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President's Report

2006 is flying away, but recently I had the pleasure to be present at the Picton High School Presentation Night for 2005. It was postponed from December because of problems with their hall. The Society along with member John Ruffels sponsors the award. The award for 2005 was shared between four students, Michael Kahabka, Amy Fuller, Alena Woznik and Ian Parker. Amy Fuller also won last year and I'm pleased to say she has become the first student from the High School to get first in the state for the subject of Aboriginal Studies. I would like to thank John for his continuing support of the award, which is very much appreciated. John is a past student from Picton High School.

We have an exciting new project in the works, along with The Oaks Society and Picton Library. We are going to digitise photographs of our local areas and put them on the Internet. There will be more on this subject in following journals.

We have had several people comment on the new look A4 journal, so hope you continue to enjoy.

Until next time,
Gail Hanger

A Recollection of the History of Yanderra.

As told by Arnold Ashton.

Parts of this article was used in the Journals of December 1998 and March 1999. Note that spelling of names has been left as recorded. The earlier article says it was told to "Yakka", and the typed version of the handwritten original did some editing. This version, in two parts, has not been edited apart from adding some commas and full stops to break up some of the longer sentences.

Part 1:

Yanderra came into existence as a settlement approximately early 1919, when Arthur Rickards real estate company acquired 200 acres original Crown grant from the Mellor Brothers. This was subdivided and named Yanderra Estate, the company providing amenities, such as building a railway station, public tennis court, swimming pool, constructing and naming roads, also providing the land for a sportsground.

My parents purchased Lot 149 Yanderra Road in late 1929 and they moved from Belmore to reside there in 1930. I was 7 years old at the time and have a clear recollection of those early days.

At that date there were less than 10 families as original residents namely:- Harry Smith, Arthur Tompkins, Bill Morgan, Ern Keating, Isaiah France, George McKellor, Albert Mellor and Oriel Ashton families.

Within five years followed:- Judds, Steve Watson, Bassett snr., W. Brereton snr., Arthur Brereton, Cyril Bowker, P. Bowker, Tompkins, Turners, Stan Murray, Alf Williams, P. Wiffin, Al. McNinch, Gibbs, W. Devlin, W. Ashton, Miss Spratt. Also there were quite a few families known as weekenders, these included Tregilgas, Stones, Harveys, Chambers, Ellis, Gibbs, Henness, Urlick.

From 1935-1940, families who settled in Yanderra included O'Keefes, Dunn, Whitehead, Jenkins, Barras, Bolands, Streeter, Ward, Hall, Woodford, Kirkwood, Miss Hill. The Log-Cabin road house changed ownership a number of times from 1929-1940. The original owner was Harry Smith, then Arthur Rush, Peter Belairs, Mrs Brennan and Sulsbrook and Greaves.

Prior to the opening of Yanderra School, we children Daphne and Lionel Tompkins, Fred Wiffin, Oriel, Arnold, June Ashton, Anne, Phyllis, Doris, Dorothy & Thelma Bowker, Jean & Doris Turner, Jack Brereton, walked to Bargo school and return each day. On the way to school, we passed the site of a small mining venture namely, the silica sand mining company formed by Mr Norm Bennett a well known identity from Bargo. The industry covered several acres and included a large concrete walled dam, plus a number of smaller concrete washing tanks, also a large washing plant, which had an endless conveyor belt with small buckets. These buckets collected the washed sand from the final washing tank, emptied the sand through screens, then stockpiled the sand, where it dried a brilliant white. The raw material was dug from the surround

area, and transported to the plant by means of small rail tracks & hand pushed dump trucks similar to those used in coal mining in the early days.

These activities were fascinating to us school kids, and often caused our late arrival to school where we were welcomed with a regular dose of the cane. I might add that most of us went bare footed, both summer and winter, not by desire but through lack of shoes. Yanderra during the depression era, became a fairly close knit community, probably due to the equal financial standing and the lack of material possessions. This caused the whole community to create ways of entertainment, such as parties, dances and sporting activities, we even boasted a very good cricket team, which competed against the teams from surrounding areas.

There were a number of interesting characters in Yanderra in the early years, perhaps the most colourful was a tall distinguished Irishman named High McNeish, he was an eccentric, perhaps even mad, most of the time. He built a small two storied weather-board house, actually one room on top of the other, which was located almost opposite our property on Yanderra Road. This piece of ground was the driest stoniest ground in the Yanderra estate and here he tried to grow potatoes. He collected countless stones on the property and built walls all round the house similar I believe to the Irish country side. He also decided to start poultry farming but couldn't understand why the chickens were dying, he told us he was feeding them on sausages and food better than he was having himself, also to keep them warm he placed them in a jam tin attached to a stick and held them over the fire, which seemed to liven them up for short time.

Old Mac as he was known, became weak, depressed and in poor health, so my Mother would send him an evening meal with my brother and I, and in his saner moments he told us that he came from a wealthy family in Ireland. He was educated and trained as a doctor of medicine, he had been in South Africa during the Boer War, had travelled to a number of countries and then was in Hobart where he had been attacked, robbed and thrown into the harbour to drown. This experience was the cause of his mental problems, and though his family made contact with him at Yanderra and begged him to return home where a title and a large inheritance awaited him. He told us that he didn't trust his relatives, so he wouldn't return to Ireland. Shortly after this he died, and we were able to verify by letters and photos left lying around, all that he told us was true, and we learnt that the state government had buried him as a pauper and collected his inheritance, some £36,000, at that time a considerable fortune.

Another character was Laurie Morris, he didn't own any property but lived with any family who would have him, mainly with Alf Williams family. He claimed to have had stage experience under the stage name of Professor Stollering, his main act was to go into a trance when blindfolded, then he could find things that were lost. Some say he could find things before they were lost, however I have seen him leading a number of men, while blindfold, through the bush searching for a lost survey peg, unfortunately without much success. On another occasion he was clearing some ground, when I met him on my way home from school, he told me that he was sure he had been bitten by a snake, which was most unlikely as it was the middle of winter at the time, however he was still sure it was a snake and hurried off to see Bill France, who was capable of fixing anything, or so he told us. We heard that Bill France had a bottle of brandy purely for medicinal purposes. Now Mr France knew that he had to

keep Laurie awake, so he kept him walking around and to further ensure he didn't go to sleep he gave him repeated sips of brandy, thus when the bottle was empty it was realised the spirit must have neutralized the snake venom, so Laurie survived, but he left Yanderra shortly after.

During the early years of the depression there were a number of men who were single and could be termed drifters or wanderers, they were not swagmen, but would attach themselves to any family who could accommodate the men with some food and shelter, in return they would perform various work. These men were from all walks of life and had interesting backgrounds no doubt, but were not always anxious to discuss their past lives.

Bill Barnes was such a man, he lived first with the France family then later with us, then he moved from Yanderra and I don't know where he went. He was a typical bushman very skilled with an axe and adze, he had lost one eye somewhere in the past, but was a hard worker, who built many fences mainly from split slabs, a few of these still remain today.

Then Bill Amos, he also lived with the France family, he was a pleasant old Englishman, who had spent a considerable time in the British Army in India. He was a volunteer postman for Yanderra Road, his daily routine being to walk to the Log-Cabin, at that time the post office and store, also the central meeting place for the residents of Yanderra. He collected and delivered mail and papers for the residents of Yanderra Road a task he cheerfully performed, always singing and whistling and he was much appreciated. This he continued to do for many years until his death from old age.

Also there were younger men such as Jack Brown who stayed with Tompkins he claimed to have been educated as a doctor, but was forced on to the Dole and Relief work during the depression, he stayed about a year and was last heard of in New Guinea.

Fred Saunders stayed with my family for a short time, then moved on and we last saw him working as a circus hand, at Bargo some years later.

Peter Gassier was an immigrant from Russia, he was in Yanderra in the late 1930s, working for Mr Ulrich a Yugoslav miner from Broken Hill. Mr Ulrich was a land speculator who bought numerous blocks of land here and employed Peter as a fencer.

Now to the permanent residents. As mentioned earlier, my parents, Oriel and Rose Ashton, settled in Yanderra in 1930. My father having served in the Navy decided to try poultry farming, with no practical experience and the depression at its worst, he had no success in the venture, so was forced to try other activities. Their children, the eldest Oriel, myself (Arnold) my sister June and brother Trevor. Trevor was born January 1931 at Picton, so was probably the first child born to parents living at Yanderra. My father died in 1944, after serving overseas in the R.A.N. from 1939 to 1941. My mother continued to reside here until her death in 1967. Then my wife and I and our children, have continued to live here until the present time, making an unbroken family residence of 54 years, the longest of any family in Yanderra.

There are only three other families with members still living in Yanderra. Mrs Anne Bassett, Lot 345. Her parents Mr and Mrs Brereton were early residents, also her late husband, Alf Bassett was an early resident of Yanderra. Anne's brothers Arthur and George with their families lived here in the early 1930s. Anne and Alf Bassett have two sons, Thomas and Robert. Robert and his family also, are still residents in Yanderra.

Mrs Ada McGregor with her parents Mr and Mrs Barrass were originally weekenders to Yanderra from 1934 to 1945 then they settled permanently, so are therefore classed as early residents, and with Ada's husband Sandy and son Robert still reside at Chandos Road, Yanderra. The McGregor's other son Craig is serving in the R.A.N.

Geoff & Jean Smith came to live at Yanderra in 1951, however Geoff's mother Mrs Smith and his sister Mrs Dulcie O'Keefe and her husband Bill O'Keefe lived in Yanderra about 1936-1950. Also Mr & Mrs Dunn, were related and lived here at that time.

The France family lived in Yanderra for many years, & were well known identities settling here in 1929 and lived here continuously until Mr France died approx. 1964. They lived at Lot 142, their original house no longer exists.

The Tompkins family settled here in 1929 originally lived at Lot 15, then were granted a Crown lease of approximately 50 acres, which was located outside the original Yanderra estate, on the opposite side of Chandos Road and fronting the Hume Highway, the family left Yanderra about 1938.

Harry Smith the original owner and builder of the Log Cabin Roadhouse, settled here in 1929, however he sold that business in the early 1930s and also took up a lease of approximately 50 acres adjoining the Tompkin lease bounded by Chandos Road and Carlisle Street. Harry Smith was a good farmer and a hard worker, he cleared and cultivated about 10 acres of his lease, and like all the early settlers this was done mostly by hand, the only mechanical aids then were a Trewella Tree puller, mattock, shovel, axe, crow bar and cross cut saw. He used horse and plough for cultivation and produced some of the best crops seen in the district including prize winning exhibits in the local shows. He left Yanderra about 1935 and was last heard of rice growing in the Riverina area.

The other 50 acre lease taken up at the same time, by the Williams family, parents of Alf Williams (who resided at Lot 127), and is bounded by Carlisle Street and Silica Road (however these roads were not known by these names in the early days and were little more than bush tracks). The Williams family left Yanderra about 1939.

Another family who lived outside the original estate were the Thompsons, they resided a few hundred yards North on the Hume Highway, Mr Thompson his son Jim and daughter Mrs Anne Gazzard. Mrs Gazzard lived at the same address until recent years and now lives at Bowral.

To be continued

From the Records:

The Society tries to keep a record of as many of the Births, Deaths and Marriages in the district as it can. This obituary of Sydney John Warters comes from the Picton Post, January 8th, 1948, p. 2.

OLD PICTON IDENTITY PASSES

Another link with the old life of Picton has been snapped in the passing of one of the grand old men, Mr Sydney John Warters, (old Syd Warters as he was affectionately known) who died at his home in Argyle Street, last Friday, January 2nd, aged 74, after an illness of several weeks.

Born in Sydney, deceased was the eldest child of the late John Edmund and Eliza Warters. He came as a baby to reside in Picton with his parents, and has lived in Argyle Street, ever since.

Mr. Sydney Warters was known far and wide throughout the district, and was highly respected for the strict integrity which was an outstanding quality of his character. He worked as a carpenter and contractor and undertaker all his life, being both zealous and painstaking in all his undertakings.

As a citizen, one could not find a better man. He was one of the original founders of the Picton brass band, which developed under his inspiration, was secretary for many years of Lodge Picton Masonic, and the School of Arts, in which position he was keen and thorough; and was one of the trustees of St. Mark's Church.

A life long member of the Anglican Church, he maintained a high Christian standard within his home circle, and in his dealings with men, and by his passing, the Church and the community are poorer.

Deceased was the eldest of eleven children, and was always devoted to his parents and brothers and sisters. For 23 years he has acted as a father to them, and they will assuredly miss him.

He was predeceased by Wilfred, Stella (Mrs Power), and is survived by Otto of Fivedock, Elsie (Mrs. W.A. Crawley) of Undercliffe, Myra (Mrs Ray) of Wellington Park (Picton), Mildred (Mrs Wilson) of Cronulla, Remie (Miss Warters) of Picton, Vera (Mrs Terrett) of Goulburn, Ray of Gosford and Neville of Waverley.

During his recent illness he was devotedly attended by his sisters, Miss R. Warters of Picton and Mrs. Terrett of Goulburn.

The funeral took place on Saturday afternoon, January 3rd, and was one of the largest and most beautiful ever seen in this district.

Prior to the service in St Mark's Church, the Rev. F.A.S. Shaw conducted a service at the house for the family.

A most impressive service was held in the Church where a large gathering of citizens and brother Masons of Lodge Picton attended to pay their last respects to one so loved and esteemed. Representatives from Lodge Bowral, Campbelltown and Camden were also present.

During the service the Picton band, in the Church grounds, played softly, sacred and solemn music, the strains of which echoed throughout the building.

The Rev. Shaw during the service in the Church could not have paid higher tribute to a man, than he did with his heartfelt words, which sentiments were echoed in the hearts of all those who had known the deceased.

He said that he was a man among men, honest and reliable, and his word was his bond. He was a man of generous and sympathetic nature and one capable of kindly understanding. There was no-one in the district had such a knowledge of Picton and its people.

The Rev. Shaw said that he was a devout member of St. Mark's Church, Sunday evenings found him at service sitting in the back seat. His contributions to the funds were frequent and generous. He also lovingly attended to various repair work to the Church building.

He added that though Mr Warters was perhaps a man of few words, his good deeds were many, and those deeds endeared him to all. Picton will seem strangely different by his absence. He didn't want to die. His illness came as a shock to him, but he had courage and with the sacrament, came peace.

The Rev. Shaw then extended to his sisters, brothers and relatives, the deepest and warmest sympathy of all present, and expressed the hope that the thoughts he had uttered, would in some way warm their hearts and proved a comfort to their minds.

At the conclusion of the service the cortege proceeded to the graveside in the Churchground, where Worshipful Brother E.H. Oakman read the Masonic burial service. Regalia was worn by all members.

After the lowering of the coffin, the Picton band played "Nearer My God to Thee" and then by special request "Peace, Perfect Peace". The graveside was banked with dozens of beautiful wreaths.

We join with the people of the district in extending our deepest sympathy to his sorrowing relatives.

From *A Stroll Through St Mark's Churchyard*, edited by Betty Villy comes some additional information. Mr Warters had followed his father and grandfather as undertaker in Picton, and after his death, his sister Remie Warters continued the family tradition, as an agent for Butler and Co. of Camden. Miss Warters died in 1972.

Extract from the Picton Argus, Saturday August 14, 1886

That Picton is a town of vast importance there cannot be the slightest doubt, situated as it is on the main southern line, and within such easy access of the metropolis. It is a matter for regret that the town has been so much neglected by the Government. Why has Picton not a public park, or a water supply scheme, and many other privileges which have been conferred on minor towns of much less importance? Picton bears the reputation of being one of the most healthy places in the colony; it is situated in a valley on a creek, some five hundred feet above sea level surrounded by rich agricultural land, and its immediate surroundings and the views obtainable from the summit of the adjacent hills, are picturesque in the extreme. The town, like all others, has its drawbacks, most eminent among which are – the miserable facilities for obtaining water in dry seasons, and the refusal of landed property owners to dispose of their land. This latter is perhaps the more important of the two, and the progress of the town has undoubtedly been retarded and its future prosperity jeopardised by the desire of owners to retain landed property. Such persons cannot have the welfare of the town at heart. The water supply scheme has, we are pleased to say, occupied the attention of the local Progress Committee for some time past, and has been the subject of much discussion among its members. The matter gives promise of bearing good fruit, for already the town has been visited by the Chief Inspector for existing lines and other government engineers and surveyors. We trust they will also urge on the matter of a public park, and not allow it to rest till a sum of money is placed on the estimates for that purpose. Our neighbouring towns, Camden and Campbelltown, each have a public reserve, and we hope before long that Picton will be able to boast of a Park second to none in the Country.

August 2006 – The Census

This is a timely reminder of the importance of August 2006 – the Census. Don't forget to tick the YES box for question 60 on the household form, and/or question 54 on the personal form. In this way, valuable personal information will be kept safely by the National Archives of Australia for 99 years, and then be available for future researchers and family historians.

Anyone who had done research is well aware of the importance of the census information from the early 19th century onwards, so please think of our descendants, and their search for information, in the 22nd century.

Proposed Publication:

The suggestion was made at the last monthly meeting, that we could consider doing a series of publications on the people of Picton, and after some discussion, it was agreed that we should start with the shopkeepers of the town in the 19th century.

By looking through the surviving local newspapers, (a work still in progress) and other information such as directories, a surprisingly long list has already emerged:

Bamford, Edwin	shoemaker, Menangle St	1867
Barber, Edward & William	storekeeper, Argyle St	1867
Barlow, W.H.	baker, Menangle St	1890 +
Barnsley, B	bootmaker, hairdresser	1880s – 1910s?
Bell, James jnr.	wheelwright, Redbank	1867
Bell, Thomas	blacksmith	1867
Bell, W.B.	auctioneer	1885-1887
Butcher, Samuel	saddler, Menangle St	1867
Byrnes, H.B.	fruiterer	1895
Caldwell, W.B.	butcher, Menangle St	1895
Clifton, Henry	general store, Argyle St.	by 1890, ++
(built what is now Liquorland near Stonequarry Creek)		
Corbett, Joe	coachbuilder, blacksmith etc Argyle St.	1892 – 1920s +?
Coull, William	storekeeper, Argyle St	1867, ++
Cross, Joseph	shoemaker, Argyle St	1860s, 1870s
Cummins, John	butcher	1867
Curtis, George R.	storekeeper	1867
Dalton, F.G.	doctor, pharmacy Menangle St	1880 – 1919
Doyle, James	storekeeper, Argyle St	1867
Edwards, James	blacksmith, Menangle Road	1867
Evans, Henry	farrier, Argyle St	1892
Fairley, Sm.	shoemaker, Abbotsford	1867
Fieldhouse, W.	storekeeper, Argyle St.	1870s +
Graham, Adolphus	storekeeper, auctioneer, etc Argyle St (between Creek & Clifton)	1860s on
Graham, James	blacksmith, Argyle St	1867
Hennesberry/Heneberry, William	“ “	1860s, 1870s
Higgs, P.	storekeeper, Argyle St	1892
Higison, Valentine	shoemaker, Argyle St	1867
Hunter, W.J.	chemist & dentist, Menangle St	1895
Inglis, R.H.	auctioneer	1887 ++
Kelso, John	butcher	1875
King, Arthur	baker, Redbank	1867
Lebon/Lebou John	shoemaker	1870s +
McGregor/M'Grigor T.	newsagent	1895
McGregor/M'Grigor J.	fruiterer	1895
McKnight, I.	tailor, draper, Argyle St	1895 +
(shop used by a later tailor, now replaced by IGA/shops)		
McLeod, Hugh	blacksmith, Menangle St	1867
McQuiggin, Arthur	storekeeper, Menangle St	1872

Martin, John	storekeeper	1840s-50s +?
Moore, F.	draper, Argyle St	1892
	(opposite the new Post Office)	
Moraghan, Thomas	draper, Argyle Street	1899?-1932
	(on corner of Barker's Lodge Road opp. George Inn)	
Norman, W.H.	insurance agent, later storekeeper	1890s + +
	(near Railway Station ?)	
Parnell, Henry	bootmaker, Argyle St	1872
Paskin, J.S.	baker, Menangle St	1890s
Pinkerton, R.L.	watchmaker	1892
Pooley, Fred	blacksmith	1867
Reeves, John	bootmaker, Menangle St.	1872
Reeves, Robert	storekeeper, Menangle St	1867
Reeves, W.	mixed business, Menangle St	1894
Rogan, John	wheelwright, Menangle St	1867
Rogers, James	shoemaker, Redbank	1867
	storekeeper, Upper Picton	1872
Samuel, E.M.	storekeeper, Menangle St	1895
Sant, Isaac	blacksmith	1870s
Seery, Thomas	storekeeper, Menangle St	1867
Sell, R.	mixed business, Upper Picton	1890s
Shoebridge/Shoobridge G.	watchmaker	1867, 1872
Skellet,	storekeeper	1890s
Smith, Charles	butcher, Menangle St	1867
Stanton, S	bricklayer, Picton & Thirlmere	1892
Stewart, Alex	storekeeper, Menangle St	1872
Stewart, Mrs.	storekeeper, Menangle St	1875
Stott, Frank	tailor, Menangle St	1892 +
Trenerry, W.H.	baker, Menangle St	1860s-1890
Viles, Joseph	saddler, Argyle St	1860s, 1870s
Wardrobe, John	storekeeper, Upper Picton	1892 +
Waters/Warters, John	saddler, Argyle St	1867, 1875
Waters/Warters, William	carpenter, Elizabeth St	1870s
Whitfield, T.D.	builder	1895
Whitfield, William	wheelwright, Myrtle Creek	1867
	greengrocer, Argyle St	1867
	gardener	1875
Wilson, S.H.	plumber, tinsmith	1895
Woodhill, John	wheelwright, Redbank	1867
Wright, George	baker, Argyle St	1890s
	(opposite the new Post Office)	

This is not yet complete – there may be more doctors, and William Pritchard was a builder and monumental mason in the 1890s – and we've only got up to the 1895 newspapers. We also hope to identify the sites/buildings these people occupied, though that might be difficult. There are some photographs that will help, but if anyone has information on any of these people, or photographs of them or their work places, we would be very grateful for your help. Lots of work to be done yet, but it would be good to get this out next year.

PUBLICATIONS FOR SALE

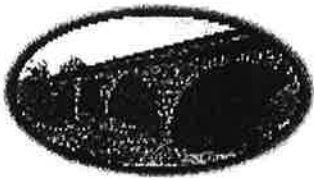
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