

The Autobiography of a Horse Shoe.

I was made many years ago. I think it was about the middle of the year 1879 when I was carefully hammered and shaped from a piece of ordinary bar iron, the reason of the great care taken was because I was designed to fill a dual capacity, first, I was to be suitable for a horse with a weak or split heal, and second, I was to be one among a collection of horse shoes to compete for a prize at the International Exhibition which was to be opened at the Garden Palace, Sydney, in October 1879, after the hammering and shaping were complete I was cleaned with a file and emery paper and tacked on a large boards, together with many others, and we were sent to the aforesaid Exhibition, placed in a prominent position there, all round us being other boards, after remaining there a few days, we were examined by the judges and the collection of which I was one was awarded first prize, this being the cause of much gratification and pride to my owner Mr J. A. Walker of Wollongong, I remained on the board for a number of years having been brought back to Wollongong, after the close of the exhibition in April 1880.

I figured many times at the Wollongong Show with my companions and quite a number of blue tickets were year after year tacked or tied on the

board, until some thing happened that prevented our owner from ever showing us again, and worse than that he began to take one and another of us from the board to be nailed to a horses foot, but that was never my lot.

Shortly after the death of my owner, I was sold with many other shoes much inferior to myself to W Edwards of Keira Street, Wollongong, after being taken possession of I was hung up on the wall to await an unknown destiny, remaining there for years, I was only occasionally looked at until one day in June 1910 I was taken down, and after being turned over and examined, I was rudely handled and three holes drilled right through me into which were slotted 3 pieces of iron, and I appeared as a shoe on stilts, but I was partially restored to my original brightness, it having been quite lost to me during the years of my history, and now I find I am to be put to a new use as my owner has presented me to his daughter on the occasion of her marriage, to be used as an iron stand, so this closes my history up to the 29th June 1910.

Continuation of the Biography of an horse shoe.

It is now a century since I was converted from a horseshoe into an iron stand.

From 29th June 1910, after 30 years of hanging around blacksmith shops just waiting my turn to go into service, I was passed onto my 3rd owner and in the household of Gertrude Mary Edwards home after her marriage to Wilfred Porter. For many years I was used as an iron stand that was until my owner purchased an electric iron and my use came to an end. Not having the heart to part with me that was until the Porter family made the decision to donate me and my story along with the Edwards collection to the Illawarra Historical Society and so be added to the Museum collection.

I lay in a box for almost four decades that was until 25th January 2010 when Carol Herben opened the box and removed me and read my story from 1879-1910.

I am a rusted old soul now but treat me kindly as I am now over 130 years of age.

Being photographed with my story I was then carefully wrapped up and placed into storage.

The story I have told is supported by photographs and documents.

My maker, John Adamson Walker, a Scottish Blacksmith of Wollongong, it was he who exhibited me at the Garden Palace in 1879 where my companions and I won 1st prize. When he died on 15th September 1903 aged 59 years the contents of his blacksmith shop were then sold to William Edwards a Blacksmith of Keira Street, Wollongong. William Edwards made me into an iron stand for his beloved daughter Gertrude upon her marriage.

The decision was made by Porter family to donate me to the local historical society.

I will not be placed into the museum's blacksmith shop with all the other old horseshoes as my history and connection to many well known old Wollongong identities afford me the protection I deserve.

A note on the Edwards Collection.

The Edwards collection is a series of photographs showing all the children as youngster, the house they lived in and some of their leisure activities. It is fortunate that each photograph has the identity of the persons and the dates.

In 1982 Miss Mearal Porter daughter of Wilfred and Gertrude Porter was guest speaker at the June meeting the topic of her speech was William Edwards of Wollongong Blacksmith. The Edwards history was published in the October & November 1982 edition of the Bulletin.

The autobiography has been reproduced in this issue of the Bulletin as it is now a century on 29th June since the horseshoe was turned into an iron stand.