protestant, able to read and write, married with no family and a "waterman" by occupation. He was from Spalding in England, convicted for burglary and sentenced to life. He had previously been assigned to William Pouditch on the Williams River. On December 26, 1836 he received a Ticket of Leave, which confined him to the Maitland District. Wade was granted a Conditional Pardon and a Ticket of Leave Passport.²⁶

According to the Burial Book at Maitland Catholic Church, Patrick Doolan died on November 17, 1836 at the age of 55 years. He was free (by servitude), a farmer and was buried at Wollombi by the



Rev CV Dowling. Pat's wife Euphemia endured a widow's life for only three months, as she married William Johnstone in the Anglican Church at Maitland on March 14, 1837. He may be the person who tried to get land for an inn at the 10 Mile Hollow in opposition to Solomon Wiseman. He was probably the licensee of the *Good Woman Hotel* near Singleton and was seeking a wife to run the household.

A shortage of trained surveyors in the colony's early days meant that grantees were often placed in possession of their land without it having been surveyed and measured. Consequently they had received no deeds. When the *Rising Sun Inn* was sold to Euphemia Doolan's grandson the young William McDougall - the son of John McDougall the convict overseer - he received no deeds and to obtain them he had to approach the Court of Claims.

John Bridge of Wollombi testified on Thursday September 26, 1839 that: I knew Pat Doolan and that he sold the 60 acres of land in question to the claimant Wm McDougall. It is my hand writing which is attached to the transfer and I saw Pat Doolan make his mark and also Bartly and Byrne the other witnesses sign it.²⁷

A reply stated: Pitt St., Sydney 22 June, 1839. Sir. With reference to a Notice in the Government Gazette of the 25th May last respecting an allotment of land containing sixty acres situate at Aellalong and numbered 36T. I have the honour to inform you that the original Promissee on the 17th Dec 1833 sold and conveyed this land to Mr William McDougall for whom I request the Deed of Grant may be prepared. Patrick Doolan has been dead some time. I have the honor to be Sir Your obedient Servant A. Haymara.

The actual deed was signed by the governor, Sir George Gipps on December 30, 1839 and was entered in the Register of Grants of Land. The description of the land has the additional information that it was a Special Reserve being ten acres ordered on 14th March 1829 and a further fifty acres ordered on 25th August 1831 - a total of sixty acres.²⁸

John McDougall held licence No. 214 dated June 27, 1838 and this was issued at Maitland. One of the Justices of the Peace was W C Wentworth and the amount of duty was 35pounds. Licensees after McDougall were Thomas Prendergast, Bernard McGrane, Thomas Prendergast, William Chambers, M Crothers, Thomas Crothers, W Whitton, Joseph Eckford, Bernard McGrane and Patrick Fleming. The inn continued operating until April 28, 1857 when it was destroyed by fire. The *Maitland Mercury* on April 28, 1857 described the fire and said it was the property of Mr. James Rose, being situated at 28 miles from Maitland. George Smyth, William R Slack, J Cody, E W Evans and Edwin Hinchcliffe continued as licensees of the *Rising Sun* after the fire on the Cessnock side of the Millfield Bridge. Edwin Hinchcliffe was the last licensee in 1880.

This discussion of Patrick Doolan and his *Rising Sun Inn* is rounded off with an extract from the *Maitland Mercury* of March 20, 1888 titled, "A Chat With An Old Convict".

In the year 1829 I accompanied my master from Sydney to Patrick's Plains. He was going to look at a grant of land in that district. We crossed the Hawkesbury at Wisemans Ferry, and one night we stopped at a place called Hungry Flat, at an inn kept by Paddy Doolan, a very rough sort of fellow.



The house was built of slabs, bark roofed - the slabs had shrunk very much since they were nailed to the wall plates. Paddy said it was very convenient to shake hands with one's friends without going outside and that one thing could be said in favour of the house, that the rooms were remarkably airy. The rooms were not ceiled and the cross beams were exposed; but the worst of it was the fowls resting on them and it was very disagreeable for the lodgers when sleeping in the rooms.

The night we stopped at this place, we met a lawyer by the name of Jones on his way to Maitland. He and my master, of course, messed together; the beef steaks were very tough and old Jones who had a second hand set of false teeth could not tackle them, and he was regularly non-suited, perhaps for the first time in his life. He laid his plaint before old Bidy, the landlady but obtained very little sympathy. She said it was a difficult matter to buy "mate tinder enough to suit every old fellow's teeth". The bread was very bad, easily chewed but hard to swallow; the stockmen used to call it "choke dog". It acted as a damper for Jones and put a stop to all his fun. Old Bidy, however promised us better fare.

It was fine fun seeing her that evening, armed with a bit of a stick, trying to assassinate an old cock but he was too old a bird to be caught easily. He had learnt the noble art of self defence, stopped none of the blows with his head or body, was lively on his pins, and he would eventually have saved his life, but a stockman happened to be present, twisted his snake looking whip around him and the poor cock was strangled like another Laocoon. Bidy contrived to make a stew of him so that old Jones might have a good breakfast before starting on his journey the next morning.

The story for the most part is probably correct but Doolan's inn was never at Hungry Flat but at least 30 miles distant. The earliest date that records Doolan being on the Wollombi is May 4, 1827 and the slabs on the wall could not have possibly shrunk so much by 1829.

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