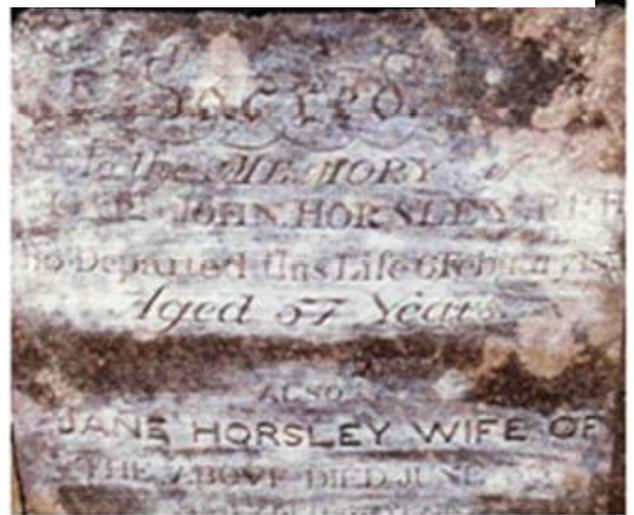


A48 Capt. John Horsley Large land owner, Coroner & Magistrate

Title/rank:

Captain, officer of the Royal Regiment of Horse Guards Blue until c. 1804 when he withdrew from it after having been reprimanded for killing a man in a duel (which had recently been declared illegal). He then decided to migrate to Sydney. In 1823, he was appointed Clerk of the Bench of Magistrates and in 1825 Coroner for Liverpool to investigate suspicious deaths.



Born – date/year:

1777

Place of origin:

Essex, England. According to local historian, William Frames, “Horsley was one of our real ‘blue-blooded’ aristocrats. He was a cousin of the late Lord Melbourne”. He arrived in Sydney in 1814.

Marital status & children:

First Maria, who refused to emigrate with him. He then formed a *de facto* relationship with Jane Cross, whom he had met on the voyage out from England. (Her convict husband left her after arrival and raised their two boys on a small farm at Windsor, while she retained her daughter.) Together, John and Jane had eight children.

Place where lived:

John fairly quickly became a large landowner, acquiring portions of grants made to others, most notably the *Castel Paul* estate. (This had been combined, by earlier land owners, with several similarly sized grants to form a largely uncleared 700 acres (280 ha) estate.) Horsley re-named it *Mark Lodge* in 1816, after family properties in Essex, England. He built a seven room house [large at that time] on the property. (It apparently did not survive into the 20th century, and should not be confused with *Horsley House*, built by unrelated John Horsley, further to the west, after whom that suburb was named.

Role/job:

Horsley proceeded to develop his estate with assigned convicts used as clearing gangs and labourers. He also was assigned a miller, a millwright and a gardener. He grew corn, wheat and other products and ran a dairy of 50 cows. He also ran a flour mill with 11 employees, most of them convicts. This property became so large that Prospect Creek formed its eastern and southern boundaries, and in the north it extended so that it encompassed the whole of Fairfield’s present day business area. *Mark Lodge* homestead was built in the centre of the estate, on an area now occupied by Fairfield District Hospital. The Horsley family lived there until 1840, almost six years after John’s death.

Contribution to Liverpool: Appointed Clerk of the Bench of Magistrates in 1823 and Coroner of Liverpool (1825-1834). He participated actively in the social life of the district.

By 1820, John Horsley was listed as the major property owner in the district. In 1821, Governor Macquarie gave him a land grant of 1,200 acres in the Illawarra district, but he also bought land in Liverpool itself.

Died/age: John died on 6 February 1834 - aged 57 years. Jane died as 'Mrs Jane Horsley' on 30 June 1841, aged 57.

Religion: Church of England Grave no. A48

Source of info. Paper by Freda M Smith (nee Millington). Also *Fairfield: A History of the District* (1991) by Vance George, and *Cabrogal to Fairfield City* by Stephen Gapps.