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RDHS Newsletter

AUGUST 2017

Early sheep washing at Dabee

Sheep washing was common in the district in the 1850s but this was usually done in the Cudgegong River. Later experimentation with hot-water washing using 'mechanical sheep-washing apparatuses' proved capable of achieving higher prices in the market for wool. The major sheep owners in Rylstone were the first to implement mechanical sheep-washing due to the higher capital investment and larger labour force required.

One such apparatus was built at Dabee in 1868 by William George AINSWORTH, of Sydney, an ironmonger and importer of agricultural implements, who also built one for Rawdon. The Dabee sheep-wash was located 'on the bank of the river, [and], 20 feet above water level, a large shed had been erected'. Rawdon's sheep-wash was located about 1.5

miles from the woolshed although there are no remains today. Remnants of Dabee's sheep-wash, are located upstream from the woolshed.

The sheep washing procedure, as described by William Wield



Remnants of hot-water cauldrons in Dabee sheep-washing apparatus
(Source: Dan HATTON)

ARMSTRONG, required 'a large engine and boiler [...] for raising water from the river. Two large iron cauldrons, the tops level with the floor of the shed, were next to the river. Water was heated in the cauldrons and 6-8 sheep washed with soap at a time. Heads were kept above water by a crook. The sheep were then placed on a slide which ran into the river. At the bottom of the slide several men stood in casks in the water. The men took each sheep and held it under a stream of water running from overhead tanks. The sheep then swam to the bank and were helped to drying pens'.

Source: Daniel HATTON, 'Changing labour requirements for rural workers on NSW pastoral properties: Rylstone 1850-1880', 2014, unpublished dissertation.

Coral STIRLING is turning 100!

Coral STIRLING (formerly BRADLEY, nee PICKETT) is turning 100 in December 2017.

Coral Ann PICKETT was born at Long Gully, Pyangle Road, Lue, to Alfred John PICKETT and Louisa PICKETT (nee McBETH) in 1917. She was married to Stanley George BRADLEY in 1941 and later to George Wishart STIRLING.

After living in Mudgee, Dubbo and Sydney, Coral returned to

Kandos about 1993 where she lived for around twenty years.



Coral left for Cowra but after a period of twelve months, returned to Kandos and now resides at Ada Cottage.

Grandson, Chris ELLIS, is seeking memories or recollections of Coral in preparation for the celebration of her centenary. If you can help, contact Chris at 0451 123 965 or by email mrcjls333@gmail.com.

RDHS wishes Coral a very happy 100th birthday.

Interesting News

General Meeting and AGM

Annual General Meeting to be held at 2pm on 26 August 2017 in the Bridge View Inn, Rylstone.

RDHS Committee

Shirley TUNNICLFF would like to thank the Committee members who have been very supportive and others outside of the Committee who have given quite a few hours of their time for me and the Historical Society.

Cottage Museum Extension

The extension is going well

should be finished to lock up in the next week. The Museum is going well, we seem to be getting more visitors and people asking about their family.

Heritage buildings from Bylong

RDHS may be given a building from the Kepco mine area at Bylong. RDHS committee members have been dealing with a heritage adviser regarding these buildings and it seems possible that we will be successful in gaining either the old Catholic Church or the 1927 school

building with a fire place and a verandah. The buildings would be delivered free to the BVI complex area and placed on foundations, all paid for by Kepco Bylong. RDHS would be responsible for submitting a development application with Mid-Western Regional Council, and for connection to all services. No official word about the buildings has been received yet.



Who met their tragic end by burning in their home at Nulla Mountain on the night of the 19th or morning of 20th Aug 1922.

"For the Father himself loveth you"

(Source: <http://austcemindex.com/inscription?id=7613773#images>)

Whole Family Wiped Out

Nulla Mount, about 30 miles from Rylstone, was the scene of a dreadful tragedy on Saturday night or Sunday morning, when a family named FERGUSON were burned alive in their dwelling. The family comprised Mr. Della FERGUSON, his wife and three children ranging in ages from three to twelve.

Nobody lives to tell the tale, but it would appear that the family were suffocated by the fumes while they slept, and burned alive. The discovery was made by a man named Athol KING, who went to the home of the Fergusons about midday on Sunday to see about grazing some horses. He was horrified to find nothing but a heap of smouldering ruins and the stench of burning flesh. Beneath the layers of iron which had comprised the roof lay the charred remains of four of the bodies on the smouldering mattresses as they had gone to sleep. Two of the children lay in one bed and the husband and

wife on the other. Sleep and death had evidently come unconsciously and by stealth.

Did the victims of the fire feel the torture of their living hell before death had drawn them to its eternal bosom?

The tragedy is inexpressibly sad, and the whole community is shocked at the horror of it. Up to the time of receiving our latest advice the position of the youngest child was not located, but that it also perished in the consuming flames there is no reason to doubt. Mr. KING rode away to Mr. THOMPSON's farm in the neighborhood and told the story of the tragedy. Mr. THOMPSON kept vigil while Mr. KING went on to Narrango with the news. Rylstone was communicated with, and Sergeant TRACEY, black tracker McDONALD, Messrs. HARDING, S. and O. FERGUSON (brothers of Mr. Della FERGUSON) went out to

the scene of the tragedy. The doctor and coroner followed. The result of their investigations is not yet to hand.

The late Mrs. FERGUSON has a sister in Rylstone, Mrs. BLACK, while Mrs. J. LYNCH, of 'Kialla,' Market-street, Mudgee, is a niece.

Only about three weeks ago the family shifted from a house on the flat to this dwelling on the heights of the mountain. The building was owned by Mr. K. WINTER, of Mudgee, and was, we learn, insured.

Both Mr. and Mrs. FERGUSON were well liked by neighbors and well spoken of by all who knew them. They were in age about middle life.

The scene of the tragedy is famous in story as a haunt of the notorious Starlight gang.

Source: "Whole family wiped out", *Mudgee Guardian and North-Western Representative*, 21 August 1922, p. 7.

Dame Constance Elizabeth D'ARCY (1879-1950)

Dame Constance Elizabeth D'ARCY (1879-1950), obstetrician and gynaecologist, was born on 1 June 1879 at Rylstone, New South Wales, fifth daughter of Murty D'ARCY, sergeant of police, and his wife Bridget, née SYNNOTT. She passed the senior public examination in 1894 from Rylstone Public School and, after attending Riviera College, Woollahra, in 1898 she matriculated at the University of Sydney (M.B., Ch.M., 1904). As neither of the Sydney teaching hospitals would accept a woman, she did her residency at the (Royal) Adelaide Hospital. She became resident medical officer at the Royal Hospital for Women, Paddington, in 1905. She was soon called to give evidence at a coroner's inquiry into a death from septicaemia following induced abortion. Throughout a distinguished career she was concerned to reduce the incidence of maternal death.

D'ARCY opened a practice in Macquarie Street in 1908 and was appointed honorary surgeon at the Royal Hospital for Women. She supported improved standards in nursing and regular antenatal examination and investigated control of sepsis in hospitals. On the executive of the Australian Trained Nurses' Association, she moved the motion in 1923 calling for the formation of the Royal Australian Nursing Federation. She was a member of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, London, a foundation member of the College of Surgeons of Australasia (Royal Australasian College of Surgeons), and an active member of the Catholic Medical Guild of St Luke. She helped reform the Medical Women's Society of New South Wales, serving as its president from 1933-34. In 1935 she was appointed D.B.E. and invited to deliver the Anne MacKENZIE oration to the Australian Institute of Anatomy, Canberra. She spoke on maternal mortality, control of puerperal septicaemia and the rise in deaths from illegal operations. She condemned moves to legalise abortion.

In 1919-49 D'ARCY represented the graduates on the Senate of the University of Sydney, the first woman to be elected. She



Dame Constance Elizabeth D'ARCY, 1933

(Photo: www.sydney.edu.au/arms/archives/history/FUO/VC_DARcy.shtml)

had been an executive member of the Sydney University Women's Union, the Catholic University Women Graduates' Association and the Sydney University Women Graduates' Association and she remained active in them. While on the senate, she helped to secure recognition of St Vincent's as a teaching hospital and was its honorary gynaecologist in 1923-45. When the National Council of Women, of which she was a member, requested the university in 1922 to establish a chair of obstetrics, D'ARCY steered the proposal through faculty and the senate. Her efforts were supported by public agitation organized by Millicent PRESTON-STANLEY calling for 'horses' rights for women'; in 1924 the government made money available. D'ARCY was lecturer in clinical obstetrics 1925-39 at the university, and was associated with later moves to expand staff and to extend laboratory facilities. D'ARCY served on the senate finance committee, the Cancer Research Committee and the conjoint board of Royal Alexandra Hospital for Children and she represented the university on the Australian Council of Hospital Almoners. As deputy chancellor in 1943-46, the first woman so elected, she took major responsibility in resolving many of the problems associated with the post-war expansion of the university.

In the 1920s D'ARCY helped to organize the sex education work of the National Council of Women. She gave her services also to the Rachel Forster Hospital for Women and Children, founded in 1922 by a group of female doctors who were worried by the difficulties women encountered in securing placements. Aware of prejudice, she established links with other professional

women through the Professional Women Workers' Association. Her attempt in 1935 to persuade the university to appoint a woman to its appointment's board revealed her continued concern on this issue. In 1944 she became president of the Business and Professional Women's Club of Sydney.

Renowned for her quick response when called, D'ARCY was chauffeur-driven on her rounds. She was a large woman, heavily built, remembered for her hearty infectious laugh, a gracious manner, and her jewellery—on emergency calls, the first task of the sister on duty was to lock it away. She collected antiques and donated a valuable cabinet to Sancta Sophia College; in 1929 she was a foundation member of its council, which she chaired from 1946. She was honoured by the Pope in 1940 with the Cross Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice.

For many years D'ARCY's two unmarried sisters kept house for her. She died of cerebro-vascular disease in the Sacred Heart Hospice for the Dying, Darlinghurst, on 25 April 1950. After requiem Mass at St Mary's Cathedral, she was buried in Waverley cemetery. To commemorate her service at the Royal Hospital for Women, a ward was named after her.



Dame Constance Elizabeth D'ARCY, 1933

(Photo: www.sydney.edu.au/arms/archives/history/FUO/VC_DARcy.shtml)

Source: Australian Dictionary of Biography, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/darcy-dame-constance-elizabeth-5880>, accessed 13 August 2017.



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2016-2017 Committee

President: Shirley TUNNICLIFF

Vice President: Ed WINDLE

Treasurer: Lori GRABHAM

Secretary: Lyn SYME

Ordinary Committee Members:

Allan WILLS and Terrence KEEN (one vacancy)

Public Officer: Carolyn BARLOW

Patron: George McDONALD

Newsletter Editor: Dan HATTON

Newsletter contributions welcomed.

Contact newsletter@rylstonehistory.org.au



Cottage Museum News

Shirley TUNNICLIFF, RDHS President, wishes to thank everyone who has volunteered for museum duty over the last twelve months. "It has been a struggle to get enough volunteers to cover the Sunday open day but we have managed, thank you all very much."

Museum entrance fees have been changed to \$3.00 per adult and \$2.00 concession as we observed people were walking past the donation box and not putting any money in. A notice was posted outside the door with good results.

In spite of the loss of the Museum Curator, Shirley has continued with accessioning of recent acquisitions, including the William Wield ARMSTRONG collection, which was donated by

descendant, Garry HALL. The museum collection was also given a saddle, saddle cloths and photos belonging to Ray MARSHELL, who was for quite some time, the stallion master at *Tarwyn Park*, Bylong.

Volunteers Needed

Volunteers are sought for the Cottage Museum, which opens every Sunday from 10-3pm.

Benefits of volunteering include:

- gain new skills and knowledge
- sense of achievement and fulfilment
- connect to and better understand your community
- meet new people and make new friends

Please contact Shirley on 6379 1121 for further information.

Family History Group

The Family History Research Group meet at the Henbury Gold Club, Kandos, on the first Friday of the month at 11.00am.

Fiona NEVELL from the Family Research Group manages a Facebook page, Rylstone & District Local & Family History Connection, where she shares many interesting genealogical and heritage articles. The page can be found at www.facebook.com/groups/140272439320083/.

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