

Restored cottage TeesBank reflects South Bathurst's past

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Community



BLAST FROM THE PAST: TeesBank, named after the River Tees in Durham, still retains many of its original heritage features. Photo: SUPPLIED

THE land around Lewins Street in Bathurst was originally granted to Sir John Jamieson, who accompanied Governor Lachlan Macquarie on his visit to Bathurst in 1815.

However, it would seem Jamieson did not take up this grant and on January 1, 1840 a further Crown grant was issued “in order to promote settlement and in fulfilment of a promise made on or before 15th October 1831 and in consideration of Quit Rent, Her Majesty Queen Victoria did grant unto George Busby his heirs and assigns 100 acres commencing at Queen Charlotte’s Vale Creek, being land promised to Sir John Jamieson of which he was authorised to take possession on 11th June 1832 as an additional Grant and being the land advertised as No. 683 in the Government Notice dated 12th October 1829 in favour of George Busby at the request of the promisee, with a Quit Rent of 16 shillings and 8 pence from 1/1/1833, redeemable within twenty years”.

The reservations placed on the land were that it could be resumed, if needed, for public ways, and for stone required for construction, and any land within 100 foot of the creek could also be resumed.

Dr George Busby was appointed colonial surgeon of the colony in 1828. He lived in Howick Street but his eldest son, John, built his home on his father’s grant and called it Logan Brae. Built in 1878, the building – known as St Joseph’s Mount – is still in excellent condition and is the home of the Sisters of Mercy and Rahamin Ecology Centre.

Busby sold part of his land to William Spencer and Theophilus McCarthy who subsequently sold on June 29, 1888 to Bathurst Investment Land & Building Co Limited. This company further

subdivided the land which was known as the South Bathurst subdivision.

Many of the cottages built in this subdivision in Busby, Logan and Brilliant streets were built as cottages for railway workers. Brilliant Street was changed to Lewins Street in the 1950s, named after Samuel Lewins, a railway employee who started the Bathurst Railway Brass Band in November 1885 and which later became the Bathurst District Band. Lewins lived at 2 Lewins Street.

Samuel had a half-brother named James Appleby. His mother, Mary Ann, had been previously married to Christopher Appleby and their only child, James, was born in Country Durham on August 8, 1853. Mary Ann subsequently married William Lewins.

James Appleby married Jane Ann Goldsborough on September 25, 1880 and they came to Australia with their son Percy William in 1884 and to Bathurst in 1886.

James and Jane had five more children - Mabel Annie (1884), Lewis James (1888), Clarence Frederick (1890), Gladys Mary (1892) and Lance Frederick (1900). James worked as a coppersmith for the railways and was a leading tenor in the St Barnabas' choir and a founder of the Bathurst District Band.

On April 29, 1898, James Appleby purchased part of Lot 19 in the South Bathurst subdivision for £52/10/-. In September 1897 John Baines had also purchased part of Lot 19 for £45 and in April 1898 Baines sold half of his block to Appleby, making Appleby's block now 36ft x 120ft, which is still the area of the current house. The house is called TeesBank, named after the River Tees in Appleby's home town in Durham.

In 1910 Appleby took a mortgage from George McKenzie, the father-in-law of Prime Minister Ben Chifley.

On October 30, 1912, Mabel Appleby married John Briggs at St Barnabas' Church with a reception at TeesBank. Mabel was attired in "a pretty frock of white silk muslin, over mousseline de soi, trimmed with Irish crotchet, French Valenciennes insertion and lace, and white satin ribbon, ash and pale tulle veil with orange blossoms".

Bridesmaids Gladys Appleby and Leila Lewins, wore "frocks of apricot striped ninon, trimmed with cream guipure and fancy brush (oriental) trimmings, with splashes of parma violet velvet and pearl buckles, hats of cream tagel with lace and pink bebe roses".

Following Appleby's death in August 1922, he left TeesBank to his wife, Jane, and following Jane's death in January 1925 the property was left to her two sons, Percy William and Lewis James. Lewis renounced probate and purchased the property from Percy for £500 on April 25, 1925. He also took a mortgage from George McKenzie for £300, a document witnessed by Phyllis Donnelly, Ben Chifley's confidante and friend.

When this mortgage was repaid in 1930, Lewis took a further mortgage from Jack Tremain who owned Tremain's Mill in South Bathurst. At this time, a rear extension was added.

Lewis Appleby sold TeesBank to lecturer Jack McDonogh and his wife Colleen on August 10, 1953 for £5500 and they added a new bathroom. The next buyers were Robert Vincent Stephens, a cannery assistant, and his wife Patricia for £3600.

On September 27, 1972, the Stephens sold to Kenneth Stapleton and his wife, Shirley, who subsequently sold to James Joseph and Barbara Frances Evans on December 14, 1982. Mrs Evans continued to live in the house following the death of James in 2005, until she sold it to the current owners, Bernard Daly and Sue Stocks, on October 2, 2015.

The house consists of the original four rooms with cedar window architraves and skirtings with wide Baltic pine floors and doors. The two front, main bedrooms retain the original English carron cast-iron fireplace inserts while the lounge room has a colonial red brick curved-arch fire place. All the fireplaces and chimneys are in working condition.

The 1920s rear extension has been demolished, revealing its old railway sleeper foundations and a new extension added consisting of a new bathroom, kitchen, family room, laundry and back verandah.

The National Trust acknowledges the current owners for their passion to restore the cottage, taking great care to maintain authenticity and resulting in TeesBank significantly contributing to the streetscape.