



MT. HORROCKS
HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

Yams
and
LEGENDS.

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We can't lose track of the past;

It made us what we are.

We go on,

We change,

We continue to grow,

YES.

But we must not forget to honour our
history, for it's our future.

Father F. Burke.

Tales of Penwortham's past often include references to the name Kelly, the place 'Kellytown', and even the notorious Ned himself, so it is quite understandable that over the years many of the Kelly's living in or around the area either claimed proudly to be related to the bushranger, or at least did not refute suggestions that they were.

THE KELLYS ARE COMING

Panic reigned in Penwortham; rumours were spreading like wildfire that the bushranger Ned Kelly and his gang were heading toward the district. It was said that Ned had ridden his horse into the bar of the Overland Hotel, and that he was making for Kellytown, where he had relatives. Men were afraid for their wives and daughters, and the doors were locked with heavy bars. Such was the hysteria among the women that some of them imagined they'd already been raped. One claimed that the deed had been done by Ned Kelly himself, and that it could not be a fantasy as she was four months pregnant, and her husband had been away from home for the past six months. The investigating police were puzzled, until some further enquiries revealed the culprit to be her next door neighbour, who was supposed to have been caring for the stock during the husband's absence. It seems that the lady, learning that her spouse was on his way home, had decided to use the Kelly rumours to her advantage.

The stories circulating about the Kelly gang were of course readily seized upon by the newspapers. In 1879 (date unknown) the following article appeared in The Northern Argus

"Some excitement was caused in due the other day by an enthusiastic young German, who quietly informed a select few that he knew the whereabouts of the notorious Ned Kelly, and that in a few minutes he would have the outlaw safely lodged in the police station. *"Mine vord, I vil so!"* A few minutes later he was seen engaging in a heated argument with a semi-intoxicated Irishman. Taking Paddy by the shoulder the young Teuton said to him *"Ya, mine friend, come mit me. You ish der Ned Kelly from Victoria; mine vord, I lock you up like anytings!"* The simple son of the Emerald Isle surprisingly went along quietly with pipe in mouth until nearing the lock-up, then, not liking the look of affairs, he suddenly stopped and addressed the soi-disant guardian of the peace somewhat in this strain: *"Hold on there now, will yez; wait till I put me pipe in me pocket, and by me sowl, I'll knock yez German head off!"*

The young man, despite the threat, firmly held the Irishman; to let go at this critical point was tantamount to losing the reward. Lustily he called *'Police! Police!'* whereupon the man in blue appeared and placed poor Pat in 'durance vile'. The next morning, he was fined for over-indulgence in beer. So much for the luck of the Irish!

THE KELLY TRYSTS

The story goes, a Mr. Nankervis owned a wine shanty which bridged the boundary line between sections 3002 and 3003 in the hundred of Stanley. (This situation later caused an ownership dispute, but that's another story)

The road past the shanty was used by the bullock-drivers of the Gulf Road era who carted ore from the Burra mines to the ships at Port Wakefield. A steep track wound its way from Mintaro through Kadlunga to the "Pink House" wine shanty owned by a Joe Felz, on the eastern side of Mount Horrocks. Some say it was so named because of the pink quartz used in its construction; others claim it was because of the rough red wine ('Pinky') which was sold there. The tortuous track then went on around a steep peak and down the side of a gully to the Nankervis wine shanty, ideally placed in one respect at least, because the bullockies usually felt the need for a strong bracer after negotiating that hair-raising piece of track!

The shanty, built of local timber, was surrounded by dense scrub, and legend tells us that Ned Kelly's sister Kate would travel up from Adelaide, where she worked, to meet her notorious bushranger brother there. Ned was hiding out at 'Kellytown', a couple of miles north of the shanty. In this respect also, the shanty was sited to advantage, as a lookout positioned on the nearby peak could see for miles in all directions, making it impossible for troopers to sneak up on Ned. He and Kate are said to have met here on several occasions, spending as much time as possible together before Kate had to leave again for Adelaide.

In 1879 four members of the Kelly gang crossed the border near Francis, claimed a Mr. Chittleborough of Neuarpuir, Victoria. Without giving their names, they called on a Mrs. Brown, watered their horses, bought chaff, then headed north. Later they were seen at Emu Springs, where Ned had his horse re-shod, paying for this in gold coin. Heading north again, they rode into the Gilbert Valley area through the Skilly Hills and past Kirk's place.

Many older residents of Penwortham, Polish Hill River and Watervale, talk of Ned Kelly, his brother Dan and two friends, living in the area known as "Kellytown". Mr. D. Morrison was told that one of them was Steve Hart, who had family in the vicinity. When the gang were moving on, Steve's relatives begged Ned to let the boy stay, for his safety. He did stay, and later fought in the South African war, changing his name, and after the war settled in South Africa.

Some later historians, however, claim that Steve died with Dan in the Glenrowan siege. But did he? Or was it George King, second husband of Ned's jailed mother Ellen? After the fire the remains were taken by friends and secretly buried. A 1911 Sydney newspaper claimed that Steve and Dan did not die at Glenrowan, but were saved, and later fled to South Africa. We will never know for sure; those who could tell us are long gone.

Printed early 80's

Ruins of Hart family home south Clare in later years removed for a vineyard.