BEER BOTTLE TO JAM JAR

Fruit was often put down after being especially cooked, in preserving jars where it was kept often for years and would provide against a bad season of no fruit. Jam was made out of nearly all kinds of fruits. Glass jars for jam were often scarce. Not to be denied the essential glass jars the housewife had a heavy iron ring bottle cutter on a long handle. This was generally made by the local blacksmith of fairly heavy iron. After heating in a fire until a bright red it was placed round the neck of the selected beer bottle. Left there for an instant it was removed and the neck of the bottle plunged into a can of cold water where upon one would hear a small crack and the neck of the bottle would fall off in the can. Quite a lot of bottle could be done in rather quick time by this manner. Finally the cut edges of the bottle would be smoothed off with a fine file or mostly the sand scythe round stone. Finally the bottles would be filled with jam and the top would be sealed with perhaps several layers of brown paper and boiled flour paste. Bottled in this manner the jam kept for years.

S. J. Tazewell

(From Berrima District Historical Society Newsletter).

THE UBIQUITOUS KEROSENE TIN

The empty and discarded four-gallon kerosene cans seemed to have never-ending uses. Every second bucket about the place would be a can with the top cut open and a wire handle fitted. These buckets were used for grain, fowl feed, boiling water and many other uses. The cans were also used for putting down and preserving eggs. With the top intact honey and other foods were placed in them. The four-gallon can would hold exactly 60 lbs. of honey. Tallow would be rendered and taken to market in the empty kerosene tin. Again, I think, about 60 lbs. weight. And this was by no means the end of the kerosene can’s uses. It was in great demand when the itinerant tinsmith, the “Tinker” called, perhaps once a year. He made billy-cans, cake tins and many other items, often to order from the cast off cans. The Tinker’s speciality was the fluted patty-cake baking tin of which he always seemed to have plenty.

Some of the home-craft people made many articles of ornamentation and other uses also. Even small sheds were walled and roofed with the flattened tins. Painted they stood the weather quite well and resisted the rust.

Another common use was to cut the tin along the top and bottom and one side and open out into two halves when one portion was used as a wash-up dish and the other for the drainer.

S. J. Tazewell

(From Berrima District Historical Society Newsletter).

NOTED CENTENARIAN TO CELEBRATE

A well known and highly respected resident of Figtree, Mr. George Thomas, is to celebrate his hundredth birthday with relatives and friends on 20 September, 1987.

The function is to be held in the Senior Citizens’ hall at Dapto.

Mr. Thomas was born at Oak Flats and has lived all his life in the Illawarra district.
He is a direct descendant of William & Sarah Thomas, who migrated to Marshall Mount in 1838, with employment promised by Henry Osborne in the early construction of the first Marshall Mount house. He also played a large role in setting up extensive gardens and orchard at Marshall Mount house.

With the ending of duties at Marshall Mt. house the Thomas family moved to Logbridge Farm on Marshall Mt. Road and it was here the remainder of their large family was born.

It was in the year 1968 the Thomas family had a reunion on Albion Park Showground and up to 1000 people came from many parts of Australia.

Congratulation to Mr. Thomas for and on behalf of Illawarra Historical Society.

Jack Maynes

STURT’S MEN - HARRIS AND FRASER IN ILLAWARRA

PART II - JOSEPH HARRIS

(Continued from August Bulletin)

But another letter dated 19 October 1832 showed that Harris had been busy in a surprising way. It seems that between the date of his discharge and the date of the letter he had "purchased" a dwelling in the township of Wollongong (which strictly was not founded until 1834), erected on reserved (Government) land, which meant that he did not own the dwelling either. Yet he had finished building the house, "and opened a Shop as a General Trader, the only one in the Township, previously obtaining the Commandant's permission". He went on to say that it was on the east of the Dapto Road, which then swung off from the harbour diagonally across a corner of Charles Throsby Smith’s grant of land, say through Market Square, across to the present MacCabe Park, and so onwards. He described himself as "a married man has two children, and had faithfully served in the 39th for 19 years. The latter was signed in quite a good hand by Harris, showing that he was literate.

His letter asked that the town land he occupied be put up for sale, but of course since no township had been laid out as yet, his request could not be granted. For what it may be worth, Harris's description of the location reads: "the dwelling is on the Dapto Road on the East [meaning eastern side of that "Road"] bounded on the north by Mr. Smith's Southern boundary [which was the present Crown Street] on the West by Government reserved Land no other person being on the reserved Land, it is also bounded on the South by Government Land the road running through". Confusing as this is, it is to be contrasted with a passage from Part XIII of the Reminiscences of Alexander Stewart (Illawarra Mercury 2 June 1894). After describing Major Mitchell laying out the coming town of Wollongong, Stewart goes on to describe the problems of one Harris, who can now be identified almost certainly with our Joseph Harris:

"At the angle of the convent [St Mary's College of today] and running across the last-made portion of Harbor Street to the Market Square, and having a frontage to the old track [the 'Dapto Road'] from where the convent now stands a man named Harris had a piece of land. Major Mitchell required this corner piece of land to make it a part of the new portion of Harbor Street, which was to run due north and south. As Major Mitchell was not surveying north of Smith