## **HARRISON, George Robert**

George Robert Harrison was born on 31st August 1831, City of London, England, the son of Layman and Honor (nee Pitt) Harrison. He was baptised on 27th January 1832 at St. Bride’s Church, Fleet Street, City of London, parents being of Fleet Street, father an oilman.

By the 1850’s the family had journeyed to Australia.

George’s mother, Honor, died at Snail’s Bay, Balmain on 23rd June 1860, aged 64 years.

His father, Layman, died at Stratford Cottage, Petersham on 21st January 1882, aged 83 years.**1**

On 14th July 1869, at St. Barnabas Church, Ultimo, he married Sophia Mary Gray, born 1847, the daughter of Alexander and Sophia Gray.

Children of the marriage were:

31st January 1871, Glebe - Mary Gertrude (died 1956)

1877, St. George - Arthur Stanley (died 1953)

1881, Sydney - Dorothy Mary (died 1952)

17th October 1886 - Grace Muriel **2**

In August 1887 George Harrison, timber merchant, purchased seven lots consisting of 14 ½ acres in Beecroft, adjacent to Beecroft Parade and Murray Road, for £645 10s.**3**

In mid-1888 a railways goods siding at Beecroft was requested by a deputation of residents which included George Harrison.**4**

Land Titles Office, Sydney, 25th October, 1888 - In the matter of the transfer from George Robert Harrison to Elizabeth Sarah Ellen Carter of 1 acre 2 roods and 12 perches, lot 9 of section 14, in the village and parish of Blackheath and county of Cook. Crown grant, vol. 707, folio 154.**5**

By early 1889 Harrison’s land in Beecroft was fenced, and a portion cleared and a neat little building erected. He intended erecting a large building eventually.**6**

In 1889 or 1890 George Harrison built “Ramona” at 130 Beecroft Road in a style evocative of an early Australian colonial house, with unpainted brickwork, low-pitched slate roof, extensive verandahs with slender iron columns and brackets and a symmetrical layout.**7**

A small group of Anglicans met at Jemima Hull’s house on 15 November 1890. The meeting agreed efforts should be made to purchase land for a church. Three weeks later, the same group re-assembled at the Hull’s residence, with six additional people present, including George Harrison, who promised to fence the site.**8**

In December 1893, the Partnership between Frederick Thomas Miller and George Robert Harrison, Timber Merchants, of Barker’s Wharf, Duncan-street, Darling Harbour, Sydney, was dissolved by mutual consent. Mr. F. Miller, junior, purchased and would carry on the business at the above address. Dated this 30th December 1893.**9**

In January 1894, at a public meeting, in which about 30 residents attended, George Robert Harris, a member of the Beecroft Progress Association, was appointed to be one of the delegates to meet the Minister of Works and the Commissioners for Railways in regard to erecting an overhead-railway bridge at Beecroft.**10**

In May 1894 his daughter, Mary, was accepted as a candidate for training by the Church Missionary Association. In September this daughter, superintendent of the Sunday School at St. John’s Church of England, Beecroft, left for the Missionary Home in Sydney.**11**

Also, in May he chaired a meeting at Stobo’s store, Beecroft, when Alderman John Forsyth, J.P., addressed the electors regarding matters in the Ryde Electorate.**12**

In December 1895 Mr. Harrison and various member of his family met at St. John’s Church of England, to discuss the arrangement for the annual Sunday School picnic.**13**

In September 1897 he was gazetted as a new Justice of the Peace. In October he was appointed as an additional Trustee of the new recreation reserve at Beecroft.**14**

In April 1899 he was appointed as an auditor of St. John’s Church of England, Beecroft. He was also elected a church auditor in subsequent years.**15**

In March 1900 he put out a tender for enclosing portion of the Beecroft Village Green with skeleton sawn hardwood fencing.**16**

In January 1902 George Harrison was gazetted as one of the trustees of the new Beecroft Park Trust but within a few months had resigned to be replaced by George Perry.**17**

In August 1902 he sued the Minister for Works for compensation respecting the resumption of Miller and Harrison’s wharf, situated in Darling Harbour, between Liverpool and Bathurst streets, in which he had a half share. The case was settled on terms that were not stated.**18**

In October 1911 his land, bounded by Beecroft and Murray roads, now subdivided (“Ramona Estate”), along with his residence “Ramona,” was auctioned off. A covenant was placed by George Harrison on his estate.**19**

On 23rd August 1914 George Robert Harrison, aged 83 years, died suddenly at his late residence, “Harmsworth,” Homebush-road, Strathfield. He is buried at Rookwood cemetery, Old Church of England section BB Row 1.**20**

Testator bequeathed his estate to his widow and children, and appointed his widow, Sophia Mary Harrison, and Arthur Stanley Harrison, executrix, executor, and trustees of his estate. His estate was valued at £16,185.**21**

Sophia Mary Harrison died in 1922.**2**2

**Bibliography**

1 The Daily Telegraph, Mon 24 Aug 1914; NSW Registry of Births Deaths and Marriages; Ancestry.com; various newspapers (deaths)

2 NSW Registry of Births Deaths and Marriages; Ancestry.com

3 Beecroft and Cheltenham the Shaping of a Sydney Community to 1914, page 83, 86

4 Beecroft and Cheltenham the Shaping of a Sydney Community to 1914, page 100

5 New South Wales Government Gazette, Fri 26 Oct 1888

6 The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Sat 5 Jan 1889

7 Beecroft and Cheltenham the Shaping of a Sydney Community to 1914, page 134

8 Beecroft and Cheltenham the Shaping of a Sydney Community to 1914, page 214-215

9 The Daily Telegraph, Mon 1 Jan 1894

10 The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Sat 20 Jan 1894

11 The Sydney Morning Herald, Sat 5 May 1894; Beecroft and Cheltenham The Shaping of a Sydney Community to 1914, page 220; The Cumberland Mercury, Sat 15 Sep 1894

12 The Cumberland Mercury, Sat 19 May 1894

13 The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Sat 7 Dec 1895

14 The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Sat 4 Sep 1897; The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Sat 16 Oct 1897

15 The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Sat 15 Apr 1899

16 The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Sat 10 Mar 1900

17 Beecroft and Cheltenham the Shaping of a Sydney Community to 1914, page 239

18 The Daily Telegraph, Tue 19 Aug 1902

19 The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Sat 23 Sep 1911; Beecroft and Cheltenham the Shaping of a Sydney Community to 1914, page 91

20 The Daily Telegraph, Mon 24 Aug 1914; The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Sat 29 Aug 1914; Ancestry.com

21 The Sydney Morning Herald, Thu 22 Oct 1914

22 NSW Registry of Births Deaths and Marriages

**NOTE**: Additional information contained within Beecroft Cheltenham History Group book ‘Beecroft and Cheltenham the Shaping of a Sydney Community to 1914’.