
Glenbrook Lagoon

The early explorers Blaxland, Wentworth and Lawson passed by this lagoon on 12 May 1813. Blaxland described it as a "large lagoon of good water full of very coarse rushes". In 1814 Governor Macquarie instructed William Cox to build a depot at the Lagoon. Travellers had to have a permit to pass. The Depot moved further up the mountains to Springwood as the road progressed. Remains can be seen clearly during drought and when the Lagoon is dry. It is now covered by reeds on the corner of Lagoon Drive and Skarratt Street. John Whitton built the Little Zig Zag Railway in 1867, the Lagoon was dammed up with a wall which is now Glenbrook Road. This dam supplied the railway. There was no water supply between Penrith and Linden Dam. Water flowed by gravity to fill the water tank at the site east of the present day Hare Street Traffic Lights. Water was pumped from the Duck Hole in Glenbrook Creek during 1877-1884 to the lagoon to supply the railway.

In 1896 Joan Peard's grandfather George Eric Bunyan as a butcher boy delivering meat from their shop at Emu Plains by horse spoke to Captain Lee Weller at his tent camp at the Lagoon on the corner of Glenbrook Road and Skarratt Street in the morning. Later in the day whilst returning he was surprised to see the tent gone and the site deserted. Captain Lee Weller was murdered on the south side of Glenbrook above the sand hole at Glenbrook Creek by William Ashe alias Frank Butler Harwood. The grave was found by James Wood whilst leading a search party. A nearby racecourse now Lennox Park was built by Mr. Colin Smith. The horse races were held to raise money for soldiers' welfare. The lagoon dried up many times in later years causing problems as there was no mains water supply till 1950. The lagoon water was used for fire fighting purposes and locals for private use as Glenbrook had few dams and depended on tank water.

Ellis's orchard and nursery used lagoon water. During the 1940's period, water was pumped up channels still sightable in the regeneration area plus the house remains. The lagoon was used for boating, canoeing, sailing, also used by the scouts for training for sea scout regattas. A nearby local sank his ex army amphibious duck forgetting to replace the drain plugs before launching it. I was a spectator at the time.

As young boys we rowed across the lagoon in our home-made canoe of corrugated iron and stole water melons grown on the edge of the lagoon. We started to sink so we threw out the melons till we got to shore and somebody returned alone to retrieve them. Many years later after telling the owner he said he knew some were missing but could do nothing as it was not his land he only used it. There was a lagoon store in Skarratt Street in 1960. Helicopters used the lagoon water in 2001 for firefighting purposes. It is a shame to see the state in which the lagoon is today. As young boys we were able to fish and swim and even drink the water.