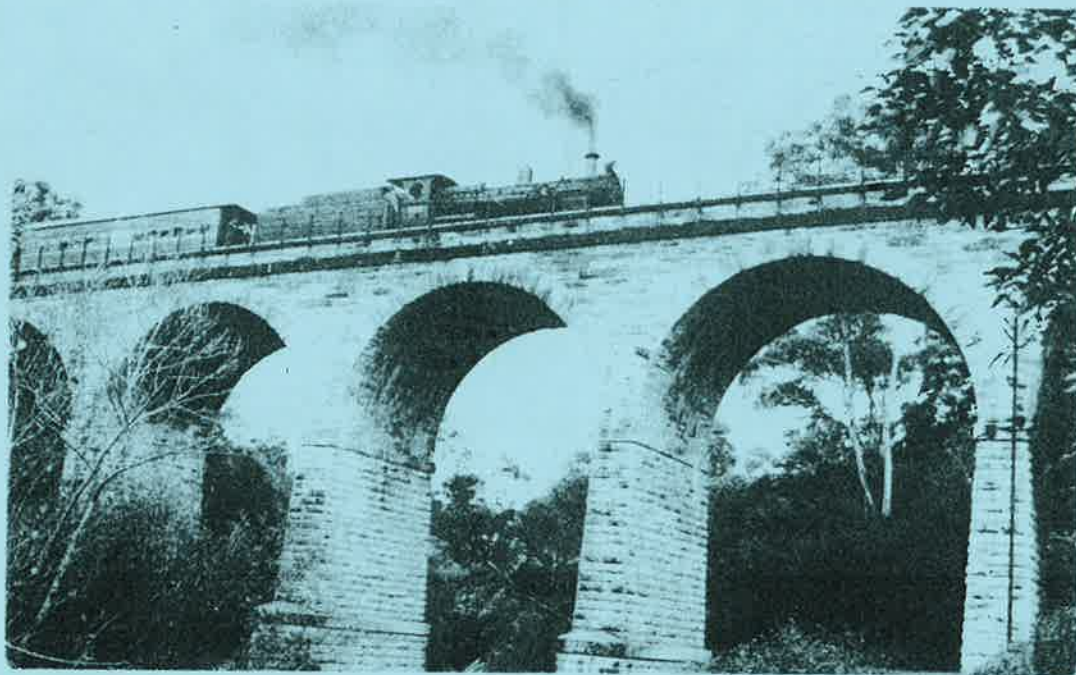


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O B I T U A R I E S
compiled by:- Jan Ross

Like most people I do not relish the thought of writing an obituary. However, it is an honour to either document or report upon the lives of three Picton residents in their own way contributed to the community. All three had been members of our Society and we extend to their families our deepest sympathies.

Charles Edward Buckley
(1912 - 1997)
NX 58669 2/4th Australian Pioneer Battalion
Kezia Park - Lakesland

Those who have visited our Resource Centre will have noticed that we have various items of memorabilia relating to the Picton Show. The last three items to be posthumously donated to the Society by Ted are all made of brass and wood. They include a scaled replica of a "Furphy" complete with cart and horse, a man pushing a plough and the third is another type of cart.

Ted Buckley

Charles Edward Buckley (Ted) was born on 13 June 1912 and died in Camden District Hospital just five days after his eighty-fifth birthday. His parents were Abraham and Selina and Ted was the brother of Daphne (Isaac) (dec), Chilla, Joyce (Slatyer) and Joe.

After attending school at Picton he joined his father at the age of twelve to help run a saw mill at Maldon. The mill supplied firewood to both Sydney and Picton and was on the site of today's Cement Works.

Ted also helped his uncle who had a contract to build a road from Wiseman's Ferry to Spencer. He grew peas at Picton and it was while working at Nestles that Ted became interested in

the Light Horse. Joining the A.I.F. he served in Timor and then Darwin. In Darwin that Ted was pulled from the harbour by a mate and Ted never forgot the person who saved his life.

He returned home in 1947 and married a widow, Alice Hoff who subsequently died in 1965. Alice and Ted had no issue although Alice had children by her first marriage.

Ted worked as a coal miner but was a passionate collector of horse and farm equipment. He thought the world of his old dog "Sadie" and when she had to be put to sleep, he acquired another companion, a black labrador from the "Pets as Therapy" organisation. This group is an offshoot of the Guide Dogs' Association of NSW and Ted and his dog, also known as Sadie, feature in one of the "Pets for Therapy" television advertisements.

A "Spotted Gum Tree" which Ted planted in his garden in 1947 bears the inscription "Whilst I Live, I Grow" summed up his philosophy for life. The tree won the Shire's "Best Tree" award on many occasions.

According to the Presbyterian Minister from Tahmoor, the Reverend Keith Walker who conducted the funeral service at Picton's Uniting Church, Ted had told him that Picton was "God's Country".

(Thanks to Mrs Helen Hanger who collected the material on Ted's life.)

**Mrs Mavis Dibley
(1928 - 1997)**

In the early days of the Society, Mr and Mrs Dibley helped to collate our Journal. As her health deteriorated, Mavis Dibley was unable to be involved in the day to day running of our organisation but she and her husband Bill still took a keen interest in our activities. They often provided me with

information which added to the overall picture of "local history".

Mavis Dibley (nee Black)

Mavis was born in Paddington in 1920. She was the youngest of eight children and her parents were Daniel and Hannah Black. Mavis attended Lilyfield Public School and completed her secondary education at Riverside Girls' High School. At 14 she commenced work in Glebe at the Highlands Shoe Store, and after some years Mavis obtained a position in the Shoe Department at Farmers in Sydney.

Mavis and Bill were married at Rozelle in 1940. After they were married Bill was posted to Grafton with the Railways. Within a few years Bill was once again relocated. This time it was to Toronto (Newcastle) in the Railway's Stores Department which also handled equipment for the State Mines. As a result Bill spent the rest of his working days in the mining industry.

The family moved to Oakdale (State Mines) in 1951 where Mavis became the Superintendent of the Nondenominational Sunday School. Following their move to Picton around 1966 she assumed the role of Superintendent of the Presbyterian Sunday School. After the Uniting Church was formed Mavis and her husband continued to follow the Presbyterian doctrine.

When Picton's Day Time View Club was formed on 5 July 1965, Mavis was a foundation member and over the years held every position on the committee as well as fulfilling the role of Zone Councillor. A valuable member of both the C.W.A. and the Red Cross in Picton, Mavis Dibley worked tirelessly for those who were less fortunate than herself.

She is survived by her husband Bill, two daughters and one son plus a number of grandchildren. Perhaps the most fitting tribute comes from Mrs Joyce Barnard who was one of Mavis' friends:-

"Mavis was a lady of her word. If she said she was going to do something you could guarantee it would be done."

(Information supplied by Mr Bill Dibby and Mrs Joyce Barnard of Picton)

**Albert Thomas Pitt-Owen
(1912-1997)**

The state of Reverend Pitt-Owen's health precluded him from being actively involved in our Society but until his physical condition restricted his mobility, Reverend Pitt-Owen displayed a keen interest in our progress.

It would be impossible to estimate the number of times that visitors to the Society have commented upon our "Miss Totty" who "Keeps an eye on us" from the top of the stairs in our Resource Centre. Miss Totty is a manekin (dressmaker's model) and had been named before she came to reside with us. She is attired in an evening dress which was handmade by a member of Reverend Pitt-Owen's family.

Reverend Pitt-Owen

The obituary is reprinted from the Sydney Morning Herald:-

"He was one of the Rats of Tobruk but he went to war not with a gun but a cross and a Bible. Albert Pitt-Owen 84, who died on in Sydney on June 13, was one of the fighting padres who cheered his men in life, lifted their spirits in sickness and, in death, gave them last rites and commended their souls to God.

Albert Thomas Pitt-Owen was ordained in 1937 two years after he graduated in arts from the University of Sydney.

He worked first as a parish priest, then served briefly with the Missions to Seamen, this in the days when Sydney was a big and busy port, playing host to seamen from many parts of the world.

Long before the Pacific war broke out, and while still in his 20s, Pitt-Owen realised the need to follow other young men sent to serve in the Australian forces overseas.

A 2nd Battalion man, Pitt-Owen was a chaplain from 1941 to 1946, serving with not only the Pioneers in Tobruk during its 240-day siege in 1941, but later with the 2/27 Battalion in New Guinea, Borneo and Sarawak.

The Pioneers, one of his mates recalled, served not only with guns but with spades, for they had the inenviable task of digging trenches and gun emplacements and camouflaging them against the ever vigilant Stuka dive bombers.

Digging trenches was a harrowing job in any war, but in the shallow sands of Tobruk, the spades hit bedrock less than a metre below the surface. Piles of rock had to be chipped out and erected on top of the trenches to give them added depth. In the Italian trenches surrounding Tobruk, which the Australians inherited, these rock piles were littered with booby traps where men lost fingers and hands.

To Pitt-Owen, this trench-digging was symbolic of the work of the church in the life of the community, building a sure foundation and giving the protection, security and assurance against the trials of life amid pitfalls and setbacks.

After his war service, which included a period as chaplain at the Rehabilitation Memorial Centre, he went to the comparative serenity of Cranbrook at Rose Bay where he served as chaplain for two years and taught Latin.

But his main academic achievement would come three years later when he was made headmaster of the Church of England Grammar School at Wentworth Falls.

When Pitt-Owen was offered the job by Archbishop Mowll, the school was on its last legs. It had three pupils - two dau boys and a boarder. It couldn't even pay him and he

had to live on his wife's private earnings until he got the school on its feet again.

When he left 16 years later, it had 350 pupils and today there are three times that. It was a post he had held with distinction, setting high standards on scholarship, sportsmanship and pastoral care among staff and students.

Among many Sydney posts, he was Rector at Liverpool, Dural, Haberfield and Petersham. In his 80s, he still delivered sermons with insight and passion. He is survived by his wife, Peg, two sons and a daughter."



(Editors Note:- "Kutnewsky's Castle" still stands but is hidden from the road by trees and shrubs. The residence was completed in 1928 by Mr Septimus Ernest Prosser who was on the Wollondilly Shire Council from 1936 to 1941)

A N N R A T C L I F F E
MYRTLE CREEK near PICTON - 1878

by:- Mrs Val Astley

(from information supplied by Mrs Frances Blundell)

Ann was the daughter of Joseph Ratcliffe, who arrived in the Colony in 1823 in the Guildford and worked at "Nonorrah", now known as "Maryland", Bringelly, and Sarah (nee Leonard) who was born in 1820 in Australia.

Joseph and Sarah married on 6th November 1837, and he took her to live at Cabramatta Chapel, where he was employed as Keeper from 1837-1848. Five children were born there, before the family moved to Sutton Forest, where they remained for three years. Jessie was born before they moved to Bargo, and there Ann was born in 1852.

On the death of Sarah's father, Richard Leonard, on 31 May 1853, Sarah and Joseph inherited a 50 acres land grant belonging to Richard Joseph was granted 77 acres at Redbank (**Deeside/ Thirlmere**) and he farmed at Redbank where their next three children were born and one male baby died unnamed.

The couple had eleven children:- Elizabeth born 1838; Jane born 1840; Eliza born 1842; Sarah born 1844; Mary born 1847; Jessie born 1849; **Ann born 1 February 1852;** Caroline born 1857; Britannia born 1859; Joseph Richard Leonard born 1861 and the unnamed deceased baby.

Ann was married to Everett Randall born on 11th February 1859 (seven years Ann's junior) on 26th February 1881, when Ann was twenty-nine years of age. According to their Marriage Certificate they were:- "Married in the private residence of William J.J. Whitfield, Murtle Creek, according to the rites of the Church of England." Their usual place of residence was quoted as "Rocky Ponds, Mittagong". William J.J. and Elizabeth Whitfield were the witnesses, the officiating minister being Samuel Fox."

Their children were:- Bernard Britton born 1878; Everett Wilfred born 1881 at Myrtle Creek; Richard James born 1884 at Myrtle Creek; Ethel Sarah born 1886 at Upper Picton; Joseph Oswald born 1888 at Upper Picton; John Searle born 1891 at Cowper Street, Upper Picton; Eric Alfred born 1894 at Upper Picton and Rupert Raymond born 1896 at Upper Picton.

Ann died on 24th August 1901 at Picton and on 23rd March 1903, Everett married Caroline Tickle, nee Whitfield. Many descendants still remain in the district.

D E E S I D E

Mr Joseph Ratcliffe was the original owner of the property "Deeside" at Thirlmere. It was 77 acres, bounded by Kendall Street and Burns Road and Joseph farmed there at "Redbank" (now Thirlmere - editor) as it was then known, but apparently did not live on the property.

The first resident owner was Mr W.T. Nixon, who occupied it from 1900 to the end of 1906. He used the property to demonstrate the efficacy of "Shirley's Superphosphate" with which he was connected. The product was most successful apparently, for very good crops were grown there even during the 1902 drought. On 24th October 1906, Mrs and Miss Nixon stoked the fire and then neglected to watch it, and unfortunately burned the house down. Mr Nixon decided to take the insurance money and move on, so sold out to Mr Pollitt, who in 1909 in turn sold out to Mr Kutnewsky.

The property then became an extension of the Fur and Feather business which Kutnewsky conducted in Sydney, and later opposite the Railway Station at Picton.

He built a "castle" on "Deeside" where he lived until the 1914-18 war brought him more problems because of his nationality and he was ultimately interned. My husband and I recently located the property through Kendall, Burns and Nixon Roads, but found no evidence left of the castle.

- B U S H R A N G E R S -
B O L D R E W O O D, B A R G O
and the
B U R R A G O R A N G
by:- John Ruffels

I have no long Picton pedigree to flaunt to show I am an expert on all the the bushrangers who waded the rivers of the Wollondilly Shire.

True, I did pick up a piece of quartz with a fleck of "gold" in it, from the bed of the Burragorang River in 1955, and I did find a pair of rusted convict handcuffs on "Mowbray Park" in 1958. And I have researched a bit of Picton's convict past since. But most of my knowledge of local bushranging has been gained from reading hard-won research of other Picton and district historians. (See end for references).

It was when I read the following item in an old copy of *The Bulletin* from 25th January, 1906, my interest in Wollondilly bushrangers was aroused:

"A man who was saved from a death sentence by the arrival of the lately deceased Victoria, died out in the wilds of Tumberumba, NSW, on January 17th. Son of a C. of E. clergyman, he entered the navy, where he drew his sword (used it!), on a superior officer who insulted a lady connected with his family. His death sentence was commuted by the coronation of Queen Victoria. He migrated to Australia, worked as a reporter on Parkes' "Empire", and later, the "Sydney Morning Herald". Landing in Adelong in 1853, he tackled mining and in 1856, he sought the big timber of Bargo, where he continued to live till his death. During 49 years he unsuccessfully sought gold. At that time, when there were no schools for free, walked each night, 2 miles to teach the children of two families; one of his pupils read the burial service over him: Rolfe Baldrewood

acquired a lot of material for 'Robbery Under Arms' from the old man."

The first thing about this item is the jumbled geography. Notice the writer seems to think that Tumberumba and Bargo are neighbours. If he sought gold for 49 years in Bargo, it is no wonder he was unsuccessful.

The second is the association between Bargo and Rolfe Boldrewood's famous Australian novel about bushrangers, *Robbery Under Arms*. It appears the writer from *The Bulletin* links the stories upon which the novel is based as being told to its author by someone who had lived in Bargo for 49 years. Quite understandable.

Anyone who has even a cursory glance at *Robbery Under Arms* will notice frequent mentions of Bargo in the book. "Bargo and Dutton Forest" (Ch. XVII): "Billy Barkiss the Bargo Bailiff" (Ch. XXXII): mention of the local man who owned "half a dozen (gold ore) crushing machines" - "Ballersdorf" - obviously Bargo innkeeper, Klensendorff (of Tahmoor House - editor); why, in Chapter IV, the older bushranger chides his sons at their bush hideout, "Terrible Hollow", saying:

"if you don't have any pluck . . . ride over to the Bargo Police Station and give me away . . ."

These frequent mentions of Bargo and then the author's linking of it with the bushranger's hideout, "Terrible Hollow", led to one of the most intense bush-pub debates in Australia's history. Because the story first appeared as a serial in a weekly magazine, *Sydney Mail*, between July 1882 and August 1883 (and Station Managers used to read the instalments to their spell-bound farm workers, - Australia's first soap opera), it generated much discussion in all corners of the continent. Who were the Marston Brothers - the bushranger father and sons based upon? Where did the race meeting story spring from in reality? And most important of all: where in true life, was "Terrible Hollow"? Bushies up and down down the country reckoned they knew the answers; (it was

described as a peculiar - geologically - formed sunken valley with one, concealed, entrance, and high cliff-like walls).

People familiar with Bargo had their theories: Ben Carlon of Burragorang told William Cuneo (the Thirlmere chronicler) of how he looked for "Boldrewood's Hollow", using as a starting point, a locality known as "Rocky Hut" at the foot of "Big Hill" (now known as Hilltop), seven to ten miles from which lay a sunken valley about 100 acres, which was concealed from the outside world. Carlon had heard "Terrible Hollow" was Burragorang Valley, but that did not stop him spending long days searching for it elsewhere. (He may have been influenced by the mention of "Hermit's Hut" on the way to the Hollow, and in future chapters mention, not of "Rocky Hut", but "Rocky Flat" and "Rocky Creek").

Carlon/Cuneo had not been the only authorities to label Burragorang as the real "Terrible Hollow", when Bernard Cronin and Arthur Russell wrote their book, "Bushranging Silhouettes" in 1932, they too, stated quite categorically that "Terrible Hollow" was Burragorang; adding that the valley was the bolt-hole of bushrangers Donohoe, Walmsley and Webber who operated around the South Creek and Prospect districts.

It is fortunate that these writers did not see a copy of Boldrewood's collection of stories, published in London in 1901, called "Fallen Among Thieves". Published at page 481 they would have found a family of squatters named the "Luptons". (A name familiar with Bargo initiates as that of the inn-keeper, John Lupton who selected land at the start of Bargo Brush in 1826 and ran an inn there until his death in 1836, when his widow carried on the establishment). More Bargo trails . . .

But were the bush-pub debaters right? Was "Terrible Hollow" based upon a real site near Bargo or was it really Burragorang?

And wasn't one of the three difficult-to-find, old Aboriginal tracks into Burragorang Valley through the Picton Lakes? - Which is not far from Bargo!

Despite his heavy use of local Bargo colour describing the localities his fictional novel, Rolfe Boldrewood actually revealed the true source of his "Terrible Hollow".

In an English publication called "*Life*" (Number One, 1904 at pages 58-61), Boldrewood, under his real name, (T.A. Browne), and entitled "How I Wrote Robbery Under Arms", stated:

"That weird fastness was drawn from a formation of 'sunk country', in the Gwydir district, New England, wherein long past ages a subsidence had taken place. The sandstone walls were stated to be three thousand feet high. The area of grass country enclosed is fairly large, with a creek running through it. It was described in the local paper at Armidale, New England, when the police had just arrested there a gang of horse and cattle stealers about to start for Queensland with stolen stock."

So there we have it from the horse's mouth. He also based his bushranging family, the Marstons, on the exploits of the Clarke brothers, amongst others.

A close reading of *The History of Bargo*, by Edward Brodie, will reveal Rolfe Boldrewood appears to have had an easy familiarity with the identities and happenings in the Bargo of the 1820s and '30s, when Bargo Brush was notorious as a hunting ground for early bushrangers. But throughout all his writing in the years following the publication of his justly successful novel, Boldrewood never revealed the source of his obvious knowledge of the early days at Bargo.

"Even when he went into Bargo, or some of the other country towns, they did not seem so much brighter. Sleepy-looking, steady-going places they all were, with people crawling about them like a lot of old working bullocks. Just about as sensible many of 'em . . ."

(Ch. XXVII), "Robbery Under Arms".

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Thanks to Jan Ross for research assistance.

**COMING SOON:- Bolters, Branders and Bail-up merchants of Bargo
Brush and Burragorang.**

FROM OUR ARCHIVES

T H E F A R M A T W I N D M I L L H I L L
(reprinted from Town and Country Journal 30 August 1873)
by:- Clydesdale

Part One

Those of your readers who have been in the **County of Cumberland** or of **Camden** need not be told where **Windmill Hill** is; but those who have not travelled in those parts, will bear telling that this very conspicuous landmark stands about a mile south-west of a little township of **Appin**; and that it is the property and home of **Mr E.G. Larkin**, a well-known and respected colonist of thirty-five years standing.

Here the proprietor has a very compact farm of 175 acres, which he has improved at considerable cost; and I don't know that I have seen in the colony any homestead better arranged with regard to comfort, or where master and men find everything more ready to their hand for carrying on all necessary business.

There is a thorough English appearance about the place, so far as can be seen where there are none but post and rail fences; but even if green hawthorne hedges are wanting, the timber substitutes for them are of the best - three railers, made sheep proof by two wires below the bottom rail, and a third between that and the middle one; and all the gates on the farm are uniform, made of the best stuff, and the best pattern, serviceable without being heavy or clumsy, hung on to capital strong posts, well sunk and well stayed, with strong hinges, swinging both ways and fastening themselves.

These gates are too carefully painted white, as also are all palings surrounding the pretty flower garden and old windmill. Touching the painting I heard not a bad story characteristic of the proprietor of **Windmill Hill**, which runs thus:- A friend who visited him, remarked as he walked round the place, "Why, bless me, what an expensive style of thing; it must take half-a-ton of white lead to paint the gates;" "Well" quoth **Mr Larkin**, in reply, "suppose it does; if they were not painted, it would take a hundred a year to keep them in repair."

The flower garden is very nicely laid out; but the late frosts are keeping back everything except some of the finest borders of violets I ever saw, equal, if not superior, to those of **Mr S.A. Blackman**, at **Cooyal**; and in this garden there is a round tank twenty feet deep, and as many in diameter, bricked and cemented, holding thirty thousand gallons of water, which is saved by piping off the corrugated iron roof of the comfortable cottage. From this tank the water is pumped for the use of the laundry. House and offices close by; and, when the tank is filled to a certain level, the waste water is conveyed down the hill clear of the garden, by a covered drain, and so flows to the creek.

(This article will continue in future issues of this journal)

PICTON & DISTRICT HISTORICAL & FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY Inc.

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