

WINDRADYNE, CHIEF OF THE ABORIGINALS

(By R.T.H.)

Last Sunday, the members of the Historical Society paid a visit to the grave of Windradyne, alias "Satur" the last paramount Chief of the Macquarie aboriginals, who was laid to rest in the sacred burying ground of his tribe, on Brucevale holding, just below the junction of Winburndale and Clear Creeks—the grave site having been preserved undisturbed by the Suttor family, the original grantees.

A full busload of members and friends travelled to the Winburndale Creek, the crossing of which was a ticklish and delicate task. All hands transferred to a 1-ton flat-topped truck, kindly provided by Messrs. Edgell and Sons. Shrieks of mingled alarm and laughter accompanied the last mile over very rough ground, for riding on a truck over rough country is an acquired art, but one can really enjoy the excitement—for a time.

The site of the grave was on a grassy knoll, overlooking the Winburndale Creek, facing the rising sun—an imposing Australian scene.

Here, the president, Mr. Munster, took charge and apologised for the absence of the principal speaker, who had, unexpectedly, been prevented from coming, at the last moment.

In the circumstances, the hon secretary, Mr. R. T. Hole, detailed some of the incidents connected with the life of Windradyne, who was here when Governor Macquarie arrived, and had, doubtless, watched with some misgivings the actions of these strangers, springing actively to cover when the soldiers fired the first volley. He appears to have been a man of strong personality, shrewdness and courage. He distrusted these strangers—what might not their coming mean to his people? For some time the natives and the whites remained on friendly terms though Windradyne was ever watchful. Then an incident occurred.

An Italian, named Antonia, had a small cultivation patch on the right bank of the river (as yet there were only military and police buildings on the left bank). A few blacks happened along when Antonia was digging potatoes and in the goodness of his heart he gave them some and showed how they should be cooked.

The blacks were delighted—this was a great treat to them.

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Next morning, when Antonia came to work, he found quite a number of blacks industrially digging up his potatoes. Expostulations were useless for to them "findings meant keepings." Antonia rushed for help and in the ensuing melee blood was shed as the blacks were put to flight.

This incident engendered a bitter feeling and Windradyne, who had been one of the raiding party, became the sworn enemy of the whites and he occasioned them all the harm he could, short of actual killing, which, he was shrewd enough to understand would result in sad consequences to himself.

So obnoxious did he render himself to the settlers that a reward of 500 acres of land was offered for his capture. At O'Connell a quarrel occurred between his tribe and another—the latter fled, in terror to escape a massacre, and took refuge in the cottage of the Rev. Hassett, who was absent but his intrepid wife stood at the door with a gun and defied Windradyne to enter. She stood firm until her husband returned but Windradyne still refused to budge and at length the Rev. Hassett promised to give them a bullock as a feast if he would make friends. The offer was irresistible and with joyful shouts all hurried off to the killing.

In an attempt to capture some, at least, of the troublesome natives, the police, aided by a number of mounted civilians essayed a big drive, but when the net closed not one prisoner had been taken nor had a single native been seen—the wily abos had slipped through the cordon. Windradyne, at length, came in voluntarily to the police announcing that he wished to meet the "big man Governor" and many of the citizens and altogether, make friends.

He was taken to Sydney and camped in the Domain where he was visited by "the big man Governor" and so well treated that, on returning to Bathurst, he became a welcome visitor everywhere until his death.

He was badly wounded in a tribal skirmish and taken to the hospital where Dr. Busby dressed his wounds (now the site of the butter factory) and handed him over to the care of the nurses (confinées).

But this was too much for his proud spirit and he tore off the bandages and escaped. Gangrene supervened and he died. He was buried by his people at Brucevale—the tribal bury-

and he died. He was buried by his people at Brucedale—the tribal burying ground and an ideal site for a warrior's resting place. And here he has lain for 120 years mourning his vanished tribe while the Winburndale croons in sympathy. Maybe the erection of this memorial—a tardy acknowledgement of his own prowess and the merits of his people—will be balm to his soul and his shade will roam the land with martial tread and head erect as of yore.

Growing around the grave are clusters of coarse native fern—Nature's tribute to his nobility. As Omar sings—
"I sometimes think that never grows so red,

The Rose, as where some buried Caesar bled."

At the conclusion, Mrs. Roy Suttor, withdrew the Australian flag from the memorial, revealing a bronze plaque inscribed:

**The resting place of Windradyne
Alias Saturday, Last Chief of the
Aboriginals. First a terror but
later a friend to the settlers. Died
of wounds received in a tribal en-
counter was unveiled by Mrs. Roy
Suttor 30th April, 1954. Bathurst
Historical Society.
Mrs. Munster, wife of the President**

then presented Mrs. Suttor with a china bowl as a memento of the occasion, for which courtesy her husband briefly returned thanks. And now the clouds which had hung heavily all day, parted and all was bathed in soft sunlight—Nature's sign of appreciation of the ceremony.

Back in the open truck, bounding over the ruts, hanging together in delightful apprehension, a return was made to the bus and to afternoon tea which was very grateful—and then back home with a sense of having had an enjoyable afternoon.

PRINTED and published by Arthur Robert Read, 115 William St., for the Bathurst National Advocate Newspaper Printing and Publishing Company, at their Chambers, Russell Street, Bathurst.