



5 July 2017

Armstrong's legacy celebrated in official naming ceremony of pavilion

The City's first European resident, Adam Armstrong, will have his legacy celebrated at an official naming ceremony for the City's newest pavilion at David Cruickshank Reserve on 27 July.

The City of Nedlands and descendants of four of Adam's children – Francis Fraser Armstrong, George Drummond Armstrong, Adam Armstrong Junior, and Christopher Armstrong will come together at a private ceremony to officially name the Adam Armstrong Pavilion.

Descendants will come from as far away as Yallingup, Busselton, Cowaramup, and Northam.

The City of Nedlands Mayor Max Hipkins said he was pleased the City would host a ceremony for the unveiling of a plaque to officially name the Adam Armstrong Pavilion.

"Adam Armstrong played a pivotal role in the early settlement of Nedlands, in naming Dalkeith. I am pleased to welcome several descendants of Adam Armstrong. It will be a special occasion for both the City and the family to celebrate Adam's legacy in the founding of the City.

"I would like to thank Councillor Ian Argyle for researching Adam's achievements and for nominating him as the namesake of this building."

Speaking on behalf of the descendants of Adam Armstrong, Shellie Cummings, a descendant of Adam's youngest child Christopher, said: "It is absolutely wonderful that the City of Nedlands is recognising the role Adam played in both the early settlement in the City and Western Australia. I am sure if Adam was here today, he would be proud to see how his family, Dalkeith, the City of Nedlands and Western Australia have prospered."

Adam Armstrong: the man behind the name

Adam Armstrong was born on 23 February 1788. A widowed Scottish father of six, he set sail on board the *Gilmore*, along with 169 other settlers on 18 July 1829. He arrived in Swan River settlement on 15 December 1829.

"Armstrong showed strong pioneering spirit and foresight. The Swan River was a tiny settlement, a very long way from Scotland. The differences must have seemed immense to the early settlers - the landscape daunting and unfamiliar, the flora and fauna outlandish, the climate harsh, especially when they had to construct their own dwellings," said Mayor Hipkins.

Armstrong had worked in London for Thomas Peel, who enthusiastically promoted the Swan River Colony. Armstrong was Peel's managing clerk and travel agent, interviewing prospective emigrants to the Colony. Before departing on the *Gilmore*, Armstrong signed a contract to work for Peel in the Colony as an accountant and surveyor.

Peel had chartered the *Gilmore* from the UK and had guaranteed to Governor Stirling that he would arrive in the new colony by 1 November of 1829 in return for large land grants.

When he arrived six weeks late, Governor Stirling told him that the land grant was void, so the Governor granted Peel 250,000 acres of land further south, in what would become the Peel region.

Armstrong helped Thomas Peel survey his vast land grant which stretched from Rockingham to Mandurah, up the Murray River to Pinjarra and toward the Serpentine.

As an employee of Thomas Peel, he was entitled to an allotment of land, so he chose a block of 1,350 acres adjoining the Murray River. He named this property Ravenswood.

It was desperately hard going, as the Armstrong family followed Thomas Peel's declining fortunes – stock and stores did not arrive from England as expected, Peel got into a duel with a ship's captain and there was no food – malnutrition and disease were rife among the settlers Peel had brought over.

Having lived in poor conditions for 18 months, the family decided to move. While in Perth, Adam stayed with his friend Captain Mark Currie, and discovered that no other settler had taken up Swan Location 85. He made a submission to obtain the grant. In July 1831 Adam and his family sailed to Fremantle and then onto Perth, a journey of almost four days.

Nedlands' first European resident

On 8 September 1831, the grant was approved for Swan Location 85 of 320 acres. Armstrong had officially become Nedlands' first permanent resident.

The family set out to develop their new property on the Swan River which Armstrong named Dalkeith Farm, Today, the area is around the junction of Birdwood Parade and Waratah Avenue. The family lived in a tent while Armstrong built a cottage using limestone from the slopes of Birdwood Parade, naming the building Dalkeith Cottage. The Cottage stood on the Swan River on the flat below the location now occupied by Gallop House.

The family probably cleared the land by hand or by burning. They felled trees and built brushwood fences to protect their patches of garden and crop from emus and



wallabies, and soon established an orchard and vegetable garden. It was back-breaking work.

On Dalkeith Farm he dug a well for fresh water, which can be seen today at the bottom of the stairs in front of Gallop House. He was the first person to grow grapes and figs for commercial purposes and farmed the best goat run in the Colony.

His original farm was eventually bought by James Gallop who built a two-storey house in the 1870's now known as Gallop House. The house was bought by the state government in 1911 before being restored in 1963-64.

Armstrong died in Ravenswood in 1853, aged 67.

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About the City of Nedlands

The City of Nedlands is situated 7km from Perth and stretches from the banks of the Swan River to the edge of the Indian Ocean. A population of over 21,000 live in the suburbs of Nedlands, Dalkeith, Mt Claremont, Swanbourne, Karrakatta, and parts of Floreat and Shenton Park.

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