



THE KOGARAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

M A Y

1 9 7 4

PRICE: 5c.

Registered for posting as a Periodical, Category C

THE KOGARAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

(Sponsored by Kogarah Municipal Council)

President:
Mr. J. E. Veness,
6 Lance Avenue,
BLAKEHURST. 2221.
'Phone: 546 3932.

Hon. Treasurer:
Mrs. K. Johns,
38 Princes Hghwy,
KOGARAH, 2217
'Phone: 587 4848

Hon. Secretary:
Mrs. E. Butters,
36 Louisa Street,
OATLEY, 2223.
'Phone 57 6954.

OBJECTIVES: To promote interest in the history of Kogarah Municipality and Australia in general.
To give support to the preservation of historic buildings and other objects considered to be of historic value.

MEMBERSHIP: Any enquiries regarding membership should be directed to the Hon. Secretary. Visitors are especially welcome.
Subscriptions - Ordinary Members: \$1.50 per annum.
Pensioners: \$1.00 " "
Students: \$1.00 " "

MEETINGS: Meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month, commencing at 8 p.m., in the Exhibition Lounge, at the Civic Centre, Belgrave Street, Kogarah. (Take lift to second floor and turn to the right).

PARKING: Cars may be parked in the ground floor parking area, the entrance to which is in Wick's Lane, at the rear of the Civic Centre. Post Office Lane alongside the Civic Centre has one-way traffic and it is necessary to enter at Montgomery Street end. From that Lane you turn left into Wick's Lane and use the first entrance into the parking area. An alternative way is to enter Wick's Lane from Kensington Street. In such case, use the second entrance into parking area.

CARSS PARK MUSEUM: Open Sundays and Public Holidays from Noon to 5 p.m.
Admission 20c Adults, 10c Children. (Maximum 60c for one family).

DONATIONS FOR MUSEUM: Donations of items of historical interest suitable for inclusion in the Society's Museum will be gratefully received by the Museum Convener:

Mrs. J. A. Lean,
24 Victoria Ave.,
PENSHURST, 2222
'Phone 57 5940.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO NEWSLETTER: Contributions of articles and information of local interest for publication in this Newsletter will be welcomed if forwarded to the Publications Officer:

Mr. V. S. Smith,
26 Prince Edward Street,
CARLTON, 2218.
'Phone 587 2938.

* * *

OUR MAY MEETING - AND TOUR OF ANNANDALE.

Our next meeting will be held in the Exhibition Loungs on the Second Floor of the Civic Centre on THURSDAY, 9th MAY at 8 p.m. when Mr. A. Roberts of the Annandale Society will provide an illustrated talk on Annandale and its historic buildings. This will be an interesting talk and will prepare us for the Tour of Annandale on the following Sunday week. Details of this outing are in our Social Secretary's Reminders.

The Competition Prize has been kindly donated by Mr. & Mrs. Briancourt.

The ladies on Supper Roster are Mrs. Slater and Mrs. Greenaway.

* * *

Tom Hamilton Kelly.

It is with a great sense of loss that we record the sad passing, on the 15th April, of our esteemed friend Tom Kelly. He was one of our foundation members and those of us who had not previously been privileged to know him, soon included him among our most valued friends.

Ever since our Society's inception it has greatly benefited by his untiring efforts. He was a member of both the Management and Social Committees and whenever a need arose, Tom always volunteered his services and performed the task with ability and cheerfulness.

Tom's passing leaves a serious gap which will be hard to fill and the loss is one which will be felt by us all for a very long time.

Everyone will agree with me that it has been good to have known Tom - and will also agree that to remember him makes us feel brighter, for it is impossible to think of him without recalling his friendly smile.

At Tom's Memorial Service, the Minister mentioned several times "He was a good man", and with this view we heartily agree.

The deep sympathy of all members is extended to Sylvia, Noel and Fay, Peter and Diane - and to the grandchildren of whom Tom was so proud.

J. E. Veness.

President.

MUSEUM REPORT.

In the April Newsletter, two new displays were mentioned, and both have since received much attention from visitors to Carss' Cottage. The old-style shop front and its wares have great appeal, and the storage cupboards are already in use.

There has been a good deal of concentration on the Stamp Display, featuring voyages of Captain Cook, and favourable comments have been noted by attendants in their Day Book reports.

Some very delightful remarks are often overheard as people enter the front room where our model stands, and many of the articles on show are greatly admired.

Early photographs of the district, its pioneers, buildings and way of life, are probably the Museum's greatest asset and as our collection grows the visitors' interest increases. We hope to soon improve our viewing arrangements, to accommodate more people and to provide a more comprehensive study of the historical progress of the Kogarah Municipality and its environs.

A wall-cabinet, designed to hold the Society's library, reference-books, bulletins, etc., is now being constructed by the joiner whose services we have secured. We hope to see this installed very soon.

The library is growing and needs to be more accessible to members. When this has been achieved, a list of the contents will be available and we hope members will enjoy reading some of the very interesting and informative books and journals.

Twice in recent weeks, Mr. V. Smith has opened the Museum for Study Groups of pupils (with teachers) from local schools. The first group of sixty came from Carlton South Public School, which was the subject of articles in our April Newsletter. The second group was smaller, and comprised boys and girls from Kogarah High School. Mrs. M. Grieve was a valuable helper on this occasion.

Following some cloudy and unsettled weather, Easter Sunday and Easter Monday were both clear, sunny days, and many people took advantage of the pleasant conditions to visit the park and Carss' Cottage. These two days were saddened, however, by the illness and sudden death of our fellow-member and friend, Mr. Tom Kelly. On behalf of the Museum Committee I express our deep and sincere sympathy to Mrs. Sylvia Kelly and family, and much appreciation for all the assistance, generosity and happy co-operation of Tom, Sylvia and Noel, in the many facets of Museum work and organisation. Tom will be sadly missed.

Acquisitions. Many items for the Museum have been acquired on loan, or donated in recent weeks, and some are listed here. We acknowledge all with thanks, and those not included here will be mentioned in the next Newsletter.

Assayers' Scales with Weights. (Mr. C. Sweeney)

Tailor's Iron. (Mr. C. Sweeney).

Old Bottles (Mrs. R. Foster).

Magazines (Arthur Mee). Approx 60 years old. (Mrs. A. McOnie).

Ornamental Hair Comb. Approx. 70 years old. (Mrs. J. A. Horrocks)

Ornamental Perfume Bottle. (Miss G. Coxhead).

"Cocky Bennett" - the historic bird which was formerly at the Seabreeze Hotel. (Mrs. E. Pugh).

Museum Roster.

12th May	-	Mrs. S. McOnie & Miss M. Foley.
19th May	-	Mrs. R. G. Diment & Mr. P. Diment.
26th May	-	Mrs. G. Johns & Mrs. G. Taylor.
2nd June	-	Mr. & Mrs. J. A. Lean.
3rd June	-	Mr. & Mrs. V. S. Smith.
9th June	-	Mrs. D. Hatton & Mrs. M. Grieve.
16th June	-	Mr. & Mrs. R. Holmes.

Any Member unable to attend on the date mentioned is especially requested to telephone me as soon as possible. Telephone 57 5940.

Museum Takings for March.

Entrance fees	\$43.20
Sale of Books	5.30
" Folder & Post Cards	60
" Carss' Cottage Jams	12.30
Commission on Pottery Sales	45
	<u>\$61.85</u>

Amount paid to St. George Studio Potters' Group for Pottery sold: \$4.00.

Gwen Lean.

Museum Convener.

* * *

OUR SOCIAL SECRETARY'S REMINDERS

Sunday, 19th May at 1 p.m. Our half-day trip to Annandale. Following the interesting talk and showing of slides by Mr. Roberts at our next meeting, he will conduct us on a pleasant Sunday Afternoon tour around some of the very interesting buildings for which Annandale is noted. Just bring your Thermos and we'll supply sugar, milk and biscuits. Book at meeting or 'phone Mrs. Burghart please - 546 4385. Bus leaves outside Civic Centre, 1 p.m.

Trip to Berrima. Not sufficient support was immediately available, so we have postponed trip. We believe this should be a most interesting tour, with much for members to see, but in order to obtain over-night accommodation we have to have our bookings much in advance of the proposed date.

Friday, 19th July. This is the day for our STREET STALL and we would be most grateful to have your help. Cakes - Jams - Aprons - Biscuits - Coat-hangers - Plants - Pot-holders. You will think of many, many other saleable items which are appropriate. Last-minute hot cakes sell like hot cakes and we cannot have too many. Our ovens are too small to cook all we could sell!

Dates for your Diary. On Wednesday, 28th August there'll be our President's Night at Carss' Cottage and on 6th October we'll have a Tulip Tour to Bowral. These are two popular events you won't want to miss.

Val Burghart
for Social Secretary.

DOWN ON THE FARM

Being Childhood Memories as related by

MONA SMITH

The scene of my story is Armidale, three hundred and sixty miles north of Sydney on the New England Tableland and 3333 feet above sea level. Our farm was three uphill miles out of town on the Glen Innes Road.

In the early 1900's two events stand out. On the 22nd January, 1901, Queen Victoria died and the newspapers of the world gave pages and pages to the news. On the 25th April 1902 I was born and the weekly edition of the "Armidale Express" devoted one half an inch of space for the announcement - at the bottom of the last page. Yet, for me, the second event was of the greater importance.

When I was due to arrive, an uncle caught his horse and rode to Armidale to get the doctor, but he was nowhere to be found. So my father decided to seek the help of the wife of a neighbouring farmer and set off across the paddocks to get her, leaving the fourteen-year-old sister of my mother in the house. When he returned, the girl said she didn't know what was happening, but she had heard a cat crying in my mother's bedroom. Without realizing it, that girl had become my aunt and her's was the first news of my arrival - unaided. When, much too late, the doctor arrived in his sulky, he announced that I was the smallest baby he had ever seen.

Our original home, where I was born, was a single-story building with slab walls and a shingled roof, which, in the past, had been conducted as the "Golden Fleece Hotel" where the thirst of man and beast had been quenched before they undertook the twenty-three dry and hilly miles to Guyra - and the next hotel.

Our home, with wide verandahs at front and one side, comprised eight rooms whose walls were lined with paper to keep out wintry winds and the ceilings were of whitewashed calico. A passage led to a detached kitchen whose open fireplace had two big black kettles and a fountain hanging from a rod and space for two camp-ovens. The fireplace and outside chimney were built of stone.

The hessian ceiling of the kitchen was made from split-open chaff bags and in a hole therein my mother kept the whip-handle with which, over the years, by a process of 50% whacks and 50% bluff, I and my seven brothers and one sister, were persuaded to be of good behaviour while she was looking, until well into our youth.

When that whip-handle was swished through the air, to the accompaniment of loud threats regarding our likely fate, we all trembled. I remember one such occasion when one of my brothers ran for the temporary safety of a tall tree and remained perched twenty feet above the ground until well after dark - when a few whacks seemed more desirable than his sitting any longer in the bitterly cold wind.

My earliest recollections are of the dancing flames of the big log fire and the satisfying smells of cooking - the baking of bread, cakes and biscuits in the camp-oven, and of the bubbling sounds of simmering blackberries in the big black boiler.

Over a long period fruit from our orchard was made into jam or preserved, and at other times big red tomatoes were carefully bottled in preserving jars of brine - and piles and piles of finely chopped beans were stored, in layers of salt, in stone jars.

During this period, too, I became familiar with the custom of pouring milk into large dishes which were placed on a shelf until the next morning when cream was skimmed off into a churn and eventually made into golden butter. On a wooden mould which impressed the picture of a swan, the butter was shaped, with pats, into round 1-lb blocks.

As time passed, I have flashes of memory which tell of my being carried in a large box out into the orchard and being placed in the filtered sunlight under the spreading branches of a peach tree, laden with beautiful pink blossoms, in which hundreds of bees from our hives busily collected pollen. I can recall the "crunch, crunch" as horses put their heads under the wire fence to tear out the much greener grass which can always be found on the other side of a fence. On one occasion, I suddenly awoke to find the enormous face of a cow a couple of feet from my own as, with her head over the fence, she solemnly regarded me with her kind eyes and contentedly chewed her cud. But usually, the swaying of the blossoms in the breeze and the hum of the bees lulled me to sleep.

When I was about three years of age, dim uncertain memories of events give way to one which I can vividly recall. In many places, scattered over our 82-acre farm, were raised-up mounds of ants' nests - sometimes over six feet across. From numerous holes emerged armies of large green ants which marched off in all directions, making well-defined bare tracks through the grass. I took a kindly interest in these small creatures and stood on the top of a mound to better observe their activities. I found that if I kicked the mound, the activity increased, so gave half a dozen hefty kicks. Suddenly, from every hole there poured forth, like a dark green liquid, solid masses of ants - every one crawling straight up my bare legs and under my clothes, and just as suddenly they all began to sting. I screamed and jumped up and down - still on the mound - and it seemed hours before my mother came and rescued me and more hours before the last ant reluctantly let go its stinging grip.

I was to learn, in later years, that when my brothers wanted a skeleton of some small animal - or snake - the body was simply placed upon such an ants' nest and in a short time only a clean white skeleton remained. If I had been left a little longer I would have been ready for display in a museum.

* * *

Our home was at a point to which the Glen Innes Road rose all the way from Armidale, but then suddenly fell away to the north. From this elevated situation we looked across a fertile valley, through which the willow-lined Tilbuster Creek flowed, to the massive shape of Mount Duval, six miles away, and then, further north, to the chain of mountains through which the railway climbed on its way to the Queensland border. On a clear day we could see the smoke from the Glen Innes Mail as it puffed up a steep grade to Black Mountain.

In the 1970's this elevated position has one severe disadvantage. The distressing sounds of a seemingly endless stream of semi-trailers can be heard in an assortment of low gears as they grind up the hill on either side. But in the early 1900's I often gazed down the peaceful tree-lined road and watched for Old Mac and his team of bullocks to come slowly around a distant bend with his wagon loaded with bales of wool for the railway goods yard in Armidale.

My mother allowed me to run down the road to meet Old Mac as the team came slowly up the hill. With long whip raised threateningly, he constantly walked up and down the length of the team, addressing each of his twelve bullocks by name, imploring it to make a greater effort. But all maintained their steady pace and seemed entirely unimpressed by the raised whip, apparently knowing, as did I, that

Old Mac had never given the most gentle of flicks. At the top of the hill the order "whoa" was instantly obeyed and we both went inside for a drink of very black tea - which I hated - but nevertheless proudly drank with him as I sat and held his whip.

In those days it had been quite safe for me to walk on the road with Old Mac for there was only occasional horse-drawn traffic and now and then a horse rider. The roadway was rather narrow, had a dirt surface, and was bordered by tall trees and saplings. Horses and sulkies had one great advantage over modern cars. Several of the outback farmers - and one farmer's wife - always ended their Saturday visit to town hopelessly drunk. At the end of the day their sulkies would go passed our farm - each occupant soundly asleep but the horse plodding homeward and always delivering his master (or mistress) to the right house. A car could not compete with this!

While road-traffic was very light during the day, there was practically none at all at night. Even twenty years later, in the 1920's, when my husband-to-be spent his annual holidays here and still thought he was chasing me, we would walk into Armidale to the pictures, returning after 10.30 p.m. I cannot remember one occasion when, during the three-mile walk each way along the pitch-black road, which is the main link between Sydney and Brisbane, one vehicle of any type ever passed us in either direction. Travellers and their tired horses rested over-night at an hotel in town and consequently the road was deserted during the hours of darkness.

Like a black inverted bowl, stretching from horizon to horizon, the night sky was spangled with a multitude of stars - millions more than the city-dweller would ever see from his home - all brilliantly shining through the clear air and their blaze not marred by the reflection of city lights. The names of the constellations and planets were familiar, just as were the types of clouds which majestically sailed overhead during daylight hours, changing their form from the imaginary giants and ships which the boys saw to the magic castles which my sister and I could see. Country folk are usually vividly aware of the sky and from our back door we looked to the west into the beauty of some of the most glorious golden sunsets we could ever imagine.

In my childhood days the lanes which separated most of the farms were overgrown with trees and bushes, although some had horse-tracks winding through the growth. Many of the wire fences were completely submerged by blackberry and briar bushes and during spring and summer these bushes were covered with birds' nests containing thousands of eggs. Uncountable numbers of zebra-finches, double-bars, red-heads, diamond sparrows, tom-tits and others flew up when an infrequent horseman, perhaps searching for a lost cow, rode by. My young brothers' huge collections of birds' eggs, each proudly surmounted by a membership certificate of the Gould League of Birdlovers, were a sight to behold!

As summer advanced, we kids would visit these quiet lanes with buckets and eventually struggle home with scratched limbs, torn clothes and deep-purple mouths, proudly carrying buckets loaded with big juicy blackberries - for jam-making, preserving and lovely blackberry pies. At other times we would visit surrounding paddocks and return with buckets piled high with fresh mushrooms. I can still remember one beauty which measured fourteen inches across.

* * *

About 1907 my father bought a second farm containing 200 acres about eight miles further out of town in a locality called Puddledock. Mount Killalee was included in its area and its smooth grassy summit rose very steeply to form an excellent look-out

providing extensive views in all directions. Later, the Government erected a trigonometry station on its top, which was thickly strewn with stones, under which could be found numbers of scorpions.

This new farm was only partly cleared, but possessed a slab-built hut whose walls were lined with newspapers to keep out the wind. There was a rough stone-built chimney and fireplace and the hut contained three rooms which were quite weather-proof. For long periods my father lived here during the week and when I was old enough I drove up on Wednesdays to take a fresh batch of food.

We called this new property "Killalee" after its mountain, and it was here, later, that I worked very hard helping my father and an uncle as they cleared the balance of the land. With cross-cut saw they would fall a tree and cut the trunk into suitable lengths for sale. The branches and tops were removed and I was required to drag them into large stacks where, after drying, they would be burnt. I also helped to roll the logs into position.

On both farms one of my tasks, from the age of about twelve, was to "drop potatoes" - in other words, to assist in their planting. Huge quantities of seed potatoes were first sorted. Those which were small enough needed no treatment. Those which were larger were sliced into pieces, each with at least one eye. Half a potato-bag, with leather straps to fit around my neck, was filled and I would adjust it into position. When filled, it almost pulled me on to my face!

Then my father walked along the edge of a paddock, guiding with long reins a horse drawing a single-furrow plough and I walked behind him in the newly-ploughed furrow, dropping seed potatoes so that they fell ten to twelve inches apart. It can be imagined that in order to keep up with the horse a considerable speed was necessary, yet I was also required to concentrate to ensure that the potatoes dropped in the furrow. At the end of a row we would reverse our direction and my father ploughed an adjoining furrow from which the earth covered the potatoes in the first row. My father was one of the best ploughman in the district and he had the reputation of ploughing perfectly straight furrows, but think how many it took to cover a paddock!

Perhaps you have heard the rumour that if you also plant some salt, it will get in the potatoes' eyes, thus making them water and irrigate themselves. I can assure readers that this is not an effective remedy for drought!

* * *

Swagmen, plodding along the Glen Innes Road, to no destination in particular, frequently called at our home to beg for food. Never did one go away empty-handed and they would usually sit on our verandah and eat what was provided and impart items of news gathered along the track - and sometimes a resume of their lives. Then, with swag strapped across the back and with billy-can in hand they thankfully departed. As they went out on to the road, they used a stick of chalk to make a secret mark on the gatepost to signify to the next swaggie that here was the home of a soft-hearted woman.

One tramp was allowed to sleep in our hay-shed and early the next morning we were awakened by a loud crackling noise and clouds of smoke entering our windows. The swaggie had departed but apparently it had been his smoking that was the cause of the raging flames that were now consuming our crop of oats, stacked in sheaves to a height of about twenty feet in the blazing hay-shed.

The fire-engine, with bell clanging, eventually came from town, drawn by four panting horses. But the lane running beside our farm marked the boundary of the "urban area" and our home was on the wrong side. So, although there was a full dam near by, the firemen decided that they had no duty to assist us. They simply sat and

were entertained by the truly magnificent pyrotechnic display and rested their horses. At that time we were still living in our old house and Dad and an uncle were having a most anxious time extinguishing showers of sparks and floating particles of burning hay to prevent the shingled roof being set alight.

* * *

Beside our house was a 2-acre orchard which supplied an abundance of apples, peaches, apricots, mulberries, quinces, cherries, plums and pears for use as fresh fruit, jams and preserves. There was a second orchard on our other farm. Under a row of pine trees, used as a windbreak, were our bee-hives and in the deep shade of a pepper tree hung our drip-safe in which the meat was kept.

Separated from the house-paddock by another windbreak (which sheltered our home from the severity of winter winds) was a paddock in which was the wood-pile, hay shed, very large grain-shed (as big as a house), sulky-shed, pig-sty, fowl yard, cow-bails and a forge. In the latter was a 4-foot square iron tank of charcoal fitted with a very large pair of leather bellows, the long handle of which extended to where my father worked at his anvil, perhaps repairing a piece of broken farm machinery or sharpening a plough-share for a neighbour or himself. When I was young, I loved to make the bellows blow and see the showers of gleaming sparks fly and the fire glow red. My father's ability to do such work was of great benefit to himself and the surrounding farmers.

* * *

Spring is the time in the year when new growth meets the eye and farmers everywhere look forward to having bumper crops - which are a certainty UNLESS there happens to be a plague of grasshoppers - or too much rain - or a hail-storm, which can flatten a crop in minutes - or a drought - or a severe frost which can kill certain crops over-night - or a plague of rabbits.

Before the introduction of myxomatosis, I can remember we sometimes had plagues of rabbits during which their numbers were so great that they ate every blade of grass. Coming up the road in a sulky, I have seen the surface of paddocks on either side apparently moving, as thousands of rabbits ran a short distance and then just sat and watched as we drew passed. I remember my father firing just one blast with his gun and five fell dead.

One method of controlling rabbits in normal times, was to leave a trail of sliced carrots across the paddocks for a couple of nights. Then, on the next night, poisoned slices would be substituted and this would considerably reduce their numbers. Occasionally, rabbit-trappers came through the area to trap rabbits for their skins and my brothers would earn pocket-money trapping them on our property. But these methods always left a number of rabbits unharmed and they soon bred again, so constant efforts were required to keep them in check. Unless the fences were netted, rabbits would come in from adjoining properties and roads.

After the introduction of myxomatosis, much later, it was most unusual to see even one rabbit. A few are about again now but not in large numbers.

Mobs of kangaroos, sometimes numbering forty or fifty, to which an ordinary fence is no barrier, were also a serious menace and the reader

might find it very difficult to imagine the tremendous damage these animals can do to a crop. In addition to the serious loss occasioned by their eating, there is the far greater loss caused by their crashing through the crop and knocking it flat. After a few nightly visits by kangaroos, the farmer is unlikely to be in the right frame of mind to reach for his cheque book and send a donation to the conservation society.

However, kangaroo steaks were sometimes a popular addition to our menu and, in the cold winter months, kangaroo-tail soup was appreciated.

* * *

In common with other farmers we took precautions to ensure, as far as possible, that we always had sufficient water. We had three large tanks on our house and one each on the other farm buildings. There were also two dams, one being fed by a spring. But an advantage that distinguished our farm from all others in the district, was a deep well which was filled with cold, crystal-clear water by a spring which had never been known to run dry - even during the few occasions when Tilbuster Creek had ceased to flow.

From this well a pipe syphoned the water down to a tank from which the horses and cattle drank. It overflowed continuously and kept the grass green over a wide area. During the few severe droughts, this spring was the only source of water in the district and farmers from surrounding areas drove their stock to our farm for a drink.

When water was in short supply, we brought it from a dam or the spring to wash the clothes - and then it was used a second time to wash the floors. And on Saturday night a big round tub was brought into the kitchen and placed before the fire and only more hot water was added to the original quantity as members of the family, in turn, had their bath.

* * *

Primary school for us was at the two-teacher Ben Venue Public School to which we went down a tree-covered very steep and stony lane - far too steep for vehicular traffic but with ample trees and outcrops of rocks to serve as an excellent hideout for a bushranger in whose presence we half-believed. This was Thunderbolt country and we had all thrived on exaggerated tales of his exploits and violent death not many miles away, when he was shot by a policeman.

Later, on horseback, I rode to high-school in Armidale. The horse was blind in one eye and on one occasion she shied when some vehicle suddenly came within her vision and I was thrown upon the road. I still bear the mark on my head. My only other mishap occurred when a draught-horse trampled on my foot. I hid my injuries at the time, but in later years, after my marriage, was forced to undergo a painful foot operation, when some bones were removed and toes straightened. My happy school days ended when another young brother arrived in our home and child-care became almost a full-time responsibility.

I should mention that my father's father was looked up to with deep respect. He was the proud father of a family of twenty-two. My father, who was the eldest, no doubt thoroughly enjoyed growing up in a crowd, but nevertheless decided to strictly limit his own family to a mere nine, of whom I was the eldest. All but one of us were born at home.

My mother's father's claim to fame lay in the fact that he and two friends were, in 1882, the discoverers of gold on the Hillgrove station property,

fifteen miles to the east of Armidale. He called the mine "Eleanora" after his wife. The discovery of gold caused the township of Hillgrove to be proclaimed in 1889 and in its heyday it had a population of over 3000.

I don't think my grandfather benefited greatly from his discovery. The main street of Hillgrove still bears his name (Brackin Street) but he moved to Armidale and became the proprietor of the St.Kilda Hotel. He thereafter entertained his friends by lighting his pipe with £5 notes. I think that when he saw my other grandfather walking out with his twenty-two children he felt a sense of inferiority. His family numbered only eleven.

* * *

When I was 15 years of age my father bought a 4-room weatherboard house which had been erected at Dumaresque, several miles away, by a man who then moved to Sydney. The house was raised on wheels and drawn by sixteen bullocks to a new site on our property. Two new rooms were added, including a very large kitchen with two arched fireplaces. One of these was a large open fireplace in which, all through the cold winter, a log fire burned cheerfully and over it a large black kettle sang merrily. A big fountain hung next to it with a reserve supply of hot water. Adjoining the open-fireplace was a large new Beacon-Light fuel stove bearing the famous lighthouse trade-mark on its front, and its arrival caused a sensation in our family.

We, of course, had been accustomed to cooking in camp ovens, which hung on a rod over an open fire with hot coals placed on the lids. When making a cake, the coals were carefully balanced, otherwise the cake would be thick on one side and thin on the other. Although we did not think a great deal about the inconvenience, never having had anything better, we now greatly appreciated our up-to-the-minute fuel stove and soon grew accustomed to its use.

By this time I was doing a fair amount of the cooking and was already entering samples of my scones, fruit-cake, sponge-cakes, etc. (as well as jams and home-made butter) in the Armidale Show and having considerable success in the winning of prizes. My favourite use of the new oven was to cook a giant-sized blackberry pie, whose appetizing aroma was spread throughout the home. This smell, which I now experience so seldom, was particularly satisfying during cold winter months, when it was possibly snowing outside, and the extra-large slices (unknown in the city) were liberally piled with home-made cream ladled on with a tablespoon because it was far too thick to pour.

Although the open-fire and new stove brought a great deal of pleasure, I was not so enthusiastic on Saturday mornings. It was then my task to polish the stove, kettle and fountain with black-lead and to whitewash inside the open fire-place and brick surrounds - and then scrub the hearth. Next, with Brasso, the tap on the fountain and twenty-two brass door-knobs throughout the house were given an eye-dazzling sparkle. The candle-sticks were cleaned and new candles fitted, and lamps filled and polished and wicks trimmed. Other odds and ends received attention and it was then the time to prepare and cook the mid-day dinner, and wash-up afterwards. And, as it was Saturday, I was then allowed to walk the three miles into Armidale and play tennis - if it wasn't too late.

* * *

(To be concluded in the June Newsletter)