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Kiama: its region and community 1901 to 1938

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements
for the award of the
degree of
Masters by Research
from the
UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

By
Elaine M. Dunn
Faculty of Arts
2007

Certification

I, Elaine M. Dunn, declare this thesis, submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Masters by Research in the Faculty of Arts, University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. The document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

Signed:

Date:

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Acknowledgments

History as a discipline is not a form of art, and what each historian accomplishes he [or she] does not accomplish alone, as an individual. The significance of any historical enquiry, like the research of any scientist, depends directly upon what others have already done or will be able to because of his work. (Maurice Mandelbaum.)

Source: A Marwick, *The nature of History*, (3rded.),
McMillan Press, London, 1989, p.389

In completing this study I do thank all those who have aided me in the project, and added to my knowledge of Kiama and its adjacent regions. I sincerely thank my supervisor, Dr Glenn Mitchell for his expertise, guidance, support and encouragement during the writing of the thesis, and I also thank Dr John McQuilton for his guidance and valued advice. Suzanne Jones and the University Library Staff must be complemented for their interest and willingness to help at all times. No request was a trouble to them. The co-operation and encouragement of these people helped to make this study enjoyable and its completion possible.

I thank my two daughters, Maxine and Marion, for their encouragement and help and their faith in my ability. The members of the Local Kiama History Centre made available their files and tapes and displayed an interest in the project. Similarly, staff at the Kiama Municipal Library provided me with access to their resources and their micro-film collection covering past copies of Kiama's *Independent*. The Municipal Rate Books showed past property values and ownership changes. Articles and illustrations appearing in the *Independent Supplement* were most valuable. John Mills of the Kiama Municipal Council provided access to past Council Minute Books and these were cross-referenced to similar material appearing in the *Independent*. Information was also sought from the State Library, Mitchell Library and Wollongong Municipal Library.

Abstract

This thesis examines the Kiama region, its economics and the social progress of its environs during the years 1901 to 1938. It recognises the basic self-sufficiency and independent nature of the inhabitants and the individuality in rural and village life as it places the Kiama society within the context of a changing world. This 'outside world' brought issues and influences that intruded into, and disturbed the simple on-going rhythm of the rural life.

The thesis recognises the influence of the region's geographical and environmental elements and the difficulties encountered by people in their attempts to advance and expand the dairying and metal industries. Transport, communication and improving technology all played a part in the progress and development of these industries.

Work in relation to gender is considered, and irrespective of class, the ways by which males and females performed their duties within the family unit and within the community. Religion and respectability were also important elements in their lives. However, World War 1 created change as the community was forced to experience the anxieties and distress of wartime commitments. By the 1920s Kiama was trying to reconstruct its earlier pre-1914 life style, but it could not return to the ways of the past. With the advance of the depression years, commencing around 1938, the Kiama community could no longer 'shrug off' or protect itself against the influences of the 'outside world'.

Abbreviations

AANS	Australian Army Nursing Service
AIF	Australian Infantry Forces
BHP	Broken Hill Property Limited
ES&A	English, Scottish and Australian Bank
hp	horsepower.
NSW	New South Wales
UK	United Kingdom
USA.	United States of America
MLA	Member of the Legislative Assembly
MP	Member of Parliament

Notes

1. On February 14, 1966 the Australian currency changed to dollars and cents from the previous pounds, shillings and pence. One shilling was equal to 12 pence and 20 shillings or one pound was equal to two dollars. Distance was measured in miles.
2. The *Independent* and *Reporter* were both produced by the Weston Family. Originally there were two newspapers being published in the area, but when *Reporter* was taken over by the Joseph Weston. The two papers then became available on different days, one at the week end, the other in the middle of the week. The *Supplement* was a Centenary production that summarized important incidents in Kiama's past history. It was co-ordinated by Michelle Hactor.
3. It is thought that the name Kiama derives from the aboriginal word *Kierama*, where the sea makes a noise, or from *Kieremia*, fish in plenty here. The *Sydney Morning Herald* in 1921 claimed that the two Aboriginal names *Kiar* and *mai* came together to signify 'a fertile district'. The word Gerringong was defined as a 'place of peril' or 'a fearful place', while Jamberoo was simply 'a track'. Minnamurra meant 'lots of fish'.¹

¹ *Independent Supplement*, June 28, 2000.

--- Part 1 ---

Kiama: 1900's

Kiama Township 1900

Source: A. Cousins, *The Garden of NSW*

Introduction: 'Between the mountains and the sea'

KIAMA.

Where long Pacific Seas break into foam
Upon an iron-bound rocky coast, and where
The ceaseless roar of ocean tides resound
Throughout the golden day and starlit night,
Kiama lies – asleep on sunlit slopes
Of long green hills, where splendid fertile soil
Yields all that bounteous nature hath decreed –
A pearl upon the swelling ocean's edge.¹

This thesis examines the Kiama region between 1901 and 1939. It builds on a previous work examining the region's nineteenth century, completed by the author as an Honours thesis.²

Regional histories in Australia are not plentiful.³ The studies by Gordon Buxton, Margaret Kiddle, Joe Powell and Keith Hancock were completed over twenty years ago. More recent works include Bill Gammage's study of Narrandera, Janet McCalman's history of Richmond in Victoria and John McQuilton's study of North Eastern Victoria during the First World War.⁴

Yet, interest in local and regional histories, and the writing of local histories by amateur historians, is clearly evident. It is reflected in local history museums supported in small towns. These centres contain valuable documents and information relevant to interpreting the past. For many years local historians were

¹ W.D.White, *Kiama Independent*, 17 January 1905, and *Reporter*, 9 May 1923.

² E. Dunn, 'A Study of the Kiama Region in the Nineteenth Century', University of New England, BA (Hons) thesis, 2003.

³ See Peel V., and Zion D., 'The Local History Industry', in Rickard J., and Spearritt P., *Packaging the Past: Public Histories*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1992, pp. 208 - 214.

⁴ G. L. Buxton, *The Riverina 1861-1891: An Australian Regional Study*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1967, B. Gammage, *Narrandera Shire*, Narrandera Shire Council, Narrandera. 1986, W. K. Hancock, *Discovering Monaro: A Study of Man's Impact on his Environment*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1972, R. L. Heathcote, *Back of Bourke: A Study of Land Appraisal and Settlement in Semi-arid Australia*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1965, M. Kiddle, *Men of Yesterday: A Social History of the Western District of Victoria, 1834-1890*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1961, J. McCalman, *Struggle Town. Portrait of an Australian Working Class Community*, Penguin, Ringwood, 1988. J. McQuilton, *Rural Australia and the Great War: From Tarrawingee to Tangambalanga*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 2001, J. M. Powell, *The Public Lands of Australia Felix: Settlement and Land*

only thought to write ‘scissors and paste history’ under the assumption that local history writers did not challenge and ‘construct [the] picture’.⁵ Allan Marwick states ‘historians don’t aim ... to give a breathless narrative of every single thing that happened in the past.’⁶ However, Kiama’s early histories were written in good faith, (for example Arthur Bailey’s *History of Kiama Municipality*),⁷ and recorded valuable memories of past events, as, for example, in Dorothy O’Keefe’s booklet *Snippets of History*. Although the reliability of their information cannot always be shown, their material performs a role and sets an agenda for further research.

John McCarthy argued that ‘any region only exists as a part of a larger one’.⁸ The interrelationship between a place and forces external to a locality form the focus of any regional study. McQuilton argues that regional history provides an alternative way of viewing history of a place.⁹ History, geography, climate and the pressures of an outside world develop a region’s culture.¹⁰ And as Simon and Leonard argue, ‘the focus of life [is] set by ... the nature of the workplace, home, kin and friends.’¹¹ These arguments have guided the writing of this thesis.

Thesis outline and scope

This is not a comprehensive history of the region between the turn of the century and 1939. Rather, it is an empirical study that examines material progress and change in the region during the forty years through a series of themes - economy, work, gender and modernity. Its principal sub theme is an examination of the ways a self-contained and isolated community not only accommodated the growing influences of an outside world but also acted as an agent of change. The influence of outside forces is evident in the local government bodies’ increasing influence on government funds to achieve civic progress, for example, but was most marked

Appraisal in Victoria 1834-91 With Special Reference to the Western Plains, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1970,.

⁵ A Marwick, *The Nature of History*, (3rd ed.) Macmillan, London, 1989. p. 7.

⁶ *ibid.*

⁷ William Alan Bailey, *History of Kiama Municipality*, NSW, Kiama Municipality Council, 1976.

⁸ John McCarthy, ‘Australian Regional History’, *Historical Studies* 18, 107, 1978, p.88.

⁹ J.McQuilton, *Rural Australia and the Great War*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 2001, p.2

¹⁰ The geography of the region was fully explained in my Honours Thesis.

¹¹ S. Leonard, *Place and Community: Examples from Moss Vale, 1929 – 1933*. Department of History and Politics, University of Wollongong. 1996, p.11.

with the First World War and the Great Depression. But the region was also an active agent of change, the best example being the developments in the dairying industry that saw the emergency of the Illawarra Shorthorn. It is a story of amelioration, resistance, adaption and change, a familiar one in regional history.

The first section examines pre-war Kiama. The second section examines the impact of a war that few in the region could have contemplated in 1901. The third examines the post-war decade and the impact of the Great Depression

The Kiama region lies 120 kilometres south of Sydney, taking in approximately 7,500 hectares. The definition of the region reflects a combination of geography, settlement and history. It includes Kiama, Gerringong, Gerroa, the Crooked River Estuary and Jamberoo in its area. Kiama was the principal town, established as a seaport. To the east it is bordered by the ocean's bold rocky headlands and flat shore landforms, and to the west the steep slopes of the Illawarra Escarpment. The Saddleback Range is an extension of the escarpment following a south-easterly direction. The Minnamurra River, the largest in the region, and its associated floodplain, the Terragong Swamps, prevented European settlement expansion to the north during the initial stages of settlement. The physical geography of the region ensured that any corridor of access to the sea was centred on Kiama.¹² It was in an enclosed pocket on the South Coast. The harbour provided a connection with the outside world and the means of transport and communication. The arrival of the railway in 1888 did not alter the outlying districts' dependence on Kiama, it still remained the principal seaport.

The region has a temperate marine climate, warm in winter and cool in summer. The farming lands on the valley floor are rich in nutriments thanks to lava flows some 250 million years ago. The influence of the lava flows and the old weathered rocks remain clearly visible at the Kiama Blowhole and the Little Blowhole. These outcrops would provide the basis for the blue metal industry that would develop in the second half of the nineteenth century. Higher up, however, the land is 'rocky' and difficult to cultivate, for scrub and brush cover the slopes of the sandstone-

claystone escarpment which rises to six thousand metres. Prior to European settlement, the region had been covered in rainforest. The cabbage tree palms growing on the basaltic soils of Jamberoo and Kiama are mute evidence of the previous rainforest.

Early physical isolation, limited means of communication and a common settlement history served to create a regional identity, both socially and economically. The first settlers were large landholders given grants by the colonial governor in the 1820s. To work their holdings, they sponsored married couples from Britain. These were tenant farmers, who were industrious and worked under extremely difficult conditions.¹³ Prominent were the Irish from both the north and the south.¹⁴ In fact Kiama at one stage was considered to be the most Irish-looking town in Australia¹⁵. These early settlers brought their attitudes from their old country and transferred them into the new land. Religion was important for the community's life style. Religion was a strong and influential element in the lives of both the Protestant and Catholic settlers. Initially services were held in homes, barns, hotels or whatever accommodation was available. The first churches built were of flimsy construction. As the towns developed so did the churches. Some had provided elementary education for local children. The issues of education had been a source of sectarian conflict in the latter half of the nineteenth century. By 1901, however, the issue had been resolved. The state had taken responsibility for education.¹⁶

The region's climate was ideal for the grazing of cattle. Kiama as a port, and with the advent of new technology, saw a shift to dairying as the principal agricultural activity in the region. Regional dairy farmers established co-operatives to market the milk and butter. It empowered them to control the marketing and distribution

¹² For the methodology used, see M. Campbell, 'What is a Region' in the Local History Co-ordinating Project, *Locating Australia's Past: a Practical Guide to Writing Local History in N.S.W.*, University of NSW Press, Kensington, 1988, p. 44.

¹³ McQuilton 'Settlement', in Hagan and Wells (ed) *A History of Wollongong*, University of Wollongong Press, Wollongong, 1917. pp. 24-26.

¹⁴ Many of the early settlers were from Ulster and recognised a similarity with their home country. Appendix 1.

¹⁵ P. O'Farrell, *Irish in Australia* (3rd ed.) University of NSW Press, Kensington 2000, pp. 101-2.

¹⁶ Cousins, *op.cit.*, pp.324, 325. D. Hilliard, 'Anglicanism,' in *Australian Cultural History*, S.L. Goldberg and F.B. Smith (eds.) Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1988, pp. 20, 22.

of their product. This was to prove economically beneficial, for by 1925 the profits from co-operatives reached the sum of £3.5 million.¹⁷ Women and children were vital for the development of the industry although their activities were frequently hidden behind the more observable work of their menfolk. The work on the farms was manual and by its very nature reinforced the cultural concept of 'the male bread-winner'.

The rail line linking Bombo (North Kiama) to Wollongong and Sydney was completed. Its official opening was 3 October 1888.¹⁸ In its construction a large labour force was required, drawing workmen away from their homes, with many settling at Kiama. The railway was a symbol of progress and prosperity. It facilitated the movement and distribution of local products and people, changed the perception of mobility and opened up the possibilities of travel. The community believed the railways had been built for their benefit but Gammage argues that they were deluded: 'the railways were built to serve the men in Sydney who equated progress with [the] economic advancement of the metropolis.'¹⁹

The blue metal industry in Kiama emerged without fuss or fanfare. In early 1870, samples of basalt metal were collected and sent to Sydney for testing and in July three Appleton stone breakers arrived and were set up opposite the wharf. The machines were used to crush stone for the construction of Robertson Basin.²⁰ In March 1871 the first load of metal was sent to Sydney on the *Tim Whiffler*. By May the Wakeford Brothers had opened a quarry and it was quickly followed by others.²¹ The development is indicated by the attached diagrams.

Federation seemed to have little impact on Kiama. Of the 2,186 registered male voters, only 1,027 voted. The death of Queen Victoria was entirely different. The death of the old Queen after a reign of 63 years caused a dramatic and emotional response, reflecting the strength of the community's commitment to Britain, Empire and the Royal Family. When the cabled messages of her passing reached

¹⁷ A. Cousins, *The Garden of NSW*, Weston and Co., Kiama, pp. 122 – 125.

¹⁸ *Independent*, 3 October 1988.

¹⁹ B. Gammage, 'Sydney and the Bush' in *Narrandera Shire*, *op. cit.*, p. 216

²⁰ A. Cousins, *op. cit.*, p. 184.

²¹ *ibid.*

Kiama, the church bells rang, the flags were lowered and work in the quarries ceased. Business houses were draped in black and the town entered a period of mourning. Kiama seemed to believe that, compared to Queen Victoria's death, a new constitution and nation was not an issue.²²

The sources used in this thesis are varied. They include the relevant secondary literature and local histories. Central primary sources included the *Independent* and its *Centenary Supplements*, edited by Michelle Hocking.²³ The Municipal Minute Books and Rate Books were also important as were the Frank McCaffrey Diaries and Arthur Cousin's *The Garden of the Illawarra*.²⁴ It begins with an overview of Kiama in 1901.

Kiama in 1901

This chapter provides a brief picture of Kiama in 1901. It examines the region's population, its social characteristics, the problems facing the local councils and transport. It ends with a brief overview of the regional economy.

The region's population in 1901 is given in Table 1 below. Kiama was the region's largest centre and principal port. Jamberoo and Gerringong were roughly equal in size to each other. In Kiama and Jamberoo, the men outnumbered the women although the reverse was true for Gerringong. However, the imbalance between the sexes was minor. Some eight decades of European settlement had evened out the marked imbalances evident in the region's early settlement history.²⁵ In Kiama, there were 405 houses within the township itself.²⁶ Similar data is not available for the other centres.

²² *Independent*, 'Kiama Mourns a Monarch', 25 January 1901.

²³ Copies held in the Kiama Municipal Library.

²⁴ A Cousins, *The Garden of NSW*, Producers Co-op. Distributing Society, Sydney, 1948. p. 184. It is relevant that the book was first published by the Producer's Co-operative Distributing Company, a forerunner of Dairy Farmers. The second edition by Weston and Co., Kiama 1994. See Biographical Appendix.

²⁵ Dunn, *op.cit.*

²⁶ J. Freeland, *A History of Kiama Houses, 1883 – 1981*, manuscript, Kiama Historical Society held in the Pilot's Cottage Museum, 2004.

TABLE 1: Population

Town	Male	Female	Total
Kiama	887	882	1,769
Gerringong	519	532	1,051
Jamberoo	667	624	1,291
Total			4,111 ²⁷

They were the ‘new’ generation of Australian-born citizens to contribute to the region’s future progress and local industries.²⁸ This ‘new generation’ would take responsibility for future planning the region’s advancement and its local industries.

Society

By 1901, social classes in the region were clearly defined. They were defined by wealth and property ownership occupation. There were four distinct social groups. There were the families who lived in the ‘big houses’, the elite. They had either descended from the recipients of early land grants or had purchased property in the area. Their homes were a symbol of their success. The bank manager was also to be found in this group. These families dominated the region’s public life. The men served as local council members and sat on and/or directed local committees. Their wives and daughters served on the various philanthropic women’s committees set up during the nineteenth century.

The second group was the middle class. They were the professional people, doctors, dentists, and teachers, and the petty bourgeoisie of storekeepers, publicans, butchers, bakers and hotel and boarding-house owners.²⁹ They were dependent on the material progress of the region for from it they achieved economic stability. The men also served as councillors and on different local committees and the women served on the various committees set up by the elite.

²⁷ T.A. Coghlan, *N.S.W. Census of 31 March 1901*, NSW Government Printer, Sydney, 1902.

²⁸ R. White, ‘Inventing Australia’, in G. Whitlock and D. Carter (eds.), *Images of Australia: An Introductory Reader in Australian Studies*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1992, p.26.

²⁹ E. Eklund, “‘We are of Age,’ Class Locality and Region at Port Kembla, 1900 – 1940’, *Labour History: A Journal of Labour and Social History*, No.66, May 1994, p.74.

The workers or laboring class made up the third group. They depended upon the quarries, the wharves, farm work and the employment needs generated by the councils. Their main concern was to earn a living sufficient to maintain themselves and their families as work could be intermittent. They, and their womenfolk, played little or no part in public life. In the lower class of labourers there was an underclass, those men considered to be unemployable.³⁰

The fourth group was the region's farmers, especially the dairy farmers and their families who were a fundamental part of the regional economy. Many were the descendants of tenant farmers imported from Ireland and Britain in the early nineteenth century to work the large estates.

The men in the region were regarded as the 'breadwinners'. The women were their dependants. A woman's status was usually determined by the occupation of her husband and/or father who established the family's status and position within the social structure. The status of widowed or deserted women was often uncertain but women from the working class who had been widowed or deserted were also frequently lumped with the unemployable males.

Religion remained a strong and influential element in the lives of regional society (see Table 2). The population's religious affiliation reflected the past history of migration from Ulster, Ireland and Britain noted earlier. In fact, Kiama, at one stage, was considered to be the most Irish-looking town in Australia.³¹ All denominations had their friendly societies who played a major role in providing support for their members in times of trouble.

³⁰ J. Ferry, *Colonial Armidale*, University of Queensland Press, St.Lucia, 1999, p.133.

³¹ P. O'Farrell, *Irish in Australia*, (3rd ed), University of NSW Press, Kensington, 2000, pp.101-102.

TABLE 2: Religious Affiliation 1901

	Church of England	Roman Catholic	Presbyterian	Methodist	Others	Non-Deno- mination
<i>Kiama</i>						
Male	228	207	157	130	38	27
Female	356	205	140	129	37	18
<i>Gerringong</i>						
Male	160	160	36	106	53	17
Female	296	109	31	111	60	4
<i>Jamberoo</i>						
Male	303	140	84	128	8	4
Female	269	109	96	17	0	0
Total	1,712	930	544	721	196	70 ³²

Religious affiliation had its political and sectarian implications in the region as it did in the rest of Australia in 1901, but the churches also represented stability, respectability and a place where, after services, parishioners could meet friends, air problems and discuss the matters of the day. Thelma Hopkins, for example, wrote in her *Minnamurra Memories*, 'I do not care that a village be not a village until it has a church, but I do care that we do have that church'.³³ Thelma Marks recalled the social side:

on Sunday we went to Sunday School and after that went across to the Church service. We walked to Church. The Church would alternate the service – one week it would be held in the morning the next in the evening for the minister served two parishes. We won books for prizes from the Church.³⁴

The churches were a part of everyday life and the social centres for the community.

The region had a rich social life. There were dances and balls, card nights and concerts and touring attractions. Sport was also a part of regional life, and by 1901 Kiama had organised clubs for tennis, golf, football and bicycling.

³² Coghlan, 1901, *op cit.*, pp.245, 247.

³³ T. Hopkins, *Minnamurra Memories*, Weston Print, Kiama, 1990, p. 50.

Like all other small towns Kiama and its region had a 'black past', but by 1901 its Aboriginal population had been displaced and marginalized and were considered at a level below that of the underclass. 'King' Mickey and 'Queen' Rosie and their family, remained for many years camped on the flats near the Minnamurra River. There they were left in peace to eke out an existence. The community appeared to treat them with a guarded respect. When Mickey died in 1906 he was buried in the Protestant section of the Kiama Cemetery, and the white community banded together and built a little cottage for Rosie on the Minnamurra River Flats. Here she lived out the remainder of her life.³⁵

Water, Power and Roads

The Kiama *Independent* reflected a pride in the town. The 1900s heralded further advances and changes for the district. Yet, advance and change could meet with opposition. Plans made by the Kiama Council to improve its water supply, lighting and roads offer an interesting insight into the way that conservative public opinion and powerful men could affect municipal plans when cost was involved and the limited nature of municipal funds.

The town's water supply had become a major issue in local politics, especially after fires of 1899, which had destroyed a substantial part of Kiama's business district. There was agitation to improve the supply piped into the town from Fountaindale Creek and to establish a local fire brigade. The Council had secured £75 from the state government in 1901 to start work on the scheme³⁶ but the scheme was shelved. The drought of 1907-08 reduced water pressure so badly that the residents living on higher ground were forced to rely on the cartage of water and a new storage reservoir was planned. Protests came from a number of citizens worried about the costs and the possible introduction of water rates. In a letter to the council the local MP, Mr Alex Campbell, claimed the proposal was 'ridiculous'. It

³⁴ A taped interview by Leyshon and Roberts, for Thelma Marks (nee Jones) of 'Sunnybank' Jamberoo on 6 September 1989. (Christian names not provided). Tape held in the Pilot's Cottage Kiama Museum.

³⁵ Bayley, *op. cit.*, p.114.; *Independent Supplement*, 'Aborigines of Kiama', 28 March 2001.

³⁶ *Independent Supplement*, 'The Water Supply', 27 September, 2000.

would only 'involve the town in an additional financial obligation.'³⁷ The council again shelved a project to improve Kiama's water supply. Residents and ratepayers became concerned about cost, and that the power of a very dominant man could end any project planned by the Council. The supply of water however, would remain an issue.

In 1901, candles, kerosene and gas provided the lighting needs of the town's citizens. The candles were made in the homes, and despite the introduction of kerosene, retained their importance in many farming households. 'Slush lights' aided after-dark outdoor activities.³⁸ Gas had been introduced to Kiama Streets in the central business is the nineteenth century, but had limited domestic use. In 1907, Kiama was offered the chance to introduce electricity to the town. It declined, again because of the cost. Gas was cheaper.³⁹

From earliest times, road conditions were a major problem. Many roads in 1901 still followed the old bush tracks of the timber cutters, were rough and unformed and after heavy rains became impassable. In places, bridges and culverts needed constructing but the foundations were often difficult to secure, and the cost was considerable. The problem was that local councils were responsible for the upkeep of local roads. As Bill Gammage noted in another Shire, state governments considered rural roads to be 'merely of local importance' and left the responsibility to the local council.⁴⁰ But municipal funds were limited. Most country centres experienced similar difficulties. The *NSW Year Book, 1904/5* noted that:

roads were impossible to keep up and meet the demands of the settlers. ... The authorities contented themselves with maintaining the roads already constructed and extending them in directions of principal centres...⁴¹

The same problem bedevilled the streets within the towns. Within Kiama, for example, and particularly along Terralong Street, dust rose as horses drew sixty to

³⁷ *Independent Supplement*, 27 September, 2000. .

³⁸ An improvised light. Fat was melted and poured into a metal tin. A central wick was placed in the centre. When the fat hardened the wick could be lit to give a candle like light.

³⁹ *Independent*, 4 July 4 1884. Gas lighting was also retained in Sydney for the same economic reason

⁴⁰ Gammage, *op. cit.*, p.215.

eighty carts laden with blue metal from the quarries to the harbour each day. Residents and ratepayers complained bitterly, for the interiors of the houses and shops were being covered with dust. Walking down the street was not a pleasant experience. The Council organized a water cart to settle the dust, but when residents were asked to cover the reoccurring costs, objections were raised and council withdrew the service. The problem continued to annoy for as late as 1914 Alderman Carson reported that ‘the dust nuisance had become intolerable and there was no water to waste’.⁴² When in 1914 a tramway was installed to transport the blue metal from the quarries to the ships, the problem was partly overcome.

The car, of course, was virtually unknown. Although it had been introduced to Australia at the end of the 1800s, (a Thompson Motor Phaeton, a steam powered vehicle), Kiama did not experience the novelty until 11 August 1902 when the first car passed through the town on a journey from Sydney to Bega. But due to the poor condition of the road south of Kiama, the driver lost control and the vehicle ran into a ditch. Horses towed the car back to Kiama, where it was returned by train to Sydney.⁴³

The Economy

Farming was a major part of the regional economy and dairying was the major farming activity. By 1901 the South Coast region, which included the Kiama region, had registered around 103,541 milking cows.⁴⁴ The regional industry was recovering from the prolonged drought of the 1890s and the local dairymen were experimenting with selective breeding processes, aiming to improve their cows’ milk and its butter fat content.⁴⁵ The regional industry was also undergoing change. All the premium grazing land in the region had long been taken. There was little left for farmers’ sons or farmers wishing to expand their holdings. But new land had been opened up on the North Coast of NSW. Sons of farmers went north as did some families. Doug Fredericks, a Jamberoo farmer, recalled, ‘When

⁴¹ W.M. Hall, *NSW Year Book, 1904-5*, NSW Government Printer, Sydney, 1906, p.112.

⁴² *Independent Supplement*, 30 August 2000.

⁴³ *Independent Supplement*, ‘The Age of the Automobile’, 29 November 2000.

⁴⁴ Coghlan, *op. cit.* 1901.

⁴⁵ *Independent Supplement*, 27 September 2000.

families moved on the remaining farmers could buy and combine two or three properties, thus increasing their profitability'.⁴⁶

Blue metal from the quarries around Kiama were also a significant part of the regional economy. It provided employment although the demand for labour rose and fell according to market demands. Although rail trucks were now moving an increasing percentage of the blue metal, the shipping trade remained and would retain its importance well into the mid-1920s. In 1925, for example, four ships moved 2,610 tons of gravel in four days.⁴⁷ Kiama jealously guarded its blue metal trade.⁴⁸ When the value of the farmer's produce lessened, or workers in the quarries were laid off because of falling demand for blue metal, the regional economy was seriously affected.

In 1901, a new industry was being encouraged, tourism. Henry Kendall had praised the beauties of Kiama:-

The Holy stars were looking down,
On windy heights and swarthy stand,
And life and love,
The cliffs above,
Are sitting fondly hand in hand.⁴⁹

From time to time letters praising these beauties appeared in the *Independent* as did poems by locals, like the one printed at the beginning of the Introduction. The editor of the paper took up the issue of tourism and its economic advantages for local businesses. Those in charge of the state's railways also supported and encouraged the concept, and could see the advantages of an increasing business. Special tourist fares were introduced and an *Illawarra Tourist Guide* printed.⁵⁰ In 1904 the Minnamurra Falls, one of the region's last tracts of original rainforest, were officially opened for tourism and were praised as an exciting place for walks and picnics. From 1901, and into the next decade a Kiama Tourist Association

⁴⁶ Taped interview with Doug Fredericks, Jamberoo, 1988, by a member of the Kiama Historical Society. Interview tape held at the Pilot's Cottage Museum, Kiama. 2000.

⁴⁷ W. Bayley, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

⁴⁸ *ibid.*, p.150.

⁴⁹ Henry Kendall, 'Poems and Songs', collated by J.R. Clark, Sydney, 1862. Quoted in Bayley, *ibid.*, 1976.

⁵⁰ *Independent*, 23 November 1899.

became a strong force instigating change and campaigning for civic improvements while publicising the beauties of Kiama and its environs.⁵¹

As noted earlier, the Kiama *Independent* saw the new century as heralding further advances and changes for the district. The depression of the 1890s was over. Change was welcome but only on the region's terms. The region's initial geographical isolation, and its settlement history, had created a sense of independence and completeness. Between 1901 and 1939, however, Kiama, like many other rural regions in Australia, would be forced to come to grips with problems posed by events at a global level, especially war, depression and modernity. The motor car is probably a good example. In 1902, it was a novelty. Two decades later, it, and its associated service industries, would become an accepted part of the regional life.

⁵¹ *Independent Supplement*, 27 September 2000.

Kiama and Local District Map⁵²

⁵² Courtesy of Kiama Tourism, 2004

Kiama Regional Map⁵³

⁵³ W. A. Bayley, in *Blue Haven*, p.14.

--- Part 2 ---

Economy, Work and Progress

*The Kiama District Hospital which took in its first patients on 17 May 1930.
Source: Kiama Independent Supplement 2000*

Chapter 1: The Economy

Farming

At the beginning of the twentieth century, dairying and quarrying dominated Kiama's economy. Tourism, which would become a significant part of the town's economic story and which had begun very slowly at the time, began to make an important contribution from the late 1920s. The 1933 Census clearly indicates patterns of industrial growth over a length of time, the work commitments of the people and the region's dependence upon both dairying and blue metal.¹ Dairy farming, which had slowly replaced the earlier burgeoning but illegal cedar trade, would develop into the region's major industry.

By the close of the nineteenth century, Kiama had more than 17,500 dairy cows and was producing more than 1,220,700 pounds of butter each year for the Sydney market.² Kiama had become an important site in the South Coast dairy industry when by 1901, South Coast farms were producing 8,157,299 pounds of butter. Kiama's farmers were the recognized leaders in the NSW co-operative system, while Kiama was the first district in NSW where butter production moved from the farms to factories.³ Increasing competition in the butter industry, especially from the North Coast of NSW and the improved facilities for transporting the milk to Sydney, created a swing towards an industry to supply milk to Sydney's growing urban population.⁴

Kiama was an important contributor to the state's dairy economy. The first creamery factories in NSW were on the South Coast⁵ and with the opening up of the railway, *albeit* on a limited basis, to stations south of Wollongong, the introduction of refrigeration techniques and the invention of a cream separator had played major roles in the development of the industry, and with the mechanisation

¹ Appendix 2 – 1933, industries, work and occupations..

² NSW State Government, *Statistics Register, 1890*, pp 242-243.

³ Davison, McCarthy, McLeary, (eds.), *Australians, 1888*, Fairfax, Syme and Weldon, Sydney, 1987, p.163. Appendix 3.

⁴ A. Cousins, *Garden of NSW*, Weston and Co., 1994, p.135.

⁵ W. Hall, NSW Government Statistician, *Year Book 1904-05*, NSW Government Printer, p.324.

of butter production, the business of dairying on the South Coast took significant steps.⁶ While the extension of the southern railway line only went as far as Bomaderry, refrigeration technology allowed butter and cheese to be transported unspoiled by rail to Australian cities and ports and then by ship to the United Kingdom. The export trade in dairy products grew, and by 1906 NSW was exporting 180,655 pounds of butter to Britain⁷ while two years later in 1908, some 15 percent of London's butter trade was from Australia.⁸ In 1924 dairy exports had reached such a volume that the Federal government established the Australian Produce Export Board to control and regulate the trade.

A busy scene from the Gerringong Butter Factory (Gerringong Co-op Dairy Society) -established in 1888 Source: Kiama Independent

Although progress was limited by the farmers' access to finance and his labour force, there was little waste on the farm. The skimmed milk that remained after the separation of the cream enabled the farmer to feed young calves and raise pigs. As the calves matured the heifers would be retained or sold to other dairymen, while the young steers would be marketed as vealers. Unfortunately the ham and bacon trade was restricted as there was a lack of refrigeration and a disinterest by manufacturers in the curing of ham and bacon.⁹ It was not a profitable side-line.¹⁰

⁶ NSW Statistician, *NSW Year Book 1908-1909*, NSW Government Printer, Sydney, 1909.

⁷ Appendix 4.

⁸ *Year Book, 1908-9, op. cit.*, 1909.

⁹ *ibid.*, p.249.

¹⁰ *ibid.*, p.331.

The rabbit, fox and hare, imported from Britain as game animals, had by 1901 assumed plague proportions and as they invaded Kiama they became were an economic burden. The earlier cedar clearing had given the animals ideal conditions in which to breed. A writer to the *Independent* indignantly claimed:-

The rabbit and the hare see [an] enormous loss to the colony. Their ravages decrease the increase of cattle and sheep by tens of thousands ... Every mouthful of grass taken is taken from our cattle and means loss. ... All this lamentable state of affairs might have been prevented with commonsense legislation, if made years ago.¹¹

Rabbits were trapped, burrows dug up, poisons laid and shooting parties organized, but still it survived.¹² Despite this many poorer families were appreciative of the rabbit and hare, for when times were bad they provided meat for the table and the skins could be pegged out, dried and sold.

Milk in the early 1900s went straight from the farm to the factory, via the railway line, without any treatment or sterilization. The distributor, the suburban 'milk-man', was then contracted by the milk factory to measure out and deliver the milk to the homes.¹³ Milk represented the farmers' greatest economical return for his labour. There was a serious danger that tuberculosis could be found in an animal or animals providing milk and hygiene was frequently lacking. Before milking, the government bodies recommended that hands and teats be washed clean, for dipping the hands into the milk to clean them was 'strictly forbidden.'¹⁴ It is not clear to what degree this rule was carried out.

The cowsheds were frequently ramshackle structures and in wet weather when the holding yards became muddy and slushy. A claim had been by Dr Stanley of the Board of Health in 1890 that 'tuberculosis existed to a large extent in the cattle of

¹¹ *Independent*, 15 October, 1901.

¹² *Ibid.* A 'Rabbit Proof Fence' was erected in 1888 in an effort to control the movement of rabbits from the east to the west of Australia. In 1901 farmers presented a petition to their NSW Parliament on the grounds of lost productivity, requesting that no more 'Noxious Birds and Beasts' be introduced to Australia.

¹³ The measure resembled a steel 'dipper' or jug marked in pints and quarts. The 'milk-man' would measure the required amount into the customer's container.

¹⁴ G. Blainey, *Black Kettle and Full Moon*, Penguin, Ringwood, 2003, p.253.

the Kiama district.’¹⁵ In an attempt to ensure disease free food, Parliament proposed the introduction a *Dairy’s Supervision Act* but it was not until 1901 that the Act became law.¹⁶ An earlier adoption would have disadvantaged many struggling farmers, for milk and butter production was the ‘life blood’ of the Kiama region. J. McCarty states that a staple dairying industry was of ‘sufficient importance to determine the economic structure of the region.’¹⁷ It also determined the ‘social and political structure’ and could thus create political difficulties for any local parliamentary member.¹⁸ This threat was followed up by for several days by the *Independent*, claiming that ‘Kiama district ... had suffered a great injustice’ and then the subject was dropped.¹⁹ The fear arose that under the *Dairy’s Supervision Act* (1901), the use of private separators would be abolished and the pasteurisation of all milk enforced. To the Kiama farmers this was seen as government impertinence that threatened their livelihood.

Although Kiama’s farmers had a strong distaste and distrust of unions, whom they identified with the introduction of restrictive regulations and wage conditions, they voted that a ‘Union be formed for the purpose of watching over the interests of dairy farmers’, and condemning ‘any interference with the industry in the way of abolishing private separators of making pasteurisation compulsory’.²⁰ The push for this organization appeared to come primarily from the Jamberoo farmers. It was difficult for these farmers to get access to the railway depot at Bombo and this in turn affected what they produced, so they relied to a greater extent upon the cream output and the local production of butter. Farmers claimed the move to control the use of their separators would cause economic difficulties to them and their families, although ironically the supporters of such a union were themselves successful dairymen.²¹

¹⁵ *Independent*, 11 November 1890.

¹⁶ *Independent*, 1 January 1901.

¹⁷ J.W. McCarty, ‘The Staple Approach in Australian Economic History’, in *Business Archives and History*, Volume IV, No.1, February 1964, p. 6.

¹⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁹ *Independent Supplement*, 26 July 2000

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 27 September 2000.

²¹ *ibid.* The men concerned were Messrs Alexander, Booth, Duggan, Boyle, Robb, Fredericks, Colley, Harris, Wood and Charles Craig, (Mayor of Jamberoo), all influential members of the community.

As the issues remained in abeyance the Dairy Farmer's Union remained mainly a paper-based union until 1911, when it was reformed to challenge and fight against the wages and working conditions being dictated by the Rural Worker's Union.²² The farmers were 'attempting to prevent the Rural Worker's Union from any organisations in their district,' for they did not want farm workers to be included in the industrial awards.²³ The possibility of any increased costs to their industry was central to their concerns.²⁴

Although the majority of farmers recognized the necessity to improve their herds and thus the farm's effectiveness, they were slow to embrace change. Change cost money, and not all farmers could financially afford increased costs. Although the physical environment was important to the animals, the farmer also needed the personal ambition and economic backing to obtain and develop breeding lines of quality.²⁵ A natural progression was to consider the productive value of the individual cows and to encourage selective breeding programs. This led to the testing of the milking animals for the quality and quantity of their milk and its butterfat content.

In his *History of the Illawarra*, Frank McCaffety notes that the 'original cattle were coarse, large-boned, big framed animals, with long horns and variegated colours'.²⁶ He stressed the necessity to carefully select animals which would produce high quality milk-flow and buttermilk content. He argued that quality bulls and cows were essential to develop the standard of a herd and the improvement of production.²⁷ The manufacturing of butter and cheese relied upon fat content, and through testing procedures the value of the milk to the factories could be assessed.

²² J. Hagan, 'Politics in the Illawarra', in Hagan and Wells, (eds), *A History of Work and Community in Wollongong*, Halstead Press, Rushcutters Bay, 2001, p.163.

²³ J. Hagan and G. Mitchell, (eds.) 'The South East', in *People and Politics in Regional NSW*, Federation Press, 2006. p.133.

²⁴ Dairy Australia Library, *op. cit.*, p. 2. The issue of pasteurisation in Australia was put on hold and until after World War 11, and then only succeeded after 'long and bitter controversies.

²⁵ J. Tozer, *An Illawarra Dairying Farm*, Jacaranda Press, Milton, Queensland, 1973, p.4.

²⁶ Frank McCaffety, *The History of Illawarra and its Pioneers*, John Sands Ltd., Sydney, 1922, p.75.

In 1788 the First Fleet brought 1 bull, 4 cows, and 1 calf to be the colonies' foundation stock. Seven years later the numbers had grown to 40 cows and 2 bulls. (ABS Year Book, No.1, U.O.W. Library).

²⁷ *ibid.*, p.109.

The approach, in turn, motivated the farmers to carefully consider and improve the standards and productivity of their animals. They recognised the economic benefit.

The exhibiting or showing of animals also enabled interested dairy men within the community to observe and discuss the cattle's good and less desirable qualities, and to become aware of the factors that constituted a productive standard. It was valuable information and a learning process. By observing and discussing the desirable qualities of the various animals they were educated in the characteristics of a valuable beast. Possibly the first local Agricultural Show can be attributed to Henry Osbourne when he placed on exhibition cattle he had purchased and introduced to the region. McCaffety observed that 'The object was ... an honorary display, with the view of bettering the district through the peoples' exposure to valuable stock'.²⁸

The Agricultural and Horticultural Show Society in Kiama also promoted an awareness of animal qualities, and encouraged improvements in farming techniques and animal husbandry. For example, at the 1901 Kiama Show, M. McVeigh introduced and demonstrated a method of milk testing, which the farmer could use to assess the cream content of a cow's milk.²⁹

It was a brass flask with decimal readings on the Gerber Scale. The small brass tube attached to a string and band, cranked like a grindstone handle [and] was swung vigorously for a minute or so, produced the same results as the Gerber or Babcock.³⁰

Ideas were coming from outside the region and being introduced to the Kiama people. Any improvement in milk production would lead naturally to increased productivity and financial gain.

By 1908, an Illawarra Cow Testing Association was formed, on a commercial basis, in a further attempt to improve the buttermilk production of the herds.³¹ It was proposed that two testers would visit the farms between Bulli and Tomerong

²⁸ Ibid., p. 214.

²⁹ *Independent*, 21 July 1900.

³⁰ *ibid.*, 21 July 1900. It was simpler to use and less time consuming compared to the Babcock.

³¹ The author of this project is not stated.

on a monthly basis, and leave for each individual farmer a detailed record of their findings in fat tests and weights, and the assessed amount of commercial butter for each cow. The proposed change was welcomed. At an initial meeting on 2 September 1908, thirty farmers recognised the economic value of the program and were willing to participate.³²

In 1905 the milking shorthorn made its appearance at the Kiama Show and by 1908 the animals were drawing the attention of the agricultural reporters at the Sydney Royal Show. Through selective breeding the strains of the English breeds including Ayrshire, Durham and Devon had been blended to produce a different and more productive dairy animal. The dairymen requested their animals be registered in the herd book as Illawarra Milking Shorthorns, but the NSW Government rejected this title.³³ The word 'Illawarra' they determined was not acceptable. The issue was not allowed to rest, for five years later the farmers formed their own Illawarra Dairy Cattle Association, and registered their animals under their preferred name of Illawarra Milking Shorthorn.³⁴

Once the Royal Agricultural Society in Sydney recognized the breed, both names were used in local and in the Royal Show.³⁵ The two breeds flourished throughout Australia.³⁶ This selective breeding programme had resulted in improvements in stock quality and in milk production. The information spread to the North Coast dairying districts and to the fertile river flats of the inland rivers, such as the Murray and Murrumbidgee, and the breed became in demand. In Queensland the two breeds of shorthorn amalgamated and the Illawarra Cattle Association of Queensland was formed.³⁷ By 1930, the dairying industry, the conservation of

³² *Independent*, 2 September 1908.

³³ K. Beasley, *Kiama on Show, 1848 – 1998*. Weston Print, Kiama, 1997, p.97. The word 'Illawarra' could not be included.

³⁴ *ibid.*, p.98.

³⁵ Both breeding titles used were Illawarra Milking Shorthorn and Milking Shorthorn. The latter title did not give credit to the efforts of the South Coast farmers.

³⁶ The Illawarra Cattle Society of Australia Ltd., -www.ansi.okstate.edu/breeds/cattle/illawar/index.htm. – (Accessed 24 May 2006.)

³⁷ *ibid.*

fodder and improvements to the pastures were fully appreciated.³⁸ The end result was economic rewards for the farmers.

Illawarra Shorthorn from the Handbook of Australian Livestock 2004.

Many years later, (and outside the scope of this study), the NSW Minister for Agriculture, Edward Graham spoke of the achievements of the ‘dairy cattle breeders in the Kiama district in evolving and producing a distinct and valuable breed’. He was instrumental in establishing an Artificial Insemination Centre at Berry, south of Kiama, to further encourage Australian and local farmers in the improvement of their herds. In 1944, the first calf was born by artificial insemination. The changes in the industry were due to the dedication and persistence, over a long period of time, of the region’s dairymen.

But dairying was only one industry - for the region to develop, expand and prosper it would be necessary to proceed beyond this ‘one’. The opportunity came through the discovery of large blue metal deposits and although quarry work provided a living, it was also a vehicle for change.

³⁸ Department of Environment and Planning, *Planning for Blue Metal Quarrying in the Municipalities of Shellharbour, and Kiama and Tablelands Sub-regions*. A report and recommendations, NSW Government Printer, Sydney, 1982, p.12.

Quarrying

The early quarries, operating prior to any town planning controls, did not seek council approval for their activities although quarry owners understood the advantage of maintaining open communication with the Council.³⁹ There was an element in the community that elevated the local interests and created alliances.⁴⁰ The daily lives and work of the quarry men were 'consistent with the interests of the dominant class structure' while the economic progress depended upon the success of the industry.⁴¹

Other issues of concern included the proximity of the quarries to the town, the noise pollution and the damage that blasting and its resulting vibrations would have upon nearby homes. Residents were becoming more aware of their rights regarding noise and pollution. Any future plans for development could be influenced by the attitudes of both the council and community. As the scars in the landscape became larger and more pronounced the Council assumed that, as the quarry trade added to the financial prosperity of the region, it was 'good'. Any inconveniences were of a minor nature, but Council had a vested interest. It received three pence per ton for all blue metal shipped from the quarries, while the quarry owners also agreed to construct any roads considered necessary in the pursuit of their industry.⁴²

The quarries changed ownership many times, but the precise historical records are not available.⁴³ The Carson Brothers, John and William, were involved in the work of more than one quarry.⁴⁴ The *Independent* in 1989 recorded an interview

³⁹ Ibid., p.12.

⁴⁰ B. McGowan, 'Class, Hegemony and Localism', *Labour History Volume* 86.<http://www.historycooperative.press.uiuc.edu/cgi-bin/printpage.cgi> - (Assessed 9 January 2004).

⁴¹ R.Connell and T. Irving, *Class Structure in Australian History: Documents, Narrative and Argument*, Longman and Cheshire, Melbourne, 1990, p.22.

⁴² W. Bayley, *Blue.Haven, a History of the Kiama Municipality*, Weston and Co. Kiama, 1976, p.87. The council saw the quarry trade as a win, win situation.

⁴³ Mc Carthy, *op. cit.*, pp. 96, 97. (Available in Wollongong Library).

⁴⁴ John Carson, originally contracted by the NSW Government, established one of Kiama's successful industries. See Appendix 5 (a), (b).

with Alan Carson, a descendant of the brothers and the last employee of the Havilah Place Quarry. He stated –

Kiama town-ship was much the same as Jamberoo and Gerringong until the quarry men came to town. Their arrival prompted the government to build houses and shops to accommodate them and the town began to prosper.⁴⁵

He also stated that the quarry industry and the contribution by his family played a major role in the development of the Kiama Municipality.⁴⁶ On the surface this could appear presumptive but considering he and his kin were reputed to have established at least six quarries up to 1909, the comment is reasonable.⁴⁷ The quarries were not subject to mining legislation and consequently complete records of operations were not maintained.⁴⁸

The quarry industries have a complex history, although exact dates are often unreliable. For example, and as far as can be deducted, Carson's Quarry changed hands to Salmon and Deene and in 1911 passed to the N.S.W. Ministry of Works, including its full working plant and steamer. It became the Kiama State Metal Quarry.⁴⁹ The cost of the purchase had been £1,400, and included all the working plant (steam engine, three crushing machines and full hopper provisions) and the steamer, *Kiama*. The metal would be supplied to the Department of Works, Metropolitan Water and Sewerage Board and the Sydney Harbour Trust, and at a cost price to the different council municipalities.⁵⁰

In the first month of operation 4,128 tons of metal had been quarried and broken. Six months later, January 1912, the quarry was unable to meet the demands for metal, and a further adjoining 21 acres of land was purchased. The population of Kiama in 1912 rose to 2,302, indicating that quarry labour was being drawn from areas outside Kiama, and was not only involving local workers.⁵¹ In 1912 both

⁴⁵ *Independent Supplement*, 28 June 2000.

⁴⁶ *ibid.*

⁴⁷ See quarry diagram 1, Appendix 5(a)

⁴⁸ J. Trivett, *NSW Year Book, 1904-05*, NSW Government Printer, Sydney, 1905, p. 280.

⁴⁹ Previously known as 'Kiama Road Metal Company'. J.B.Trivett, *NSW Year Book 1911*, NSW Government Printer, Sydney, 1912, p.345.

⁵⁰ *ibid.*

⁵¹ The *NSW Yearbook of 1911* recorded the population of Kiama at 1,620.

Pike's Hill and Carson's Hothersall Street Quarries changed hands to become a part of the State Metal Quarry.⁵² By 1913 it was dispatching by rail and steamer 1000,000 tons of metal for use by State Departments. Despite the influence of mechanization it still employed 100 men and had two colliers of 300 and 270 tons respectively.⁵³

Bombo Point contained one of the larger quarries.⁵⁴ It passed to the State Rail Authority and later in 1926 became the property of the N.S.W. Associated Blue Metal Company.⁵⁵ A quarry was opened at Long Point, by a Melbourne firm, Chambers and Co., on land owned by Mr G.W. Fuller, but the firm became insolvent. Mr Fuller reopened the quarry, and continued to trade securing two steamers for the purpose, until in 1913 he sold it to another company.⁵⁶ By 1923 the 'Dunmore Quarry was opened west of the Shellharbour Railway Station and on Mr Fuller's Estate. It was the largest quarry existing at this time'.⁵⁷ Although the Federal Government opened a quarry in 1923, it closed three years later, a casualty of the depressed economy.⁵⁸ Naturally, the changing work patterns in the quarries, along with the changes taking place in the dairying industry, impacted upon the town and its community.

⁵² Cousins, *op. cit.*, p. 186.

⁵³ Trivett, *Year Book*, 1914-1915, p.281.

⁵⁴ It is difficult to ascertain if Bombo was the home of more than one quarry as information varies.

⁵⁵ *ibid.*, p. 149.

⁵⁶ The steamers were the *Platypus* and the *Dunmore*. Cousins, *op. cit.*, p.187.

⁵⁷ Cousins, *op. cit.*, p. 187.

⁵⁸ Appendix 5 (b)

Chapter 2: Work

This chapter examines the role that women played in Kiama's workforce. In the early 1900s gender was important in defining male and female occupations, and the responsibilities incurred by the different types of work. Social and cultural mores cast men as the principal providers while women cared for their physical and emotional needs, the home and the children. Women were neither encouraged nor expected to participate in any occupation that would challenge these roles. Kiama's small cottage hospital became an important site for the employment of local Kiama women. It also confirmed the social roles applied to the employment of women.

Prior to 1901 the community had been calling for the establishment of a local hospital.¹ The closest established hospital was at Wollongong some 25 miles to the North. The transport was by horse drawn vehicle or by train. Neither was appropriate. The region was involved in the quarry trade and accidents did occur. The wealthy were reluctant to become involved in the hospital debate, for, when ill, they would employ a nurse and be cared for in their own home. It was the accepted concept that hospitals were for the 'poor'. The government would only partly fund such a project - it was seen as a community's responsibility. However, the specific gender roles played in the planning process, although inter-dependent, were designated for the men and women.²

The men promoted and organised the project, they argued the communities' case and appealed to the government for monetary assistance. The women-folk, after the hospital had opened assumed their role. Their responsibility was to provide it with constant support, to arrange various fund-raising activities and to help the hospital and its patients to obtain additional comforts. The workforce roles being taken by both the men and women, and although separate, are still interdependent and equally important. The cottage hospital, built in 1887 and opened by Dr

¹ *Independent Supplement*, 'Kiama Cottage Hospital', 28 June 2000.

² The hospital identifies the gender roles. The men were the initial organisers and planners, the women supported through money raising, sewing and voluntary work.

Tarrant (ex MLA), would become Kiama's principal medical centre for many years.³

In 1910, a small but slow change occurred to the hospital when an operating theatre, including the anaesthetic room was added.⁴ Surgery could now be performed upon less serious cases, thus eliminating the difficulty and expense of transferring patients to Wollongong Hospital. This time Mr George Fuller, MP, officiated at the opening.⁵ The *Independent*, in covering the event noted specifically that Mr Fuller's daughter not only opened the ward, but 'gave a speech as well'.⁶ Young ladies were not normally in the forefront of a public event. In 1930, to meet the changing needs community, the Kiama Cottage Hospital was replaced with a more modern Kiama District Hospital.⁷

Like many country hospitals staffing consisted of a Matron and nurses, with their work overseen by the local doctor who was usually a male. Nursing was considered perfectly respectable work for young women as it involved helping and nurturing people, and attending to their needs. It was an occupation suited to their temperament. It stressed obedience to seniors and patients and developed the 'caring' attitude, considered such a valuable asset in any woman's future married life.⁸ Very few girls worked before becoming trainee nurses, as they stayed at home and attended to the family duties.⁹

Women began their training when around 18 or 19 years of age, were unmarried and they lived in the hospital's accommodation for nurses, and there they were supervised, directed and trained by the senior staff. The early duties of the young Kiama trainee would range from ward cleaning, washing up, sweeping floors, tidying patients' rooms and collecting the 'pans'. In addition nurse trainees attended lectures on patient care.

³ *Independent*, 'Kiama Cottage Hospital Opened', 24 May 1887.

⁴ *Independent*, 25 June 1910.

⁵ *Independent*, 15 March 1911. Appendix 6

⁶ *ibid.*

⁷ *Independent*, 5 July 1930.

⁸ Teaching was also an accepted occupation as it involved the care of young children.

⁹ *Independent Supplement*, 30 August 2000. Although these references were applied to the period between the wars they are equally valid for the early 1900s.

Duties for junior nurses altered little over the years. Strong attention was paid to cleanliness - uniforms must always be clean and starched and exemplary appearance was to be matched by exemplary conduct. They were trained at the hospital in the 'Nightingale Method'. At the Kiama Cottage Hospital, Matron Barron was responsible for the care of the patients and the conduct of the small nursing staff, and she ruled in her domain. Upon marriage any nurse's career was terminated.

Gender issues: Women

Women's work was defined as different to the man's. Women cared for the needs of the home and the children, and did not participate in any occupation that would challenge this concept. Her responsibility was also seen as retaining the family order and harmony. For a woman to pursue a career was considered a 'violation of nature'.¹⁰ The strength of the community feelings were clearly and firmly expressed in the *Independent* when, in October 1902, the women's franchise movement secured equal voting rights for women.

Very little enthusiasm or excitement at any rate on the surface, has marked an undoubtedly interesting incident in the history of the Commonwealth – one, if the power is used, able to considerably upset the existing state of affairs, and to be a power to reckon with for good or for evil.¹¹

The phrase 'interesting incident' suggests that, at least for the editor of the local paper, the voting rights of women were of little or no consequence, merely a political 'incident' By 1904 the same paper was making its patriarchal feelings even clearer:

A woman's place is in the home where she should reign supreme, and not in an area of public life, in its hurley-burley, to lose the love for home-life and duties, which should constitute her nearest joy, and make her, like certain famous persons a boom and blessing to men.¹²

¹⁰ Francine Blaw and Marienne Ferber, *Economics of Men, Women and Work*, Prentice Hall, New Jersey, 1992, p.26. A large amount of literature exists on this topic.

¹¹ *Independent*, 31 October 1902.

¹² *Independent*, 6 August 1904.

A much stronger message regarding the position of women came from the clergy following the publishing of the Miles Franklin novel, *My Brilliant Career*.

With common [working class] people ... if their noses are not kept to the grinding stone, rearing families, they would get up to devil's mischief. We must populate Australia or perish, and hold it safe from the yellow peril at our doors.¹³

In addition to helping with any outdoor work the woman's home duties as described by Geoffrey Blainey has particular resonance in Kiama:-

Washing day ... called for the carrying of heavy buckets of water, the lifting of masses of hot sodden clothes, and pegging those clothes on the long washing line. The making of jams, sauces, soap candles, pies and biscuits in the kitchen called for heavy and persistent labour. ... [The] families clothes had to be made and repaired ... and meals cooked.¹⁴

The churches constantly accentuated the moral concepts and encouraged the emotion of 'belonging to the church' for they bound a culture of people with similar beliefs and attitudes together. In Kiama in 1921, there were 1,555 adults following the Protestant beliefs, as against the 333 Catholics. A smaller number - 75 persons – followed different faiths.¹⁵ The women were empowered through their faith and their aura of respectability to control the behaviours of their men.¹⁶

John Ferry claims that the ideologies of masculinity were challenged and weakened by the *Married Women's Property Act 1893*. Prior to this, the law 'enabled economic, political, legal and customary domination' to validate male power.¹⁷ Covertures or the condition of married women under a husband's protection was at the centre of the law and it affected all women who owned property, both personal and landed. The Act provided women with a limited financial dependence.

¹³ S. de Vries, *Great Australian Women, Volume 2*, Harper and Collins, Sydney, 2000, p. 112. This was not an unfamiliar attitude.

¹⁴ G. Blainey, *Black Kettle and Full Moon*, Penguin, Ringwood, 2003, p.310

¹⁵ Commonwealth. Statistician, *NSW Census 1921*, 'Religions', pp. 624, 625, 632, 633. The 1933 Census does not indicate the faiths held in the regions.

¹⁶ O'Hara, *op. cit.*, 185.

¹⁷ John Ferry, *Colonial Armidale*, University of Queensland Press, St.Lucia, 1994, p. 106.

Several legislative and industrial decisions, such as the Harvester Judgement (1907), and the Maternity Bonus (1912) reinforced the concept of the 'ideal' family, for. By 1910 both a woman's maternal health and the protection of her infant were gaining political and public support. The Maternity Bonus, introduced by the Commonwealth in 1912, enabled a pregnant woman to receive medical or mid-wife support. Trade unions supported these provisions, but the rigid division between work and home remained.¹⁸

Once the children reached the age of around eight years they could also work and assist with the chores. This was in addition to them probably walking each day to and from school.¹⁹ The women and children on the farm were a part of an informal neighbour-hood economy that is difficult to assess as domestic and family occupations were not recognised as legitimate work.²⁰ However, the Commonwealth Census of 1933 indicates the occupations of the people living within the Kiama region. Here the accepted work performed by men and women is categorised. For example, only 19 women are seen as having work commitment to dairying, while the Domestic Service industry employs 130 women. The breadwinners comprise 1,602 males, but only 355 females are recognised as breadwinners. It is not possible to assess the dimensions of this informal economy,²¹ for their input to the Kiama community is not recognised.²²

However, it did make good economic sense for the dairy farmer to be married. Hired labour was expensive as for example, in 1901, a farm labourer when given board and lodgings would receive 17/6 per week plus board and lodgings.²³ Maintenance of the family home and farm became the basis for many marriages in Kiama.²⁴ A wife could run the home, organize the children and assist in the

¹⁸ *ibid*, p. 13.

¹⁹ Dorothe O'Keefe in *Snippets of History*, Weston Print, 1992. She tells of the Baden and Smith children walking from *Range Farm* to the Dreuwalla School, p. 10.

²⁰ Eric Eklund, 'We Are of Age, Class Locality and Region, Port Kembla 1900-1940', in *Labour History: A Journal of Labour and Social History*, No.66, May 1994, p. 74.

²¹ Jill Matthews, *All her Labours*, Hale and Iremonger, Sydney, NSW, p. 16.

²² R. Wilson, *Commonwealth Census of Australia*, June 30, 1933, pp.110 – 113 and 118 – 119.

²³ W. Hall, *Official Year Book of NSW, 1904-5*, Government Printer, 1906.

²⁴ W. Mitchell and G. Sherrington, *Growing up in the Illawarra*, University of Wollongong, Wollongong, 1984, p 25.

activities of milking and butter making but the woman was seen as a minor part of the masculine world.²⁵

The man's work was seen to contain certain skills acquired over a length of time. His skills were the means by which he could earn a living and provide for a wife and family. He would probably follow the same work throughout his working life. The farmer would persist in their rural life style and finally pass an inheritance to his sons.

While working conditions on the early Kiama dairy farms were not ideal dairying enabled the small farmers to survive. They were committed to long hours, made little money and were obliged to involve their family in the farming process. There was a demand for their milk products from the growing populations in the urban centres. Although dairying was the farmers' principal occupation there were other related chores and on-going costs. Cows needed food, good grazing conditions maintained and fodder conserved for periods of little pasture growth.²⁶ There was the clearing away of scrubby brush cover and the control of the imported pests such as the rabbit and the fox. Fences needed erecting and maintaining.²⁷ Milk cans had to be delivered daily to the railway depot for transport to the factory at Redfern. With others possessing a separator and concentrating upon butter production, the cream had to be conveyed to the factory of the Coastal Farmers' Co-operative. After use all the milking utensils required washing and cleaning. It was a demanding occupation.

Cows had to be milked twice daily, morning and evening. The day's work commenced with the rising of the sun, and ended with its setting. Although candles and lamps were satisfactory within the home they were not suitable for outdoor work. Hurricane lanterns, or slush lamps were the principal means of lighting after dark for anyone moving around the farm. One poem describes the life thus:

²⁵ Ferry, *op cit.*, p.15.

²⁶ Appendix 7.

²⁷ Kiama's Dry Stone Walls are well known and were built by Thomas Newing over a number of years commencing in 1857. Many of these stone walls are still maintained as tourist attractions. Farmers later found it less costly to run fencing wire around their property. .

We look for the cows, they're down by the creek
 Miles from the shed when the winter is bleak!
 I'm covered by mud as I slither and slide,
 And I swear at the fog wishing I was inside!
 The cows hear us coming, get up on their feet
 And Bluey, me heeler then jumps ...
 Barking and snapping, He moves them along,
 And I hear in the distance the Plover's harsh song.
 At last, in the gloom, the dairy I see,
 And there is my son, standing, waiting for me.²⁸

Quarry work

The volcanic nature of Kiama's geology had resulted in large deposits of basalt, a hard and durable rock, which would be invaluable to effectively stabilize railway lines and tram tracks, and provide a base for the building of Sydney's streets and roads. Previously -

the roads, footpaths and waterfronts were paved with [Sydney] sandstone, it being the only rock available in the area. Such roads were continually being worn down by the iron-shod wheel rims of the bullock drays, carts and sulkies, causing endless problems for the government.²⁹

John Carson, a stone-mason, possessed a skill valuable to the government.³⁰ He was contracted to search for a suitable metal for road and rail construction and found, amongst other sites, a cliff at Pike's Ridge containing metal of an excellent quality. Also it was reasonably close to the harbour. A new and valuable industry was created. It would provide local work and prove an economic boon to Kiama and its associated communities. Carson's Quarry illustrates the demand for the product. It opened with three work-men and was soon employing 300. Men lived in tents, some in nearby huts.³¹ Work at the harbour also increased and consequently there was a need for additional labourers. The *Independent* excitedly

²⁸ From Peter Rush, 'A Dairy Farm in Winter', in *Australian Poems that would Stun a Sheep*, Silverere Publications, Tasmania, 1995, p. 89. Songs, poems and rhymes can and do reflect community attitudes.

²⁹ From an interview with Alan Carson, descendent of John Carter, and recorded in the *Independent*, 28 June 2000.

³⁰ *ibid.* He had been a stone-mason in Ballymena, in the Irish County of Antrim, and was one of the many immigrants from Protestant Ireland.

³¹ *Independent Supplement*, 'An Industry Forged in Rock', 28 June 2000. A small number of the workers cottages have been preserved and are known as 'The Terraces'. .

and correctly stated that ‘the business of stone crushing for the production of road metal is likely to become an established industry in Kiama.’³²

Bombo Blue Metal Quarry at Kiama (Daniel Cocks).

Source: W. Bayley, *Blue Haven*

Two different types of road materials were shipped to the Sydney trade – the blue metal being the crushed pieces of basalt, and the ‘cubes’. The stone cubes were by far preferable to the wooden blocks previously being used.³³ The breaking of the metal, first by blasting and then with heavy hammers, and transporting it in horse drawn drays was hard and tedious work.

Frequently quarry accidents occurred. The *Independent* reported a particularly nasty one when three quarry workers were drilling over an ‘old hole where gunpowder had not been discharged.’³⁴ About 8.15 am a terrible blast occurred which cost Thomas Cudden his life and George Thompson and William Daniels were seriously injured. Cudden and Thompson were drilling for what then known as a ‘pot’ shot.

³² *ibid.*

³³ A. Cousins, *Garden of New South Wales*, Weston and Co., Kiama, 1994, p 186.

³⁴ *Independent, Supplement*, 26 July, 2000.

Daniels was employed as single-handedly drilling about five yards from the other two. ...Its effects were terrible. Cudden was sitting on a sleeper with a drill between his legs. He was blown 40 to 50 feet into the air. ... He was picked up, dead, his body being bruised and riddled in a fearful manner. His chest was completely perforated, his nose split, his legs broken. ... Thompson got the force of the explosion in his face and hands and was blown up against the embankment. ... Poor Cudden leaves a wife and child.³⁵

Another accident, in August 1905, records the details concerning the overseer of the Railway Commissioner's quarry at Bombo:-

While handling a section of the machinery attached to the elevator which carries the blue metal from the mills to the trucks, his arm caught in a section of the cogs and was drawn through. ...the bone and flesh were literally crushed to a pulp and the hand portion hung only by sinews. The [electric] motor was stopped but before the arm could be released a good deal of the machinery had to be taken to pieces.³⁶

The accidents are not to be wondered at for the work the men were performing was exhausting and dangerous. To break the stone the stone masters tediously drilled holes in the rocks with a sledgehammer and chisel. One man held a chisel and after each strike with the 'spoiler' (hammer) would turn the chisel in a quarter revolution. It became a rhythmic action. When the hole was deep enough a 'charge' was 'loaded' and the rock blown apart with gunpowder. The 'spoilers' then shaped the cubes of rock, and any metal left would be used for the blue-metal trade.³⁷

Many of the men, if not most, with or without families were living in tents. Regulations controlling the setting of charges, blasting and the safety of the workers were lax, or did not exist at all. In the techniques of blasting the men were inexperienced, and in 1912 when gelignite replaced the 'black' gunpowder, most men lacked knowledge of the potential danger. For example, in May 1912 six men were killed and others injured when an explosion discharged a quantity of rock under which they were standing. A coronial inquiry was called and the

³⁵ *ibid.*

³⁶ *Independent Supplement*, 27 September, 2000.

³⁷ Information available in the files at The Kiama Historical Center. (Pilot's Cottage).2005.

Amalgamated and Tramway's Union met to ensure that quarrymen in the future would have safer working conditions, and to set up a relief fund was for the families of victims.³⁸ Their ganger, Walter Isles, was so disturbed by the tragedy that he committed suicide by throwing himself in front of a train.³⁹

The *Independent* records the details of many other accidents, too numerous to mention, that occurred at the quarries. It was hard and dangerous work for both the men and the little ships that conveyed the metal to Sydney.⁴⁰ There were no Occupational Health and Safety laws – it almost appeared that the workers were 'disposable commodities'. Also, during this time there is little reference to the Kiama quarry workers, to unionism or to the Labour Council – it is almost as though the safety issues had faded away. It was not until 1926 that the Wollongong League sought to convene a meeting of all union members in the wider Illawarra regions, including those in Kiama.⁴¹

Thus marriage remained the lot of most young people growing up in Kiama. The young women would most likely marry a local boy from a similar class background and continue the life pattern modelled to them by their parents and grand-parents. Some Kiama brides would leave the district and with their husbands set up homes along the Richmond River. Others would marry quarry or railway workmen, and if the work 'cut out' move on with their men to another 'job'.⁴²

³⁸ *Independent Supplement*, 'Quarrying', 25 October 2000.

³⁹ *Independent*, 15 June 1912.

⁴⁰ Appendix 8

⁴¹ S. Nixon, 'The Illawarra Trades and Labor Council in Depression, Recovery and War. 1926-1947', in *Journal of the Illawarra Branch of the Australian Society for the Study of Labor History*.

⁴² Mitchell and Sherrington, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

Chapter 3: The Community

In 1901, Kiama's economic successes in dairying and a growing blue metal trade had not trickled down to much of its infrastructure. While living conditions had improved, poor transport and communication problems remained. People continued to walk long distances or relied upon their horses for transport. Churches retained their pride of place in the town while the social 'ladies' through their voluntary work, supported their menfolk and organised picnics, fetes and money-raising activities.¹ By 1901 Kiama Municipal Council had successfully acquired a collection of books and achieved lending-library status. Previously the School of Arts had maintained a small lending library. For Kiama's youth, sporting activities and clubs especially team activities, brought them closer to the players and their families in the adjacent regions.

At this time, Kiama's community activities were -

- a) special days of celebrations such as Kiama Show Day and school-centred activities such as Empire Day and Arbor Day;
- b) emerging benefit societies and church organizations which aimed the community and which had at their heart the maintenance and development of Christian and moral standards; and
- c) the organization of sports such as golf, tennis, cricket and football into local clubs².

Labouring and working class men and their counterparts however, did not always fit comfortably into the social pattern of the professional, bourgeois and self-employed. Their enjoyment was of a different kind, for by the end of a day's work they were weary and lacked the inclination and money to become involved in many community activities. Their enjoyment was a drink at the local hotel after work and conversation with their mates. Moreover, survival was their principal priority.

¹ E. Dunn, *A Study of the Kiama Region in the Nineteenth Century*, Honours Thesis, University of New England. 2003.

² Many of the sporting clubs had their foundations in the late 19th century.

However, there were experiences, for example Show Day, where the whole town could participate, either as exhibitors, workers or visitors.

Special Days - Empire Day, Arbor Day and the Show

Empire Day and Arbor Day and their location in local schools as sites of celebration, reinforced and restated the town's links to the state, nation and its constitutional links to the British Monarchy. Arbor Day, also strongly celebrated in schools, often accompanied by tree-planting ceremonies, took on many of the virtues of cleanliness, tidiness and possibly Godliness, all of which in turn also related to the concept of respectability.

Similarly, benefit societies, lodges and church as well as sporting groups restated the importance of collective work and activity. It is also likely that the separate and collective effect of these activities for many Kiama residents restated and reinforced the notion that life in Kiama would experience little change as the years rolled by. While each organisation was clearly keen to either display local work, involve people in the celebration of local skills and abilities or celebrate and/or worship significant social, political or religious agencies they also had the indirect consequence of restating and reinforcing the social order. These organizations were not agents of change. Change, however, came to Kiama through other agencies such as the agricultural show, school-based events, and community and sporting activities

One of the most important annual events in Kiama was the Agricultural Show, especially as it grew into an exhibition of major importance.³ The show was considered a major event, a means of promoting the district and an important date on the family calendar. Kiama's Show was one of the first rural shows in Australia with visiting dignitaries and which invited political representatives to attend and officiate at its opening and be a part of the official program.⁴

³ *Government Gazette*, August 26, 1908. The Minister for Lands had given permission in 1896 to use the government land but tenure still remained insecure until the official notice was gazetted.

⁴ K. Beasley, *Kiama on Show*, Weston Print, Kiama, 1997, pp. 24, 25.

Socializing was a major part of the show. The community came together in an exhilarating atmosphere. It was two days of both enjoyment and work. The exhibitors were fully aware of the commitment and work necessary in the preparations and time taken to present their animals in the best possible condition. A win could mean greater acceptance of their animals and increased respect and rewards for the breeders. It was a time when the farmers could freely talk, make comparisons and discuss the merits of the different exhibits. The show exhibitor, regardless of size or value of the beast, required no special status – Kiama Show was open to everyone.

The Kiama Show was the principal display opportunity for Shorthorn Dairy Cattle. According to the *Independent*, the Illawarra breed of cattle did not appear at South Coast Shows until 1905.⁵ Cattle which won prizes at the Kiama Show frequently went on to the Sydney Royal and there the Illawarra Shorthorn eventually came to be recognized as a specific breed.

The Show did not provide an opportunity to only showcase cattle. Horses of different breeds were significant in Australia's early history, and in 1901 a letter from the Minister of Agriculture was sent to the Kiama Agricultural Society stressing to the judges the necessity to concentrate on the animals' 'bone, sinew, and weight carrying capacity'. A suggested procedure was included. It was reasoned that through the shows and the establishment of a points system to judge the animals 'appearance, pace, style, and soundness', farmers would be further educated in breeding techniques.⁶ But, the system devised by a person unknown to them, resulted in many complaints from competitors. Also it was very cumbersome and time consuming. The judges at the Kiama Show were highly respected and many went on to officiate at other South Coast Shows, while prominent farmers such as Doug Blow, Cliff Emery and Alan Walker, were often invited to assist in assembling district exhibits at the Sydney Royal.

⁵ *Independent Supplement*, 'Agriculture', 27 September 2000.

⁶ *ibid.*

Early Kiama shows saw the introduction of high jumping competitions with cash prizes for the winners. These competitions were later expanded to include bareback jumps and tandem jumps with the rider controlling the lead horse over the jumps with long reins. Also there was jumping 'in matched pairs' for both lady and gentleman riders.

Sonny Chittick with "Dunmore Lad" and "Maisie" competing in the Tandem Jumping competition at the 1923 Sydney Royal Show. Sonny Chittick performed this difficult feat at the Kiama Show. From Kiama Independent Supplement.

In addition to 'ring' events and district exhibits, a ploughing competition was always held on a different day to the official show day on a nearby property. These ploughing contests displayed the quality and working reliability of the heavier horses. It was not until the 1920s that motor vehicles and tractors replaced the horse.⁷

Guessing competitions such as guessing the weight of a bullock were held and in the early 1900s, a "fun event" was introduced open to women or boys, which involved harnessing a horse, putting it in a sulky or buggy and then driving it around the show ring in the fastest possible time.⁸ These ring events provided entertainment for all and could be enjoyed without undue cost⁹. There was also sideshow alley with marvels such as the Fat Lady and Boxing competitions,

⁷ Beasley, *op. cit.*, p 34. Plowing competitions are still a part of the Irish Countryside. This year the National Plowing Championships were sponsored in Cork, and were widely advertised in the *Cork and Country Advertiser*, 16 September to 30 September, 2005.

⁸ Beasley, *op. cit.*, p. 27

⁹ *ibid.*

‘penny-in-the-slot’ games and people who ‘would read and interpret the bumps on your head’. Non-competitive exhibits such as Singer Sewing Machines, Palings Musical instruments and samples of ‘fancy’ foods like chocolates and cocoa attracted the attention of all wishing to ‘keep up with the developments of the times’.¹⁰ Put simply, the show offered something for everyone.

The Show also provided many Kiama folk with an opportunity to make something akin to annual audit of social standards. Both men and women wore their ‘best’ clothing, and frequently a new dress for the ladies would be made or purchased for the occasion. The children also had to appear at their best, for the respectability of the family in the community was also on show. It ‘proved’ that the father was a sound provider and the mother a respectable ‘home maker’.

We always dressed up for the second day of the show. We usually came in the afternoon and had a picnic tea there. I remember being sun-burnt at the show and as children not being allowed to go near the boxing tent. (Betty Chittick).¹¹

It became the common practice to invite a political dignitary to officially open the show. On one occasion, The Honorable J.L.Fegan, the NSW Minister for Agriculture, thrilled his listeners by stating in his opening speech that nine million tons of dairy produce from Kiama had been exported in the previous year. In 1903 the NSW Premier, Sir John See, opened the show and became the first Premier to accept such an invitation, and in 1905 the Governor, Sir Harry Rawson, was invited. With due consideration of his position, the show society organised a special train to transport him, his friends and advisors to Kiama.

Following the *Holiday Act of 1899* the Show Committee was forced to ‘fix’ the dates for their event each year, so January 24-26 was designated as Kiama’s Show Day. The Committee also decided that a special train be organized to transport visitors, so at this early stage and in an indirect way, tourism was being fostered.¹²

¹⁰ *ibid.*

¹¹ Oral history related by Betty Chittick and recorded in K. Beasley, *Kiama on Show*, Weston Print, Kiama, 1997. p. 112.

¹² Beasley, *op. cit.*, p. 28

During a recent ‘Oral History Day’ at the Kiama High School, the students collected and collated the memories of local senior residents. Doug Blow, Wal Anderson and Betty Chittick, respectively recall the time:

I started to show at the Kiama Show when I was ten years old. My main association with the show was through the Gerringong Junior Farmers.¹³

I saw my first Kiama Show when I was about six years old. My father worked for Stan Cole and we came into Kiama by horse and wagonette. A wagonette is a four-wheeled vehicle that was used to take milk to the Jamberoo milk factory. I remember this very well as though it was yesterday.¹⁴

We would bring 20-30 cattle from the farm at Jerrara. They would be driven half the distance on the evening before the show began to a paddock rented at Greyleigh and then on the morning of the show taken to the sale-yards, which is where Chittick Oval is now. ... In later years motor transport was used.¹⁵

In 1902 the *Independent* devoted considerable praise to the show. Prizes had been awarded to 920 competitors. The horse section competitions had greatly increased, while the cattle had 55 classes.¹⁶ It also praised the Agricultural Committee for clearing their debts and conducting the most ‘educative exhibition in the colony’.¹⁷ The growing popularity of the show was clear in 1904, with 3,400 entries received, an increase of approximately 1,000 on the previous year.

School and Community

Some activities for enjoyment were specifically organised at the local school level, yet structured to also involve their parents. The Premier’s Conference of 1903, suggested that a National Day - an Empire Day - be celebrated each year by the schools. The children’s formal lessons would be put aside for the day, and with the co-operation of parents talks would be given, athletic and ‘fun’ games played and a

¹³ *ibid.*, p.112

¹⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.112. These reminiscences open other areas of interest .

¹⁶ *Independent*, 31 January 1900.

¹⁷ *ibid.*

special luncheon prepared. Parents would be asked to join in with the children. The government feared the Australian youth were 'growing away' from their 'Mother Country'. Some argued that Kiama's youth knew little of the 'old country' and its heritage. Their sense of where they belonged remained with their farms, their town and their community. Empire Day would revive civic emotions and a sense of responsibility.¹⁸

The death of Queen Victoria and Federation represented a need to reiterate the importance of loyalty and patriotism to the Crown.¹⁹ A 'national holiday circling the earth with Britain's drum beat' would help in holding the 'race' together and re-inculcate in the youth the recognition of their responsibility.²⁰ The 'fun day' would also prompt the memory of parents and adults and their commitment to Britain. It would represent a day of homage and reverence, with Australians seeing themselves as 'transplanted Britons beholden to the Mother Country'.²¹ Programs could vary at different centres but saluting the flag and singing the national anthem, 'God Save the King,' were mandatory. A fire-works display would end the day.

The *Independent* detailed the Empire Day procedures of 1908, three years after its suggested introduction. At Jamberoo, about 200 children marched from the school to the Council Chambers where the Mayor, Hugh Colley, presented each with a medal commemorating the occasion. From there they marched to the recreation ground to listen to patriotic speeches and a lunch provided by their parents. Various athletic games and foot races (with prizes) were then held. Although it was to-be a day planned presumably for the children the parents were involvement too. In Gerringong, Reverend Riley, representing the Protestant churches, presented the address, speaking of the Empire's 'Unity', the meaning of the crosses of England, Scotland and Ireland on the Union Jack, and the need for all social classes to cooperate. In Kiama the approach varied, for the adults competed in a team rifle match, the annual *Daily Mail* Empire match, while at the

¹⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁹ Stuart Mactintyre, *The Oxford History of Australia, 1901 – 1942*. Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1993, p. 132.

²⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 132-133.

²¹ W. Byrne, 'Republic Vs Monarchy', in *Colony and Empire in Australian*, Information p.150. <http://members.ozemail.com.au/nationfo/rep3.htm> (Assessed 5 August 2005).

school junior cadets performed patriotic displays and ‘fired a volley or two’. At night the Kiama Tourist Association sponsored a fireworks exhibition.²²

One section of the community did not participate. The Catholic schools resented this patriotic intrusion into their organization and its underlying messages to students and parents. They structured their own celebration to be a part of St Patrick’s Day.²³

Community Societies

The first stones for the Kiama School of Arts were laid in 1900, and Gerringong established its School of Arts in 1901. At the laying of the foundation stones Mr Alex Campbell stated:-

This building must prove an advantage to its residents, and play an important role in the intellectual advancement of young men and women and old folk as well, who desired to grasp the opportunities of acquiring knowledge that such an institution afforded.²⁴

The Mechanic’s Institute in Britain was the forerunner of the School of Arts movement in New South Wales. As well as a place for the dissemination of knowledge, it also had Protestant Christian objectives. Kiama’s School of Arts aimed at providing knowledge to young local men and to encourage in them a love of learning. It was to be a sound and cheap educational process. The School building housed a free lending library and was a venue for lectures and classes in of subjects of self improvement, thrift and morals. In Kiama it was promoted as a community and cultural centre for the protestant members. Although, originally conceived for the benefit of the working men, the professional men intruded and began to make it their base. It was also a venue for the Good Templar Lodge, an organization encouraging abstinence from intoxicating liquors and the appointment

²² *Independent*, 30 May 1908. The *Independent*’s wrote much detail in its report - the major emphasis was upon loyalty to the King, Flag and Empire.

²³ S. Macintyre, *op. cit.*, p.133. Eventually Empire Day would be renamed Australia Day, with loyalties to Australia, but the King or Queen would still be recognised as leader of the British Empire).

²⁴ *Independent*, 22 December 1900.

of 'good honest men' to administer the laws. The temperance movement was strongly supported by the women's organizations. Between 1906 and 1933 the Kiama Municipal Council also held its meetings in the centre for at the time it did not have its own chambers.²⁵

In addition to the School of Arts in 1908, a Young Men's Institute was instigated by the Catholic Church. Upon its formation suitable church accommodation was made available. Its aim was to promote self-culture, desirable reading habits and a spirit of good fellowship among the young catholic males.

Mutual aid and benevolence, the moral, social and intellectual improvement of its members, and the proper development of sentiments of devotion to the Catholic Church and loyalty to our country, in accordance with its motto, *Pro Deo, Pro Patria*;

and

Membership was divided into three classes, beneficiary, active and honorary but no person could be a member or remain one without being a practicing catholic.²⁶

The Hibernian Society, an Australian Catholic Benefit Society, established a benefit society and the funds raised went towards helping and supporting its members in cases of sickness, to encourage the faith and inspire the parishioners towards being 'good' Catholics. In 1908 the Church's Golden Jubilee and His Holiness the Pope's priesthood were celebrated. Mass was held and afterwards a 'sumptuous repast was taken' followed by a reunion celebration and toasts were drunk to the Pope and the Church and to the work of the Hibernian Society

²⁵ W. Bayley, *Blue. Haven, a History of the Kiama Municipality*, Weston and Co. Kiama, 1976, Chapter 7. *Independent Supplement*, 27 September 2000. The council erected its own chambers in 1933.

²⁶ 'Young Men's Institute' in *New Advent* at <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15736b.htm> - (Accessed 21 August 2006)

The 'Bombo Band of Hope' was a part of the Wesleyan community. It originated in Britain and was aimed at children. By the church providing suitable activities and entertainments for children the Christian beliefs would be reinforced and the future avoidance of alcohol encouraged. One of the innovative features was a 'signing of the pledge', including the promise not to indulge in alcoholic drinks of any kind.²⁷ Concerts and musical evenings became important elements in their gatherings, while temperance issues remained paramount to the social gatherings and policies. The *Independent* willingly recorded meetings and entertainments, for example 'in March, 1896 the Church of England Band of Hope provided an evening of entertainment which proved so popular many guests were forced to stand during the performance.'²⁸

At the same time the Masonic Lodge played its role in the welfare and support of its Protestant members. The Masonic fraternity was a social organization providing fellowship between people with similar interests. It followed its own procedures dating back over many years. It had its foundation in the Scottish working class. Religion was not at the basis of the society, although members were expected to believe in a 'Supreme Being'. Due to this concept and the closed nature of the meetings the Catholic Church and its community suspected the members to be possibly practicing deviant and perverse behaviours. However the order functioned for the support and economic good of its members.

It is a privilege to nominate a man into masonry. As with all privileges it carries responsibilities and the mere act of signing a nomination form, or recommending a man for initiation, does him and the lodge a disservice unless the basic criteria are met.²⁹

The presence and influence of the religious bodies within the community continued as the various churches approached their Jubilees. Their importance to the parishioners is recognised in the details reported in the *Independent*. For example, the Golden Jubilee of Kiama's Christ Church (Church of England), in 1909 was marked by a service conducted by the Archbishop and followed by the taking of

²⁷ <http://www.hopeuk.org/history.htm> - (Accessed 10 March 2006.)

²⁸ In January 1902 the Kiama Wesleyan Church was renamed the Methodist Church.

²⁹ The *N.S.W. Freemason*, Volume 32, Number 3, June 2000. p.3.

photographs. As was the usual pattern the ladies of the parish provided and served lunch for the clergy, church officers and choir.³⁰

Community Sport

The early twentieth century saw the growth in recreational sport. A different approach evolved in the peoples' lives and in the ways by which they could enjoy their leisure.³¹ Sport was a part of regional life particularly with the games of cricket in summer and football during the winter. The small villages had their own teams and these they followed faithfully while the new pneumatic-tyred bicycle was proving popular to both men and women. However, the churches had misgivings, particularly when it concerned Sunday sport. Possibilities could be seen in motor power and flying but these would not become prominent until after World War 1.

Sport encouraged closer social connections with adjacent regions. Gerringong held its first Lawn Tennis Club competition in 1902 beating the Meroo Meadows Club by 21 games, and the Kiama Council proposed in 1906 the building of two courts on the low land in Central Park.³² It was not until 1909 that the Kiama Tennis Club became a reality. Two years earlier, in December 1907, the Kiama Methodist Institute had officially opened a court at the rear of their church, and 1910 the Jamberoo Tennis Club commenced to function. Both men and women became members.

Golf was introduced to the region in 1903 when a course was laid out on Chapman's Point and the Kiama Golf Club was formed. The ladies were welcome to join the club, but Golf Club membership appears to have lapsed during the war years. In 1927 a new nine-hole course was being proposed in the hope that it

³⁰ *Independent*, January 16, 1909. The ladies were accepted and praised for their role in providing such service to the church.

³¹ Automobiles became a fact of life, a motorized ambulance was presented to the hospital, electricity was connected to the district and Jamberoo gained a continuous telephone service.

³² Club History, *The Early Days*, kiamatennis.wacmac.com/history.htm, [Accessed 26 May 2004].

would 're-awaken interest in the game'.³³ However, the Cricket Club had a sound membership even before 1901..

Football had long been a competitive sport within the region. By 1907 the Kiama and Jamberoo Primary Schools were competing competitively in football games but when in 1914 a Kiama Rugby League Club was formed the decision was criticised by the Reverend Tulloch Yuille. In May he described the game as a 'pagan sacrifice to the God of Fertility' and where 'young men coming from different villages kicked the head of a goat and strove for its possession'.³⁴ The victors would receive the 'blessing of the God of Fertility'.³⁵ His words did not appear to dampen the enthusiasm of the club.

At the turn of the century bicycling became the rage and was taken up in the community for both pleasure and competition. The new pneumatic-tired, chain-driven bicycle enabled and encouraged both men and women to participate in the sport. Women rode in their long skirts and 'boater' hats but not competitively.³⁶ In 1908 fifty members of the League of N.S.W. Wheelmen had raced through Kiama on a route from Nowra to Sydney.³⁷ The Kiama locals were inspired and in 1909 formed their own Kiama Bicycle Club. Competitions were organized, one route being from the Brighton Hotel in Kiama to Jamberoo and return. However, the pastime was not all pleasure as indicated in the *Independent* and the reported accidents. One example was the collision of a bike rider with a sulky coming from the opposite direction (1908). The cyclist 'came off second best'.³⁸

A business person of the time recognized the possibilities in sporting events and a market opportunity. His advertisement appeared in the *Independent*:-

³³ *Independent*, 1 June 1927. There is considerable doubt over the site of this course – some claim that it was on the site of the current Kiama High School but there is nothing definite.

³⁴ *ibid.*, 23 May 1914.

³⁵ *ibid.*

³⁶ Cyril Pearl, *Australia's Yesterdays*, Readers Digest, Sydney, 1974. p.198

³⁷ *Independent Supplement*, 27 September 2000

³⁸ *ibid.*

Bicyclists should never start without a bottle of Chamberlain's Pain Balm in their tool bags. This liniment is excellent for all flesh wounds and sprains. One application gives relief.³⁹

Surfing and bathing had always been a part of the local Kiama environment, but the community still maintained its own ideas. In 1909 it was claimed that 'young men [were seen] bathing on the beaches (at North Kiama in particular), in a nude condition and only wearing V trunks'. In another incident local ladies claimed that they could not walk to the North Kiama Beach without passing 'several young men sun-baking and wearing little covering on their bodies'. The *Independent* was critical. 'It is understood that the law prohibits bathing without a neck-to-knees costume. Such persons can be prosecuted. The collective notions of respectability must be maintained for the benefit of all the community.'⁴⁰

But the laws suited to 'Mother England' were being challenged in Australia. By 1910 it was recognized that in Kiama 'Surf bathing was one of the main [tourist] attractions' and by the 1911/12 season the Kiama Surf Club was formed.⁴¹ Bathing and sport were bringing about social changes. Sport can be a declarer of class and also a definer of a nation. Surfing, in general, would later lead to the individualism of the 'surfie'.

Above all sport, whether individual or team, gave the region's youth a place in their community and 'The Club' a social life apart from the family⁴². Empire Day, Arbor Day and the Kiama Show each provided Kiama folk with opportunities for change and opportunities for a quiet conservative resistance to change. The Show, unbeknown to those who attended and revelled in the fun of sideshow alley and the ring events, were in effect part of a broad revolution in the state's dairy industry. The Illawarra Shorthorn whose origins were in the Kiama region, made a significant contribution to the state's cattle industry and the Kiama Show became an important site for the beginning of this change. On the other hand, Empire Day and Arbor Day became occasions where those Kiama folk who were suspicious of

³⁹ *ibid.*

⁴⁰ *ibid.*

⁴¹ *Independent Supplement*, 'Kiama Surf Club and Bathing', 25 October 2000.

⁴² 'I belong to the Club!' (It could be any group - Cricket, Football, Tennis Bicycling or Surfing).

change or who wanted to keep alive and strong links to the 'Mother Country' against the backdrop of a newly federated nation. Their influence was initially benign and went without much notice. However, a change in the social context and backdrop put their influence in a different light. World War One saw their supporters use these occasions to good effect.

Kiama Rugby League Club was formed on May 4, 1914, but before this there was the Bombo Football Club. Pictured is the first Bombo Club of 1913, a team made up of young men from in and around Kiama and Bombo. Source:- Kiama Independent Supplement.

Chapter 4: Progress

Between 1910 and 1914 Kiama entered a period of progress, and fresh projects were undertaken. For example, an anaesthetic room and operating theatre had been added to the hospital, and in anticipation of tourist trade the Brighton Hotel was remodelled. It was now capable of seating 100 guests and had 27 bedrooms plus a billiard room and store room. However, the administration offices of the council needed updating, and the problems associated with the limited water supply and the dusty main street still remained. The Council recognised the local needs and were slowly working towards an improvement but their rate of progress was determined by the availability of their finance. Life and work in the community continued steadily along the lines of Kiama's 'respectable Protestant and Northern Ireland heritage'¹.

Council – Progress

The town and farm water supply in 1910 still remained a major issue. Despite the Council's earlier decision to water the street regularly and control the dust issue land owners and business houses continued to be dissatisfied. Complaints were aired through the *Independent*:-

It seems that they [the council] have gone back to the old days
... if they desired to make Kiama a tourist place things would
have to be altered considerably.²

One rate-payer, R H. Stevenson, claimed that the foods in his shop could not be kept free of dust, and thus the *Pure Foods Act* was being violated.³ This was due to council neglect. Again an agreement was reached with the council to have the streets watered every morning under the supervision of an alderman, but the problem remained. It would only be solved when the streets were sealed, or there

¹ W. Mitchell and G. Sherington, *Growing Up in the Illawarra*, the University of Wollongong, Wollongong, 1984, p. 41.

² *Independent*, 19 October 1910.

³ *ibid.*

was an alternative way of transporting the blue metal from the quarries to the harbour.

In 1911 the Council approached the Department of Public Works to consider the building of a second water storage dam. The earlier construction was quite unsatisfactory and was described as ‘a disgrace.’⁴ In 1909 the Council had investigated the possibilities of constructing a storage dam and obtained a costing. The quote was given as £7,250 (\$18,125), but now two years later the cost had increased to £8,640 (\$21,600). The indecision had cost the rate payers. Still the Mayor remained hesitant regarding the amount of money but agreed to hold a ‘water reticulation referendum’. The result was positive with 62 voters to 42 in favour of proceeding with the project. Before the project could progress a commitment from possible subscribers was required. This was not a problem, so tenders were called and the construction commenced almost immediately.

Concurrent with Kiama’s water needs the Jamberoo community was also seeking a reliable supply from Fountaindale Creek.⁵ The NSW Government agreed to contribute towards the project but work was delayed for a further twelve months. The prolonged dry weather that occurred in early 1913 caused anxiety amongst the rural and urban community for they feared that the creeks and springs would become dry. By June 1913 and to the satisfaction of Jamberoo residents, a connection with the creek was completed. The Mayor said that –‘the value of the work would be appreciated to the full.’⁶

Quarry - Progress

However, in other ways the ‘outside world’ was intruding into local affairs, creating challenges and forcing Kiama to move forward. In October 1911 the Kiama MLA., Mr Mark Morton, suggested building a tramway from the quarry to link with the harbour and the railway station. The concept possibly came from the

⁴ *Independent Supplement*, 25 October 2000.

⁵ *ibid.*

⁶ *ibid.*

construction in the nineteenth century, in Wollongong, by the operators of the Mt. Pleasant and Mt. Kembla Mines, where a tram line had been built linking the coalmines to Wollongong Harbour.⁷ The coal trucks were initially horse-drawn but by 1906 the horses were replaced by steam-powered engines.

When the quarries had adopted the use of crushers driven by the steam driven Roby Engines the workers no longer needed to manually break the basalt. This mechanical change was economically beneficial to the quarry owners as labour costs could be reduced. Then in 1913 work began on a 'tramway' to convey the crushed blue metal along Terralong and Manning Streets to the harbour. The tramway was planned to run on a two foot gauge rail line. In July 1914 when the initial 'trial run from a newly constructed platform,' was declared a success, two small Baldwin locomotives were then put into service.⁸ These two locomotives replaced the 300 stone carts. Each locomotive carried a bell, and this was rung to warn pedestrian and road traffic of the approaching train.⁹ As a result of the more technical methods of production and transport the labour of the horses and their handlers was no longer required. The itinerant labourers moved on and their financial input to the town and businesses was lost.

The technology was a boon to the Kiama residents, as the train replaced the old stone carts that trundled through the town creating dust and noise. Also, the tram was capable of bulk handling, impossible to implement with the horse and dray teams. Soon the number metal trains leaving Kiama was increased from two to seven resulting in change and progress.¹⁰

Other changes in communication occurred when in 1911 word was received that Kiama was to benefit from a telephone exchange, and the work would commence immediately. Telegraph poles were cut from the local iron bark timber, and were described by one resident as 'no ornament to the town'. On the day the exchange

⁷ Information from a Wollongong City display at Belmore Basin, 2005.

⁸ D.Cottee and Y. McBurney, *Terralong Tracks*, Educational Material Aid, Strathfield, 1987, pp.52-53.

⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁰ Cottee and Burney, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

opened 36 subscribers had been connected and a continuous day and night service was promised upon the number of subscribers reaching fifty.¹¹ In October 1913 Gerringong commenced agitating for a similar telephone service - a 'Telephone Bureau' - claiming that their town was a popular tourist resort. The town had already established some tourist amenities including water and cooking facilities for picnic and camping parties, and had erected shelter sheds in the recreational area and built tennis courts. Now a telephone connection was desirable for the convenience of visitors.¹²

For some time the Municipal Council had been using the School of Arts building for their meetings, declaring that their own building was 'beyond repair'. The Minister of Public Works was approached for a loan of 2000 pounds, the amount needed to help finance the erecting of a Council administrative centre and town hall. When a representative from the Public Works Department visited the region to further discuss the issue only three residents attended the meeting. The visiting official declared that Kiama just 'did not care' and rejected the request.¹³ Much debate followed and the council eventually had their request approved. In February 1915 work on the building commenced. Obviously the Kiama rate payers did not see such a building as a benefit to the community – and eventually they would be paying for it. Also, World War 1 was already underway, and to the community the construction of Council offices did not appear a priority.

In February 1913 an old and prominent member of the community had died at the age of 88 years. Joseph Weston, proprietor of the *Independent*,¹⁴ He was one of the region's earliest pioneers and the instigator of the co-operative dairying system. Through the newspaper reports he endeavoured to keep readers aware of their society and the need to progress. His campaigns included the completion of Kiama Harbour, the South Coast railway line and support for the Australian Federation. 'It was fitting that his interment should be honoured by the rights of the Ancient

¹¹ *Independent Supplement*, 'Kiama Telephone Exchange', 25 October 2000.

¹² *ibid.*

¹³ *ibid.*

¹⁴ *The Kiama Reporter*, 19 February 1913.

Order of Freemasons' the *Reporter* declared.¹⁵ The Freemasons Order had a strong following in Kiama.

A new generation of newspaper owners which included his son John and daughter Mary now became responsible for Kiama's *Independent* and *Reporter* and they would guide the papers through a World War and a Depression. Changes in structure and reporting style occurred but they still believed in the philosophy of their father:-

That the role of a community newspaper was not just to deliver the bad news, but also to act as a faithful and reliable companion for its readership, highlighting reasons to be hopeful where none appeared to exist.¹⁶

Schools - Progress

Progress can also be seen in the activities encouraged by local schools, and through the parents' efforts to increase the community awareness of students. The organisation of Arbor Day is an example of encouraging the youth in an ongoing and worthwhile activity. Directly or indirectly it was encouraging environmental awareness, but in 1905 this was not realised.

In 1905 Arbor Day was placed in the forefront of the school organization. The local Progress Association placed a proposal before the Council recommending a community 'tree planting ceremony' to visually improve the appearance of the town, and make it more attractive as a tourist resort, and it [trees] would be the means of making it [the town] more comfortable and more pleasant, for to have a tree as a shade was a great thing.¹⁷

This activity did develop into a day of fun and activity with over 2000 people, ranging from school children to the elderly willing to assist, and planting over 500

¹⁵ *Ibid.*,

¹⁶ *Independent Supplement*, Obituary., 'Death of a Great Pioneer', 25 October 2000.

¹⁷ *Independent Supplement*, 27 September 2000.

trees.¹⁸ The Catholic school willingly became a part of the exercise and in the evening a formal dinner was held, hosted by Alderman John McCaffrey. Such enthusiasm reflected positively on the future of the town.¹⁹ To this day, the Norfolk Island Pines act as a reminder and as an attractive feature of the Kiama landscape.

When the Kiama and Shoalhaven Public Schools Athletic Association was established, the place for sport as a part of school activities was recognised. Sport was to play an important role in the life of the community. In 1910 the techniques of life saving were demonstrated at the school, to be followed in 1913 with the introduction of physical exercise. The health and well-being of students was receiving more attention and in 1912 the first official government medical examinations were held 'to find out cases that are neglected and report to the parents'.²⁰ In 1918, and on the instigation of the school principal, a Parents and Citizens Association was formed²¹.

A push by parents for an Intermediate High School in Kiama was denied by the education authority as unnecessary. The cost to the government for buildings and staffing would be too great and not warrant the benefits. To support the Parents and Citizens of Kiama, Gerringong and Jamberoo the Municipal Councils entered the debate, claiming the financial cost to parents was also considerable. Children were being disadvantaged as they were 'forced to go to Wollongong for higher education'. A High School in Kiama was a 'definite and long-felt want'.²² However, it was not until 1954, and after much on going discussion, harsh words and pleading by parents to the State Government, that the Kiama High School was built.²³

¹⁸ *Independent*, 9 August 1905.

¹⁹ *Independent Supplement*, 27 September 2000.

²⁰ *Independent Supplement*, 25 October 2000 reported that Kiama's Superior School was 'leading the way'.

²¹ *Independent*, 6 June, 1918. P and C. - Parents and Citizens. Section 19B of the Public Instructions Act, 1880 – 1961. in *Department of Education Handbook*, 1969, p. 89.

²² *Independent Supplement*, January 2001.

²³ This debate was long and involved.

--- Part 3 ---

The Great War: 1914 - 1918

The Waratahs recruiting march in Manning Street Kiama.
Source: W.Bayley, *Blue Haven*

Chapter 5 - The Call for Men

The remoteness of the Kiama region and its physical isolation had inculcated in the community a sense of independence and ‘completeness’. But on the other side of the world, disruptive forces were about to change the face of Europe and raise issues that would disturb, distress and change the region.¹

On 4 August 1914, Britain declared war on Germany. On 5 August, the *Independent* set out the reasons. Germany had declined to attend a conference in London between the French, German and Italian ambassadors to head off the impending conflict. It noted that the assassination of the heir presumptive to the Austrian throne was seen as the cause but added, ‘its real causes lie much deeper’:

[A]s Serbia mobilised its army it appealed to Russia. Germany responded by urging Austria-Hungary to declare war on the country. In the space of a week, Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia, prompting Russia to mobilize its army. In retaliation, Germany declared war on Russia on August 1, before invading Luxembourg, France and Belgium.²

Clearly, the cause of the war was German militarism. The paper then assured its readers that Kiama had had its own volunteer corps of men who trained regularly. Their purpose was to defend Kiama.

Kiama’s military presence had been well recorded before 1914. The successes of the Military Balls held over a number of years by the local voluntary militia are an example. In April 1914 the *Independent* reported that ‘few, if any, can compare with the success of the one [organised] by the 37th Infantry on Friday night last’. It was a ‘brilliant spectacle’ and was attended by a number of military dignitaries.³ Empire Day in 1914 included a church parade of A Company with the military band in attendance.⁴ The mustering of the 5th Regiment of the Australian Light Horse was reported in the paper as were the comments of General Sir Ian Hamilton

¹ Appendix 9.

² *Independent*, 5 August 1914.

³ *ibid.*, 9 April 1914.

⁴ *ibid.*, 27 March 1914.

who 'expressed his regret at the lack of enthusiasm amongst spectators when viewing military functions and parades' in Britain.⁵

The war, however, was a distant matter. Australia was in the middle of a federal election campaign. The Liberal Prime Minister, Joseph Cook, immediately promised an expeditionary force of 20,000 men. Andrew Fisher, the leader of the Labor Opposition, promised to 'stand beside our own' and support Britain 'to our last man and our last shilling'.⁶ In the seat of Illawarra, George W. Fuller was running as the Liberal candidate. George Mason Burns was running as the Labor candidate.

Fuller received extensive coverage in the *Independent*. His meeting at Jamberoo on 4 August drew an 'excellent attendance' and he warmly supported Cook's offer of 20,000 men. The mayor was present and Fuller was supported by the local state member, M. Morton. Fuller also addressed a meeting in the Oddfellows Hall in Kiama on 12 August with the same message, one strongly supported by the *Independent*. It was the duty of every young man to take positive action for the protection of the 'old' homeland and for justice.⁷ Fuller could rely on strong support from Kiama's leading citizens. At a meeting convened by the Political Liberal League, Alderman Carson suggested that scrutineers canvas all streets in order to secure votes for the Liberal candidate and Alderman Hindmarsh offered his car to convey any disabled voter to the polling booth.⁸

Burns's campaign was not as well covered by the *Independent* and Burns was more concerned with other issues. His address at the Gerringong School of Arts appears to have been a much smaller affair. He concentrated on wages and the cost of living, the *Defence Act* and the proposed *Electoral Reform Act*. He hoped that the war would soon be over. His wife also participated, speaking on the Maternity Allowance and the Old Age Pension elements of the Labor Party's platform.⁹

⁵ *ibid.*, 6 May and 29 July, 1914.

⁶ Joan Beaumont, *Australia's War 1914-1918*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1995, p. 2.

⁷ *Independent, Supplement*, 25 October 2000.

⁸ *Independent*, 4 July 1914, and 15 August 1914.

⁹ *Independent*, 15 August 1914.

An incident arose when Sergeant Loomes asked the Council for clarification about an electoral issue. On 22 August a Mr Foster was conducting a political address, on the footpath outside Tory's Hotel, and it was being chaired by a Mr Craig. Should they be prosecuted? Mr Foster had been speaking on behalf of the Labor Party and Sergeant Loomes asked did the Council wish a 'prosecution to take place against the gentlemen?' If so the police were prepared to act.¹⁰ Politically the council decided that it was a police matter and not for the council to intervene, but 'the Liberal Party might like to do it'.¹¹

In the final election count, Fisher became the new prime minister and Burns took the seat of Illawarra. But in the subdivision of Kiama, Fuller took 1033 votes and Burns 653. It was the mining communities to the north in the Illawarra that gave Burns his victory.¹²

Although distant, the war had not disappeared from the columns of the *Independent*. The paper printed a number of reports on the war, many clearly propaganda. For example, in its issue of 15 August sub headings included 'Sea fighting in the Mediterranean', 'Kaiser reported as being shot in right thigh', 'Large numbers of Germans deserting' and 'Two German regiments annihilated'.

The outbreak of war was also accompanied by rumors and a search for the enemy within. Mysterious 'lights' and boats were reported being seen off the Kiama coast. At Pambula, further south, a German cruiser was reported as being seen close to the coast. A report circulated in Kiama that a young man of 'foreign appearance' and 'possibly a German spy' was taking photographs off Blow-hole Point. The German cruiser proved to be a steamer on its way to load sleepers. The German 'spy' was an employee of the gas company following his employer's instructions.¹³

The war had also begun to affect the community in other ways. The outbreak of war brought with it a suspension in public works projects which resulted in a decline in the demand for blue metal. Plans to promote Kiama as a tourist

¹⁰ *ibid.*

¹¹ *ibid.*, 20 August 1914.

¹² *ibid.*, 9 September 1914.

destination were temporarily placed on hold. Farmers were worried about the disruption to the export trade caused by the war and the impact enlistments might have on family labour.¹⁴ However, the community was exhorted to 'accept the sacrifices in loyalty to the Empire'.¹⁵ The region in September 1914 produced its first volunteer, Waldon Nelson from Jamberoo.¹⁶ The region's first casualty was a dairy farmer from Shellharbour, Lt McFarlane: he was seriously wounded during the landing at Gallipoli.¹⁷

Early Recruitment

The initial rush to the colours had been more than satisfactory. Cook's promise of 20,000 men had become a force of over 50,000 men known as the Australian Imperial Force (AIF). Following the landing at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915, the Fisher government decided to double the size of the AIF and embarked upon a recruitment campaign. It established enlistment targets for regions across Australia and instructed local bodies to organise recruitment meetings. The country was divided into thirty-six recruiting districts.¹⁸ All British subjects (which included Australians) between the ages of eighteen and sixty years were eligible to enlist, although it was expected in the early stages that unmarried men or widowers without dependants between the ages of 18 and thirty-five would be the first to go.¹⁹

The *Independent* fully supported the campaign and ran many advertisements encouraging the local men to join the AIF. It ran leaders claiming 'No Peace Possible' and printed the pro-war speeches of Lloyd George delivered in January 1915. The paper praised an address by Captain Ryan, a recruiting officer, who asked his audience, 'In What Respect Have I Failed?' It printed letters to the editor

¹³ *Independent* Supplement, 25 August 2000.

¹⁴ *Independent*, 16 September 1914.

¹⁵ M. McKernan, *The Australian People and the Great War*, Thomas Nelson, North Melbourne, 1980, p. 181.

¹⁶ *Independent* 16 September 1914..

¹⁷ *Independent*, 6 May 1915.

¹⁸ B. Gammage, *The Broken Years*, Penguin, Ringwood, 1974, p. 17.

¹⁹ J. B. Trivett, *NSW Year Book*, 1915, NSW Government Printer, Sydney, 1917, p. 66.

that stressed the need for volunteers. It reported the activities of the *One Woman, One Recruit League* where every woman instrumental in 'securing a recruit' would have her name recorded on an honour roll.²⁰ Leading members of the community also supported the campaign. On 20 February, Reverend Tulloch Yuille of the Presbyterian Church gave an address entitled 'Why should I not go to the war?' and followed it up with guest speakers and a 'Roll of Duty' service in May. This resembled an Honour Roll and contained the names of the young church members who had enlisted. Space was also allowed for the inclusion of additional names. On 1 May, Reverend Wilson presented a 'stirring lecture on his visits to the Battle Fields of France'.²¹ Later in the month, Yuille gave a moving sermon blaming Germany for -

the endless cruelties bubbling out of that seething maelstrom of blood and iron... cruelty, treachery and rapine, the murdering of old men and babes, the violation of women and girls – everything murderous and fiendish in the whole brood of hell itself.²²

In July 1915, the Kiama Council received a request from the Premier, W. A. Holman, for a 'recruitment meeting to be arranged for the Honourable H. Hale MLA and M. Morton MLA to publicly address constituents of Kiama, Berry, Nowra and Milton'. The date for the Kiama meeting was set for 3 August, the eve of the first anniversary of the declaration of war. The Kiama Council, with the support of the local patriotic organisations, dutifully organised the meeting to be held in the Kiama Drill Hall.²³ It was the first of many recruitment meetings. In August 1915, Hale addressed a packed hall, claiming that -

...the nation was up against the greatest problem it had ever faced and the greatest danger in its history... Germany had prepared and organised for 40 years and had striven and worked for one objective, the conquering of Britain... [He would now] ask every young man fit to go with no ties, to take up a rifle and give his help as one of the glittering particles of a glorious jewel in the diadem of the British Crown... Australia.²⁴

²⁰ *Independent*, 1 January, 23 January, 25 June, 25 July 1915. Appendix 10

²¹ *ibid.*, 1 May, 5 May 1915.

²² *ibid.*, 6 May 1915.

²³ Kiama Council Minutes, item 340, July 1915.

²⁴ *Independent*, 7 August 1915.

John McQuilton, in his study of North Eastern Victoria, argues that in sentiment and structure, recruitment meetings held there differed little across the region.²⁵ That observation holds true for Kiama.

The most famous recruitment march associated with the region came in November 1915 with the Waratah's March. The concept of a march originated in Gilgandra with the captain of the local rifle club and from there the idea spread to other regions. The 'Coo-ee March' commenced in Gilgandra with 30 men and as it made its way towards Sydney, a distance of about 320 miles, another 233 men joined along the way.²⁶ Other marches included the Kangaroos from Wagga Wagga, and the Wallabies from Narrabri.

The Waratah March began at Nowra with 50 men, and made slow progress up the Princes Highway. As it passed through each small town, it received a enthusiastic welcome from local residents and school children.²⁷ The local bands played as the men marched into the towns. Clark noted that 'Captain Bow made a stirring appeal to the eligible men of Gerringong'.²⁸

As the marchers approached Kiama there was a jubilant air of expectancy.²⁹ As the men proceeded to the town hall they were welcomed with speeches giving praise to their patriotism and the work of the organisers. Mr Dennis, of the Kiama Recruiting Association, presided over the gathering. The Red Cross organised decorations for the hall and for the town.

The men were quartered in the drill hall. Food was provided by the local hotels, but no alcohol was allowed. Captain Blow of Kiama, was in charge and insisted as the men were joining the AIF they were under military discipline, so they were marched directly to and from the drill hall for their meals.³⁰ Captain Blow was a highly respected member of the Kiama community, had served in the Boer War and

²⁵ McQuilton, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

²⁶ Alan Clark, *The Waratahs*, Alan Clark, North Street, Nowra., 1994, p.3.

²⁷ *ibid.*, p. 13.

²⁸ *ibid.*

²⁹ *ibid.*, p. 15.

³⁰ *ibid.*

was the chief recruiting agent for the Light Horse.³¹ The quarry workers were given a half-day off work to attend the function, and five Kiama quarry workers joined the march.³²

At 10 am on 3 December, the March continued on to Jamberoo.³³ It is difficult to ascertain the number of men who joined the march at Kiama. Clark claims nineteen recruits.³⁴ Bayley in *Blue Haven, a History of Kiama Municipality*, declares 21 men joined at Kiama.³⁵ The little group consisted of 76 volunteers as it proceeded on to Wollongong.³⁶ The *Illawarra Mercury*, on 10 December 2005, reported that the march, starting with 50 Nowra men, had swollen to 120 by the time it reached Sydney.³⁷

The recruitment campaign also coincided with growing propaganda about German atrocities. In August 1915, the NSW Government sent to local clergymen copies of the *Government Gazette* which gave details of German atrocities being committed in France. The local ministers responded and Yuille spoke strongly on the issue.³⁸

In December 1916, the government announced a second recruitment campaign. At a Council meeting, the mayor explained a communication he had received from the Prime Minister, William Morris Hughes.³⁹ In it he asked the Mayor to take control of the local campaign and to join in the raising of a further 50,000 Australian volunteers. The local Councils were to provide recruiting depots which would be staffed by recruiting officers appointed by the Commonwealth Government. These officers would assist the local recruiting committee in evaluating responses to the 'invitation' to join up Hughes had sent to every eligible male late in 1915. They would also interview these apparently eligible men. Eligible men were also banned

³¹ *Independent Supplement*, 25 October 2000.

³² Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

³³ *ibid.*, p. 18.

³⁴ *ibid.*, p. 17.

³⁵ Bayley, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

³⁶ *ibid.*, p. 19.

³⁷ *Illawarra Mercury*, 10 December 2005.

³⁸ *Independent*, 7 August 1915.

³⁹ Hughes replaced Fisher as Prime Minister in October 1915.

from membership of the recruiting committees. Medical inspection of volunteers could now be undertaken locally rather than in Sydney.⁴⁰

Hughes also announced the government would establish training camps in regional areas like Albury, Wagga Wagga and Kiama. These would provide preliminary training and drill for regional volunteers prior to them proceeding to more strenuous training at Casula.⁴¹ Shortly after the 1916 Kiama Agricultural Show, Captain Ryan, representing the Department of Defence, met with the society and requested the use of the showground and buildings for military purposes. The request was agreed to. Approximately 2,000 men would be camped at the Kiama Showground for an indefinite time, and future shows would be abandoned.⁴²

The Kiama community felt honoured when the Governor-General, Sir Ronald Munro Ferguson, visited the camp for the second time in October 1916.⁴³ The community had taken the young men in the camp to their hearts. As the young volunteers were mainly drawn from the south coast region many were already known to Kiama people. Concerts and entertainments were organised by the community and the soldiers were invited into the homes of Kiama's citizens. In April 1916, the Methodist Soldier's Club entertained the community with various artists from their camp.⁴⁴ A camp concert was next organised on Saddleback Mountain by the soldiers and the locals were invited to join them. The *Independent* reported it was well attended and that the 'glow from the fires could be seen for miles'. Such songs as 'The Boys of the Dardanelles', 'Silver Lining,' and 'Australia the Free' were sung.⁴⁵ Again the soldiers themselves later presented an open concert at the Showground Pavilion.⁴⁶ The *Independent* reported a 'packed audience' and it was 'enjoyed by all'.⁴⁷

⁴⁰ Kiama Council Minutes, 29 December 1915; *Independent*, 1 January 1916; McQuilton, *op. cit.*, p.41.

⁴¹ K. Beasley, *Kiama on Show*, Weston Print, Kiama, 1997, p. 32.

⁴² *ibid.*, p. 32.

⁴³ *Independent*, 28 October 1916.

⁴⁴ *Independent Supplement*, 20 October 2000.

⁴⁵ *ibid.*

⁴⁶ *ibid.*

⁴⁷ *ibid.*

The campaign launched in January 1916, however, did not meet the recruitment targets. Young men were not enlisting in the numbers required. Meanwhile, Hughes had been in Britain, along with other Dominion leaders, participating in the deliberations of the British War Cabinet. He was feted as Britain's 'man of the hour'. Hughes had promised the British government more volunteers. When he returned to Australia, he was convinced that conscription was necessary to win the war. But the Labor Party was split on the question of conscription for service overseas. In October, Hughes decided to take the question to the Australian people through a referendum.⁴⁸

Conscription

Conscription had been advocated as early as 1914 but had little appeal for the then Prime Minister Fisher. The Kiama Recruiting Association had also called for conscription at the height of the 1915 recruitment campaign. It noted that it was the Association's opinion that 'conscription should be immediately adopted'.⁴⁹ Like many recruitment committees across Australia, Kiama felt that the time for voluntarism was over and now there was a need for the government to take decisive action.⁵⁰ The Kiama Council, however, was less certain. In September 1916, it had received a request from the Prime Minister's Department seeking support for the introduction of conscription. The aldermen were annoyed and hotly debated the matter. They argued that the community was 'doing their best' and that the current time was 'not opportune for compulsory service'. The negative effect on local farming families would be considerable. Employment of outside labour was expensive.⁵¹ Drought and the uncertainties in international trade, and their impact on the regional economy, had been noted as early as September 1914 in the *Independent*.⁵²

⁴⁸ J. Hirst, 'Labor and the Great War', in R. Manne (ed.), *The Australian Century*, Text, Melbourne, 1999, p. 59, S. Macintyre, *The Succeeding Age 1901-1943*, vol. 4, *Oxford History of Australia*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1986, pp. 161-2.

⁴⁹ *Independent*, 25 August 1915.

⁵⁰ McQuilton, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

⁵¹ Kiama Council Minutes, 22 September 1916.

⁵² *Independent*, 16 September 1914.

Prior to the referendum, leaflets and posters promoting the 'Yes' vote were forwarded to the Council for distribution. One leaflet proclaimed, '*Your votes will be of no value unless the Allies win. What are you doing to defeat the Germans?*'⁵³ Meetings for and against the question were held across the region. Yuille played a prominent part in the 'Yes' campaign as did the local Recruiting Officers, Gillies and Thomson.⁵⁴ The *Independent* supported the 'Yes' vote as did almost all the Australian press. But Kiama, like the rest of Australia, voted 'No'. In 1916 there were 548 'Yes' votes to 786 'No' votes, (ie, citizens *not* in favour of conscription) and 11 informal votes.⁵⁵ However, in 1917 the voting position was unchanged. In Kiama of the 1300 votes cast, 577 voted 'Yes', 744 voted 'No' and nine votes were informal. A third of those on the electoral roll chose not to vote.⁵⁶

On 18 July 1917 the *Independent* had announced that a Sportsmen's Rally would be held on 27 July 1917, in connection with the latest recruiting drive. It would be the biggest of its kind and would honour women who had convinced a man to volunteer.⁵⁷ This had little or no affect.

Kiama was not unique in its experience with conscription. It brought about divisions and differences of opinion. In Wagga Wagga and North Eastern Victoria, for example, the 'Yes' case was led by the 'rich and famous', the regions' civic male leaders and the Protestant clergy. The working class became resentful of the rising taxes and cost of living, and strikes occurred in the town. The Wagga Wagga *Daily Advertiser* reported the anti-conscription movement in derogatory terms – 'as an infamous campaign of cowardice, ignorance and selfishness'.⁵⁸ A third of the electorate chose not to vote.⁵⁹

The farmer's vote may have affected the result. In October 1916, wages paid to dairy workers were increased. Weston argues that rather than pay farm hands,

⁵³ Mitchell Library - World War 1 collection.

⁵⁴ *Independent*, 28 October 1916.

⁵⁵ Appendix 10 (a)

⁵⁶ Appendix 10 (b)

⁵⁷ Appendix 11.

⁵⁸ *Daily Advertiser*, 6 October 1916.

⁵⁹ McQuilton, *op. cit.*, p. 64; S. Morris, *Wagga Wagga: A History*, Bobby Graham Publishers, Koorringal, 1999, p. 123.

‘teen-age and adult sons worked seven days... and were given a meager amount of Pocket money’.⁶⁰ And in October and November, serious fires were raging in the areas to the north of Kiama. Twenty-five farms were lost along with 300 head of cattle.⁶¹ Fires and the need for cheap labour to sustain local farms may have affected the way farming families voted for strong active young men were essential in the community.⁶²

Recruitment resumed in January 1917, sometimes using a new strategy. For example, information lectures were presented by visiting personnel ostensibly to raise funds for the Returned Soldier’s Association. The talks covered the training, embarkation, and landing of the soldiers in Egypt, praised the bravery of the men and their resistance under fire. Incidents both sad and exciting were recounted. The un-stated agenda was to encourage Kiama’s reluctant young males to volunteer for service Promises were also made to any volunteers who, on their return, would have opportunities for on improved future.⁶³ In August, the third anniversary of the War was celebrated on the steps of Kiama’s Town Hall.⁶⁴ Recruits were also being sought from the Rifle Clubs of the State to create a fresh company of 150 men.⁶⁵ And films were used to promote pro-war sentiment (although they had been used as early as 1914).⁶⁶

Shame was used to promote enlistments. Local returned men were invited to re-enlist. The *Independent* praised the region’s ‘Fallen Heroes’. It reported the comments of Private Smith at his homecoming and his regret at returning before the ‘job was completed’⁶⁷. Smith was invited to join the recruitment committee where he could speak of the sadness he felt at leaving his ‘mates’, and the young men who had fallen and would never return home.

⁶⁰ W. Weston, *Albion Park Saga*, Tongara Heritage Society, 1996, p. 2.

⁶¹ *Illawarra Mercury*, 5 November 1916.

⁶² Before the 1917 plebiscite, major floods devastated the region. This may well have affected the vote in 1917.

⁶³ Appendix 12 - ‘promises’.

⁶⁴ *Independent*, 8 August 1917.

⁶⁵ *ibid.*, May 1917.

⁶⁶ For example in its issue of 5 December, the paper had promoted as a chief attraction newsreels showing German atrocities in Belgium and the ‘awful effects of shell-fire’. (*Independent*, 5 December 1914.)

⁶⁷ *Independent*, 21 November 1917.

The public debates at national level were echoed in the region.⁶⁸ The unions strongly objected to Hughes's policies. A war of words developed between the Prime Minister and the Catholic Coadjutor Archbishop of Melbourne, Dr. Mannix.⁶⁹ The priests doubtlessly conveyed his feelings to their parishioners in Kiama. Catholic citizens in Ireland were fighting for their independence from Britain. The Catholic men in Ireland were not conscripted so why should they be in Australia? However, despite this Catholic men in Australia did volunteer for the AIF. Meanwhile, the Anglican Synod was declaring that 'God was on the side of the Allies'.⁷⁰ But despite all efforts the number of young men volunteering was decreasing. The community was war-weary.⁷¹ They had heard all the arguments before. Hughes announced that a second plebiscite on conscription would be held in December 1917.

The posters and cartoons produced by the government to support the 'Yes' cause clearly aimed at creating anxiety and fear in the electorate. Many of the propaganda posters depicted the rape, mutilation and murder of women and children. The *Independent* strongly supported a 'Yes' vote. It ignored the 'No' case. Locals seeking information on the 'No' campaign would have had to rely on Wollongong's *Illawarra Mercury*, which reported that an anti-conscription campaign had been initiated in Wollongong with A. Lees and H. Jones as speakers, and a rally would follow on 30 November when Mr E. Riley, formerly a member of the House of Representatives, would be the speaker.⁷² Although Private Smith urged residents to 'support the *great proposition* that would be made on 20 December, 1917',⁷³ the region again voted 'No'.

By October 1918 the supply of Kiama's young, eligible and willing men was exhausted. The Divisional Recruiting Staff Officer visited to discuss with Kiama's Mayor the possibility of a voluntary enlistment ballot. He claimed that within the local region, in particular the towns of Kiama, Gerringong and Jamberoo, there

⁶⁸ Beaumont, *op. cit.*, pp. 50-1.

⁶⁹ It is possible that the local priests took their lead from Dr Mannix. Also at this time there were the political issues of home rule for Ireland between the Catholic Irish and the British government.

⁷⁰ Cyril Pearl, *Australia's Yesterdays*, Readers Digest, Surry Hills, Sydney, 1974, pp. 205-6.

⁷¹ *Independent*, 3 January 1917.

⁷² *Wollongong Mercury*, 1 December 1917.

⁷³ *Independent*, 29 November 1917.

were still 623 men eligible for war service.⁷⁴ The government now proposed that every three months a ballot containing the names of these 623 men would be held in public, and would be drawn by a returned soldier. The results would be published in the *Independent* to further ensure the maximum coverage and to place pressure upon those who would not volunteer.⁷⁵ It was emotional blackmail. On 11 November 1918, an Armistice was declared. Germany had effectively surrendered.

Why go?

Why did young Australian men enlist for overseas? Historians have provided different reasons. Gammage has suggested it was for a 'thousand particular and personal reasons...Loneliness, family trouble, public opinion, and unemployment each contributed a measure'.⁷⁶ Beaumont suggests the men possibly joined the military for financial security, an opportunity to visit the 'home country', a way of seeing the world or simply a way of escaping from an unpleasant domestic situation. McQuilton argues in an article in the *Journal of the Australian War Memorial* that economic and class elements played a part in the decision to enlist. Although duplicating his analysis of a rural region is beyond the scope of his thesis, his conclusions about the response of farmers and farming communities to enlistment probably holds true for Kiama. They had a 'far more complex view of the war effort than their urban patriots', one balanced between the demands for men to fight and the demands to feed the Allied armies.⁷⁷ However, individual case studies do offer an insight into why men from the Kiama region enlisted.

Eddie Stewart was an only son and assisted in the running of the family farm. He was torn between a reluctance to be involved in war and the 'outside' pressures placed on fit young men to enlist. He was also a member of the Kiama Rifle Club. Although his father was elderly, and his two sisters lived at home he still felt obliged to enlist when a recruiting drive, organised on 8 March 1916 by Captain

⁷⁴ *Independent*, 29 October 1918.

⁷⁵ *ibid.*

⁷⁶ Gammage, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

⁷⁷ J. McQuilton, 'Enlistment for the First World War in Australia', in *Journal of the Australian War Memorial*, issue 33, 2000.

Carmichael, sought volunteers.⁷⁸ He felt he had a duty and a responsibility to his country and his 'mates'. His father with his sisters' help would be able to manage the farm.

Gordon Pike was the son of Alderman Pike and his story was recorded in the *Independent*. In 1914, Gordon Pike was working for the local Dairy Farm Association and had recently been appointed as the Assistant Manager at the Dairy Farmers Association at Balmain. On 18 April was given a social evening at the Presbyterian School Hall, arranged by members of the L.O.L. No 12,⁷⁹ the Good Templars, and the Presbyterian Church members. On behalf of those present he was presented with a silver mounted pocket watch and was thanked for his work with the lodge and for his time as chair of the Good Templars was appreciated by all.⁸⁰ Yuille also spoke, praising Mr Pike and his 'many good qualities.'⁸¹ In September 1915, the paper reported that he had offered his services to 'King and Country'.⁸² His position would be held for him in the Dairy Farmers Association when he returned. The paper, on behalf of his friends and relatives, offered 'their very sincere goodwill'.⁸³ Gordon Pike survived the war years.⁸⁴

Both these men came from middle class backgrounds. One man was a young farmer with responsibilities, the other held a management position important to the dairying industry, but they both reflect the middle class values of the time. They fully believed it was their responsibility to volunteer for active service, despite any personal commitments. Loyalty to the Queen and Empire and support for their 'mates' became the all important issue.

⁷⁸ The story is told by his son from his letters, service record and the diary of the 3rd Division's 9th Brigade. Material is held in the office of the *Independent*.

⁷⁹ Orange Lodge, originally formed to support Irish Protestants.

⁸⁰ *Independent*, 22 April 1914.

⁸¹ *ibid.*

⁸² *ibid.*, 27 September 1915.

⁸³ *ibid.*, 27 September 1915.

⁸⁴ There is no record of his death on the Kiama War Memorial.

‘We are here, too’⁸⁵

Although the male volunteers were the centre of attention between 1914 and 1918 there was a place in the AIF for nurses. In May 1915 Nurse Kellick, the Hospital’s Matron and Nurse Godfrey resigned, stating that they were volunteering for active service.⁸⁶ In December 1916, in the ‘Roll of Honour’ in the *Independent* listed the names of another four nurses from Kiama: Rita Fuller, K Gallon, Mary McAnend and C.B. Whittington. However, little is recorded of those Kiama nurses who resigned to work on the hospital ships, in the hospitals as far apart as Cairo, London and India, and in the field hospitals close to the front line. The *Independent* only printed one letter from the local nurses who had volunteered. It was from Nurse Kelleck. She wrote that she was on the way to the war hospital. It was surmised that she wrote from Colombo but ‘all letters [were] censored’, and as such ‘I shall have to limit my news somewhat’.⁸⁷ ‘The Censor was not content with scratching the name out, he cut it out.’⁸⁸ There is little doubt, however, that they shared the experiences recorded by historians for nurses in the Australian Army Nursing Service (AANS).

In the early stages of the war little or no provision was made to accommodate the in-coming nurses or set up hospitals for the treatment of the wounded soldiers.⁸⁹ Conditions were primitive and in Egypt, with its heat and sandflies and poor sanitary conditions, a bath was a luxury.⁹⁰ In addition to the war inflicted wounds the soldiers were contracting diseases such as yellow fever, typhoid and measles.⁹¹ The food, the stress and the long hours of work also affected the health of the nurses. ‘We all know what it is to be actually hungry and thirsty’, one wrote.⁹²

⁸⁵ Margaret Young, *We are Here, too, The Diaries and Letters of Sister Olive L.C. Haynes November 1914 to February 1918*, Australian Down Syndrome Association Inc., 1991.

⁸⁶ *Independent*, 5 May 1915.

⁸⁷ *ibid.*, 11 September 1915.

⁸⁸ *ibid.*, 11 September 1915.

⁸⁹ J. Bassett, *Guns and Brooches, Australian Army Nursing from the Boer War to the Gulf War*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1992. p.32.

⁹⁰ Young, *op. cit.*, pp 25-26

⁹¹ *ibid.*, p 49.

⁹² Bassett, *op. cit.*, p.48.

Australian Hospitals in Egypt were overcrowded and the staff at times worked in the unnatural circumstances of war and in isolation.⁹³

Emergency hospital in Cairo, staffed by Australian nurses and caring mainly for wounded soldiers from Gallipoli. Source:- Kiama Independent Supplement.

Conditions on the Western Front were hardly better. Sister May Tilton, of the AANS, provides a record of the nursing situation in October, 1917.

...Patients were admitted before the hospital was properly equipped and ready ... Patients began to arrive at 11 a.m. and in the first 24 hours about 3000 patients passed through the CCS (Casualty Clearing Station). We admitted for 24 hours at a time with No CCS alongside us.

... The guns were roaring... we hated and dreaded the days that followed the incessant thundering, when the torn, bleeding ... broken human beings were brought in; their eyes filled with thunder and pain; those who could walk staggering dumbly, pitifully, in the wrong direction. And days later the men were carried in who were found lying in shell holes, stone cold and pulse-less, but, by some miracle, still alive. Many died of exposure and the dreaded gangrene.⁹⁴

These women did not hold rank but they performed vital and life-saving work. Patsy Adam-Smith described the conditions under which the Kiama nurses would have enlisted in March 1915. It included a free passage from and to Australia at

⁹³ Patsy Adam-Smith, *The Anzacs*, Thomas Nelson., Melbourne, 1979, p.334.

⁹⁴ Nurse May Tilton, 'The Grey Battalion', in *Nurses Narratives*, A.C. Butler Papers of the Official Historian War of 1914-18, AWM, Written Records 41. Retained in the Research Section of the Kiama Library. See Appendix 13.

the end of the service. For their work a qualified sister was paid £50 per annum and a regular nurse £40 per annum. Miss Bell, as a Matron Inspector in Melbourne Hospital, received a salary equal to half of what she was receiving in her previous job.⁹⁵ The women were required to supply their own uniforms.⁹⁶ And, as Olive Haynes noted in her diary, 'We had to pay our mess account for Mena – three shillings and sixpence per day.'⁹⁷ She, and her fellow nurses, refused to pay.⁹⁸ Delayed pay caused financial problems and the nurses relied on their families for help.⁹⁹ Nurses were seen as being 'of but not in' the army.'¹⁰⁰ Even war could not change the chauvinistic attitudes of the administrators and medical officers in the AIF.

The cost

The war had cost the Australian people dearly. Out of an Australian population of 4,870,000 there were 324,000 AIF servicemen overseas. The total casualty list was 214,720. The total killed was 61,720.¹⁰¹ The region's response to the war, and the price it paid, are recorded on the local war memorials: In Kiama, 194 enlisted and forty-two died; Gerringong saw 50 men go and fourteen were killed; from Jamberoo, 42 men served and eight never came home. In all, the region provided the war with 286 men of whom sixty-four paid the 'supreme sacrifice'.

⁹⁵ Bassett, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

⁹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 32.

⁹⁷ Young, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

⁹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 51.

⁹⁹ Young, *op. cit.*, pp.7, 107.

¹⁰⁰ Bassett, *op. cit.*, p 2.

¹⁰¹ Injured and maimed and killed. Note:- discrepancies can occur when figures are drawn from different sources. Australian War Data, www.awm.gov.au/research/infosheets. war casualties 2007. [Accessed 11 January 2007].

Chapter 6 - The war at home

Life on the home front centred round fund raising for the war effort and the soldiers and their welfare. Before the war, community fund raising activities had covered many different causes. From September 1914, the war dominated. Patriotic societies were established to promote the war effort. In terms of fund raising, foremost was the Red Cross, followed by the Patriotic Fund.¹ These were followed by the Belgium Relief Fund² and much later the War Food Fund. The War Food Fund, was originally established by the Sydney Chamber of Commerce in conjunction with the South Coast Dairy Farmers in 1915. Funds were raised by contributions of dairying products. Later, in 1918, the funds went towards aiding the returning soldiers.³

In a less prominent way smaller fund raising activities were conducted by the Presbyterian Church,⁴ the Kiama Schools Mother's Fund, a ten shilling fund on Empire Day and St Joseph's Convent.⁵ The local picture theatre ran special benefit nights, and dances and euchre parties were arranged.⁶ The money from these smaller fund raisings was usually donated to the Red Cross, the Patriotic Fund or the Belgian Relief Fund.

Both men and women participated in fund raising and the patriotic societies. In this they differed from the Sydney societies and funds, like the Lord Mayor's Fund. The Mayor's Fund aimed at providing relief for the wives, children and dependents of service men, and was controlled by the influential male members of the Sydney establishment. Women were not a part of their executive committees nor allowed to participate as inspectors or advisors. This appears illogical as the primary beneficiaries were women.

¹ *Independent Supplement*, 25 October 2000.

² *ibid.*

³ *Independent*, 8 November 1918.

⁴ *ibid.*, 26 August, 1914.

⁵ *ibid.*

⁶ *Independent Supplement*, 25 October 2000.

The Red Cross and the women's war effort.

The earliest patriotic and fund raising society established was the Red Cross. Mayor Love's wife had acted quickly, when the call went out for women who would help by raising funds and assist in the war effort. On the 21 August 1914 a 'phenomenal meeting of ladies' gathered together in the lecture room of the School of Arts and formed the Kiama Branch of the Red Cross.⁷

The Red Cross was the outstanding success as a voluntary effort on the home front during the First World War. It had two basic aims: to provide clothes and comforts for the soldiers and to raise funds for the war effort. It succeeded because it could draw on the ethic of voluntary work that filled the philanthropy of middle and upper class women, and it allowed these women to turn their domestic skills to a purpose that reached beyond the home.⁸ The women could dedicate their time and effort to providing supports and comforts for the 'brave young men' on the front line. The work performed by the women also changed their beliefs about their ability to manage and thus improved their confidence.⁹ The body was conservative in nature. It was led by women from the region's most prominent families.¹⁰ They had little time for what the *Red Cross Record* called the 'feminist vote... of petticoat power'. The same issue went on to claim that a 'good effect' of the war was the 'waking up' of Australia's women to their responsibilities.¹¹ Reverend Yuille gave an address at one of the early meetings and outlined the ideology that underpinned the Red Cross. He stated that the war was no child's business for Germany was 'in grim and deadly earnest'. He continued:

⁷ *Independent*, 22 August 1914.

⁸ J. McQuilton, *Rural Australia and the Great War*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 2001, p. 120.

⁹ *ibid.*, p.77.

¹⁰ See Appendix 14.

¹¹ M. McKernan. *Australian People and the Great War*, Thomas Nelson, Melbourne, 1980 p. 78.

As a people we were determined that Britain should remain mistress of the waves and that the sun should never set on her Empire, and as a consequence, much precious blood would be shed. The great power of the Empire did not only apply to the fighting line, but also the power behind it ... the great courage of the British people.¹²

This sentiment of imperial loyalty would not waver between 1914 and 1918. Other branches of the Red Cross were also formed. By July 1915, a Gerringong branch was formed, to be shortly followed by one at Jamberoo. By the end of 1914 in New South Wales there were 249 country branches of the Red Cross formed as against 88 in the city and suburban regions.¹³

The *Independent* actively promoted the Red Cross. It published details of meetings which were held on Wednesday and Thursday afternoons.¹⁴ Mary Weston, co-editor of the paper, recommended that all women should purchase the magazine, *Every Lady's Journal*, for it clearly explained the causes of the war, and would assist understanding. It also outlined how women could help others and themselves in a time of war.¹⁵ The *Independent* published a list of the clothes and supplies required by the troops and what was expected of the members. All participants in the 'sewing bees' were expected to provide their own needles, cotton, needles and thimble.¹⁶ Within a short time the women were making clothing such as shirts, cardigans, socks and gloves and providing food parcels for the men serving overseas. First Aid classes were also organised to familiarize Kiama women with the St John's Ambulance and its 'most up to date approaches, for it was argued that if war came to Australia's Shores the women in the community would be prepared'.¹⁷

One of the first projects conducted by the women of the Kiama Red Cross was a door-knock to establish subscription lists to raise funds for the purchase of materials to be fashioned into clothing. (Miss Weston, sounded a local note,

¹² *Independent*, 26 August 1914.

¹³ McKernan, *op. cit.*, p.70

¹⁴ *Independent*, 14 August 1914.

¹⁵ *ibid.*, 14 September 1914.

¹⁶ *ibid.*, 14 August 1914.

¹⁷ *ibid.*

suggesting that all materials should be purchased locally.)¹⁸ The subscription lists, giving the names of subscribers, were regularly published in the *Independent*. Donations ranged from 1 shilling to ten. The sums raised were substantial. For example, by June 1915 the amount of £260 pounds (\$520) was raised by Kiama Red Cross.¹⁹ The women also sought donations of materials that could be used in the comforts sent to soldiers. The *Independent* published the names of the donors. The enthusiasm of these women knew no bounds. Other fund raising activities included flower shows, cooking contests, and street stalls stocked with home made goods and lollies. Some even turned to poetry. Helen Mabel Nicholson composed a poem she hoped would encourage contributions.

At the call of love and duty,
Come hither all and Give, Give, Give.
When the muffled drums are heard,
And your tears are falling fast
It will be too late to Give, Give, Give.²⁰

And she followed this up with a song on a similar theme:-

While this war cloud envelops the world,
Shot and shell on all sides are heard,
Our brave men in battle will fall
Leaving widows and orphans to starve'
So put yourself in the niche in the wall
And open your hearts and your purse,
Respond to our Empire's call, and
Give, Give, Give.²¹

The Red Cross gave its members a purpose in life, it was socially and morally justified and they were receiving praise and public recognition for their efforts. The work of the Red Cross was given prominence in the region but the region's women also contributed to the war effort in other ways. As Eddie Stuart's story in Chapter 6 suggests, when their sons enlisted, many rural women replaced them on the farms.

¹⁸ *ibid.*, 22 August 1914.

¹⁹ *Independent Supplement*, 25 October 2000

²⁰ Copy filed at the Pilots Cottage, Kiama History Centre, 2004

²¹ *ibid.*,

From the front

The war could hardly be forgotten by the people of Kiama. Like many other newspapers in regional Australia, the *Independent* published an honour roll as an indication of Kiama's patriotism. It listed the men who had enlisted and their fate. As early as November 1915 it listed for the region 26 'fallen heroes', 23 wounded men and one prisoner of war.²² In December 1916 it stated that there were 119 men from Kiama, thirty from Jamberoo and thirty-one from Gerringong serving overseas.²³ The *Independent* also published letters from the regional men in the AIF under the title 'From the Firing Line'. These letters reminded the people of Kiama of the realities of war, reflected the power of propaganda and kept them informed of what was happening to their men.

Amongst the earliest volunteers was Private Peter Bursil of Kiama: .He wrote from the Gallipoli Peninsula:

(14/4/15) Dear Mother, just received a letter from you dated February 22 and this is the only opportunity I will have to write to you. We are in the middle of the fighting here; had two nights and days in the trenches. ... One wants to be in the trenches here to understand what real war is like. [The trenches] run for about three hundred miles, and we are only about forty yards from the Germans.... It is rifle and machine gun fire all the time, with a few shells bursting occasionally.²⁴

Major Colin Fuller of Kiama was there too, and he wrote to his sister from Anzac Cove:

It is now 5 weeks since we landed and have made no progress to speak of ... The regiment's casualty list now totals 72. [The regiment] did 28 days straight off ... I have had bullets and shrapnel all around, I was sound asleep in my dugout when a big six inch shell landed ten feet from me.²⁵

²² *ibid.*, 8 November 1915.

²³ *ibid.*, 10 December 1916.

²⁴ The day the letter arrived his mother was informed he had been wounded in action. Information is held in the Kiama History centre, (2005) and was reported in the *Independent* on 26 June 1915.

²⁵ Colin Fuller would become one of Kiama's distinguished soldiers. Letters held at the Kiama Local History Centre.

George Aldridge wrote from the Salisbury Camp in Britain. He described the Kaiser as an Antichrist, and went on to explain the pleasures the Australian soldiers were enjoying in their 'Camp Life.'²⁶

In September 1916 Bombardier Gordon Pike wrote about the Somme campaign, how fortunate he had been in escaping death and capturing prisoners:

On the 19th some of our Australian Infantry and some of the English made a charge. Oh God, what sights there were. ... We were successful as far as prisoners were concerned. Nearly all young fellows about 15 or 16 years and old men ... medically unfit.²⁷

But others had different views. Gunner McClintock wrote:

The roaring and screaming of the guns was awful and when dawn came we could see what lay in front of us. – once beautiful forts were tumbled down like matchwood, and the cliffs everywhere battered and torn by the enormous shells. ... Then the terrible slaughter and carnage began, which only those that saw it could imagine ... all we could see for a while was a huddled mass of humanity covered in blood.²⁸

Another wrote that war was 'not what it is cracked to be.'²⁹

Their letters reflected a pragmatism when it came to death. Two of the 'Waratah Boys' were killed. Private Leggett wrote from his hospital bed to Harry Warren's mother about her son's death and the death of his mate Johnny Hanrahan.

Dear Mrs Warren –
Just to let you know, that it was arranged between your son, Jonny [sic] Hanrahan and myself that any of us got knocked out the one left would write home and let our people know. I am sorry to have to write this letter to you.³⁰

²⁶ *Independent*, 15 February 1916.

²⁷ *Independent*, 27 September 1916.

²⁸ *ibid.*, 21 August 1915.

²⁹ *ibid.*, 26 June 1915.

³⁰ *ibid.*, 27 September 1916. Hanrahan was a labourer and single, Ben Leggett was married and a quarryman and Henry Warren was a labourer and single (A. Clark, *The Waratahs*, pp. 49, 51 and 56.)

These letters appeared at the same time that recruitment drives were underway. Those running the campaigns needed to present their arguments in a positive form, stressing sacrifice and patriotism, loyalty to the Empire and the protection of homes and country against a ruthless foe, appealing to moral and ethical values. Local men enlisting were farewelled by their communities in the same manner.³¹ Death was rarely mentioned.

Commemoration, death and the returning men

The two most important patriotic committees established by Kiama during the war were the Citizens Committee and the Home Committee. Both committees were appointed by the council. The Citizens Committee was given the authority to work and deal with local wartime issues and to promote the war effort.³² The Welcome Home Committee was formed to ensure that all soldiers would receive a heroes' welcome on their return, and in addition the Lady Mayoress would present each soldier with a gold medal.³³

A parade down Terralong Street in 1915. The post office and Police Station are in the background. Source:- Kiama Independent Supplement.

On 25 April 1916, the Citizens Committee organised a combined church and memorial service on the slopes of Blowhole Point. It presented to the community an image of loyalty, cooperation and 'togetherness'. The clergy, representing all

³¹ McKernan, *op. cit.*, p. 187.

³² *Independent Supplement*, 25 October 2000.

³³ *Independent*, 21 November 1917.

denominations, were invited to participate, as well as members of the military. It was further decided that a collection would be taken up at this 'Anzac Day Ceremony' and for the welfare of any local returned men. Businesses were closed for the hour of the service.³⁴ Colonel Rourke, the officer in charge of the Showground Camp, addressed the Kiama people. He stated that 'the day celebrated the undying honour attached to the name of those who fallen at Gallipoli.'³⁵ The *Independent* described the service:

An unprecedented one in our little town ... The hour of the service was a typical one – ushered in under lowering clouds and falling rain, typical it seemed of a nation's sorrow and tears... When as a nation we Australians were asked to hold in sacred memory our glorious dead, the sun broke forth gloriously as a symbol of our Empire's victory.³⁶

As Gammage comments the 'notions connected with the war – duty, honour, manhood and the like – all suffered from their martial association'.³⁷ His statement is also relevant for Kiama. Other expressions of commemoration followed. In 1917, for example, a memorial church service for the fallen was held at Gerringong. In 1918, a 'March of Freedom', organised by the Citizens Committee, was followed by an open-air service at the Kiama Showground. The Protestant Churches were represented.³⁸ Shortly after the Church of England organised a tree planting in the church grounds. A tree was planted by the next-of-kin for each soldier killed over-seas. In all, eighteen trees were planted.³⁹ The process of commemoration would reach logical conclusion with the building of regional war memorials after the war.

Between 1914 and 1918 all social levels were affected by deaths, woundings, disease and injuries suffered by their volunteers. The war left no strata of the community untouched. Whenever an ominous black edged envelope, containing a telegram, was despatched from the local post office, a minister of religion would be

³⁴ *ibid.*, 26 April, 1916.

³⁵ *Independent Supplement*, 25 October 2000.

³⁶ *Independent*, 26 April 1916. The locals claimed it was Australia's first Anzac Day.

³⁷ B. Gammage, *the Broken Years*, Penguin Books, Ringwood, 1982, p.276.

³⁸ *Independent Supplement*, 25 October 2000.

³⁹ *ibid.*

seen visiting the serviceman's home. The neighbours were fully aware of the significance of the telegram and the visit. McQuilton has described how death in particular evoked different reactions in different people. He also writes of families' requests for the return of their sons' belongings. Maria Keat wrote to the authorities seeking the return of her son's possessions. She had a 'close personal relationship' with her son but to her, 'King and country' were not the main priorities of life. Harold Croucher's service is a similar story. A casualty of Gallipoli, he was buried at sea and his brother, who had also enlisted, died of wounds at the Boulogne hospital. His parents were left to mourn, but his mother was possibly one of the women 'who helped to organise the anti-conscription meeting at Dederang in 1917'.⁴⁰ The letters illustrate the closeness of the mothers to their sons and the ways by which they coped with the impact of the war on themselves and their families. In Maria's case, her son's belongings symbolically maintained the memory of their closeness. Harold's mother wanted the demands on the young men to cease.

However, the information in telegrams was not always correct. When Sapper Ettingshausen was reported missing in France on 19 July 1916 his mother appealed to the Red Cross to help find him. After an extensive search he was found in January to be alive and in a Prisoner of War camp in Germany.⁴¹ The telegrams could also produce months of anxiety for parents. In July, 1918 Lieutenant Nelson was reported missing after aerial activities in France. The *Independent* hoped that 'news will still come through to relieve the anxieties of his father and sisters,' but the hope was in vain.⁴² Mr and Mrs Sproule had nine months of anxiety, waiting for news of their missing son Private Stanley Sproule. Eventually they were informed he had been 'killed in action'.⁴³

With each death, Kiama was being pulled further into another world about which it knew, or understood, little. Bill Gammage argues that the war contributed to the decline of the old ideals. War was not 'manly and glamorous'.

⁴⁰ McQuilton, *op. cit.*, pp. 6, 135-6.

⁴¹ *Independent Supplement*, 25 October, 2000

⁴² *Independent*, 27 July 1918.

⁴³ *Independent, Supplement*, 25 October 2000.

The Council

The Minute Books of the Kiama Council meetings, and the lengthy reports of council meetings recorded in the *Independent*, reflect the impact of the war on the regional community. At its meeting on 3 September 1914, no mention was made of the outbreak of war. Although the Council was loyal to Empire, local issues were the Council's priority. But the war was there. At that meeting, two letters seeking aid and donations of food and money for the Belgium people were quickly dealt with. The first was referred to the local Red Cross and the second to the Patriotic League 'for its consideration'.⁴⁴ At subsequent meetings, an appeal from Sydney's Chamber of Commerce requesting a War Food Fund to be established for the 'starving' Poles was passed on to the Patriotic Fund Raising group. A request then came to the council that members of the community be urged to follow the example being given by King George, and refrain from the consumption of alcohol during the length of the war. This was passed on to, and strongly supported by, the Kiama Temperance Society.⁴⁵ This was followed by the women in temperance organisations requesting that the government 'restrict drinking by women' for it was 'disrupting home and social life'.⁴⁶ and in May 1916, the campaign that introduced 6 o'clock closing. The *Independent* strongly supported the campaign.⁴⁷

However, there were the external organisations that would intrude, influence and over time, change the Kiama Council's attitude. For example, Mosman Municipal Council wrote to Kiama Council and requested support for their recommendation that all trading with German or Austrian firms should cease. It was not in the best interests of Britain. The Kiama Council did not record a response.⁴⁸ But the problem did not go away. Hurstville Municipal Council urged the N.S.W. Premier 'to have all Germans removed from the Public Service' on 8 September 1914.⁴⁹ The matter was debated by the Council but there was no final decision. The Anti-German League communicated with the council calling for the internment of all

⁴⁴ Kiama Council Minutes, Items 207 and 3083, September 1914.

⁴⁵ *Independent*, 24 December, 1914.

⁴⁶ *ibid.*,

⁴⁷ *ibid.*, 31 May 1916.

⁴⁸ Kiama Council Minutes, Item 402, 2 December 1914.

⁴⁹ *Independent*, 22 September 1914.

German subjects on Australian soil.⁵⁰ Holbrook Shire Council demanded support for the striking off of all ‘enemies’ from the magistrate’s role.⁵¹ The Council was reluctant to support these demands. Many so called Germans in the region were of second or third generation and Australian citizens by birth. Some had volunteered, for example, Sapper Ettingshausen.

But the Council could not avoid direct involvement in the war effort when Holman, as described in chapter 6, asked it to organise recruitment meetings in 1915. The mayor, and the councillors, attended the recruitment meetings. They were present to welcome the ‘Waratah Boys’. When the Showground was needed as an army camp by the Department of Defence, the Kiama Show Society and council agreed.⁵² The Council was directly involved in both conscription plebiscites. No longer could Council refer matters related to the war effort to community organisations. As McKernan has argued, local government bodies finally had no choice but to play a major part in the war effort.⁵³

The War Ends

As the news of the Armistice reached Kiama the town clock chimed to announce to all that ‘something of an epoch had taken place.’ The train whistle ‘crowed’ and the church bell rang. Kiama celebrated, and residents danced in the street. Kerosene tins were beaten and an impromptu ‘Tin Can Band’ was formed and marched along the street, the band growing larger and noisier as the players proceeded. The people rejoiced for soon their young men would be coming home.⁵⁴

The Welcome Home Committee, brainchild of the Kiama Council, followed a set pattern for welcoming home the regions ‘heroes’. The welcome home receptions reflected the community’s sense of excitement and joy, and local communities

⁵⁰ *ibid*, 8 September 1915

⁵¹ *ibid.*, 30 June 1915.

⁵² Beasley, *op. cit.*, p.32.

⁵³ McKernan, *op. cit.*, p. 184.

⁵⁴ *Independent*, 18 November 1918.

welcomed back a 'favourite son'. People gathered at the Railway Station and the local band entertained. The stationmaster gave the assembly a hint of the hero's position on the train, and as the train drew near the band commenced playing 'Home Sweet Home'. The young women waited with packets of confetti and showered the returning man or men. The Mayor in his official capacity, extended a hearty welcome home and described each young man's experiences and service records. With more back-slapping and welcomes and while the band played 'He's a Jolly Good Fellow', the recipients finally escaped to the security of their family.⁵⁵ The welcome homes attracted people from all spectrums of society and overcame all social barriers.

Kiama did its best to celebrate peace in the only way it knew as it gladly welcomed its returning men, but Kiama would never be quite the same for the returning men carried the scars of war. There was also a shortage of work. In the quarries, for example, improvement in technology was reducing the demand for male labour. It was expected that men and women would return to their pre-war lives, as though nothing had changed. But the fabric of the past was torn. Gammage records a poem written by a soldier which summed up the situation:

Adieu, the years are a broken song,
And the right grows weak in the strife with wrong,
The lilies of love have a crimson stain,
And the old days never will come again.⁵⁶

But the region had one more war-related crisis to face: the Spanish Flu.

The Pandemic

Peace had been declared and the Armistice signed. The 'boys' were coming home. However, a highly contagious disease, first thought of as secondary importance,

⁵⁵ *Independent Supplement*, 25 October 2000.

⁵⁶ Gammage, *op. cit.*, p. 279.

spread rapidly through the troops.⁵⁷ Doctors initially gave it the name of a 'three day fever'.⁵⁸

In the Spring of 1918, in the trenches in France, large numbers of soldiers became ill. Soldiers called the pandemic the 'Spanish Flu' because the King of Spain had been one of its first victims.⁵⁹ Three consecutive waves of the disease occurred during the next twelve months.⁶⁰ The close proximity of the service men in the camps, on troop ships and in training exercises enabled the infection to spread rapidly, but Australia, due to its isolation and vast distances, remained unaffected until the soldiers returned. Transport ships bringing home the returning men brought with them the Spanish Flu. The authorities recognised the danger to public health.⁶¹ From 17 October until 30 April 1919 ships coming into Sydney were required to undergo quarantine restrictions. Some men died within sight of their homeland. The nurses also became caught up in the epidemic. Twenty-one members of the AANS aged between 25 and 41 had died of the illness while still in the service. It is claimed that half were the victims of influenza.⁶²

The epidemic followed the men to their home towns and the cities. The borders between the states were closed. Large gatherings of people were restricted and normal activities ceased by government order. In Kiama, schools and churches closed and the 1919 Anzac Day March was cancelled. The Council and the *Independent* supported the restrictions imposed by the government to limit the spread of the flu.⁶³ It appears Kiama escaped the worst of the disease. It is not possible to state the precise number of deaths in the local region, but 12,000 Australians died, 55 per cent of the recorded deaths occurring in NSW.⁶⁴

⁵⁷ A. Silverstein, *Pure Politics and Impure Science*, John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1981, p.16.

⁵⁸ <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/FWW/influenza.htm>, [Accessed 8 January 2007]

⁵⁹ H. McQueen, 'The 'Spanish' Influenza Pandemic in Australia, 1912-19', in J. Roe, (ed.) *Social Policy in Australia*, Cassell, Stanmore, 1976, p. 131.

⁶⁰ Silverstein, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

⁶¹ McQuilton, *op. cit.*, p. 194.

⁶² Bassett, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

⁶³ *Independent*, 1 January 1919.

⁶⁴ J. Camm and J. McQuilton (eds), *Australians an Historical Atlas, Australians: A Bicentennial History*, Syme, Fairfax and Weldon, Sydney, 1987, p. 68.

--- Part 4 ---

Boom and Depression: 1920 – 1938

Ready for a day at the beach: Kiama 1924.
Source:- *Independent Supplement* 2000.

Chapter 7: Modernity and Economic Development

The war was over and the pace of life quickened. Motor cars and aeroplanes were introduced as well as new ideas and fresh concepts.¹ This was the decade of modernity and material prosperity. Progress, change and work relied upon funding. To an increasing degree, this meant government funding from both state and federal sources which in turn meant greater government control over local issues than had been the case prior to the outbreak of war in 1914. The Kiama Council, for example, undertook major public works, road work, connection of electricity to the town and an extension of its water and sewerage works which relied, in part, on government funding. Councils could no longer meet the costs of these works from their own funds.² The earlier fears expressed in the *Independent* regarding the export of dairy produce were now being justified.³ Inflation was devaluing the real value of wages.⁴ Kiama workers were affected too.

The returned men found that life was not easy. The returning ex-servicemen faced low wage and rising living costs. The Government earlier stated in its recruitment campaign that the soldiers would be well provided for - no returned man would be disadvantaged. They would be assisted in obtaining a home and possibly helped to possess a farm if they had farming experience. They would receive priority when seeking work. The promises did not eventuate.⁵

However, Kiama was moving on in other ways. The most obvious sign of modernity was an increasing interest in motor- power, its benefits and convenience. At the 1920 Kiama Show it was noted that 'one was forcibly struck with the fact motors are superseding horse vehicles on conveying visitors to the show.'⁶ Personal transport was changing. At the same time there was a revolution

¹ C. Benham, *The Prosperity of Australia*, P. S. King and Son, Orchard House, Westminster, 1928.

² MacIntyre, *The Oxford History of Australia: The Succeeding Age, 1901 – 1942*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1993, p. 229.

³ *Independent*, 16 September, 1914.

⁴ McQueen, "Shoot the Bolshekov! Hang the Profiteer!", in *Essays in the political Economy of Australian Capitalism 1918 – 1920 – Volume 2*, eds. Wheelwright and Buckley, Australian and New Zealand Book Company, Sydney, 1978, p. 203.

⁵ C. Pearl, *Australia's Yesterdays*, Reader's Digest, Surry Hills, 1976, p.309.

⁶ *Independent*, 1 February 1920.

occurring in the ways of communicating. The telephone exchange had commenced operating in Kiama in 1911 with 36 subscribers and would grow rapidly in the 1920s.⁷ The radio and gramophone would soon be available to all and electric power reached the region.⁸

But before the past wars years could come to a closure, there was the matter of a memorial to the men and women who had ‘made the supreme sacrifice’. Both Jamberoo and Gerringong Councils had erected memorials to their servicemen, but the Kiama Council had been lax.⁹ The local community protested, and after much debate a decision was made to erect a memorial from local stone and masonry in the style of an arch. On brown marble tablets would be engraved the names of the ninety-six Kiama volunteers. The 24 men who gave their lives on foreign ground would be specifically identified. The arch would be positioned in Central Park close to the business district and be carefully positioned ‘in order that [it is] the first thing and the last that tourists see as they enter and leave the town.’¹⁰ It was unveiled at the Anzac Day ceremony in 1925 by the NSW Premier, Sir George Fuller, K.C.M.G. Kiama’s residents, the local school children, Girl Guides, Scouts, Red Cross, returned men and the Voluntary Defence Core all marched to the unveiling ceremony.¹¹

The Changing Environment

Kiama had been serviced by gas lighting for many years and was reluctant to convert to electricity. This was not uncommon even in the larger centres. However by 1920 the State Government decided to connect their State Quarry and Railway Quarry to Port Kembla’s electricity supply seeing it as a more effective means of providing power for the quarry crushers. Jonas Price, Kiama’s Mayor at the time, investigated an extension of the transmission lines to the town. The council was willing to provide the reticulation work and guaranteed a sum of

⁷ *Independent Supplement*, ‘The Kiama Telephone Exchange,’ October 25, 2000.

⁸ *ibid.*, 29 November, 2000.

⁹ *Independent Supplement*, 29 November 2000.

¹⁰ *ibid.*

¹¹ *Independent*, 25 April 1925.

£4,000 per year in return for the power. In 1924, the Kiama Council employed its first electrical engineer.¹² In February 1925 the Kiama Presbyterian Church was 'switched on' (the result of a bequest) and the line was extended by Council to Central Park, Pleasant Point and the residents in Farmer Street. Electricity reached Gerringong in March 1928, but Jamberoo vetoed a proposal in 1929 to supply it with electricity on the grounds of cost.¹³

The *Independent*, praised the benefits of electricity. It offered -

safety from risk of fire, extraordinary ease of control, adaptability and the possibility of obtaining any desired standard of illumination. ... the absence of combustion and therefore of all contamination of the air in buildings is a benefit of inestimable value from the health standpoint.¹⁴

On 31 May 1924, the *Independent* advertised a number of electrical appliances and praised the 'outstanding advantages they offered to the quality of home life and living standards.'¹⁵ Mr H. R. Glossop, a local storekeeper, followed up with the announcement he would be extending his business and stocking 'all descriptions of electrical appliances and lighting'.¹⁶ But despite the *Independent's* and Mr Glossop's optimism it would still be some time before electrical appliances became common objects in the homes of Kiama.

With the war over, the Local Progress Association returned to promoting tourism. It contended that tourism would encourage visitors to the region, create work and benefit the business houses in the town. 'As the population increases and the cities become more congested they [people] will as a surety seek to make their homes where so many holiday attractions offer', it argued.¹⁷ Crooked River at Gerringong had already been recognised as a tourist resort and attracted visitors (although it

¹² *Independent Supplement*, 29 November 2000.

¹³ *ibid*

¹⁴ *Independent*, 31 May 1924.

¹⁵ *ibid*.

¹⁶ *Independent Supplement*, 29 November 2000.

¹⁷ *Independent*, 8 May 1922.

was not until 1939 that a ‘first class camp’ – a caravan park - was proposed. (It was described as a wonderful asset to the Gerringong community’.)¹⁸

Other changes were happening. In January 1925 a Main Roads Board was formed by the NSW State Government to provide financial assistance and advice on the maintenance of country roads. It would prove of value to Kiama’s Council and its immediate hinterland. The first project involving the council and Main Roads Board occurred in 1928 with the widening the Kiama to Minnamurra road, and excavating the Minnamurra Bends. The activities created work for local men at a time when work was difficult to find. Meanwhile, a system of national highways was being planned and a stretch of road between Kiama and Shellharbour had been designated as a part of the Prince’s Highway much to the disgust of Jamberoo who felt that the original road into Kiama which passed through the district deserved the honour.¹⁹

Around the same time the Kiama Olympic Baths were constructed, Jubilee Park was upgraded, a new pavilion at Gerringong was built and Jamberoo gained new tennis courts. The Baby Health Centre was improved and up-dated. The magic of radio, gramophone and film were bringing wonderful new experiences to the local people. There was little similarity between the crystal sets of yester-year and the battery radio that replaced it. Radio brought recordings of popular tunes into homes on a daily basis. The gramophone catered for, and encouraged, changing musical tastes and, combined with the radio, acquainted the youth with the rhythms of the Charleston and jazz. The older generation expressed doubts since, with the newer dances, young men and women now moved more intimately together.

Although the ‘talking picture’ would not reach Kiama until the 1930s, silent films were a well established part of the region’s entertainment. They had been part of the Kiama scene since 1910 and the *Independent* advertised the films showing and the coming attractions. In 1911, the paper noted that ‘every detail and every action will be clearly portrayed in the lifelike manner’ and advised its readers ‘in order

¹⁸ *Independent Supplement*, 20 December 2000.

¹⁹ *ibid.*

that there will be no inconvenience caused at the door, the hall will be opened at 7 pm, so by going early the crush will be avoided'.²⁰ The 'hall' was the Oddfellows Hall. In 1915, this was replaced by *The Antrim* Theatre in Manning Street which was officially opened in 1915 by Mr M. F. Morton M.L.A. Built by Andrew Carson, it could seat 999 people and also be used as a venue for such functions such as balls, concerts and meetings. The first picture screened was 'The Covered Wagon'.²¹

The Motor Vehicle

A new and different technology was coming to impact on the people of Kiama namely the motor vehicle. The coming of the railway had resulted in changes to people's lives: the car would create many more.

Australia's first *Motor Traffic Act* was introduced in New South Wales in 1909, making it compulsory for all vehicles to be registered and for drivers to hold a driver's license. Speed levels were also restricted to 6 mph across intersections and 4 mph around corners. However, the Kiama Council drew up its own ordinances as they had concerns for the safety of the people who lacked an understanding of the new machines. In future it would be an offence to drive between sunset and sunrise without showing a light on the driver's side, to drive around corners at a pace greater than a walk, to drive on the footpath and to drive at a pace greater than 10 mph.²²

Historical records indicate that either Frank Bullen or Nesbit Hindmarsh owned the first motor vehicle in Kiama in 1909.²³ The motorcar was a toy for the enjoyment of the social elite and wealthy. Its appearance attracted reports in the local paper. For example, on the holiday week-end of October 1914, the *Independent* reported some twelve cars had motored through Kiama in a space of two hours, and that in the same year, a motor owners' association was formed and affiliated with the

²⁰ *Independent*, 22 March 1911.

²¹ Information filed in the Pilot's Cottage, Kiama Museum .,

²² *Independent Supplement* Kiama., 29 November 2000.

²³ *ibid.*

N.S.W. Automobile Club. The fact that a motor vehicle reflected social status was seen during the war years when returning men were driven home. For example, in 1918, the *Independent* reported that 'Gunner Norman McClintock had returned from the 'front' and Mr Hindmarsh drove both he and his mother home by car'.²⁴ This would change during the 1920s when mass production techniques produced cars that were within the purchasing power of many more people. A Motor-owner's Club was already functioning in Kiama after the war and in May 1923 a hundred members of NSW Automobile Club arrived in town, and formed a procession along Terralong Street and up the Saddleback Mountain.²⁵

The growing popularity of the car created problems for the council and the local community. The roads had reached a deplorable condition. There had been little maintenance of roads during the war years. The roads themselves had been constructed for the use of horse drawn vehicles, not motor-cars, and wound around the hills following the less steep routes. In many cases they were little more than tracks with potholes, broken branches and the occasional culvert to be negotiated. Straying stock on the roads and within the town environs also created hazards. It was not uncommon to drive around a corner and find a horse or cow standing relaxed in the middle of the road.²⁶ Letters appeared in the *Independent* condemning the council's inability to control straying animals. Many of the town blocks and land holdings were either unfenced, or had only temporary fencing. The animals could roam freely, and were a hazard, particularly at night, to any motor vehicles.²⁷ And then, there were the car races which Kiama residents had taken to their hearts.

A major sporting attraction in the 1920s was the Seven Mile Beach Races, with both cars and motorbikes participating. Visitors travelled long distances to watch or join in the sport. The venue for the 'meet' was the strong sands of the beach then affectionately known as the 'Gerringong Speedway'.²⁸ Crowds in excess of

²⁴ *Independent*, 25 November 1918.

²⁵ *Independent Supplement*, 29 November, 2000

²⁶ *ibid.*

²⁷ *ibid.*

²⁸ *ibid.*

2,000 would attend these races and speed trials, camping nearby or arriving by horse, buggy or car. It was the interesting and acceptable 'place' to be.

Seven Mile Beach races in the 1920's. Original photos from the collection of L. Setri.

The beach did justify its speedway title for it was there, in March 1925, that the Royal Automobile Club of Sydney decided to conduct its speed trials. In a three-mile handicap for touring cars up to 12 hp, Mr J. Leslie's Rover clocked 3 minutes and 41 seconds, averaging a speed of 48 mph. Seven months later, on 7 October, Don Harkness broke the 100 mph barrier, by reaching speeds up to 107.75 mph.²⁹ More than four years later, in December 1929, Norman 'Wizard' Smith attempted a new record in his sleek gold painted car and exceeded 109.19 mph over one mile and then reached 130 mph to take the ten mile record.³⁰

At a picnic-sports day held in April 1929, the dominance of the car was obvious. The *Independent* reported, 'some sixty cars were pulled up before the arena for different events.' It also reported that no entries had been received for the novelty sulky event planned for the day. The interest in horse events was waning. Society was seeking thrills in a new, faster and more sophisticated form.

²⁹ *Independent*, 8 October, 1925

³⁰ Pearl, *op. cit.*, p. 190. Horse Races had previously been held on the sands of Seven Mile Beach.

The car made Kiama more accessible. People could now make a day or weekend visit to Kiama - the scenery and the beaches were inviting. The community's involvement during the war years had fractured the region's isolation and Kiama and its hinterland could no longer return to its pre-war status. Improved facilities for the motorists would encourage tourism and the motor vehicle fostered new service industries in the form of garages and car yards.

It is thought that in May 1924 Ziems and Jones established their local garage, and later they installed a 'motor spirit tank' to supply the 'travelling motorist with juice'.³¹ Shortly after establishing the Kiama Motor Works and installing the 'bowser' with an 'up to date visible measure' they commenced 'carrying' a stock of radio and car batteries.³² In 1929 the Dion Motor Service was opened, transporting people in their 'up to date bus' from Kiama to Wollongong at the cost of 3/6d (35 cents), and in addition they ran a special service on Friday and Saturday evenings for the convenience of people wishing to attend the 'shows' at the Wollongong picture theatre.³³ A new support industry had emerged and was soon seen as a basic need in a modern community.

However, there was another side to the motor vehicle experience as motorists did 'bend' the law and take risks. In February 1926, a group of motorists attended the local Magistrate's Court in Kiama to answer to the charge of 'cutting the corner in Manning Street' and persisting in doing it over a number of weeks. They were fined 10 shillings with two shillings and sixpence court costs.³⁴ In March 1927 Alderman N. Hindmarsh complained to the council that motorists 'went over the roads at break neck speeds' and acted as though 'no one else had a right to it'. He called for a motion to outlaw 'racing motorists from carrying out record breaking speed tests on the road'.³⁵

³¹ *Independent Supplement*, 29 November 2000. Petrol was carried in a container in the car before the convenience of garages and petrol stations.

³² *Independent*, 8 October 1925. Radios were powered by the same or similar batteries to those used in motor vehicles.

³³ *Independent*, 29 August 1929.

³⁴ *Kiama Reporter*, 28 February 1926.

³⁵ *Independent Supplement*, 29 November 2000 .

An Ambulance, but what of the Hospital?

The advantage of motor power was to extend beyond the area of the race-track with its sense of speed and excitement. In June 1923 the council discussed the possibilities a motorised ambulance service. The Kiama Council would use motor power for the benefit of the community. At a public meeting, Kiama's Mayor, Neville Hindmarsh, was nominated to chair and organise the necessary meetings and the raising of funds. The committee decided that, although centred in Kiama, the ambulance would service all people between Gerringong and Albion Park. There would be no cost to patients and all work carried out by the Ambulance Board would be on an honorary and voluntary basis. An initial sum of £200 was required plus an ongoing maintenance of £500 to £600 per year. The initial target was reached within six months. The quarry workers made a major contribution. Fully aware of the dangers of accidents in their work, they agreed to on-going deductions from their weekly wages of three pence each, which was deposited with the ambulance fund.³⁶

When on 15 January 1927 the first motorized ambulance was handed over to the committee, the citizens of Kiama felt the region was moving forward. Over 800 residents came to observe the hand-over, and this was followed by a parade down the main street. The *Independent* reported:

Quite a number of cars followed the Ambulance ... with the Friendly Society in regalia, the Boy Scouts in their uniforms and the Fire Brigade [Members] in their brilliant red motor wagon.³⁷

Within the first month, 'Mr Wingate', the ambulance driver, had attended twenty-four calls and had covered 264 miles.³⁸ The push for an ambulance service and the work and cost incurred, reflected the community's sense of commitment and shared destiny.³⁹

³⁶ *Independent*, 19 January 1927

³⁷ *ibid.*

³⁸ *Independent Supplement*, 29 November 2000.

³⁹ E. Ecklund, 'We are of Age, Class Locality and Region at Port Kembla 1900-1940' in *Labour History: A Journal of Labour and Social History*, No.66 May 1994, p. 73.

Kiama's first motorised ambulance was presented to the community on January 15, 1927. Source:- Independent Supplement, November 29, 2000.

The cottage hospital, however, no longer possessed the medical facilities to effectively provide for Kiama's increasing population. The equipment was old and facilities were out dated. At the time of its building in 1886 it was considered modern, but it was placed on the outskirts of the town, was not easily accessible for patients or visitors and was in close proximity to the quarries. The noise of their blasting and the dust polluted the area. The community had been asking for improvements in their hospital for some time but in 1922 the agitation began in earnest. By 1926 draft plans were drawn up and costs investigated to build a general hospital. It was estimated that the building would cost £12,466 with 50 percent being provided by the State Government. However, the community and Hospital Committee were constantly frustrated by government's delays, lack of organisation and poor administration. The government did not see the project as a priority. Meanwhile, the Cottage Hospital continued to deteriorate. Matron Kilgour resigned in 1927 and moved away from the area.⁴⁰ In May 1928 a strongly worded letter was sent to the Health Minister.

[The situation] is going from bad to worse and the prolongation is enough to take all the heart out of the staff and committee. This committee takes strong exception to having to spend further money on the old building when the money could be used towards a new structure.⁴¹

⁴⁰ *Independent Supplement*, 29 November 2000.

⁴¹ *ibid.*

In August 1928 the committee threatened to resign. Messrs Hindmarsh and Woolford were directed to forward a telegram to the Health Minister, Dr Arthur, placing the issues firmly upon his desk. The project and the hospital's future were now up to him!

Kiama Hospital Committee Resigning. Action by Department necessary on account of patients in hospital. Payment of accounts and salaries impossible after 21st. Matter urgent. Reply Secretary.⁴²

Four days later a response was received from the Minister. He instructed his Under Secretary to meet with the Hospital Committee in three days time. A promise of funding in the 1929 budget was given 'as an urgent case', and in February 1929 tenders were called and the following month the construction work commenced. In July of the same year the Hospital Committee made representations for the new hospital to be considered as a centre for the training of local nurses.⁴³

The people of Kiama believed that a training hospital with its own doctor was their democratic right. The Committee had taken a political gamble by opting to resign, thus embarrassing the Health Minister. Had the Wall Street Crash occurred prior to the signing of this agreement the history of the Kiama Hospital could have been quite different. It opened on 5 July, 1930 by Colonel C.D. Fuller, the Hospital Committee's President.

Sport and the bathing controversy

In the early 1920s sport again became a part of Kiama's community life. A boxing club was formed and proved popular. A large number of spectators came to the opening match 'including three car loads of people and a train load from the south.'⁴⁴ The bowls club was re-formed on 21 March 1921. It had a 'slow start'

⁴² *Independent*, 19 September 1928.

⁴³ *Independent Supplement*, 29 November 2000.

⁴⁴ *Kiama Reporter*, 16 March 1921.

but with the introduction of electric lighting and evening games, the sport had become popular and inter-club competitions were announced.⁴⁵

The Rugby League competition had re-formed earlier and in 1919 the 'Dinkums' were the Premiers of the South Coast Rugby League. But the game was not without its moments of controversy. In 1927, a follower asked the *Independent*:

Is it to be football or dog fighting? ... Two or three players having to be ordered off the field. ... If these are not stopped – regardless of the persons concerned – football will be looked on as dog-fights, pure and simple.⁴⁶

In 1928 a delegate, a Mr McDonald, commented on Kiama's Group 7 Competition and wrote:-

I do not think Mr Misson a fit and proper person to manage a team, last year when we should have been out practicing, Mr Misson was down at the markets, inspecting cabbages.⁴⁷

Kiama's Surf Club, however, encountered difficulties in reviving interest in membership and activities when it re-formed in 1918. When the council banned the holding of Surf Carnivals on a Sunday in 1928 the club was forced to close. The Life Saving Association of NSW voiced its concern at the decreasing lack of life-saving expertise and facilities available at Kiama's beaches, and informed the council that it could be held legally responsible, should a serious accident occur. Mr H.S. Bennett, a visitor to Kiama, asked 'do not tourists and family friends come to Kiama to enjoy bathing in the ocean and the surf?',⁴⁸

Council's decision reflected the conservatism of the community when it came to the question of swimming, surfing and bathing. As early as 1912 mixed bathing had been mooted but the Reverend Adamson at the Methodist Conference stated that 'no modest man can be associated with mixed bathing and no man who respects the

⁴⁵ *Independent*, 16 March 1921.

⁴⁶ *ibid.*, 26 April 1926.

⁴⁷ *ibid.*, 25 April 1928.

⁴⁸ *Independent Supplement*, 29 November 2000. Other sporting clubs re-forming in the 1920s included croquet, tennis and golf. Although the local cricket club had suspended many of its games, it had never been disbanded. It originated in the latter half of the 1800s.

opposite sex could take part in it'.⁴⁹ The *Independent* claimed that the thought of mixed bathing was sufficient to make a gentle woman faint.⁵⁰

A visitor from overseas, a Mr Cyril Monk, in the summer of 1923 expressed surprise at Kiama's attitude to mixed bathing, and similar sentiments were echoed by Mr H. S. Bennett. In a letter to the *Independent* he stated - 'Surely Kiama is not going to play second fiddle to other South Coast Towns' and then sceptically continued:

From an innocent amusement point of view, [it is] as well an absolute necessity to teach the art of swimming to wives by their husbands, parents to their children and the best boy to his best girl⁵¹.

The council did not respond.

In the summer of 1927-28 the Chamber of Commerce, with an eye to the tourist trade, sought to change the council's attitude and suggested that mixed bathing (or continental bathing) be allowed between 8 am and 5 pm each day as the 'gentlemen's baths are superior to the ladies' baths', but without success.⁵²

The solution to the bathing controversy came in an unexpected way. In 1928 masses of seaweed were deposited in the men's baths at Gerringong, making them unusable. The Gerringong 'gentlemen' then 'skipped over to the lady's baths' Gerringong Council was disturbed, but the weed could not be cleared. 'You cannot expect the men to bathe in rotting seaweed', protested Alderman Weir as the men continued to use the ladies' baths.⁵³ With the acceptance of the fraternisation at Gerringong the Kiama Council could no longer insist that 'the majority of the rate payers were opposed to mixed bathing', so in the summer of 1927/28 it became accepted.⁵⁴

⁴⁹ Pearl, *op. cit.*, pp.194 -5.

⁵⁰ *Independent Supplement*, 29 November 2000.

⁵¹ *ibid.*

⁵² *ibid.*

⁵³ *ibid.*

⁵⁴ *ibid.*

Women and Change

The Kiama women in 1920s were confidently moving forward and farewelling the pre-war Edwardian styles in dress. The tight-fitting bodices and layers of fabric that gave Edwardian women their hour-glass figure gave way to the narrow 'tubes' that disguised the figure. Women 'bobbed' their hair and 'cloche' hats became fashionable.⁵⁵ Advertising ensured that the local women were aware of changes in fashion and fashion catalogues for women were being produced by the large city department stores.

A photograph of the mid 1920s provides a clear illustration of dress and leisure entertainment. It is a photo of local men and women enjoying a picnic on the shores of Lake Illawarra, dressed in the fashion of the day. In addition two motor vehicles are shown, presumably their conveyance to the picnic ground.

Picnic on the Lake.
Lake Illawarra was a popular destination for picnics during the 1920's when parties would hire a motor car and head north for the day. Photo:- Mrs Pauline McGrath. Source:- Kiama Independent Supplement.

The modern Australian girl was now dancing the Charleston, playing jazz records, listening to the music of George Gershwin and attending the cinema. She read the tales of the 'movie makers' in Hollywood and followed the romances of the stars. The city influence spread to the rural towns. *The Australian Christian World* was

⁵⁵ Pearl, *op. cit.*, pp. 244-8.

disturbed by the changes. It called a halt to 'the heedless recklessness of our young people'. Who, it asked, was going to 'curb the mad rush for pleasure? Who is going to set an example?'⁵⁶ By the mid-1920s the length of dresses was shortened, and a comic of the day rhymed:

Half an inch, half an inch, half an inch shorter,
The skirts are the same for mother and daughter,
When the wind blows
Each one of them shows,
Half an inch, half an inch more than she oughter! ⁵⁷

Educational Change.

Change comes slowly, but no change is slower than that associated with education. The impact of modernity on the region is evident in its educational record. If any country or region were to progress it would require a capable and skilled workforce. A comparison of the Commonwealth Censuses of 1901 and 1921, which recorded literacy rates in schools, indicates the growing importance placed on education in the region.

Kiama Superior Public School 1911. The Kiama National School operated from 1861 to 1867. In 1971 a single storey stone school was opened and by 1893 increased enrolments necessitated the erection of a two storey building. Source:- Wollongong Public Library.

⁵⁶ F. K. Crowley, *Modern Australia in Documents, 1901- 1939*. Wren Publishing, Lonsdale Street Melbourne, 1973, p. 394.

⁵⁷ Pearl, *op. cit.*, p. 248.

Before 1900, the attendance levels at primary schools were poor and were influenced by economic and social conditions. As earlier stated, a child eight years of age could be a valuable asset assisting around a dairy farm or helping with the usual household chores. Stuart Macintyre also notes that children absent from school were not being inculcated with the moral values and desirable attitudes, or the necessary literary and mathematical skills, demanded by modernity.⁵⁸ The literacy rates for 1901 are poor. The change by 1921 is dramatic.

TABLE 3: Education Statistics

	Census of NSW Children 1901		Children NSW April 3-4, 1921	
	Read and write.	Only read.	Read and write.	Only read.
Kiama	50	297	810	0
Jamberoo	27	212	427	1
Gerrington	37	163	316	4 ⁵⁹

Until 1921, primary education was considered to be sufficient to meet the needs of most of the regional population. But during the 1920s, secondary education became increasingly important. For the Kiama children there was no High School closer than Wollongong. Students after completing grade six could travel daily by train to Wollongong Intermediate High School, be boarded in Wollongong or be placed in a city boarding school.

As the numbers attending school grew, the school was found to be not meeting the needs of the students. Three senior classes were being taught in the one room. A deputation of Parents and Citizens and the local Mayors, (of Kiama, Gerrington and Jamberoo), approached the Deputy Chief Inspector, Mr Price in 1931 and were informed that if the state government established 'an Intermediate High School a teacher would have to be provided for each subject and this would entail a good deal of expense.'⁶⁰ The deputation was pointed out that to have

⁵⁸ Macintyre, *The Oxford History of Australia: The Succeeding Age, 1901 -194*, .Oxford Print, Melbourne., 1913, pp. 108 – 109.

⁵⁹ T. A. Coghlan, *NSW Statistics Register 1901*, NSW Government Printer, Sydney, 1902 and *NSW Census 1921*, NSW Government Printer, Sydney, 1922..

⁶⁰ *Independent*, 10 June 1931.

three grades grouped together and working in the one converted room ... it was extremely difficult to concentrate and do justice to all students at once. It was not fair to students or teacher'.⁶¹

The Education Minister visited the region and a decision was made in 1931 to raise the status of the Kiama Primary School to that of a 'Superior' Primary.⁶² Students could now continue their education at the Kiama School for another two years after completing year 6. A large storeroom was converted to a classroom and outside a space was graded and designated a lunch and playing area for the senior students.

The school representatives did not give up and approached Mr W. H. Drummond, Minister for Education in 1938 with a view to establishing a High School for the Kiama Region. Again the request was refused. By 1939 Kiama Superior Primary had an enrolment of 55 students, and they were still being taught in the same converted classroom.⁶³ But, the change was still slow in coming, and did not eventuate until after the Second World War. In November 1951 the Education Minister, Mr Heffron, gave his promise to a delegation of parents that a Kiama High School would be built.⁶⁴ In February 1954 the Kiama High School was finally opened.

⁶¹ *Independent Supplement*, 20 December 2000.

⁶² *ibid.*.

⁶³ *Independent Supplement* 'Campaign for High School', 10 January, 2001.

⁶⁴ *ibid.*

Chapter 8: The Depression

The collapse of the New York Stock Exchange triggered the Great Depression and in turn, created an international crisis that no country could avoid. For Australia, it meant a decline in the demand for the nation's products and a decrease in its export trade. As Australia's primary export trade was in agricultural commodities, this had an impact on the region. Nationally, unemployment rose officially from 9.2 percent in 1929 to 14.6 percent in 1933. However, the latter figure has been contested by some historians who put the rate at 33 percent in 1933, based on the government's census data collected for union members. The oral historian Wendy Lowenstein argues that even this figure disguises the extent of unemployment because no records were kept of unemployment amongst women seeking work or the young also seeking work. The gap between rich and poor widened and men took to the roads seeking work. Governments attempted to help with public works programs but these were limited.¹ However, David Potts in his *Myth of the Great Depression* claims that the popular images were extreme rather than typical.

In reality, during the Great Depression, no one died of starvation; due to poverty, malnutrition declined; infant morality and death rates fell; health improved; and most people remained housed much as usual and were adequately housed.²

The *Independent*, however, painted a grimmer picture of the Depression:

Men with families are on the borderline of starvation, ready and willing to work, with no work available ... primary objective of the unemployment relief grant is to prevent starvation and establish self-respect instead of the 'dole' ... the dole merely keeps life alive – work builds morale.³

This chapter examines the region's response to the Depression and attempts to place the regional experience within the contradictory interpretations offered by the historians.

¹ See, for examples, S. Macintyre, *The Oxford History of Australia*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1993; Camm and McQuilton, *Australians an Historical Atlas. Bicentennial History*, Syme Fairfax and Weldon, 1987; W. Lowenstein, *Weevils in the Flour*, Hyland House, Melbourne, 1979.

² David Potts, *The Myth of the Great Depression*, Scribe, Carlton North, 2006.

³ *Independent*, 27 October 1929.

The Unemployed

In Lowenstein's pioneering work, *Weevils in the Flour*, she records the impact unemployment had on men. Some unemployed proudly denied their state of poverty in their effort to retain an image of respectability. Married men were distressed and reacted in many different ways for their self-image and feelings of 'worth' were being destroyed. No longer could they provide for their families. Many of the younger men were like Simon Bracegirdle.

I was eighteen years of age at the time... You couldn't get a job anywhere. There'd be about fifty in the queue and only one job, so I set out with a mate on the track.⁴

But many local authorities were hostile towards the itinerant unemployed seeking work. To Kiama's north, Wollongong Mayor, W. L. Howarth, had little sympathy for them.⁵ He disclaimed any Council responsibility for 'those who migrated from town to town', for he believed transients challenged the local men for any available work.⁶ With the possibility of the steelworks of the Australian Iron and Steel company commencing in Wollongong, thousands of people had come hoping to find work in the steel mills or coal mines.⁷ The men were forced to camp in make-shift shanties and tents on the edge of the town.⁸ They were not permitted to hold meeting within the town boundaries. There was also a fear that they could be 'radicalised' by communists, Marxists and other 'radicals' groups. Right-wing paramilitary organizations, such as the New Guard, had sprung up to combat any such possibility. During the 1931 election meeting at Jamberoo, the Labor candidate, W.A. Davies alleged that New Guard Leaders, Eric Campbell, a solicitor and army reservist and 'Captain' Francis E. de Groot, along with men from Berry and Kiama, intended to disrupt his campaign and provoke violence. This suggests that there was a cell of the New Guard in the region.⁹ However, the speech by Davies proceeded

⁴ W. Lowenstein, *Weevils in the Flour*, Hyland House, Melbourne, 1979, p. 129.

⁵ L. Richardson, 'Protest' in *The Bitter Years: Wollongong during the Great Depression*, Hale and Iremonger Sydney, 1984. pp. -76. Mayor Howarth became known as the South Coast Mussolini.

⁶ *ibid.*, p.43.

⁷ Henry Lee, 'The Economy', in Hagan and Wells, *History of Wollongong*, University of Wollongong Press, Wollongong, 1997, pp. 60-61.

⁸ Lowenstein, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

⁹ S. Macintyre, *The Oxford History of Australia: The Succeeding Age, 1901 – 1942*. Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1993, p. 266.

as planned and violence was averted 'by the presence of miners with pick handles at the ready'.¹⁰

Basically, Kiama's cultural attitude was conservative, and unionism, particularly on the dairy farms, was not encouraged. A worker belonging to the union would not be given employment. Dairying was family based, and the managers of the cooperative factories (milk and butter,) were responsible to the farmers.

There were individuals, however, who attempted to ease the unemployment situation at the local level. The writer, Charmian Clift, the wife of Sid Clift, the Railway Quarry Manager, wrote of her husband's efforts to help the quarrymen.¹¹ He understood the need for men to work, for he had known unemployment. When the Railway Department decided to close its quarry because of the Depression, Sid Clift (with local support) insisted on keeping it going. He did all the maintenance himself and put in many underpaid hours. Although the quarry struggled, men were kept employed and working. Men further north, (for example in Wollongong), did it rough.¹² Kiama may have had a New Guard Cell, and problems with unionism, but the community also believed in a 'fair go'.

By November 1931 the number of 'traveling persons' walking the roads and arriving at Kiama to collect their fortnightly 'track rations' steadily increased to forty-five.¹³ The unemployed men were expected to move from place to place searching for work, and could claim their rations at the different allocated centres. These were desperate times, particularly for the poor and those without resources. Kiama Police pressed charges against a number of men seeking relief and sustenance. For example 'dole fraud' was cited against a 39 year-old man who allegedly 'obtained under a false name food and relief ... for the value of one pound and four shillings.' In addition he was accused of previously obtaining

¹⁰ Richardson, *op. cit.*, p 122. The New Guards was a right-wing military organisation formed after W.W.I. It saw the unemployed and the policies of Lang as enemies of the state, and organised to defend the King and Country (see K. Amos, 'Campbell, Eric' in *Australian Dictionary of Biography, Volume 7*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1979. pp. 546 – 547.)

¹¹ *Independent Supplement*, 20 December 2000.

¹² J. Hagan, 'Politics in the Illawarra', in J. Hagan and A. Wells (eds.) *A History of Wollongong*, University of Wollongong, Wollongong, 1997, p. 167.

¹³ *Independent Supplement*, 20 December 2000.

government benefits at both the Wollongong and Port Kembla centres.¹⁴ Another Kiama labourer was charged with false pretences by obtaining £5 9s.6d. worth of food relief. In yet another incident on 18 August, a defendant was charged with falsifying data in order to obtain food relief. He had no means of support, he claimed, and had 'not worked for two years come Christmas.' He had just been 'walking about' looking for work. The magistrate in summing up was neither sympathetic nor understanding – 'you have rendered yourself liable to a long term of imprisonment ... you are a single man ... food relief is only for destitute people.'¹⁵ When the authorities recognised the system was open to fraud it was reviewed, and the system abandoned.

In their desperation to obtain food and simple comforts, young men (and family men) were being made to appear as criminals. The Kiama magistrate was not alone in his view. In the Darlington Court in October 1930, Judge White commented when passing sentence that 'the court cannot recognise distress as a justification' for fraud.¹⁶ Although the moral imperatives must be conceded, the standard solution, i.e. the threat of jail, merely engendered fear and did not solve the problem. Alternative solutions were not developed to counteract the distress, or remedy behaviours, that were clearly due to the Depression. There was no lateral thinking or innovative ideas. It is difficult not to sympathise with sentiments expressed by Kenneth Slessor in *Smith's Weekly*:

Imagine the bankers were banished,
Imagine the prices are down
Depression has utterly vanished,
We're all of us dining in town;
Endeavour to keep up your pecker,
By copious draughts of champagne –
We'll go to the Ritz in a Checker
And fare back to foxtrots again.

¹⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁶ F. Crowley, *Modern Australian Documents 1901*, Wren Publishing, Melbourne, 1973, p. 479.

Imagine there's no privation,
No matter what pay you may draw,
The people who mention taxation
Are straightway strangled by law,
And no one goes around with a copper
To sack or reduce or revise,
And (this is a bit of a whopper),
WE'VE ALL GOT A TEN PERCENT RISE.¹⁷

The Farmers

Although the regional farming economy was affected by an international decline in the demand for its product, the farming families generally fared better. They could be self-sufficient, as they could produce seasonal and staple foods for their own use. Although the local farms varied in acreage they remained productive, producing for example fresh vegetables, eggs, meat, butter and milk. Any surplus produce would be bartered or exchanged with neighbours while the local shopkeepers were willing to take surplus products and give credit to their customers. Valmai Irvine recalled in an interview in 1988:

it was always a struggle to make ends meet. Most families were large but we had our own potatoes and pumpkins and cows for milk and butter. But we were not really poor – some people were really poor.¹⁸

Doug Fredericks, in an interview, also recalled the impact of the Depression on farming families.

It [the Depression] did not worry us much. Work on a farm was hard and dairy farming depended upon the seasons. You did not buy anything you could make. The nearest shops were at Jamberoo, but Kiama was a larger place – we went there by horse and sulky, the trip would take about $\frac{3}{4}$ to an hour both ways. I had one man and myself.¹⁹

Nor did the farmers abandon a now well-established tradition of promoting new agricultural developments. In 1934, a Junior Farmer's Club was inaugurated to

¹⁷ Kenneth Slessor, in *Smith's Weekly*, 1 November 1930.

¹⁸ From a taped interview by a member of the Historical Society and held at the Pilot's Cottage Kiama Museum, 1988. Mrs Irvine lived on a farm at Jamberoo.

¹⁹ From a taped interview by Peter Snashalls, 24 May 1988, and filed at the Pilot's Cottage, Kiama Museum.. Doug Fredericks was born in 1906. He owned a farm at Jamberoo.

foster in the local youth, both girls and boys, the aims of the area's agriculture and to develop a greater understanding of farming techniques. The *Independent* was enthusiastic about the movement. It discussed the necessity for Kiama's youth to have a strong interest in the land, and in farming methods, for these young people represented the region's future. Improved farming knowledge lead to improved farming methods and improved financial returns. The club would expose them to the relevance of, and latest developments in, dairying and animal husbandry. It would also show the importance of an intelligent use of fertilizers and improvements in farm technology.²⁰ It was a positive approach as it looked towards the future of dairying, and the further advancement of the region.

The Kiama Show, however, suffered. Dramatic cuts were made to the prize money provided for events. It was reduced to such a degree that it no longer covered the winner's entry fee.²¹ However, money was not everything compared to the status gained by owning prize-winning stock.

To overcome the Agricultural Association's financial problems, the Council proposed in 1935 to take over the control and care of the grounds, stating that the Council was in a more favourable position to obtain any government loans or grants. In addition, the Kiama community would benefit if the grounds were available for the playing of competitive sports, such as football, and other larger sporting fixtures. The Council, however, would guarantee the rights of the show society, because it symbolised the region's agricultural history and progress.

The Association agreed to the proposal, and the grounds and responsibilities were transferred by the Land's Department to the Council, effective from February 1936.²² Two years later in August 1938, the Showground Pavilion was burnt down. With the Pavilion destroyed, the Show for January 1939 was cancelled. Replacement depended upon Local Government funding, but it was not considered a priority so any rebuilding was delayed. Storm clouds were again gathering in Europe. It was not until 1944, and without a pavilion, cattle pens, or a ring-fence,

²⁰ *Independent*, 27 June 1934.

²¹ Beasley, *Kiama on Show, 1848 – 1998*, Weston Print, Kiama, 1997, p. 41.

²² *ibid.*, p.42.

that the Show Association decided to hold a Patriotic Agricultural Show.²³ The *Independent* reported the fire as a ‘wonderful pyrotechnic display’, possibly started by ‘tramps’ seeking shelter and a place to camp for a night or two.²⁴

The swagmen, walking the roads and stopping at the farms looking for work or food, were the visible poor. They were frequently given work to do, such as ‘odd jobs’ around the farm, and then provided with meat, bread and tea and directed to camping areas further down the track. They were not turned away. It was not charitable for the country women to refuse food. Nor was it wise or diplomatic to refuse help as farm gates could be left open and the stock allowed to ‘roam’, or a hay-stack could catch fire. The swagmen had their own communication network and reports of meanness would travel to others on the track.

Women and ‘making do’

The relief schemes ignored the plight of women.²⁵ They were not structured for any woman divorced, separated or widowed with children, so employment for them was practically impossible. Parents of these women were frequently left to provide for them as best they could.²⁶ The unions gave the women little support. They frequently viewed women who obtained work as taking it away from the more deserving men. Also any relief work usually involved ‘heavy labouring’ on the roads and in the quarries and was suitable only for men. The women remained dependent upon the men-folk and had to ‘make do’.

Barbara Wawn told of her mother re-making clothes from ‘hand-me-downs’ given to them so that

We would always look nice. But we did not have a change of underclothes. ... We ...cut cardboard and put it in our shoes when they wore too thin...²⁷

²³ *ibid.*, pp. 47-8.

²⁴ *Independent*, 31 August 1938.

²⁵ J. Mackinolty, (ed) ‘A Woman’s Place’ in *The Wasted Years? Australia’s Great Depression*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1981. p. 105.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

²⁶ Mackinolty, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

²⁷ Lowenstein, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

and added,

Even as poor as we were, people would be scrubbing and polishing their houses, always shining up brass knobs and taps. ... Mother used to make everything.²⁸

In *Minnamurra Memories*, Thelma Hopkins wrote of her mother's cleverness at improvising and providing pillow cases from the calico bags in which flour had been purchased.

Mum's patchwork quilts were a wonder to behold. Many a threadbare blanket was given a new lease of life when used as a base for these. One side would be covered with a pretty piece of material bought for the purpose. The other side with patchesand sometimes with patches from the 'good' parts of worn-out clothing. ... they were attractive and hard wearing.²⁹

Other practical uses were found for both the hessian sugar bags and calico flour bags. From hessian, articles such as aprons and hand towels could be made for use in the dairy and kitchen. The aprons frequently had a large pocket sewn across the front and separated in the middle. Left-over cotton material was used to 'trim' the articles. Calico had a wider range of uses, providing tea-towels, pillow cases, patching sheets and wraps for the plum pudding. In the 1930s, every woman was able to sew.³⁰

Placing food on the table for most women was a challenging exercise. Meat was expensive, as were quality vegetables, but bread, dripping and treacle (cocky's joy) were basic stand-bys. In the region, rabbit stew and fish were often on the menu. Thelma Hopkins remembered many people camping in the vicinity of the river, as

both fish and rabbits were plentiful. The main source of income was fishing. Fish and rabbits were caught for food, ... the men would walk into Kiama and try to sell them at the 'pubs'. This would give money to supplement their food vouchers of 7/6 and go towards the purchase of fresh fruit and vegetables, and possibly a beer or two.³¹

²⁸ *ibid.*

²⁹ T. Hopkins, *Minnamurra Memories*, Weston Print, Kiama, 1990, p. 21.

³⁰ D. O'Keefe, *Snippets of History*, Weston Print, Kiama, 1992, p.58.

³¹ Hopkins, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

Opossums were also killed for their meat and for their skins, which would be sold. The government had given permission for 100,000 possums to be slaughtered to ease the food crisis.³² Pipi soup was not to be laughed at. The pipis were placed over heat until they opened and then the flesh scooped out and washed clean of all sand. They then became a basis for a fish soup. Oysters were also plentiful and wild spinach grew along the river foreshores.³³ People shared with neighbours. Ben Irvine's daughter recalled that their morning meal of 'home grown maize meal' was shared with an elderly neighbour, and in their evening meal was shared with 'a different elderly lady and it was often just soup.'³⁴

Government efforts

An Unemployment Relief Council established by the Commonwealth Government, requested that Councils establish 'community chests', with members from the Council controlling the collection and the distribution of benefits. But there was no indication of how the funds could be raised, and as Alderman Price of the Kiama Council correctly commented, 'it seems as though the government cannot solve the problem themselves so they want us to ... it [is] a case of the blind leading the blind'.³⁵

In 1931 Kiama Municipal Council established the Kiama Relief Committee. The Committee was to be fair to all, to organise fund raising activities, and to assist the Red Cross in its purchase of materials to produce dresses and underclothing for the disadvantaged. To raise money and also improve community morale matches between different football and tennis clubs were instigated. The Red Cross was provided with a list of the local needy. Once again charity work became a part of their activities although this time it was not for the 'boys at the front' but for their own community. Twelve yards of material for dresses and twelve for underclothing were purchased to be sewn into clothing. Miss Weston (co-editor of the *Independent*) once more requested that all purchases be made from local

³² *Independen, Supplement*, 20 December 2000.

³³ Hopkins, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

³⁴ E. Webb, *William and Sarah Irvine, a Biography*, 1909, manuscript held in the Kiama History Centre, Pilot's Cottage, p. 144.

³⁵ *Independent Supplement*, 'The Great Depression', 20 December 2000.

storekeepers, and the Jamberoo Methodist Church called for donations of ‘good’ used clothing and money for distribution to those in need.

The Kiama Council applied for government grants to develop job creation schemes. The money was not to be considered as a ‘dole’ or ‘handout’ because the men worked for their money.³⁶ The grants provided for local employment and at the same time enabled worthwhile community projects to be undertaken. Councils could physically improve their regions while, at the same time, benefiting the unemployed. The Council’s approach was logical as men preferred relief work as an alternative to the dole or ‘sustenance’.

In 1932 the Council applied for and received £1500 for road improvement, to back-fill in Central Park and to improve Surf Beach. In November of the same year an additional grant of £400 was requested to aid families over the Christmas period. In 1933 improvements were made to the road near the Toll bars and in 1934 a start was made on the construction of the Olympic Baths. In 1937 the large amount of £3,550 was allocated for the completion of the baths, improving the showground and the erection of toilet facilities.³⁷ Unfortunately, the total value of the grants obtained is not available, but the indications are that they were in excess of £5,400.

However, not all regional Council projects seeking funding were approved. In 1930, the Jamberoo Council devised a road improvement policy and, from their own funds, had purchased 300 pounds worth of blue metal. The Council sought a government grant of £500, 95 per cent of which would be spent on wages. It was the proposed method of employment that created difficulties. The Council proposed a sliding scale of work based on the men’s marital status and family commitments: ‘single men would receive one day per fortnight work, married men without children one and a half days per fortnight, married men with a child two days,’ and so on.³⁸ The government rejected the proposal because grants were

³⁶ *ibid.*

³⁷ *ibid.*

³⁸ *ibid.*

meant to provide full time steady employment.³⁹ A deputation was organised to meet with Members of the Economic Relief Council, asking that they 'relax the iron bound rules'. Ultimately Jamberoo was successful in its appeals.

The state government also provided employment with capital works programs. In 1933, the Department of Main Roads launched a road improvement project catering for the unemployed in the Minnamurra area, a distance of approximately five kilometers north of Kiama. The Kiama Council was delighted that many local men could find employment, which was preferable to the sustenance allowance.⁴⁰ However, each day the workers were expected to first report for duties in Kiama, and, as transport was not available, the men walked to and from their homes. It soon became obvious that these workmen were not only 'under-fed and under-clothed' but had resorted to lining the soles of their shoes with paper or cardboard to protect their feet. Mayor Carson, (the same Carson of Carson's Quarry) was shocked, and immediately arranged for a Council lorry to transport the men to and from work. Carson argued that, as the project being undertaken was improving the region, the Council had a moral duty to help the men.⁴¹

In 1936, the Department of Main Roads commenced a project to by-pass the Omega Railway Crossing and improve the Prince's Highway. Unemployed men converged on the area and under a 'sea of white canvas tents erected beside the roadway' commenced the work. The Gerringong Council had little involvement in organizing and planning the road work but they did welcome the project, for many local men could obtain work. The Council arranged a 'White Sports Day' for the workers to give the community an opportunity to welcome them. In this way workers and the local community could get to know each other in enjoyable circumstances. It may have reflected a desire to overcome the suspicion and hostility directed against itinerant workers noted earlier in the chapter. Mr Sweeney, MLA, attended the function and praised the community for its kindness and hospitality and commented on how 'admirably' the men were adapting to the

³⁹ *ibid.*

⁴⁰ Appendix 15

⁴¹ *Independent Supplement*, 20 December 2000.

working and living conditions.⁴² As was the norm the local women provided ‘refreshments’ for the day.

A rare photo from the Hindmarsh Collection, displayed in the ‘Independent’ and showing the road workers tents along the ‘new’ Princes Highway near Gerringong, 1936. Source:- Independent Supplement.

By March 1931 the Council finances were described as ‘very sick’ and it was suggested salaries be cut by 10 percent, except for the outdoor workers on the basic wage.⁴³ The Depression had brought with it a rise in the number of land owners falling behind in their payment of rates. Earlier in the year, Kiama Council had considered a change in their policy on the community’s payment of rates, in order to ease the burden on property owners. But the income from rates was the basis of the Council’s budget. Alderman McArney suggested that any rate-payers in arrears should be allowed to settle their accounts by installments, but the Council agreed that only land owners ‘owing more than 10/- (in rates) could pay by installments.’⁴⁴ Applications then came from property owners offering to perform Council labouring duties to lessen their Council debt. Mayor Carson, called a special meeting to discuss finances but no firm decision was made.⁴⁵ He commented that it was ‘no fault of ours that people are out of work.’⁴⁶ By October 1931 the

⁴² *ibid.*

⁴³ *Independent Supplement*, 20 December 2000.

⁴⁴ *ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Independent.*, 28 February 1931.

⁴⁶ *ibid.*, 22 August 1931.

Independent reported that ‘with nothing worth speaking about or money to spend the Kiama Council meeting was so depressed to be almost morbid.’⁴⁷

‘Good Times’

However, the Kiama region did experience incidents when the problems and the Depression seemed to disappear. The talkies arrived in the region and did strong business. Even during the Depression, people found money to enjoy the cinema.⁴⁸ But the early development of flight attracted greater interest.

In 1928 the flyers Captain Lancaster and Mrs Keith Miller, landed their plane, ‘Red Rose’, on the Wollongong Race Course during an epic flight from London to Melbourne.⁴⁹ It was a forerunner to the ‘surprise visit to Mr and Mrs Stevenson of *Yon Goo*’, in July 1929 when a plane landed in the State Quarry, carrying visitors to their home.⁵⁰ Then in 1931, Charles Ulm, in a history-making flight, landed on Hugh Colley’s Flat at Jamberoo. After securing the machine against the wind and possible damage, he and his friend drove off ‘in the company of Mr and Mrs Nelson whose guests they were for lunch’.⁵¹ Not all people were suffering or ‘on the poverty line’ during the Great Depression.

Perhaps the most exciting incident occurred in 1933 when the *Southern Cross*, described as ‘the largest aeroplane seen over Kiama’, landed on Seven Mile Beach at Gerroa. ‘Smithy’, (Sir Charles Kingsford Smith), had chosen the hard sands of the beach as the perfect landing and taking off place for his Australia – New Zealand flight. He intended to remain in Gerringong until conditions were suitable to fly across the Tasman Sea.⁵²

⁴⁷ *ibid.*, 21 October 1931.

⁴⁸ Information courtesy of Dr Kate Bowles who is undertaking a research project into cinema-going in the Illawarra and South Coast.

⁴⁹ *Independent*, 6 June 1928.

⁵⁰ *Independent Supplement*, 20 December 2000.

⁵¹ *Independent*, 8 June 1931.

⁵² *ibid.*, 11 January 1933. He was accompanied by Captain Taylor, co-pilot, J. Stanage, navigator and S. Neilson, wireless-operator.

Source:-*Independent Supplement*, 20 December 2000.

The local police were present to protect the plane and prevent any possible damage, and six members of the Aero Beat Radio Club set up their centre to collate the weather reports. The whole community became involved, and by the following morning over 1000 spectators from the local region had gathered, prepared to participate in the brilliance of the moment and the excitement of take off. In 1933 the technology associated with air travel was for most unknown - the people of the Kiama region were about to witness the wonder of flight and history in the making. There was romance and mystery in the concept of flight, even if a few, there still there remained doubt - 'If God wanted men to fly he would have given them wings.'⁵³ The *Independent* reported that 'score of photographs were taken'. The beach was illuminated by the 'huge and powerful lights used by the Fox Movie-tone operators'.⁵⁴ It further described the 'take-off':

Shortly before two o'clock Kingsford Smith went down to the beach. ... [He] taxied the Southern Cross along the Beach for almost a mile escorted by flares and followed by hundreds of people on foot who braved the biting sands which was shifted by the wheels and tail of the plane and driven in their faces by the wind.⁵⁵

⁵³ A comment frequently heard from older country men in the Riverina, lacking technological knowledge and a distrust of flight.

⁵⁴ *Independent*, 14 January 1933.

⁵⁵ *ibid.*

After farewells and other pleasantries the plane became air-born at 2.50 a.m. Car owners were asked to shine their car-lights across the sea to assist the pilot's vision during take off, and then it was all over. 'Tired and happy' the spectators made their way home, with a general agreement that 'it had been a worthwhile night.'⁵⁶

Sydney Bennett, a reporter for the *Independent* composed a rhyme on the visit which also reflected his attitude towards the Depression.

Life's Smithy.

On the anvil of fate is the Smithy of life,
We are beaten – some more or some less;
Some pass through the process of sorrow and strife
And others to joy and success.
Hard knocks make us conquer misfortunes most dire,
Which try to defeat us in vein;
And just as a metal is tested by fire,
So our hearts are tested by pain.⁵⁷

Sadness descended upon all in the community when in April 1932 word came that the great racehorse Phar Lap had died in the United States. The death of this horse was considered a national tragedy for his racing successes had captured the heart of the nation, and elevated him to the status of 'the little man's hero'. But excitement would come again to the region with the short visit to The Brighton Hotel by Sir Donald Bradman and his young bride. The Brighton was recognised as a popular resort for visiting dignitaries'.⁵⁸ The date of the visit was possibly 1 or 2 May 1932. The young couple, on their honeymoon and travelling by car, decided to break their journey at Kiama. The community felt honoured that such people would remain over-night in their town for in the early 1930s 'The Don' was the national symbol of cricket. He was invincible – his presence gave the people hope. The next morning he agreed to be photographed with three local admirers.

⁵⁶ *ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Independent*, 6 January 1937.

⁵⁸ Information from the 'Bradman File', in the Pilot's Cottage, History Museum, Kiama.

Donald Bradman being welcomed at the old Brighton Hotel by local youngsters. Left to right: Bruce Kirkpatrick, Cyril Brandon, Harold Tuohy, Sir Donald Bradman and Margaret Lipscome: From the Bradman file in Kiama Local History Centre.

Another ‘first’ for the *Independent* appeared in 1933 when it ran a report on the ‘glamorous world of Olly Kelly’. Olly Kelly had grown up in Kiama and ‘achieved world acclaim’ as a ‘leading dress designer for motion picture stars’. He visited Hollywood as an artist and as he became better known, Warner Brothers offered him a contract designing stage settings for film sets. Moving on from this he became a dress designer for movie stars with a clientele including Barbara Stanwyck, Loretta Young and Bette Davis.⁵⁹ Kiama was proud of its son.

By 1934 the Australian economy began to recover but the process was a slow. The number of unemployed remained high and did not approach the pre-war levels of 10 percent until 1937. Full employment would only return with war. As Europe prepared for war, a call went out for men to join the local militia unit, the 34th Battalion, Illawarra Regiment. Around 40 men from Kiama joined.⁶⁰ In March 1939 the *Independent* reported that ‘the largest public meeting held in the last forty years’ was held at the Kiama Council Chambers.⁶¹ The Mayor, Alderman Boyd presided, and Colonel Milne of the Defence Department spoke, supporting the introduction of compulsory military training to provide ‘adequate, seasoned

⁵⁹ *Independent*, 5 July 1933.

⁶⁰ *Independent Supplement*, 20 December 2000.

⁶¹ *Independent Supplement*, 10 January 2001.

reserves' in the case of war.⁶² Shortly afterwards, the *Independent* began to run a column headed *Militia Notes*. Its purpose was to regularly report the activities of the Kiama men of the 34th Battalion. War would bring change yet again to the region.

In terms of the differences between historians noted at the start of the chapter, it seems as though Kiama falls somewhere between the two. The workers suffered, but Kiama did not experience the severe conditions of other urban areas. For example, the evictions of tenants in Sydney, who were defended by union members, did not occur in Kiama.⁶³ Michelle Hocking, who edited the supplements of the *Independent*, tends to side with Potts (*Myth of the Great Depression*). She claims that as a result of the government funded projects Kiama underwent a time of industry and progress.⁶⁴ Goodwill came from the country people, surplus produce would be bartered or exchanged and the local shopkeepers were willing to give credit to their known customers. The regional response reflected a philosophy of 'charity begins at home' and 'a fair go'.

⁶² *ibid.*

⁶³ The *Independent*, for example, reported no incidences of dispossession of tenants.

⁶⁴ *Independent Supplement*, 20 December 2000.

--- Part 5 ---

Conclusion

Conclusion

Kiama had developed throughout the nineteenth century in a comparatively isolated and secure environment. In 1901 it was similar to many other regional areas. It was a close knit community and social activities suited to the different social levels. It had its churches and benefit societies and was basically masculine in outlook and attitudes. This thesis shows a conservative and pragmatic community slowly adapting to changes through internal and external forces.

In 1901 the region had two valuable industries, dairying and quarrying. A third was being touted – tourism. Pre-war Kiama relied on these industries as well as the success of the cooperative movement which was established prior to 1900. By 1901 the value of milk and butter had increased considerably. Individual farmers were now attempting to improve the quantity of the butterfat in their milk through selective breeding and regular systematic testing. This led to the successful breeding of the Illawarra Shorthorn Cattle whose value would soon be recognised in NSW and nationally.

The quarries in the 1900s were moving towards mechanisation, thus lessening the ‘back breaking’ labour of transporting metal to the harbour or rail centre. However, this technological change resulted in reductions in the quarry work force.

For the Council, the problems of water, power and road construction was ever present. Their funds were limited so without help from the ‘outside’ authorities they were unable to proceed. But changes were coming that would disrupt the peaceful community.

With the outbreak of a World War in 1914, Kiama witnessed further changes. The demand for blue metal decreased and farmers were concerned for their labour force. Initially Kiama’s young men responded positively to the call to enlist to protect ‘Mother’ England. Australian Army Nurses were involved too. Although Recruitment Committees attempted to maintain a steady flow of men into the defence force it was not possible. By 1916 when a referendum for Conscription

was presented to the people and in turn it was rejected. Another referendum a year later saw the same result.

Kiama's voters rejected conscription, but it was a different matter when it came to supporting their men overseas. Red Cross, Patriotic Societies and the community all banded together in their efforts to morally support and send comforts to the men. When in 1918 and the war ended, Kiama rejoiced, but there were further problems to come. The 'Spanish Flu' would be brought home by many of the returning men.

However, great changes had occurred as a result of the war. A more modern world was emerging. The 'outside' world had also changed and the youth were adapting to it. New forms of music, dancing and dressing were appearing and the motor car was emerging and proving popular. Technology was bringing the 'outside' and 'inside' worlds closer together. Despite the depression the young people in Kiama were enjoying the changes.

The Depression enabled the Council to obtain Government funding in the name of Grants and with this funding, improvements could be made to the region and also provide work for local unemployed men. In Kiama, the Depression brought out the 'good' in people as they wrestled with significant social problems. Kiama could not return to its past. It would retain its concerns for its region and have a conservative and 'God-fearing' outlook, but too much had happened. It was now a part of a larger world.

Many residents at the beginning of the twentieth century would not have anticipated or even welcomed change in their sleepy seaside hamlet. However, change came, and in ways which had resonance with other sleepy regional hamlets in other parts of Australia, whose residents would have neither anticipated nor welcomed it. The familiar pattern of amelioration, resistance, adaptation and change had seen to that.

--- Appendix ---

Appendix 1

In Britain the *Enclosure's Act* of 1801 was instrumental in creating larger land holdings that resulted in the common and unoccupied land, previously held by tenant farmers to be passed into private ownership - to be 'enclosed' and farmed for commercial profit, not for subsistence. Farming was becoming commercialised and the social consequences were the destruction of the traditional elements of the British peasant society.

Many of the dispossessed farming families immigrated to America and Australia. The Bounty system was established in Australia, by the government of the day, aimed at encouraging families and women to settle and work in Australia. Following the ending of transportation (1840) there was a shortage of labourers and the cost of their labour increased. The Bounty system allowed the holders of land grants to sponsor the immigration of British families. Agreements were made with the families and many were sponsored to the Kiama region to settle and work on the grants. For example George Grey sponsored around 40 relatives from his home region in Antrim, Ulster.

Appendix 2

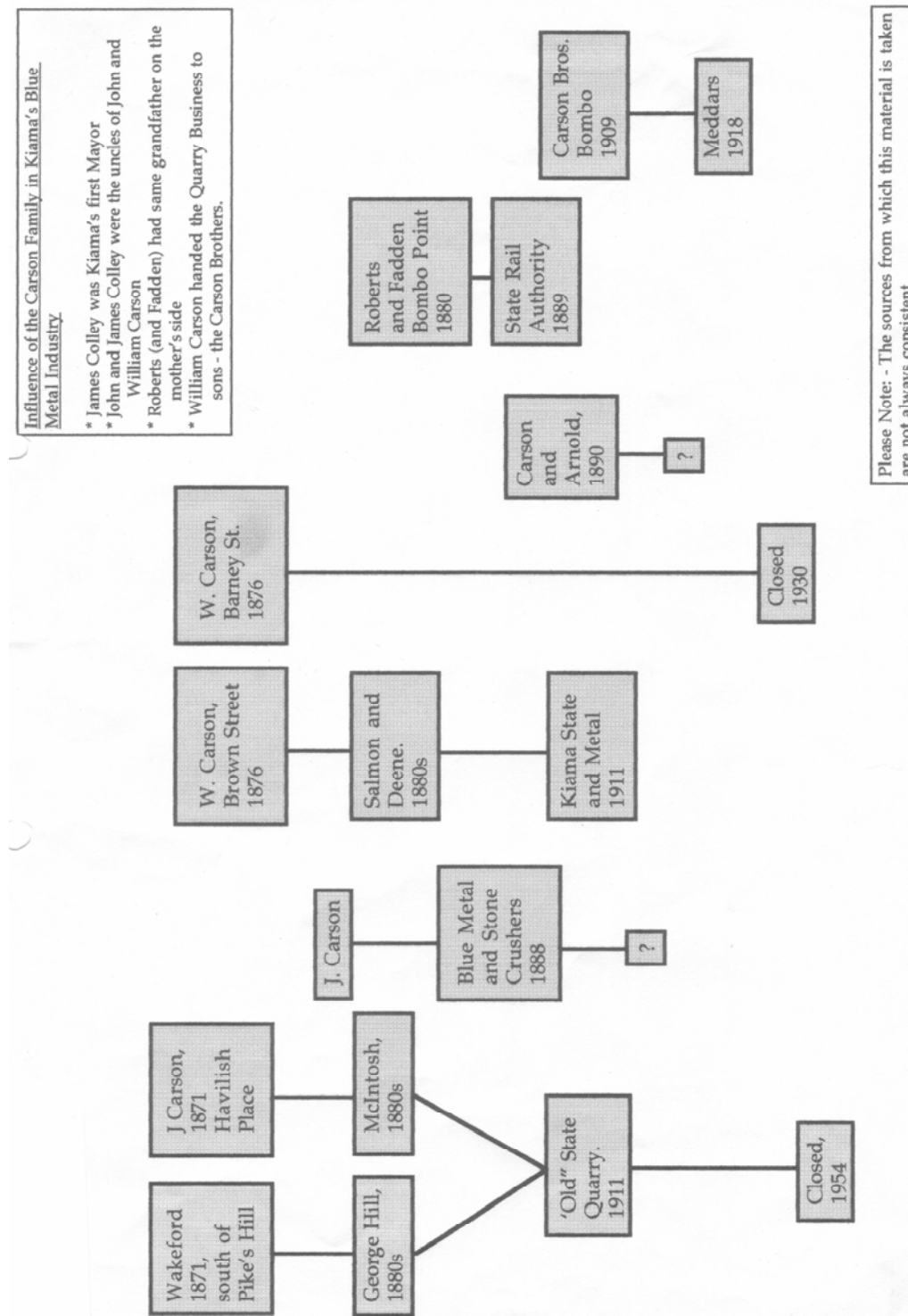
Appendix 3

1901 Under the heading of Agricultural pursuits (in NSW), and from a total population of 43,097 people, the occupations indicated in the *NSW Census*, 1901 are –

	Agricultural	Pastoral	Dairying	Mining
Male	1233	167	3679	1,863
Female	27	3	406	0
	Other Primary Producers	Indefinite	Dependants	
Male	178	109	8,259	
Female	3	167	17,438	

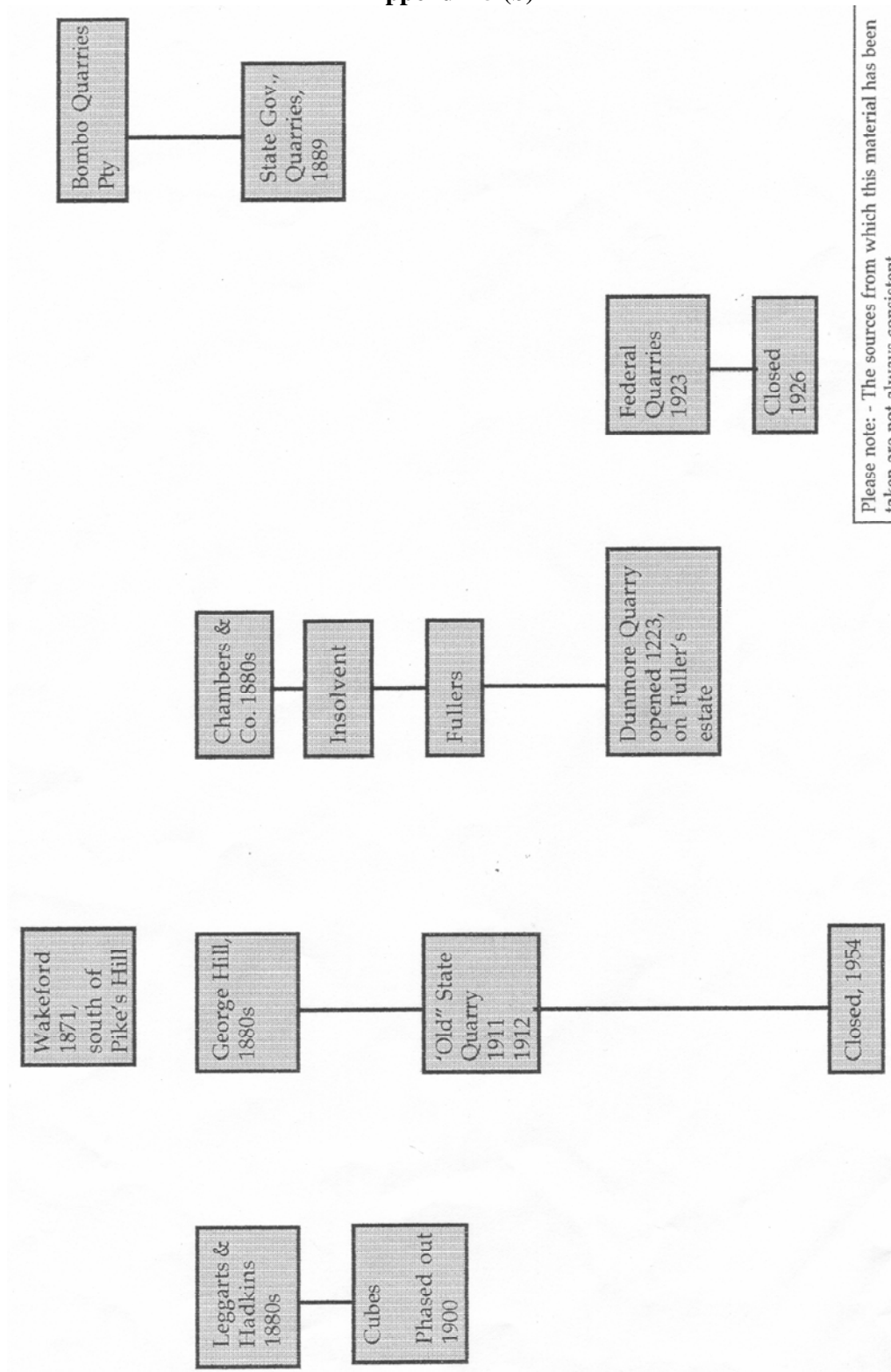
Appendix 4

Appendix 5(a)



Compiled by Elaine Dunn from written reports.

Appendix 5 (b)



Compiled by Elaine Dunn from written reports.

Appendix 6

There was an urgent need for a local hospital. Both the stone trade and the extension of the Rail Line were responsible for a high accident rate and local hospital treatment was not available closer than Wollongong. Although at the time a depressing drought was occurring, a public meeting regarding the hospital was still called. The response to the project was favourable. The Reverend Doone moved the motion that a committee be elected to investigate the government regulations and draw up appropriate plans. Three offers of land were made at the meeting, from Nesbitt Hindmarsh, Robert Hindmarsh and John Honey, and subscriptions to the amount of 414 pounds were promised.

The committee consisted of Dr Lacey, and Messrs Pike, Hindmarsh, Kendall, Major, Bullen-Stephenson, Curtis, Marks, Bennett, Nonie, Finlayson, Waldon and the clergymen of the region. Dr Tarrant organized the plans. He originally was the local doctor but became the Grand Master of the Kiama Freemasons, the local member for Kiama, a member of the Legislative Council and the chief surgeon at the Sydney Hospital.

In 1886 the plans were approved, the foundation stone was laid and the construction commenced in Barney Street on a 2.5 acre block donated by Joseph Pike (value 250 pounds). The government promised to assist on a pound for pound basis. Subscription lists were compiled and further fund raising activities were organized, for both railway and quarry workers.

The cottage hospital was officially opened with much fanfare on 21 May, 1887. Further extensions and improvements to the hospital did not occur until 1910.

The building of a new more modern hospital was commenced in March 1929 and opened in July 1930.

Sources: Information from W. Bayley, *Blue Haven History of the Kiama Municipality*, Weston and Co., Kiama. 1976; Kiama Municipality Minute Books; the *Independent* Obituaries, October 30, 1900

Appendix 7

Appendix 8

Accidents were bound to happen, and did. The earliest stone fleet loss was in 1878 when the *Northern Lights* went down off Bradley's Head, followed by *Bertha* and *Franz* in 1879.² Between 1881 and 1889 seven vessels involved in the trade sank at sea. They were the *Gosford Packet* (1881), *Prima Donna* (1882), the *Pioneer* (1883), the *Merchantman* (1883), the *Nile* (1883) *Annie Powell* (1886) and *Ino* (1889). Despite the hazardous work the little ships remained the most 'effective and economic way of moving the "blue diamonds."' Some quarry owners purchased their own ships in an effort to control pricing and scheduling, for example Dunmore Quarries owned a fleet of carriers.³

There were other accidents, too, as when in 1880 John Carson lost a 'valuable' horse:

The animal ... a rather restive one... suddenly started to back and the cart, which was heavily loaded with stone, was backed over the edge of the wharf, dragging the mare after it. It sank almost immediately.

Sources: J. Clark, *People and Places afloat*, February, 2003, p.29.
Reporter, April, 1880.

² Jack Clark, *op. cit.*, Part 2. January 2003. p. 13.

³ J. Clark, *op. cit.*, February, 2003. p.29.

Appendix 9

The unification of the German States in 1817 under Otto van Bismarck resulted in increasing political, economic and military power and disturbed the surrounding European countries. The Hapsburg and Ottoman Empires were declining and complicated alliances were being entered into. Since 1900 there had been underlying tensions between the different nations despite the surface illusion of harmony. The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Bosnia on June 28, 1914 was the nexus for a show-down between Austria Hungary and Serbia. The Time Line collated by Ruth Henning indicates the complicated politics that plunged Europe into a World War in 1914.

June 28	Archduke Ferdinand assassinated by a Bosnian extremist trained in Serbia.
July 5	Austria-Hungary assured of German support in any military action against Serbia.
July 23	Austria- Hungary gave Serbia a ten-point ultimatum.
July 24	Russia declares support for Serbia in the event of a military attack.
July 25	Serbia recognizes most of the ten-point ultimatum, but not all. Austria-Hungary began military mobilization.
July 28	War on Serbia declared by Austria-Hungary.
July 30	Russia began to mobilize.
August 1	Germany declared war on Russia; France mobilized.
August 3	Germany declared war on France and invades Belgium.
August 4	Germany declared war on Belgium; Britain declared war on Germany.
August 5	Austria-Hungary declared war on Russia.
August 10	France declared war on Austria-Hungary. On August 12 Britain declared war on Austria-Hungary.

Source: R. Henning, *The Origins of the First World War*, (ed.3.), Routledge, London, 2002. p. xx, and pp.3-4

Appendix 10(a)
Military Service Referendum Results 1916

Appendix 10(b)

Military Service Referendum Results 1917

Appendix 11

Appendix 12

The government made wonderful promises to entice the enlisting men –ones that they could not keep. See attached copy of a 1915 or 1916 letter regarding enlistment, and the enticement made to the volunteers.

Appendix 13

Appendix 14

Kiama Ladies present at the initial Red Cross meetings were Mesdames Love, Ryan, Beith, Boles, Crisp, Mayor, Wells, Nicholson, Fox, Hindmarsh, Yuille, Pearce, Cope, Addison, Judd, Keeling, Wells, McClintock, Inglis, Hart, Stevenson, Caird, Wood, Small, Bloomfield, Minnett, Colley, and Cameron. And the Misses Honey, Swindells, Rob, Hunt, Tidmarsh, Daldon, Dennis, Nicholson, King, Colley and Bay. A similar group of dedicated ladies also organized and assisted at Patriotic Meetings.

Similar meetings were reported within the region but the names varied, for example, the Lochiel Comfort's League. Others patriotic leagues were formed at Merimbula, Grieg's Flat, Nethercote, Bald Hills. As far away as the United States Patriotic Leagues were becoming 'popular' as for example in Seattle, where the aim was to 'make efforts in supporting wartime hardships.'

Sources: *Independent Supplement*, 25 October, 2000,
Tae H. Kin., *Where Women Worked during World War 1*,
<http://facultyWashington.Edu/gregoryj/strike/kim.htm> Date accessed
16 February, 2007.

Appendix 15

In 1930 the State Government introduced 'sustenance' for the unemployed. This relief took the form of ration vouchers worth only a fraction of the basic wage. Eligibility was limited to those who possessed nothing except a home in which to live. There was a huge economic gap between the employers and the unemployed.

To gain food relief the applicant selected from a list of approved traders (the supplier), from whom he wished to obtain food, and its total value. He (or she) signed a declaration regarding any income received for the previous fortnight. The permissive income ranged from 25/- (shillings) per two weeks for a single person to 75/- for a married man with 5 children. This increased by 10/- for each additional child.

Those people fortunate enough to have and maintain a job often were required to take a cut in wages. The Federal basic wage fell from 4 pounds 14 shillings and 6 pence in 1929, to 4 pounds 8 shillings in 1930, and in 1931 the wages for unskilled workers dropped a further 10%. At the height of the depression over 30% of all workers were unemployed.

In Kiama in 1921 there were 1,963 adults (981 males and 971 females) In 1933 the population had increased to a total of 2,438. Unfortunately the unemployed numbers are not known but it could be assumed that they were similar to the national average of 30%

Sources:- Davidson, Hirst and Macintyre, *Oxford Companion of Australian History*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1998. p.184;
T. Waites, *N.S.W. Year Book. 1933-34*, Government Press.

Biographic Appendix

Bailey, Phillip Richard Spry -

was a farmer and resident of Gerringong. A workman was engaged in sinking a well for him on his property but when he had reached a depth of about thirty feet and attempted to descend into the well, the bucket he was descending in slipped, and he fell on the rocks below. Phillip Bailey called Dr. Lacey for help and the following morning conveyed the injured man in a horse drawn vehicle to Kiama, from where he was taken by streamer to Wollongong, and then by ambulance to the Hospital.

Bullen, Frank -

was one of the earliest owners of a motor vehicle in Kiama. At sporting fixtures and the show he provided rides for spectators.

Bradman, Sir Donald -

was 'the boy from the bush' and is recognized as the most successful cricketer of all time. He was held in awe, his influence extended far beyond the confines of his position, and he was knighted (in 1949) for his services to cricket. The Australian tour of England in 1930 transformed him into a national hero, for by its end he had scored 2,960 runs in 36 innings. In the South-African visit to Australia in 1931-32, Bradman made a century or more each time he played. The 'bodyline technique' used by some English batsmen aimed at reducing Bradman's efficiency as a 'run-maker'.

Bruce, Stanley Melbourne -

was the Prime Minister of Australia from 1923 to 1929, replacing 'Billy' Hughes as leader of the National Party. He planned to work within an imperial framework and introduced the policy of 'Men Money and Markets', along with 'rural settlement and empire migration. The London money markets were to provide the means for development and infrastructure. His deputy prime minister and treasurer was Earl Page (Country Party) and the era became known as that of the Bruce – Page government.

Carson, John -

immigrated from Ballymena, County Antrim, in the late 1860s. By trade he was a stonemason. He sought work in Sydney and was there given a government contract to investigate the quality of the basalt deposits near Kiama, in the hope that the blue-metal aggregate and block material, would be preferable to the sandstone and timber blocks now being used for streets, road base and the stabilizing of rail lines. The quality of the basalt was high. He set up a home in Kiama and established one of the first quarries in Kiama at the cliff face of Pike's Ridge. (Now the excavation is the site for the Blue Haven Retirement Village). His uncles, John and James Colley were already well established as farmers in the district, and between 1859 to 1861 James Colley held the position as Kiama's first Mayor. They were active in

the Presbyterian Church, James Colley's barn being the centre for the first Presbyterian Church Services in Kiama.

William Carson and his wife Jane, encouraged by John's good fortune, travelled to Australia in 1871. William opened a quarry in Brown Street which was sold in 1880 to Salmond and Deene. John Roberts and Richard Fadden, both closely related to William, opened the Bombo Point Quarry. When this was sold in 1890 they were retained as managers. In 1909 William Carson handed the business to his sons Bill, Hugh, Jack and Dave. It now became the Carson Brothers' Quarry Works.

Charles, Captain S. -

was a prominent figure in Kiama in the mid to late 1800s. When the Kiama Steam Navigation Company formed in 1854 he was entrusted to go to Scotland to supervise the building of the ship *Kiama* and then under sail bring the vessel to Australia. Later he purchased the 800 acre property *Hoolong* from James Holt who had been holding the deeds for Daniel Cooper in England. The property he renamed *Eureka* and had it divided into small farms. Later he became an alderman on the Kiama Council and a Member of the Legislative Assembly representing Kiama.

Chittick, Betty -

was a member of a family in which the Kiama Show, their farm at Jerrara and their cattle were central to their lives. Each year they would exhibit between 20 and 40 animals. Betty at different times was a committee member of the show society, assistant treasurer and organizer of the showgirl competition.

Colley, Hugh -

was a member of the Colley Family. When herd testing over a 7 day period was introduced at the Kiama Show, Hugh Colley offered a holding paddock on his farm while the animals were being tested. He was then nominated to supervise the milking and the weighing of butter. He had acted as the auditor for the local council, been an Alderman for six years and was Mayor of Jamberoo eight times.

Cousins, Arthur -

was born in Kiama in 1866. He was an intelligent child and passed the Junior Public Examination conducted by the Sydney University. As a boy he worked in his father's boot shop but in August, 1881 he became a probationary pupil teacher at the Jamberoo Primary School. He taught in several schools and when at Neutral Bay enrolled at Sydney University as an evening student. From here he graduated with BA and 1st class Honours in History. After retiring in 1931 he wrote, amongst other publications, *The Garden of N.S.W.* It still remains a sought after and rare book, and is a general history of the Illawarra Region.

Done, Reverend -

was a minister of the church and assisted in organizing a campaign titled 'Hospital Sunday' to raise funds towards the establishing of a Kiama hospital.

Fisher, Andrew -

was the Australian Prime Minister in 1908 – 1909, 1910 – 1913 and 1914 – 1915. Of Scotch descent he became leader of the Australian Labor Party in 1907. His final period as P.M. was overshadowed by the war and the difficulties in maintaining his pledge 'to the last man and the last shilling'. He resigned in favour of 'Billy' Hughes. He then became high commissioner to London, a position he held for five years.

Fuller, George-

is described as a 'central figure in the life of the district' He came from Galloway, Ireland, and settled in Gerringong. He worked consistently for the Kiama Cottage Hospital, and became a commission agent, purchasing buildings in Kiama and a part of the land on Dunmore Estate. He relinquished his agency interests and concentrated upon land development to become the largest landowner in the district. By 1880 he possessed 9,000 acres, most of which was dairying land and which he worked by tenant farmers. He opened a metal quarry at Shellharbour and also served as a Magistrate in Kiama for many years. He had six sons and five daughters.

Colin Fuller, his son, became a distinguished soldier in World War 1, serving in Gallipoli, Egypt and Palestine. He served at Gallipoli in the 6th Light Horse and in Egypt and Palestine and was awarded the D.S.O. and bar. Another son was Sir George Warburton Fuller. Described as 'one of Kiama's most brilliant sons', he was one of the earliest pupils at the Kiama Public School. From 1901 – 1913 he represented Kiama (Illawarra) in Federal Parliament, re-entered State politics in 1915 to represent Woollondilly. From 1922 to 1925 he led the Coalition Ministry. From 1828 to 1931 he became appointed Agent General for N.S.W. in London.

Hindmarsh, Michael N.-

was the grandson of Michael Hindmarsh, Senior, (deceased in 1863) who had been the occupier of the first land grant in the Gerringong/Kiama Region. He was prominent in business and civic matters, held an alderman's position on the Kiama Council for 39 years and was Mayor for eight. He was involved in the progress of the Hospital, School of Arts, Agricultural Society and a member of the Oddfellows Lodge and Presbyterian Church. His Obituary describes him as 'a man of sterling integrity and his word was his bond, strong willed with firm convictions'.

Nesbit Hindmarsh was the grand-son of Michael N. Hindmarsh. He inherited the property from his father in March 1912. The property and personal estate were valued at 28,593 pounds.

Holman, William Arthur -

was premier of N.S.W., 1913 to 1918. He arrived from London in 1888 and became the Labor Member for Grenfell ten years later. He had socialist beliefs, was committed to expanding the Party and recognised a need for broad-based reforms. During his term as premier he had marked disputes with the Labor Party and in 1916 was expelled for his support of conscription. He became a leader of the National Party government until losing his seat in 1920.

Hughes, William Morris 'Billy' -

was Prime Minister of the Labor Government in 1915 and 1916, and upon being expelled from the Party instigated a Nationalist government of which he was the leader until 1923. In 1917 and with the support of the Opposition he broke away from Labor and formed the National Party. In 1916 he had attempted to gain the people's consent to introduce conscription via a referendum, but after a bitter campaign it was rejected. This also was the result of a second referendum held in 1917. At the 1919 Versailles Peace Conference Hughes was an outspoken advocate for Australia, and although he offended foreign dignitaries he gained in status at home. He believed in the White Australia Policy.

Lloyd George, David -

replaced Asquith as Prime Minister in 1916 and commenced to prosecute the war with vigour. The concept of 'total' war became a reality. British Naval Power gained and maintained control of the seas. At the peace conference Lloyd George felt that Britain should play a major role in decision-making and he was determined to 'make Germany pay'.

Leggatt and Hadkins.

The government called for tenders for a massive 10,000 tons of blue metal to be provided annually for the next two years and the Leggatt and Hadkins tender was successful (March 1880). It was estimated that 45,000 pounds sterling would be spent in the district. By July 1880 the company was advertising for additional workers and quarrymen's cottages were being built to cater for the expanding workforce. Economically, Kiama was booming.

Marks Family of Jamberoo - John, James, Robert, William and Samuel.

James Marks (senior) was born in 1797 in the town of Ballyronan county Derry, Ireland, arrived in the colony in 1826 and initially settled in Sydney. Thirty years later he moved to the Illawarra with his five sons having purchased the Terragong Estate. John became an Alderman and Mayor of Kiama, an MLA. and MLC, Samuel purchased a section of Terry's Meadows, and John in 1858 built Terragong House. William and Robert were also prominent in local affairs. John and James later established their homes in Sydney.

Morton, Mark -

was one of the eight sons of Henry Morton, the land steward and surveyor on the Berry Estate, and was a good friend of the local ministers of religion. After the death of Alexander Berry and the break up of that estate, he arranged special provisions for the older farmers that would allow them to remain on and work their farms. Mark (junior) and two of his brothers became members of parliament.

Morton, Mark Fairles -

was educated at Numbaa Public School, and later Hurstville College, Goulbourn. He became a stock and station agent and auctioneer at Nowra and was active in local issues including being the chairman of the directors of the local dairy company. His brothers Henry and Phillip were political figures, and Members of the Legislative Assembly. His brother-in-law was Sir George Fuller. He became the MLA for the Shoalhaven from July 1901 until July 1904 and for Allowrie from August 1904 to February 1920. He served two separate periods as the representative for Wollondilly from March 1922 to April 1925 (defeated), and March 1928 to September 1938.

McCaffrey, Frank -

was keenly interested in the progress of the dairying industry and particularly in the standards of the imported stock. In his note books he compiled lengthy details on the breeding lines the produce of different animals. He wrote two books on the industry, one of which was the *History of the Illawarra*. Around the turn of the Century the State Government imported different stud stock from Great Britain and these animals, both cows and bulls, could be inspected and evaluated by breeders during the quarantine stage. They appeared quite different to the animals favoured by the local dairy farmers. A Milking Shorthorn Association was formed but it did not meet the needs of local farmers. They wanted recognition for their own breed the Illawarra Shorthorn. Frank McCafferty convened a meeting in Kiama and with his knowledge was instrumental in the formation of the Illawarra Dairy Cattle Association.

Monash, John -

combined a 'career in engineering with the profession of arms.' He was one of the first officers to be appointed to the Australian Military Forces following the outbreak of World War 1, and lead the 4th Brigade at the Gallipoli landing. In 1916 he was promoted to major-general and given command of the 3rd Division. His aim was to 'devise ways of defeating the enemy without squandering [the] lives' of his troops. Following the war he became the general manager of the Victorian Electricity Commission.

Osborne, Henry -

had 2,560 acres of land granted to him in the Illawarra in 1829 by Governor Lachlan Macquarie. He had ability as a cattleman, called his property Marshal

Mount, and along with the help of his brothers Dr John and Dr Alexander imported high quality animals to the Region. These animals were the basis of the first show of quality cattle in the region. He became the first president of the Illawarra Agricultural Society and also was a Justice of the Peace.

Pike, Joseph -

was born in Malmsborough, Wiltshire, England in March 1810 and came to Sydney in 1829. He was attached to the imperial regiment. On marrying Mary Talbot he took up farming on a property at Dapto. Ten years later he purchased land at Pike's Hill, Kiama, becoming first a storekeeper and then a dairy man. He was an Alderman on the Municipal Council and later the Mayor for five/six years. He was on the board of Shellharbour Steam navigation Company and a director of the Pioneer Dairy Company. As a member of the Church of England he regularly attended services.

Price, Jonas T. -

was a breeder of draught horses and a breeder and exhibitor of blood stock. He was a registered bookmaker on the Sydney and local courses, and was prominent in public affairs at Kiama. He was an Alderman in the local Council, a Grand Lodge Officer, president of the United Australia Party, a delegate to the Electoral Council and for a time the District Coroner. Kiama was the centre for his coach business.

Robb, James of 'Riverdale'.

This property of 1,280 acres, originally a grant to J. Collis, was awarded to him by the Court of Claims in 1830. By trade he was an architect but his interest was really in the cedar business. George Gray leased the property and organized its clearing under the Tenant System. The first co-operative butter factory, the Pioneer Factory, was built upon his land. He attempted to start a sugar industry but this was unsuccessful.

Ryan, Captain -

represented the Department of Defence, and negotiated with the Kiama Municipal Council for the Army's occupation of the showground and buildings during World War 1. The military needed training bases for the young service recruits, and proposed to position a number of these training centers in country towns. Naturally the requests were not opposed.

Scullin, James Henry -

was the leader of the Australian Labor Party from October 1929 to January 1932, in the most difficult period of the great depression. As the son of Irish Catholic parents he had earlier opposed conscription. His government replaced that of Bruce-Page government. He argued for socialization but he was 'faced with a hostile Senate and unhelpful bankers'. Policies could not be progressed and Labor itself was being split into three factions. The Lang - led faction took over as Scullin struggled with

the issues of the depressed economy and unemployment. In the December 1931 election the Lyon's led Opposition was successful.

Smith, Sir Charles Kingsford -

in conjunction with his friend Charles T. Ulm pioneered aviation in Australia. Civil aviation proved to be the great revolution in transport and communication. Smith had won a Military Medal for his efforts during the war when serving with the Royal Flying Corps, and amongst other exploits made the historic flight in the *Southern Cross* with his co-pilot Ulm from England to Australia. In 1928 he and Ulm made the first trans-Tasman (Australia to New Zealand,) crossing to earn yet another aviation record.

Sommerville, George -

was one of six sons. His father James Sommerville served as a clerk upon the Kiama and Jamberoo Councils for a number of years. (Resigned 1891). George served a term as Kiama's Mayor and was also secretary of the Kiama Show Society 1911-43.

Tarrant, Dr. H. J. -

was a medical doctor and surgeon in Kiama, a Grand Master of the local Freemasons and later the local Minister for Kiama. (MLA) He became a 'speculator' and lost heavily on investments in goldmines and land purchases. Discredited, he left Sydney with his wife for a new destination (unknown), but later returned to Kiama and was re-financed into a medical practice.

Yuille, Reverend Tulloch –

was of Scotch descent and minister of the Presbyterian Church in Kiama. He was a prominent supporter of Britain and Australia's involvement in the World War 1. He was pro-war. The *Independent* reported on 18 September, 1915, that the Synod of the Presbyterian Church was opposed to conscription, so this would have placed Reverend Yuille in an invidious situation. He served on local committees and the recruitment committee and was a contributor to the Patriotic Fund. He spoke frequently on war issues at patriotic meetings..

Wittington, Matron Carrie B. -

in 1910 retired from her position at the Kiama Cottage Hospital after 23 years. The position was advertised and filled by Miss Wittington of Camden. Four years later Miss Whittington 'regretfully' resigned and in 1915 joined the army's Nursing Service where she was posted to the Dardanelles.

Wakefield Brothers -

opened a quarry on the south side of the cutting at Pike's Hill.

Weston Family

Joseph Weston came to Kiama in 1856 and commenced the *Independent* in 1863. He was passionate about Kiama's urban and rural areas and through his paper campaigned for progress and the betterment of the community. He was a trustee of the Methodist Church, an old member of the Samaritan Lodge and on his interment was honoured by the rites of the Ancient Order of Freemasons.

John Maclean Weston and Mary Weston, two of his children, took over the running of the *Independent*, and guided it through the years of the Great War and the Depression. The *Independent* remains to this day under the control of the Weston Family.

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