

History of the Blacksmith Shop



*A later photograph of Mark Whitby's Blacksmith Shop to the one on the plaque.
Note the size of the tree on the left as compared with the earlier photograph.*

Photo courtesy of Jerilderie & District Historical Society

The first owner of this allotment, after the subdivision of John Powell's Land Grant, was a publican by the name of John Turner, who purchased the land in May 1871. It is thought that Mr Turner was the publican of Turner's Hotel on the Deniliquin Road near Tocumwal, an area known as Berrigagama. Mr Turner died in 1877, and the land was sold to James Morris (settler) in August 1877. Morris did not retain the land for long, selling it, in August 1878, to Samuel Rea, who subsequently established the blacksmith shop on the site.

Samuel Rea must have thought that being a publican was an easier occupation than blacksmithing because, in August 1881, he sold the property to William Mackenzie, with Samuel Rea becoming licensee of the Commercial Hotel, William Street, Urana.

The purchaser, William Mackenzie, was himself a publican, only recently taking over the licence of the Royal Mail Hotel in Jerilderie from Charles Cox who, strangely enough, had also relocated to Urana to become licensee of the Urana Hotel.

Six months later, in April 1882, the property was purchased by Mark Amos Whitby, who then recommenced blacksmithing on this site.

In 1892 Mark Whitby's health began to deteriorate to such an extent that he had to retire from the business and took up permanent residence at his country property "Plain View" on the Wilson Road.

While the blacksmith property remained in the ownership of the Whitby family until it was sold to Lydia Collier in July 1918, it is not known whether any sons of Mark Whitby continued in the blacksmithing business.

What is known however, is that Mr J C Burke leased the property and carried on a blacksmith shop for several years, until March 1912 when Neivandt Brothers commenced a blacksmith and wheelwright business at the premises.

Neivandt Brothers separated in May 1914, Jim Neivandt commencing a rival business on the north-east corner of Jerilderie and Bolton Streets, Jerilderie.

In August 1914, the remaining Neivandt brother commenced a partnership with Thomas J Plumbe, but in February 1915 this partnership was also dissolved, with Plumbe becoming the sole lessee.

Plumbe sold the plant and machinery associated with blacksmithing in November 1916, retaining the wheelwright part of the business, and in April 1917 bought out the rival Undertaking business in the town, Mr W E Thorman.

When Thos Plumbe finally closed his doors in June 1921, selling up all his goods and chattels and leaving the district, the building lay idle for many years. At various times it was merely used as a garage for a private vehicle, general store room, horse stalls and feed rooms.

In July 1998, the premises was purchased by the current owners, who have gradually transformed it into the tourist attraction that can now be seen and appreciated.
