

Shore School, the Dibbs family, and Graythwaite.

Shore School, the Dibbs family, and Graythwaite histories are linked by a remarkable woman, Sophia Elizabeth Dibbs. Early decisions by Sophia Dibbs, the mother of Sir Thomas Allwright Dibbs have had far reaching consequences for generations of Shore boys and current and future patients at the new three storey Graythwaite Rehabilitation Centre, Ryde (Graythwaite Ryde).

This history includes various other themes covering the early colony of Sydney and North Sydney, the Dibbs Family and in particular Sir Thomas, his grandsons and World Wars I and II, his mother Sophia, her strength as a 'widow' raising successful sons with their interest in education, the building Graythwaite and its various occupants and uses, and Shore.

The histories of Sydney Church of England Grammar School (Shore, founded in 1889) and the Dibbs family were linked even before Shore's beginning. Sir Thomas was a lay member of the foundation School Council in 1887. After much consideration of various possible sites in and around Sydney for the new school, the Council purchased from Sir Thomas the Holtermann Estate in 1888 which was close to his home 'Graythwaite' in North Sydney.

At this time North Sydney's population was increasing and the North Shore was becoming a desirable place for professional and business men to live. They would daily cross the harbour by ferry/steamer. The North Shore railway line was begun in 1887. As a result Shore would not only have boarders but also would be accessible to students from the whole of the North Shore. Over the next 50 years transport infrastructure would grow dramatically. There would be trams fanning out to Balmoral, Taronga Zoo, Northbridge, Chatswood, and Lane Cove. More important links were the construction of Sydney Harbour Bridge and the extension of the railway line from Hornsby and, after various redirections and extensions, to North Sydney and Milsons Point and across the new harbour bridge to the city with its additional underground network to the new Wynyard and Town Hall Stations and on to the already established Central Station. Thus Shore became accessible to an even wider group of boys. These new transport corridors, however caused great dislocation to the population of North Sydney, Kirribilli, Milsons Point and surrounds with the wholesale demolition of properties (estimated between 500 and 800 houses).



Sophia Elizabeth Dibbs from the Dibbs Family Collection

Sophia and Education

Sophia Dibbs (nee Allwright) whose parents were convicts, was born on 21/7/1809 in Sydney. She married Captain John Dibbs¹ at Scots Church when she was 18 years old. In 1829 Captain John took Sophia with him on a visit to England and Scotland. After their return to Sydney they had three boys who were baptised at Scots Church and survived infancy. Tragically in 1835 Captain John 'disappeared as sea' when the boys were all under four years old. It was later found he was in the care of the East India Company Asylum in Calcutta. He never returned to Sydney and his family, but died in 1872 aged 81 in an asylum in London. Sophia, however, was financially very astute and was advised by her husband's friend and colleague, merchant John Campbell². Sophia, a devout member of the Church of England had her boys educated at St Phillip's Church of England Infants School in York Street Sydney then at John Henry Ruckers School in the Lyceum Building at Pitt and Bathurst Streets, Sydney then at the Australian College in Jamieson Street Sydney run by Presbyterian minister John Dunmore Lang with a curriculum based on a Scottish model with both classical and commercial subjects (Scotland had long enjoyed an international reputation historically as one of the best educated societies in the world with the foundation for this being in the 17th century.) Sophia was also connected to various other schools including 'Coodra' at St Leonards, a preparatory school for young gentlemen conducted by a Miss Kirby.



S.T. Gill 'City of Sydney from North Shore' 1856 (painted from Shore's Main Drive)

In 1848 Sophia and her sons, John aged 18, Thomas aged 15, and George aged 14 moved from Upper Fort Street, Flagstaff Hill Sydney to a cottage in Quiriki Bay (part of Lavender Bay) before there was even a ferry connecting the north and the southern shores of the harbour. The boys had to go by boat to town to work or to buy provisions for their home at Lavender Bay. The boys' pastimes were mainly rowing and sailing as there was little level ground around their home on the steep Sydney sandstone rock terrain for a cricket pitch. Sophia was very strict with the boys' upbringing, overseeing their reading and studies. She also required them to be home by 9pm! Sophia even kept a quince stick handy for disciplining the boys while they were living with her.

As a grandmother living with her son Thomas and family on the second floor of the Commercial Bank of Sydney in George Street, Sophia looked after George's son Walter Robey Dibbs from infancy to 7 or 8 years old who recalls being taken by his grandmother across the harbour by ferry

to Lavender Bay and climbing up the 100 steps to Sophia's cottage. 'He marvelled at an old lady of about 70 years undertaking such a trip with active young boys and killing with a nearby stick a black snake that blocked their way.' Sophia was a remarkable woman 'widowed' at 26 years whose mother had died in 1825, whose father had gone to Tasmania, returned to Sydney and in 1842 died aged 75.

Sophia's three sons became extremely successful in the colony. With Sophia's emphasis on their education and upbringing it is understandable that in later years son, George went into politics to support education for all children. Another son Thomas was very involved with and supported Shore with generous donations. When the building of Shore School Chapel was proposed in 1906 Thomas promised to contribute one tenth of the cost. It must have been a joy for Sophia to live so close to a growing boys' school where at least some of her grandsons would be educated as well as having son, Thomas so committed to strengthening the work of the Church of England.

John Campbell Dibbs (born 4.09.1830, died 08.07.1899, Sophia's eldest son)

John started his own business as a financial agent, an accountant and a merchant in Newcastle. He was the auditor of the University of Sydney, the Old Barrack Street Savings Bank of New South Wales, Tooth and Company, and the North Shore Steam Ferry Company. He was also a ship-owner, colliery proprietor, a JP and later a Public Accountant. John was a warden of St Phillip's Church Sydney and St Thomas's Church North Sydney. In 1862 John married Jane Wood whom he later divorced (before Justice Windeyer). The divorce in 1880 led to a defamation case against brother George Dibbs by John Shepherd solicitor for Jane (the Dibbs-Shepherd Scandal) and George incurring a large debt causing him to spend time in a debtors' prison.

George Richard Dibbs (born 12. 10.1834, died 05.08.1904, Sophia's youngest son)

George became Premier of NSW in 1885, 1889, and for the period 1891-4. He was knighted in 1892. The three brothers had various shipping ventures including shipping coal to Chile and returning with a cargo of wheat as Australia was in the grip of a drought. Not surprisingly these ventures met with many problems including a blockade by the Spanish Fleet, ships being wrecked on reefs, and bank failures. George was appointed to the Maritime Services Board and became Hon. Secretary of the New South Wales Shipowner's Association. He maintained his shipping interests, as well as being agent for other mercantile agents, and a wharf owner. George entered politics in particular supporting the 'Public Schools League, which was to bring in education that was "national compulsory, secular and free". He said it was the "absolute duty of the state to educate every child in it". When he moved a bill to withdraw support from denominational schools he became the 'main political spokesman for National Education.'

During this time George was living at 'Euroka' North Sydney. After losing his seat in Parliament George moved from Euroka to another electorate at Rylstone allowing him to regain a seat in Parliament. He saw through many difficult situations. The most extreme was during the financial crisis of 1893 which saw the start of the collapse of many banks. With the run on the Savings Bank of New South Wales George went to the doors of the bank and gave his handwritten proclamation guaranteeing its deposits. The Parliament passed a bill 'making bank notes a first charge on the issuers' assets. Its purpose, said Dibbs, was not 'to assist the banks of this colony, because with private business and banking this Parliament has nothing whatever to do' but to 'save some thousands of our fellow-citizens from severe loss and misery'. This bill 'proved effective for the restoration of confidence'. The banks, however, were 'unnerved by the swift march of destruction', and lacked the will or the public spirit to take advantage of it and most of them closed their doors and prepared for reconstruction. 'For six weeks', wrote Dibbs, 'I never left my office to go home—but once—the storm is over—the ship (was) saved.' (The seriousness of the situation is emphasised as 26 banks failed over the years 1891-93. In Australia there was a severe depression from the late 1880s to the mid 1890s)



Sir Thomas Allwright Dibbs from the Dibbs Family Collection

Thomas Allwright Dibbs (born 01.11.1833, died 18.08.1923, middle son)

Family history records in 1847 Thomas as a small 14 year old boy applying for a position at the Commercial Bank of Sydney (later the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney which merged in 1981 with The National Bank of Australia Limited, changing its name to the National Australia Bank). The Manager, Edward Knox said "I am afraid he is too small." Thomas, as he had been instructed by his mother, spoke up asking Knox if "he did not think something good could come out of a small parcel". He won the position and remained with the bank for the rest of his working life. (Edward Knox was later to serve on the Shore School Council from 1887 to 1899, as did Thomas from 1887 to 1898)

Thomas and his wife Tryphena in 1861 opened the Commercial Bank of Sydney branch, the first bank in Cooma, to service the Kiandra gold rush. Knowing an officer from another bank was also seeking to establish a bank in the area and was travelling by sea to Eden then inland to Cooma, Thomas and Tryphena, went overland carrying 'gold, silver, and eight thousand pounds of unsigned notes, stationery, duelling pistols and an American six shooter'. The season had been very wet which made their journey even more difficult. They travelled by train to the end of the line at Campbelltown, then by horse and coach or cart. They stayed in deserted huts, and on farming properties, crossed rivers by boat, or horse, or Thomas waded across rivers. Their heavy bags with their very valuable contents together with the need to keep this as well as their mission secret, made the journey even more hazardous. On reaching Cooma only days before the rival bank, they stayed in a hotel from where Thomas transacted the bank's first business. Security was such that Thomas shared his bed with the gold, silver, notes and weapons. By undertaking their nightmare journey Thomas and Tryphena beat the opposition to Cooma and the bank prospered there for many years. Always forward looking, Thomas compiled interest tables for a manual published in 1877 which were widely used throughout Australia as well later he introduced a major labour saving device, - adding machines. He also founded The Sydney Clearing House where cheques were exchanged between banks.

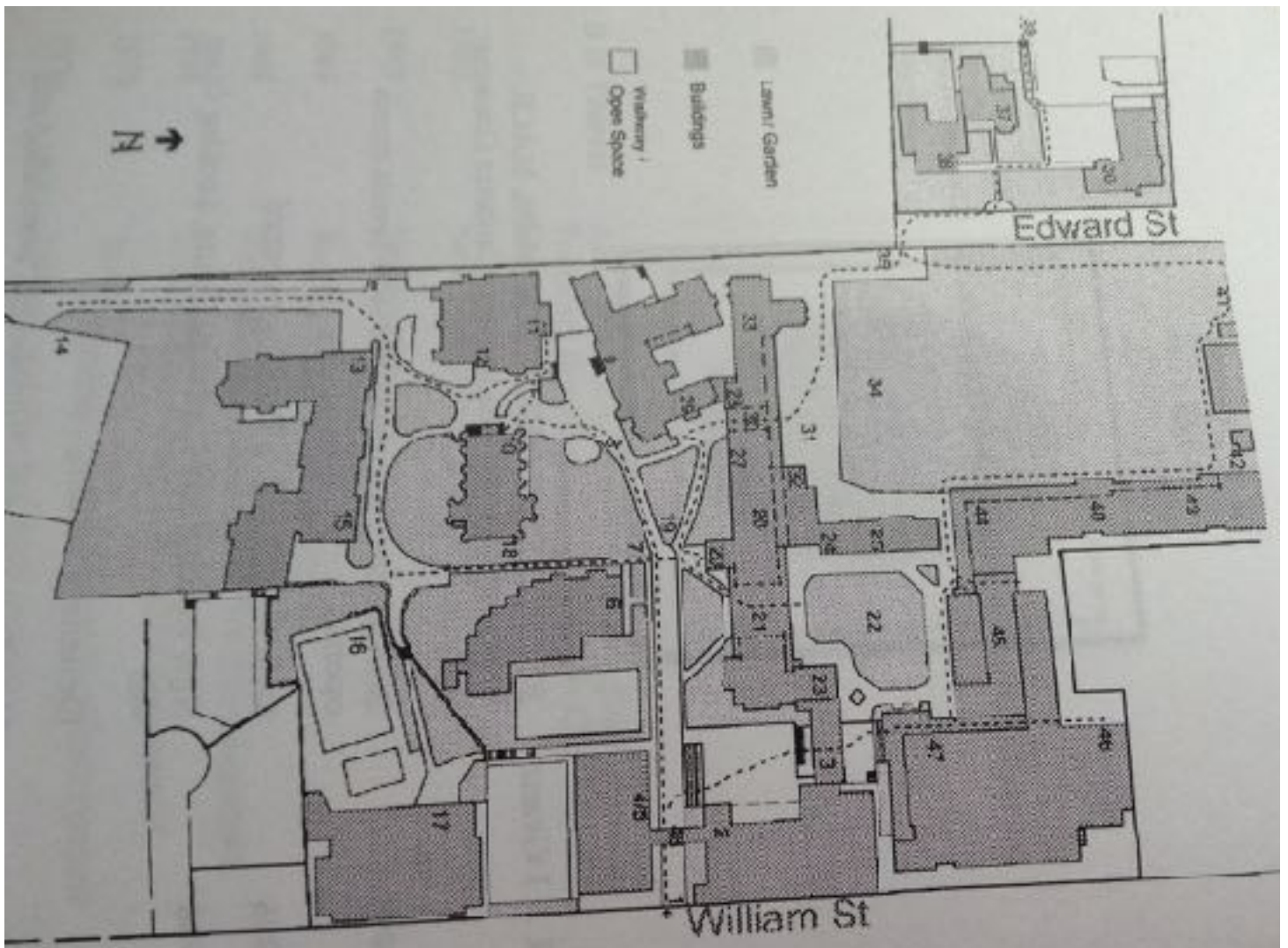
Thomas progressed from Inspector, to Assistant Manager then to General Manager in 1882, a position he held for 48 years. During these years he also held various influential commercial positions in the city. In 1915, aged 82 Thomas retired on a bank pension of £2,000 per annum. He had also accumulated a substantial property portfolio including Euroka, originally built by Thomas Walker, purchased from a ship owner named Edwin Sayer. In 1873 Thomas paid £4,500 for approximately 16 acres then subdivided it but retained slightly more than 5 acres comprising the house, garden, and outbuildings. The remaining land was sold. Around 1875 his brother, George redeveloped the residual 5 acres and demolished the original Euroka cottage and built the existing two storey main part of the house with attic accommodation and verandahs and the widows' walk that is evident today. Following George's 1880 bankruptcy, efforts were made to sell Euroka.

In 1882 Thomas, his family, and most likely Sophia, moved into Euroka and renamed it Graythwaite after his wife Tryphena's family home at Graythwaite Hall in Cumbria UK. A new room was added to the rear of the west wing. A coach house was constructed allowing the original stables to be modified for other uses. In 1884 Kailoa at 44 Union Street was built for Sir Thomas' only son Tom Burton Dibbs and his family.



Euroka later renamed Graythwaite with members of the Dibbs Family on each storey c1874

In 1885 Thomas purchased the adjoining property to the east, Holtermann's Tower (previously owned by Bernard Otto Holtermann, a famed photographer and joint discoverer of the Holtermann Nugget at Hill End NSW in 1872). Thomas on-sold this property in 1888 to Shore School for £10,000. This was Shore's first building. Thomas built three houses, Marilbah, (Robson House, 6 on map) for his third daughter Tryphenia Agnes who married Hugh Massie, Elsemere (Hodges House 15) for his eldest daughter Isabel Cecelia who married Charles Gaden, and Bishopsgate (formerly Yerrowin, Barry House 13) for second daughter Miss Ellen Mary Dibbs who did not marry. These houses were to the east of but near Graythwaite but all of the daughters had sold these houses by 1915 as had son Tom on sold Kailoa on Union Street below Graythwaite. (see next page)



Map of Shore grounds & these houses from "Shore An Historical tour" R C Peterson Archivist

Graythwaite, the grand estate

Graythwaite, a Victorian Italianate Villa, is sited on a high point above the harbour. In 1880 it was a four storey sandstone building including basement (dry cellars); a ground floor with its wide reception hall, large dining room with folding doors to the drawing room and sitting room; a first floor with a large landing, six bedrooms, bath and lavatory; a second floor with seven bedrooms; and a roof containing a large observatory (the observatory provided long views to the south/south sou-east to the city/ Pyrmont, and west/west-sou-west to Balmain/Leichhardt and the Parramatta River.) The outbuildings comprised a kitchen with two servants' rooms above, pantry, laundry, stables and other "out-conveniences". The grounds were tastefully laid out and improved. There was evidence of a tennis court, rose garden, fern house, and a garden pavilion on the planted upper slope. Still evident is the Cook's Pine (*Araucaria columnaris*) a North Sydney landmark on the border of the Holtermann and Graythwaite Estates. Moreton Bay Figs (*Ficus macrophylla*) and Port Jackson Fig and Small-leaf Fig as well as a Pepperberry Tree are still evident along with various other plantings from both the Dibbs and Red Cross eras.

Various additions were made to the house including a new room to the rear of the west wing and a more spacious coach house (now used for meetings and a caretaker) constructed allowing the original stables to be modified for other uses (now used as the Gowing Museum). Graythwaite was the scene of many grand parties for 300-400 people as well as for Thomas's daughters' wedding receptions. After Graythwaite was given to the State and no longer subject to private use/whim, the house retained detailed finishes, fireplaces, and hardware from the Victorian era. Thomas was a prominent, active and generous member of the Church of England. He was a foundation member of the Shore School Council, various diocesan bodies, and the nearby Christ

Church Lavender Bay where Shore boys attended before their own School Chapel was built. Thomas provided one-tenth of the funds needed to build Shore Chapel. He gave large donations to many needy causes and encouraged others to give by promising to match donations. Thomas was knighted in 1917 for his philanthropy. As a keen yachtsman he was Commodore of the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron and in 1900 he built a steam powered yacht, 'Ena' (named after his wife Tryphena). This beautiful 27 metre yacht was used for entertaining family and friends. During World War 1 Ena was acquired by the Royal Australian Navy to be used as an auxiliary patrol vessel around Thursday Island and the Torres Strait. After a varied history including being sunk off Tasmania, but later re-floated, it was then restored to be the beautiful Ena below. It is believed to have been sold in 2015 for around \$1m and has been returned to Sydney Harbour.

During Sophia's time at Graythwaite she saw the opening of Shore, the birth of at least five great-



Ena on Sydney Harbour as advertised in May 2015

grandsons. Two (Hugh Hanson Ingoldsby Massie and Robert John Allwright (Jack) Massie) lived with their parents (Tryphenia Agnes and Hugh Hamon Massie at Marilbah (also known as 'Pinwherry') now known as Robson House, purchased by Shore in 1925) and three others (Leonard Dalrymple Burton Dibbs, George Stewart Burton Dibbs, and Owen Burton Dibbs who lived at Kailoa on Union Street North Sydney with their parents Tom Burton and Annie Dalrymple Dibbs). These great-grandsons would all be pupils at Shore, starting from 1894. Sophia died at Graythwaite in October 1891

The need for improved access to Sydney from the North Shore

As early as 1815 Francis Greenway raised the question of a future need for a bridge joining both sides of the harbour, later there was a petition presented to Parliament in 1878 calling for a bridge. Over the years further petitions, discussions, an enquiry and Bills were presented. In 1922 the Sydney Harbour Bridge Act was passed. Construction started in 1923 with much excitement but also disruption and dislocation caused by the demolition of up to 800 houses to make way for the Sydney Harbour Bridge and access roads. The North Shore railway line was reconfigured from around the foreshores past Lavender Bay to the ferry wharf at Milsons Point to through the hill on which Graythwaite and Shore are built via a tunnel to the new North Sydney station then to the 'new' Milsons Point station and onto the Harbour Bridge.

This resulted in many professional families including the Dibbs family leaving the area and many large homes which had not been demolished were turned into rooming houses or schools such as parts of Wenona, Loretto, and Monte Sant' Angelo. It was not until the 1990s that the lower North Shore saw a return of professionals and the grand homes being restored or turned into apartments. Some of the members of the Dibbs family moved to Point Piper and the houses that Sir Thomas had built for his son and daughters were eventually purchased by Shore after 1924.

Although Shore and Sir Thomas were no longer neighbours their links remained. Sir Thomas was present at prize givings. He offered to sell Graythwaite to Shore in 1913 but Shore had decided to secure much needed sports grounds at Northbridge and there were insufficient funds to purchase both. In accord with the shock, horror, at the extreme loss of young men from The Great War which was felt thorough out Australia, these sports grounds were named The War Memorial Grounds as were many other civic halls, buildings, churches, and monuments throughout Australia.



*Construction of Railway Tunnels and Station at North Sydney 1920 - Heritage centre North Sydney Library
(Note Holtmann's Tower and St Peter's Church Spire in the background)*

The Great War

From Gallipoli R.J.A.(Jack) Massie (at Shore 1900-1909) wrote to his grandfather Sir Thomas describing the slaughter at the landing on 25 April 1915.

On 14 June 1915 Sir Thomas wrote to the NSW Premier offering Graythwaite to the State 'as a convalescent home, to be used in the first place for our wounded soldiers returning to Sydney.'

On 26 August 1915 grandson Thomas Graythwaite Burton Dibbs (at Shore 1902-1905 with 6 months at The Armidale School over 1904-5) was killed on the Western Front at Ypres West Flanders, Belgium.

On 1 March 1916 Graythwaite was opened as a Convalescent Hospital with 40 beds.

As a convalescent home Graythwaite was administered by the Australian Red Cross Society with voluntary aids who worked 12 hour shifts for no pay. They carried out the washing, cleaning of wards, polishing silver, while providing care and maintenance of the fabric of the building. Other women of the state rallied to support financially the Red Cross. At Graythwaite Convalescence Hospital fetes were held and Shore boys were asked to support various stalls, particularly the Produce Stall. Shore cadets were supplied as guards of honour for the opening of the fetes and

special occasions. Boys from the School together with Boy Scouts visited the veterans and helped maintain the grounds of Graythwaite.

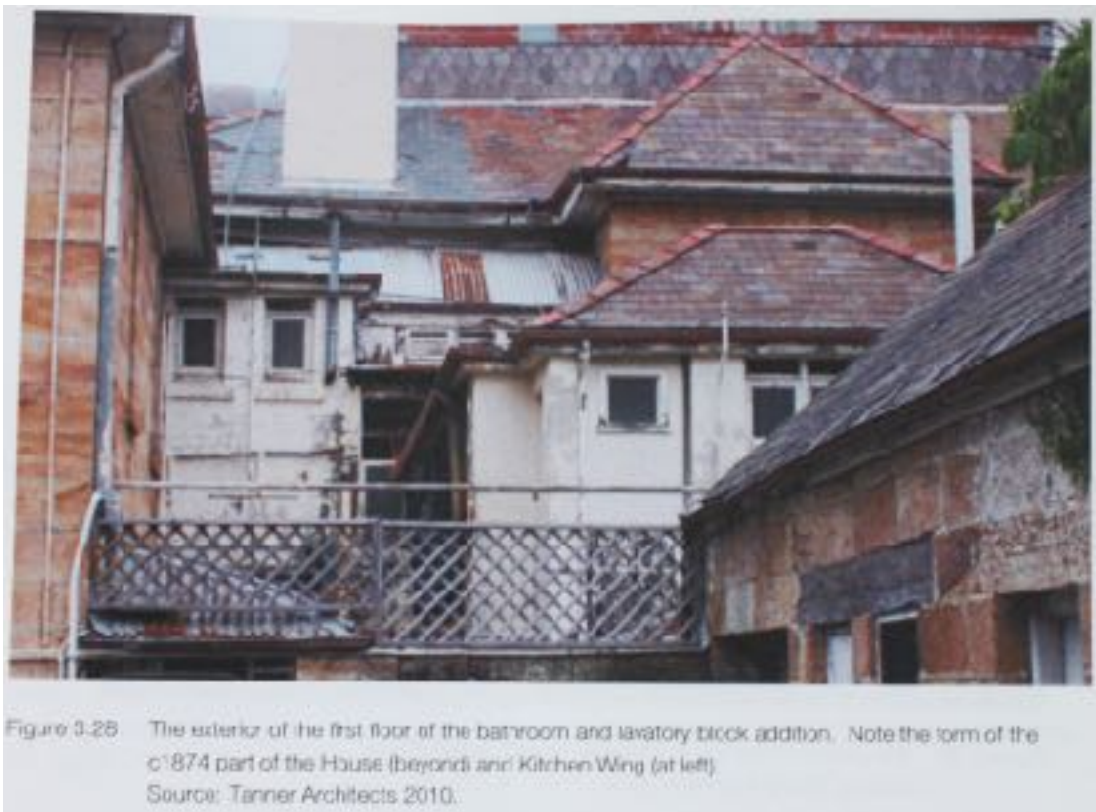
Graythwaite was opened as a Convalescent Home on 1 March 1916 and its management was transferred to the Red Cross. (At this time there were many other large homes in New South Wales and Victoria being given or more often loaned to the Red Cross for wounded or sick returning soldiers.) Modifications were made to suit the needs of the returning servicemen. A major building of the lavatory and bathroom block was added. Minor changes to rooms were undertaken as needed. A new ward known as the 'Hut' was built by the Red Cross. In 1919 Upton Grange, Edward Street was acquired by the Commonwealth Government as a home for nurses working at Graythwaite. The nurses home was closed in 1924 and sold to Shore School and now is part of Shore Preparatory School. A brick laundry and billiard room (known as the Tom O'Neill Centre named after a local general practitioner) was built and is now used for the Archives and Archivist. The 'Hut' has been demolished and the coach house is now used for a caretaker's accommodation and meeting rooms. In 1920s patient numbers had increased from 40 to 50 and up to around 54 capacity in 1954, climbing to around 60 in 1970 but falling to 28 in 1995.



The 'Hut' with nurses standing on the stairs.

In 1980 when the management of Graythwaite passed from the Red Cross (veterans were funded by Commonwealth Veteran Affairs Department) to the NSW Department of Health to be run as a nursing home under the Home of Peace Hospitals, a charity under the Anglican Deaconess Institution. The Home of Peace Hospitals became Hope Healthcare which in 2008 was acquired by Hammond Care, also a charity under the Anglican Church. From June 1977 patients were changing from veterans to the infirm aged civilians, many with dementia.

Various attempts were made as the Health Department sought to separate the property from the Trust set up by Sir Thomas because it was no longer being used for convalescing veterans. Veterans from both WWI & WWII would have found the Graythwaite complex, even with the additional buildings, unsatisfactory for modern requirements. The maintenance of the grand house was also proving to be difficult and haphazard, as revealed by various photographs especially those taken after 1978. In 1978 Graythwaite was placed on the Register of the National Estate.



Crumbling Graythwaite, North Sydney

'Save Graythwaite' era

When it was obvious that Graythwaite was in urgent need of significant repairs to which neither State nor Federal governments was prepared to commit funds, the question arose as to who or which body would be responsible for this once great building and its future use.

A local group, particularly those who lived in the surrounding streets, feared that if Shore owned Graythwaite the site would be used by many more boys. This group was strongly supported by North Sydney Council who funded many court challenges against the NSW State Government. North Sydney Council wanted to continue to use Graythwaite for the aged or as a function centre, have North Sydney office workers eat their lunch in the Graythwaite grounds, and allow the locals to continue to exercise their dogs in the grounds.

There were street signs around North Sydney pointing to 'Graythwaite - 5 min walk'. A group was formed to work in the garden under the Council's 'Streets Alive' programme. Public meetings were held to drive the 'Save Graythwaite' group; any contrary opinion was held up to ridicule. On the footpath on Union Street outside the main gates of Graythwaite is written in concrete a faintly visible 'Save Graythwaite' plea.

The Dibbs family was drawn into the argument that the Graythwaite had been given to the 'returning wounded men of the Empire in perpetuity' and the State was taking that gift for its own use and there was some story in the family (although I have found no evidence in publicly available Dibbs family histories) that Sir Thomas was hostile to Shore and didn't want Shore to have Graythwaite. Sir Thomas's actions, however, suggest that he was still very supportive of Shore even though he was now living at Point Piper as reported in The Sydney Morning Herald (SMH 22/9/1919 p.6) and intending to open the War Memorial Playing Fields at Northbridge on the following Saturday. He wasn't well enough on the day so his daughter Miss Ellen Dibbs attended in his place. On 9/11/1921 p.15 SMH Sir Thomas is reported as having attended the funeral of a previous Shore Headmaster C.H.Hodges (headmaster while at least five of Sir Thomas's grandsons were at Shore) in the School Chapel. He continued to donate prizes (SMH 1/9/1922 p. 5) and died on 18 March 1923.



Plaque at War Memorial Playing Fields Northbridge

The Court released the Trust from its obligations via the granting of a cyprés application by the State Government. Thus the North Sydney property could be sold by tender with the proceeds to be used for rehabilitation facilities elsewhere. Concurrently in 2007 a Federal election was in progress with both major parties promising funds to buy Graythwaite, up to around \$20m with \$5m additional funds for restoration. The Court had ruled that it was not to be sold for less than \$16.8m.

This was Shore's last chance to secure this much longed for additional open space for which funds had been saved over many, many years. In the tender process Shore's successful bid was \$35.2m for the 2.6 hectare (7 acres) park with its crumbling improvements. The under-bidder is believed to have wanted the property for a private home.

The restoration of Graythwaite, North Sydney together with satisfying current Occupational Health and Safety and Fire Department requirements cost around \$10m and was completed after a year of intense work. It was officially opened on 4 May 2014 in Shore's 125th anniversary year. Tanner Architects were the guiding heritage architects for the project. The restorations have won the builders Carfax Commercial Constructions various National Building Awards for historic buildings. The restored Graythwaite was the fulfilment of decades of dreams by generations of Shore boys who hoped to be allowed one day to enjoy the open space.

This purchase by Shore of the 'Graythwaite Estate' was also beneficial for local residents with beautiful well kept buildings and grounds (with no further costs to the local North Sydney Council or NSW State or Federal Governments), a win for those in need of rehabilitation treatment in the new Graythwaite Rehabilitation Centre, Ryde (Graythwaite Ryde), and the Dibbs family with the beautifully restored and maintained Graythwaite at North Sydney and their family history not only acknowledged by Shore School but also enshrined in the new world-class 64 bed, \$41m rehabilitation facility at Ryde.

Graythwaite Rehabilitation Centre, Ryde

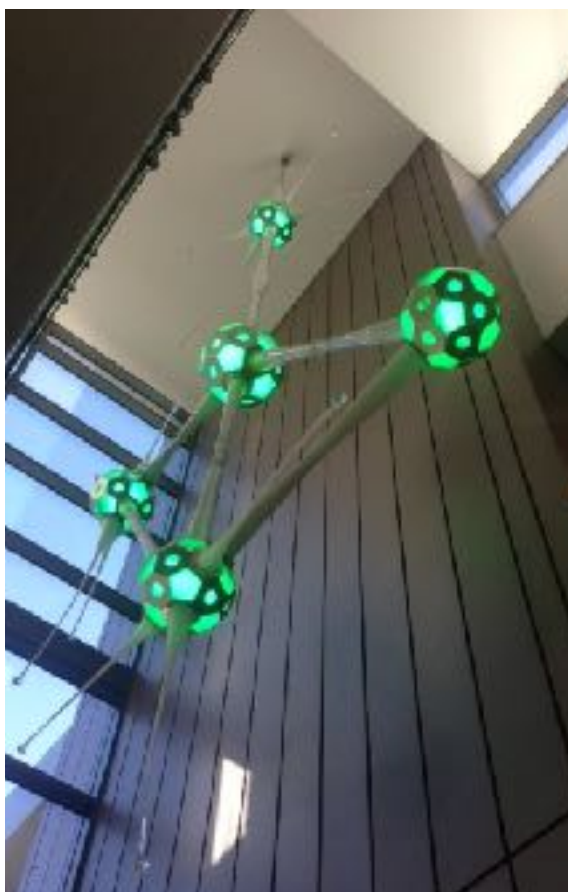
The state of the art development at Ryde is in stark contrast to the old North Sydney operation. It was built with the \$35.2m released by Shore's payment for the North Sydney site supplemented by funds from the Federal Government. The high standard of care is for patients' rehabilitation service for residents of the North Shore community including Ryde, Mosman, North Sydney, Willoughby, Lane Cove, and Hunters Hill for four main types of patients: orthopaedic and amputees, neurology, reconditioning, and severe burns victims (for patients released from Concord and Royal North Shore Hospitals' burns units).

This outstanding facility combines the philosophy of healing both body and mind with an emphasis on neuroplasticity. On the ground floor is the entry/waiting and parking areas. The building includes

on the first floor a hydrotherapy pool for inpatients and outpatients, modern gymnasiums, therapy laundry, kitchen and study, outdoor therapy and recreation areas, library, dining room and patient lounges and two 32 bed wards known as Graythwaite 4 on level 1 and 5 on level 2. A linkway to the main hospital is from Graythwaite 5, allowing access for patients in need of acute medical services.



Graythwaite Ryde upon completion, 2013



This sculpture designed by Tim Bassett signifying neuroplasticity hangs above the entrance foyer at the Graythwaite Ryde complex. The sculpture is of a neuron with 3 nerve cells connecting, to represent the process of neuroplasticity which is the recovery of brain or body by changing brain patterns.

The spirit of the convalescent or rehabilitation hospital which the prominent benefactor Sir Thomas Dibbs on 14 June 1915 gave to the State of NSW lives on in Graythwaite Ryde when the Court in 2008 by coincidentally another Justice Windeyer allowed the North Sydney property to be sold.

In Graythwaite Ryde are displayed the memorial plaques which were originally at Graythwaite North Sydney. At Graythwaite Ryde in ward Graythwaite 4 is the *Graythwaite Lounge 1* where a memorial plaque and a description records the death on 27 August 1915 in World War 1 of Thomas Graythwaite Burton Dibbs (TGB Dibbs) on the Western Front. As well in *Graythwaite Lounge 2* are explanations of 'The Graythwaite Story' together with various photographs when Graythwaite, North Sydney was functioning as a sanctuary for veterans from both World Wars. (see appendix)



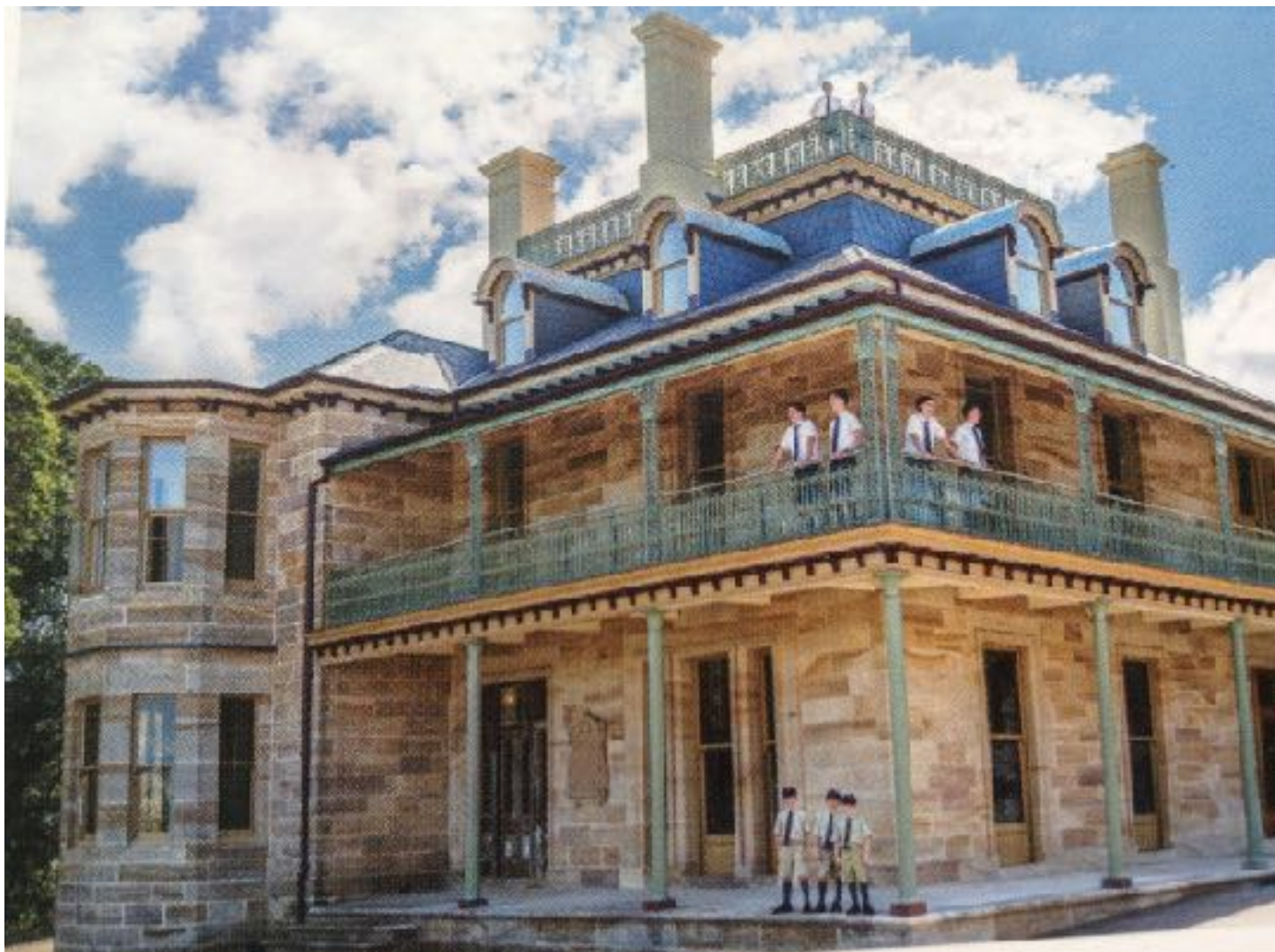
Plaque of TGB Dibbs at Graythwaite Ryde

In Graythwaite Ryde in ward Graythwaite 5 in the *Thomas Dibbs Lounge 1* is another memorial plaque in memory of Owen Burton Dibbs, killed 1 April 1918, also on the Western Front and the death of George Robert Dibbs killed over Egypt on 2 September 1942. (It seems that the joint plaque for Owen Burton Dibbs and George Robert Dibbs now in the *Thomas Dibbs Lounge 1* was made and erected in the first instance at Graythwaite North Sydney in the mid to late 1940s possibly by the Veteran Affairs Department.) In the *Thomas Dibbs Lounge 2* there is also an introduction to Sir Thomas Dibbs as well as the history of the building at North Sydney and the Dibbs Family including Sir Thomas's brothers John and Sir George. (see appendix)



Plaque of OB Dibbs & GR Dibbs in Dibbs Lounge at Graythwaite Ryde

Sir Thomas had eight daughters and an only son, Tom Burton Dibbs who had five sons. Of these sons two, Thomas G.B.Dibbs and Owen B.Dibbs were killed in World War 1. Leonard, another son of Tom Dibbs had a son George Robert Dibbs killed in World War 11. These plaques and descriptions inform those being treated in Graythwaite Rehabilitation Centre, Ryde of Sir Thomas's and his brothers' lives in the developing colony and his grandsons' and great grandson's sacrifices in each World War. (see appendix for more photographs for Graythwaite Ryde)



The restored Graythwaite North Sydney 2015

I think Sir Thomas and Sophia would be delighted with today's Shore as an Anglican boys' school, the recognition given to the contributions by the Dibbs Family to Australia, the beautifully restored Graythwaite, North Sydney, and the new Graythwaite Rehabilitation Centre, Ryde.

Endnotes.

1. In the early 1800s the London Missionary Society, (LMS formed 1795) sent missionaries to many countries such as Africa and the Pacific Islands. Captain John Dibbs was Master of ships serving the LMS stations on these islands between 1822 and 1827.
2. Robert Campbell of Campbell & Co merchants who was the LMS agent in Sydney had two sons John and Robert, friends of Captain John Dibbs.

Dibbs Family Tree			
	Captian John Dibbs	Married	Sophia Elizabeth Allwright
	b 08.11.1790, d.31.07.1872	16.12.1828	b 21.07.1809 d 22.10.1891
	'Lost at sea' 1834/5		
Children			
	John Campbell Dibbs	Thomas Allwright Dibbs	George Richard Dibbs
	b 04.09.1830 d 08.07.1899	b 01.11.1833, d 18.03.1923	b 12.10.1834 d 05.08.1904
	Married 27.12.1862	Married 11.03.1857	Married 18.03.1857
	Jane Wood, b 07.06.1843 d 11.06.1889 2 daughters & 4 sons	Tryphena Gaden b c1839 d 14.06.1925	Anne Maria Robey b 05.04.1836, d 30.12.1909 10 daughters & 5 sons
Children of Thomas & Tryphena			
	Tom Burton Dibbs b, 13.02.1858, d 05.06.1921	Tryphena Agnes b 3.7.1863, d. 14. 06.1925 lived in Marilbah (Robson House)	7 other daughters, 2 lived in houses, Elsemere (Hodges House) & Bishopsgate (Barry House) built by TA Dibbs
	m Emma Anna Dalrymple Hay, 5 sons including:	m Hugh Hamson Massie 1 daugther & 1 other son &	
	Owen Burton Dibbs b 22.12.1889, K.I.A. 1.4.1918	R.J.A. (Jack) Massie b 8.7.1890, d 14.2.1966	
	Thomas Graythwaite Burton Dibbs b11.4.1892 K.I.A. 27.8.1915		
	Leonard Dalrymple Burton Dibbs b 4.3.1884, d 8.2,1969, m 12.8.1912 Linda Alexander 2 sons & 2 daughters including Robert George Dibbs b 10.1.1919, K.I.A. 2.9.1942		

Sir Thomas Dibbs' 23 year old grandson, Thomas Graythwaite Burton Dibbs, was a construction and turbine engineer, studying in Switzerland. At the outbreak of World War I, he rushed to England where he enlisted with the York and Lancashire 7th (Pioneer) Battalion. He left for France on July 11 and was killed in action on August 27, 1915 at Ypres, West Flanders, Belgium.

Appendix:

From Graythwaite Lounge Ryde

The Graythwaite story

Graythwaite, a Victorian sandstone mansion surrounded by beautiful gardens, sits atop a hill in North Sydney overlooking Sydney Harbour to the city and suburbs beyond. In June 1915 early reports reached Australia about the devastating losses and casualties in Gallipoli so its owners, Sir Thomas and Lady Dibbs, offered their home and grounds valued at £15,000 to the NSW Government:

.... to be used as a Convalescent Home for our Sick and Wounded Soldiers and Sailors and when not required for that purpose as a Convalescent Home in perpetuity for distressed subjects of the British Empire regardless of Sect or Creed.



Graythwaite c. 1918
North Sydney Municipal Council
Museum Library

Graythwaite's story begins in 1872 when Thomas Wicker was granted purchase of 30 acres for £60. He built *Graythwaite* from brick and shingles. After Wicker's death it was sold to wealthy Akip-sones Edelela Sayers, who added a large sandstone wing.



Viewpoint of Sydney from the North Shore
Graythwaite is on the right of the picture.
View Change of Peter South White, Circa 1910

Image from the 1940s
 Convicting soldiers and *Widows and Orphans* from the
 loss of Gough's (1915) to help with the
 Red Cross. We are grateful for nursing duties and
 financial aid.
 A letter published in 1920.
 Red Cross Star with picture of members of
 Gough's, 1915.
 Image courtesy of the National Committee of the
 Australian Red Cross (1915)



Thomas Dicks, a bank manager at the Commercial
 Banking Company of Sydney Ltd, brought funds to 1917.
 He substantially modified the home and changed its name
 to Goughs. His brother George Dicks, who would
 become Premier of NSW, lived in the home with his wife
 and four daughters and two sons until 1988.

In 1915 Thomas Dicks gave his home to the NSW
 Government. Three months later Dicks passed.
 Thomas Gough's Baron Dicks, died in 1920.
 Noel Plender, He is commemorated in the plaque in
 this room.

The Red Cross became Gough's administrative and
 covered the home with a 24-hour facility. The first
 patients were treated on 1 March, 1916. During 1916
 hundreds of recovered soldiers from Australia, New
 Zealand and French business were cared for. Also the
 Red Cross's Institute of Medical Research for permanently
 disabled soldiers.



Sir George Huxley Johnston

The Depression and Red Cross plan to create various
 registers of qualifying for a reward under the Repatriation
 Commission's strict eligibility guidelines issued *Revised*
1918-1919.

At the 1920s various front-line units give other and more
 recognized and observed for plans in Gough's treatment
 facilities expanded in 1920 but then was a largely unrequited
 for. In 1927 a decline in the number of unrequited
 provisions allowed for total patients.

In 1930 Gough's 48-year history as an *ASAC* Board
 member, the Department of Health took over and to become
 a public nursing home. The work team was transferred to
 provide a list of names to meet developmentally disabled
 young people with living skills. This program has changed
 to the only design and award in the nation building. The
 work team then became a big program across for people with
 dementia. It was found to contribute the work of the
 organization to the *ASAC*.

Gough's was sold in 1971 for \$10.5 million including the
 construction of the specialized Rehabilitation Centre.



Image from the 1940s
 Convicting soldiers and *Widows and Orphans* from the
 loss of Gough's (1915) to help with the
 Red Cross. We are grateful for nursing duties and
 financial aid.

*Gough's role as a sanctuary for soldiers suffering
 the effects of war cannot be underestimated.*

Sir Thomas Dibbs' grandson, Owen Burton Dibbs, was a member of the Sydney Stock Exchange when he enlisted. He served with the AIF Infantry and was commended 'on his initiative and gallant leadership' at Zonnebeke, West Flanders, Belgium in October 1917. He died six months later at the age of 29 in France.

Sir Thomas' great grandson, Flying Officer George Robert Dibbs, of the 33 Squadron RAF, died in a flying battle in September 1942. He was shot down near El Alamein in Egypt 'the day they stopped Rommel'. Educated at Sydney Grammar School, he was 23 years of age when he died.

From the Thomas Dibbs Lounge

Sir Thomas Dibbs

Thomas Allwright Dibbs was born in 1832 and despite humble beginnings he became a widely respected businessman and philanthropist. His devotion to the welfare of others was characterised by the gift of his home, *Croyhaute*, to the state for the convalescence of wounded soldiers returning from World War I.

His father, John Dibbs, met his mother, 30 years younger, when she worked in an inn on George Street. John was a master mariner from Scotland who sailed between Australia, New Zealand and Tahiti, transporting missionaries and trade. A few months after the youngest child was born, his father 'disappeared'. It was long believed he had drowned at sea but it transpires that due to erratic behaviour and mental swings possibly caused by a head injury, he was seen to land them in the East India Company Baylon in London where he remained until his death in 1872.

Sophia was left to bring up Thomas and his two brothers on Flagstaff Hill (now called Observatory Hill, The Rocks). She was described as 'a lady of great strength, integrity and determination with beautiful deep blue eyes'. She was made of stern stuff, a follower of John Ruskin's long who believed in education and democracy. She was also the daughter of servants.

Sir Thomas Dibbs, c. 1881.
State Library of New South Wales
01444/0134/112



Croyhaute, c. 1878.
When Sir George Dibbs lived there, allowing three generations of his family.
State Library of New South Wales
01444/0134/110





Sir Thomas Dibbs, knighted in 1917, worked for almost 70 years at the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Ltd - 45 years as its general manager. He began his career at the bank at the age of 18 and was soon responsible for setting up branches in country towns. Early in his career, he introduced a method of recognizing (therefore closer to their physical attributes, often women. Later he introduced adding machines, thus becoming known as the 'Father of Bank Accountants'. He was an acute and skillful manager whose management of the bank was credited with saving it from the fate of other banks in the Depression of 1890. He died in 1923 in his home in Wilsley Road, Point Piper, at the age of 91. His obituary noted the 'passing of one of Australia's most notable bankers and one whose munificent spirit and public service had been identified with so many benevolent and patriotic movements'.



The gift of his and Lady Dibbs' home, Goughbarrs, to the NSW Government in 1915 to be used as a convalescent home for servicemen exemplified this philanthropic spirit. Perhaps they feared the worst as their grandsons enlisted to serve overseas at the outset of WWI. Grandson, Thomas Goughbarrs Burton Dibbs, is commemorated in the plaque in the room downstairs.

Grandson, Owen Burton Dibbs served with the AIF Infantry and died in France in 1918. Great grandson, George Robert Dibbs died in a flying battle in the Middle East in 1942. Both these men are commemorated on the plaque in this room.

Thomas Dibbs' brothers were also identified with patriotic and benevolent movements. Eldon brother John Campbell Dibbs, maintained a successful business working as a shipping agent for Dibbs Wharf (or Darling Harbour).



From left to right
Partners of Thomas Dibbs painted by Tom Roberts
in 1897. NSW 105

Celebration held at Goughbarrs to mark Thomas Dibbs' 80th year at The Commercial Banking Corporation of Sydney Ltd, to which all members of the extended staff were invited. Thomas is sitting in the centre, his wife, Sylvia, to his right and his mother, Sophia, to his left. His grandchildren are standing behind him - George with his hand on John's shoulder. Some of these grandchildren are in line of duty. On 14/01/1916.

The Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Ltd building on the corner of George and Bennet Streets opposite Martin Place - closed to allow Thomas Dibbs was here and when he was 70 years old about 1915. Prior to his retirement, he enjoyed the distinction of being the oldest bank manager in Australia.

All images: State Library of New South Wales

Sir George Rickard Dibbs, the youngest brother, is listed in his biography as 'a law reformer, a Member of the Lower House, a Premier (of NSW, three times), a politician, a protectionist politician, a ship-owner, a sugar refiner and a taxation reformer'. He was knighted in 1892 by Queen Victoria. For a number of years he lived in Goughbarrs with his wife, some daughters and two sons.

This Rehabilitation Centre was largely funded by the sale of Goughbarrs, the Dibbs' family home in North Sydney.

“... one of Australia's most notable bankers and one whose munificent spirit and public service had been identified with so many benevolent and patriotic movements”

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Robin Lewarne, 11 November, 2016