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BRO. SIR JOHN JAMISON (1766-1844)

In the N.S.W. Freemason of May 1st 1954, Chester Smith, Editor at the time, published a paper on Sir John Jamison and links between The Royal Agricultural Society and Freemasonry. This year 1998 the Royal Agricultural Society moved from the Showground at Moore Park to new premises at Homebush Bay, the site chosen for the Olympic Games in Sydney in the year 2000. Accordingly now seems an appropriate time to again examine the work and achievements of Sir John Jamison.

Sir John Jamison was born in Carrickfergus, Antrim, Ireland in 1766, the eldest son of Surgeon Thomas Jamison, who was later to arrive in the First Fleet as Surgeon's Mate aboard H.M.S. Sirius.

John Jamison graduated in medicine at Edinburgh and Dublin before joining the Royal Navy, serving in many parts of the world including the battles of Aboukir Bay and Trafalgar under Lord Nelson. In 1809 whilst serving aboard the hospital ship Gorgon with the Baltic Fleet he performed a delicate and successful operation on the Queen of Sweden for which the King of that country awarded him the Order Gustavus Vasa. The King of Sweden also presented Jamison with a very handsome diamond ring. Jamison assisted in preventing an outbreak of Scurvy in the Swedish Navy and for his work in the British Navy the Prince Regent of the time awarded him with a Knighthood.

John Jamison's father, Surgeon Thomas Jamison, returned to England to give evidence at the court-martial of Colonel Johnston over his part in the Bligh rebellion of 1808 and he died there in 1811.

Upon the death of his father, Surgeon Thomas Jamison, in 1811 Sir John Jamison inherited 1,000 acres of land in New South Wales with frontage to the Nepean River together with some other property. He then sailed for Australia on board the "Broxenbornebury", arriving in New South Wales on 28th July, to inspect his inheritance. Following the death of his father and before his arrival in New South Wales his pastoral and other interests inherited from his father were being managed by Doctor Throsby, D'arcy Wentworth and Samuel Marsden.

Sir John Jamison was impressed with conditions in New South Wales at the time and decided to settle here and pursue his inherited pastoral interests. Feeling that he needed more land to expand his interests, Jamison requested Governor Macquarie to grant him land at Emu Island, the early name of Emu Plains. This however had been reserved for Crown use and consequently was unavailable.

