

GERRINGONG HOTELS

'JERRINGONG ARMS' – 1857

Although Governor, Lieutenant -General Sir George Gipps, in January 1846:

'was pleased to declare **Jerringong**, Kiama and Dapto places at which Beer may be sold in quantities not less than two gallons'¹ and again in May 1850, Governor, Sir Charles Augustus Fitzroy, CH,KCB, declared:

'the Townships of **JERRINGONG**, JAMBEROO, and DAPTO... places at which any fermented or spirituous liquor, or any mixed liquor, part of which is fermented or spirituous, may be sold in

Gerringong Arms,
WILLIAM LANG, PROPRIETOR.
THE ABOVE HOUSE will be opened on Tuesday next, the 22nd instant, when the Landlord invites his friends and the inhabitants of this district to call and
"Renovate their Spirits."
Luncheon at 11 o'clock in the morning.
Supper at 8 in the evening.
Free of Charge.
GERRINGONG ARMS
Has been fitted up for the accommodation of travellers and country visitors. The rooms are spacious and recently furnished, and no desirable comfort will be found wanting.
Wines, Spirits, Ale and Porter, &c., will be supplied of the very best quality; and the charges will be strictly moderate.
Good stabling and paddocks.
Illawarra Mercury
21st December, 1857

quantities not less than two gallons at any one time'², it was not until 8 December, 1857³, when William Lang secured a 'Publican's General License'⁴ and opened the '**Jerringong Arms**'⁴ in the vacant premises 'formerly occupied by the Messrs. Ritchie'³ as the original 'Post Office General Stores',⁵ that Jerringong had its first 'public-house'.

The Illawarra Mercury of 14 December, 1857 reported: 'The opening of this house will afford accommodation, urgently needed, for some time past, at Jerringong.' [Site today: Jock's Bakery, Miller's Arcade].

Initially, all was not smooth sailing for Lang as he set forth in establishing his new venture.

He soon found that trying to encourage the locals of this God-fearing small town to patronise his new establishment, was 'hard- yakka' or well neigh impossible.

Whilst holding out hope that business would one day improve, Lang was forced in the meantime, to supplement his meagre income in other ways.

He held Entertainment Nights⁶ and Balls⁷ but still very few of the local townsfolk would attend:

*'The wizard of Australia has been performing for two nights at Lang's public-house...it was a very creditable display of the sort, and worthy of a fuller house. The attendance was very small, but cash is scarce, and it would take witchcraft enough to squeeze blood from a turnip as to draw shillings from the pockets of the Gerringongesse just now. The respectables, of course, don't like going to a public-house.'*⁷

Unlike the Gerringong Council, which in 1885 stated:

*'Gerringong has no natural scenery sufficiently striking to command any attention amongst the magnificent views that can be found in other localities in which Nature has been more lavish with her favours'*⁸, Lang came to realise the enormous potential for Gerringong to become the mecca for tourists coming to the South Coast.

He therefore went out of his way, to encourage patrons from all walks of life to travel down from Sydney and other places by sea or by horse, in order to relax and enjoy the tranquillity and striking beauty of this magnificent part of the colony, where the majestic lush-green mountains gently flow down to caress the sea.

'LANTERRICK HOTEL' 1861 - 1872

After revamping the 'Jerringong Arms' as the 'Lanterrnick Hotel' in 1861, Lang heavily advertised its unique features in the Sydney⁹ and local papers:

'Mr. Lang has much pleasure in informing his Sydney Friends and the Public, that he is now in the position to offer first-class accommodation to those who may favour him with their patronage. FAMILIES and INVALIDS who intend visiting this District during the approaching Summer, will find that the Lanterrnick Hotel offers many and attractive inducements. The House is within a few minutes' walk of the Sea... where those desirous of SEA BATHING can readily secure its advantages. The Scenery in the vicinity is of the highest order, and is not to be surpassed by any on the Southern Coast.'

Examiner, 30th September, 1862

THE
LANTERRICK HOTEL,
1862 **GERRINGONG,** 1862
PROPRIETOR WILLIAM LANG.

THE above Hotel having been recently erected expressly for the Proprietor, and furnished with every attention to taste and comfort, Mr. LANG has much pleasure in informing his Sydney Friends and the Public, that he is now in a position to offer first-class accommodation to those who may favor him with their patronage.

Families and Invalids

Who intend visiting this District during the approaching Summer, will find that the Lanterrnick Hotel offers many and attractive inducements. The House is situated within a few minutes' walk of the Sea, (the elevated nature of the intervening ground effectually screening it from a too close proximity), where those desirous of

Sea Bathing

can readily secure its advantages. The Scenery in the vicinity is of the highest order, and is not to be surpassed by any on the Southern Coast.

Gentlemen in search of a healthy and quiet locality in which to spend a few weeks of relaxation during the Summer, will not, the Proprietor feels confident, regret a visit to Gerringong, in the neighborhood of which they will find an abundance of shooting and fishing.

TERMS STRICTLY MODERATE.

Good Stable Accommodation and secure Paddocks.

*during the Summer, will not, the Proprietor feels confident, regret a visit to Gerringong, in the neighbourhood of which they will find an abundance of shooting and fishing.'*¹⁰

Following a slight set-back when the Lanterrnick Hotel was severely damaged by lightning a month after its opening,¹¹ major upheaval soon erupted throughout the District, when in 1863, Lang, who had recommended his niece, Julia Acherson, for the vacant position of Postmistress at the Gerringong Post Office, had her operate the said Post Office from a room at his hotel once she was appointed.

Naturally, many local women entering or exiting a public-house in order to post a letter, were horrified that they would be seen by the town's 'busybodies' who had nothing better to do with their time.^A

The following article relating to the conduct of such Jerringong people appeared in the Illawarra Mercury of 28th April, 1856:

'A society is in the course of formation at Jerringong, a committee having been appointed for that purpose, to be called the Anti-poke-your-nose-into-other-peoples-business Society: it being absolutely necessary that these persons who take such a lively interest in their neighbours affairs, should be awarded a B.P. medal, as a token of the "non-admiration" of their services.'

Illawarra Mercury, 15th October, 1861

Ball and Refreshments.

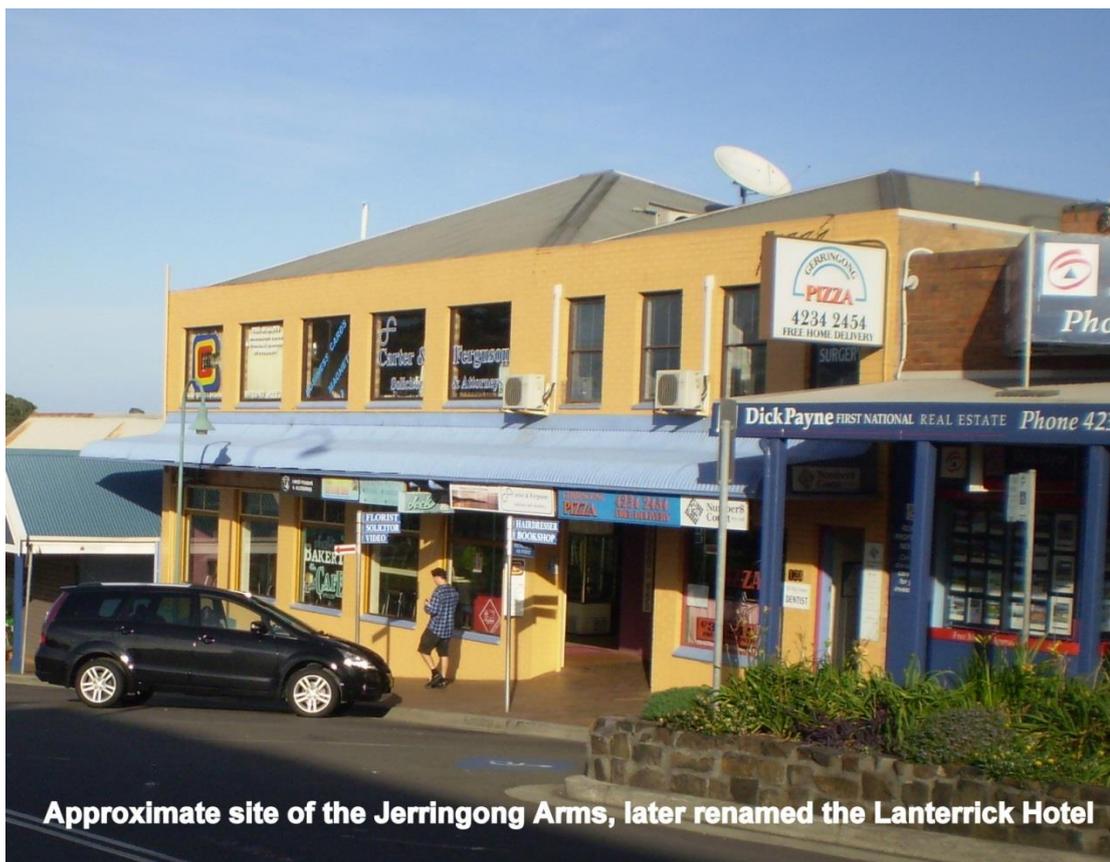
MR. W. LANG, of the Gerringong Arms, respectfully informs his friends and the public that he will give an Entertainment of the above description in his new establishment,

"The Lanterrnick Hotel,"
GERRINGONG,
ON WEDNESDAY EVENING, 23rd INST.

DOUBLE TICKETS 5s.
SINGLE TICKETS 3s.

Dancing to commence at 8 o'clock.

W. L. feels that it is almost superfluous to state that every exertion will be made to render this Entertainment worthy the patronage of the Ladies and Gentlemen of the district—the accommodation afforded by his new premises being such as to warrant the fulfilment of the above assertion.



Approximate site of the Jerringong Arms, later renamed the Lanterrick Hotel

'DAIRYMAN'S ARMS' 1864 -1866

Following that 'small-town' dilemma, Lang then had to contend with new competition raised by Michael F. Egan opening a licensed public-house, the **'Dairyman's Arms'**, on the old Gerringong Rd. at Omega Retreat. [Site today: Located near Chittick's farm on Miller's access lane on the western side of the Princes Highway, opposite Griffy Miller's 'Dunoon Farm'.]

The **'Dairyman's Arms'** rapidly became extremely popular with Mackey Gray's Omega Retreat tenant farmers and their rough farm-hands.

Shortly after the 'Dairyman's Arms' was granted a bagatelle license in July 1866,¹² the complex was 'completely destroyed by fire' in October of the same year.¹³

Back in town, Lang continued to struggle in all aspects of his business.

Eventually, with Liabilities of £215 9s and Assets of £137 8s, Lang was declared insolvent in November 1867.¹⁴

From 1868 till 1872,¹⁶ Robert Miller J.P. became the **Lanterrick Hotel's** new owner and William Alexander Hines the Licensee¹⁵. [Hines had for many years operated 'a place of accommodation and

St. Patrick's Day.
LOTS OF FUN
 AT
THE DAIRYMAN'S ARMS,
GERRINGONG ROAD.

M. F. EGAN begs to inform his friends and the public generally, that he purposes celebrating with the usual sports, the raising of the sign of his house—"The Dairyman's Arms."

The programme will comprise, amongst other things—

- A greasy pole for climbers, with a valuable hat for prize.
- Pig, with greasy tail, to be caught.
- Races in sacks.
- Wheelbarrow races, &c.

Kiama Independent
8th March, 1866

Bear in mind—ST. PATRICK'S DAY,
Saturday, 17th March.

Luncheon Rooms... in the building known as the Central Store, next to the Court House, Terralong Street, KIAMA'.¹⁷

When the Gerringong Municipal Council was proclaimed in 1871, its Meetings were held in a building adjoining the **Lanterrnick Hotel**.¹⁸

Tragically, in July 1872, a stump-fire lit by the Nelson boys in Willow Vale flared out of control.

Roaring across the dense scrub in an easterly direction, it soon had Gerringong at its mercy.

With no town water available, the courageous residents were powerless to stop its fury.

In next to no time, the fire had devoured houses, shops, the C.of E. Church and School, as well as the **Lanterrnick Hotel**.¹⁹

'GERRINGONG ARMS' 1874 - 1875

In what must surely be the shortest life-span of any 'public-house', the second '**Gerringong Arms**' opened in Gerringong Rd. [Site today: unknown] in November, 1874.²⁰

Licensed to a Rose Valley resident, John Thomas Milligan,²¹ it was forced to close down in February, 1875 after numerous brawls, mass destruction and total mayhem became the order of the day - maybe it was just the local farm-hands faithfully following the Government's edict of buying liquor in quantities of 'no less than two gallons at any one time'. In any case, the God-fearing 'respectables' of Gerringong just couldn't cope with such 'ominous signs of a "Whisky-war"'.²¹

'OCEAN VIEW INN' 1875 - 1899



In 1874, Frederick Phillips arrived in Gerringong from Charcoal (Unanderra) and immediately set about building the '**Ocean View Inn**' which would also include a Library.

Shortly after the building was completed, he was granted a Liquor Licence in 1875,²² and opened the Inn for business.

The Inn was situated in Fern Street, on the then main southern road from Kiama to Nowra and overlooked the majestic beach on Geering Bay to its east.

This solid Colonial Georgian building was constructed of blue-metal blocks and mostly lined with rich cedar.

The new public-house, with its own stables and grazing paddocks for horses, was the ideal place for passing travellers who wished to rest or stay by the sea for a few days.

From a maritime point of view, the **'Ocean View Inn'** featured at various times.

As the Gerringong district developed and the local produce increased in the mid 1870s, local farmers and store keepers agitated for the nearby Boat Harbour to be put to better use.

Fortuitously at the time, the Shellharbour Co-operative Navigational Company (S.C.N.C.) decided to replace its ageing coastal sailing fleet with new Steamers.

In order to help defray the cost of two new vessels, the S.C.N.C. called for a Public Meeting at the **'Ocean View Inn'** to propose that the people of Gerringong buy a third share in its new £3,300 Steamer ['Dairymaid' was still under construction] which once built, would service the combined Gerringong and Shellharbour trade. Of the 3600 shares on offer, 1200 were set aside for Gerringong. After much enthusiastic discussion by the locals, only 150 shares were sold at the meeting and a further 100 later.²³

The 'Dairymaid' however, was launched on 12th February, 1876.²⁴

After its successful Sydney Harbour trial on 31st March,²⁵ the [82 tons, 88' long x 18' beam x 9' hold] screw steamer was advertised to leave on its maiden voyage south from the Caledonian Wharf at the end of King St Sydney on 6th April, 1876, at 8pm under the command of Captain W. Wilson.²⁶

Expecting the steamer to arrive at Shellharbour on the following morning and then immediately depart for Gerringong's Boat Harbour; *'at an early hour visitors crowded from all parts of the district to this most picturesque little spot'* to have a picnic and greet its arrival.

All catering for the picnic to be held on this momentous occasion was organised by **Frederick Phillips** of the **'Ocean View Inn'**. *'By noon there could not have been less than 350 persons present.'*

Un-be-known to the assembled gathering however, the 'Dairymaid', through an accident to part of its machinery, had not left Sydney.

Not to spoil a good party however and in true Gerringong spirit, everyone had a wonderful time down at the harbour and cheerfully sauntered back home in the late afternoon.²⁷

Until the arrival of the railway in 1893, the **'Ocean View Inn'** was the Gerringong staging-post for the six daily Kiama to Nowra and back Stage-Coach runs. Meals were provided at the Inn for passengers as the horses were changed.

With the railway now replacing the Stage-coaches, Phillips continued operating the **'Ocean View Inn'** and held its Liquor Licence from 1875 till 1899²⁸ except for three years when it was held by John W. Francis.²⁹

In 1912, Thomas A.Noble purchased the building and initially ran it as an accommodation house.^B

Over the years, many changes to the building have taken place.

The two small annexes on the north and south sides have been demolished and the balcony we see at the front of the building today was erected in 1916.

In the 1920s and 1930s, the lower rooms of the building facing today's Fern St. were leased by Rene Chittick, who operated them as the 'Beach Lea' Refreshments Rooms, catering for travellers using the then Princes Highway, which at the time came through the centre of Gerringong.

Charles Kingsford Smith had his evening meal in the Rooms on the eve of his trans-Tasman flight from nearby Seven Mile Beach in 1933.^c



'Beach Lea' Refreshments
Run by Rene Chittick circa 1930

In 2013, only the central section of the original building remains and it mainly caters for various retail outlets such as 'Scoops' and 'Cherry Red'. The building itself is still owned by the Noble family.



When construction of the Kiama to Bomaderry rail link was about to commence in the late 1880s, many large landholders such as the Campbell's and Hindmarsh's anticipated that the Gerringong central business area, along with the rest of the township, would rapidly expand around the proposed Railway Station.

They decided, at the time, to cash-in by developing their larger land holdings in that area into smaller residential blocks.

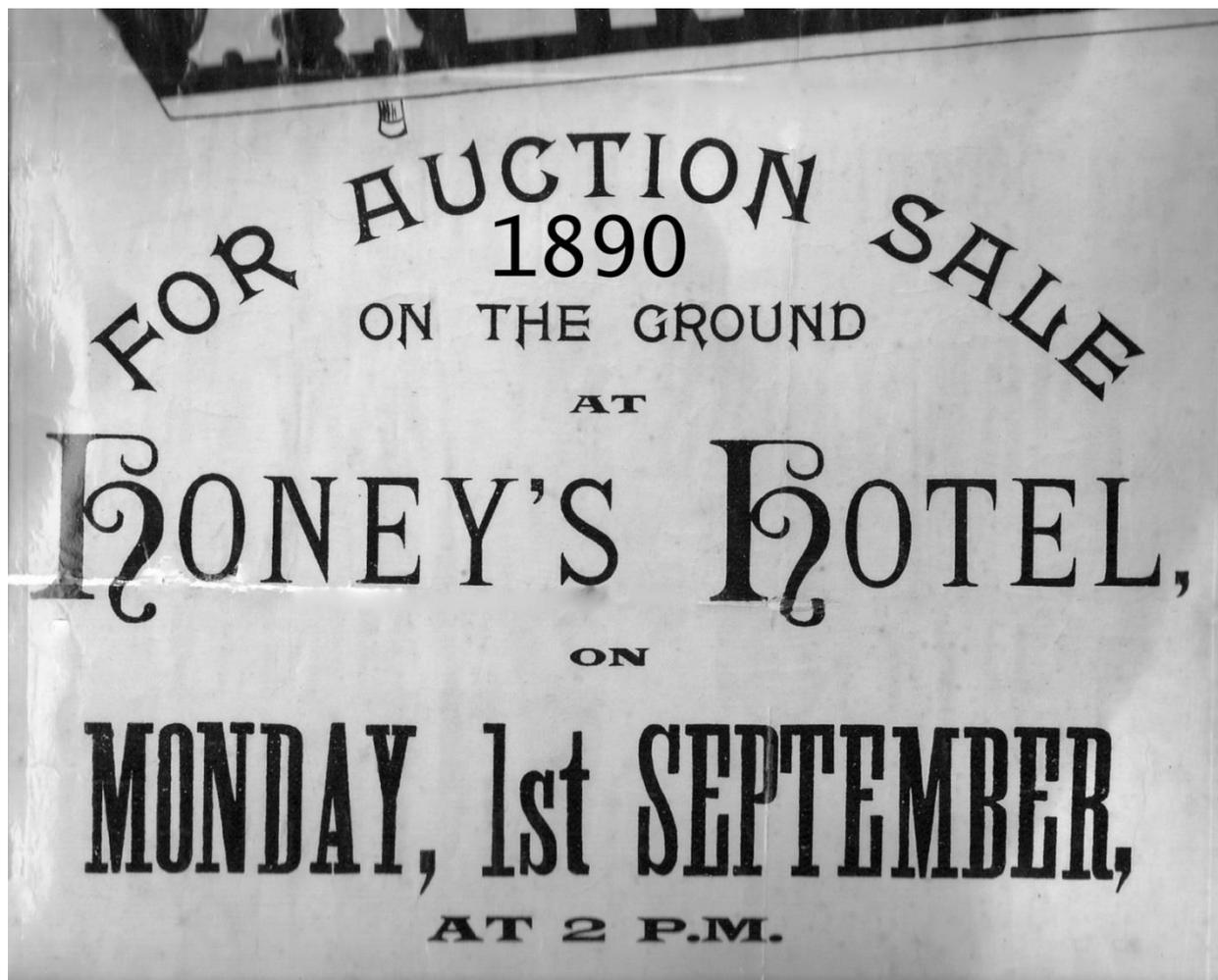
The two main developments were Hindmarsh's 'Alnedale' Estate on the southern side of Belinda St. and Campbells' 'Railway Park' Estate on the northern side of Belinda St.

'HONEY'S HOTEL' - 1890

The first land development to take place was W.R.Hindmarsh's, 'Alnedale' Estate on the southern side of Belinda St.³⁰

This Estate came on-line on 1 September, 1890 when 16 allotments were put up for auction.

The first building erected on the Estate was **John Honey's Hotel** on the corner of Campbell and Belinda Sts.



The Hotel was actually built just prior to the auction and its grounds were used to conduct the auction.^D John Honey held the Hotel's first Licence.³¹

'RUSSELL'S HOTEL' 1891 -1894

Later that year – November 1890,³² Honey sold the Hotel and its Liquor Licence to Henry Russell – **Russell's Hotel.**

Russell operated the Hotel from 1891 – 1894.³³

'MURPHY'S HOTEL' 1895 - 1898

In 1895 Henry Russell on-sold the Hotel and Licence to Peter Murphy – **Murphy's Hotel.**

Murphy operated the Hotel from 1895 – 1898.³⁴

'BERGIN'S GERRINGONG HOTEL' 1899 - 1968



In 1899, Thomas Bergin, who worked for Murphy, purchased the Licence³⁵ and leased the Hotel from Murphy for a few years before purchasing it outright. The Hotel was then known as **Bergin's Gerringong Hotel**.

As with William Lang and the Lanterrick Hotel in 1861, Tom initially found business was very slow in that isolated part of town.

In order to supplement his income he built saleyards adjoining the Hotel [Site today: Squash Court] for livestock dealing.³⁶

When Thomas died in 1918, the Licence passed to his son Bill who held it for the next thirty two years.

Bill Bergin was a true entrepreneur in every sense of the word, and in a very short time the Hotel had:^D

- (a) the first phone in town – you simply requested - 1.
- (b) one of Gerringong's first cars.
- (c) the township's first petrol Bowser in 1926³⁷
- (d) its own Electricity – 11 years before Gerringong was officially connected in 1928. Bill purchased his own generator to run the 50 or so lights.
- (e) the District's first wireless set.
- (f) Gerringong's first Car Hire.^D

When Bill died in 1950, the Hotel's Licence transferred to his wife Molly.

'CRONIN'S HOTEL – GERRINGONG HOTEL' 1968 -



With Molly's death in 1968, the Hotel's Licence passed to her son-in-law, John 'Jack' Cronin – **Cronin's Hotel**.

After Jack's passing in 1997, it was handed on to his son Mick who holds the current Licence.

Over the years the **Gerringong Hotel**, a stalwart of the community, has undergone many extensions and renovations.

Nearby Bergin Street was named after the Bergin family in May, 2003.³⁸

1. NSW Government Gazette 23 January, 1846 2. Ibid 31 May, 1850 3. Illawarra Mercury 14 December, 1857 4. Certificate by Justices to Authorise the Granting of a License No. 322 - 20 April 1858 5. SMH Advert 'TO LET' 22 April, 1857 14. Ibid. 30 November, 1867 p.8 15. Ibid. 4 July, 1872 9. Ibid. Advert. 14 January, 1862 p.8 11. Ibid. 29 November, 1861 19. Ibid. 4 July, 1872 26. Ibid. 3 April, 1876 27. Ibid. 5 April, 1876 30. Ibid. 9 September, 1890 p.5 36. Ibid. 24 September, 1901 6. Examiner 29 September, 1860 7. Ibid. 15 October, 1861 10. Ibid. 30 September, 1862 17. Ibid. 11 November, 1862 8. Gerringong Council Correspondence 05 May, 1885 37. Ibid. 8-18 February, 1926 32. Ibid. 14 November, 1890 12. Kiamo Independent 7 June, 1866 18. Ibid. 12 Jan, 2 Feb, 1 June, 8 June, 15 June, & 28 June, 1871 20. Ibid. 19 November, 1874 22. Ibid. 21 January, 1875 & 25 January, 1875 24. Ibid. 30 January, 1876 25. Ibid 11 April, 1876 28. Ibid. 11 April, 1876 36. Ibid. July 1906, Licensing Court 38. Ibid. 4 June, 2003 16. NSW WAO Reel 1243 & Gov. Gazette – Copied by John Graham G&DHS 1983 : 1868[No. 2876], 1869[No. 2156], 1870[No. 1928], 1871[No. 1956]. 21. Ibid. 1874[No. 2340]. 23. Ibid. 1875[No. 979] – Gazetted 19 April, 1857 29. Ibid. 1891[No. 6530], 1892[No. 6662], 1893[No. 6434] 31. Ibid. 1890[No. 6647] 33. Ibid. 1891[No. 6544], 1892[No. 6676], 1893[No. 6447], 1894[No. 5357] 34. Ibid. 1895[No. 5510], 1896[No. 5903], 1897[No. 6095], 1898[No. 6853] 35. Ibid. 1899[No. 6531] 13. Maitland Mercury 9 October, 1866

REFERENCES: **A.** Postmaster General correspondence re. Gerringong Post Office 1857 – 1890 **B.** Athol Noble: Notes re. Noble Family **C.** Chittick Family History & Robyn Elphick (nee Chittick) **D.** One of the original posters advertising the auction is held in the G&DHS's Museum **E.** Kiamo Independent Supplements 2000

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