

Quinbean

Volume 9 No 1
April 2016



*The Journal of
Queanbeyan and District Historical Museum Society*

QUEANBEYAN & DISTRICT HISTORICAL MUSEUM SOCIETY

QDHMS is a local history society aiming at preserving the history of the city and its wider district and sharing this, with the strong support of the Queanbeyan City Council, through the context of the Museum of Queanbeyan.

Find us on the net at www.queanbeyanmuseum.org.au

Contact us: email qbnmuseum@yahoo.com.au

THE MUSEUM OF QUEANBEYAN

The Museum is open from 1pm to 4pm Saturdays and Sundays or by arrangement.

It is found at 10 Farrer Place Queanbeyan, next to the Police Complex and opposite the State Office Building.

Our Cover:

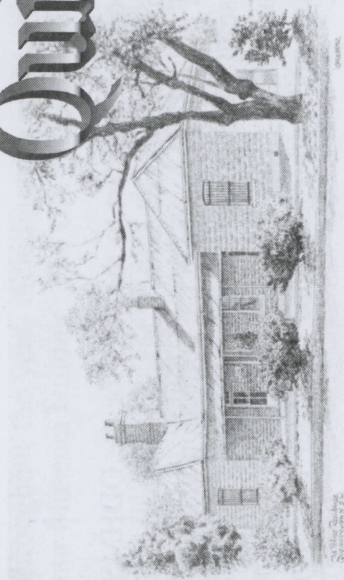
Cantle's Cottage on fire, December 28th 2015

Photograph: Michael Sillis



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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Once again there has been a busy start to the year for the QDHMS. The Heritage Festival is to be marked with a Made By Hand Fair where we can highlight the many objects in the collection that were handmade and give those in the community who make things by hand to display their wares and skills. This has involved liaison with the QCC Community Officer and with the groups ready for the Open Day on 16 April.

We have also been able to secure the services of actor and entertainer Chrissy Shaw to present a show for children during Heritage week. She has a very popular show, Gran's Bag which will surely attract a new group of younger visitors to the Museum.

We are fortunate to have more volunteers ready to step up to the crease, though more are always welcome and needed. Their enthusiasm has enabled us to have a stall at the Multicultural Fair, continue with the task of arranging and describing and cataloguing the collection and keeping the museum spick and span. This includes the garden which is at risk in the heat of the summer.

You may have noticed our brand new colourful Museum Open banners thanks to QCC support. We think this has increased visitor numbers already. Museum openers have welcomed a number of visitors on the weekend and have been able to help some with information from the collection and/or learn from the visitors, gathering stories and connections to share.

We have been able to hold a very successful induction to cataloguing session and hope to hold more of these and openers' training sessions during the year. Members Get Togethers have been scheduled

throughout the year, including one in May celebrating 140 years of our Museum building: The Old Police Sergeant's Residence.

We have been maintaining a Facebook page and have had some success at building followers. Like us on Facebook and share our post with your friends if you'd like to keep up to date and promote our activities through Social Media.

John McGlynn
President

FROM THE EDITOR

The theme for the Heritage Festival this year is *Discovery and Rediscoveries*.

Discovery can mean finding something for the first time or rediscovering something that has been lost, forgotten or hidden. It can mean remembering things as they used to be, not necessarily for the better, and looking at it as it is now, and imagining it as it might be in the future.

Queanbeyan has a rare asset in having a healthy river in the CBD. The use of the river has changed greatly since the 1830s – it has been a water source for the town, it has provided water for numerous market gardens that in turn has added to the food sources for the town, it has been a great source of edible fish and a recreation area for swimmers and boaters.

It has run dry, become a chain of ponds, become a great nuisance with its floods and supports amazing bird animal and reptile life.

The town has a pattern of lovely parks and the new parkland will undoubtedly rapidly become a favourite location for all.

There is a challenge for us all:

What river stories are waiting in our community?

What photographs, even if the river is only incidental, are hidden in albums?

Are there memories of the buildings that used to stand: the Severn Mill, Rose cottage on the corner of Trinculo PI & Booth Street, Cantles Cottage, Gettys cottage, the market gardens, the land before the golf course, the floods.

Can you add to the story? Together we may be able to build a cohesive story of the river in the central part of town. Have a think about it and please do contact me at gillkell@hotmail.com or via the Museum.

Gillian Kelly

THE PALMERS AND JERRABOMBERRA

Last year a great-granddaughter of Pemberton Campbell Palmer, Julia Cornford from Queensland visited our Museum and was assisted by Peter Procter. Julia is a granddaughter of Howard Frederick Leslie Palmer, an Anglican priest, born in 1871.

Peter wrote and supplied useful leads for further research on the Jerrabomberra family, e.g. the Australian Dictionary of Biography; Alan Fitzgerald (1987) Canberra in two centuries; Rex Cross (1985) Bygone Queanbeyan; Peter Procter (2001) The Canberra Queanbeyan Biographical Register; Queanbeyan Age references on the National Library site Trove; Maps from the National Library site; Brian Maher and Greg West (2009) Title fights: Jeramiah Keefe and the Federal Capital Territory Vigilance Association; Sands' Sydney & New South Wales Directory 1919; Dictionary of Sydney website; and Garran & White (1985) Merinos, Myths & Macarthurs.

John Palmer arrived in the Colony with the First Fleet. A brother-in-law of Robert Campbell of Duntroon, Palmer established Jerrabomberra as an exchange land grant in 1827. After John's death in 1833 the Jerrabomberra Estate was left to his eldest son George Thomas Palmer who was already established at Palmerville, Ginninderra. It was ultimately managed by John's youngest son, Pemberton Campbell Palmer until his death in 1885.¹

Rev. Edward Smith, Dr Hayley and Mr Bingham lived at the Bachelors' Quarters at Jerrabomberra in the 1840s. Many weddings were performed there by Rev Smith before the first Christ Church opened in 1844.

Parts of the Jerrabomberra Estate were auctioned in the 1880s and more in 1908 as farming land in the area was expected to be resumed for the Federal Capital Territory. Today's Queanbeyan suburb of Jerrabomberra has a population of almost 15,000, so different from those Palmer days of the 19th Century.

Marilyn Folger



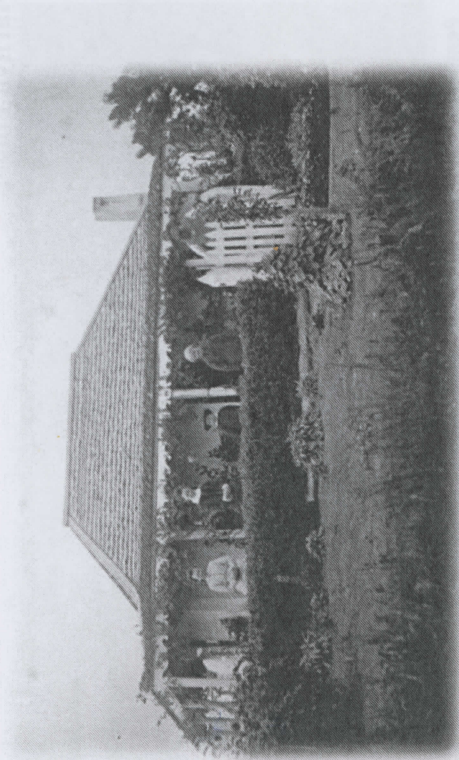
Pemberton Campbell Palmer at Jerrabomberra. Photo Lyall Gillespie

WILLIAM ROBERT CANTLE AND HIS COTTAGE

Gillian Kelly

William Robert Cante was Australian born – just! His parents, William and Mary, arrived in Australia on June 4th 1836 on the *Camden* and William Robert was born in Kent Street on July 20th. There is a gap then of twenty five years until 1862 when William Robert Cante appeared in Queanbeyan.

In about 1861 John Wright bought the Severn Mill in Trinculo Place a little to the west of the suspension bridge. He employed William Cante as the mill manager, and provided a small cottage, known as Rose Cottage, at the end of the mill in Booth Street. William involved himself in the affairs of the town from the start. He played cricket and became active in the establishment of the Mutual Improvement movement, resulting in the establishment of a Mechanic's Institute.



Rose Cottage, cnr of Booth St & Trinculo Place on the western side, with family members. Photo: Kate Genge Coll.

In 1867 he married Catherine Sutherland at Braidwood, and brought her home to his cottage by the Severn Mill. Three children, Jane, William and Mary, were born in the next three years. In 1873 Catherine, at the tragically young age of 33, died leaving William to manage alone. He remained a widower for the rest of his life, bringing up his children and throwing himself into many of the more cultural aspects of the town. He was considered to be a quiet, well read and informed, and a very well thought of gentleman

William became Secretary of the Queanbeyan Pastoral and Agricultural Association, and was on the committee of the Mechanics Institute. He was an extremely keen and lucid debater, having initiated debating classes into the structure of the Institute. Later he became president of the School of Arts and was a prime move in organising a chess club there, as well as undertaking the role of librarian.

When John Wright closed the mill, William Cante moved to Wright's store as a book keeper. He later handled the books and correspondence of Hayes and Russell until failing health and old age caused him to retire. He was an alderman 1889 to 1891 and then again in 1895 and 1896 and further served the town as the Council's auditor.

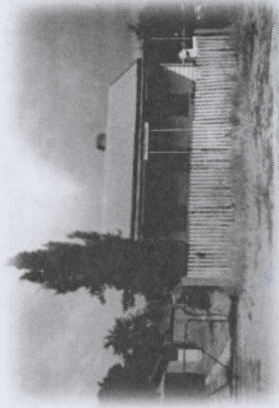


Cantles Flat – rear view of Cantle's Cottage c 1910
Photo: G Kelly Coll.

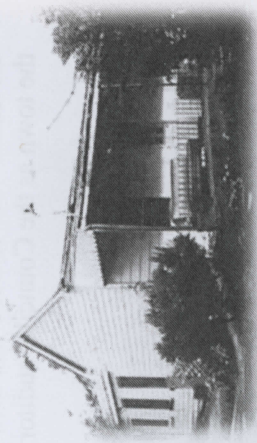
Around 1892 William bought two blocks of land in Booth Street opposite Rose Cottage: Section 19, Lots 9 & 10. Here he built the home later known as Cantle's cottage. It was a cosy place, with three fireplaces and its own cellar. William, his son William Charles and his remaining daughter Mary lived there. His daughter Jane died in 1886 at the young age of 17.

William died in 1911, leaving the small cottage that would forever be known by his name. Later the house became the home of Mr and Mrs Ted Holloway and many a meeting and social gathering of the golfers was held within its walls.

While the golf Club continued to expand its course, Cantle's original land became a very desirable asset. At one stage Leo Marchiori owned it and sold it the Heyliger family. The Golf Club had offered the owner \$13 000 in 1970 but the offer was rejected. Five years later an offer of \$45 000 was made to the Heyligers but again rejected. By 1987 the Club was able to purchase both blocks of land with the cottage at the cost of \$100,697. Part of the property was used as a car park and after Eric Tindale undertook a major refurbishment, the house was let.



Cantle's Cottage 1975, Errol Lea-Scarlett



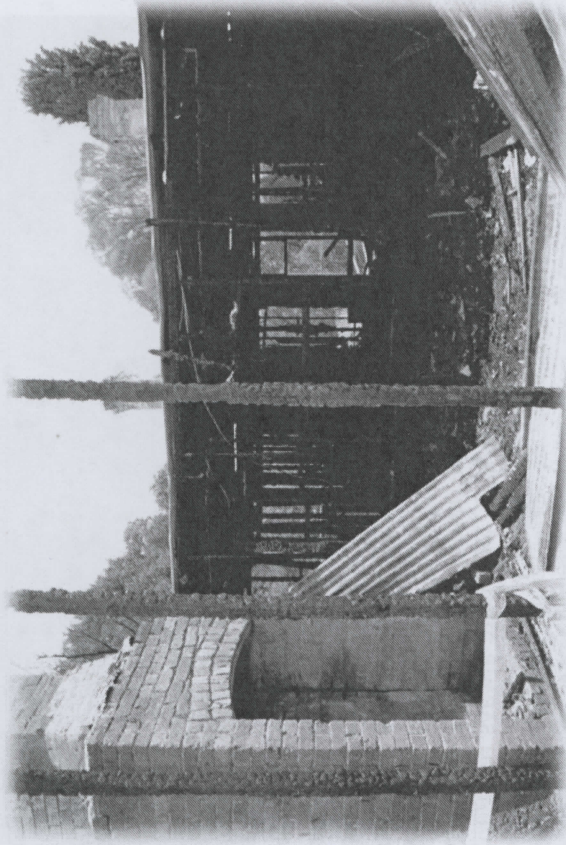
Cantle's Cottage 1996, Bob Woods

The ravages of time took their toll, and the cottage became unrentable. About 2005 the Club made a development application to Council to remove the cottage and build a block of units on the site with the idea of attracting golfers. Several Councillors were absent from the meeting, and after a great deal of debate, the motion was put and passed, only to be rescinded within a few days.

This decision was as surely a death sentence to the cottage as a demolition order. From that time on no maintenance or care was taken, the cottage was open to all and gradually the building fell into disrepair, attracting vandals and squatters.

By 2013 local historian Nichole Overall was well and truly fascinated with the 100+ year old cottage and its oh-so-odd cellar. She included it in her *Mysterious Queanbeyan* by *Moonlight* tours and awakened among her guests a new interest in its history. She also became aware of continual man-made deterioration and worked hard at deterring intruders by enclosing the openings. Sadly, this was to no avail.

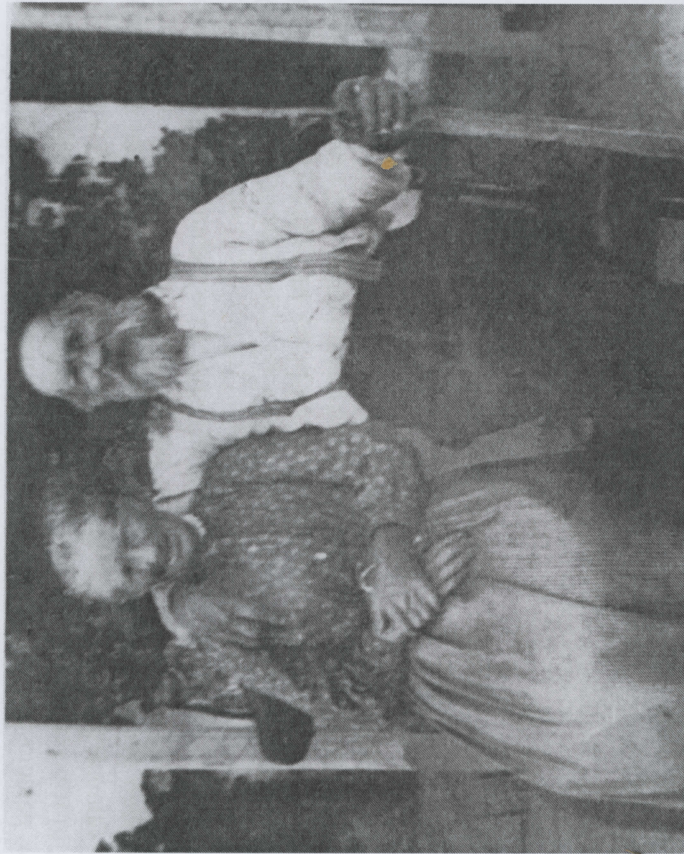
On the evening of December 28th, 2015 smoke was seen billowing from the building. Everything that could be done was, but there was nothing that could save the tinder dry timber walls. For the want of interest, the last remnant of that small piece of Queanbeyan's history has been lost.



Cantle's Cottage 2016, Gillian Kelly

THE GRIBBLE WHO CAME TO QUEANBEYAN

James McDonald

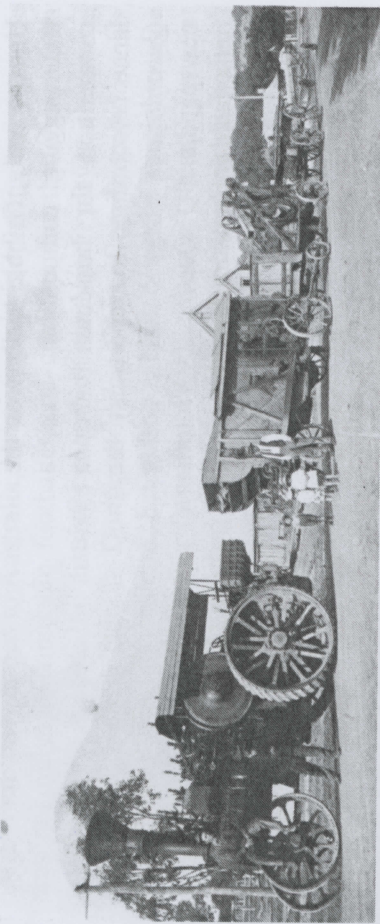


Tom Gribble (senior) and Catherine Gribble (nee Warren), probably taken at 'the Valley', c. 1913. Photograph, James McDonald

The Gribbles were a well-known Ginninderra family. Thomas Gribble and Catherine (nee Warren) settled at what was to become known as 'the Valley' in 1861. The family soon became known throughout the district as expert hay-stackers and innovative farmers, who were always ready to try new methods. Thomas was known in the district as 'the Boss Farmer'.²

² E.g. *The Queanbeyan Age*, 27 January 1905, p. 4.

The Gribbles also brought the first steam-powered traction engine into the district, which was used for reaping and threshing.³



Gribble's traction engine

The fourth of the seven surviving Gribble children, George, was born in 1868 at the Valley. George was to become, arguably, the first individual international sporting star of the Limestone Plains.⁴

Before he moved to Queanbeyan, George and two of his brothers, William and Thomas, served as members of the local detachment of the NSW Mounted Rifles. George was the most talented of the trio. His ability was first noticed when the mounted riflemen were drilled before senior officers at Duntroon in 1893. He was soon promoted to the rank of Farrier-Sergeant.⁵ Four years later, George was one of four local men selected to represent the Australian colonies in military competitions in Dublin and

³ L.R. Smith, *Memories of Hall*, Canberra, 1975, pp. 49, 92; L.L. Gillespie, *Ginninderra: Forerunner to Canberra*, Canberra, 1992, pp. 96, 101-2; J. McDonald, 'When Ginninderra Grew the Golden Fleece', *Canberra Historical Journal*, no. 75 (September 2015), p. 19.

⁴ Of course, by this stage, teams from the district had competed overseas, but George was certainly the first local to earn success as an individual athlete in overseas competition.

⁵ Gillespie, *Ginninderra*, p. 106.

London to celebrate Queen Victoria's Jubilee.⁶ The three others were: William Rolfe, F.E. Smith and Harry Oldfield.

Unexpectedly, Gribble easily won the tent pegging competition - i.e. a competition for horsemen using a lance. According to reports in the *Queanbeyan Age* and other newspapers, Queen Victoria personally presented him with a silver cup as a trophy, which was displayed many years later in the window of Fallick and Sons in the Carrington Building in Monaro Street.⁷ George's victory had been a shock result.

No one had expected the colonials to win, particularly when they were pitted against the professional cavalry regiments of the empire.⁸ In the Jubilee celebrations, George also even won the buck-jumping contest and top-scored in a cricket match, in which the Australians defeated the British team.



Farrier-Sergeant George Gribble of the NSW Mounted Rifles, c. 1897
Photograph courtesy of Neil Gillespie and the Hall School Museum

Gribble and the other NSW Mounted Rifles were a big hit. No doubt, it was long enough ago for the British public not to have begun to tire of Australian sporting successes and their audiences were still keen to applaud the efforts of the Antipodeans. George and the other lancers were recruited to participate in staged re-enactments of a shoot-out between troopers and

⁶ *Evening News*, 15 November 1897, p. 5; *Goulburn Evening Penny Post*, 16 November 1897, p. 2; *Queanbeyan Age*, 17 November 1897, p. 2; *Freeman's Journal*, 20 November 1897, p. 9.

⁷ *Queanbeyan Age*, 23 October 1914, p. 5.

⁸ *Goulburn Evening Penny Post*, 9 November 1897, p. 4.

bushrangers for the English crowds, reminiscent of the pantomimes of the American Wild West shows.⁹

When Gribble returned to Australia, he continued his sporting activities. He was not only a formidable footballer and cricketer for the Ginninderra teams, but he became the district's champion steel-quoit player, remaining undefeated for a decade.¹⁰ During working hours, George toiled on his parents' farm, in the family butcher's shop in Hall, or on the traction engine when it was hired out to other farmers. In 1907 a young Queanbeyan man named, Nicholas McInnes, had his arm mangled in the Gribbles' chaff-cutter. George's quick first aid saved McInnes' life, but not his arm.¹¹



Outside the Cricketers' Arms, Ginninderra, left to right: William Gribble, Unknown, George Gribble, Harry Curran, Unknown, Unknown, Charles Thompson, Unknown.

⁹ Perhaps he had been inspired in the role by stories told by his parents about being bailed up by Ben Hall and his gang in the early 1860s. See S. Shumack, *An Autobiography, or, Tales and Legends of Canberra Pioneers*, (ed. J.E. and S. Shumack), Canberra, 1967, pp. 143-144. But note that Shumack's chronology in relation to the story is problematic.

¹⁰ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 July 1902, p. 10; L.L. Gillespie, *Early Verse of the Canberra Region*, Canberra, 1994, pp. 95-96; Gillespie, *Ginninderra*, pp. 43-46, 89-90.

¹¹ *Queanbeyan Age*, 16 April 1907, p.2; *Goulburn Evening Penny Post*, 16 April 1907, p. 4. As is widely known, William's son, Ernie Gribble, died from terrible injuries after being trapped in the fly-wheel during a separate accident. See *Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 September 1920, p. 9; Smith, *Memories of Hall*, pp. 53-54

George Gribble also had a more colourful side to his life. In 1893 he had to answer a charge of stealing seed-corn from John Southwell at the Queanbeyan Police Court.¹² The stolen property was discovered, suspiciously, in the Ginninderra blacksmith's shop of his close friend, Harry Curran. But the case against Gribble was weak, relying on footprints in the mud, and he was acquitted. Nevertheless, he seemed to have a reputation for being a little 'wild'. In 1908, during a visit to Sydney, it is said that, after a bout of drinking, Gribble was seriously injured by a tram.¹³ His trouble with the authorities may lend support to a new theory that he changed his name, when volunteering for active service in the Boer War. It is argued that he may have sought to avoid some sort of trouble at home by enlisting under a different Christian name, i.e. 'Joseph'. Two Gribbles signed up on the same day in 1902 and had consecutive enlistment numbers and were both deployed to the same militia unit.

The first was his brother, William, whose service record has been clearly identified. The problem is that it has not been possible to find a match for the second Gribble, Joseph, who had enlisted alongside William. There is no possible candidate for a 'Joseph Gribble' amongst the known relatives of that time. Therefore, the name seems to have been a mistake or deliberate error. Other Gribbles, such as his brother Tom and his cousins from Sydney can all be accounted for during the Boer War.



William Gribble,
c1905
Photograph,
James McDonald

There is a strong temptation to identify the mystery Gribble as being our George. But, even if this speculation does prove to be true, it still needs to be explained why he enlisted under another Christian name, when he was already a celebrated Farrier Sergeant of the militia.¹⁴

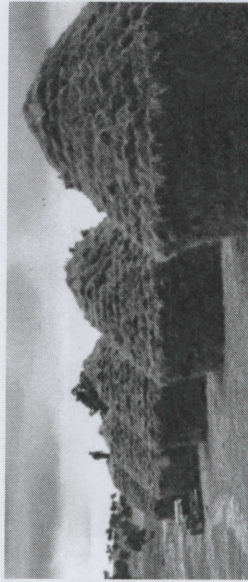
¹² *Queanbeyan Age*, 19 July 1893, p. 2.

¹³ *Queanbeyan Age*, 24 April 1908, p. 4

¹⁴ This is a theory I have been discussing with Robin Droogleever, who is writing a history of the NSW Mounted Rifles.

George Gribble did, eventually, settle down to a quieter life. By 1905, he seems to have taken over the running of his father's property at Ginninderra with his brother, Tom. At the age of 42, in 1910, he comes to Queanbeyan, where he married Margaret Courtney Moore, the daughter of the well-known Queanbeyan couple, William Moore and Catherine (nee McKenzie).¹⁵

George and Margaret Gribble settled down to family life at 1 Surveyor Street, Queanbeyan, opposite Queanbeyan Park. Margaret, who was also aged 42 when they wed, was to have just the one child: a son named, Courtney. George used his experiences from running the family traction engine to secure a job as an engine driver on the NSW Railways, stationed at Queanbeyan.¹⁶ George Gribble, one of the district's most colourful and celebrated personalities, died in 1947 at the age of 79, five years after his beloved, Margaret.



Haystacks built by the
Gribbles for Babe
Curran at 'Deasland',
Ginninderra, c.1935
Photograph courtesy of
Neil Gillespie and the
Hall School Museum



Ruins of 'the Valley' homestead,
Ginninderra, 2011
Photograph courtesy of
Merran Martin

¹⁵ E. Lea-Scarlett, *Queanbeyan: District and People*, Queanbeyan, 1968, pp. 131, 195-196, 205.

¹⁶ *Australian Electoral Rolls* for the years 1930, 1936, 1937 and 1943.

AN ITALIAN IN QUEANBEYAN

John McGlynn

But when I arrived there was no pasta, nothing like that. Cheeses, nothing. Nothing. And I remember I had to go buy some milk, because, you know, I had the - you know, my sisters are young, they like milk, you see? And tried to explain to the shop keeper to sell me milk, I was going like this, "Moo".¹

Such was a tiny aspect of what life was like for new migrants coming to Queanbeyan in the 1950s. I'd like to explore a little of the migrant experience, in particular Italians, by looking at one such migrant, Orazio (Frank) Presutti.



The Presutti family c 1956. Photograph Frank Presutti

Italians have been coming to Australia since the 18th century. One, Raffaello Carboni, was a participant in that most iconic of Australian actions, the Eureka Stockade. There were Italian Catholic missionaries as well as political refugees but there were no sizable Italian arrivals until the second half of the 19th century.² There were Italian communities formed in such places as Western Australian fishing communities and in Queensland cane fields. However, the majority of Italian emigrants did not come to Australia and Italians formed a small proportion of immigrants to Australia until after the Second World War.

There was some resentment against Italians, as against other migrants, for their co-operation and mutual help in making a success of various enterprises but certainly they did not attract the level of hostility as that against the Chinese.

Not all Italians stuck together and many integrated fully into Australian society. For instance, my grandfather Gaetano Russo came to Australia from the little island of Salina at the end of the 19th century and was naturalized in six years. He sent his children to selective state schools and to university. They never learnt Italian and married Australians. We can generalize about the migrant experience but each person's tale is different.

In Queanbeyan as with the rest of Australia the big increase in migration and in Italian migration came at the end of the Second World War. Most migrants came from war-torn Europe, encouraged by the Australian Government's policy of 'populate or perish' and started out their time in migrant camps such as Bonmagilla. Many found work in the Snowy Scheme or building the national capital.

Italians, and their children, along with other migrants from many countries, contributed to the civic life of Queanbeyan. One, Frank

Pangallo, was a highly successful mayor who came from the less conservative side of the political spectrum and another, John Barillaro, from a conservative party, was elected as State Member for Monaro.

This emphasizes that there has been diversity within as well as between different groups in our society.

The new settlers began to change Queanbeyan from a country town where most people were of British or Irish heritage. By 1966 there were more than a thousand new naturalized citizens in Queanbeyan.³ Although each migrant experience is different as people are different we can gain some insight by looking at the life one, Frank Presutti, a well known Queanbeyan barber, who for many years cut men's hair in the main street near JB Young's.

Frank was born in Italy, in a little town by the name of Sulmona in the Abruzzo region. He described it as:

It's a very nice region. And they make a good salami, good food - it's a lovely little place.



Sulmona, Abruzzo, Italy

A more poetic description of the district can be found in a book by a woman also from Abruzzo. She describes:

imperial mountains, The Abruzzo is the stuff of fairytails – castles surrendering to the elements and dark forests that still resonate with the enchantment of snake Chalmers, werewolves and witches. Rising arrestingly from the Adriatic Sea [are] the highest peaks of the Apennines ... [there are] towns built of stone the colour of sand.

Clusters of houses perch on rocky pinnacles, threatening to slide hundreds of metres into the valley below.⁴

It may be a magical place but it was not immune to the disaster that was the Second World War and the chaos that followed. As Frank noted: *after the war everybody was leaving Italy. Some came to Australia, some to Venezuela, Argentina, and America, of course. Frank's father came out 1951 and then the rest of the family followed in 1956.*

The father worked on a farm but when he came to Australia he sent a letter and said to his wife, *"Tell Orazio to go learn a trade."* So that's how Frank went to learn how to cut hair, starting his apprenticeship in Salmona town but had to finish his apprenticeship here. Because when you come out from Italy you've got to start your apprenticeship again, Frank had to start again and do four years with Franco, in Civic, He lived in Queanbeyan because that's where his father had found work.

Frank had no love of formal schooling, in Italy he had even jumped out of the window to escape but he had to learn English to survive. As he explained: *when we come out, of course, in a barber shop you had to learn quickly, with the boss that I had there. And I done all*

right. But the worst part was the first couple of weeks when we arrived, the day after my father had to go to work and he left me in charge. I had to go buy milk, I had to go buy butter and it was very, very, very difficult, those days..

Frank finished the apprenticeship and later opened a little shop in Cassidy's Arcade, in Queanbeyan, which is still there. However after getting sick he had to sell the shop because he couldn't keep going. When he recovered Frank went to Johnny Byrnes, to work, 'he offered me the job and was there, with him, for forty-two years plus.'

Frank was introduced to his future wife Doreen by Claire Moore, a well known Queanbeyan girl. They were married and had three daughters who were educated in Queanbeyan and produced six grandchildren by 2013.



Frank and Doreen Presutti, 2013. Photograph QDHMS

Frank has no regrets about leaving Italy. Though he does miss the food. He had comments on the way Queanbeyan and the world has

changed since he arrived. With the growth of the district, he thinks people are less friendly and life is in some way more difficult:

It's a little bit scary, because someone is telling us the economy's booming, but I don't believe so. Because I've got three - four grandkids, adult grandkids, two of them they've got permanent jobs, you know, they can count on it, but another two, they're on contracts, they're young. If they want to buy a house, it's not secure, what happens if you get the sack the next week and you've spent half a million dollars, how are you going to pay for it?

Well, some of the stories we get in the shop that I - and in the past also, there's a lot of divorces, you know, people are getting divorced and they tell us all sorts of story, which I don't think - I don't think you want to know what's happening. I get it every day just about and I'm afraid that the society out there's not that good, I'm afraid. Too much pressure with the jobs and the husband works five days a week and the wife has got to work a couple days at the weekend, the Saturday or Sunday. There's no social life anymore.

On a lighter note, one final story:

Frank name was originally Orazio but he related how that changed: 'While I was waiting for the shop in Civic to be finished I got a job in the saw mill and the boss he said to me, "What's your name?" And I said, "Well, my name is Orazio." He said, "No, no, no, I'll give you two names to choose from, Henry or Frank." And I picked Frank. That was the choice.'

Conclusion: Frank's story is one of many but it shows the way immigrants settled into their new home and made significant contributions. The way the father came first and set up a place for his family was typical of one strand of post war migration. Others

came as single men and sent for women to marry from Italy. Frank married out of his cultural group and sent his children to State schools while some kept the community and religious ties even after moving to Australia by marrying other Italians and sending children to Catholic schools. Naturally Frank still has fond memories of his home town and Abruzzo, just as many Australians of earlier years regarded England as the homeland, There is no doubt, however, that Frank has integrated fully into Queanbeyan society. His business was with a long-term resident of the district and in particular his children and grandchildren are all Australian born.

References:The Queanbeyan and District Historical Museum Society, Queanbeyan's Living History Oral History Project for Queanbeyan's 175th Anniversary, 2013. Interview by John McGlynn with Frank Presutti on 13th April 2013 Withycombe, Susan Mary, *Town in Transition: A socio-economic history of Queanbeyan , NSW, 1945-1985*, Canberra Printing and Publishing Co., c.1986 Boccabella, Zoe, *Mezza Italiana*, ABC Books, 2011

A COTTAGE BY A RIVER

In December 2015 the Editor asked if any one recognized this photograph: Member Michael Hall has responded, saying that the photo can be found on page 26 of Allen Mawer's 'Canberra Tales'.



He describes it as being Ryan's cottage at Acton. Further research has uncovered images of Ryan's cottage c 1914 when it was enlarged, the kitchen was linked and the river changed. It was said to be one of the very early cottages on the Molonglo.

The question was posed because the photograph came up in a group of photographs whose subject matter was the Queanbeyan Police. Therefore there is another question: was this cottage linked to the original Courthouse on Acton that Captain Faunce rented and repaired in 1838?

THE HARRY AND SHIRLEY HESSE COLLECTION

We are very privileged to have received *The Harry and Shirley Hesse Collection* into the QDHMS collection. We plan to base a new exhibition in September this year on this collection. The papers and banner represent the local manifestation of several important social movements in Australia in the 1970s and 1980s etc.: the anti-nuclear and peace movements; the conservation movement and the twin cities movement. They are the papers of one of the most active of the Queanbeyan based activists.

Harry Hesse was a respected Queanbeyan high school teacher and Councillor on the Queanbeyan City Council. Harry and Shirley brought up three sons who attended school in Queanbeyan. Shirley Hesse has been a member of various community groups; both lobby groups, as listed above; and service groups such as the Meals on Wheels

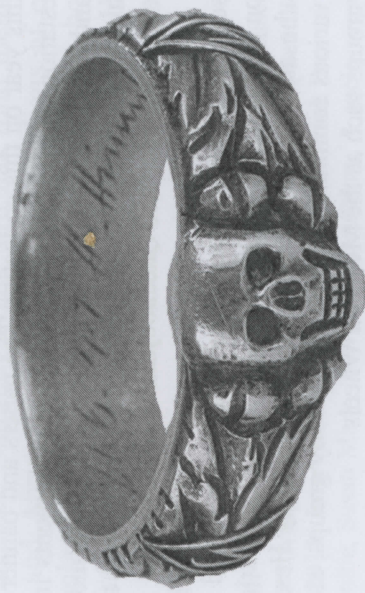
The collection consists of: a hand-made banner of the Queanbeyan and District People for Peace used in the International Year of Peace, 1986; Palm Sunday Rallies and other gatherings; boxes of press clippings, minutes of societies, photographs and other papers related to the various groups of which Harry and Shirley Hesse were members.

Kerrie Ruth



Harry Hesse & Kerrie Ruth with banners outside the US Embassy Canberra. 1980s

THE CONTINUING SAGA OF ONE TOTENKOPFRING



The *Totenkopfring*¹⁷ was an award of Heinrich Himmler's *Schutzstaffel* (SS). It was a personal gift bestowed by Himmler to SS officers and reflected his interest in Germanic mysticism. Each ring had the recipient's name, the award date, and Himmler's signature engraved on its inside surface. It was considered the highest and most coveted of SS awards.

In 1938 Himmler ordered the return of all rings of dead SS-men and officers to be stored in a chest in Wewelsburg Castle, a meeting place for high ranking SS generals and for storing the honour rings of fallen comrades. This was to symbolize the ongoing membership of the deceased in the SS-order. All new awards of the ring were halted in October of 1944 and Himmler ordered all the remaining rings, approximately 11,500, blast-sealed inside a hill near Wewelsburg.

¹⁷ Death's head ring, properly called the SS-Ehrenring (Honour Ring).

A few years ago a QDHMS member donated a small bag of costume jewellery to the museum. Unbeknown to her, at the bottom of the bag was a very large and heavily tarnished but in excellent condition, man's ring. A careful cleaning revealed what appeared to be a Totenkopfring, complete with name Orf, Himmler's signature and a 1944 date. It was quickly identified as genuine and one of a very few known in the world. Our member had no idea how it came into her parent's possession but assumed it came to Australia with them when they escaped from war-torn Europe. Because of the horrendous history connected to it, she regarded herself as the ring's custodian, rather than its owner, until such time as a suitable place for it could be found.

Last year that opportunity arose, when member Marilyn Folger and her family were visiting Germany. She continues the story:

WEWELSBURG CASTLE, GERMANY

By chance we saw a National Geographic Program in 2013 where Wewelsburg was mentioned. A knowledgeable academic historian Dr Jan Erik Schulte was interviewed. I emailed him in the hope that he could give us leads on Orf the SS soldier on the Totenkopf (Death's Head) ring. I was delighted when he phoned me – he was amazed that the ring had ended up in Australia. Unfortunately his records did not help and the Orf search continues.

Erik had also contributed to an article published in *Spiegel*,¹⁸ "Confronting the Nazi Perpetrators: New Exhibition Explodes Myth

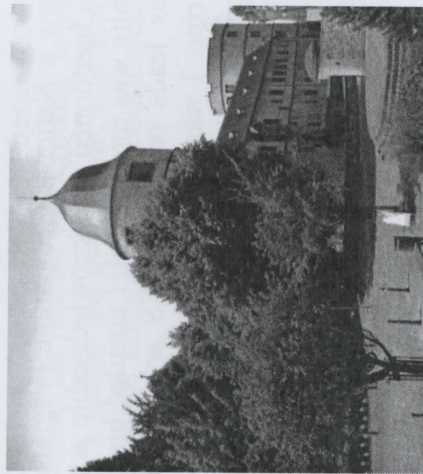
¹⁸ D. Crossland, 'Confronting the Nazi perpetrators: new exhibition explodes myth of SS Castle Wewelsburg, *Spiegel Online International*, April 6, 2010, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/confronting-the-nazi-perpetrators-new-exhibition-explodes-myth-of-ss-castle-wewelsburg-a-687435.html>

“The need to shatter the lingering myths makes the exhibition at this site all the more important”, historians say.

After discussion with the custodian of the Orf ring, we decided that returning it to Germany and donating it to Wewelsburg would be the best place for it to help tell the story of those Nazi terror times.

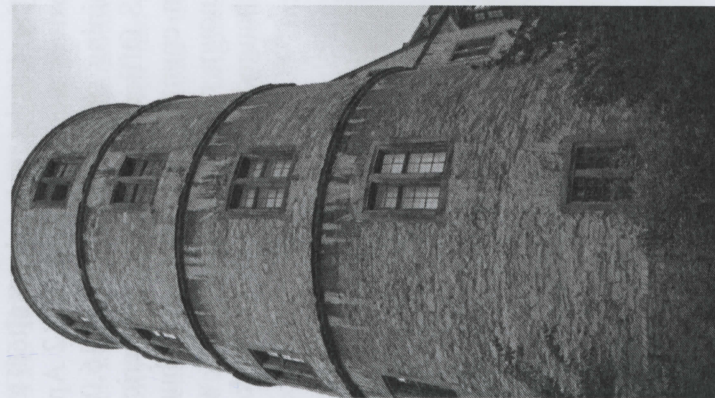
In July 2015 we travelled to Wewelsburg, near Paderborn, and donated the ring to Markus Moors and Kirsten John-Stuecke on behalf of our Museum member. Markus will let us know the results of his research, although there may be privacy issues involved.

Wewelsburg is an early 17th century Renaissance building and is one of Germany’s few triangular castles. Today it serves as the district Historical Museum, the 1933-1945 Memorial Museum and a Youth Hostel.¹⁹ (Unfortunately the Museum was closed until August 2015 for modernisation.)



Wewelsburg Castle, Photo Marilyn Folger

¹⁹ W.E. Brebeck, *Wewelsburg Castle: a historical and architectural overview*, Berlin & Munich, Deutscher Kunstverlag GmbH, 2009. This illustrates what we missed.



The North Tower Photo Anna Folger

The Castle’s North Tower was destroyed by lightning in 1815. From 1939-1943 it was rebuilt with concentration camp labour, and now houses the *Ideology and Terror of the SS* exhibition.

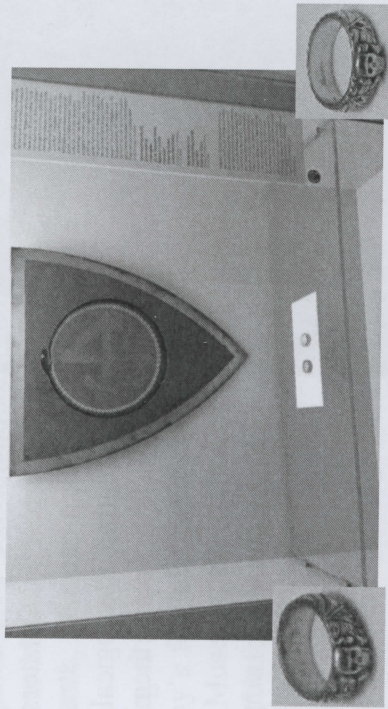
These displays are very well interpreted with many signs in English. “Curators had to develop special strategies for presenting ideologically charged objects to avoid them becoming fetishes.

The objects range from Himmler’s diary through Totenkopf rings, uniforms and insignia to furniture and fittings decorated with runic inscriptions.”²⁰

Himmler, head of the SS, a powerful, murderous organisation, in order to rebuild the castle had a concentration camp built on the outskirts of the village at Niederhagen, where 3,900 prisoners were held. About one third of the camp inhabitants, mainly Jehovah Witnesses and POWs from the Soviet Union died of hard work and deprivation. The camp closed in 1943 and inmates were transferred to other camps, with a core of 42 remaining.

²⁰ *Wewelsburg 1933-1945 Memorial Museum and Village Guide*, Regensburg by Stadtwechsel Verlag, 2014, p.20

In March 1945 Himmler ordered the Castle to be dynamited and leave no trace, but not enough explosives were available. On 2 April 1945 US forces liberated the remaining prisoners. "About 16,000 Totenkopf rings were awarded to SS Officers up to 1945. American soldiers are supposed to have taken countless rings from the burnt out castle for themselves. An unknown number of counterfeit and copies of the rings have been exchanged at auctions and markets since the end of WWII."²¹



The Totenkopf Cabinet with their only two rings (prior to the Queanbeyan addition) displayed. One is an original, and one is an imitation.. Photos Anna Folger
Each year on 2 April, the anniversary of the liberation of the camp, a commemorative ceremony is held at the memorial on the former Roll-Call Square.

"Wewelsburg today has many visitors, especially from abroad. The four hundred year history of the castle should not be reduced to its twelve SS years. Nevertheless, those twelve years have left their mark on both village and castle."²²

Marilyn Folger

²¹ Translation of signage with the 2 rings on display, one fake, one original
²² *Wewelsburg 1933-1945 Memorial Museum and Village Guide*, op.cit., p.26

THE DREAM THAT BECAME A REALITY

This is a story about a community, and how it turned a dream into a reality. It really begins with the small tin building next to the Hotel Queanbeyan in Uriarra Road that was known as John Vianney's church and school. It was originally the office for Mason, who built the hotel. After a fire destroyed it in it 1953, there was an evident need for a new school. The land towards the town's western boundary had been subdivided into large blocks, attracting many of the new European settlers. At the same time there was a commitment by the Housing Commission to erect a large number of public houses in the area.²³

To this end the Department of Education built Queanbeyan West School, and the Catholic Diocese erected an innovative new school, Sacred Heart, in Crest Road. The brick building, used as a school during the week and converted each Sunday to a church by the removal of sliding partitions, was opened at the end of 1957.



Father Kevin Flynn was appointed to the Parish of Queanbeyan. His responsibilities included Sacred Heart where he, supported by Pat Power, saw the need for a larger and permanent church. In November 1973 a meeting was held and a committee formed to discuss proposals for a 'Parish Centre' – a church and hall in one. Various plans were drawn up and after a second meeting the Archbishop gave a cautionary go-ahead.

²³ This development was moved to the South Queanbeyan area and built in the late 1960s.

The building Flynn and his parishioners envisaged was more than a church. It was to have space that the parishioners could utilise for community events, leaving the school to operate without having to be reorganised each week. Flynn invited Kevin J Curtin, noted architect of ecclesiastic buildings, to have a look. Curtin understood what was wanted, but the cost of his building was way outside what a newly defined small parish could possibly manage. However, amongst the congregation was one Tom Bosman²⁴ who had the skills to draw up an appropriate plan. The plan was extraordinary in concept – apart from the communal uses, it included innovations such as pumping water through solar panels, and then running the hot water under the floor to heat the building.

It wasn't until June 1980 that a large and enthusiastic meeting planned final specifications for approval by the Archbishop and his Council. This was achieved in record time and Qceanbeyan Council, with a hiccup over whether 'church-school' meant a church and a school²⁵ or a school belonging to a church. The Church had intended the first, the Council interpreted the application to mean the latter. Father Flynn and the then Town Clerk, Mr R B Smith, debated and unsurprisingly the good priest won out.

Knowing his community was important to Father Flynn and the first thing he recognised was the passion that these largely immigrant-based parishioners had for their own church as a focus for the community. Sacred Heart was the dream and achievement of so many of those parishioners. Offers poured in. There were steelworkers, brickies, concreters, painters and stone workers all willing to help. Then there was a steady flow of cash, including anonymous donations

²⁴ Now living on the South Coast and a noteworthy artist.

²⁵ This was the meaning intended by the original DA application to build the school.

of \$500 and \$1000 that would get the project off the ground. In July 1980 the starting fund held \$13 448

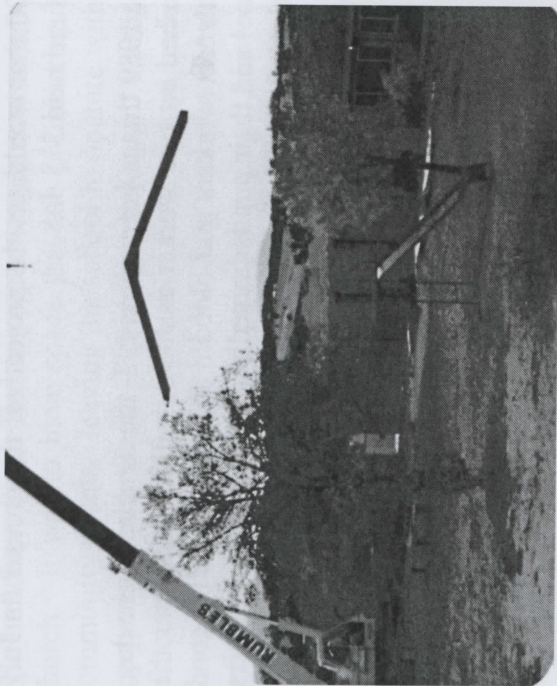
On November 25, 1980 things got underway – the trenches were dug, and the day described by one worker as 'so-so'. Two days later the mesh went in with 'six workers and blood'. The next day the good Sisters of the school and their pupils prayed for rain while the workers outside prayed 'Not yet, Mate'.



Surveying the site.
Photograph Fr K Flynn

The Croatian community undertook the task of fund raising to complete the Chapel of Our Lady. The rest of the parishioners, without being asked, doubled their contributions.

The removal and rebuilding of a retaining wall further back was done by thirty Croatian workers in a seven hour burst one Saturday. Father Flynn had already had discussions with the manager of local quarry who had agreed to a suitable price, but warned him not to ring up one Thursday and expect the stone to arrive on Friday. Flynn didn't – having been told by a parishioner one Friday that he had thirty men ready to go on Saturday, he rang on Friday, and Lo and Behold! the stone was there, ready to go on Saturday.



Lifting the Trusses
Photograph Fr K Flynn

The doors of the church were built as a donation, as was the Confessional. Others sought items of significance from the area. The door handles came from the old Canberra Courthouse. The Tabernacle came from the now-submerged church at Jindabyne. The statue of Mary came from St Peter and Paul's, Goulburn and was found collecting dust in an old shed.. The light fittings came from the old Archives Building in Canberra.

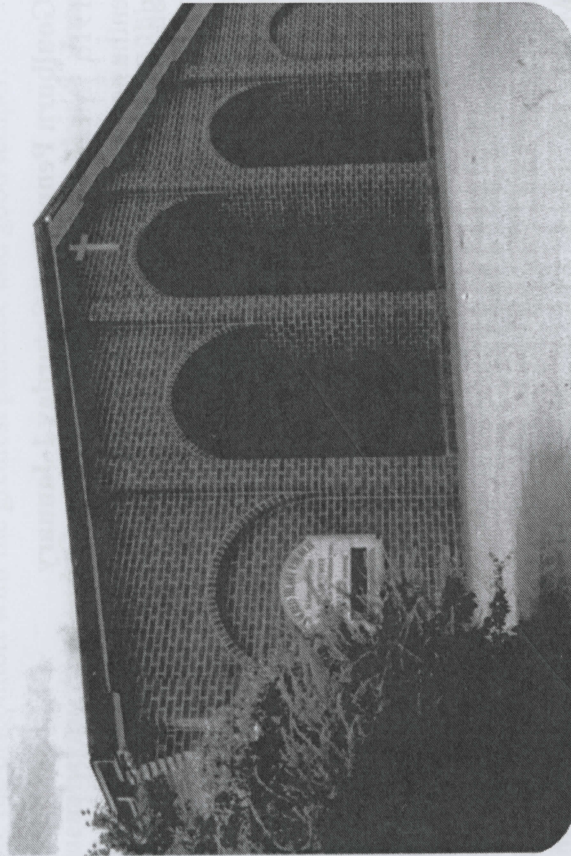
When strikes threatened progress of the concreting at the front the parishioners rolled up their sleeves and completed the area with hotmix. Inside too, carpet was laid, seats adapted and a PA system installed.

In August 1981 Sacred Heart Church opened its doors as a consecrated church of the Catholic faith. For the next twenty two years it remained so but by the turn of the 21st century the deomgraphics of the whole diocese had changed. The need for a church and school in

the little corner had faded, and on November 22nd November 2003, a farewell Eucharist was held and the doors closed on an era. It was not the end of the building though – it is now a long day care centre that continues to provide for the community, but in a different way.

The plaque attached to the original church says it all:

"Many by their gifts and efforts made a dream become a reality. Please pray for them."



References:

Informal discussion with Father Kevin Flynn, retired.

Leaflet. Sacred heart Church First Anniversary 22.8.82, property K Flynn

Booklet Sacred Heart Queanbeyan Farewell Eucharist 22nd November 2003, property K Flynn

THE HOME FRONT QUEANBEYAN DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR

A glance at the local press of the Queanbeyan district during the First World War reveals that along with the war much of the daily life of the district went on as before. There were recruiting rallies but also meetings of the various clubs and societies and boards; films were shown at the Triumph; the Boy Scouts continued their activities and football matches continued and before the Police Court were cases of drunkenness and assault.

Goulburn Penny Post Saturday 1 January

1916 MEN FROM SNOWY RIVER ROUTE MARCH. An enthusiastic meeting of the executive committee of the "Men from Snowy River" Route March was held at Queanbeyan on Thursday. The members were welcomed by the Mayor. The Mon. Austin Chapman, M.P. presided. Delegates from Delegate, Bombala, Queanbeyan, Cooma, and other centres reported a number of recruits ready to join at each centre and generous promises of support from all quarters.

Queanbeyan Age and Queanbeyan Observer Tuesday 4 January 1916

Boy Scouts in Camp. The Scouts went into camp on Monday, December 27th. Through the courtesy of the Administrator, Colonel Miller, the school tent, at the Cotter River was placed at their disposal and proved ample enough to accommodate the 27 boys who made up the roll call. The Scout Masters, with true soldierly fortitude, camped outside under the stars.

Queanbeyan Age and Queanbeyan Observer Friday 19 March 1915

The twenty-second annual show, under the auspices of the Queanbeyan Pastoral and Agricultural Association, was held on the society's show-ground on Wednesday. It was but a one-day's show, and the circumstances tinder which it was conducted, so far as weather conditions were concerned, were unfavourable in the extreme. The prevailing unprecedented drought was responsible for a degree of discomfort never before experienced. The show-ground was a bed of dust, and for the greater part of the day a high east wind raised it in smothering clouds, especially in the neighbourhood of the ring where the greatest concourse of spectators foregathered, and more so when the horse events were in full swing. But the onlookers bore the discomfort with the greatest patience and good temper.

Queanbeyan Age and Queanbeyan Observer Tuesday 8 June 1915

Queanbeyan District Hospital. Monthly Meeting. The usual monthly meeting of the board of management of the Queanbeyan District Hospital was held at the School of Arts on Friday after noon. The minutes were confirmed on the motion of Messrs. Hughes and Hirst. The correspondence, chiefly departmental and of little public interest, was received on the motion of Messrs. Collett and Moore. Swan Bros., butchers, wrote that owing to the high prices ruling for stock, and the consequent all round increase in the price of meat, etc., they could not fulfil the contract entered into by them in February last. A considerable amount of discussion followed, Mr. Wicks, seconded by the Rev. Mr. Hughes, eventually carrying a resolution that the contract be cancelled.

Goulburn Penny Post Saturday 30 December 1916

At the Queanbeyan Police Court on Thursday before Mr. T. W. Irish, J.P., two defendants were fined 10s and 2/6d for imbibing too freely during the holidays. Joseph Laughtonn, on warrant for

unlawful assault on Arthur Wilden was fined £5, costs 8s, in default one month hard labour in Goulburn Gaol. There was a large attendance at the Boxing Day meeting of the local pony club, there being numerous visitors from Goulburn, Yass, Bungendore, and other centres. The gate receipts amounted to £82.

Queanbeyan Age and Queanbeyan Observer Friday 29 December 1916

Mr. R. Thomson announces that he will resume buying rabbits on Monday. Congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. John Gale who celebrate their Diamond Wedding on Wednesday, January 3rd, 1917. Wednesday next at the Triumph Pictures:-The big wild west picture "The Knight of the Range"

John McGlynn

QUEANBEYAN
Pastoral and Agricultural Association.

THE 24th GRAND ANNUAL



Of the above will be held on the

Showground, Queanbeyan,

— ON —
TUESDAY AND WEDNESDAY,
MARCH 13th & 14th

OFFICIAL OPENING DAY, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 14th.
PUBLIC HOLIDAY. CHEAP EXCURSIONS.

Queanbeyan Age and Queanbeyan Observer, Friday 2 March 1917,
page 3 NLA Trove