

BUNN'S COTTAGE

Colin Fowler

The residence of George and Anna-Maria Bunn at Cockle Bay was named Newstead House, but became popularly known as Bunn's Cottage. The formal name would have been chosen by Anna-Maria in honour of her literary hero, Lord Byron, whose ancestral home was Newstead Abbey.

George Bunn and Anna Maria Murray were married in 1828 and they were gifted with acreage from the Ultimo estate of Surgeon John Harris, a friend of Anna-Maria's father, Captain Terence Murray. The parcel of land was on the western shore of Cockle Bay (Darling Harbour) adjacent to the Macarthurs' Pymont estate.

In 1832 George Bunn built a wharf projecting into Darling Harbour and relocated his shipping business there from George Street. The next year a sandstone residence was erected. George died the following year. It was at Newstead House that Anna-Maria wrote her novel, *The Guardian: a Tale*, which was published pseudonymously as the work of 'An Australian' in 1838.

The house continued to be occupied by Anna-Maria and her two young sons until 1841 when they relocated to her brother's Yarralumla homestead, and in 1859 to their St. Omer property at Braidwood.

Newstead was leased and the estate finally sold in 1872. Advertisements in the *Sydney Morning Herald* during February and March, described the house as 'commodious':

EXTENSIVE BLOCK OF FREEHOLD CITY LAND, containing an area of ONE ACRE AND A HALF, having upwards of 3 CHAINS FRONTAGE to the Pymont side of DARLING HARBOUR, nearly opposite the FOOT OF MARKET-STREET, adjoining the land purchased by the Government for the RAILWAY GOODS TERMINUS.

BICHARDSON and WRENCH have received instructions from the proprietor to sell by public auction, at the Rooms, Pitt-street, on FRIDAY, 15th March, at 11 o'clock,

The above-described valuable block of city land, together with the commodious family residence and spacious outbuildings erected thereon ...

(Sydney Morning Herald, 6 March 1872)

By 1879 Newstead House had been demolished. When Anna-Maria heard of the proposed demolition, she wrote to her nephew and godson, urging him to inspect the old house before it was pulled down:

If you go there, you will see a room looking towards the North Shore and opening onto the hall, in which your father [the late Sir Terence Aubrey Murray] used to sleep. The cellar down below, where the butler hid from the Police, had a well in it, in which one of our pet dogs was drowned. I suppose the Norfolk Island pines in my favourite walk are still blooming, while he who gave them, Colonel Morisset, has long turned to dust.
(Gwendoline Wilson, *Murray of Yarralumla*)

The following year, Anna-Maria Bunn died at St. Omer, Braidwood.