

Mrs Gillard

The History of Ludlow.





LUDLOW



As the sun began to slowly sink beyond the horizon, a sixteen year old boy and his mother gradually came into view. Their horse and bullocks strained as the buggy in tow became bogged in a sandy stretch of the road. Eager to get home before it became too late the boy dismounted from the buggy and brandishing a whip he helped push the cart along. The boy turned towards his mother and there, standing as tall as a fifteen hand horse, was a large black dog, with huge red eyes as big as plates. The dog was so big it appeared to be able to put its head on the shoulder of the boy's mother who was still sitting erect on the buggy.

The boy cracked his whip and as the horse and bullocks pulled the buggy from the sand, the boy ran along side and when he turned to look at the apparition, it was gone.

Such is one story from George Froome, a long time resident of Ludlow and employee of the young boy (Steve Thomas) at a later date.

The area of boggy sand in the story is in between Ludlow and Wonnerup and there is a tree nearby, called the "Ghost Tree". Many people in Ludlow feared the tree and it is reputed that horses and bullocks would refuse to pass the tree after nightfall. On the other hand, others pass off the howling and wailing noises that have been heard as either branches squeaking and rubbing together or the imaginations of the early Irish settlers in the area.

There have been many ghost stories in the area. One of the most popular is the story that originated after George Layman's murder by an aboriginal. Many aboriginals were cornered near Coolilup Pool and massacred. The actual murderer had hidden in a log near Ludlow and when he was flushed out he was shot and then decapitated. His head was put in a saddle bag and taken into Busselton where it was mounted on a stake on the beach. The spirit of this aboriginal is still believed to haunt the area between Busselton Caravan and Camping Centre and Capel. This stretch of road has seen more than fifty road deaths, and some locals claim that as one drives along Bussell Highway in the Ludlow area you can feel the car edging off the road, all by itself.

The majority of ghost stories originated from the early Irish settlers who had to walk home in the dark after work with only a hurricane lamp. The original settler in Ludlow however, was Fredrick Ludlow, hence the area's name.

Fredrick Ludlow and his wife, Kitty (nee Mildred Kitts) arrived in Western Australia at the Swan River Colony in 1929 aboard the "Parmelia". In 1930 they moved to Augusta under the employ of Captain Molloy. (The settlement had been established by Molloy, J.G. Bussell and Brothers and Turner). There were no roads for the 200 mile journey, just untamed bush all the way to the Swan River.

Fredrick was not a man who was renowned for his accomplishments, but it is known that in September of 1931 Ludlow, John Welburn and Mr Kellam (a Government Surveyor who had been retrenched) walked the entire 206 miles to the Swan River Colony.

Kitty was a cripple but she was skilled in the field of needle work. When she arrived in Western Australia she was employed by Mrs Molloy to look after her daughter Sabina. While in Augusta Kitty became ill and by her own choice took up residence on Dalton Island, now known as Molloy Island. Kitty died on the island and Mrs Molloy had to perform the burial as Captain Molloy was in the Swan River Colony at the time (approximately February 1834).

In 1932 there was a general departure from the Augusta district when Bussell and others left to settle near the Vasse River. Soon after the Molloy's came to

settle at "Fairlawn" on the other side of the Vasse.

Some people chose to settle six miles (ten kilometers) further up in the area known as Wonnerup. Fredrick Ludlow settled near the current position of Ludlow, several miles further on. This was probably because of the good cattle grazing area that the Tuart Forest afforded.

Ludlow is situated fifteen kilometers east of Busselton along the Bussell Highway. Most of it falls in the shire of Busselton, but the settlement area is divided by the Ludlow River, putting some houses in the shire of Capel (formerly Coolingup). The Bussell Highway is the only major road connecting Ludlow to Busselton and Capel, although there are two other bitumised roads, Ludlow-Hithergreen road and Ludlow North road. During the 1880's it was known that several coach roads went through the area as is shown on Map One. The road that travels north-east after it passes through the townsite went straight to the Swan River Colony, and now forms the beginning of the Ludlow North road, although only for a kilometer before the current road veers off in a westerly direction.

The aerial photograph that follows was taken for Mr N. Bentley as it shows much of his property. The green line at the top left hand corner of the picture is the Bussell Highway, just East of the Ludlow Bridge, as it is today. The Highway used to incorporate Ludlow-Hithergreen road (the yellow line) up to the orange and light blue lines. The light blue road was in use until the new highway was opened and gave motor vehicles direct access to Bunbury via Capel. The orange road is much older and was altered to eliminate the tight curve it involved. The Ludlow River winds around the top of the photograph and would cross the highway just to the left of the picture. The Ludlow settlement is also to the left of the picture.

Ludlow's maximum population at any time would be about 150. In 1938/39 the population was 136 (ref. "Western Australian Postal Directory", 1939, pg3281). Out of the families living in Ludlow at the time, several were direct descendants of the original early settlers in the area.

After Fredrick Ludlow the first recorded land owner in Ludlow was Mr Hurford. He took up residence across the wetlands (which form part of the Wonnerup Estuary) on the sea hills in the 1830's. Many more people took up land in that vicinity in the 1840's. These pioneers included James MCourt, Bishop Brady, Samuel Bryan and surveyor Henry Ommany.

Ludlow also became home to several Irish Roman Catholics, many of whom have descendants still living in the Vasse district. In fact, the first recorded Catholic baptism in the district took place in Ludlow, in 1848 when Margaret MCourt was christened.

Early families in Ludlow had names such as Connell, Forrest, Hickey, Kinsella, Larkin, Moriarty, Murphy, Paine, Thomas, Warner and Winn, which are generally thought to be of an Irish origin.

The head of the original Connell family was Dennis Connell, born in 1833. He came to Western Australia as a convict aboard the "Phoebe Dunbar" in 1853. By 1856 he had received his "Ticket of Leave" and had married Julie Layhie/Leahy in the Vasse district (probably Ludlow). During the next decade the Connells had built a house in Ludlow.

The Connells bore nine children; Dennis (known as Dinny), Ellen, Mary, William, Daniel (Danny), Maurice (Pat), Julia, Kathleen and Jeremiah. Tragically, Dennis Connell Senior committed suicide at Qualen in 1887. It is

believed that the original house was haunted by Dennis' spirit after the rest of the family deserted it.

Maurice and Dinny built a small Tuart mill of which little information was recorded, but by 1927 it had ceased operation and was just a skeleton. The brothers were renowned for their eccentricity when they were about sixty. There is one story about them which details Dinny travelling to Perth by rail, and on the way his hat blew out the window. He then marked a cross on the train's window saying that with this he would be able to find the hat on the way home!

The Forrest family who settled in the area built "Forrest House" on Forrest Beach, in the area adjacent to Mr Hurford's property. These Forrests are direct descendants of William Forrest, the brother of Sir John Forrest, the one time Premier of Western Australia. Fourth and fifth generation Forrests still live in Ludlow, and one of the fourth generation (Keith) and his wife are the owner/builders of "Cape Cod House".

Descendants of the Moriarty family no longer live in Ludlow, but several live in Busselton and the Vasse electorate.

William Moriarty was the first Moriarty in Ludlow. An Irishman born in 1814, he arrived in Western Australia on the tenth of December 1840. He landed in Australind and built an Inn after a short time, but it was destroyed by flood waters. He is also reputed to have helped in the escape of the Irish political prisoner and acclaimed poet John Boyle O'Reilly.

In 1843 William wed Ann Wear, but she died a few years later, bearing no children to William. Moriarty travelled to Fremantle where he declared that he would marry the first woman off the ship that had just docked. This he did and the marriage was rewarded with ten children. (Figure 1 is a photograph of Moriarty and his wife).

Moriarty first arrived in Ludlow in 1843 when he was given the freehold on 100 acres of land adjacent to the Ludlow Bridge. In 1860 he purchased another 100 acres adjoining it. This land is now encompassed by the Forestry reserve and the place on which William constructed a wattle and daub house is contained by the Conservation And Land Management Compound (figures 2 and 3).

The exact date of the Warner family's arrival in Ludlow is not known, but it was sometime in the mid 1800's. The first Warners in Ludlow were William George Warner (birthdate 1824) and his wife Honorah Mary.

They built a house along a side road of Tuart road which is a dirt extension of Ludlow North road to the west. The side track is now known as Warner Road. The original house had five rooms; a lounge, kitchen and three bedrooms. Thirteen children were conceived due to the marriage, and eventually another, smaller house was built for the grandparents.

Les Warner, who worked with the Forestry Department for close to fifty years in Ludlow, remembers that as a child, with ten brothers and sisters, he had to sleep on the verandah. The mosquitoes in Ludlow were, and still are, extremely friendly and the only way to rid the house of these pests was to burn cow manure, as repellents in a can were not readily available. The burning manure had to be moved through out the house and Mr Warner could not decide which was worse, the mosquitoes or the smell.

A Mulberry tree situated in a paddock that now forms part of Keith Forrest's property is the only remnant of the original home site.

The coach road that went through the Ludlow area (refer Map One) crossed the river before it branched out to go north-east and north-north-east. A small

bridge was erected, but it has since been replaced with a much more sturdy version since the advent of cars and trucks.

Along the road that led from Busselton to Ludlow, just before it would have crossed the bridge, an Inn was built. Known as the "Wayside Inn" it was one of only three taverns in the Vasse District at the time.

With the coming of families to Ludlow it was decided a school was necessary for the children. The first recorded school was called the "Ludlow Bridge School" as it was so close to the coach bridge. In 1866 12 students were enrolled into the school, with Miss Larkin the Head Mistress.

The school was made of mud brick and had a galvanised iron roof. The only warmth for the students was a pot bellied stove in the corner of the only room, which was a square of about four or five metres length. It was situated about 150 metres south of the River, and the bridge. The school lay on flat ground, but the area to the north quickly sloped downwards to the river flat.

After Miss Larkin left the school in 1868 Mr W. H. Leach took over as teacher. He was succeeded by Mr Simpson and then Mr Carter. All three men were ex-convicts who had received their tickets-of-leave.

The School was renamed the "Ludlow State School" in 1877, which was also when Mr Leach was re-instated as Head Master.

If the student population fell below nine then it was no longer viable for the school to remain open. In years when this occurred the school either closed completely or "shared" students with Wonnerup or Newtown Schools. For one half of the year the students would travel to Wonnerup for their education, and for the rest of the year the Wonnerup children would have to travel to Ludlow. This situation occurred in 1900 when the students were "shared" with Wonnerup and in 1905 with Newtown school. Between 1866 and 1923 the school was forced to close for twenty nine years (not consecutively), but after 1923 there was a full time teacher at the school until its closure in 1948.

In 1923 a new school building was transported to Ludlow from East Kirup. It was placed a little closer to the river (probably so that the pile of rubble left over from the first school did not have to be moved immediately.) The new school was bigger than the original and had more windows. It had a half enclosed verandah on the side that faced the river, which enveloped the only door. The children sat on long desks that ran perpendicular to the river. Around 1925 a house was built next to the school for the teacher to live in. In 1953 this house was purchased by the Forestry Department and extensively renovated. The house still stands and is lived in by forestry workers (Thompsons in 1988)(see figure 4).

The school had only one major "scandal" when one teacher, Andrew McWillie was transferred after complaints about him to the Education Department. He was a very strict teacher at the best of times, but he suffered severe head aches due to the fact he had been gassed in World War One. After a headache he would be in an especially foul mood, and usually took his anger out on the students. Mr McWillie was especially harsh on the slower students and he caned students for not absorbing information immediately, and any thing else that annoyed him. He broke many canes, and once he ran out of supplies the children had to fetch Peppermint tree sticks for his purposes.

The school finally closed in 1948 when buses to Busselton schools were made available to the children in Ludlow. Other country areas on the other side of Busselton already had a bus service, and people in Ludlow generally felt that

their children were missing out on a better education.

Between the schools closure and its destruction in 1969 the only constructive use for the school was for dances. When the School was dismantled by Lance Avery he put the timber to good use. A 180 000 litre capacity water tank was erected on the site, which still stands today (see figure 5)

The main reason why Ludlow has remained as a small community is the Tuart (*Eucalyptus gomphocephala*) Forest. Early settlers took advantage of the well spread forest because of its cattle rearing advantages, but it was soon realised that the timber itself was a valuable resource.

The Western Australian Government did not fully recognise the value of the Tuarts when the state was first colonised, and in 1842 10 000 acres of land was granted to Governor Stirling. This came to be known as "Stirling Estate" and encompassed nearly all of the Tuart Forest (The red zone on Map One). It was known as an Estate because most of it eventually became available for sale to individuals.

Once the government became aware of the possibilities that lay in the forest it had to repurchase the land. £10 000 was spent in buying back most of the Estate. The government then had to cut down alot of the tuarts to pay for the purchase, even though public opinion was that it should have remained as a forest.

By 1906 the milling of tuarts was so intense that the government was forced to declare that any tree with a girth of less than two metres was no to be cut.

The reasons that tuart was in such demand are many. It is a very strong wood as its grain is interwoven. This means it has desirable qualities for top-rails and undercarriages of railway wagons, tram cars, trucks or anywhere where strength is required. Tuart is very non-reactive, and hence is desirable as metal does not rust when used with the wood.

This area of tuart is the only one to occur naturally anywhere in the world, which is why the township of Ludlow grew once the wood was in demand.

In 1918 government passed the "Forestry Act", and in 1919 6 517 acres of forest was declared State Forest Number One and Number Two.

With the advent of the Forestry Act the aim of the government was to increase the yield of Tuart timber. This however proved difficult as Tuart is prone to a large number of insects and it will only germinate in ashbeds left after an extremely intense fire which would kill all of its competitors such as the peppermint tree (*Agonis flexuosa*).

In 1922 the land within the forest was fenced off and the grazing rights for cattle were sold off by public auction. The most significant event of 1921-22 was the completion of the Ludlow Forestry School/College.

The purpose of the school was to train youths to be field staff for the Forestry Department. The apprentices spent six months in the school and six months in the field. An apprenticeship would last for four years before they could enter the department. In 1922 nine young men entered the school and by 1924 twenty seven youths had entered the course. Out of these, twenty two completed the course and took up positions with the Forestry Department. These men filled all of the vacant positions in the department, so the school closed in 1927.

Since then the school and the adjoining oval were used for many purposes. In 1928 the school was used as the Senior Foresters or Managers House. It was also used as a boarding house for foresters, a community hall and the club rooms/camp for the Country's Junior Football Club. In 1974 another school building was

moved near the original Apprentice School to complement the park sporting complex. It came from Jarrahwood.

All of this was lost in 1979 when the original school burnt to the ground in August of 1979. The second school is all that remains of the complex.

The photocopied sketches that are at the end of the essay were both drawn by artist Barbara Reid. The smaller one was drawn from a photograph taken of the school in 1922 and the second was drawn from a picture of the school as it burned and the artist's memory. This is why it only has one door and lacks windows.

Map Two entitled "Ludlow School Arboretum" is a fairly old map. Few of the roads still exist. Just south of the school there is a road that runs parallel to it, called Tuart Road. The river has since been straightened from its winding course by the Public Works Department (the dotted lines). Ludlow North Road would be slightly to the right of the map, at the very bottom.

In 1922 a tuart mill was erected in Wonnerup for the purpose of milling the over mature Tuart trees. Some form of transport was required for the felled logs. The answer to the problem came in the form of a timber tramline that ran from Ludlow to Wonnerup. It had timber sleepers and very thick steel rails and ran parallel to Bussell Highway, on the eastern side. Since the only train at the time was the "Ballarat" which took timber from Yokonup (near Jarrahwood) to the port at Lockeville, via Ludlow, (similar to the lines current position in Ludlow) some other sort of engine was needed. Teams of bullocks and sometimes horses provided the required power. The bullocks were hooked onto harnesses and chains which were attached to "whims". "Whims" are a pair of wheels on an axle with a type of cradle inbetween which would hold the log.

The Ludlow river proved a problem as the tramline had to cross it. Another bridge was constructed for the line, approximately forty metres southeast of the existing bridge. It was a low lying, but very strong bridge.

Today (1988), nothing remains of the bridge or line. The bridge was destroyed by the army in World War Two. The reason for this is unknown, but it is thought that the bridge's detonation was for the purpose of hindering the Japanese if they ever got down this far. The timber in the line had almost completely rotted away by 1940, and the Forestry Department had pulled up alot of the line for other uses.

By 1928 several of the experimental pine plantations made in 1907 and 1913 were ready to be milled. A spot mill, Howletts mill, was erected on the eastern side of the railway, close to the Ludlow siding (where Ludlow North Road and the railway intersect on the aerial photograph). This mill was powered by a steam engine that used fuel in the form of pine edgings and scrap. It did not process tuart logs, only pine thinnings.

Also in 1928 the Wonnerup mill closed down as it outlived its use, all of the over mature Tuart trees had been removed.

In 1936 Howletts Mill closed down and it was not until a decade later that the Ludlow mill was erected near the Forestry College. Originally it was only for pine which had been planted in the area steadily since 1907, but it was extended with a double bladed saw for the Tuart trees once Tuart became in demand again in the early Fifties.

Once the mill was up and running the Forestry could afford to build houses for its workers. The first two had been built previously in 1919 just north of the river to the east of Ludlow North road. Four more houses were built behind

these after World War Two, perpendicular to Ludlow North Road. Eight more were built a little further along the road on the other side. Soon after four more were built on the south side of the river, slightly south of the teachers house.

All of these houses are of the same basic shape and colour except the last four which were light blue in colour. The others are all dark brown and look similar to the teachers house and figure 6.

Another type of house was built, the single man's quarters. Consisting of a kitchen, lounge and bedroom this type of house is now unique to Ludlow as all of the others in the state have been demolished.(see figure 7)

In 1955 it was discovered that an inferior grade of pine tree has been planted for the last forty eight years and that *Pinus Radiata* should be the only species of pine planted in the future.

Then in 1960 it was decided that prime areas of Tuart Forest should be left alone, and that pine should only be planted in areas of inferior soil quality.

The last pine tree was planted in the Tuart Forest in 1971. This meant no more of the Tuart Forest would be taken over by pine, only the existing area would be replanted with *Radiata*, if any.

Ludlow was big enough to support a local store between approximately 1918 and 1973. Known as Ashton's Store it was situated west of the Ludlow siding on the same side of the road. The store incorporated a Post Office and was probably similar to many of the petrol stations found on the side of the highway today. The similarity exists as the store used to be near the highway before it was moved.

The original owners of Ashtons, Elizabeth (see figure 8) and George Ashton also owned the house adjacent known as "Ashtons Cottage". When the State school closed in 1948 its last teacher, Mr William Kemp, who incidentally only had one arm and a hook, bought the store and the cottage. Once the store closed Mr Kemp still retained the paper delivery service, which was taken over by J. and J. Lignan in 1979.

In 1976 a five year working plan was introduced into the Tuart Forest. It has four principle aims which were;

1. Appreciate the Tuart Forest for its unique biological values.
2. To regenerate the forest in the hope of enhancing its value.
3. Set aside part of the forest as Flora and Fauna Management

Priority Areas.

4. To enhance the aestheticism of the forest and provide for public appreciation and enjoyment of appropriate sections.

Timber production in the Ludlow Tuart Forest in the future is aimed at preserving the forest in its natural beauty. If the forest can be protected from the danger of mineral exploitation then it will, hopefully, continue to amaze people with its hidden stories and grandeur from here to eternity.

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