

KOONORIGAN



Michael Smith

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A scrapbook of stories, memories, photographs and documents supplied by some of the people who called Koonorigan home for at least part of their lives.



In the pages of this book Koonorigan is spelt with either 2 'o's or 3 'o's according to how it was spelt at the time. It is now officially spelt **Koonorigan**.

Cover photo ... Toge Graham with his draught horses.

Clearing the 'Big Scrub'

In the early 1900s timber provided a source of ready income for the settlers. The establishment of a sawmill on the eastern bank of Terania Creek in 1906 by Edwin Roach began a new era for the settlers. Timber was bought for cash as it stood. Teak, rosewood, cudgeri, longjack, blue fig, pine, beech, ironbark and many other timbers were cut and hauled by bullock team to the mill. One tree, a teak measuring 94 feet to the first limb and with a 27 feet girth at the butt, was felled on J.D. Bray's property.

The method of scrub felling as related by John James Taylor who came to The Channon in 1903: 'We went through with a brush hook first to get rid of the rubbish. Usually we contracted for 50 to 100 acres – it took a couple of months to fell 50 acres and we were paid at the rate of 25/- per acre. We only got 20/- if it was already brushed.

Brushing was sometimes sublet at about 5/- to 6/- an acre. A good man could brush about an acre a day. We camped on the job in 10 x 12 tents, ate damper, corned beef and potatoes. Pigeons and wild turkey were good eating too. We used a Kelly or Plumb axe but we never used a saw. We worked singly on trees and sometimes in pairs if the trees were big – using a left and right-handed cutter. Most of the menfolk shared their felling of scrub and pit-sawing, giving day for day in the work, also in corn planting and harvesting.

Those settlers with families assisted each other to erect a dwelling to house their families by pit-sawing beechwood logs into 6"x1" feather edge boards



Povey Jackson at Koonorigan 1919

for the walls using 3"x2" for studs and 3"x3" for plates and in some cases light forest poles for rafters and silky oak shingles for the roof coverings.'

The following history was written as part of the celebration of the 'Koonorigan Public School Golden Jubilee' in 1961.

The little district of Konorigan lies on what is named on a Parish map of 1912 as 'Konorigan Range'. It rises from the low land of Goolmangar, by way of a steep ascent to the main ridge that leads eventually to the Nightcap Range, which is the watershed of the Richmond-Tweed River systems.

It is difficult to say who were the first white men to penetrate here, because these hills were all part of the real 'Big Scrub', and heavy standing scrub it remained until well into the 1800s.

Thus, the cutters of cedar and pine, teak and beech were undoubtedly the first to enter this particularly steep part of the Big Scrub in the 19th century, and bullock tracks wound into and upwards along its ridges, drawing its logs to several 'shooting' places where they were 'shot' or skidded down to lower levels. Two or three vestiges of such 'shoots' can still be seen, e.g. where the logs came down to Coffee Camp to be hauled away by the teams.



Bill Gordon ploughing sweet potatoes

There is a story, which no doubt has a solid factual foundation, that one such heap of logs waiting at the top of the 'shoot' was the subject of some dispute – the cutters claiming that they had not received their proper pay, the owner holding out against their claim. Anyhow nobody won, for the logs were burnt – accidentally, of course. Thereafter the place was known for years as 'Burnt Cedar Shoot'. But when at length the Postal Department sought a suitable name for the district the name 'Koonorigan' was submitted, this being the aboriginal nomenclature meaning 'Sweet Springs' from the abundant supply of fresh spring water found there – then and now. The double 'o' was subsequently dropped and the name 'Konorigan' became the accepted one.

Shortly after the turn of the 20th century, though the country was still standing scrub, large areas were thrown open for selection and with the coming of the farmer settlers that followed, the real history of Konorigan can be said to begin.

It is then that we find names familiar to the Richmond River figuring in the settlement – that of Mr. P. O. Jackson, for instance. He is shown as having selected in 1904, then came Mr. J. McIntyre in 1906, closely followed by John Seccombe and others.

By 1910 most of the blocks had been balloted for and a young community began to knit itself together. Soon it sought some social amenities and it was right here that the people of Konorigan began to show those traits of self-help and a neighbourly unity that characterise them to the present day.

They wanted a school for their children but found the Department of Public Instruction moved much too slowly to suit them, so - they did it themselves. They built the first school. They gave the necessary land rent free for as long as it might be required for school purposes, and in March 1911 the school was opened.

Dairy farmers 1928-1941 remember

Washing was done in round tubs on a bench, under a peach tree until a laundry was built years later. Water was carried to tubs in buckets. There was no electricity until 1933. We had a gas light in the kitchen which had to be pumped up, and one in the bedroom.

Once each year we held a dance in aid of Lismore Base Hospital and it was very well attended.

Each year the school district put on a display in The Channon Flower Show, Koonorigan won each year even though a Tuntable Creek farmer dug holes with a post hole borer and filled the hole with cow manure to grow carrots, turnips, etc, for display. They sure grew big, but he was told by the judge that they were judged as table vegetables not cow vegetables.

The teacher, Mr. Hitchcock, boarded at the Ryan home. The School won prizes in Lismore Musical Festival and the competition at The Channon for the choir. Even though all the children had to be put in the choir, some were told not to make too much



The Jacksons 1913

noise. The Choir was conducted by Mr. Hitchcock and was called a mechanical spider by some people.

We grew sweet potatoes in the 1930s to help out but only received 10/- for a corn-bag full in Sydney.

Koonorigan had an A and B grade tennis team and played competition tennis against Coffee Camp, Goolmangar, Jiggi, Blakebrook, Keerong, etc. The games were played on Saturdays, then round our table by schoolie and my eldest brother; the first couple of days, why we lost and the next couple of days what to do next time, but it was usually everyone else that lost the game, not them.

Ministers stayed at our home for the night after church because the road was too bad and the distance too far to Nimbin.

Koonorigan produced two school inspectors, a couple of councillors in Lismore, Charlie Mustard and Walter Seccombe. The latter was Terania Shire President for years, he broke the record. He was also Chairman of Norco for years and was tragically killed in a tractor accident.

The Hall was built in 1935 and first used for a Kitchen tea for Hazel Haynes and Laurie Ryan.

Cordwood was cut and carted to The Channon Butter Factory by the Ryan family, lots of it cut near the tennis court below the School.

School children rode up to Koonorigan from The Channon and Pinchin's Lane because the teacher at Koonorigan was better than the one they had.



This photograph is from Richmond River Historical Society Inc. showing William Young Gordon in 1905 on a brush turkey nest at Koonorigan.

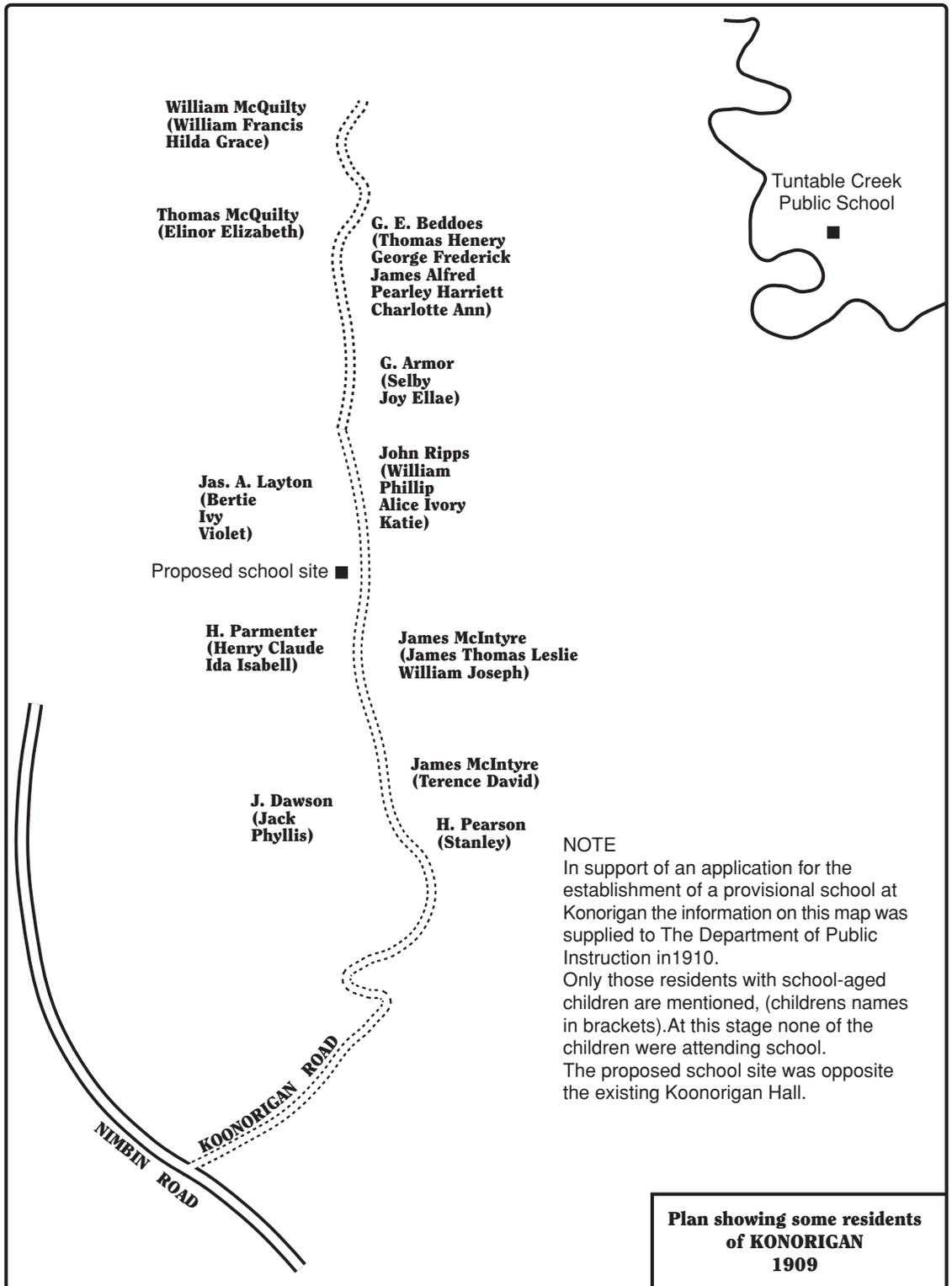
Ivy M Ryan

When Jack Eather went to Koonorigan in 1932 as a young farmer with his parents, milking 45 jersey cows, there were 20 dairy farmers all producing cream for butter manufacture. Today, a few raise cattle and the rest of the farms have converted to other products e.g. bananas, macadamia nuts, and some are divided into hobby farms.

Of the 'old time' dairy farmers, some were on rented farms but owning their own 'going concerns', others were share farmers but the majority were owner farmers. The price of butter was 10 pence per pound at the time, but a few months later it had fallen to 6 pence. A few farmers grew small crops such as sweet potatoes, peas and beans to supplement their incomes. Jack Eather and others worked for 1 shilling an hour to make ends meet. All the milking was done by hand as there was no electricity for machines. Men who employed share farmers liked them to have a large family so that the children could help with the milking.



Aboriginal stone axeheads found in Koonorigan, ground cutting edge uppermost.



Most share farmers were paid 8 shillings in the pound. So times were hard in those Depression years.

The cream carrier was an important member of the community. On his return trip from Lismore he brought goods ordered from the Factory for the farmers and often did other shopping for them. His truck was always ready to transport groups to functions around the district and would convey the school children to sport meetings. Some children obtained a daily ride to school. One of the cream carriers was Sid Irvine, a very popular man. He was a fine cricketer and had the distinction of bowling the young Don Bradman for a duck when the latter played in the Kippax team against the 'North Coast Eleven'. Sid was invited to go to Sydney to play cricket but declined for personal reasons.

The road at that time was only lightly metalled from the foot of the hill to Gordon's Road. The remainder was just an unformed dirt track. Farmers were frequently bogged. One such occasion Jack Eather was returning home in the wee small hours from a ball at Goolmangar, dressed in his best suit, when the car became bogged. While he was attempting a rescue, it suddenly lurched forward and he fell flat on his face in the mud.

That was the last straw for him. Knowing that the residents were always ready to help themselves, he convened a meeting to see what they could do to improve the so-called 'road'. Mr. Seccombe President of Terania Shire arranged to hire a Council truck. The Koonorigan men dug metal with pick and shovel from near the boundary of Eathers. With horse drawn ploughs several farmers formed the road from there to Gordon's Road. The metal was spread and the large chunks broken up with napping hammers. Even with this 'new' road, problems often occurred after heavy rain near the spring below the 'Devil's



Cecil Osbourne's bullock team.

Elbow'. Some years later, with the same spirit of self-help, the residents led by Mr. Seccombe approached the Shire with an offer to pay a special rate for 10 years if the Council would agree to bitumen seal the road. A quarry was formed at Seccombe's to obtain metal.

The present Community Centre was formerly the local provisional school. After the new School was built the old building was taken over by the people as their social centre, but it was a sorry sight. There was no glass in the windows and the door had fallen off, with the floor in poor condition. However, functions continued to be held until one night when several people had gathered at Seccombe's to listen to the 'phantom' cricket broadcast. A talk followed and it was suggested that possibly something could be done to improve the social centre. A meeting was called and 10 farmers agreed to put in 5 pounds each and these men were the Debenture holders. A quote was obtained from a carpenter who was living in the barn at Bennett's place (now Braidwood's). He offered to do the work for 20 pounds, and the rest of the money provided the timber etc. It was a great occasion when the 'official opening' took place. The lights were carbide gas. There was no water tank so a 4 gallon drum was used to fetch water from the house opposite for boiling up for the supper.

As the years went by the so-called Hall needed to be enlarged, so a stage and dressing room were added, also a verandah and a larger supper room. The Friday night Euchre Tournaments were much looked forward to by the local people and some came from other nearby centres to play.

Any girl who was to be married was given a Kitchen Tea by the community and anyone reaching the age



Cecil Osbourne

Butter £596-19-4	Pigs 42 pigs £132-7-5	Pigs Bought. 34 pigs £38-9-0 12 stores from cart for 2 cows 1 Hog.
Cattle sold 6 = £32	at Present	15. own rearing 11 Bought £6-10 2 sows 10 bed. 1 wog. 7-2 condemned 29
" Dick 1	7 Head	
Total.		
Cattle, cows 54		HORSES.
Heifers 10		2 Draught horses
yearlings & calves 12		1 " Mare
Stalls 2		1 light Fidy.
Bullocks 4		
52		half hides 35-3/8-5 Freight on Cream £17-7-6 Blacksmith £11-10-6
Shire rates £40. 11. 11		3 hands at £1.10.0 per week from 1st July 1926 till 30th June 1927 board for
Fire Insurance 14. 0. 0		3 hands for same period 30/- per week.
Fire Insurance 3. 16. 8		1 hand for 5 weeks at £1.10.0 per week also board at £1.10.0 for 5 weeks.
Payment to brown on Farm. £21. 0. 0		18 trips to Lismore at 10/- per trip with pigs.
Workers Compensation Insurance £7. 16. 0		
Various items bought for working Farm £89. 4. 3.		

Expenditure and income for the Pattersons in the financial year 1926-27.

North Coast Motor and Coach Factory
 Plot 79 NORTH LISMORE
 Mr. R. Patterson.
 The Channon.
 Dr. to WILLIAM RILEY & SON
 COACH AND MOTOR BODY BUILDERS, GENERAL BLACKSMITHS AND WHEELWRIGHTS UNDERTAKERS
 All Kinds of Work in the Trade done with Neatness and Dispatch.

10 1 Bullock soko 10/-



of 21 was given a birthday party. At one time a Concert Party was formed and great rehearsal evenings were held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Cox, the latter providing the music for the items. The first Concert proved so successful that the Party was invited to present their show at surrounding local halls.

One of the first Departmental teachers at the new School was Mr. Hitchcock. He remained at the School for 17 years until he married and had to leave as there was no accommodation for a married teacher. He was renowned for his choir, which won the Trophy Cup for a One-teacher School Choir at the Lismore Musical Festival on several occasions. During his time 20 children from The Channon used to ride up to Koonorigan School as the parents were dissatisfied with the teacher there. There wasn't enough grass in the horse paddock, so during school hours the gate was opened to allow the horses to feed in the schoolyard, which became as bare as the road.

Single men teachers were appointed to the School after Mr. Hitchcock left, but at the end of the war a married man with a wife and child arrived. Another child was 'on the way' and the only board available was inadequate. So the locals, feeling sorry for him, joined together to work out a way of providing a place for him and his family to live. Twelve residents acted as guarantors and borrowed money from the bank to build a house. When the School was finally closed some 25 years later the school house became an asset to the community. When it was sold the money was used to improve the Hall, build a tennis court, etc. It is a far cry from the old provisional school building and a credit to the local people.

During the War a Civic Fund was set up and functions held to provide comforts for the boys from the district who had enlisted. A piano had been purchased some years previously and usually someone had to go to The Channon or Coffee Camp to bring a lady to play for the dances. Sometimes Mr. Strong from Blakebrook used to come and play all evening for 1 pound. Mr. George Graham would occasionally be engaged to provide music with a concertina.

Mrs. Swift, from Coffee Camp, declined to play any more after her son was taken prisoner-of-war in Singapore. Fortunately he returned.



Charles Mustard bringing empty cream cans back from The Channon Factory.

For several years a C.W.A. group functioned at Koonorigan and money was raised to help several worthy causes. The group also raised money to extend the supper room at the Hall and to build a barbecue in memory of the late Mr. Walter Seccombe in recognition of his community work.

During the dairy farm days a special carrier for pigs came from The Channon. Farmers usually 'drove' their cattle to market by horse. Jack Eather often started off with 2 or 3 of his own and finished up being asked along the road to include neighbouring farmers' cattle and would finally have 8 or 9.

Sweeney

William James & Ada Mary Sweeney, farmers 1909-1929, came to Konorigan from the Condobolin district in southern NSW. Mr. Sweeney had selected a block there about the turn of the 20th century and met and married his wife in the early 1900s. After a series of bad seasons in their area he acted on the suggestion of his sister (Mrs. M. L. Sackett), then living in Lismore, to come and have a look at the North Coast region. Liking what he saw, he decided to make a move and rented a farm here at Konorigan (Maxwell's). After returning to Condobolin to dispose of his property there, he then proceeded to transport the family possessions to Konorigan by means of a two horse wagon with an aged uncle of his wife for company, the journey via Armidale, Nymboida, Grafton, etc. and taking approximately six weeks. His wife Ada, who was then awaiting the birth of their fourth child, had remained behind in Cootamundra until he (Alan) duly arrived and some weeks later made the journey by train, boat, etc. bringing her four youngsters with her to rejoin her husband on the newly rented farm at Konorigan. In these days of fast, comfortable transport, paved roads, etc., one tends to gloss over journeys such as these, however they must have been quite a handful in those days.

After several years on this farm (hard work like everyone else), he had the chance to buy a place of his own (Cameron's), a mile or so to the east on the road to The Channon, where the family (now numbering seven) lived, worked, went to school, etc., for the next four or five years.



Rob Mustard boils the billy, with his dog Peter

Mr. Sweeney then decided on another move, selling the farm to Mr. Mustard, and bought the butcher's shop in The Channon where they lived for approximately three years before moving once again back to Konorigan, building a new house on the property on Konorigan Road just south of the Cox's road junction, opposite what is today known as 'Heather Brae'.

Letters 1926

Following are extracts from letters recieved by a Koonorigan resident from family and friends in 1926.

"We had a rotten trip down to Sydney. After Grafton there were 11 and 12 in the compartment ("dog-boxes", I call them) and Joyce was the only girl all the rest were men and boys. Still we made the best of it as we had some jovial company. I roused the ire of one grouchy occupant of the carriage by opening a bottle of lemonade on him. The top came off the bottle and the contents squirted in all directions.



William Mustard 1910

Two gentlemen in the corner continually expressed the desire through the night to have a bottle of beer and a bag of prawns.”

“Yesterday was Anniversary Day and Annie, Joyce and I went to Manly. This afternoon I intend to go into the City to see a man descend from an aeroplane at a height of 400 ft. in a parachute. This man, Lieut. Q’Viller intends to make a parachute descent from a height of 10,000 ft. into the sea at Bondi tomorrow and is going to demonstrate a novel method of surfing with the parachute, weather permitting.”

“I am pleased to hear you have bought a wireless set and I do hope you get the greatest possible enjoyment out of it. The youth with whom I am sharing a room made a very cheap set lately. He had two pairs of headphones, a crystal set cost him 6/6 and two batteries 5/6; thus he made a wireless set at a cost of 12/-. Any night we can hear programmes from Farmers (2FC) and Broadcasters (2BG). Of course, we cannot hear any long distance stations like Melbourne or Brisbane.”

“I had an adventure last weekend. Went to Lismore last Friday and left Bonnie and the sulky at the Lismore Hotel, and stayed at Talbots. At 9 a.m. on Saturday I received a phone ring from Tuncester. Bonnie had escaped from the stables with the harness on and got out as far as T. They took the harness off and put her in a paddock. The next thing she’d jumped the fence and set off for Casino. She evidently went along the Casino road as far as Leycester and



The Cox family grew pumpkins for pig food. Back row ?? Front row Keith, Alice and Doris Cox.

1

THIS IS OUR ONLY RECEIPT AND MUST BE PRESENTED WHEN PAYMENT IS MADE.

CLARENCE RIVER COUNTY COUNCIL
LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 1938

ACCOUNT No. 26/1938

K & MISS D PATRICKSON
THE CHANDON

ELECTRICITY ACCOUNT

THIS ACCOUNT MUST BE PAID WITHIN 14 DAYS FROM DATE OTHERWISE YOUR SUPPLY IS LIABLE TO BE DISCONTINUED.

DATE 18/11/1938

READING	READING		MULTIPLIER	UNITS CONSUMED		CHARGE	APPEARS	TOTAL DUE
	PRESENT	PREVIOUS		LAST	RATE			
487	320		4x3	194 D	210	1 10 5		
20	16			538 HW	480	1 15 0		
62	42				SC		16 0	
1182	644						*****	4 8 30

CODE

L. Lighting
D. Domestic Power
P. Industrial Power
HE. Meter Rent
W. Window Lighting
SC. Service Charge
K. Surcharges

PAYMENT OF THIS Account may be made by Post or at the Council's Office, GAFFNEY and COFF'S HAMMERS, or at the Office of the Bankers of SOUTH AUSTRALIA, ALBANY, MACKAY, or the Bank of SYDNEY, HULLMANN, ADELAIDE, or other Bankers, YARLA.

CHEQUES, BANKY ORGANS or POSTAL NOTES should be made payable to the CLARENCE RIVER COUNTY COUNCIL.

CHEQUES should be crossed "NOT NEGOTIABLE"

Payment of this account may be made BY CHECK at Council's HEAD OFFICE, GAFFNEY, or any of the Council's OFFICES above FREE OF CHARGE.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS MUST BE NOTIFIED TO THE COUNTY COUNCIL IMMEDIATELY.

FEDERAL INCOME TAX

Based on Income derived in the Year ended 30th June, 1924.

NEW SOUTH WALES.

IN ALL COMMUNICATIONS

ASSESSMENT No. **F/62464**

QUOTE THIS NUMBER.



All Letters, &c., should be addressed "The Deputy Commissioner of Taxation," Warwick Building, Hamilton Street, Sydney.

Notice of Assessment.

To **George Paterson, Esq.,**
The Channon,
Via LISMORE.

In accordance with the provisions of the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1922-1924*, I have assessed the amount of Federal Income Tax payable by you in respect of your taxable income for the period above set out, as under:—

Amount of Taxable Income.	Rate.	Amount of Tax.		
	Pence in the £	£	s.	d.
From Personal Exertion ... £ 54	5,4182	1	4	5
From Property £				
Rebate of Tax				
Additional Tax, Late Lodgment ...				
Do do Omitted Income...				
Total Amount of Tax payable ... £		1	4	5

The amount of General Exemption allowed in this assessment is £ 287
For method of computing this allowance see explanation below.

Year of Income.	Taxable Income.
1920-21 ...	£
1921-22 ...	£ nil
1922-23 ...	£ 688
1923-24 ...	£ 54
TOTAL ...	£ 742
AVERAGE ...	£ 247

The rate of tax is based upon the average income set out opposite.

W. H. WHIDDON,
Deputy Commissioner of Taxation.

Dated at Sydney,
20th March, 1925.

This Tax may be paid without fine up to 19th May, 1925.

All cheques, drafts, or postal notes forwarded in payment of Income Tax should be made payable to the Deputy Commissioner of Taxation, be crossed, and marked "Not Negotiable."

N.B.—The special form for use when forwarding Income Tax, which is transmitted with this notice, should be produced or forwarded, or the Assessment Number quoted, as above, when payment is being made. Hours of payment—9 a.m. to 3 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m. to 12 noon.

Objection may be lodged against this Assessment within forty-two days after service by post of this notice, but notwithstanding any objection or appeal, the full amount of the tax must be paid within the time stated on the face hereof.

Forms of notices of objection may be obtained on application to the Deputy Commissioner, Warwick Building, Hamilton Street, Sydney.

The Paterson farm stretched from Cox Road Koonorigan to Tunttable Creek at The Channon.

crossed over to Rock Valley from there because at about 10.30 she arrived at Oakeys. I was rather in a fix. However Ashton Woolley brought me out in his car after he shut his shop. The sulky is still in Lismore and the harness arrived home this morning.”

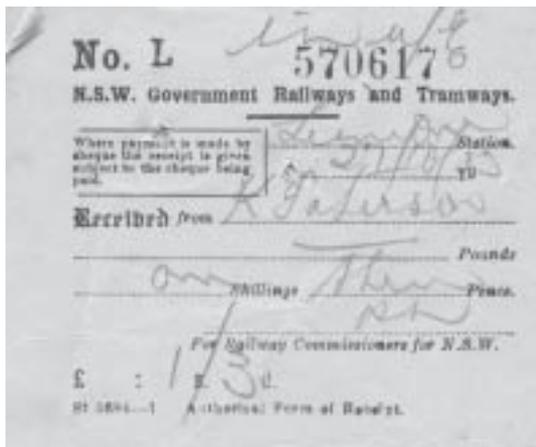
“We still play matches here, but are pretty lukewarm. There are too many blessed rows and rumours of rows in the club for anyone to be very fussy. However we manage to have a fairly decent time out of it so the rows don’t concern us very much. Of course I’m always very discreetly neutral I’m more interested in other affairs.”

“We ran a Fancy Dress Ball last night and had a great crowd. We made over \$10 after all expenses were paid.

I just saw some of the Rappville ladies going over to the tennis court. I really don’t know how they can play after the dance last night. Of course some of the girls don’t get many dances and of course they’re not tired next day, but I’m always dead beat the next day.”

“I bought a warm coat last time I was in Lismore \$4.4.0. It’s been worth it already though it was a big wrench to take that amount out of my purse all at one go though.”

“Our tennis club is proving rather a lively institution. Everyone is fairly wound up and just waiting for someone to start a big bust up. A few people have already sizzled over. Our captain resigned and then withdrew his resignation. One lady (?) swore at another lady (?) on the court one day. I never miss tennis. In fact I attend with sickening regularity in the hopes of seeing some fun.



Train ticket to Lismore, 1933

I’m dead unlucky though, and I’m sure the real flare up will come when I’m away sometime.”

“Winter is coming closer isn’t it. I’ve started to wear a warm petticoat already and nearly live in that sleeveless jumper of yours.

Jim didn’t get home till nearly one o’clock on Friday morning. I didn’t worry till after ten as I knew the roads were bad, but by 12 I was frantic so I got a lantern and went over through the swamp to Jame’s place and told Artie that my husband was lost and would he please come and look for him. He said “certainly” and got dressed and brought me home on a worse track than the one I went over on, the grass was just about over my head and I was up to my knees in water most of the way. I had a pony in the yard and caught him, and just as Artie got down to the lagoon, I head the cart coming, and all my anxieties fell away into nothing.

375 DEPARTMENT OF THE VALUER GENERAL, N.S.W. - NOTICE OF VALUATION

VALUATION DISTRICT OF BERANIA

NAME OF OWNER: PATERSON, MRS. JANE ELIZABETH, EST. LATE

ADDRESS: THE CHURCH.

PROPERTY: HOUSE

VALUATION: 2094.25.00

LAND AREA: 2090

VALUATION: 4300

VALUATION: 216

DATE: 15 AUG 1934

“I’m a great worker, I am. I milked 30 cows, separated (Engine), fed the calves and pigs, washed up dairy, caught a horse in exactly 3 hours.”

“The only improvement we’ve had lately is the instalation of the Electric Light, last week. I’ve got 5 lights on. There are still 3 bedrooms without. The lights cost 30/- each and 1 pound application fee. We - Muriel and I were hanging off about a big Miller lamps for the long room and then suddenly we got the whole 5. It just happened that Ron paid up some back board (since Easter) so instead of squandering it on little things (like food) we gave it to Dad to put into the lights. Of course Dad paid the Shire fee and the remainder from our part and to keep the lights switched off when no one’s in a room. Its a bit too brilliant if you are sick, as I was last week.”



The Browns take a ride on the slide

At that time the schoolteacher boarded with the Browns. Beryl remembers the school children were often taken for an excursion down to Goolmangar Creek (Dickies Crossing) for a swim.

Very few people had transport in those days, and so they made their own local entertainment. There was tennis; everyone had to wear whites. Other social activities included a Crib (Cribbage) Club, as well as a *Dad and Dave* concert, and a dance every 2 weeks in the Koonorigan Hall. Locals provided music at these events (fiddle, accordion and piano). Dances in the Koonorigan Hall were not just fun, but an opportunity for the single members of the community to meet each other. In 1942 Beryl was playing the piano at a dance in the Koonorigan Hall when Bill Graham approached her. Bill, who grew up on a dairy farm down the road, was in his army uniform, on 2 weeks leave. He asked Beryl to dance when she got a chance. She said she could get Mrs. Swift to fill in. Bill was away for two more years, but when he came back in 1944 they married.

Brown

Beryl Brown went to school in Koonorigan and grew up in a house, now gone, located on what is now the Dunbar’s property on the eastern side of Koonorigan Road. The front part of the house was also used as the Koonorigan Post Office. Beryl remembers it being used as a Post Office from the 1920s until she left the area in 1946. The Post Office was also the telephone exchange, the old fashioned manual type: a panel of plugs, wires and switches. Calls lasted 3 minutes, unless you were ‘extending’. This 24 hours a day job was Beryl’s. It was also her duty to pick up the mail from a coach at the intersection of Koonorigan Road and Nimbin Road. To do this she would ride a horse down the Koonorigan cutting at 7.30 am. One horse she rode had a bad experience with a passenger coach and would not go near it. When this horse was used the mail had to be left on a fence post and picked up from there. Around this time (1943) there were 22 dairy farms in Koonorigan and each family collected their mail from the Post Office.

Beryl’s parents also ran a 100-acre dairy farm, and it was her job to help with the milking. The cream was picked up by Sid Irving and taken to The Channon. In those days butter sold for 3 pence a pound. Beryl was one of 7 children; she also picked beans on Jack McIntyre and Bruce Duncan’s farm for one shilling an hour.



The Brown family lived in this house which was also the Koonorigan Post Office

Beddoes

G.E. Beddoes was one of the first settlers in Koonorigan. He raised 5 children, Thomas, George, James, Pearl and Charlotte, on his dairy farm in Cox Road. His son, Thomas Beddoes, eventually took over the farm. One of Thomas's children was Gordon Beddoes. In 1948 a girl from Coffee Camp, Ivy, rode her horse up the hill, overland, to attend a dance in the Koonorigan Hall. Gordon Beddoes noticed her and after several years of courting they married. Parents were fairly strict in those days, so to spend time with Ivy, Gordon would ride his horse down a track near the School to Coffee Camp and play cards with the whole family. They did not get much time alone. Ivy was from a large family, there were 12-16 people living in the house. She left school when she was thirteen and a half. Her parents owned a dairy farm and grew bananas. Ivy was paid two shillings per fortnight to milk the neighbour's cows. With so many in the family money was tight. For Christmas they might get some material for pyjamas or a pair of shoes, but you would get nothing on your birthday. There was plenty of fun to be had, tennis on the weekend, and a dance every week at either Koonorigan, Coffee Camp, Goolmangar, The Channon, Nimbin or Tuntable Falls. Ivy would go to the pictures at Lismore or Nimbin once or twice a month, whenever her parents would let her go.

After Gordon and Ivy married they moved onto a farm in Koonorigan, growing bananas, peas and beans, and working off the farm. In the 1970s some Koonorigan women could not find transport to The Channon to attend the monthly meetings of the Country Women's Association so they started a Koonorigan branch. Ivy was a member and she remembers attending meetings and organizing dances and picnic days. The women made cakes to sell to raise money for the school. The Koonorigan CWA only lasted 4 years. At that time many dairy farms were closing and farming women had to seek work in the towns to make ends meet.



Gordon Beddoes courted Ivy on this horse.



Tom Beddoes 1914



Beddoes bails and homestead on Cox Road Koonorigan in 1949

Haynes

Vera Haynes was 11 months old when her parents, Earnest and Gladys, brought her to Koonorigan. They were to be share farmers on Walter Secombe's farm, next to the Jacksons. For the next 20 years they hand milked 60-80 cows, keeping two fifths of the profits, although they generally made nothing in the months of May, June and July. The other children in the family were Elsie, Irene, Grace, Alice, Millie, Will, Betty, Heather and Alan. When she was aged 5 Vera had to cut up chips for the fire and round up the calves. By the time she was 7 she was milking cows and kept doing so until she was 20. All the oldest girls milked, carried around the 10 gallon milk cans and helped dad feed the pigs. Vera remembers it as a happy, but busy time. Rising at 4am with her father she packed her own lunch and, after milking the cows, she would race off to school. After school she would run home to help with the second milking. Any spare time was spent bagging sweet potatoes, scattering feed for the cows and brushing scrub. For power there were 2 draught horses and one riding horse. Like all the other children in Koonorigan the 10 Haynes children went barefoot, except for Sunday school and going to town. Once per month a big grocery order was delivered from town with such things as potatoes and dried peas. Rabbits were caught for tucker and skins. Vera left school at 15 and as there was no way of getting in to Lismore she did a year of correspondence. Some of her sisters made their debut at Goolmangar. After dances in the Koonorigan Hall she remembers having to walk home in the dark. During the war years the ladies of Koonorigan were taught to make camouflage nets. (The Red Cross came and taught the local women and school children to knit cotton washers during the first world war). For recreation the family would play cricket in the yard before sundown, or the children would play 'catch me'. If you wanted to get away from everyone you would climb a tree. Around 1940 Jack Thompson would drive his van from Nimbin and pull up outside the Koonorigan School at lunchtime, selling ice cream, frankfurts (cheerios) and other treats. Bruce Duncan, former MLA for Lismore also recalls this: 'I remember the Nimbin traders in the thirties and early forties supplied meat, groceries and smallgoods to Koonorigan. Jack Thompson sold smallgoods from his vehicle and his stops at the Koonorigan School were always welcome. The opportunity for a break from the classroom to buy a penny or a threepenny ice cream in a cone was a special treat.'



Cecil Osbourne taking the cream up to the gate on the slide



Norman Seccombe, Anne Patterson, Colin Seccombe and Millie Paterson

Essery

Ray and Norma Essery came with their 7 children to Koonorigan in 1961. Just in time too as the Koonorigan School was considering closing down due to lack of student numbers. Five of their children were of school age. For the next 13 years the family milked 65 cows and kept 80-100 pigs. This was the same farm that the Haynes lived on, later to be known as 'Cricklewood'. They also put in 4 acres of bananas. Between milkings they cut bananas on a Wednesday, packed them on Thursday (30 cases) and sent them away on the carrier on Friday. Clive Winkler was the carrier and his truck also carted the cream, pigs and cattle for the area. The bananas grew well but transport costs and low prices eventually made it unprofitable.

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