

Westlake Newsletter Christmas 2002

Another year has gone by and more of the old mob have joined the ranks of those who have gone before. My apologies to the families who have had a bereavement whom I have missed in the newsletter. I rely on people to let me know. One death I missed was that of Daphne Hughes who was nee Robinson of 57 Westlake. This past year Ray Wilder died in June 2002 and in early July he was followed Tamara Reid's (Bondarenko) son Nathan. Another 'lad' who died was Jack Lette of Molonglo and later Causeway. Jack was one of the men who moved a number of the Westlake houses to new sites.

Members of the Pennington family who lived at Westlake in the 1940s contacted me and arranged for Hazel Kennedy (Haines) and Roma Banks (Brien) – the workers - to add their sign to the others in the park. This took a little longer in time than intended because both Hazel and Roma have had health problems and the process was further held up because Gunty, the one male in the group of workers who is the person whom we nominate to do the hard heavy work managed to break his arm during a limbo dance.

Another contact was a member of the O'Dwyer family who lived in the twenties at Westlake prior to their move by 1928 to Causeway. I am still trying to find the details of when they lived at Westlake and whether or not it was in a Westlake cottage or one of the build your own type that were situated in a line across the hill near the sewer vent

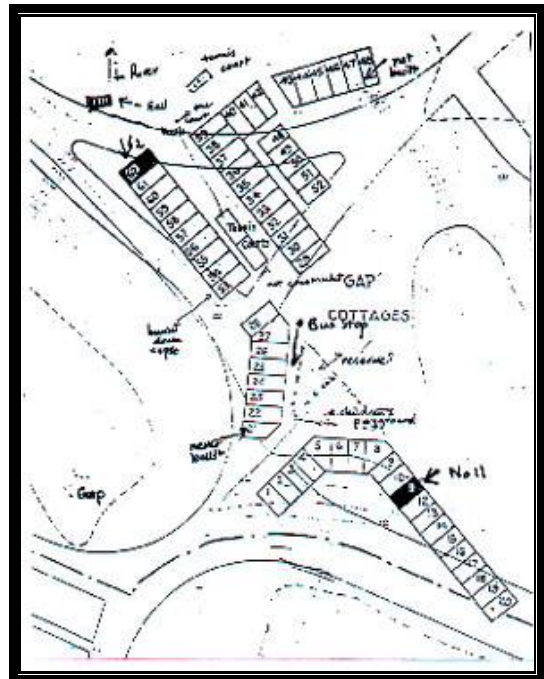
The granddaughter of Jane & Robert Gates who were the first tenants at 29 Westlake – George Sykes moved into this cottage in 1929 – made contact. Also living with the couple was Ena Gates (born c1910). Robert Gates was 61 in 1925 and prior to coming to Canberra had worked as a missionary with Aboriginal people in various parts of Australia including Terry Hie Hie. Robert Gates was a Tasmanian by birth and a very devout Christian. Ena Gates worked for a time as a seamstress with Effie Makin (lived in 47 and later moved to Acton) who was the mother of Maggie Shepherd. On leaving Canberra the family returned first to Launceston & Burnie and later to Melbourne where in April 1945 Robert Gates was knocked over by a tram and died. Jane Gates died in April 1948 and Ena Gates moved back to Hobart where she died in the 1990s.

The NCA (National Capital Authority) have kept the grass in the area of the cottages cut allowing for easier walking on the sites of the old houses.

View 1924 of houses 22-27 with some of the finished cottages in background.



R.L. 28 24
Westlake 16 3 1923



Plan of Westlake Cottages

Sites of 1-20 are covered by the buildings and grounds of Mexican Embassy. Sites of 22-28 are opposite the embassy in Empire Circuit Forrest and the other sites are in the park proper I have been typing up articles from the *Canberra Times* – 1940s and will add a few articles that may be of interest and reminders of times gone by.

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21st April 1940

[Raising of funds to build the RAAF Recreation Hut – later renamed Lady Gowrie Hut]

A final statement of the result of the Government House Fair held on April 20, was presented to Their Excellencies the Governor-General and Lady Gowrie, at Government House, last night on the occasion of the final meeting of the Executive of the Canberra War Funds Appeal. The total amount raised for war funds was eight thousand, eight hundred and sixty pounds of which six thousand pounds had already been disbursed to the ACT Division of the Red Cross and the Canberra Volunteer Welfare Association.

Her Excellency last night presented cheques of one thousand four hundred and twenty-nine pounds each to Sir William Clemens, chairman of the ACT Division of the Red Cross and Mr W G Piper for the Canberra Volunteer Welfare Association, her Excellency expressed the hope that the work of the Association would progress in caring for our men.

RAAF RECREATION HUT

Their Excellencies evidenced keen interest in the recreation hut which is to be provided for the RAAF in Canberra. Mr WG Piper informed Their Excellencies that the site for the hut had been approved at Manuka and preparations were in train to put the scheme underway. The Association had already received many offers of assistance in materials and would have the co-operation of Canberra builders. It was hoped that the hut would be ready about six weeks after commencement. Plans for the hut were inspected by Their Excellencies, who were particularly interested in the facilities to be provided particularly the hot showers which they had found would be appreciated by the men...

May 1940 MILITIA NOTES

Canberra Unit

Commanding officers' parade will be held every Tuesday night until the end of May in order to complete three days' home training.

In addition there will be an all-day parade on May 19 when companies all carry out tactical exercises assisted by signalers, machine gunners and the intelligence section. Efficiency pay will be made available at an early date. All men who were serving on September 2 1939 will be paid

at the rate of 4 pounds a year. Efficient efficiency includes attendances at camps and musketry parades. There are still a number of vacancies in 15 MG Platoon. Men desiring transfers to this Platoon should make application through their company commander.

PROMOTIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

The following promotions became effective during the three months camp at Glenfield:

Appointed O/C E Coy: Lieut W JS Atkinson
Promoted Acting Lieutenant (pending gazettal):
Sgt JR Brackenreg, Serg J Wittingham
Promoted Warrant Officer, Class II: A/CSM AG Gent.

Promoted Colour Sergeants: A CQMS AE Johnstone, CQMS., Cpl J Somerville, OR Sgt A Cpl WE Jones, OR Sgt.

Promoted Sergeant: Cpl C... , Cpl FJ Seymour, Cpl W H Bray.

Appointed Lance Sergeant: Cpl PW Clemens, Cpl JA McCracken, Pt E Cavanagh, Cpl J Cassidy.

Promoted Corporal: A Cpl R Harrison, A/Cpl PL McAndrews, Pte WA Evans, Pte S Evans, Pte SE Thomas.

Personal Notes

During the absence of the Commanding Officer Lieut-Col AT Paul, MC, DCM, who is still and inmate of the Prince of Wales Hospital Randwick, Major OA Beattie ED is administrating command of the battalion. Captain RE Weeks of Queanbeyan and Lieutenants JR Crawford, R Donegan, and GC Watson of Canberra are now with the AIF Recruiting Training Depot, Ingleburn. Lieut FH Ordish has been seconded to the 14th Infantry Brigade as Brigade Transport Officer. Warrant Officer A Mellor AIC, Regimental Sergeant-Major is in Canberra on leave until May 13.

**HAPPY CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR
2002/2003**

Ann Gugler