

# Barking up the wrong hut

THE 2008-2009 archaeological dig on Camden Park has unearthed useful evidence of early buildings first seen on an 1840s map but in my opinion none of these buildings relates in any way to the bark hut shown in the Conrad Martens painting circa 1835.

The best reference we have to Elizabeth Macarthur's bark hut is that painting.

Sadly, it appears to have been dismissed as too romantic or indulging in artist's licence.

On the contrary, Maertens was noted for his accuracy in landscape and architectural detail.

The "small miserable hut" (or bark hut) is depicted low on an eastern slope, well settled into the slope and viewed from a higher level.

The archaeological site being excavated is on the western side of the same ridge, whence the background hills to the east have been well identified but the foreground has not.

Had the hut been in this position, it could be viewed only from a lower level.

The Belgenny ridge where all this takes place is a long finger of hard, dry land above flood level. Clearly evident on the map, the western boundary of John Macarthur's first grant Lower Camden (1805) courses



**Mystery:** Detail from *The old bark hut* by Conrad Martens, 1835, which sparked the search on Belgenny Farm.

the ridge from north to south. Though effort has been made to re-establish the boundary, I believe we may safely presume the old bark hut lay on the eastern side (on the early grant), while the newly-discovered remains on the western side are more likely to be part of a later development on an 1818 grant known as West Camden.

**Annette Macarthur-Onslow,  
Camden**

were so many people involved I'd like to include their comments. I would appreciate receiving comments of up to 250 words by July 31. Post to me at 43 Broughton Street, Camden, NSW 2570 or email to Pam Ferrazi (Down), former tourist officer, [pam@renifar.com.au](mailto:pam@renifar.com.au). My other colleague on this project is Annette Davies (formerly of Camden Printing).

**Betty Yewen (Hunt), Camden**

## Hunt starts

I have been encouraged to write my story on the beginning of the Macarthur Country Tourist Association and the introduction of tourism from 1978. It will include many items of mine with photos, reports, memorabilia and comments. As there

## Thanks to you all

Thanks to all who donated this year to help raise \$30,200 for the NSW Cancer Council. We have raised \$135,697 in nine years. There's a fund-raising dinner at Camden Golf Club on October 31.

**Kay Sidman, Grasmere**

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