HISTORIC TREES OF JAMBEROO:

When the Kiama-Jamberoo area was first opened up to new settlers, the general plan was to give large grants of land to men who undertook to clear the area. This in turn was leased out by these men to tenant farmers. The blocks of land on an average were about 60 acres, and compared with the present average of 200 or more acres; it can clearly be seen why there were many more cottages scattered about the hills and valleys than there are today. A few of the old homes of the land-holders are still standing, but not many remain in the hands of descendants of the original owner.

If one could have the time and the energy to wander over the hills, the evidence of the existence of many of these settlers can be found in the shape of the trees and orchards they planted. Pear trees are still cropping well in what is often almost bush, and wherever a large pine or fig tree stands out, there also used to be a home.

Camellia trees bear witness that our early settlers had a love of gardening. The first Camellia trees were brought from England by one of the Macarthurs1 to his Camden property, and in searching for new pastures for his sheep, he was brought over the mountain by natives to a spot near the Minnamurra Falls where he built a cottage. His shepherds brought cuttings from Camden of the Camellias, including one called “Aspasia Macarthur.” A tree growing of this type is still at the old cottage site, and most of the large Aspasia Macarthur Camellias in Jamberoo have been grown from this tree. It is very large and a lovely shape. Professor Waterhouse took a photo of it and sent it to London, where it was used as a cover for the Camellia Magazine.2

At one old home, “Hawthorn Glen,” Fountaindale Road, originally owned by Walkers and now by Mr. David McFaul, an Alba Plena and a Fimbriata Camellia were planted about a foot apart and evidently pruned in the early days to make it appear to the casual eye to be one tree—an idea maybe for those who have limited space.

At the Marks family home, “Terragong,” near the Swamp Road corner, one of the few still in the hands of descendants of the original owner, there remain two wonderful Magnolia trees which each year are a joy to behold as the huge cream flowers unfold. Peppercorn trees, several large pines and eight or nine walnut trees are still growing. The walnuts produced a large crop about ten years ago, the first for many years, and none since. A quince growing near the road is still bearing. “Terragong” has been classified “B” by The National Trust.

An experiment in grape growing was carried out at “Riversdale,” now Mrs. Elaine Honey’s home. German migrants with a knowledge of wine-making were brought out to run the vineyards and vint, but the climate proved to be unsuitable. A giant fig tree marks the spot where the homestead used to be. One paddock, still terraced, is clearly discernible and the cellars, now but holes in the ground, serve as reminders of a past endeavour.

About a mile out of Jamberoo on the Albion side of the Minnamurra River, the growing of hops was tried and a brewery built. This lasted some years, then was closed.

In almost every old garden in the Jamberoo area the Camellias appear
to be the one flowering tree to flower and live on down the years, and I often wonder what is their expected life-span.

—ELMA FREDERICKS.

1.—Presumably this was not the Perturbator himself—by the time Jamberoo was being settled he was in no shape for mountaineering. It may have been his son William; in “John Macarthur” M. H. Ellis refers to William as “the pioneer of the vine and the camellia” and as having inherited his mother’s “love of plants and animate things.”—Ed.

2.—Information given to Mrs. Fredericks by Mrs. Waters of Jamberoo.

(This article originally appeared in “Within My Garden,” the magazine of the Dapto Garden Club. We thank the author and the editor, Mrs. M. Moncrieff, for permission to reprint).

NATIONAL TRUST CAMPAIGN FOR LEGISLATION TO PROTECT HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND SITE:

The National Trust of Australia (N.S.W.) seeks your help in its campaign for new laws to protect historic buildings and sites in this State.

Such law has existed for many years in Western Europe, North America and other “developed” nations. In Australia, the Governments of Victoria and Western Australia have already legislated to protect our national heritage within their State boundaries.

As early as July 1973 The National Trust of Australia (N.S.W.) forwarded thoroughly researched proposals for legislation to the then Premier, Sir Robert Askin. In October 1973, one month before the last State elections, the Premier announced that his Government would establish a committee to advise the Government on the preservation of historic buildings and sites.

The Committee did not meet until early 1975, and the Government has not yet introduced any legislative measures.

Meanwhile, the demolition of historic buildings continues; the shameful neglect of historic buildings continues.

The National Trust is campaigning for the urgent introduction of legislation which provides for:

(a) Compilation of an official list of historic buildings and sites in New South Wales;
(b) Controls over the demolition of listed buildings;
(c) Adequate fines for breaches of demolition regulations;
(d) Financial assistance for owners of listed buildings.

You can help The National Trust in this campaign by writing to your local Member of the New South Wales Parliament, drawing his attention to the urgent need for legislation and the provisions which the legislation should include.

[Authorised by John Morris, Director, The National Trust of Australia (N.S.W.), and published by request of the Trust].

PERSONAL:

Congratulations to our member Mr. L. B. Kelly, M.L.A., on his re-election and his nomination for the Speakership, an office of great importance, dignity and historical significance, which we are sure he will worthily fill.