

HISTORY OF GLENIFFER BRAE



Early History

The University acknowledges that *Gleniffer Brae* is located on the traditional land of the Wadi Wadi people who speak the Dharawal language, and that these people have a deep and abiding relationship to this country and are the traditional custodians of this land.

After the arrival of Europeans in the Illawarra, much of the land was used for farming. In 1841, Robert and Charles Campbell received a Crown grant of 1000 acres which included the site of *Gleniffer Brae*. In 1901, James Fitzgerald acquired the land and it became a dairy farm until his death in 1925. The family eventually sold 75 acres of the land to the Hoskins in 1938.

The Hoskins Family

Arthur Sidney Hoskins moved to Wollongong after he and his brother, Cecil, established the steelworks in Port Kembla. During their time in Wollongong they made a substantial contribution to the Region.

Cecil and Sidney had married two sisters, Dorothy and Helen (known as Madge), who were the daughters of the stonemason Thomas Loveridge. The sisters' brother, Geoffrey Loveridge, was an architect and designed Cecil and Dorothy's home called *Invergowrie* at Exeter in the Southern Highlands.

The Design and Building of *Gleniffer Brae*

Sidney and Madge purchased 75 acres of the Fitzgerald's dairy farm in Keiraville and also employed Geoffrey to design their home, a single-storey English Tudor or Elizabethan Revival style house.

Construction of the house began in 1937 and finished in 1939. The name *Gleniffer Brae* came from Madge's grandfather's house, near Bowral, which was also called *Gleniffer Brae*. The name originally came from a range of hills in Paisley, Scotland where he was born.

As at *Invergowrie*, Paul Sorensen, the famous landscape architect from the Blue Mountains, was employed to design the gardens. The collaboration between Loveridge and Sorensen is a distinctive feature of the overall aesthetics.



Gleniffer Brae Becomes a School

In 1935, BHP bought the steelworks from the Hoskins family, although Sidney remained involved with the business until he retired in 1949. The Hoskins gave a small portion of their estate, including *Cratloe Cottage* (now the Botanic Garden Discovery Centre), to their gardener, Eric Winter. In 1951, before leaving the district, Sidney donated 46 acres of the Keiraville estate to Wollongong City Council to establish a Botanic Garden. In 1954, the Sydney Church of England Girls Grammar School (SCEGGS) purchased the remaining 15.5 acres, including the house, to establish a school.

In October 1954, a headmistress, Miss Kathleen McCredie, was appointed to the new school. Miss McCredie was only 26 years old at the time of her appointment and became one of the youngest headmistresses in Australia. The six staff members started teaching 78 pupils on 1st February 1955 and in the same year SCEGGS purchased another 20 acres of the Hoskins Estate from Wollongong City Council.

In 1974, SCEGGS announced it intended to sell three of the schools in its network (Moss Vale, Wollongong and Bayview) in order to ensure its financial security. In 1975, SCEGGS merged with The Illawarra Grammar School.

Council Resumes *Gleniffer Brae*

The house was subsequently listed for sale and on 12th July 1978, the Council took possession of the property *Gleniffer Brae* via a notice of resumption, including the manor house, outbuildings and 10 hectares of land.

The Council leased the school buildings and some rooms within the manor house to the Wollongong Branch of the NSW Conservatorium of Music, which took up residence on the site in 1980. Wollongong City Council also ran the site as a function centre.



In 1984, the Australian Army 34th Infantry Battalion Illawarra Regiment donated its silverware collection to the City of Wollongong. The Council restored this at a cost of \$2,500 and it was placed on display within *Gleniffer Brae*.

In 1985, the house was listed on the National Trust of Australia Register and in 1999 was added to the NSW State Heritage Register. It is now protected under the NSW Heritage Act.

In May 2010, Wollongong City Council closed its function business on the site and, citing increasing maintenance costs, called for an Expression of Interest (EOI) for the purchase and/or lease of *Gleniffer Brae*. The EOI terms included maintaining tenancy for the Conservatorium of Music and maintaining public access to the site.

The University of Wollongong submitted an EOI with two related uses for the site:

- Development of the *Gleniffer Brae* house (including demolition of the free-standing auditorium and construction of a glazed pavilion) to provide facilities for public functions, dining, conferences, meetings and seminars; and
- Redevelopment of the former school site along Murphys Avenue to create a new Creative Arts Centre, incorporating the Conservatorium of Music.

Resources used to prepare the above information:

Historical images on this page are from the collections of the Wollongong City Library and the Illawarra Historical Society. For more information and to search the Library's Illawarra Images database visit:

<http://mylibrary.wollongong.nsw.gov.au/cgi-bin/spyus.exe/MSGTRN/PIC/BSEARCH>

Wollongong City Council *Gleniffer Brae* Site:

<http://www.wollongong.nsw.gov.au/facilities/parks/Pages/GlenifferBrae.aspx>

NSW Heritage Register Listing:

http://www.heritage.nsw.gov.au/07_subnav_04_2.cfm?itemid=5045680

Bluescope Steel Website History Page:

<http://www.bluescopesteel.com/index.cfm?objectid=9C27136B-D547-4F2D-8C18CBB3075E074F>

Wollongong City Council Botanic Garden History Page:

<http://www.wollongong.nsw.gov.au/botanicgarden/about/Pages/history.aspx>

National Trust Everglades Website: <http://www.everglades.org.au/>

Heritage NSW *Gleniffer Brae* Listing: http://www.heritage.nsw.gov.au/07_subnav_04_2.cfm?itemid=5045680

Buck, Glenda "The Changing Face of *Gleniffer Brae* 1938 – 2011" Glenda Buck Caringbah (2001)

Radcliffe, Richard "Australia's Master Gardener Paul Sorensen and His Gardens" Kangaroo Press Pty Ltd Kenthurst (1990)

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