

## RESTORATION OF A LAND GRANT DOCUMENT

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THE DOCUMENT discussed in this article is a very interesting item from a historical as well as a restoration point of view. It was in a very deteriorated and worn state when we received it from Mr Christopher Maley as a private restoration job. Being interested in the Lachlan Macquarie signature, we decided to look into the historical aspects of the document.

William Bond was granted fifty acres in 1810, but by further research it was found that the land had originally been granted in the Paterson period. After Governor Bligh, William Paterson administered the government of New South Wales as an insurrectionary, from 9 January to 31 December 1809. In despatch No. 3 of 1812, Governor Macquarie remarked to the Earl of Liverpool, 'Paterson was such an easy good-natured, thoughtless man, that he lately granted lands to almost every person who asked him, without regards to their merits or pretensions'. When Macquarie superseded Paterson on 1 January 1810 he revoked all administrative actions carried out by Paterson. The proclamation revoking them was dated 4 January 1810. William Bond's grant is listed with those lands surrendered into the Secretary's Office in Enclosure No. 181 of Macquarie's despatch to Castlereagh dated 30 April 1810. The following information is given:

No. 153 (Number of Grant)  
William Bond  
6 November 1809 (date granted)  
50 acres, Cabramatta District  
Paterson (by whom granted)  
22 January 1810 (date surrendered).

The land was later re-granted, legally, by Macquarie, below the date of 18 January 1810, and it is listed with 252 grants which had previously been surrendered and renewed on the same date, 18 January. An account of the renewal can be found in Macquarie's despatch to Liverpool of 18 October 1811, in Enclosure No. 21. The following details are given: No. 162, William Bond, 50 acres, Botany Bay. As an added touch of the unusual, one of the persons working on the restoration of this document discovered that he is living on part of this fifty-acre land grant.

One of the witnesses to the document, James Mechan, surveyed the land and was Deputy Surveyor-General and collector of quit rents from 1813 to 1822. The second witness, John Thomas Campbell, was Secretary to the Governor from 1810 to 1820; and the third, Henry Colden Antill was a Captain who came to Australia in Macquarie's regiment and became Aide-de-Camp. Quit rent was levied on an annual basis after five years. It ensured that some revenue was being acquired under the grant system. It was a carry over from the English manorial system—coinage rather than payment in kind.

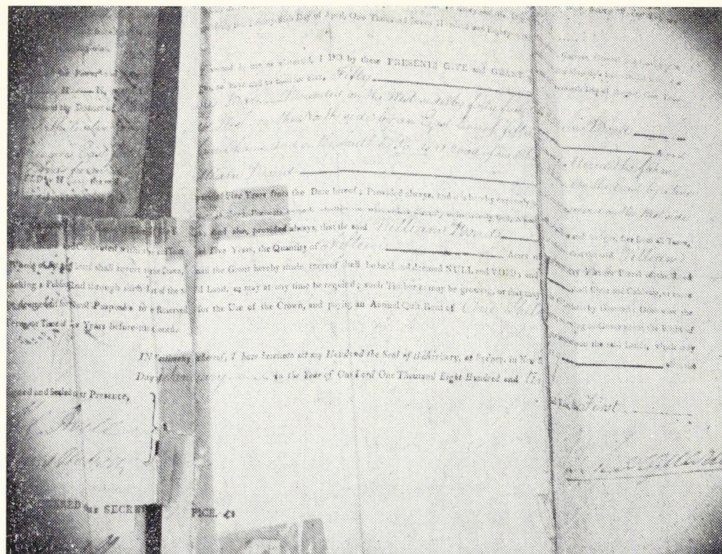


Figure 1: Close up of Land Grant document issued to William Bond of Botany Bay, 1 January 1810. Signature of Lachlan Macquarie can be seen at lower right hand corner. Note also the very bad adhesive tape stains and general deterioration.

### Restoration procedure

As can easily be seen from the first photograph (Fig. 1), this document was in a very deteriorated state of preservation, and there was considerable evidence that it had already gone through at least a couple of 'restoration and repairs' since the original issue in 1810. Both the printed and hand-written words had, unfortunately, worn a great deal, and it was certain that not much would have to go wrong during the restoration process for the remaining writing to become much more damaged and for some of it to disappear completely. The previous 'restoration and repairs' had certainly not been carried out in the best traditions of the trade, and they were the direct cause of all the ills associated with the document's present condition.

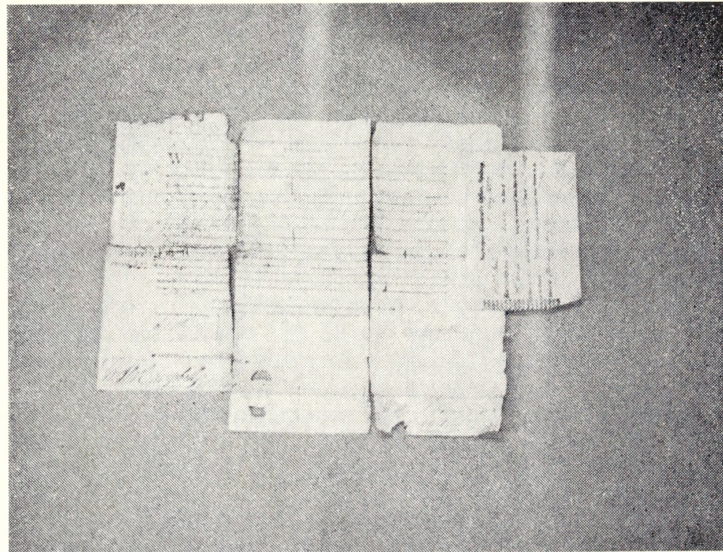
We performed a variety of tests to assure ourselves about the solubility of the inks, glues and paper, and decided on the following work as the best course of action to extend the useful life of this document.

1. As much surface cleaning as possible using rubber and vinyl powder and rubber pencils.
2. Stains from adhesive tape to be removed with toluene and acetone.
3. Fixing of all writing with Calaton B500 soluble nylon, as this product, apart from fixing the writing, also allows for penetration of water.
4. The removal of all previous repairs.

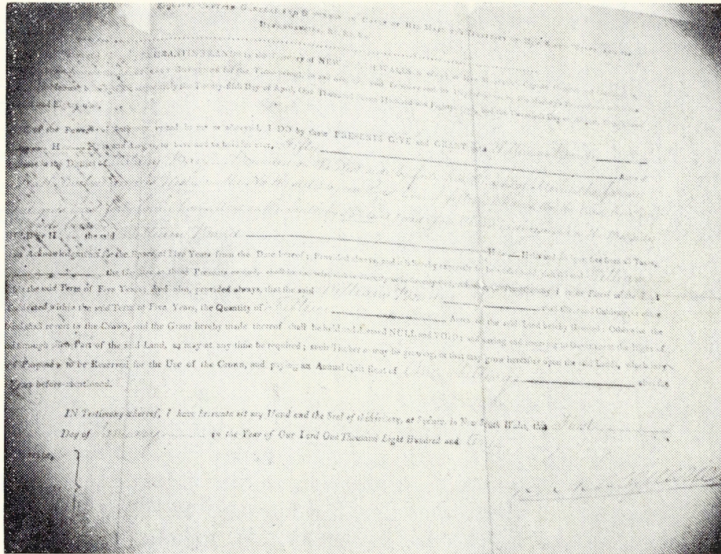
5. As much cleaning with water as could be regarded as safe—if any.
6. Deacidification.
7. Sizing.
8. Repairs—most likely in combination with the sizing.
9. Encapsulation of the document in mylar.

The surface cleaning with rubber powder around all written words removed a great deal more dirt than we had at first anticipated. It was not possible in any way to touch any of the writing as this was too loose and powdery. At this stage we decided to fix all written words with a 10% solution of soluble nylon, and after this had dried completely a successful attempt was made to remove the yellow sticky stains (from the adhesive tape) which are so clearly visible in (Fig. 1). We used both toluene and acetone. It is not possible to state which one of these solvents did the best job, but a combination of both removed the stains completely.

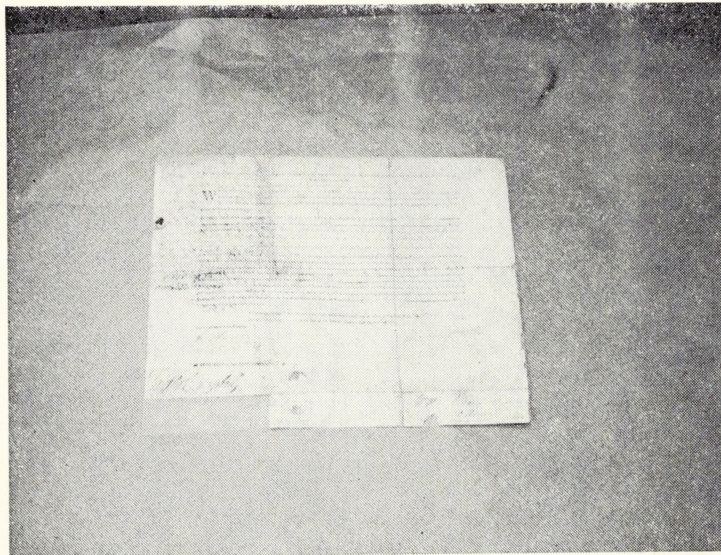
In an effort to remove the original land grant document from its support paper and to remove the remaining repairs, it became necessary to use water, as the adhesives used in the old mounting operation and repairs were home-made oat paste and gum arabic. We simply dabbed the document and its support repair paper on both sides first with cold water, but as this did not seem to have any effect we used warm water with lissapol. Even this combination took about six to seven hours finally to dissolve the oat paste. The other adhesive, gum arabic, dissolved in a matter of ten to fifteen minutes after wetting with the warm water and lissapol. The pH reading of the document before any other work had been carried out was 4.4.



*Figure 2: Original document as it looked after it was removed from old mounting and repairs. Adhesive tape stains are now barely visible.*



Figures 3 and 4: The finished restoration work.



Possibly because of the long continuous wetting while undoing the old mounting and repairs, the document itself did not seem to be in any need of washing in water and in any case we considered it to be unsafe, as at this stage of the operation the paper showed to be very frail.

It was now necessary to deacidify the document, and to accomplish this a solution of 3.0 gr./litre calcium (bi) carbonate in water was prepared. The document was soaked in this solution for about half an hour and then left to dry until next day, when the pH was measured and found to be 7.9. Sizing became the next step in the operation, and we hit on the idea of carrying out the sizing and repair operation as one. The size used was methyl cellulose mixed to the correct consistency with deacidification solution, and size-glued onto a piece of sheer nylon (pH 7.0), making up a sandwich as previously described in *Archives and Manuscripts* Vol. 6, No. 4, pp. 137-41. After drying overnight the restoration and preservation treatment was complete. The results are shown in Figures 3 and 4.