



Braidwood & District Historical Society

PO Box 145 Braidwood NSW 2622

Newsletter

Number 16 March 2020

John Higgins' Maps

John gave a talk in Braidwood last year on the Government land sales in Braidwood from the late 1830's to 1862 and he produced a series of maps to help people interested in their family histories, and who would like to know who first owned the parcel of land they are interested in. These maps are now available to peruse at the Museum. They will eventually be loaded onto the Museum website.



An Old Settler of the Right Sort

Abridged from 'Queanbeyan Age'
12 October 1865

Little Bombay is the location occupied by one of the pioneers of settlement in this district, the proprietor, Joseph Taylor Esq J.P. having arrived here 33 years ago, and laid out the Braidwood gardens for the founder of the town. Some 22 more ago, Mr Taylor purchased a plot of land which became the nucleus of his present freehold, which now comprehends somewhere about 900 acres. It was then a complete wilderness, and has been converted into a delightful domain. The dwelling house, although rude in construction, is exceedingly comfortable and homely in its general arrangements.



Workers cottage on Little Bombay

Mr Taylor has erected stone cottages for the use of the persons employed upon the estate, and the stables are not only the finest in the district, but would compete in design and arrangement with many of those attached to the mansions of the patricians of the mother country.

Compartments of the same building are occupied as a store room and carpenters shop. The piggery is erected on Mechi's plan, and food is supplied by troughs which project beyond the outside walls thereof.



Stables since converted to living quarters.

There are convenient calf sheds, dray houses, boiling down and dipping apparatus, and until recently, when George Bradbury and his tribe of aborigines returned from the bush, the oldest erection of the homestead, by far a more respectable building than many in Braidwood, was opened for the occupation of poor travellers on the road. "Nanny", an aboriginal woman, was on our visit, found in possession, and was engaged in mending something which bore a strong resemblance to crinoline. The wants of these aborigines are carefully provided by Mr Taylor, their larder being well provided with "johnnycake", and their tea and sugar bags and tobacco pouches are kept full. Beneath the shade of a fertile hedge of English broom dividing the house grounds from the business premises, an old aboriginal named "Nalla Marra", generally known as "Stupid Tommy", is accommodated with a nice gunyah, from whence it is probable he will never move until he is gathered to his fathers. "Nalla Marra" was an old man 33 years ago, and is one of the Braidwood tribe. He presents a pitiable sight, being afflicted with cancers on both feet, which have been pronounced incurable. But for the

kindness and attention he has received at Little Bombay, "Nalla Marra" would long since have been called before the Great Spirit, but he is charitable fed and attended to 3 times a day. Upon Mr Taylor's arrival in this district the natives of the Braidwood tribe numbered over 300: they have now dwindled down to 30. The causes of this declension can scarcely be accounted for on ethnological principles. In the exercise of his rights, Mr Taylor has been kind and generous, even to a fault, to the aboriginal race. Whereas in other districts, the males have been indiscriminately shot down, and, if report speaks correctly, deliberately put out of the way by the administering of poisoned food; on the grounds of Little Bombay they have been protected and cherished. A trait of their gratitude was presented to us on our visit.



Modern conversion of stables.

In the repair of his offices and the erection of new ones, Mr Taylor required a considerable quantity of bark. No less than 150 sheets have been got and stacked up for him by the blacks this season. A neat little store, against the walls of which the English ivy is being carefully trained, is fully stocked with every requirement for the numerous population. Where everything from a farthing candle, a ha'porth of pins, or a stick of lollies, to a keg of "Dixon's Twist", or mining materials of all descriptions, is available for purchase.

The lawn on which the home is situated is surrounded by a double fence, within the lies of which fruit trees of various kinds have been planted, and the same system has been carried out around out to the margin of the Bombay Creek. But the chief pride of Mr Taylor is emphatically his

garden, which is situated in a well sheltered position, and laid out in a very scientific manner. Large areas of land are under crop with wheat, barley, oats, and a promising plot has been worked for the planting of potatoes. There is a flock of about 900 sheep on the grazing station. The woolshed and cottage of the tenant in charge is situated on the Flat. The latter contains a double lever press, of considerable capacity and the shed itself occupies an area of 300 by 20.

The old stables have been converted into accommodation. There is no know ruin of the old house which was said to be not to the standard of the farm buildings and worker's cottages. John Joseph Mechi was an English experimental farmer of the early 1800's. Photos courtesy of John Dowling.

A Rollicking Night on the Town

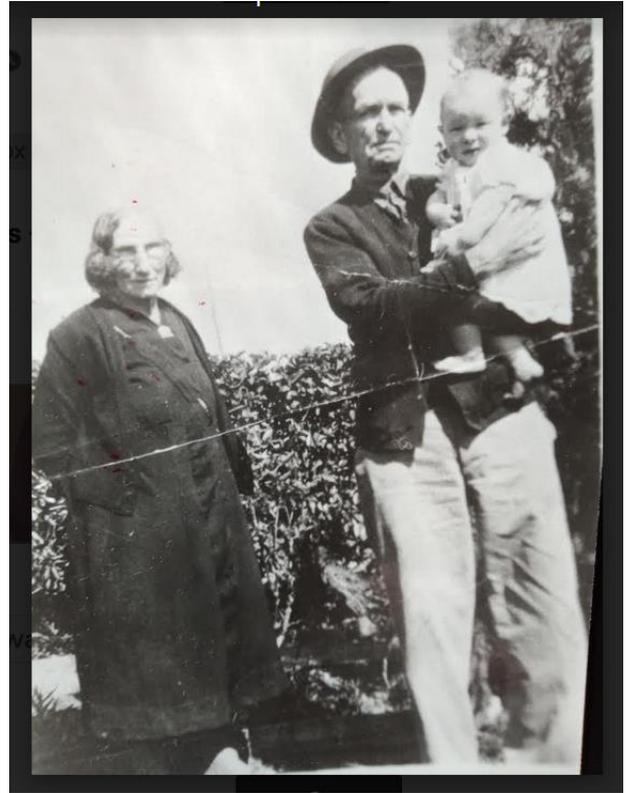
Copy of a letter written by John (Jack) Bond to his grandchildren Laurie, Kevin and Lola Bond. Circa late 1920's

Dear Laurie, Kevin and Bub

Just a line as Mum is writing to Mumma

There is not much here to write about only the dance on Saturday nights. We sometimes go and Hell, you ought to see Mum doing the Heel and Toe Polka with Taff Williams. Aunty May and I have to rub her down after every dance and fan her down with a towel to cool her off. I only dance with Ann Mortlock, no doubt we are good, everybody stops to admire us, we dance the first sets. Wacko had a dance with Mrs Carney, he went well the first time it was a Marzurka, but the next time he took her in, it was a Highland Fling and Mrs Carney flung Wacko on top of two women on the other side of the hall and the jar knocked his fly undone and I had to hold Tom Rawlings in front of him while he buttoned up and Tom told Wacko to be careful and always hold his fly with one

hand when he was learning to dance. When Jason came to the dance late and fell in love with Bob Harirott and made him kiss him on the lips overnight everybody laughed. It did look funny no doubt.



John and Marina (Minna) Bond with young Johnny Bond c.1940

Mum is taking herself to a dance on her own on Saturday night, it is the sword dance. She is practicing at home every day but I expect her to buck her pants off, won't it be good if she does? I've got Mrs Pete Richmond engaged for five dances, she is as black as charcoal but that won't matter, she is very big and fat and strong, she will be able to hold me up, won't she? I wish your Dadda and Mumma could come up, I could get them some good partners, all wool and two yards wide.

Well kids, I think I have told you all the news of any importance so will dry up and have a few winds and expect to be up not later than 11.30 tomorrow, of course I won't get any sleep after because Mum will be practicing her dance and she has an old joker 84 years of age next door

who comes in every morning and plays the tin whistle for her, then after her lesson she gets him to rub methylated spirits on her knees, she says it stops them from crackling. I don't believe it is her knees, do you?

*Bye, Bye
Best wishes,
Dad.*

Jason in the letter is Jason Moore who married 1922 in Cooma, Irene (Rene) Ellen Mary Bond. He was born 25th Feb 1904, died 18th Oct 1934 supposedly dying on the operating table from an appendix operation performed by an intoxicated doctor.

John (Jack) Bond was born 1873 Cooma and died 1961 Queanbeyan. He married 1877 in Cooma, Marina (Minna) Christina Scott born 1877 died 1949 Cooma, daughter of Henry Scott and Margaret Feeney.

Mrs Peter Richmond was Florence Waarno who was Indonesian.

Mrs Ann Mortlock (nee Margaret Ann Bell) was the widow of William Mortlock of Jerangle.

Bob Harriott of Bungendore was married to Margaret Murphy of Jerangle.

Laurie, Kevin and Lola were the children of Roy Andrew Bond, parents Jack and Minna.

Reminiscences of a Majors Creek man

written by Paul Briggs

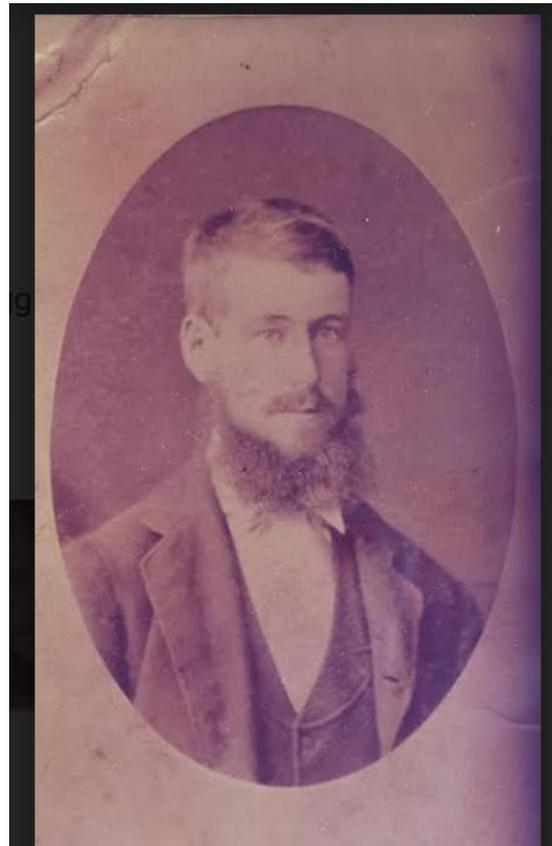
Recently (December 2019), I was an inpatient at Calvary Hospital in Canberra for several weeks over the Christmas and New Year periods. Time passed quite well, due to my good fortune to have a great room mate in the adjacent bed, one (Thomas) Keith Cawthorne, who was quite proud of his advancing years getting him

close to 90. He told me he had lived a good, full and happy life thus far.

Keith as he has been and prefers to be known, told me he'd started his life out near Braidwood, and needless to say (being a member of the BDHS), it captured my interest immediately. Keith turned out to be from Majors Creek, and he was prepared to share his story with me.

Keith went to school in Majors Creek until he was 15, whereupon he went to Braidwood to do his final year of schooling until he was 16, and lived in Braidwood with Ted Bourke and his family.

Keith's friends from the Creek, were Horrie Preston, Keith Bourne and several members of the Cradle family, Cyril, Ted and Douglas, of whom he said was a motor bike fanatic, who didn't mind having a drink. And another Cradle family member Harold, had an Indian motor bike. Some of our older members will no doubt know them.



Keith's great uncle Adam Cawthorne who married Elizabeth Berry of Jerrabutgulla.

Keith's favourite pastimes, which were not unusual for the day were trapping and shooting rabbits, fishing and eeling. Playing cricket he especially enjoyed when playing against Jerrabatgulla and Araluen. Keith was a batsman when he played for Majors Creek and he also played 3 years for Hoskinstown, when he worked there. Keith's favourite fishing locations were in the Shoalhaven and Molongolo Rivers and the local dam, where ever he be.....! Sometimes they would venture to Lake George for a taste of freshwater bream or trout.

When Keith went shooting, he preferred his trusty Lithgow SAF (Small Arms Factory) 48/50 .22 calibre rifle, which he used to good effect on foxes, roos and pigs.

Keith lived and worked at Captain's Flat for 6 years in the lead mine. He used to do track laying to support the locomotive and its nine trucks. Keith left the mine in 1954 and worked as a fettler on the railways for 8-9 months, until he found another job with the P.M.G. (Post Master General's Department) as a linesman around Captain's Flat and Jerangle as well as Tarago, Mount Fariy and Boro to install new phone lines for ex-servicemen who had taken up specially designated blocks of land.

On Christmas Day for lunch, his Mum cooked for about 14 and if you think this is a catering feat for Major's Creek, then the numbers swelled to almost double that for dinner. Keith said there were usually around 26 for that meal. Christmas in the backyard wouldn't be a traditional Aussie Christmas without the sports afternoon, and to wear off the Christmas lunch in readiness for dinner. They played the sedentary game of darts, rounders and not for the feint-hearted, a game of back yard cricket also occurred, where the local heroes could shine.

However, in preparation for Christmas, Keith's Mum used to breed , fatten and sell turkey's to make some extra money and in no doubt to help feed the Christmas hordes. But... one year, someone left the

yard gate open and there was a plague of grasshoppers which came through, and as any self-respecting fattening turkey realises, delectable grasshoppers are an opportunity not to be missed. A moving feast none-the-less! So the flock of 36 followed the food trail. Keith said the family and friends were worn out from chasing turkeys for between 3 and 4 kilometres on the Turkey Trot. All up, they were only able to catch 5 of the errant flock. Some of the little roosters found freedom and others found tree branches out of human reach. Luckily Keith's mum was a good cook and she had made and sold 14 one and a half pound Christmas cakes, which she iced and decorated, as well as some happy juice demi-john of cherry wine from their cherry tree. No doubt Keith's mum 'Aggie' (Agnes Douglas) was able to pass some of those cooking skills onto some of the ladies of Major's Creek, as she had been the chair person for the CWA (Country Women's Association) for 36 years. Must be a local record for an irreplaceable country woman.



John Harold Cawthorne and his sister Nancy Cawthorne who is marrying Arthur Gumm.

So what happened for weekend entertainment, you can bet your bottom pound note that dances were on the menu where Keith would don his suit and his dancing pumps which had soft sides and tops as well as the soft soles. Local dances were held more on a Friday night, like Braidwood, Majors Creek. However, on a Saturday night, they'd go further afield from Major's Creek to Captains Flat, Moruya and Goulburn. They'd get to the dances in the old rust buckets of mates which were often overloaded with bodies to make sure they all got there for their Pride of Erin, Quickstep and waltzes for their Old Time dancing regime.

Keith's mum Aggie, had been the main stay in the Major's Creek School P&C. They apparently put on the local dances for the young people, ran the supper table and boiled a large billy or cauldron of water over a fire for tea and coffee. Then Aggie would strike out for home, about a 2 mile walk (or 3.6 km) walk from the recreation ground back home.

Keith also told me about the Annual Major's Creek picnic which was traditionally held on New Year's Day in the recreation area. One year, the local butcher, Vic Rowe accidentally poisoned a large majority of the locals. Keith said that he'd cooked corned meat in a copper and caused ptomaine poisoning. An old name for a variety of the food poisoning family. It appears that in later years the annual picnic day was still held, but folks would gravitate towards Gunnamatta Bay, in Sydney's Cronulla area for the get together.

When it came to getting around Majors' Creek, everybody, bar very few, walked everywhere using Shanks Pony, even though his Dad (Jacob Thomas Cawthorne) had a sulky, he took it to Captains Flat every 3 weeks for his work. With Dad away from home much of the time with work, most of the chores fell to Keith's Mum Aggie who did the fencing and cutting wood. Keith looked after the cows, chooks and the poddy sheep.

Something Keith enjoyed was fossicking. He had a sluice box and a pan below their

homestead in Breakaway Creek, off Shingle Hut Creek, heading towards Snobs mine. This alone was not unusual. However, Keith's ability to harvest the gold, enabled him to get enough to have his wife's engagement and wedding ring to be made from Major's Creek gold with rubies and diamonds, made by Angus and Coote for him and his bride Gwen.

Keith's favourite of all pastimes was Eeling. I could see Keith licking his lips and almost salivating when he spoke of his love for the taste of the eel. He used a 5 prong, 3 foot long welded fishing spear and he did it from age 8 to 50 years old. Keith said they would make a day of it when going eeling. They'd shoot away to go black berrying in the afternoon until about 5pm. Then they'd have some sandwiches or a BBQ to fortify themselves for a long night of eeling, and head off to Hyles Creek, west of Araluen, or to Jembaicumbene Creek, Majors' Creek or Mulloon Creek. Keith said the eels were only found in the eastern flowing waters. He'd have his spear, his torch, hurricane lamp and /or his carbide lamp.

So, according to Keith, the best way to treat an eel, is to

- Skin the eel by using pliers to pull the skin back,
- cut it into 6 inch long sections
- Soak them in salt and water overnight
- Drain it in the morning and dry the pieces
- Roll them in flour heat a pan with dripping in it and when hot, drop the eels into it for about 5 to 8 minutes.

Bon Appetite

Our Society values the support of

Queanbeyan Palerang council

