

COMMANDANTS OF PORT MACQUARIE 1821 TO 1832

Captain Francis Allman

(March 1821-April 1824)

48th Regiment



□ Captain Francis Allman

Born on 1st November 1780 in County Clare, Ireland, Allman enlisted in the army in 1794 and served through several campaigns including Holland, Egypt and the Iberian peninsular. He was wounded and captured at Albuera (1811) and was imprisoned until 1815. With his wife Sarah and three children he sailed with the 48th Regiment on the Minerva, arriving in Sydney on 30th April, 1818. He was chosen by Governor Macquarie to lead the development of the Port Macquarie penal settlement and remained as Commandant and Magistrate until recalled in April 1824. He later held government positions in Newcastle, the Illawarra, Goulburn, Campbelltown and Berrima. Allman also tried his hand at farming without success. He retired to Yass in 1844 and died there on 24th October, 1860

Captain John Rolland

(April 1824 - 16 November 1824)

3rd Buffs

Captain John Rolland was an officer in the "Buffs' East Kent Regiment, 3rd Foot. He was born on 4th April 1795 at Auchmithie, Scotland. He entered the army in 1814 as a Cornet with the 22nd Light Dragoons and saw service in India where he was made a Lieutenant. On returning to England he transferred to the 3rd East Kent Regiment, known as the 'Buffs'. Not long after, in July 1822, the Buffs were sent to Van Diemens land (Tasmania) on a number of vessels as convict guards. They were to assist with law and order problems in Van Diemens Land. Rolland had a reputation for treating his men and the convicts fairly. In 1824 Rolland was summoned to Sydney by Governor Macquarie and told that he would be replacing Francis Allman as Commandant at Port Macquarie with a promotion to captain. Rolland arrived in Port Macquarie in April 1824 together with a detachment of troops of the 3rd East Kent. Allman had problems with convicts escaping the penal settlement and Rolland faced similar difficulties. Another problem the Colonial Administration had with Port Macquarie was the rising cost of maintaining supplies. Rolland was instructed to make the colony more self-sustaining and he introduced a number of initiatives to this end, including improving conditions for the convicts to induce them to work more productively. Preparatory work for the construction of St Thomas' Church had begun when Rolland arrived and too great interest in its completion. Sadly, John Rolland never lived to see the opening of the church; he contracted an illness and died on 16th November 1824 aged 29, just three weeks before he was due to lay the foundation stone. Captain John Rolland was buried beneath the floor of St Thomas Church.

Lieutenant George Richards Carmac (November 1824 - January 1825) 3rd Buffs

George Richards Carmac arrived in New South Wales in 1822 as an Ensign aboard the ship Asia. In May 1824 Lieutenant William Wilson left the Port Macquarie settlement and Commandant Rolland recommended Lieutenant George Richards Carmac be appointed Acting Engineer and Inspector of Public Works for Port Macquarie. Rolland died in November 1824 and Lieut. Carmac became Acting Commandant. The Governor believed the position of Commandant should be held by a married man so he appointed Captain Henry Gillman of the 3rd Buffs to be the new Commandant. Gillman's wife and two children accompanied him to Port Macquarie. Carmac left the colony of New South Wales and sailed to Madras (India) where he married Henrietta Maling 19th February 1833. He died on the 2nd April 1838 after a short illness leaving his wife and two children.

Captain Henry Gillman (January 1825-February 1826) 3rd Buffs

Henry Gillman was born in 1793 in the West Indies. He enlisted in the Army as a youth and was promoted from Ensign to Lieutenant in 1809. In 1815 he married Mary Elizabeth Winter in London. Gillman, his wife and two children, sailed to Australia in 1822 with the 3rd Regiment of Foot, East Kent regiment, and shortly after arrival was posted to Port Macquarie to replace Carmac. He took command in January 1825 and remained in-charge until February 1826. He and his family sailed on the ship 'Australia' for London in 1827 having been appointed a Brigade Major. In 1828 he was appointed as a Major in the 69th Regiment, and in 1832 to be Lieutenant Colonel in the 67th. He died at Tunbridge Wells (England) 25th June, 1833 aged 39. Gillman was a controversial figure in the colony with reports of misuse of Government resources, duelling, and over strict discipline of prisoners appearing in the newspapers and government notices.

Captain Samuel Wright (February 1826-November 1826) 3rd Buffs

Samuel Wright was born in County Cavan, Ireland around 1785. He enlisted in the 3rd East Kent Regiment (the Buffs) on 6th March 1808 as an Ensign with a purchased commission and was promoted to Lieutenant by 1810. He fought in the Peninsular Wars and was wounded at Albuera and in 1813 at Bayonne in 1813. His last campaign with the Buffs in the Peninsular Wars was at Toulouse in April 1814. Three months later they were campaigning in Canada against the North American colonies seeking independence. He returned with the Regiment to Europe in 1815 and then back to Ireland. Wright's regiment was next posted to the Colony of New South Wales where he arrived, via Van Diemens Land, in 1822 on board the Richmond. In December of 1822 Wright sailed for Hobart where the Governor appointed him the Commandant of the Macquarie Harbour convict station. In April 1825 Lieutenant Butler replaced Wright at Macquarie Harbour as Governor Brisbane wanted to recall the Buffs for transfer to India. Eight months later Brisbane was replaced by Ralph Darling as Governor and Wright (now Captain) was sent to Newcastle, but in 1826 Darling instructed Wright to take command of the Port Macquarie convict station. During his short tenure as Commandant, Wright explored the local area and reached the Macleay River which was initially called Wrights River. (Archibald Clunes Innes, who succeeded Wright as Commandant, renamed the river Macleay in honour of his father-in-law Colonial Secretary Alexander Macleay). In 1826 Wright decided to leave the army, rather than go to India with the Regiment, and settle in Australia. In February 1827 he returned to Newcastle as Police Magistrate and Superintendent of Police, replacing Francis Allman. In September he was granted 2,560 acres in the Hunter Valley. Samuel Wright accumulated a number of significant debts over the next few years, and after visiting Sydney in 1852 he disappeared while returning to the Hunter on board the ship Rose. The conclusion was that he jumped overboard and was declared to have died on 24th March 1852.

Captain Archibald Clunes Innes

(November 1826-April 1827)

3rd Buffs



The name Innes looms prominently in the history and development of Port Macquarie; most notably for the construction of the large mansion on the shores of the large fresh water lake that now bears his name. Archibald Clunes Innes (1800-1857) was born at Thrumster in Scotland. He enlisted in the 3rd Regiment in 1813 and served in the Peninsular Wars. Captain Innes arrived in Sydney with his regiment on board the *Eliza* in 1822. Between January 1824 and May 1825 he served in Van Diemens Land (Tasmania) before being appointed as aide-de-camp in December 1825 to the Lieutenant-Governor of New South Wales, and then a magistrate in November 1826. Innes was appointed to the position of Commandant in Port Macquarie in December 1826, succeeding Captain Gilman. His tenure only lasted six months, as he returned to Sydney in April 1827

as a Brigade-Major. Innes left the army in 1828 to take up an appointment as magistrate and superintendent of police at Parramatta, resigning in 1829 - the year that he married Margaret, daughter of Colonial-Secretary Alexander McLeay.

Innes's main period of connection to Port Macquarie began in 1830 when he was appointed as Police Magistrate, along with a land grant of 2,568 acres (1,039 ha). This land, together with a contract to supply food to the convict population, and convict workers, allowed Innes to transform his property into a magnificent country estate. His growing prosperity saw him venture into other areas such as sugar cane, sheep and cattle properties, and an ill-fated attempt at wine production. Innes also acquired properties in the New England region and was chiefly responsible for the construction of the road linking the New England with the coast. The depression of the 1840s saw Innes's fortunes crumble and he was declared bankrupt in 1852. He died in Newcastle on the 29th August 1857. Much of what we know of the lifestyle of the Innes Lakes estate comes from the journal kept by his niece, Annabella Boswell, who recorded her view of life at the estate between 1845 and 1848. Major Innes was responsible for much of the prosperity of Port Macquarie as it transformed from a penal settlement into an agricultural region, and pointed the way for many future endeavours.

Lieutenant Thomas Meyrick

(June 1828-August 1828)

39th Regiment

Adjutant Lieutenant Thomas Meyrick of the 39th Regiment, and his wife, sailed from Deptford, London, on 5th August 1826 on board the ship *Woodford*. He was a part of a guard detachment escorting 100 convicts to Van Diemens Land (Tasmania). The ship arrived in Hobart on 22nd November 1826 where it discharged its cargo of convicts and proceeded on to Sydney with supplies for the colony. Meyrick had been in Port Macquarie for several years, serving as Engineer Officer, before he was appointed Acting Commandant on 7th July 1828. Meyrick was replaced as Commandant by Philip Aubin on 14th August 1828 and remained in Port Macquarie where he is listed as Superintendent of Works in 1830. He left the colony in July 1832 after a period serving as Superintendent of Police in the Airs district (Campbelltown N.S.W.). He died of cholera at Bangalore, India, on 23rd March 1833. He had served for 22 years in the 39th Regiment.

Captain Phillip Aubin**(August 1828-October 1828)****57th Regiment**

Philip Aubin was baptised at St. Helier, Jersey, on 9th February 1794, son of Germain Aubin and Mary Poingdistre. He was appointed Ensign in the 57th Foot, by purchase, on 14th February 1811. He was promoted to Lieutenant, without purchase, on 29th April 1813. He served in the Peninsular Wars from November 1811 to the end of the war, including the battles of Vittoria, the Pyrenees, Nivelles, Nive as well as other minor skirmishes. He also received a Captain's pay being only a Lieutenant at the time. A fortnight later, on March 18th. Lieutenant Aubin, commanding the 57th Light Company, was severely wounded. He served afterwards in North America in 1814-1815, and in France and Flanders in 1815-1818. He was appointed Adjutant on 7th April 1825, and promoted to Captain on 22nd June 1826. From 1827 to 1831, Captain Aubin was in NSW, being in command of the guard on board the convict ship Borodino which arrived in Sydney in July 1828, his wife being among the passengers. His term as commandant at Port Macquarie ran from August to October 1828. In January 1829 he was in command of a detachment of the 63rd Foot on the convict ship Vittoria at Port Jackson. In August 1829 he was appointed to take charge of the police establishments at Wallis Plains and Pattersons Plains, to take action against bushrangers in those areas. Having been promoted to Major, by purchase, on April 12th 1831, he embarked at Sydney on board the Red Rover on 8th June 1831, together with 4 officers, 6 sergeants and 96 rank and file of the 57th Foot, and arrived in India on 31st July 1831. Major Aubin returned to England in July 1840, and retired on full-pay on 11th February 1842. He was promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel on 28th November 1854, and died at Rockingham House, St. Helier, Jersey on 7th May 1863. He is buried in the family crypt at Mont-Saint-Michel Abbey, St. Helier.

Captain Robert Hunt**(October 1828-November 1828)****57th Regiment**

Robert Hunt of the 57th Regiment served for only three weeks as Commandant at Port Macquarie. He arrived in Sydney in March 1828 on the ship Morley along with a detachment of soldiers and 192 convicts from Dublin. On 17th October 1828 he sailed for Port Macquarie on board the government brig Mary Elizabeth with a detachment of the 57th Regiment to relieve the 39th and to assume the role of Commandant. Despite only a three-week tenure, The Australian newspaper on 21st April 1829 reported that no Commandant since Allman has "discharged his duties so much to the general satisfaction as Captain Hunt". He was appointed as Commandant of Norfolk Island to replace Captain Wright who was recalled to Sydney to face charges in respect of the death of a convict. He served there from November 1828 to November 1829 before he too was recalled, arriving back in Sydney on the Isabella on the 5th March.

Captain Henry Smyth

(November 1828-June 1832)

39th Regiment

Henry Smyth was born in England in 1776. He was the longest serving Commandant at the Port Macquarie penal settlement. He was a member of the 39th Regiment of Foot and served during the Napoleonic Wars and the Peninsular Wars. He saw service at the battles of Vittoria, Pyrenees, Nivelles, and Nice. The 39th Regiment of Foot were posted to Australia in November 1825 and they set sail in eighteen different groups over a period of twenty-two months. The British wanted to establish a settlement in northern Australia and so Captain Smyth was despatched to what is now the Northern Territory to found Fort Wellington. He was to be Commandant, and was accompanied by 30 soldiers, 14 Royal Marines, 13 Royal Navy other ranks and 22 convicts from Sydney. Smyth remained as Commandant from June 1827 to June 1828 before falling ill, as so many other men had done. He returned to Sydney on the brig Governor Phillip on 24th April 1828. His term as Commandant at Fort Wellington was marked by an incident that resulted in the deaths of up to thirty members of the local Iwaidja Aboriginal nation. Smyth was soon after appointed Commandant at Port Macquarie and began his term in November 1828. One of his concerns during his tenure was the state of the bar and possible safety measures that could be implemented. With the ending of convict transportation to Port Macquarie and the opening up of the district to free settlers, the Government was keen to close the penal settlement. Smyth was therefore the last of the Commandants, being succeeded by Police Magistrates. On 13th September 1839 he was granted 640 acres in the Parish of Kincumber, fronting onto Brisbane Water. He was a director and shareholder in the Bank of Australia which collapsed in 1843 resulting in his loss of much of his money. In July 1847 he sold his Kincumber estate. Smyth returned to England to his family home on the Isle of Wight and became a benefactor to several local churches. His wife Elizabeth died in 1863 at Sandown, Isle of Wight, and in the same year Smyth retired from the army on half-pay. He died on 24th August, 1867 at his residence, Royal Heath Villa, Sandown, Isle of Wight. Obituaries described him as a highly respected man of a good family.