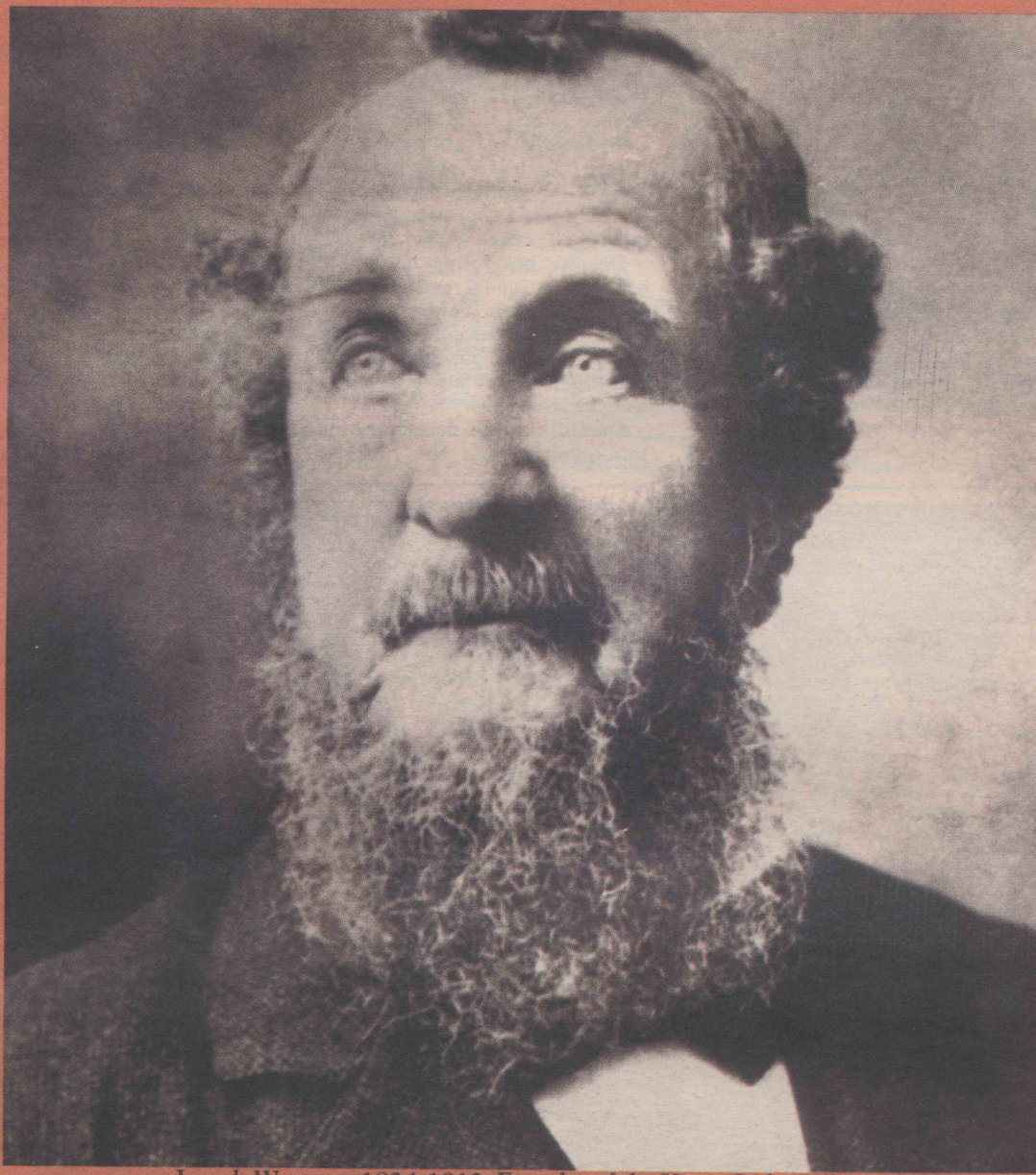


Kiama

MUNICIPALITY

OUR HISTORY IN PRINT



Joseph Weston - 1824-1913, Founder of the Kiama Independent

Volume 11

COLLECTOR'S EDITION

January 2001

A Kiama Independent

Twelve Volume Millennium Feature

Individual Copies \$2 available from Kiama Independent office

Death of John MacLean Weston

Kiama Independent proprietor, Mr John MacLean Weston died on September 6, 1946, just two years short of the newspaper's 85th anniversary. He was aged 71 years.

An "appreciation" by Mr A Oakes, provided an insight to a man who had, alongside his late sister Mary, guided the news of the town for almost 40 years while being a member of staff for more than 50 years.

"His last day was characteristic of him, and was as he would have wished. On that afternoon I saw him seated at his favourite old Wharfedale machine and working off a job. He was busy as usual, and cheerful, and spared a few minutes to chat about the forthcoming election, for he always followed closely the trend of public events.

Later on, he supervised the publication of the Independent, and the week's work done, he went home tired but happy, and about midnight slipped away from his life's work, which for him had been an abiding interest since the day he left school. He had learnt his trade thoroughly, and from the beginning, and would often speak of the old days when he went out to neighbouring centres on horseback to report meetings.

He was a craftsman of the old school, careful and conscientious in all his work. From his more than half a century's connection with the newspaper in itself now an octogenarian, it was to be expected that he would be very interested in the old history of the town and district in which he was born and spent the whole of his long life.

So he became a storehouse of old and interesting facts, much that he had

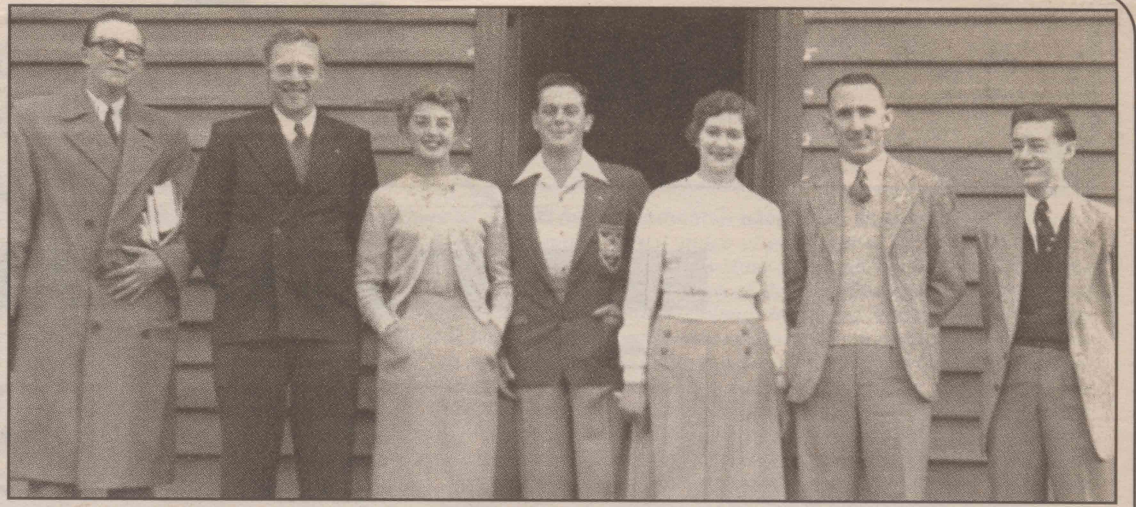
read, and more that he had himself seen or experienced...It was this historical sense, also, which prompted him carefully to preserve the files of the Independent intact from the beginning in 1863. In his earlier days he had exercised his musical talent with the violin, and until advancing years overtook him he was a keen fisherman. In this he displayed his talent for friendship, faithful and abiding. Dick Fadden, Ted Seymour and Jack Weston - this trio were known far and wide as inseparable comrades from the days when they went to the old Kiama School as classmates, and it was sad indeed to see how greatly the passing of one of them affected the survivors. Their fishing excursions to Minnamurra had become almost a legend.

Another sporting activity in which he was engaged was rifle shooting, and as well as on the range he made his mark on the administrative side, being for some years the Secretary of the South Coast Rifle Clubs Union.

There is much more that could be written of John Weston, of his integrity, of his literal truth that 'his word was his bond', of his unobtrusive generosity, of his character as 'the boss' (a term of affection as well as esteem) and his proud avowal that he had never dismissed an employee, of his sense of humour, and in later years of his steadfast courage in failing health...

By those who were privileged to have known John Weston intimately, he will be greatly missed, more perhaps than he himself would ever have realised."

Kiama Independent
September 11, 1946



The staff of the Kiama Independent in July, 1953, are (from left) Len Bickel, Bert Weston, Dawn King, David Taylor, Helen McGann, Jack Wiley and Bob Vickery.

Son Bert takes the reins

Bert Weston was just 26 years of age when the control of the Kiama Independent passed into his hands, following the death of his father, John MacLean Weston, in September, 1946.

Bert was schooled at Kiama Public School, Wollongong High School and Sydney's Newington College before returning to Kiama to learn the industry which had now been in his family for three generations and a total of 83 years.

Despite his young age, Bert quickly gained respect from industry leaders for his expertise and skill, and his determination to advance the newspaper and printing industry into a new and competitive era.

One of his first decisions was to amalgamate the Kiama

Independent and the Kiama Reporter into the one edition. The Weston family had bought out the Reporter in 1920 and began the tradition of publishing the Independent on Saturdays and the Reporter on Wednesdays. Bert's aim in amalgamating the two was to "bring the newspaper back to where it all began" in 1863, when it operated solely as the Kiama Independent.

The same year that he assumed control of the bi-weekly Kiama Independent, he married Miss Marjory Shepherd and combined his professional and family duties with various community commitments including the Kiama Volunteer Fire Brigade, Kiama Surf Club and Kiama Rifle Club.



Bert Weston

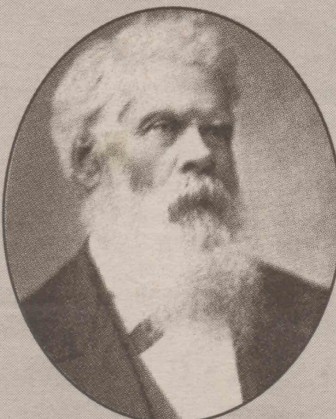


WWII 1939-45

A parade of service trainees - including a contingent from Kiama - march through the streets of Parramatta in 1938 during a military training exercise.

Full coverage
Pages 7 to 13.

Centenary of Federation 1901-2001



'Father of Federation'
Sir Henry Parkes

"The bloodless, but memorable battle of Tuesday last will, by the brilliancy of its victory...mark an era in the history of Australia, and blazon in letters of gold upon her glory page the fact that she has at last burst the bands by which she was bound and declared before the world her faith in the brotherhood of man."

Joseph Weston, June 24, 1898

"We should be proud of the achievements of our nation over the past 100 years. Henry Parkes' prophesy of the importance of Federation in placing Australia on the world stage has come to pass."

Graeme Henderson, January 4, 2001



Australia's First Prime Minister
Edmund Barton

~ 1940 - 1949 ~

As the war raged in Europe, the Middle East, Africa and the Pacific, the local townsfolk busied themselves with supporting the Allied troops which included many Kiama district men and women among its ranks.

The first moves to establish Jerrara Dam as a supplementary water supply were made following the failure of the Kiama Water Supply Scheme.

A new clothing factory was opened in Manning Street and calls were made for the establishment of a maternity wing at Kiama District Hospital following the closure of Brooklyn Private Hospital.

Calls were increased for the

establishment of a Kiama secondary school after conditions at Kiama Public School were revealed as appalling.

Child nutrition was improved with the introduction of the Oslo Lunch and sex education films were introduced to local cinemas.

The Gerringong Town Hall was built, an uproar was generated over the establishment of 'shed' homes at Werri Beach, and street lighting was extended to Minnamurra.

The much sought-after Hartwell housing subdivision - containing 50 blocks - was released to the public.

By Michelle Hoctor
Research Assistant: Chloe Ashbolt

Kiama's Water Woes

Water Supply Fails

As if the declaration of war in 1939 was not enough, 1940 opened with a protracted period of dry weather which led to the worst drought experienced on the South Coast.

For the first time since its construction almost 40 years earlier, the Kiama storage dam ran dry on March 5, 1940. By the following morning, the only water available from the town supply was a "small trickle" from taps on the lowest levels of town.

The crisis was a culmination of events whereby council had asked the Government to assist with funding to clean the local reservoir. A total of 924 loads of silt, equal to 2310 cubic yards, had been cleared by Mr Cleary with his tractors at a cost of £290. A survey of the site showed that 17,815 cubic yards, or more than three million gallons of silt, remained.

The Minister for Works and Local Government, Mr LO Martin, refused to assist, however, saying that the problem was a "maintenance matter". A day after receipt of his letter, samples were taken from the Fountindale dam which the Board of Health deemed unfit for human consumption.

Council issued warnings accordingly while setting the old town pump in operation again. Soon after, the "worst happened" when the water supply failed altogether.

Amid anger with the Government, Kiama Council held an emergency meeting when it was learned that Council had only £500 to spend on the project. With an estimated three week's work remaining, it was evident council could not afford to complete the project.

The meeting resolved that a deputation meet with the Minister for Works to explain council's situation more thoroughly and to again ask for financial assistance to clear the silt and augment the existing supply.

Ald Tully also recommended that if the minister refused to assist, council resign in protest. He said that while his recommendation was "rather drastic", it was the only way to "get what we want". Ald Holden opposed the motion, only because he believed it would have little effect. "The minister would not burst into tears if we resigned," he said, "he would merely put in a receiver." Ald Lamb agreed saying that the minister "would not care two hoots". The majority of aldermen were inclined to agree.

A deputation met with the minister within the fortnight, they gaining a commitment that Departmental engineers would visit Kiama to assess the situation.

In the event of future water failure, council was told it could buy water from the Metropolitan and Water Sewerage Board at Dapto at a cost of one shilling and sixpence per thousand gallons.

In the meantime, Sunday March 17, 1940, was set aside by the Premier of NSW as a day of prayer for rain. All churches in the district joined the call.

The community's prayers were not answered immediately, but the Minister's assistance was greatly forthcoming. No sooner had engineers inspected Fountindale dam than he agreed to grant council a sum equal to half the cost of clearing 13,000 cubic yards of silt from the storage area.

The dry spell continued, however, forcing council to re-open the old Shoalhaven Street well which had been filled in years earlier. Expense was also incurred in purchasing tanks to cart water to various portions of the town.

Drought Breaks

After nine months of water rationing, Kiama - and the State - received a "splendid Christmas present" in December, 1940, when several inches of rain fell to fill the storage dam and break the drought.

"The farmers and district folk were facing a very black summer. Water was getting very scarce and feed was practically unobtainable, and already many farmers had spent hundreds of pounds in purchasing fodder for their stock...Householders in Kiama were also facing the summer with anything but a feeling of optimism, especially with the influx of visitors to the town during the Christmas holidays...All sporting fixtures were washed out on Saturday, but nobody minded - the rain was worth all of it. Householders saw their neglected gardens getting a good soaking and rejoiced at the prospect of work with reasonable results. Gardening of late has been a heartbreaking and disappointing hobby, if indeed it was undertaken at all."

Kiama Independent
December 4, 1940



Early Australian advertising for 'Stamina Self-Supporting Trousers' and 'Casben Swim Shorts' depicts the style of men's clothing in the 1940s.

After years of discussion on the proposal to augment the Kiama Water Supply, nothing concrete was done until May, 1946, after the NSW Government announced that it would provide financial assistance for the construction and extension of approved water supply and sewerage systems in country NSW.

Encouraged, Kiama Council sent in its submission for assistance, complete with a report from engineer, Mr N Craigie.

Mr Craigie had been engaged to carry out a survey of the possible sources of a new supply and found that 200,000,000 gallons of water ran to waste over the present dam each year. He said that a new dam could be built some distance below the dam at Fountindale to conserve 62,000,000 gallons of water at a cost of £108,522.

He recommended that a dam 75 feet high be built with provision made in the foundation for it to be raised at a later date to 95 feet. The water would be fed by gravitation with a limited amount of pumping to supply the high areas and in times of drought.

A second scheme was also put forward by the Water Board which proposed that Kiama be connected to Cordeaux Dam, but this could only be done once a new dam was constructed. A third scheme, meantime, proposed that a new water catchment area be developed at

Jerrara Creek at a cost of £55,000.

Jerrara Dam

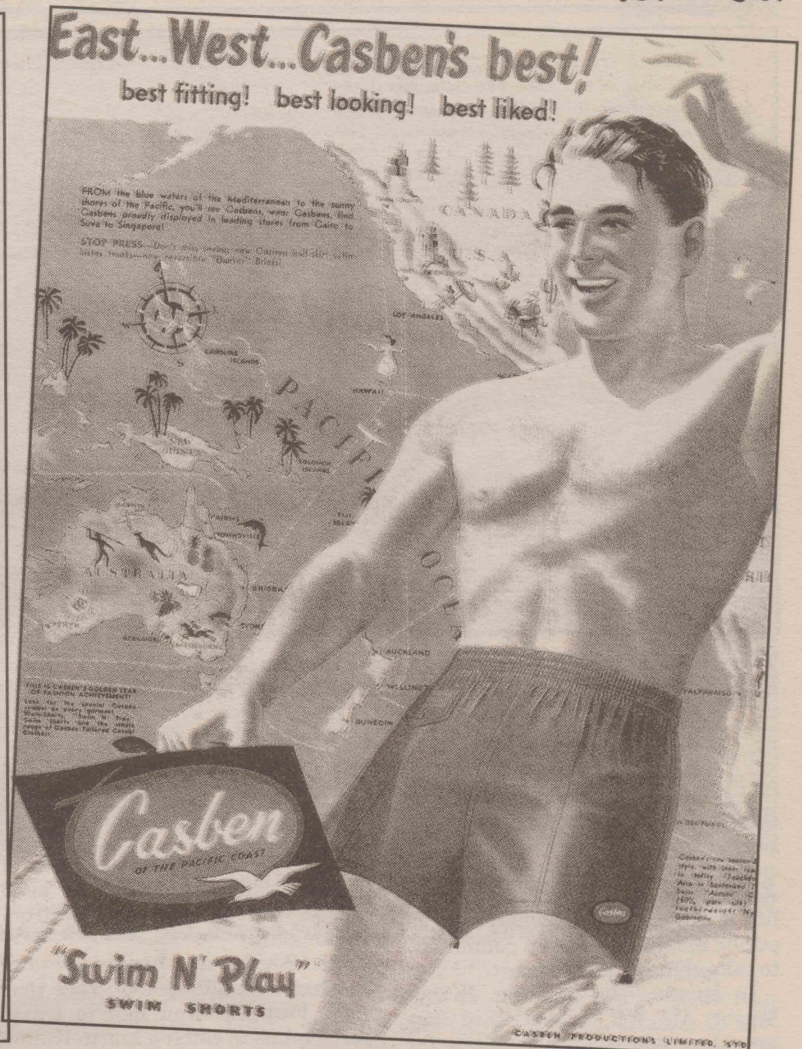
After considering the application for seven months, the Government said that it believed Kiama would best be served by the construction of the Jerrara Creek scheme, in preference to "reliance on one small catchment developed to an extreme degree".

The Government concluded that once Kiama had adopted this new plan of attack, it should then submit a new application for funding.

By March, 1947, the problem was no closer to being solved, prompting the *Independent* to ask, "What is wrong with Kiama?...The water supply is an old question, having been inadequate for nearly 20 years...The history of the water supply is one of constant putting off. Many schemes have been suggested, but for various reasons have not been proceeded with."

The Minister's recommendation for the construction of a Jerrara Creek scheme was discussed at length by council at a meeting in May, 1947, when it was decided to accept the advice in principle.

The Minister was accordingly asked to proceed with a complete survey, preparation of plans and estimate of costs.



New clothing factory

In 1943, Kiama Council joined forces with the NSW Development Bureau and proprietors of the *Lightning Button & Pleating Company Pty Ltd* to establish a clothing factory in Kiama. It formed part of a Government decentralisation program to have factories established away from the major cities.

In September of that year, a call went out to women and girls residing in the Kiama district "who are willing to accept employment in a clothing or textile factory". Previous experience with machines or dressmaking was an advantage, but not essential. All applications were to be made through the Town Clerk's office.

By November, the factory had been built in Manning Street and 22 girls had been employed in the manufacture of school tunics and blazers.

"The girls are very contented with their employment and are displaying a keen interest in their work. Mr Shields, the manager, expresses satisfaction with the progress the girls are making."

Kiama Indep, November 24, 1943

Minister Opens Factory

While operating in November, the factory was not officially opened until February 10, 1944, when the honour was performed by the Minister for Labour and Industry, Mr Hamilton Knight.

In addressing the gathering, Kiama Mayor Ald WR Holden, said that there was room for more factories in Kiama and Council would do all it could to assist in their establishment.

He said that the quarrying industry on which Kiama had depended of for so many years had largely ceased and hope abounded that light industry would fill the void.

Many of the local men, thankfully, had since been employed at the Port Kembla steelworks.

An adjournment was made to the factory when the minister met the staff of 44 girls and was given a tour of the premises. The machines were "in full swing" while provision had been made for "plots of grass and flowers, which will make the exterior very attractive".

Happy
New
Year



STEEL

Family

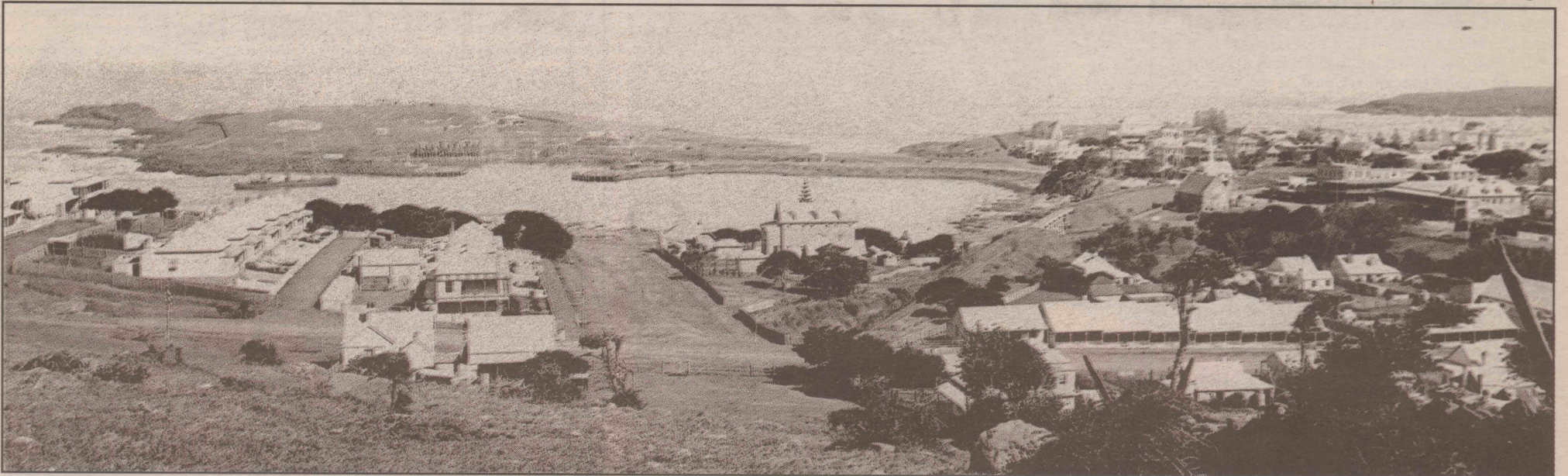
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Campaign for High School



The Kiama township is pictured from the top of Minnamurra Street - note the prevalence of quarrymen's cottages, including today's 'Terraces' commercial precinct in Collins Street. PHOTO: Hindmarsh Family Collection.

School Campaign Re-energised

It took exactly nine years before the local school community relaunched its campaign for the construction of a high school in Kiama, the campaign gaining new life in August, 1947, when a large public meeting elected a committee to take charge of the project.

In opening the meeting, Kiama Mayor, Ald WR Holden, said that providing educational facilities for the present and future needs of the area was of such paramount importance that "it behoved every citizen to participate wholeheartedly in the movement". He said that the district was rapidly developing with the expansion of heavy industries at Port Kembla and Wollongong, warranting consideration of the school.

Mr Bloomfield, headmaster of the Kiama School, said he had 220 pupils in the primary and 101 in the secondary school which was the most they could take. He said that it had been "a struggle" to obtain teachers and facilities for a full science course, adding that five or more classrooms were needed together with teachers for languages and technical subjects, and courses in cookery and agriculture.

Mr Bloomfield said that if the five rooms and two additional teachers were provided, they could take in an extra 100 students. He believed that the best thing would be to "scrap the present school and build another on the hill with plenty of playing area".

Ald Sproule said the time was

ripe to make representations for a new school adding that, once his son reached secondary level, he would send him to a boarding school before Wollongong High School. The Mayor said that the lives of Kiama children had already been lost in the journey to and from Wollongong.

Mr Southwell, headmaster of Jamberoo Public School, said that some local children had to travel three miles to catch a bus to Kiama before catching a train to Wollongong, forcing them to leave home at 6.30am each morning.

Jamberoo Mayor, Ald AL Fredericks, moved that a committee be formed to further the proposed acquisition of a new school with high school facilities. The committee consisted of Messrs C Jones (Jamberoo), A Crew (Lake Illawarra South), Austin Robinson (Shellharbour), Reg Simpson (Albion Park), E Booth (Albion Park Rail), J Griffin (Oak Flats), AM Trevallion (Gerringong), C Raison (Jerrara) and CR Bodey (Kiama).

Minister Visits - Inspects School

The community's efforts were rewarded in March, 1948, when the Minister for Education, Mr R Heffron, visited Kiama to meet a deputation requesting the establishment of a secondary school. Following an inspection of the Bombo school, the minister proceeded to Kiama Council where the Town Clerk, Mr Lyons, presented a case for the school.

"...After you have inspected the Kiama Central School, you will appreciate that the secondary school

educational facilities at present available in Kiama are restricted, and the available accommodation for both primary and secondary pupils inadequate and overcrowded, whilst the accommodation for kindergarten is primitive and the hall rented for the latter is without school furniture," Mr Lyons said.

Mr Lyons said that the short-

"Raw sewage from the boys' urinal flowed through a pipe to the storm water channel which discharged into the bay, near the old figtree."

term hope was to secure five additional classrooms - these to take the form of five ex-RAAF lecture huts located at the rear of the current school - and four new teachers. The long term hope was to have a new high school constructed.

He said that the general course could then include: English, Maths 1 and II, Science, Languages and History; and a commercial course to include English, General Mathematics, Business Principles, Bookkeeping, Woodwork or Needlework, History, Commercial

Geography, Shorthand and Typing, and an optional Science.

Following the meeting and after hearing addresses from representatives from Lake Illawarra to Gerringong, Mr Heffron inspected the Kiama Central School and planted a poplar tree near the school bell.

Public Holiday Granted

While the minister inspected the proposed site for the new high school on a portion of the farm Culbyrnie, owned by Mr C Cooper, and also granted the local school children a public holiday, he made no guarantees about the outcome of the meeting to determine the future of the school, other than to say a decision would be made "in a very short time".

This "short time" lasted 11 months when the Minister announced in February, 1949, that he had instructed the Valuer General to negotiate the purchase of 12.5 acres of land at Kiama "for high school purposes". It was not stated whether a school was to be built immediately on this land.

By October, 1949, conditions at the Kiama Public School were reported as "shocking", prompting the *Independent* to publish the full extent of the problems.

In the girls lavatory, which was shared by 200 girls, only one seat out of the 10 was fit to use; 34 children were crowded into a room 15ft x 15ft and most were forced to climb over their desks to leave the room; raw sewage from the boys urinal flowed through a pipe to the storm water channel which discharged

into the bay, near the old figtree; and the school playground was riddled with deep potholes.

"We make no apology for putting the facts so badly," the *Independent* said, "as we consider parents should be aware of the conditions the children have to put up with at the school."

The article had the desired affect with parents issuing an ultimatum to the Minister for Education, Mr Heffron, that unless something was done to alleviate the situation within 14 days, they would withdraw their children from the school.

"Communist"

In an address to Parliament on November 10, however, Mr Heffron was reported by the *Sydney Morning Herald* as having issued an indignant response saying that he "would not be dictated to by a school committee".

He said that the law provided for compulsory education and if the children were withdrawn, "appropriate action would be taken". In a comment befitting the times, Mr Heffron said that he was aware that the parent who moved the resolution was "a well known communist".

Mr Heffron later claimed that he had been mis-quoted and had never made the "communist" reference. Almost immediately, he arranged for improvements to the school including the arrival of new and improved sanitary seats, new garbage cans, tar paving in the playground, a bi-weekly sanitary service, the approval of three new classrooms and the commencement of work on the home science block (Old Bombo School).

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Calls for Kiama Maternity Wing

Application for the establishment of a new £45,000 nurses' home in the grounds of the Kiama District Hospital, together with maternity ward accommodation, received a favourable response from the Hospitals Commission in April, 1946, and a request was made to the Government Treasury for funds to carry out the scheme.

In hindsight, the turn of events was regarded with cynicism as the Government's support came on the eve of an election. By April the following year - exactly 12 months later - no further progress had been made on the project.

Adding to the urgency of the situation was the news in October, 1946, that the proprietor of Brooklyn Private Hospital, where most local babies were delivered, intended to retire and close the building to maternity use. The Manning Street hospital was kept open until April 1, 1947, but it still wasn't enough time to see an outcome in Kiama Hospital's maternity project.

In the absence of Brooklyn, the hospital was forced to make private wards available for the reception of maternity cases. Due to

limited space, only three beds were left to serve residents of Kiama, Gerringong and Jamberoo. "Already one mother had to be sent home six days after the birth of her baby to make room for another patient," the *Independent* gasped.

The situation provoked a "storm of protest" from the community and Kiama Council which decided in April, 1947, to write to the State Treasurer, Minister for Health and the Hospitals Commission, entering "an emphatic protest and asking that commencement on the proposal be facilitated and treated as urgent".

The protest had the desired effect, an officer of the Government's Architect's Department announcing following an inspection of the premises four weeks later that conversion of the hospital's Isolation Block to accommodate a maternity ward would be completed within 12 months.

An accomplishment was achieved of sorts - in April, 1948 when the foundation stone of the new nurses' quarters was laid by Chairman of the Hospital Directors, Mr CS Boyd. The ceremony was held on a plat-

form built at the side of the building which had reached window level on the ground floor.

Immunisation

A booklet released by the Health Department in 1941 said that whooping cough had become the most deadly infectious disease in children up to the age of five. In the 10 years up to 1937, the disease had in NSW claimed 1189 children aged three years and under. This was compared with 754 deaths from diphtheria over the same period.

The Department said that while diphtheria was once the greatest killer, mortality rates had decreased on account of immunisation.

In July, 1945, a public advertisement in the *Independent* reminded parents that children aged 12 months to 14 years could be immunised against diphtheria, consent forms being available the Kiama Council Chambers.

Developments

Gerringong Railway Station

The Gerringong community was shocked by the news in late 1941 that their historic railway station had been struck by lightning and burned to the ground. Gerringong Council set about having the building replaced and, in March 1942, the Government announced that tenders had been called for the work.

Rev Alexander Canonised

The Rev Frank Alexander was reported having been appointed a Canon of Christ Church Cathedral, Grafton, in November, 1942. Rev Alexander was the brother of Messrs Ossie Alexander of Bombo, JW Alexander, of Jamberoo, and S Alexander, of Albion Park. The son of the late Mr and Mrs Frank Alexander, Frank was born and educated in Kiama and had a distinguished career with the church, attaining a high honour at a comparatively early age.

Kiama Town Hall

In April, 1945, the Commonwealth Disposals Commission of NSW announced that various "service properties" would be offered for sale, this to include the Drill Hall at Kiama which was located adjacent to the Kiama Council Chambers. Town Clerk, Mr Harold Lyons, suggested that Council purchase the Drill Hall and adjoining land to build a town hall, with the Council Chambers as the main entrance.

Mr Lyons suggested that the hall could be built on ground level at first, but with sufficient strength to permit the construction of another storey. His proposal was supported by Kiama Council in principal.

Houses To Be Numbered

It was surely a sign of the times when, in September, 1945, Kiama Council decided that all local houses would be numbered. No longer was the town considered so small that everyone, including the local postie, knew where people lived just by name alone.

The idea had been discussed and subsequently shelved by previous councils, and was strongly re-launched by Ald JN King who said that a house numbering system would at least assist strangers to the town.

Ald King had sought advice from the Spar Trading Company which indicated that it would dispatch an enumerator, allot numbers, serve notices on owners and supply necessary number plates.

He moved that the company be given "the necessary permission" and this was seconded by Ald Boyd and carried unanimously. The number plates were supplied at a cost of 1s6d to owners of houses, the numbering system being compulsory.

Gerringong Post Office

The new Princes Highway/Gerringong bypass may have provided an improvement in local road travel, but it also saw Gerringong overlooked for the construction of a new post office.

The township's current post office building was "old and did not provide accommodation in accordance with the usual standard", but when calls were made to have it replaced in October, 1946, the Postmaster-General refused, saying that the future requirements of Gerringong from a postal standpoint "were obscure, due in some measure to the by-passing of the township as a result of the deviation of the Princes Highway".

The citizens were told, however, that the situation would be kept under review.

Tired of waiting, Gerringong Council in October, 1949, resolved to make further representations to the Postmaster-General, asking that a new post office building be erected on a site adjoining the Town Hall.



Gerringong Mayor, Ald Mayor Gus Chittick, lays the foundation stone for the new Gerringong Town Hall watched by (from left) CT Hindmarsh, JRM Miller, architect Ray Spencer and HG Miller.

Gerringong Town Hall

Plans for the construction of a new town hall at Gerringong were announced in August, 1944, with an initial estimate of £3000 for the project. Twelve months later, a special meeting of Gerringong Council decided to proceed with plans for the construction of the hall.

The hall was to include a new council chambers and office - a move made necessary by the recent transfer of the former offices and Memorial Hall to the RSL. Also included would be the Gerringong Literary Institute Library and a consulting room for visiting doctors and a Health Centre nurse.

The hall was initially proposed to be built on the existing School of Arts site in Blackwood Street but, on the motion of Aldermen Hindmarsh and McInerney, this decision was altered in favour of a site in the centre of town, opposite the ES&A Bank.

Ald JRM Miller said that his main concern was to have a hall which served the recreational and amusement needs of the young folk of the town. "This would keep them in the district," he said. Ald Chittick saw the hall as a facility which could be used as a pavilion in conjunction with the local Agricultural and Horticultural Shows.

"The Town Clerk (Mr Trevallion) sub-

mitted a draft plan of a hall and reported having inspected several modern halls. The plan included the facilities understood to be required by all local organisations...Ald Hindmarsh was deputed to interview a qualified architect...In reply to questions, the Clerk indicated that a £4000 hall erected with Loan Funds would require a rate of approximately one farthing for repayment in 25 years at four per cent."

Kiama Independent
September 15, 1945

Ultimately, Council decided on the Fern Street site and purchased the land at the "reasonable cost" of £465. Plans for the new town hall, which included the revised cost of £8000, were approved by the community at a public meeting in May, 1946, the recommendation that council be endorsed to build the hall being moved by Mr SGW Miller and seconded by Mr N Parrish.

The foundation stone of the "new town hall and civic centre" was not ultimately laid until November 21, 1947, by Gerringong Mayor, Ald Gus Chittick, while Deputy Mayor, Ald HG Miller laid a stone containing the names of the members of Gerringong Council who were in office when the project was successfully got underway.

Official Opening

The hall was officially opened on November 17, 1948, by the Minister for Public Works and Local Government, Mr JJ Cahill, MLA. He was joined by 500 local residents, parliamentarians and representatives of Local Government who were present to witness the momentous community event.

The ministerial party were met by a police escort at the municipal boundary and proceeded to the Rose Valley residence of the Mayor and Mayoress, Ald and Mrs Gus Chittick, where Mr and Mrs Cahill were guests for the night.

At the opening, Mr Cahill said that Council had wisely decided that the new town hall - whose cost had blown out to £16,000 as a result of increases in labour and materials and additions - should be built.

"Civic Pride"

He said that the building of the hall and council's housing project indicated "a sense of civic pride and a courageous outlook". Mr JG Beale MLA, Member for the South Coast, added praise for the Town Clerk, Mr Trevallion, "who had worked so hard to have the hall erected".

Afternoon tea was served at the conclusion of the speeches by the ladies of the district.



Townfolk roll in for the official opening of the Town Hall by the Minister for Public Works, Mr JJ Cahill, on November 17, 1948. PHOTOS: Hindmarsh Family Collection.

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'Shed' Homes, Oslo Lunch

Werri Beach Wrangle Over 'Shed' Homes

Neighbourhood relations at Werri Beach took a downturn in November, 1943, when Gerringong Council received a deputation from residents protesting the number of garages and sheds being built as residences in the locality.

Messrs G Culham and R Cooke spoke in support of a petition from various residents of Werri Beach who claimed that such dwellings were "lowering the standard of the area".

"Mr Culham said that some few years ago, they got a good type of camper at Werri, and land was selling well. Then, later on, people came along and put up garages and shacks which they used as dwellings...Places were also being built without Council's sanction...The other residents here wanted to retain the dignity of the place. Garages with no conveniences were being let for good rentals as week-enders, and the natural beauty of the beach was being spoilt. The whole atmosphere of the place was deteriorating. Rabbits were being cleaned under the pump, also washing and rubbish left all over the place."

Kiama Independent/Reporter
November 17, 1943

Mr Cooke added that some of the residents had put hundreds of pounds into their properties and did not think it fair to have these "depreciated by tin shacks put up alongside".

He added that he had visited every camping area down to the Victorian border and in no other place had he seen such "Rafferty's Rules".

Mayor, Ald HE Cooke said that the problems arose when people made "all sorts of promises" that they would build a cottage as soon as they finished the shed, but never got around to it.

Ald JRM Miller added that, nevertheless, permission had never been given by council for garages and sheds to be used as dwellings, or for sub-letting.

The Mayor said that the council would do "the best they could. They would contact the owner of the subdivision and also investigate the powers council possessed in this matter".

Seven Mile Beach Camping Area

After "many years of worry for the Council and inconvenience for campers", Gerringong Council announced in November, 1946, that work would commence as soon as

possible on the construction of a new camping area on the south side of Crooked River.

The decision to establish the park south of the river was influenced by the location of a spear point pump known as "Arnott's bore" which was still operating successfully.

Council had paid as much as £30 a year just to provide water for the campers on a small reserve at Gerroa and aldermen sought a solution to the problem.

It was agreed following a council inspection that half an acre would be cleared on the eastern side of the highway and south of the bridge for a small camping area and two brick lavatories and shower rooms.

The camping ground was completed in time for an inspection by the Minister for Public Works and Local Government, Mr J Cahill, who was in town to officially open the new Gerringong Town Hall in November, 1948.

So impressed was the minister by the facilities that he announced an additional grant of £1000 for improvements to the recently established camping area.

Minnamurra's New Year Celebrations

Minnamurra might have been a quiet little community, but the township had a reputation for ushering in the New Year in style.

The New Year of 1947 was celebrated with a show held in front of Mr Wilson's store, the audience of 1000 to 1200 no doubt swelled by local campers and tourists.

The show, which was financed by Mr Wilson and compered by Mr Clegg, included a fancy dress parade and beach girl parade. Miss E Hansen of Epping was announced "Miss Minnamurra for 1947", receiving a silver cup, sash and cash prize for her win.

For fancy dress, the Most Original prizes were won by Miss G Baird (Bushell's Tea), Miss V Stewart (Peter's Ice Cream), Mr I Medley (Archbishop), and Mr B Medley (McNiven's Ice Cream). Prizes for the Most Comical costumes were won by Miss I Jones (clown), Mrs G Stewart (Danny Boy), Mr G Stewart (tiger), and Mr R Taylor (Miss Bombo).

Minnamurra Street Lighting

Street lighting at Minnamurra was officially switched on by the Mayor, Ald W Holden, at 8.30pm on Friday, November 19, 1948.

The Kiama Municipal Band was there to celebrate the occasion, marching from the railway overhead bridge in Charles Avenue to



Loading hay at Alne Bank in 1941 are (from left) Bruce Winley, James Winley and Dennis Donovan. PHOTO: Bruce Winley Collection.

"the Settlement". A special bus service was put on to convey both the band and members of the public wanting to witness the event.

Hartwell Subdivision

In 1948, the subdivision of "Hartwell", Kiama, was surveyed and roads constructed and tarred. By the new year of 1949, pegs were installed by Kiama Council to mark out the various housing allotments. The auction sale of 50 blocks in the Hartwell subdivision was conducted by Messrs JN King and Son on Easter Saturday, 1949.

The sale had "turned out better than most people had anticipated", specifically because local residents were able to obtain blocks at reasonable prices and not the "fantastic" sums that were predicted.

In all, 42 blocks were sold, 30 to local buyers. The top price of £300 was paid by Mr H Lucraft for a block overlooking Kendall's Beach. The lowest price was £60 for a block located "on the steep portion between the level road and the rifle range".

Hartwell Homestead, which was also offered for sale, was passed in after failing to reach its reserve price.

The highest bid was £3600.

Kiama Surf Club Clubhouse

The building of a "fine new surf pavilion" was foreshadowed at a meeting of Kiama Council in February, 1940, when a report was received from architect, Mr JP Tate, to build new sanitary conveniences at Surf Beach.

Mr Tate advised against building an isolated structure of this nature on the beach, suggesting that either a temporary or permanent structure be built to form part of an "ultimate surf shed and pavilion, the conveniences to be built as the first unit".

Ald Phillips said that he would like to see a "modern surf pavilion, which would be a real asset to the town". He suggested that it include a refreshment room that could be let, also facilities for the hire of costumes, "a much felt want".

Aldermen Lamb and Shepherd moved that temporary buildings be built on the southern fence line, with a permanent septic tank sys-

tem. But Ald Batty opposed the construction of a temporary building.

"That has been the trouble with this town for years past. It has been temporary everything all the time," he said. The Mayor agreed saying that "temporary somehow had a habit of becoming permanent".

The clerk, Mr Lyons, said that considering what a temporary structure would cost, it might be wise to build a permanent clubhouse. The motion for a temporary shed, however, was carried.

Examinations were conducted by the club in March, 1942, with Bronze Medallions being awarded to: Hector Larson, Albert Weston, William Wiggins, Roy McDonald, Robert Scott, Raymond Stead and William Burton. Qualifying Certificates were presented to Alan Royston, Colin Wiggins and Edward Bennett.

Better Nutrition with The Oslo Lunch

The nutritional value of children's lunches came under the microscope in October, 1943, when a representative of the Education Department, Mrs Gordon Donkin, addressed a meeting of 15 ladies at Kiama Public School on the "Oslo Lunch".

The Government had been greatly worried over the "dietetics" and health of Australian school children, realising that physical education was as important as mental, and that "a sound mind functioned best in a sound body".

The average lunch bought by a child consisted of "a meat pie and a bottle of fizz drink", according to the Government, "none of which had much food value".

In the Scandinavian countries which had adopted a diet known as the Oslo Lunch, children were found to have considerably improved height and weight. There, the Government had run canteen services and it was hoped that, after the war, the same would be established in Australia.

In the meantime, the community was asked to prepare for the introduction of the Oslo Lunch to local schools, as had already been done at Port Kembla and Moss Vale

and was soon to be introduced at Wollongong. The Lunch cost six pence and consisted of a glass of milk, roll, fruit, and cake or toffee.

Lunchtime "Prejudices"

Mrs Donkin said that there were "many prejudices" which had to be broken down before a healthy lunch was introduced. She said that while many children's diets contained "foundation foods" such as bread, milk and cheese, "there was no need for so much meat and cereals, as were ordinarily eaten".

She said that, at Moss Vale, two women went on canteen duty at 11.30am, giving them ample time to prepare the children's lunches by 12.30pm lunchtime. "In fact it had been found that two people could prepare an Oslo lunch in half an hour for between 70 and 100 children".

A Kiama committee of management was established to investigate the introduction of the Oslo Lunch system, it including: Mesdames Walton, Jenkins, Gale, Tongue, Bloomfield and Protte.

A meeting was held the following week when those present seemed more con-

cerned with the fact that - in this time of war - a video was being shown which praised the diets of the Japanese and Italians as compared with the Australians.

When someone raised the problem of the glass milk cups being broken, the Principal, Mr Bloomfield, said that as most of the mugs were made in Japan, to break a glass would be "patriotic" as it would have to be replaced by a cup made in Australia.

When the question of obtaining a supply of milk was raised, it was suggested the school buy a couple of cows and graze them in the schoolyard.

The matter became side-tracked when someone suggested that goats' milk was richer than cows' milk and a debate ensued. Oddly enough, progress was still made and work was begun on canvassing parents for canteen duty.

The system was up and running by the new school year of 1944, the canteen roster being published in the *Independent*. The ladies were advised that "cutting up and preparing" was done in the school shed at 10 o'clock each morning.

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World War II 1939-45

Red Cross Launches Into Action

As with the Great War, the announcement of WWII launched the Red Cross into frenetic activity as it worked to support Australia's troops. An immediate call for material was sent out and, by March, 1940, the movement announced that a large shipment was ready to send to Red Cross headquarters.

This included eight pairs of pyjamas, 23 pillow cases, 20 pairs of socks, four tidy bags, one hot water bag cover and some old linen for bandages. Pending permission from Kiama Council, a room in the council chambers was to be used on the second and fourth Thursday of each month to distribute garments.

Three little girls from Minnamurra warmed the hearts of many when they joined the fundraising effort in June, 1940. The girls, Kathie and Betty Anderson and Betty Oates, staged a play, Red Riding Hood, in a garage. Admission was three-pence while a total of 25 shillings was raised.

"When even the youngsters will do their bit like this, the national spirit and war effort can never fail."

Kiama Independent
June 15, 1940

Farewells

Various send-offs were held throughout the Kiama district during "Christmas week", 1939, when local men were farewelled for service with the Second AIF.

Jamberoo

At Jamberoo, Messrs D Murray, A Gunn, H Russell and C Goodworth were farewelled with a dance at the School of Arts Hall. Of the four, Mr Murray was the only one able to attend, he being presented with a wristlet watch by Jamberoo Mayor, Ald JV Edwards, as a mark of the community's gratitude.

Ald Lin Fredericks wished Mr Murray well, saying that "the future destiny of Australia would be worked out on the other side of the world". Mr PW Sykes, President of the Jamberoo branch of the RSL, presented Mr Murray with an envelope containing "spending money".

Messrs AJ Boxsell and CG McGlinchey officiated as MCs for the dance, Mr Sykes was the ticket seller and Messrs E Warby and JO Sproule doorkeepers.

Kiama

A function was held at the Kiama Council Chambers when Messrs Toby Alexander, A Meredith, D Gardiner, AG Smith, Gordon Miller and Ray Weir were presented with parcels containing razors, pyjamas, socks etc by Kiama Mayor, Ald CS Boyd.

At an evening service held at Christ Church, Mr Weir was also presented with a wristlet watch, sleeping pillow and a "roll of notes" by the parishioners.

Gerringong

A social was held in the School of Arts when a large attendance farewelled Messrs Eric Johnston, Jack Maynes, George Martin, Tom Smith, Reg Stevenson and Claude Stuart who were presented with chromium nickel wristlet watches, a "housewife outfit" and socks from the Red Cross.

"The stage decorations, which had been carried out by Mrs WY Mitchell and Miss D Love, were very effective with draped flags, surmounted by a huge rising sun and horseshoe...The Mayor, Ald HE Cooke, made presentations, wishing the men Godspeed and a happy and safe return. His Worship's remarks were endorsed by the Revs D Davies and WT Hooker, Mr WA Watts, Lieut Hedley Chittick, Ald MJ Walker, Mr Stan Miller and Mr J Cope on behalf of the various churches and district organisations. Mrs TW Johnson also spoke on behalf of the women of the district, wishing the boys bon voyage."

Two members of the 16th Division of the Second AIF, Privates Eric Johnstone of Rose Valley and G Martin, of Warri Beach, were entertained by the parishioners of St George's Church before their departure.

Patriotic Carnival

Kiama's first fundraising effort for the Patriotic and War Fund was a carnival/fete held on Australia Day, 1940, in Coronation Park, Surf Beach. "The big marquee was devoted to the refreshments department, run by the CWA, and the tables were beautifully decorated with blooms of every kind...The various stalls were all gaily decorated with patriotic colour schemes, greenery and streamers and made a most attractive setting indeed...At the Convent School Ladies' Committee stall, novelties of all descriptions were to be had, and the kiddies had a great time as they made

their purchases of balloons, masks, whistles and other novelties...The Red Cross ladies had charge of the hoopla and during the afternoon and night proved a great drawcard. The big attraction here was the £5 note that tempted everybody to have a try. Although many had a try, at a late hour announcements over the air still stated it was there to be won. The soft drinks and ice cream stall did a roaring trade."

Kiama Indep/Reporter
January 31, 1940

7th AIF Division

In May, 1940, an advertisement appeared in the *Independent* calling for 11,000 men to volunteer for the new 7th Division of the AIF. Specifications for height and weight limits and standards of health were set.

Ladies' Militia Auxiliary

The Kiama Ladies' Militia Auxiliary was formed in June, 1938, and celebrated its second birthday with a party in the Drill Hall. For several weeks a band of workers, under the guidance of Mrs RW Walker (President), and Miss Beryl Jarratt (Secretary), had been organising the celebration.

"Purple and green streamers, the colours of the 34th Battalion, were in profusion, the building being transformed...Music for the dancing was supplied by Mrs Dawes (piano) and W Raftery (drums) and was much appreciated by the large gathering. Extras were contributed by Mrs W Walker, CSM Keith Kates, and Cpl AS McGregor officiated as Masters of Ceremonies."

Kiama Independent
June 15, 1940

Petrol Rationing

Petrol rationing was introduced to the nation in 1940, it having a great effect on not only travel, but the local economy.

When, in August 1940, the NRMA wrote to Kiama Council, asking it to renew its advertisement in its Tourist Guide, Ald Lockett argued against the idea, saying that, with petrol rationing in force, "long-distance motor travelling would be impossible". The advertisement was placed anyway, council saying that rail transport was still available, and it should do its best to compete with the Blue Mountains for the tourism market.



Lieut Toby Alexander, AIF.



Gordon Miller, AIF.

Mates die on warfront

As Toby Alexander and Gordon Miller lined up at a civic reception at Kiama Council in December, 1939, smiling graciously as Kiama Mayor, Ald CS Boyd, presented them with a parcel of home comforts, they must have wondered for all the world what fate lay ahead of them.

Lt Ernest 'Toby' Alexander, 23, was about to leave for overseas service with the Second AIF. The eldest son of Mr and Mrs Ossie Alexander, of Eureka, Bombo, Toby was "a young man with a natural aptitude and tremendous enthusiasm for military affairs" (KI 3.1.40). From the beginning he had been marked for success, his nickname coming from his grandmother's first cousin, Sir Edmund 'Toby' Barton, Australia's first Prime Minister.

Gordon, the son of newly retired Kiama Pilots' Station master, Mr Robert Miller, was to travel with him, later becoming Lt Alexander's Batman (personal assistant).

Both men were treated to many farewells before their final departure. Thirty members of Kiama Rifle Club gathered at the Brighton Hotel on December 28, 1939, to bid "au revoir" to their club mate, Toby.

Club Secretary, Mr CR Andrew, proposed a toast to their guest who was "one of the best liked members of the club". They congratulated him on receiving his commission as a Lieutenant. But it was only to be expected, Toby had been "wrapped up in the Militia", joining the Wollongong unit when it formed.

When the Kiama unit was formed, he joined up with them and gave everyone the benefit of his training

and experience. From a Sergeant in the Militia he had gone into the Second AIF as a Lieutenant, which was "a big advancement, and one which had been gained purely on his merits."

Mr Andrew referred to Toby's prowess with the rifle saying that, "even when he was only a lad in short trousers, he was able to get his 48s and 49s off the rifle and was always up amongst the topnotchers."

Lt Alexander was sent abroad with the first contingent and his ability shown during training in Palestine was such that he was asked to undertake a special staff course with the British Army. But, "characteristically", he refused to leave the Battalion which he helped to train to efficiency.

Toby and Gordon fought for their country for twelve months before they were killed during an encampment at Bardia, North Africa. A bombing raid killed Gordon instantly while Toby later died of his injuries. It is believed the two Kiama mates were killed by the same shell. The news was conveyed to Toby's parents by the Minister for the Army on January 14, 1941.

"It was inevitable that Toby should have been in the forefront of action when it came, and no-one who knew him could doubt that he would have wished anything else. He was born a soldier, one who had been...undoubtedly destined for high command. But the fortunes of war, which he faced cheerfully, even with enthusiasm, decreed otherwise."

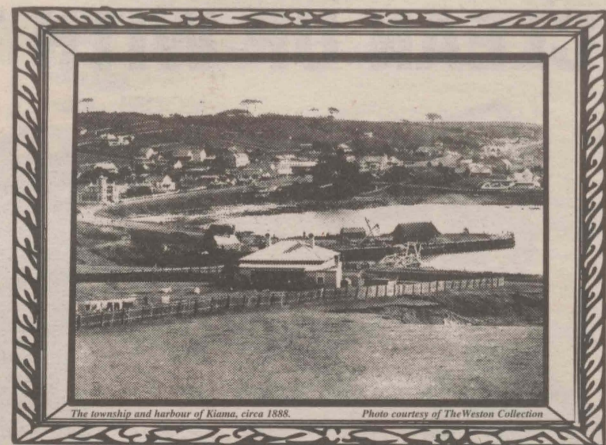
Kiama Independent
January 15, 1941

Kiama lads in training



Pictured during manoeuvres at a military training camp at Parramatta in 1938 are (from left) Kiama men Doug Carson, Alan Wiggins, Nesbit Carson, unknown, Richard Ruse and Len Holz.
PHOTO: Geoff Honey Collection.

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~ Lieut Ronald King, AIF ~
 Ronald King left Australia with the first contingent for the Middle East in January, 1940, as a member of the 3rd Battalion. He was afterwards seconded to the Headquarters Guard Battalion and served in the first Libyan campaign, then Greece and Crete before being captured by the Germans on June 1, 1941, and held as a prisoner of war.



~ Sgt Hilton King, AIF ~
 Hilton King, brother of Ronald, left Australia in October, 1940, for service in the middle east. He was a member of the 13th Battalion and served in the Syrian campaign.



~ Sgt Noel 'Jack' Smith ~
 Jack, of Kiama, enlisted early in the war effort and served almost to the end before he was killed during a campaign in New Guinea.

World War I

Women's Land Army

A representative of the McMaster Institute, Miss Helen Turner, addressed a meeting of the Southern NSW branch of the Australian Illawarra Shorthorn Society in December, 1940, on the work of the Women's Land Army.

Miss Turner was introduced by Mr Shirley who spoke in high terms of the Army's work in Australia and in England during the Great War. He said that reducing production on the farms was "the last thing everyone wanted", and to meet the deficiency of labour was one of the jobs of the Women's Land Army.

Miss Turner said that it was not contended that members of the Army could completely undertake the running of a farm, but they could replace some of the men who were called for service. The Land Group had begun at the Sydney University where students had been trained and were now offering their services during their vacation.

She said that it was hoped a further call for trainees would be made shortly. "Should such a crisis arise as the invasion of Australia, it would be too late then to try and replace the men who would be called up for fighting services," Miss Turner said. In response to various questions, Miss Turner said that what was ideally wanted from the men was assistance with training and "sympathy in the way of removal of prejudice against women farm workers".

"Bombo" Requisitioned

Kiama's already dwindling blue metal industry was further eroded in 1941, when the Naval authorities requisitioned the metal steamer, "Bombo", for the war effort. In a letter to Kiama Council, Quarries Ltd said that as the Bombo had been taken out of local service, and with no other suitable ships available, the wharf storage hoppers would no longer be used.

The "People's Army"

Branches of the Volunteer Defence Corps (VDC), affectionately known as the "People's Army" were established throughout Australia, including Kiama and Gerringong, as a means of assisting military procedures on the homefront.

Army authorities were engaged in instructing these civilian units how to "best help the army in the event of an invasion". Membership was opened to men aged 18 to 60 years who wished to perform defence services, were reasonably fit and who were not, at present, in the militia or were eligible for service.

"Military experts here say that in the event of an invasion, a first essential is that the civil population should remain in the towns, villages and farms. The second essential is to do everything possible to instruct the civilian population how to best assist the army by attacking the enemy communications by sabotage etc."

Kiama Independent/Reporter
 February 11, 1942

Rats of Tobruk

In October, 1941, the community celebrated the triumph of the "Rats of Tobruk" for their achievement in defending a fortress for a period of six months, the longest period any garrison had withstood a siege during the war. The siege began on April 10, 1941, while the enemy was still sweeping into Egypt.

"The value of the defence of Tobruk cannot be

assessed too highly. It was the rallying point for a Cyrenaican Force during the March retirement and the presence of the garrison astride the Germans' long lines of communication contributed materially in putting a halt to their advances early in the siege. During the April and May attacks, the Germans lost heavily in tanks and men when the garrison showed how Panzer units could be repelled by resolute men making efficient use of anti-tank mines and artillery. For six months this valuable port has been denied the enemy. During this period more than 20,000 Germans and Italians have been needed to encircle the defences...For six months Tobruk has been a key point in the Western desert defence...They are six months of which Australia can truly be proud."

Kiama Independent
 October 22, 1941

Test Blackout

A test blackout was held on the South Coast on December 16, 1941, as part of a drill in the event of an enemy attack. The test was commanded by the National Emergency Services (NES) with the assistance of local wardens who were, in Kiama, controlled by an efficient Chief Warden, Mr NE Hindmarsh.

Under the test, householders were told that all rooms which were visible from the sea must be blacked out while all other lights must be effectively screened so as to produce an absence of glare. Bulbs were to be removed from all outside lights.

The hour-long blackout began at 8pm when the street lights and house lights were switched off and the driver of an engine in the Kiama railway station yard covered the firebox. "About halfway through the blackout, a plane came over, circled, and came over again, flying very low to get a good observation of the conditions."

Kiama Independent
 December 20, 1941

During the test, wardens patrolled the district while a car containing the NES warden and Mr Howard T Fowles, MLA, circled the town. The only points of concern were the presence of too many people in the streets and the smoking of cigarettes ("and in some instances waving them about by irresponsible youths"). The controller suggested that smoking in the streets during blackouts be banned as the glow from the lighting of a cigarette was visible from 2500 feet, and that of a cigarette from 1000 feet.

Kiama Hospital, meantime, received high praise. There, the blackout was permanent, yet all the lights were on inside the building, including the operating theatre, and all work was going on as usual.

Barbed Wire on Beaches

As part of Australia's defence preparations, and in the wake of Japan's bombing of the US naval base at Pearl Harbour in December, 1941, Minister for the Army, Mr Forde, announced that



Allied Troops

Members of the Allied troops including British, New Zealand, Canadian and Australian (among which are several Kiama servicemen) are pictured during a

barbed wire would be laid along the Australian coastline, including beaches.

People who saw these preparations being carried out in their home towns were advised not to be alarmed, "but should realise that they are part of the plan which has been worked out for their defence".

Evacuation Scheme

Several weeks later, the Minister for National Emergency Services, Mr RJ Heffron, called on the Municipal and Shire Councils of the state to carry out "the decentralised planning and administration of evacuation".

The question of evacuation generally involved the transfer of residents, food, livestock and plant located on the coastal belt to areas in the "interior of civil population".

At a public meeting held in the Gerringong Town Hall, residents were told that people of the town had not only been targeted for relocation inland, but their town was seen as a convenient base beyond Port Kembla's industrial centre from which the Government might carry out military operations. As a consequence, a local register of "accommodation" outlets was also being compiled.

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I - 1939-45 ~



in Jerusalem

photo call in front of the Mosque of Omar, Jerusalem, in 1943.

PHOTO: Geoff Honey Collection

main point of discussion was the clearing of tracks, which could be used for the evacuation of the livestock and/or the population. "There is no good running about trying to clear tracks once the enemy was right among us," Mr Fredericks said. He added that the evacuation policy of cattle was not altogether designed to save them, but to prevent them from falling into enemy hands.

The meeting ultimately supported the track clearing proposal, contributing £10 towards the Government's costs.

Further advice to hand from the Government in March, 1942, instructed that stud animals were to be evacuated "at the very earliest moment" together with animals of stud herds.

Those farmers who did not carry out these instructions voluntarily would be forced to comply.

National Security Act

Under the National Security Act of 1939-40, all citizens of German, Italian and Japanese heritage were deemed "enemy aliens", regardless of whether they had been naturalised as Australians. As of January 28, 1942, these people were required to report once a week to the nearest Aliens Registration Officer in their home district.

While the aim of the act was to maintain national security, the "aliens" became relative prisoners in their own homes, prevented from traveling anywhere and having the finger of suspicion pointed in their direction. Within days, cards for the compulsory registration of every Australia citizen aged between 16 and 65 were distributed throughout the country. People had only two weeks in which to register and it was the duty of every person to carry his card at all times for identification purposes.

Air Raid Precautions

A large gathering attended the Antrim Theatre in March, 1942, to hear an "interesting and instructive address" on air raid precautions delivered by Mr R Griffin, an instructional staff member of the National Emergency Services.

Members of all branches of the NES gathered at the Council Chambers before marching to the theatre with their stretchers and equipment. The large numbers on parade showed "what a big proportion of the population here is already engaged in civil defence work".

In his opening address, Mr Griffin said it should be remembered that the purpose of many air raids were simply to destroy civilian morale. He said that before the current war, it was considered that battles were fought by trained soldiers against trained soldiers. "But today there is some truth in the saying that the safest place for a person to be was in the army," he said. He added, however, that "our civilian morale was Australia's greatest asset".

Mr Griffin then proceeded with a lecture on

three main topics, high explosive bombs, incendiary bombs and gas attacks.

"It was an error to think that this climate in this country was not propitious for gas attacks. Between dusk and dawn, gas would stay on and near the ground, and do its job. The Japanese would undoubtedly use gas when it suited them...Using graphic blackboard drawings, Mr Griffin dealt with HE and anti-personnel bombs, the latter often being known as 'daisy cutters'. To escape the effects of the former, it was often alright to lie in a gutter or ditch, but with the latter, this might be dangerous and if wounding were inevitable, it was better to keep standing, when the legs would be the only portion of the body to be harmed."

Kiama Independent/Reporter
March 25, 1942

Trench Digging Starts In Local Playgrounds

Trench digging was begun in local schools in March, 1942, the local volunteers being told that "blistered hands and stiff backs" were nothing compared with the compromised safety of local school children, should an air raid occur.

At Kiama, the work started on March 21, with up to 30 men engaged digging trenches while the women worked to render the windows shatterproof, serving morning and afternoon tea in between. Altogether, 36 sections of trenches were dug over a period of two days, each about ten feet in length. More trenches were to be dug the following weekend.

The men who dug trenches were:-

Messrs H Chin, R Henderson, James, Rev Dr Collocott, F Jones, A Jones, FE Palin, H Lyons, CW King, RJ Jenkins, J and H George, A Fretwell, Gunning, AJ Scott, C Walton, PJ Gale, M Camage, W Longbottom, A Yule, Larsen sen and jun, A Piercey, R Townend, J Richardson, H Tidmarsh, E Millet, W Boyce, WG Walker, R Little, E Filmer, C Griffiths, AJ Partell, Aiken, F Wilson, TR Kirkpatrick, FA Smith, C Emerton, H Prott, NE Hindmarsh, P Tarbert, R Warren, FJ Hannigan, G Emerton, J Carson, N Hindmarsh, R White, H Campbell and McKenzie.

Workers on the shatterproofing of windows were: Mesdames Holman, Chin, Smith, Weston, M Graham, James, Barrett, G Richardson, Gale, Burton, A Scott, also Mr George Richardson and Betty Scott.

At the Kiama Convent School, good work was also done, the digging of the trenches being practically completed and the job of lining them being in progress. A shelter for the nuns and the "tiny tots" had been built as well, while shatterproofing was underway.

Those who worked in the trench digging were:

Messrs RJ Jenkins, Bennett, W Shanahan, G Gardner, J Warren, T McDonald, JP Marley, J Wall, WG Walker, J O'Connor, Parkinson, K Saunders, F McAuley, McAuliffe, J Flynn, A Piercey, Sylva, F Brown, F Ryan, R Smith, P Monaghan, J Sendt, J McDonald, J Simpson and Ken Shanahan.

At Jamberoo, trench digging was begun the previous Saturday, two rows of zig-zag trenches being made sufficient to accommodate all the children enrolled.



~ Pvt Ken Sweet AIF ~
Ken joined the 2nd 20th Infantry Battalion in 1942, aged 28 years. He was captured at Singapore by the Japanese and spent four years as a POW at Changi, building the Burma Railway. He died in 1996.



~ Corp Beryl Jarratt WAAAF ~
Beryl had just finished a commercial artist's course at Sydney Technical College when WWII was declared. She joined the Air Force as a Signalwoman in April, 1942, and spent the next three years at Laverton Air Force Base, Victoria, interpreting enemy Morse code and guiding Allied planes in distress. 80-year-old Beryl, now Mrs Oliver, today lives at Earlwood, Sydney.



~ Signalwoman Sadie Chin AWAS ~

Valentine's Day

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World War II 1939-45

Parish Hall - Welfare Hut

Kiama's Christ Church parish hall "commenced a new stage in its career" in May, 1942, when it was re-launched as the Kiama United Welfare Hut by Kiama Mayor, Ald CS Boyd. The hall was converted for the "comfort and assistance of men of the fighting forces who may visit Kiama".

The hall was filled to overflowing for the launch, such was the enthusiasm and support for the initiative. The Rev SA Mainstone, in addressing the gathering, said that the church had the hall to give, also the furniture and the workers.

He paid tribute to secretary of the movement, Mr AG Adam, who had been untiring in his efforts to have the welfare hut established. Twenty community organisations would assist in the operation of the hut.

Rationing

It wasn't long after Pearl Harbour was bombed and war was launched in the Pacific that rationing was begun in Australia. This was done to conserve the country's resources which were slowly dwindling due to a shortage of labour, a reduction in imports such as tea, and the country's efforts to support its overseas servicemen and women.

Each household was supplied with a ration book containing coupons which could be used to buy goods ranging from basic food items such as sugar, flour and tea to reams of fabric and clothing. Those who lived on farms, of course, were fairly self-sufficient and were less inclined to feel the effects of rationing than city and urban dwellers.

A Revised Australia Coupon Scale published in the *Kiama Independent* and announced by the Rationing Commission on November 23, 1942, provided an indication of what householders faced in their efforts to make ends meet.

A fully lined woman's dress was worth 21 coupons and 13 coupons for an unlined dress. A child's dress was 16 coupons and 10 coupons respectively. A pair of trousers, be they cotton, tweed, drill, denim, woollen or oilskin, was worth five coupons.

A brassiere was two coupons while a pair of stockings was four coupons. One had to be pretty keen if they wanted a fur coat - it was worth 40 coupons.

It must have been an extraordinary situation for residents of the Kiama district when, in June 1943, the Australian Government announced that butter would be rationed at half a pound a person

per week. While people were seen as not being overly affected by the ration of tea and sugar, the rationing of butter "affected every man, woman and child".

"Butter is essential to health, and to maintain health at least one ounce is necessary for each person daily. Butter contains health-giving vitamins A and D, which keep you free from colds. They also keep your eyes healthy, and ensure firm bones and teeth and normal growth."

Kiama Independent/Reporter
June 16, 1943

Given the essential nutrients offered by butter, the *Independent* published advice on how the ration could best be utilised. "Firstly, divide each ration into equal portions, one of which should be used each day for each member of the family. At the end of the week, there will be a portion of each half pound ration left over. This may be used for any little extravagance you may have had to deny yourself."

Annual Shows Abandoned

The 1941 Royal Easter Show was abandoned on account of the military occupation of the Sydney Showground. President of the Council of the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW, Sir Samuel Hordern, said that it was with great reluctance that the show had been cancelled, "especially at a time when there was so much to be done in the direction of stimulating war-time primary production".

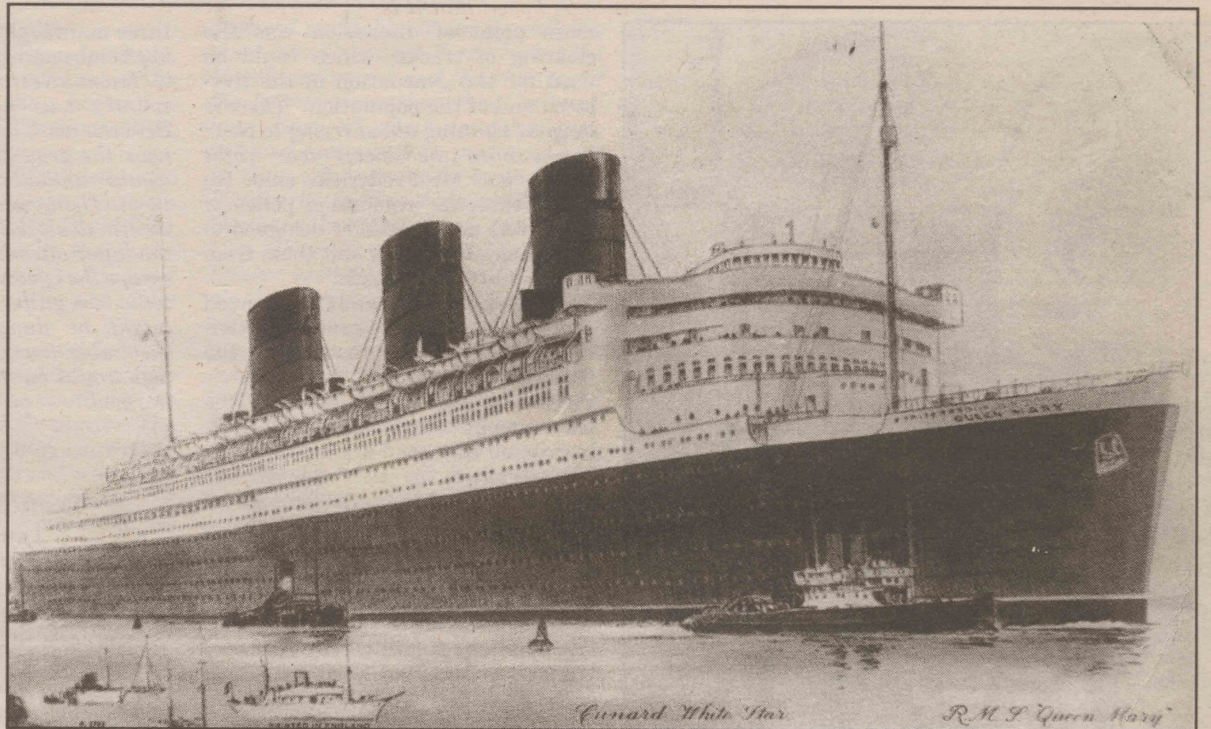
Meantime, in a deputation to Kiama Council, Kiama Agricultural Society representatives, Messrs AL Fredericks and CW King, said that due to the absence of a showground pavilion and in view of the war, it was unlikely that a Kiama Show would be held in the next seven years, if at all.

Indeed, when the Society met in July, 1941, to discuss the 1942 show, it was unanimously decided that "owing to petrol rationing and labour shortage on the farms", the time was inopportune to consider a show for the following year.

When the 1944 Show was also cancelled, Mr Fredericks, said that it was a "tragedy" that the Kiama Show had "died out" as it had been "a great meeting place for men from all parts of New South Wales".

The decision was later reversed, however, and the first show to be held in Kiama since 1938 was staged at the Kiama Showground on Saturday, January 29. The show was officially opened by Minister for Local Government and Housing, the Hon J McGirr.

Football Season



The Queen Mary - a passenger ship which transported several thousand Australian troops to the warfront. PHOTO: Geoff Honey Collection.

Suspended

In March, 1942, the South Coast Rugby League suspended the 1942 football season "on account of the war conditions". School football was also cancelled.

Appeal for Knitters

An urgent appeal for knitters was made by the Kiama Patriotic and War Fund in March, 1943, on behalf of the Australian Comforts Fund. Fund organisers asked that all knitters concentrate on the making of short socks.

"It is hoped that every woman who can knit will make herself responsible for the making of at least one pair of socks during this month, over and above her usual quota...Socks are wanted in almost unlimited numbers...The ACF has accepted the added responsibility of supplying allied troops as well as all servicewomen. This means a greatly increased number of requisitions to fulfil their needs."

Kiama Independent/Reporter
March 3, 1943

Surf Club Support

In 1943, members of the Kiama Surf Club struck upon the idea of sending their own canteens of rations to their clubmates on the front, and of circulating the addresses of servicemen and women so that they could keep in touch with others serving on the front. By June, 1943, several can-

teens had already been received, prompting letters of thanks from the service personnel. LAC Les Thompson, RAAF, thanked the club for his canteen and the "enterprising move" of circulating the addresses. Private Alton Tuohy said the canteens had been a great help "to us poor buck privates who don't get overpaid".

Staff Sgt Jack Carrick, AIF, sent his thanks from hospital where he was overcoming his fourth bout of malaria in six months. Captain Keith Kates, AIF, said that he appreciated the opportunity of hearing from other club members, while Private Les Pepper, AIF, said the list of colleagues' addresses was just what he needed.

In August, 1943, further letters of thanks were received from Corporal Viola Carson WAAAF, Signalwoman Sadie Chin AWAS, ACW Beryl Jarratt WAAAF, Corporal Gwen Wright AWAS, LAC Jack Kates RAAF, Private Roy Phillis AIF, W/O Ray Walker and Private Alan Ziems, AIF.

WAC Committee

A Kiama branch of the War Agricultural Committee was formed in August, 1943, to the urgent need "to organise the food front". Members were to assist with manpower matters, the organisation of farm labour within the district, school labour on light jobs such as pea-picking, and advising National Service Officers.

Committee members included Messrs RJ Wilson, EW Cooke, HA Weir, CS Boyd and T Weir.

"PRISONERS OF WAR Advice to Relatives

"The Red Cross Headquarters have issued the following advice:-

Next of kin of Prisoners of War in Europe should take special heed of instructions regarding contents of Next of Kin parcels.

For prisoners in Germany, shirts, woollen garments and comforts must be in service colours.

For Prisoners in Italian hands, only khaki shirts, woollen garments and comforts will be received.

For Prisoners of War in both Germany and Italy, service boots only, and only striped pyjamas may be sent.

Disregard of such regulations causes delay in despatch of parcels to our boys. The Packing Department handles over 500 parcels a week. Permit parcels for Prisoners of War in Italy may not contain playing cards.

For POWs in Japanese hands, type your letters."

Kiama Independent
March 6, 1943

Letters from the Front

~ Sergt Arnold Miller ~

In February, 1943, a letter from Sergeant Arnold Miller, of the RAAF, to his parents, Mr and Mrs JG Miller, of Parkview, Gerringong, was published. The letter outlined Sergt Miller's flying exercises over Russia - and his impressions of the local food.

"We flew over in our aircraft, the long journey taking nearly eight hours, and we were lucky enough not to run into any enemy aircraft or anti-aircraft defence... We were over Finland (which is occupied by the Germans) at dawn, and we were rather surprised at not being fired at, or seeing any enemy aircraft... We were taken to a Russian mess and although the food and tea wasn't too bad, the bread was horrible to what we have always had. It was very sour and soggy, and the butter was made from goats' milk, which didn't taste so good... Our Aussie ground staff came here by boat, having left some time before us, and all the food we have here has been sent over from England;

all tinned food, and it is cooked by Russian woman. They are very good cooks, as the food has been very good...When we arrived here, we all built air-raid shelters, and they certainly have had plenty of use. Jerry comes over every day, and sometimes at night when the weather is clear...There is no warning siren here and if we don't hear the Russian fighters taking off, the first indication we have that there is a raid on is the anti-aircraft guns firing. The other day, the sound of the bombs whistling down made us all do our dash for the shelters in even time...We are paid an allowance of fifteen roubles a day, which is extra to our pay, but unfortunately there isn't a thing that can be bought, except to spend it on a shave or haircut. A free ration of sixty cigarettes and two bars of chocolate are given to us each week while overseas."

Kiama Independent
February 19, 1943

~ Private Joe Perry ~

In Papua New Guinea, Private Joe Perry had more than just enemy aircraft to contend with overhead, as he outlined in a letter to one of his Kiama friends.

"I have had a bit of a move since I last wrote to you, and am pretty well settled in the new place now. It is a good bit different from the last, in as much as it is not open country. There are a lot of coconut trees about; in fact it's pretty well all coconut trees...a bloke has got to watch out for falling nuts. You may think I'm joking, but as the nuts ripen, they just fall down, and as I've said before, there are coconut trees everywhere, so you've got to watch yourself.

A couple of blokes have had near-misses, and one was actually hit on the head. Lucky for him, he had his battle-bowler on, but just the same he was staggering around for some time. We have to wear long strides and those American gaiters all the time here. There are too many mosquitoes around. They are not so bad in the daytime, but they're pretty crook in the night. There are a few malaria ones knocking about here, and we have to take ten grains of quinine a day...There is a fellow here who was telling me he woke up the other morning and found a four foot baby alligator bellowing outside his tent."

Kiama Independent/Reporter
February 17, 1943

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World War II 1939-45

Prisoners of War

In September, 1943, updates were published on the welfare of local prisoners of war who were in Japanese hands after the Malayan campaign.

It followed the arrival of post cards to relatives throughout Australia - some from men already known to be prisoners, others being the first notification received.

Mrs Olga Harvison, of Jamberoo, who had been evacuated to Australia just prior to the fall of Singapore, was separated from her husband who had enlisted in the Malayan forces. She had not received word from him until September 14, 1943, when a post card arrived saying that he was a prisoner, unrounded and in good spirits.

Mrs MJ Solway, of Jamberoo, received a similar post card from her son, Private AA Solway of the AIF. Mr Jack Sweet, of Kiama, received the following card from his son, Private Ken Sweet AIF: "I am in good health and I hope that you are the same. We are getting plenty to eat and are in very good quarters".

His message arrived after a long period of anxiety, during which all that was known was that he had been posted as officially missing. (On August 22, 1945, just a week after the cessation of war, Private Sweet was reported alive in Siam.)

A letter received by Mr and Mrs WC Lees, of Gerringong, from their son Cpl LR (Tod) Lees, was the first word they had received from him in 22 months.

DVR Reg Aiken AIF was the first prisoner of war to return to Kiama, this occurring on July 12, 1945, two months after Germany's surrender to the Allies. His return came after more than five years absence, four of which he had been a prisoner of war in German and Italian hands.

"It was a great occasion for his relatives and friends, some forty of whom gathered at the residence of his parents, Mr and Mrs H Aiken, Shoalhaven Street, to give him a fitting welcome. Beautiful floral decorations in a patriotic scheme of red, white and blue greeted the guest of honour as he came home again after such a long and trying absence, and he entered to the strains of 'There's a Boy Coming Home On Leave'. In a new uniform, with the ribbon of the Africa Star, and his six service chevrons, Reg looked very fit and well, and the recuperative period in England and the long sea voyage had evidently done their work well... Various toasts were honoured, and among other speakers, Messrs CW King and W Gemmill, Diggers of the last war, voiced the general sentiments of pleasure at Reg's safe return... The presentation of a complete civilian outfit was made to Reg by members of his

family, and it is to be hoped that it is not long before he is able to wear them...Returned men are always reticent about their war experiences, but in an informal yarn with Reg, some interesting experiences were elicited. He was taken prisoner by the Italians in the first Libya show, and he and another AIF man really owed the loss of their freedom to the fact that they refused to leave a badly wounded comrade. Conditions in Italian prisoner of war camps were not very satisfactory, the food problem being the worst, this fortunately being greatly alleviated by the excellent Red Cross parcel system."

Kiama Independent
July 14, 1945

1945 Anzac Service

Kiama's 1945 Anzac Day service was held on Sunday, April 29, just nine days prior to Germany's surrender to the Allies.

Although, as the large crowd gathered at the Oddfellows Hall to hear an address by returned serviceman and Acting Rector of Dapto, the Rev WP Hart, no-one knew just how much longer the war on the European front would last.

The service began with a march from the Showground to the Memorial Arch, played along by the Kiama Municipal Silver Band.

Wreaths were laid by representatives of organisations including the Junior Red Cross, Girl Guides, Returned Soldiers, Volunteer Defence Corps, Air Training Corps, and RAAF under Flying Officer Mr Lyons, before the Last Post was sounded by a "fanfare of cornets".

Rev Hart, in his address, said that every war was a "crime", the current war having been "engineered by fiends incarnate, and was being fought by two nations of lunatics". He then asked some rather poignant questions of the gathering.

"I wonder if the fact that the war has not touched us to so great an extent as it has in other countries, is going to be our great advantage. We are sitting here comfortably; we have had two good meals today, and we are reasonably certain of having another. We can go to bed tonight sure that we will not be disturbed by sirens giving warning of air raids and bombs. What real right have we to this peace and security? When there was a suggestion that the meat rationing might be cut down to feed the starving people in other countries, there was talk immediately by so many people that they could not possibly reduce their meat consumption. My own people in England had to pool their meat coupons in order to get one good meal on a Sunday."

Kiama Independent
May 2, 1945



Easter in Jerusalem

If there was an upside to war, international conflict at least afforded Australian troops stationed in Jerusalem an "unforgettable" Easter experience in 1940.

"Attendance at church services was not compulsory, but a large proportion of the men were present and it was obvious that they were conscious of their proximity to the actual scenes of a sacred story that had been their heritage and the background of their knowledge since early boyhood. These camp services, with the military simplicity, were in some respects as impressive as the manifesta-

tions of faith in the old City of Jerusalem itself. Every man must have gazed across the fertile plains to the blue Judean Hills and felt how brief is a man's span of years when it is measured against the centuries of history. In Jerusalem the day began early for the men on leave...

Perhaps the greatest number attended the Stations of the Cross which commenced at the Palace of Herod and ended at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. As the men entered the Damascus Gate and poured through the winding streets to the Church of Ecce Homo, the

transition from modern to biblical days could not fail to impress them... The men assembled in a large courtyard and waited for the ceremony to commence. Bareheaded, with their hats looped on their shoulder straps, they presented a magnificent spectacle of bronzed fitness in contrast with the pale, bearded faces of the monks and priests in their grey and brown habits, dating back a thousand years."

Kiama Independent/Reporter
April 17, 1940

PHOTO: A scene from the courtyard of the Mosque of Omar, Jerusalem, during WWII.

Letters from the Front

A letter was sent home by Private Norman Harris, of the AIF, to his parents, Mr and Mrs Ernest Harris, of Jerrara, in March, 1943. Pte Harris, who was serving in New Guinea, said that he was happy and well and undertaking a tour of local villages.

On leaving one village, he saw a "thrilling dogfight" between a number of Japanese bombers and some of the Allied fighters.

"It took our planes about two minutes to get into position, and then they let the Japs have it," the Independent said.

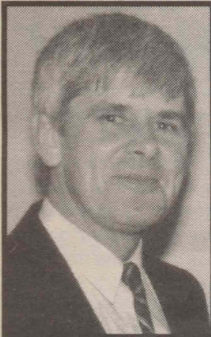
A follow-up letter was published in November, 1943, Private Harris reporting that he had come through "the Salamaua scrap without a scratch".

"There's no doubt about it, they are as cunning as foxes"

He said that he'd had a strenuous climb over the Tambu moun-

tain carrying a heavy load, which necessitated him having to rest every ten minutes. He said that, if he lived to be 100, he would never forget the ascent.

"It was in this type of country that we met the Japs," he wrote. "There's no doubt about it, they are as cunning as foxes, and they even live in holes like them. Believe me, they take some rooting out. After many hair-raising experiences, we finally got them out, and they went for their lives towards the coast, with us hot on their trail."



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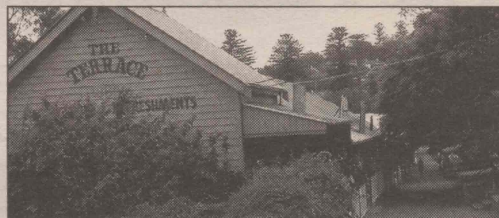
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Rev WP Hart  
Anzac Day, 1945  
~~~~~

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Specialising in English sweets, Beanie kids (exclusive), airplants, silver jewellery, Coalcraft (exclusive), Australian made T-shirts and hats, souvenirs, Kiddies Korner.

World War II 1939-45

"GERMANY SURRENDERS

Fighting In Europe Ceases After Nearly Six Years of War

The long-awaited news of Germany's final capitulation to the Allies was received yesterday (Tuesday). The Unconditional surrender of all German fighting forces was signed at 2.40am (London time) on Monday at Reims Schoolhouse, General Eisenhower's headquarters.

Previously, the German Forces in Italy and Western Austria, numbering 1,000,000 men, had surrendered to Field Marshal Alexander on 2nd May, the day on which Marshal Stalin announced the fall of Berlin...At the time of going to press, it was expected that Mr Churchill, President Truman and Marshal Stalin would simultaneously make official statements at 11pm (AET) yesterday that all hostilities in Europe had concluded. Celebrations of the victory in Australia were to commence after the Acting Prime Minister, Mr Chifley, had made a similar announcement over Australian Broadcasting Stations following immediately after Mr Churchill's announcement.

Kiama Independent/Reporter
May 9, 1945

"VE Day"

"VE Day" in the Kiama district, as elsewhere, was celebrated on May 9, 1945, "in a spirit of profound thankfulness that the dreadful conflict which has devastated Great Britain and Europe is at an end". The celebrations, which took the form of local thanksgiving services conducted by the local churches, were somewhat low-key, however, the townsfolk bearing in mind that, with war still raging with the Japanese, "there is still a job, and big job, to be done in the Pacific".

"Regarding prisoners of war, perhaps this was the sphere in which the two ideas were best expressed. There are those whose sons, husbands or brothers have been prisoners in German hands, and even if they have not received definite news of them, still there is the great probability that they are now safe and before long will be on their way home. Others again whose menfolk are prisoners of the Japanese cannot share this joy, and they are indeed imbued with the realisation of the incomplete stage of the conflict."

Kiama Independent
May 12, 1945

Diggers' Clubroom

In July, 1945, Gerringong Council announced its willingness to sell the Memorial Hall to the local branch of the RSL for use as a Diggers' clubroom. It followed a request from the RSL and occurred despite misgivings expressed by Gerringong Mayor, Ald Gus Chittick, who said that the building had been built by public subscription and thus belonged to the people of the municipality. Ald JRM Miller countered that the build-

ing had received little use from month to month and, "if it was going to benefit the soldiers and give them pleasure, he would say let them have it". The majority of council agreed.

In August, 1945, at a special meeting of Council which was attended by members of the Gerringong RSL sub-branch, the council unanimously decided to transfer the hall and Council Chambers property to the League; the League to make a contribution of £250 to council to offset expenditure incurred by the Council in improving the Memorial Hall and building the Council office and chambers.

"JAPAN SURRENDERS Six Year War Ended

With the news received at 9am on Wednesday last (August 15, 1945) that Japan had accepted the ultimatum sent out from Potsdam by the Allied Nations, practically a six-year war period came to an end. The surrender terms are in the process of being signed...The Japanese war had lasted nearly four years, this conflict having started with the treacherous attack on Pearl Harbour, Hawaii, in December, 1941. This brought the United States into the war...The Pacific war has been fought on very widely separated fronts, Malaya, Burma, the Philippines, Dutch East Indies, New Guinea, the Solomons, to name the chief areas, and at one time Australia itself was threatened...The collapse of Japan came somewhat suddenly after their first decisive rejection of the Potsdam demand for unconditional surrender, and their reversal of attitude was undoubtedly due to the use of the atomic bomb and the realisation of the dreadful and widespread devastation which even one of these had caused...The world appeared to realise that the future use of this energy can mean only one of two things - either war and fratricidal strife must be abolished and peace and human fellowship come into their own; or else the whole world must inevitably perish in another conflict in which such a method of destruction might be employed."

Kiama Independent
August 18, 1945

Victory Celebrations

With the war now well and truly over, the residents of Kiama district celebrated in full strength, the "joyousness" being centred on the local school children who had just started school for the day. Reading the following account of the local celebrations provided a delightful picture of rural innocence.

"Victory Celebrations A Very Happy Occasion - ...The children poured out into the streets and formed 'crocodiles' all over the school flat and up the street. Gay paper caps and streamers, little flags, rattles and hooters appeared from nowhere, and the noise was soon deafening. A number of people turned up their radios to the full, petrol tins and cans were kicked about the streets, or towed at the

back of pushbikes, and several buildings were soon sporting some bunting and flags.

At the Clothing Mill in Manning Street, work was stopped almost as soon as it had started, and the forty or fifty girls made whoopee, singing, laughing and cheering, and all the wireless sets in this building were also turned on full. In next to no time shops were closed and people were out in the streets in large numbers, hardly anyone waiting to hear all the details over the air.

All they wanted to know was that the war was over, that the news was really official, and that the two day's holiday had started...The church bells commenced ringing almost immediately and according to what had been arranged, two hours after the news made eleven o'clock a convenient time. There were large congregations at all churches...

The Ambulance had got on the job early and went around with its siren sounding, to let people know who had perhaps missed the radio news. Then the fire engine was brought into service for the same job, and it soon turned out that it had a dual job to perform. Dozens of kiddies, to whom a fire engine is a perennial delight, found that there was a ride going, and driver Alec Scott found that he had to make several trips round town with his unusual 'brigade' on board.

A load of yelling, cheering youngsters waving flags was certainly a novel sight for the fire engine in its staid, wartime khaki dress...At the telephone exchange, also, the

girls carried on and gallantly and good-humouredly coped with the rush of calls, cancelling appointments or making new arrangements...

On the Showground, a very fine bonfire had been assembled, with loads of wood, old motor tyres, smothered with oil and petrol, and towards midnight this was another gathering point for the youngsters who stayed there for several hours, dancing and singing. The second day was very quiet. Everyone was tired."

Kiama Independent
August 18, 1945

Jamberoo

At Jamberoo, "the main item of noise when the glad news broke" was supplied by bells, although "the factory whistle blowing for some hours also did its best. The dinner bell from the hotel worked overtime for a while".

Gerringong

"Singing and cheering in the main streets" greeted the news at Gerringong and the school children immediately proceeded home again to celebrate with their family and neighbours.

"The factory whistle was set blowing and all the milk cans were taken out of the lorries and trucks. They were of course too precious to be knocked about, so enthusiastic celebrants played leap-frog over them as the next best thing. Bunting appeared in the main street as if by magic, and an air of joyousness soon prevailed everywhere."



Members of the 2nd 101 Australian Transport Company are entrusted with the task of moving a bomb for the US Air Force in Port Moresby, New Guinea, in 1943. Note the chalked message on the bomb, 'To Tojo, with love'. PHOTO: Geoff Honey Collection.

The Fallen, Wounded & Prisoners of War

For those who have not lived through a period of war, it would be hard to imagine the absolute tragedy of picking up the local newspaper and reading that yet another neighbour, friend or former classmate had died.

Of course, the suffering experienced by relatives and friends would have been unimaginable. Many men and women from the Kiama district served their country during World War II. The following are but a few.

"Private Ron Herbert

Mr Frederick Herbert, Kiama, has been notified by the military authorities that his son, Pte Ronald Frederick Herbert, of the AIF, has been wounded in action. He was serving in the Middle East. Sympathy is expressed with the relatives in their time of anxiety." KI 7.11.42

"Corporal SJ Monaghan Killed in Action

His many friends here will learn with regret that Corporal SJ 'Paddy' Monaghan, of the AIF, has been killed in action on the North African front. Paddy was the younger brother of Flying Officer Ted Monaghan, RAAF, with whom he was in partnership in a garage in Kiama a few years ago." KI 7.11.42

"Private Mark Hart - Killed In Action

The sad news was received in Kiama on Saturday that Pte Mark Hart, of the AIF, had been killed in action, during the fighting in North Africa. He was the only son of Mr Mark Hart, formerly of Kiama and now of Harden, and the late Mrs Hart, and his only sister is Mrs C Moskos, Kiama. Mark was of a bright, cheery and happy disposition, and endeared himself to all. Now at the early age of 25, he takes his place with the others of our townsmen who have given their lives in this and previous wars for the cause of their country's freedom." KI 11.11.42

"Lieut John Ottley - Died of Wounds

Lieut John Ottley, AIF, has died of wounds received in action in North Africa. He was formerly in partnership with his brother, Darrell, (also a lieutenant in the AIF) in a sawmilling business at Bombo and while here made many friends who will be sorry indeed to hear of his passing. He is survived by Mrs Ottley and one son." KI 11.11.42

"OBITUARY - Sergt Lloyd Sharpe

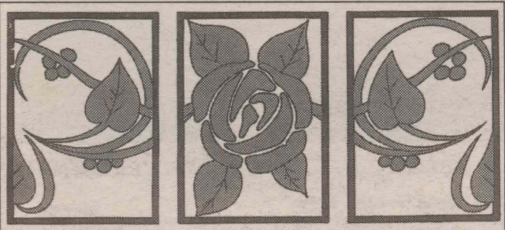
An official RAAF casualty list issued last week contained the name of Sergt Lloyd Sharpe,

'Previously missing, now presumed dead'. Sincere sympathy is extended to his parents, Mr and Mrs OG Sharpe, of Gerringong, and his brothers, Bruce and Cyril and sister Nona, who have indeed had an anxious time since Sergt Sharpe was first posted as missing in August last after being engaged in air operations over Europe. Lloyd Sharpe was 24 years of age and enlisted in the Air Force early in 1941, completing his training in Canada and later going to Great Britain. He had passed through all stages of work for air crew and had graduated as Wireless Air Gunner with his promotion to Sergeant. Lloyd was a fine type of young man, very popular in the district, especially in sporting circles, in which he had taken a prominent part, being a keen cricketer and footballer." KI 6.1.43

"Sergt Les Pepper AIF

The sad news came through yesterday (Friday) afternoon that Sergt Les Pepper, AIF, had been killed in action. It is believed that he was in Borneo. Very sincere sympathy is extended to his mother, Mrs Pepper, Shoalhaven Street, Kiama, his wife, brothers and sisters." KI 14.7.45

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World War II 1939-45

Welcome Home Committee

A Welcome Home Committee was formed in Kiama in early 1944, the first meeting being held in the Kiama Council Chambers in February. The purpose of the committee was, as the name suggested, to welcome home those local service men and women who had been discharged from duty.

On this occasion, the committee was aware of 12 people who had returned and the decision was made to celebrate their homecoming with a dance at the Oddfellows Hall.

The social was ultimately held on a cold winter's night on April 15, 1944. Kiama Mayor, Ald WR Holden, made presentations to Signalwoman Sadie Chin, Sergeant Ray Weir, Private AE Bishop, Corporal Seldon Cocks, Major GP Watkins, Private WA McDonald, Private Tim Gannon, AC1 DT Evans and Private SE Edwards.

In some cases, the presentations had to be made to relatives - Miss Edie Richardson for her brother, Dvr Jack Richardson; Mrs Ruse for her husband, Private Ron Ruse, and Mr RJ Wilson for his son, Cpl HD Wilson.

Ald Holden said that there were 153 men and women on service from Kiama and similar welcome home functions would be held for each of them.

Sergeant Weir thanked all those who had sent Canteen Orders, parcels and letters while he was away and those people who "carried on so bravely while the menfolk were away fighting".

He said that the troops had met many people who had "no country and nothing to live for, and it was nice for the soldiers to realise that they had a home which was being kept going for them".

Even prior to the cessation of war, the local servicemen and women were welcomed home - either for a period of leave or for good - and were always greeted with a heroes' greeting. This included a euchre party and dance at Gerringong in April, 1943, which received a special guest, Corporal Jac Cullen, who had returned home on leave.

The Mayor, Ald MJ Walker, welcomed the young soldier home, congratulating him on the work done for his country. Mr Stan Miller extended a welcome on behalf of the Gerringong branch of the RSSAILA while Mr

Gus Chittick expressed warm wishes on behalf of the Junior Farmers' Club, of which Cpl Cullen had been a hard working member.

"Cpl Cullen in responding said he appreciated the hearty welcome given to him and assured the gathering it was wonderful to be home after the experiences he had been through. He expressed his thanks to the Comforts Fund for the excellent parcels he had received whilst away, Mr JW Cullen expressed his sincere thanks for the manner in which his son had been welcomed home. He said it showed the excellent spirit of the Gerringong people."

Kiama Independent
May 1, 1943

A happy gathering of 70 friends and family formed at the New Brighton Hotel in November, 1945, to welcome home Flying Officer Charles King, RAAF. The proceedings were chaired by Dr BA Stephen while Mr FE Palin was toastmaster.

"Their guest had gained his promotion on active service, and had had a brilliant career, having been the captain of a four-engined bomber, with the responsibility for the lives of himself and the highly trained and specialised crew...He had been mentioned in dispatches and this had brought honour to all his friends."

Kiama Independent
November 3, 1945

This welcome was followed in March, 1946, by a Welcome Home Social which was held in the Antrim Theatre. The function was the eighth of its kind organised by the Kiama Welcome Home Committee.

Those presented with certificates were: Pte CW Bailey, Dvr Beryl Boles, LAC HH Brown, Sgt VM Brown, Pte H Bryson, S.Sgt RR Burke, FO E Cocks, Dvr J Collins, ACW ME Creelman, F/O D Davies, F/O John East, W/O Basil Ettingshausen, Pte Max Evers, Gnr CW Griffiths, Capt W Hamer, Pte FA Hardy, Cpl Beryl Jarratt, Sgt Don Jenkins, Sgt HL King, Lieut RE King, F/Lt CW King, Sgt JR Long, Pte L Mabey, Sgt RP Medcalf, Pte G Millett, Pte Jean Mitchell, Sgt W Mitchell, Pte SC Nance, Pte H Nelson, Pte L Nelson, Pte WJ Nicholls, Gnr WJ Queasley, Lieut WH Richardson, Cpl FR Ruse, Cpl AH Shepherd, Pte LJ Spinks, Sgt GL Sullivan, Pte Ken Sweet, L/Sgt JC Simpson, Pte AJ Tuohy, Sgt NH Tully, S/Sgt RW Walker and Pte A Ziems.

Jarratt's Orchestra entertained the gathering, the large crowd partaking in the old dance and barn dance which developed into a marathon, lasting half an hour.

A similar function was held at Gerringong in October, 1946, when local men were officially welcomed home at a gathering held in the Gerringong School of Arts. Mayor, Ald Gus Chittick presented certificates to the following returned personnel:

AC Abbott, JM Agney, DJ Arkell, LW Barrett, SR Barrett, VM Barton, KJ Blake, CD Blow, DS Blow, RJ Blow, FR Bissaker, RH Buchanan, LJ Cady, AJ Campbell, RP Carroll, AL Carson, JA Cullen, JR Cronin, RE Davies, CR Emery, GH Emery, VJ English, RW Gallegos, Audrey Glenmill, Dawn Gemmill, Hilda Gemmill, JA Harding, MA Hayter, RS Hayter, Nancy Henry, CA Hindmarsh, JL Hindmarsh, LM Hockaday, RF Holman, JN Holman, R Jacobs, E Johnston, JK Johnson, W Johnston, D Jones, JH Knock, AR Lamb, LR Lees, NJ Love, Joyce Wellham, RH Martin, WG Martin, JW Maynes, HB Metcalf, Aleen Miller, DL



When the Australians took leave in the Middle East, this is where they stayed, King David's Hotel - otherwise known as the Australian Soldiers' Club. The club was destroyed shortly after the war by a bomb blast which killed 80 to 90 Allied troops.

Miller, HN Miller, IG Miller, JA Miller, Ruth Miller, SN Miller, WL Mitchell, JM Murphy;

JV Murphy, I McGill, L McGregor, Lois McGregor, JW McInerney, KP McInerney, GV Neale, KT Neale, RG Neale, T Neale, PJ Noble, JC Norris, VP O'Sullivan, RN O'Keefe, J Page, BE Parkhill, KJ Parkhill, PJ Parkhill, CL Parrish, OJ Parrish, WD Peck, S Pottie, A Reynolds, AE Reynolds, JD Sharpe, NS Sharpe, LC Soley, Mavis Soley, AW Smith, MG Smith, TE Smith, WF Smith, RG Stephenson, CC Stuart, M Tammock, IJ Thompson, M Tomlins, IA Walker, JR Watson, Patricia Wallace, CE Weir, GL Williams and WJM Foley.

"Back To Civvy Street"

In 1946, the Independent launched a question/answer column called "Back To Civvy Street" which provided a forum for returned servicemen to have their concerns overcome.

"Picking up the threads again is a chief difficulty for ex-servicemen and women when they get back to Civvy Street. In this column each week typical re-establishment and rehabilitation problems will be answered. Questions are invited and authoritative answers will be published.

Q: I am a casual worker in the country. My work includes carrying out carpentry and joinery and plumbing repairs and concreting. Can I get £10 free gift of tools of trade?

A: As your employment appears to cover several sections of the one trade, it would be well to test your eligibility for a grant for tools by applying to your Repatriation Local Committee or to the Deputy Commissioner of Repatriation in the capital city of your state."

Kiama Independent/Reporter
November 13, 1946



Sergeant Ray Weir.

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HMAS Kiama

In February, 1944, Kiama was honoured in having a corvette of the Royal Australian Navy named after the town. As part of the honour, the HMAS Kiama visited the town when a presentation was made of two ornamental plaques bearing the municipal coat of arms. These were to be installed on the ship "as a tangible link between the naval vessel and the town whose name she bears".

At a civic reception, the visiting officer said that the naming of ships by the RAN was not done in any "haphazard fashion". He said that Kiama had been honoured partly because of the generosity of the Kiama people in their subscriptions to War Loans.

This support continued into the war when local organisations sent "com-

forts" to the ship's crew.

Local townsfolk were again able to inspect the vessel when, in February, 1946, it pulled into Kiama Harbour for a week's stay on its way to Sydney for demobilisation. The official welcome to the ship's company was performed by Kiama Mayor, Ald WR Holden. Lt Commander Godden said that it was a tradition of the British Navy that once a name had been selected for a ship, that name was perpetuated.

"While there was an Australian Navy of any size, there would always be a 'Kiama'," he said. He then made a presentation to the town of two mountain guns which had been captured from the Japanese. "They still had their war paint on and were just as they were when captured".

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First Woman Alderman

Miss Kathleen O'Connell

Local history was made in 1944 when Miss Kathleen O'Connell, secretary of the Brighton Hotel, was elected the first female alderman of Kiama Council.

Miss O'Connell proved a woman ahead of her time, she also being the only female representative on the board of the Kiama District Hospital and a director of the Kiama District Co-operative Building Societies.

Kathleen was re-elected to Council 1947, then as Mrs Brown and served until 1950 when she did not seek re-election.

Amalgamation

By the late 1940s, Kiama Municipality was not only keenly sought by tourists as a holiday destination, but also by the residents of Shellharbour East Ward who in 1947 lodged a campaign to be amalgamated with Kiama. A petition signed by 183 residents was presented to the Local Government Association asking that the transfer be enacted. A second petition was lodged by the residents of Jamberoo's South Ward asking for a similar union.

Kiama Council responded favourably to the proposals at its meeting in August, 1947, Ald Boyd saying that "if these people wished to come into Kiama Municipality they (the council) should welcome them". The increase in rates expected from an additional 800 residents no doubt influenced his opinion. A

recommendation was made that the Minister be asked to investigate both petitions. The action, however, did not come to pass.

In 1949, various residents of Jamberoo again sought amalgamation, this time of the Kiama, Gerringong, Shellharbour and Jamberoo Councils. The action was motivated by 122 residents living in the North and South Wards who believed they were not receiving the attention they deserved.

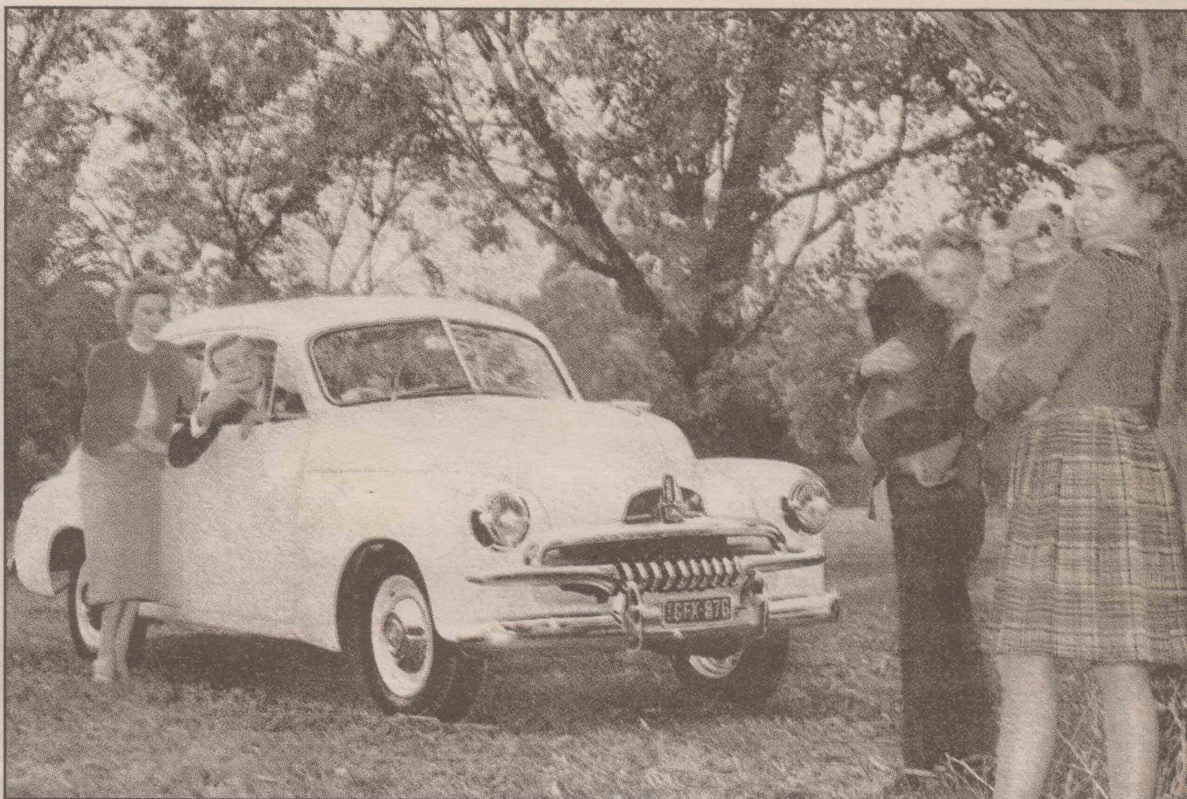
The Minister for Local Government followed up on the request, seeking the opinion of the relevant councils.

By June, 1949, all responses had been indicated. Amalgamation had been opposed by all but one council - that of Kiama. Jamberoo Council maintained that no saving would be affected in administrative costs and any plant which could be shared was being done so with Shellharbour Council already.

Kiama Council voted in favour of amalgamation by five votes to three. Ald Boyd said that he had always supported the idea of amalgamation which he said was "coming whether we like it or not". He said that the four municipalities in question shared similar characters being all rural in nature, with dairying being the main agricultural pursuit. The sharing of plant was another advantage.

Hugh Colley retires

After a tremendous 53 years service with Jamberoo Council, Ald Hugh Colley retired in November, 1947. He was auditor for six years and alderman for 47 - his record of service in Local Government in Australia being second only to Ald Boyd, of Broughton Vale, who had served on council for 50 years.



An ad which features one of the first Holdens released for Australian distribution by General Motors.

Ald Colley was farewelled with a supper provided by the Mayor, Ald AL Fredericks, following council's November 27 meeting. He was then presented with two books, 'Australia In Pictures' and 'Wonders of the Great Barrier Reef'.

Highlights of Ald Colley's career included attendance at a Local Government Conference when his service was lauded by the Minister.

Compulsory Voting

December 6, 1947, was a significant date in Local Government history as it was the first election held under a compulsory voting system. The Kiama district distinguished itself with an almost 100 percent voting attendance.

Elected to Kiama Council (in order of most votes tallied) were: Walter Holden (Mayor), Cyril Boyd, James Phillips, Robert Wilson, Albert Hillman, George Shepherd, Alfred Hindmarsh, Mrs Kathleen Brown and John Sproule.

Seventeen candidates stood for nine positions on Gerringong Council: the successful candidates being: John Ritchie Miller, Gustavus (Gus) Chittick (Mayor), Karl Hayter, Mervyn Walker, Arthur Rutledge, Harold Cooke, Henry Miller, Daniel McInerney and Charlton Graham. Those who missed out were Donald Stewart, Reginald Cooke, Athol Noble, Charles Hindmarsh, William Mitchell, Edgar (Gerry) Emery,

George Young and George Culham.

Jamberoo Council: South Ward - Charles Chittick, Ernest Harris, Frederick Weir; Central Ward - John Walsh, Roy Colley, Edward Tate; North Ward - Lin Fredericks, Roy Warby (Mayor) and Neil Richardson.

Jamberoo ALP

The first official meeting of the newly-formed Jamberoo branch of the Australian Labor Party was held on February 26, 1942, in the School of Arts hall. The branch opened with 30 members and Mr J Byrne in the chair. The meeting was addressed by Mr Howard Fowles MLA who declared the branch officially open.

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Surf Rescues, Sex Education

Surf Rescues

With the passage of time, one of the few constants of coastal living was the number of surf rescues performed in local waters. This included a rescue by Jack Gannon and Ron Nicholls in February, 1948.

"Unfortunately, one life was lost but it could quite easily have been another one but for the efforts of these two young fellows. Also a word of praise for the efficiency displayed by Harold Tuohy who answered a summons to the beach in record time and then with Doctor Cranna and George Gardiner did all that was possible in an

attempt to resuscitate the patient."

Kiama Independent
February 11, 1948

In January, 1949, another courageous rescue was carried out, this time by Kiama Surf Club Captain, Ray Stead, amid 20 foot waves. Mr Stead, of Bong Bong Street, received a call that a 13-year-old Castle Hill boy who had been camping with his parents at Easts Beach, was marooned on East's Island.

"After he had been on the island, which is about 100 yards long and 50 yards wide, for some time, he decided to return but found that the rising tide had marooned him. His plight was noticed and the police informed. Sgt E Dew and two members of the Kiama Surf Club, Messrs Ray Stead and Harold Tuohy, took a surf reel to the site. Meanwhile a youth had crossed to the island and he too had become marooned. Donning the belt, Ray crossed to the island, but in doing so was washed off his feet and badly cut his foot, which later necessitated two stitches...Those who witnessed the rescue highly praised the efforts of Ray Stead."

Kiama Independent
January 22, 1949

Omega School

After being closed in 1939, the community once again rallied to have the Omega Public School reopened for classes. The campaign was successful by 1944, the school functioning as the "Omega Subsidised School" which required the community to partially meet the costs of having the institution remain open.

In October, 1944, the children of the school were doing their bit to

"pay the expenses to keep their school open", they having "taken up tek work", the proceeds of orders going towards the central fund. An example of the work included a teapot whose handle had been broken off.

"It was given to the children to see what they could do with it. They cut a piece of three-ply as a base and then wove tek (which is a coarse type of string) around the pot, strengthened by pieces of wire, and attached a handle of wire covered with tek...Besides putting the teapot back in use, the design, worked in green and orange, is a very attractive one."

But the community's efforts only sustained the school for two years before it was closed for good in January, 1946.

Sex Education

"Sex Films" - It was a rather bold heading, especially for the Kiama Independent in November, 1949, and also when considering that the opening paragraph read, "Shellharbour residents will welcome the opportunity of attending a unique presentation of first class sound films on Sex in the Shellharbour School of Arts".

But it did not represent a momentary decline in morals, just the introduction of sex education to local teenagers. The films were being organised by the Father and Son Welfare Movement and were considered "probably the best available on the subject in the world today".

Since its inception in 1926, the Movement, which was represented by the church, state and commercial circles, had been "very active in the field of sex education and guidance" and sought to encourage "a commonsense attitude to sex and to present the challenge of the Christian moral standard". A Mother and Daughter section was incorporated in the work of the movement, "to handle the activities amongst women and girls".



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