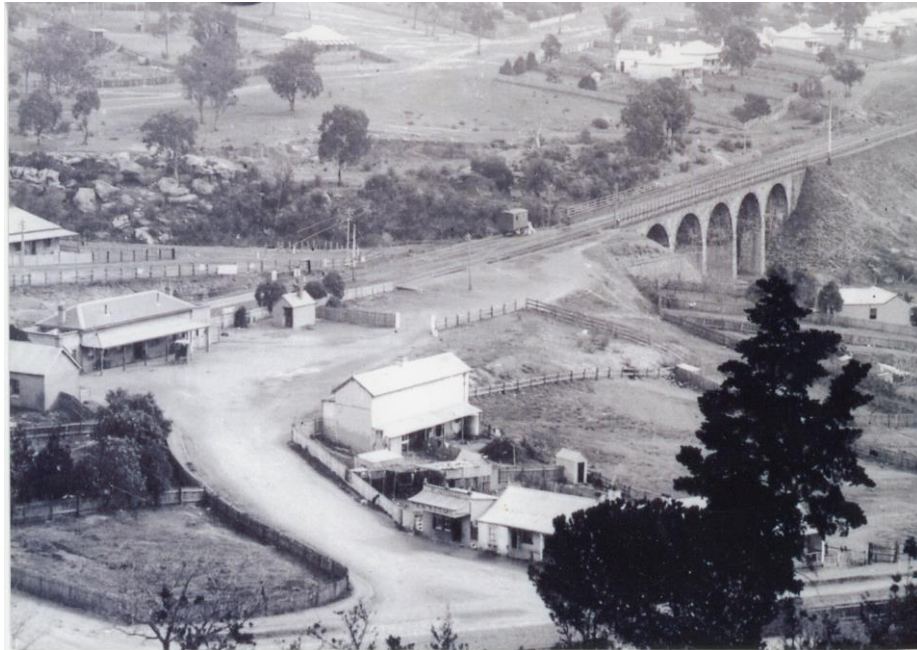


THE STONEQUARRY JOURNAL



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Published by The Picton and District Historical and Family History Society Inc.

The Picton and District Historical and Family History Society Inc.

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Membership

Pensioners and Students	\$15.00
Single	\$20.00
Family (living in same residence)	\$25.00

Meetings

We meet at 9.30 am on the first Saturday of each month (**except** January) in the View Room, Picton Library, 42 Menangle Street, Picton. The Annual General Meeting of the Society is held on the 1st Saturday in September.

Research

Our Research Room is in the Susan Keohane Local History Room, Picton Library, 42 Menangle Street, Picton and is open each Thursday from 9.30 am until 3 pm or by appointment.

Research Fees

Members	Free – plus photocopying costs
Non-Members	\$20.00 first hour - \$10.00 per hour thereafter plus copying/postage costs

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NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Picton and District Historical and Family History Society Inc will be held on Saturday 4 September 2021 at 9.30 am in the Wollondilly Library, 42 Menangle Street, Picton. (COVID restrictions permitting). Please contact the Society if you require a nomination form.

MEMBERSHIP FEES DUE

The Society's membership year runs from 1 July to 30 June. A membership renewal is enclosed with this Journal. You may post your payment to:

The Secretary, PO Box 64 Picton NSW 2571 or, if more convenient by electronic transfer direct to the Society's account with Bendigo Bank: BSB 633-000 ACC NO. 156 881 971. Please put your name in the reference.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Welcome to the June edition of our Journal. We have re-started our monthly meetings in the library and this is going very well. The cooler weather lends itself to us doing our family research on line. The rooms have been busy and Kate gave a wonderful talk on Picton in the library to over 28 people. The event was part of the Library's Café Connect program.

The NSW and ACT Association of Family History Societies annual conference is on again this year after being postponed last year. The conference will be a virtual event, on the 11th September and will be run by Port Macquarie.

There will be speakers on DNA, and using the Archives all from the comfort of your own home. More information can be found on the conference website. [2021 Annual Conference | 2021 NSW&ACT Annual Conference | Port Macquarie \(wixsite.com\)](#). Early bird registration ends on 2 July 2021 and full registration ends 27 August 2021. Single registration is \$10 (early bird) or \$30.00.

PS – In lockdown again, Wollondilly considered part of Greater Sydney so no meeting in July and the Library closed which means no access to our records in the Local Studies Room at the Library.

Gail Hanger

LIBRARIAN'S REPORT

We continue digitising and sorting photos. We had a volunteer, (Deb) helping for a couple of days in March. The maps and plans have been tidied up and many are now in the map cabinet. Both Ian and Marlane have found better copies of some maps on the internet. Marlane downloaded the 1841 map of Picton, the 1895 Municipality of Picton (new to us) and an 1862 map of the railway area including a lot of names added to the lots.

A separate event was an interview of our Mayor, Robert Khan scheduled in March, which was postponed until April due to heavy rain. By then Ian was away on holiday, so couldn't help with recording, but we hope to organise another session. His family came to Australia in the 1880s and did all sorts of things in several places. Robert came to Picton some 40 years ago, first buying a service station and then moving into the newly built (IGA) supermarket which he still operates.

On 29th April, after we had "closed", Marlane and I looked in on a public presentation of the Picton Place Plan and talked history to a consultant and two of the council planners. One was a Ruddiman

related to the Ruddiman family who operated as bakers in Argyle Street from 1900 – 1954 (later Lowe's until 1973).

We were asked to identify a photo of a house related to the Brookes family – and with the help of our followers on Face Book and our own archives, we were able to identify the house as Mt Hercules on Razorback.

We didn't have many visitors during May and it has been quiet. There was a request from a National Gallery Researcher for information about Marcella Hempel, a master weaver, who lived in Picton from the 1950s to 1970s. This proved very interesting. Thanks as usual to Helen Hanger who said "of course she remembered the Hempels!" An article appears in this Journal.

We received some more family files on the McFarlane/McFarland family, here briefly in the 1860s who then moved to Wagga. Life member John Ruffels has sent in a couple of articles for the Journal – thank you. Kerry, in charge of the Men's Sheds came into the library for information on the new one in Bargo, but hasn't been back to see us.

Another recent acquisition was a photo album of photos, newspaper clippings and programs given to Bob Lindsay on his retirement as County Clerk from the Nepean River County Council.

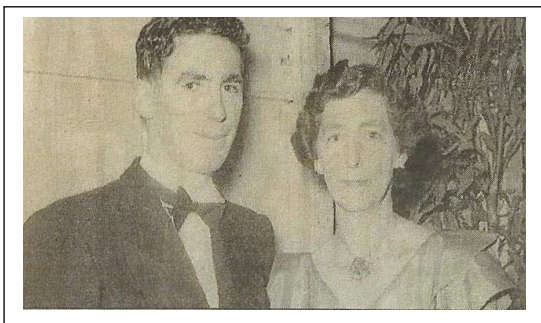
Café connect Talk. The Library has asked us to be involved in their programs. They are having regular twice monthly events on a wide variety of subjects. I was the guest speaker on 15 June and my topic, of course, was Picton. It was the largest attendance at any prior Café Connect events. Gail and Marlane attended as my "helpers" and passed around maps and photographs.

Kate Holmes

A DEBT REPAYED

*Reprinted with permission from the Legacy magazine "Torchtlight" and the author, **JO Morrice**, son of Jane Morrice and brother of the late Tony Morrice former member and President of our Society.*

Foreword: *Legatee JO Morrice's mother, Mrs Jane Morrice, was widowed in 1940 when her husband, Arthur, a WWI veteran and ANZAC, died. Her four children, all under the age of ten at the time of their father's death were subsequently made wards of Sydney Legacy. Later, Jane Morrice became a Legacy foster mother looking after various other Legacy wards. This was her way of repaying the debt she owed to Legacy. The story of the late Jane Morrice's involvement with Sydney Legacy is told by her youngest son, JO, who, like his late mother and his late brother Tony, also decided to repay his debt to Legacy.*



Jane Morrice with her son Tony, 1950

Amongst my mother's records there are many poignant reminders of the past. A small notebook contains a miscellany of information about her family and friends. It was begun in 1934, the year of my birth. There are samples of hair, pressed flowers, bus schedules, shoe, dress and collar sizes. and fascinating detail about our early childhood. Apart from brief medical histories (measles and whooping

cough seemed to have been common), there are notations about when we wore our first pyjamas, lost our first teeth and so on. It was when reading this notebook I was reminded that our association with Sydney Legacy began on 25 February, 1942, some fourteen months after our father died.

According to a family friend, my mother was left almost “penniless”, living with her family in a rented house in Avalon, a northern beachside suburb of Sydney. At first she was given a meagre widow’s pension as well as child endowment, which she found barely sufficient to make ends meet. With some reluctance, she sought help from Legacy. Family records indicate that in the ensuing years my mother received “generous assistance from this organisation in the form of money, clothing and advice.”



"Ealing" Tahmoor home of the Morrice family (Baker Collection)

My somewhat hazy childhood memories of Legacy include visits to the office in Castlereagh Street, usually accompanied by my mother. At the time we were living in Tahmoor, some sixty miles SW of Sydney. The staff of Sydney Legacy were most helpful and lasting friendships were made in those early days. Nothing seemed to be too difficult for members of the staff, although I have no doubt that my siblings and I were a handful for both our mother

and Legacy. The Legatees who often visited us at home in the country would

have noted our particular circumstances. When I joined Chatswood Division of Sydney Legacy in 1985, I was reminded of this valuable relationship between Legatees and families by one of our first Legatee Advisors, the late Fred McAlister. The late Alan McMurchie also had vivid memories of the Morrice family as an advisor. My association with these two outstanding Legatees in their twilight years was an experience that I valued highly.

In 1948 my wardship with Legacy virtually ceased when I joined the Royal Australian Navy as a Cadet Midshipman. Thereafter my board and lodging was well catered for by the Navy. By this time my mother was taking in boarders from Legacy. As a cousin recalls in her family history, “Jane was able to become one of Legacy’s foster mothers which meant that she was paid to look after various other Legacy wards who were placed in her care from time to time.” Sometimes there would be three or four foster children living in the house, as well as our own family. Our lame and ageing grandmother was an added burden, as was an elderly cousin and an infant grand daughter, all of whom my mother cared for while taking on the fostering role.

The “house full” sign was never to be seen at our modest country property, even though at times there were ten or more people, young and old, living in what was originally a three bedroom fibro cottage. As the extended family grew, more rooms were added, with the overflow occupying the small veranda (at times sleeping up to five or six children). Tents provided additional relief. There were few squabbles that I remember, although our mother’s horse whip was always at hand. Those who knew her would not disagree that Jane Morrice was a strict but caring mother and foster mother.

The numerous Legacy wards who were placed in my mother's care were all boys. No doubt she refrained from offering to look after girls because the mix of boys and girls may have been too difficult to handle. The boys concerned came from a variety of homes in the city. In some cases their mothers were unable to provide a reasonable level of care. Some were orphans, while others needed a more disciplined life than they were leading at home. I don't believe that any of the boys, some of whom stayed for months at a time, regretted being fostered by their adopted "Aunty Jane." The Legatees involved must surely have been well satisfied with the outcome of this post WWII foster parent scheme.



Mrs Morrie's Legacy boys: Roy Desreaux, Richard Le Serve, Peter Bourne, Gerry Le Serve, Bob and Reg Shepherd (Baker Collection)

The selflessness that my mother showed towards the boys entrusted to her care by Legacy reflected the manner in which she assumed the heavy responsibilities thrust upon her as a young widow. With the help and encouragement of Legacy, she gave her own as well as her foster children every possible opportunity. She rejoiced in our scholastic and sporting achievements and generally ensured that we were ready to meet the demands of adult life. As a family friend said at my mother's funeral in 1992, Jane was a vibrant woman and she had a big heart. She repaid her debt to Legacy a thousand times over.

L/JO Morrice

MARCELLA HEMPEL, MASTER WEAVER

Kate Holmes

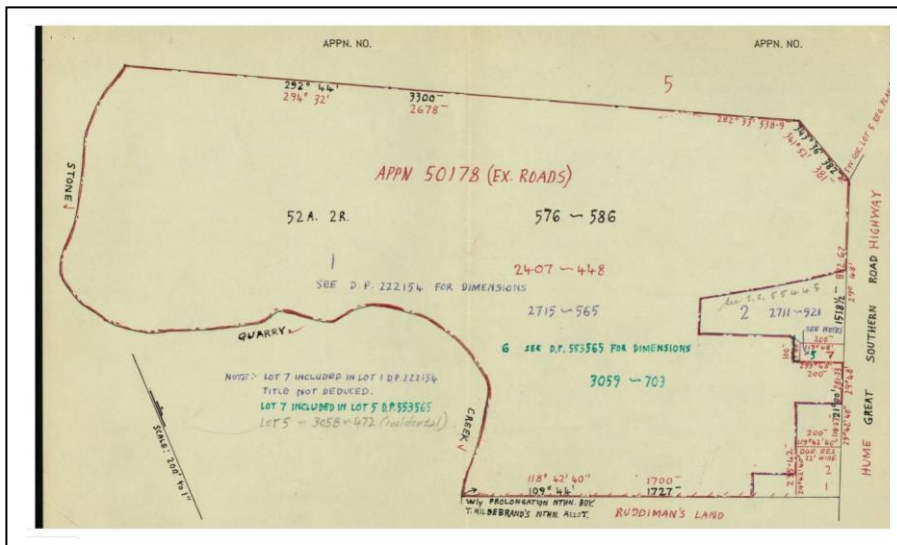
In May we received a request for information from Linda Pascal, a volunteer archivist at the National Gallery of Australia in Canberra. She had been researching the life of Marcella, and provided us with her notes, so all the early biographical material is from Linda. She wanted to fill in some of the gaps, including almost twenty years spent in Picton! So Kate began looking for references to her in the local *Picton Post*, and found some, then went to see life member Helen Hanger, our local source for information from the 1950s on. Oh yes, Helen remembered seeing Marcella who would often walk into town from her home on the northern edge of town – Helen would be taking her children to school, so this would be in the early 1960s. She didn't know Marcella, but they would smile at each other. Helen described her as quite small, with light brown hair; she often had her daughter Annette with her, who had dark hair.

Linda found that Marcella had corresponded with an English author, Lyn Newman whose correspondence was held at St. John's College Library, Cambridge. This reference was followed up by Marlane and we were able to obtain copies of the letters.

Marcella was born in Berlin in 1915. She graduated in 1936 in handweaving and textile design. She married Georg Senff in 1937 and they had a daughter Maria, but Georg fell foul of the Nazi regime, and died in 1944. Marcella had continued to work and became a master weaver in 1947. She left

East Berlin in 1952 for London, where she worked (as a domestic) until 1954 when she sailed for Australia via Cape Town South Africa.

Bruno Hempel (1910-1969) was also born in Berlin, and at 14 became the first “air boy” or steward, in the world, later becoming an aeroplane mechanic; this was noted in his obituary in the local paper. He also married, and had a son Peter before, as a widower, he left for Australia in 1954. According to Bruno’s death record, Marcella and Bruno were married in Cape Town in 1953. Did Marcella and Bruno travel together from England from the outset or did they meet and marry on the voyage? The ships passenger list on arrival in Albany WA in January 1954 from Cape Town, records Bruno and Marcella Hempel and the two children, Peter and Maria as a family unit travelling to Sydney.



Here they were able to pursue their careers – Marcella designing fabrics and teaching at East Sydney Tech for a while, Bruno working for Qantas and then Ansett Airways at Rose Bay. Bruno’s obituary says the family moved to Picton in 1957; the

Sketch Plan showing the land owned by the Hempels. In July 1964 Bruno gifted his share of lot 2 to Marcella. The remaining lot 1 containing some 48 acres, was sold in September 1964 to Canley Vale Food Stores who subsequently sold it to Regreme Developments in 1972. (NSW Land Registry Services Primary Application 50178)

title deeds showing that they bought the farm in February 1958 when Bruno was described as a farmer

from Camden. It is possible that they leased the land before deciding to buy it. The farm was on the left-hand side of the Hume Highway where it curves slightly on the way to Camden. It is now part of the developments in the Botanic Gardens area.

This land was part of the original Jarvisfield grant to Major Henry Colden Antill in 1822, and had remained in the Antill family until 1922, when this particular portion was sold to Willie Larkin, a local agent and auctioneer, who may have rented the farm, possibly to members of the Farrell family. The property changed hands a few times until sold to Bruno Arthur Willy Hempel and Marcella Auguste Hempel. The property comprised some 52 acres. They ran it as a dairy farm, with some sheep – the latter useful to Marcella to spin and weave her rugs and hangings. Soon after their arrival in Picton the Hempel’s had a daughter, Annette, and Marcella’s daughter Maria married Noel Chiddy, and by a wonderful coincidence lived just up the street from life member Helen Hanger.

There are very few references to the family in the local paper, though many of the 1950s and early 1960s newspapers did not survive to be microfilmed. The first was an advertisement in 1963 for the Picton Village Inn, a restaurant, with Mrs. Hempel and Mrs. Urban as proprietresses. Locals (Helen

Hanger and Michael Fairfax) remembered it as possibly starting in the smallish space in the Moggeridge/Coull building, next to the George Inn, and then in the old stables, known as the Barn, behind the George. Michael thinks they may have moved further into town at some point. They also provided a take-out service of complete dinners for the busy professionals.



Picton Post 27 June 1963

So why should Marcella be taking on this sort of work on the top of helping on the farm, and weaving? It seems that Bruno had had an accident, and was bedridden for three years, as mentioned in the 1967 letter written by Marcella to Lyn Newman. This goes on to say how difficult she found working the farm herself, and eventually, in 1964 to selling the farm, although she was able to keep the old farmhouse, situated on the Hume Highway. An earlier letter, in 1962, gave her address as "Glendore". As well, the Hempel marriage had broken down. It is possible that Bruno went to live in Sydney, maybe with his son Peter, or the couple continued to live together. By December 1968 it was noted in the "About Town" column of the *Picton Post*, that Bruno had been in St. Vincent's Hospital for some time but was now being brought back to Queen Victoria Hospital, as he so loved Picton. He spent the last few weeks being nursed by his wife back at home and died on 15th April 1969. Bruno's headstone in Upper Picton cemetery reads:

Where Are We Going
Homewards Always
In Memory of My Husband
BRUNO HEMPELL
17.5.1910 – 15-4-1969

It is after this that the local "About Town" column provided snippets of information about Marcella and her activities. She lectured in weaving at vacation schools at Binna Burra in Queensland from August 1970, in Sydney in May 1971 – plus two exhibitions, one in Brisbane and one in King's Cross. Similar activities were noted in 1973, plus in July, that Marcella was to teach at the Picton High School, with nine girls already enrolling. In July 1974, the paper noted that Mrs. Hempel had been a guest lecturer for some six months in Wagga at the College of Advanced Education, which led to her move from Picton in January 1975. This time there was a longer paragraph, but still in the "About Town" column.

Weaver Leaves District

Hand loom weaving has for the past 20 years has been synonymous with the name Marcella Hempel of Argyle Street, Picton. This association has extended all over Australia as well as overseas.

Picton is to be bereft of this proud connection as Mrs. Hempel and her 16-year-old daughter, Annette have left to reside in Wagga where Mrs. Hempel will become a permanent instructor in weaving at the Advanced School of Education.

She spent six months last year as a guest instructor at Wagga and found the position and the city most agreeable. Annette who gained an excellent pass in the School Certificate at Picton High School will continue her studies at Wagga.

Picton owes much to Mrs. Hempel as one of the earliest to bring through her culture from Europe and fame to this district.

With Annette, Mrs. Hempel has just returned from an overseas trip, their second in recent years and all Annette's school friends also wish her well.

(Picton Post, January 23, 1975)

From this time, it seems strange that Marcella was not given a proper farewell, given her renown. In some of the Newman correspondence Marcella says that Picton is "just a small town with little interest in the arts", and she probably didn't have many friends here. Some contact has been made with the children, but for some the years in Picton had been very difficult and they would prefer not to be involved in talking about that time. Do any of our members have any recollections of the Hempel family and their various activities? We would love to hear more about this extraordinary woman.

Sources:

Wikipedia article researched by Linda Pascal [Marcella Hempel - Wikipedia](#)

St. John's College Library, Papers of Lyn Newman. Quotes from Marcella Hempel's letters by permission of the Master and Fellows of St. John's College, Cambridge.

Picton Post various articles from 1963 to 1975.

NSW Land Registry Services

Trove – National Library of Australia

Ancestry – Fremantle, Western Australia, Passenger Lists "SS Jason"

Etched in Stone, Collison, N (The Oaks Historical Society)

JAMES MUIR AULD – A THIRLMERE PAINTER

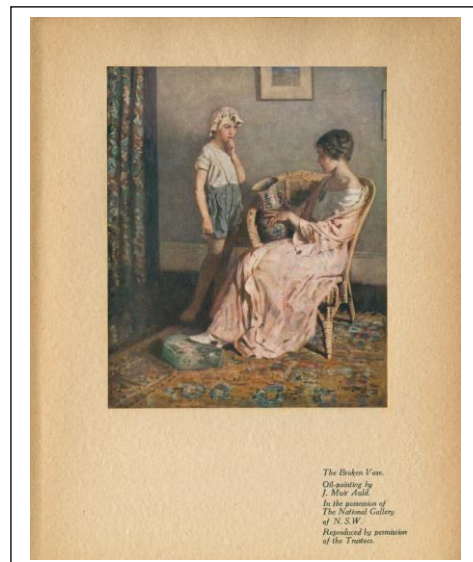
John Ruffels

When you think about it, it was probably inevitable that James Muir Auld would gravitate towards Thirlmere.

Auld was born in Ashfield in Sydney in 1879, his parents were prominent charity workers and founders of the Young Women's Christian Association in Sydney.

(Ed Note: J Muir Auld's parents John and Georgina Auld, were close friends of John Hay Goodlet and his wife Ann who established the Picton and Thirlmere (former Queen Victoria Memorial Hospital) Home for Consumptives. Auld's brother John Hay Goodlet Auld was born in Goodlet's home at Ashfield in 1875. John Auld was a prominent Presbyterian Minister in NSW. (Ref: Cooper, Paul F. More Valuable than Gold Elder Books, 2015).

The Vase
'JAMES MUIR AULD. (1 July 1917)' Art in
Australia, no. 3, pp. 13



James Muir Auld was an artist, who suffered with Tuberculosis, and doubtless moved out to the village of Thirlmere, because of the healthful climate. He lived there for eleven years. Muir Auld, despite his fine connections was a modest man who struggled on quietly with his illness and his limited ability to work.

He had trained at the Julian Ashton Art School and travelled to England in 1909, returning to Australia in 1911.

An interesting article in "Smith's Weekly" dated 8 February 1936, and titled "Meets Good Fairy", throws some light on Muir Auld's existence at that time;



1912-06-01. *The Lone hand*, vol. 11, no. 62 cover illustration by J Muir Auld

"No radio, just books. He was not given to blatant advertisement". The newspaper continued: "He was not expected to live three months. The outlook could hardly be worse"; "At this moment Fate brought the good fairy on the scene. A Pitt Street solicitor Mr F H Greaves, "a sturdy, kindly man who becomes gruff when the subject is mentioned, knew "Jimmy Auld" better than most, he was Jimmy's brother-in-law, and knowing him as an artist and a man, he was prepared to back him personally. It so happened "a small property at Thirlmere was on the market and going for a very small figure. It was just a four-roomed shack, not in good order, but capable of improvement. Mr Greaves decided it was the place for Jimmy, so he acquired it, white ants included. Exterminating the white ants, they put on a verandah and made the place habitable. That was five years ago. The sick man, who was still able to get about, found new hope in his adopted home and took

up life as an artist-hermit, with the zest of a novel experience." "He found in the forest around his shack many subjects for his brush, and incidentally, one of these is "Winter Morning" which won the Wynne Prize!", (one thousand pounds).

Winning the Prize in 1935 was great publicity. And despite his reluctance to self-boost, inspired him with his painting. Catalogues list over twenty of his works.

In those Sydney auction catalogues on the 'Net', three titles by Muir Auld mention "Thirlmere". They are: "Spring at Thirlmere"; "Bushland Peace at Thirlmere" and "The Cottage Thirlmere". You can also use Google images to actually view these works. You will notice how many of them have a small hut or shack tucked away in the corner of the painting.

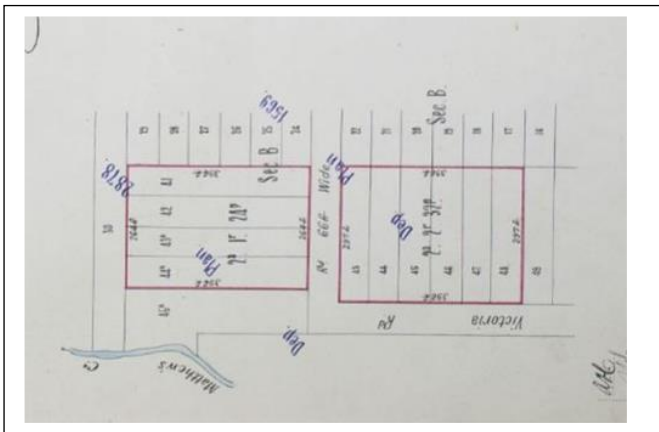
I have consulted ex Thirlmere-ites Paul and Margaret Schmitt, themselves of artistic bent, about the location of Jimmy's hut, and they have told me that Jimmy's shack was "at the back of Shelley's Lane". They also told me some old Thirlmere-ites recall Jimmy Auld paying local tradesmen with a painting for work done around his house. I wonder if any of those paintings still survive on some living room walls in Thirlmere?

When Muir Auld held an exhibition of his paintings at the Macquarie Galleries, the *Sydney Morning Herald* sent along a critic. This knowledgeable person observed most of the landscapes were of very similar views. Given the artist was house-bound with tuberculosis, what did the critic expect? (And

paraphrasing from irate English landlord in *Fawlty Towers*: “What do you expect to be seen from a Thirlmere window?; The Hanging Gardens of Babylon? Rampaging herds of Wilderbeast?”

Muir Auld died on the 8 June 1942 in Camden Hospital and is buried in the Old Presbyterian section at Rookwood.

His painting “Picton” dated 1932 shows an elevated view across a railway line to familiar bush in the distance. It captures the subtleties of the local landscape wonderfully. As did his prize winning “Winter’s Morning” (1935) and “The Broken Vase”. All now in the art Gallery of New South Wales. Along with his portrait of poet Roderick Quinn.



Editor’s Note: The property on which J Muir Auld lived was bought in the name of his sister, Emily, who was married to Frederick H Greaves. The property was in Victoria Road and comprised nearly five acres of land. In 1953 the land was sold to Kevin Chalker. It is not known exactly where “the shack” was or indeed did he live in the home later to be occupied by the Chalker family?

Plan from Certificate of Title Vol 1990 Fol 196 – the land purchased by Emily Greaves.

Street Naming: As mentioned in previous reports by Kate, the Society is continually being consulted by Wollondilly Shire Council to provide names for the streets in new subdivisions – of which there are many at the moment. Not only do we need to propose a name, but the name must also be backed by research and appropriately referenced. At the moment the Society is involved with providing names for a subdivision at Wilton which will create 42 new streets.

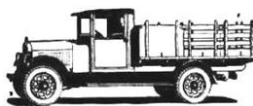
The Geographical Names Board impose a strict criteria for the naming of streets, it cannot be the same name as in another village in the Shire or neighbouring councils, nor sound similar to or look like it – eg Edith (proposed for Nurse Edith Farrell of Wilton) is rejected as it is too close in the spelling of “Erith” (road in Buxton). The reasoning behind it is to make addresses as accurate as possible for emergency services to locate and not mistaken for streets/roads with other areas.

Some that are currently being considered for a new subdivision off Byron Road, Tahmoor, with a theme of old property names are “Woodside Place” (The Early family), “Yeovil Place” (the Totterdell family), “Lone Lea Street” (Kelly and Wilson family) and “Alma Den Way” (Hines/Zambra family).

Book: Wollondilly Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades: On 17 April, members attended the launch of Colin Miller’s book on the history of Wollondilly’s bush fire brigades. The 237 page book is complimented with over 100 photos, many of which are current photos by member James Whitfield. It is available from the author 0438772408 or by emailing James at jameswhitfield@bigpond.com. It retails for \$40 plus postage etc.

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