

Ingleside

In 1884 Carl von Bieren bought 320 acres of land high on Sugar Loaf hill, adjacent to present day Mona Vale Road, over looking Mona Vale to the east and Narrabeen lagoon to the south. He planned to manufacture explosives and built large factory in a gully. Unfortunately his venture failed and he went bankrupt. He fled the country but was arrested in England, returned to Australia and imprisoned. His elaborate home, Ingleside House, gives its name to this area. Powderworks Road, as it came to be called, was surveyed in 1885.

At the beginning of the twentieth century Florence and Isaac Larkin took over as caretakers at Ingleside House and farmed nearby. The house was burned down and a new Ingleside House was built in 1939.

In 1951 the state government restricted subdivision and building on any lots less than 2 acres, consequently Ingleside has retained a rural character. A notable building is the Baha'i temple dedicated in 1961.

Memories

"The Larkin family has had a very long association with the Ingleside-Narrabeen area. Isaac and Florence Larkin established an orchard at Narrabeen around the turn of the century and one of their seven children, Arthur Larkin, built many roads and bridges with the help of his horse and dray.

In the 1890's after Carl Von Bieran had been jailed for fraud relating to his attempts to establish a powderworks at Narrabeen, Isaac and Florence Larkin were appointed caretakers of the powderworks and Manor House.

Two of their seven children were born there, including Arthur, who was later to contribute much to the development of the area. The family established Waratah Farm, an orchard on Mona Vale Road near the intersection with Powderworks Road. Old pine trees, planted by them around their property near the Baha'i temple, still stand to-day.

On this orchard, Isaac Larkin propagated the Narrabeen Plum, which was registered by the Department of Agriculture as a new variety and is still very popular. The goods from this farm were transported by horse and dray to Manly Wharf, where they were consigned by an agent to Sydney markets and taken over by ferry.

The four eldest children attended Narrabeen Public School, travelling there on foot, and the three youngest went to Mona Vale Public School when it first opened.

The boys were keen cyclists and sold bunches of wildflowers, including waratahs and native roses which were abundant in the area, to help pay for their bicycles.

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The two oldest brothers served right through World War I. On their return, one of them, Bob, who had lost a leg, started a hire car business, which was very "new" in those days. The other, Arthur, set himself up as a general contractor with a horse and dray. His tasks were varied.

Among these were the first bridge across Narrabeen Lakes at Ocean Beach, the first roads in the Warriewood area, the Collaroy Heights roads for the Salvation Army and the Collaroy and Narrabeen rock pools for Warringah Shire Council. He also built most of the early jetties and wharves around the Pittwater foreshores."

Nan Bosler, Memories of Narrabeen and its Public School, 1989.

Reading

Powderworks

"The powder mills are the first in the colony – that of course is to everybody known; but the powder mills are also the most extensive and complete in the southern hemisphere, which in fact may be new to all who have not inspected them. Everything that capital could command and ingenuity devise has been obtained and adopted. The crude nitre is placed in an elaborate refinery here and reduced to the required condition, the gum trees are cut down, and the hardest gum wood is so treated as to produce the most perfect gunpowder charcoal, and down in substantial stone buildings, separated from each other by breadths of turf, and worked and managed by men dressed in flannel garments, with indiarubber shoes, no scrap of metal or of any material that might possibly produce the slightest combustion amongst them all. In a ravine, well sheltered and secluded, they pursue their black art, but high above, amongst the green woods and the abundant flowers, Mr Von Bieren most courteously entertains all visitors in his charming little home. Those who roam in search of the beautiful will not be concerned with the powder works, but they will certainly halt before this chalet, as in sight of Narrabeen Waterfall or Manly Cove. It is like an actual shrine to some deity of the flowers of the land, and quite unlike any other house in or about Sydney, or Manly, or any other Australian town. You might imagine it imported as it stands, from the Tyrol, built under the inspiration of peaked mountains and tapering pines, and the grace and colour which the humanity of that high fair land loves to display. It is a little house that contains a lot of accommodation, long and lofty rooms, approached beneath peaked and gabled verandahs, or by quaintly carved flights of stone stairs, with a little octagon tower in the centre, containing boudoir below, study above, and over all a little gallery, beneath a steeple roof. Roof of a deep dull red, that suits the landscape as well as do the old red tiles, the tiles that Ruskin loves to praise, the village scenes of England. All this beauty M. Von Bieren designed for himself, as also the carved stone fountain, fed from a reservoir excavated in the hill above, and the terraces, parterres, and elaborate surroundings of the garden. It is indeed a marvel in the bush, and it is, in a certain sense, instructive to contrast these fair and adequate provisions for all the requirements of a cultured and refined humanity with the arrangements we are more usually familiar with in our bush; the uncouthness, the rudeness, the lack of any consideration for the higher, better life, which characterises, not the Australian pioneers only, but the wealthy settler of the second or third generation. It is to be hoped that Mr Von Bieren's chalet, as his powder, will work in the land,

to the shattering of many crude old notions , and parsimonious prejudices, that he may aid in the blowing away of that still old English notion of a house, which bars the way to a full development of the architecture natural to and worthy of our land".

Francis Myers, A Traveller's Tale: From Manly to the Hawkesbury, 1885.

Further reading

Nan Bosler, The Baha'i House of Worship, Ingleside, 1992.
History and description of temple

Nan Bosler, The Ingleside Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade, 1991.
History and activities of bush fire brigade

Shelagh and George Champion, Narrabeen Powder Works, 2012.
Margrit Koettig, Warriewood Ingleside Release Area Assessment of Aboriginal Sites, 1993.
Aboriginal sites

Joan Lawrence, Pittwater Paradise, 1994, Pittwater Pictorial History, 2006
Historical and contemporary information.

John Morcombe, 'A Dream Explodes', Manly Daily, 28/8/2003, p.38.

Colin Tatz, A Course of History. Monash Country Club, 1930-2001, 2002.

Tropman & Tropman, Ingleside Warriewood Urban Land Release Heritage Study, 1993.
History and important sites