Blue Mountains Weekend Leases
Part 2 — Glenbrook and Blackheath

Keith Painter

In September 1916 the first Weekend Lease Area in the Blue Mountains was created on the south side of Hazelbrook. Later there were two further sections on the north side of Hazelbrook. See History Hound No. 6.

In the following months Weekend Leases were notified in two areas at Blackheath and one at Glenbrook.

**Glenbrook’s Weekend Lease Area**

November 1916 saw Weekend Lease Area No. 14 at Glenbrook notified in the *Government Gazette* (17 Nov 1916, p6852, *Trove*#225964477/13890529). The weekend leases were also advertised in the *Nepean Times* of 16 December 1916 (p4 c6, *Trove*#86147084). See Figure 3.

There were 50 blocks — Portions 186 to 235, Parish of Strathdon, County Cook — ranging in size from 1 rood 8¾ perches to 2 roods 13 perches (just over ¼ acre to just over ½ acre — 0.1 hectare to 0.2 hectare). The allotments were on what are now Brook and Emu Roads — all the area south of Hodgson Road. Most of the portion numbers still exist in 2020. See area circled in white on Figure 1. For “Diagram B” referred to in Figure 1, see Figure 2.

The description of the location and the land in the *Government Gazette* notification stated —

“Within the suburban boundaries of the village of Glenbrook, & about ¾ mile from Glenbrook railway station and 40 miles from Sydney.”

“Sandstone country, fairly steep and rocky; covered with gum scrub; no natural water supply; about 800 feet above sea level; suitable for residential purposes.”

I don’t know what the local reaction to the declaration of the Weekend Lease Area was, but less than four months later the whole of the Weekend Lease Area was revoked (*Government Gazette*, 9 Mar 1917, p1511, *Trove*#229428022). Did Glenbrook residents object? Or did the Blue Mountains Shire Council object? Or did the Government decide they could make more money by selling the land outright? The latter course of action is exactly what happened.
In the same issue of the Gazette as the revocation there was a notice “that the following Lots of Land will be offered for sale by public auction ... at the Information Bureau, Department of Lands, Sydney, On Wednesday, the 18th day of April, 1917, ... Suburban Lots ...”. This was followed by a listing of Portions 186 to 235, Parish Strathdon, County Cook, with the area of each block and the “Upset Price per Lot” which ranged from £10 to £20. (The “upset price” was the reserve price.)

On May 25 the Gazette published a list of approved “after-auction purchases” which included nine of the Glenbrook Lots, for which the purchasers had made application between 20 and 25 April.

Here are some of the details from the list —

“Portion 198, price paid £10, Applicant: Dewdney, Ellis, of Beecroft, commercial traveller.
199, £10, Helen Seale, of ‘Culzean’, Badminton-road, Croydon, spinster.
200, £10, Ethel Mary Taafe, of ‘Culzean’, Badminton-road, Croydon, spinster.
215, £20, Herbert Edward Cooper Robinson, of 221 George-street, Sydney, map publisher.
226, £15, Grace Annie Bonamy, of ‘Dalkeith’, Cromwell-street, Croydon (wife of ——).
229 & 230, £16 each, Catherine Sara Bertha Brent, of Glenbrook, spinster.”

Did you notice the name “Helen Seale” appeared twice in the list? Once as a “spinster” and then as “wife”. Maybe it was daughter and mother?

Meanwhile on 18 May 1917 a further auction sale was announced for 27 June where 25 Lots would be offered (Govt Gazette, 18 May 1917, p2590, c1, Trove#226215517). I believe these were the unsold lots after the previous auction and after-auction sales.

In May, Portions 186 to 190, 192 to 197, 202 to 206, 211 to 214, 217, 222, 223, and 228 were Reserved “From After-auction Sale” (Govt Gazette, 11 May 1917, p2500 c1, Trove#-226215338).

In June, Portion 201 was Reserved from “After-auction Sale” (Govt Gazette, 15 Jun 1917, p3073 c1, Trove#226215538).

In November, Portions 208, 209, 219 and 220 were advertised for auction sale on 20 December 1917 (Govt Gazette, 2 Nov 1917, p5963 c1, Trove#227328334/13840318).

And thus Glenbrook’s Weekend Lease Area devolved into ordinary suburban lots.

**Blackheath: Weekend Lease Area No. 10**

On 20 October 1916, 17 blocks ranging from 1 rood to 2 roods 17 perches (¼ acre to 5/8 acre — 0.1 hectare to 0.15 hectare) were notified in the Government Gazette (p6265, Trove#225846664) as weekend Lease Area No. 10. Applications were invited for the land in an advertisement in the Nepean Times (25 Nov 1916, p4 c7, Trove#86145693). Figure 4.
The land (in the Parish of Blackheath, County Cook) was between the Main Western Road (now the Great Western Highway) and an unformed section of Valley View Road, 2km from the Blackheath railway station and 200 metres east of Evans Lookout Road. See Figures 5 and 6. Part of it had been Water Reserve No. 192 (Gazette, 19 May 1884, p3246 c1, Trove#221671674).

The land, with annual rents ranging from £1 to £1 15s, was described as:

"Level and undulating sandy and gravelly soil, slightly stony in parts; timbered with gum, peppermint, and blackbutt, with light tea tree and other scrubs; no permanent water supply on the land" (Gazette, 20 Oct 1916, p6265, Trove#225846664).

I have not found anything to indicate that any of the leases were taken up.

Less than a year later on 12 July 1918, the whole of the Weekend Lease Area was revoked (Gazette, 12 Jul 1918, p3430, Trove#-229537095). See Figure 7.

Then in November 1923 a Sale by Public Auction was announced in the Gazette. “Sale on the ground at Blackheath on Wednesday, the 26th day of December, 1923 ... COUNTRY LOTS”. Portions 503 to 519 were to be offered with the “upset price” (reserve) ranging from £20 to £75.

The pricing was much more expensive than those at Glenbrook just a few years before. So it’s not surprising that “Nothing sold at Auction sale” — handwritten note with advertising notice from
the auctioneers Frank Smith & Downing at Mitchell Library (email from Dr Peter Rickwood, June 2020; Blackheath subdivision plans, ZTP/B8).

The 1943 aerial photo shows no buildings on these lots but some small structures on lots further east (maps.six.nsw.gov.au).

The area is now part of the Blue Mountains National Park. The lane to the east and the short east-west one within the area are still shown on the Blue Mountains City Council interactive mapping site (emapping.bmcc.nsw.gov.au).

It is also part of the water catchment area for Greaves Creek Dam and access is restricted.

**Blackheath’s second area**

A second area of 13 lots at Blackheath, Weekend Lease Area No. 16, was notified on 22 December 1916 (Govt Gazette, pp7750,7751, Trove#225965818/13891402).

The leases were also advertised in the Nepean Times, 13 January 1917.

The 13 lots were made up of 36 smaller Portions. See Figure 8—*Note the descriptions of the “Character of Land, Soil, Timber, &c., Water Supply”*. These lots were on the western side of Blackheath in the Parish of Kanimbla, County Cook. They were positioned between what is now 24-28 Helvetia Road (now part of the Delaney Reserve) in the north to what is now 111 Shipley Road (Kanimbla View Wildlife Refuge) in the south. See Figure 9.

---

**Figure 8. Listing of Lots and Portions in Weekend Lease Area No. 16 at Blackheath.**

Government Gazette, 22 Dec 1916, pp7750,7751, Trove#225965818/13891402.
Just a couple of months later, on 16 March 1917, the whole area was revoked (Govt Gazette, p1626, Trove#:229428291).

A week later the lots were advertised for public auction on 25 April 1917 (Govt Gazette, 23 Mar 1917, p1688 c2, Trove#:229428517). The table of Small Portions in Figure 10 may show the names of those who purchased the land at the auction.

In 2020 the majority of the land appears to be either Regional Open Space, Council Community Land, or Crown Reserve.

NOTE. For further reading: https://trove.nla.gov.au/list?id=140699