

BILLOW VIEW HISTORICAL HOUSE

159 Belinda Street, Gerringong, NSW 2534.



The COOKE family of "Billow View"

William COOKE arrived from Ireland in 1855, and in the following year he married **Mary Anne** KING. They had 9 children.

William Richard COOKE, their first child, was born on 10 Jan 1857 on the family farm at Longbrush, Jerrara, New South Wales, Australia, and died on 13 Dec 1928 in Kiama, New South Wales, Australia at age 71. He was buried on 15 Dec 1928 in Gerringong, New South Wales, Australia. Ancestral File Number: 1ZJL-XB2.

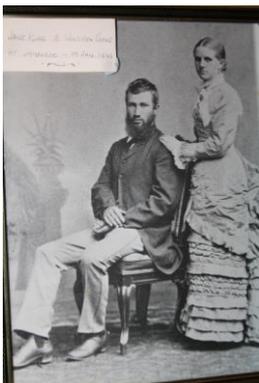
William Richard Cooke worked with his father on the family farms at Longbrush & after 1860 at Broughton Vale & Broughton Creek.

Later his parents and siblings moved to Stoney Ck. Curramore (between Jamberoo and Albion Park). **William Richard** remained at Broughton Vale and established a bacon curing business.

In addition to bacon curing, **William Richard** and his brother **Samuel**, carried the mail on horseback between Kiama and Berry. **Samuel**, who was living in Kiama, carried the mailbag to Gerringong where he was met by **William** who took the mailbag on to Berry.

When the Berry Estate was being sold off in 1892, **William Richard** purchased the land east of the Catholic Church, Gerringong, fronting Jupiter St, and built a bacon curing factory. This quickly grew into a thriving industry, with **William Richard** raising his own pigs to ensure the best quality meat. At its peak his operations covered a chain of piggeries from Dunmore to Jaspers Brush, and from Cambewarra to Kangaroo valley, with over 1200 pigs. Generally, these piggeries were established near local dairy factories, where surplus skim milk was used to feed the pigs.

The introduction of refrigeration meant that all the locally produced milk could be sold on the Sydney market, so **William Richard** sold off his piggeries and worked as a buyer for C Barnes & Co for almost 25 years.



William Richard married **Jane** KING, daughter of **Moses** KING and **Janet** RUSSELL, on 19 Jan 1881 in Kiama, New South Wales, Australia. **Jane** was born on 20 June 1857 at Jerrara Creek, Kiama, New South Wales, Australia, and died on 6 Dec 1935 in Gerringong, New South Wales, Australia at age 78. She was buried on 8 Dec 1935 in Gerringong, New South Wales, Australia.

In 1901 **William Richard** built Billow View to accommodate their growing family, of 8 children,
 1. Janet, 2. William Charles Dixon, 3. Agnes Ann, 4. Edith Isabel, 5. Alexander Wallace, 6. Alice Maud, 7 George Herbert, (George was killed in the WW1) and
 8. Harold Ernest.

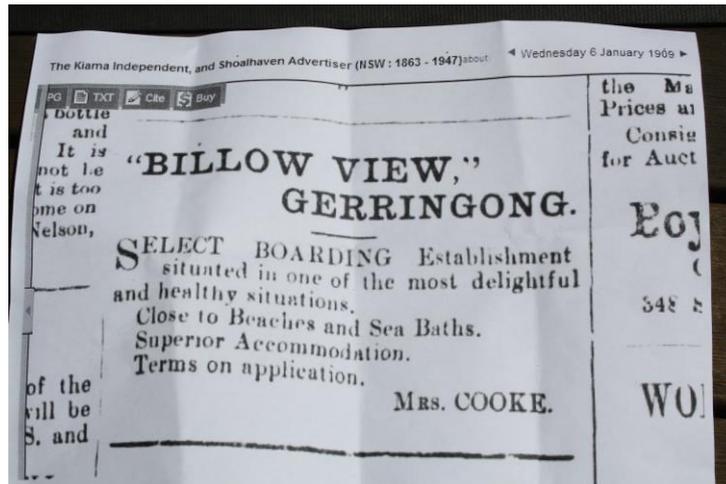
Their daughters all married: 1907 **Janet** married **Malcolm K MATHIE**; 1913 **Edith** married **Albert DAWES**;
 unknown year **Agnes Anne COOKE** (born on 19 Feb 1885 in Kiama, New South Wales, Australia and died on 21 May 1962 at age 77), married **Albert WILLIAMSON**. (The old WILLIAMSON home is on the Corner of Coal St, & Belinda Street); 1924 **Doris** married **Arthur J ROBINSON**.



William Richard & Jane COOKE decided to run a guest house.

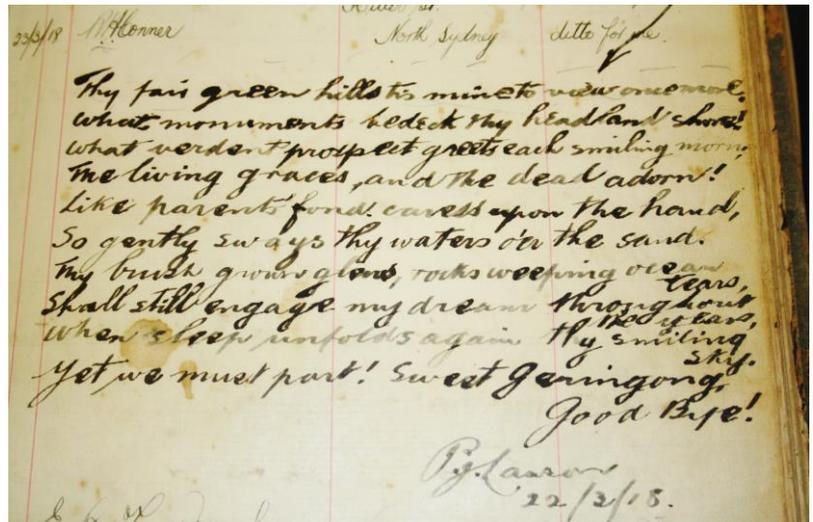
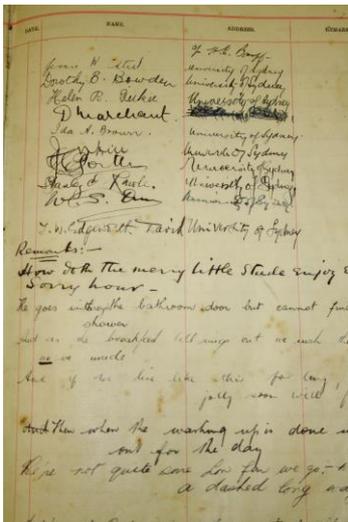
This advertisement appeared in the Kiama Independent and the Shoalhaven Advertiser (NSW: 1863-1947) on Wednesday 6th January 1909.

Billow View” Gerringong.
 Select Boarding Establishment situated in one of the most delightful and healthy situations.
 Close to Beaches and Sea Baths.
 Superior Accommodation.
 Terms on application Mrs. Cooke.



The Guest Registration books, one starting 1913 and another starting 1950 are still available for view.

The comments of guest are a joy to read, commending the hospitality of both Mr & Mrs COOKE and the beautiful hills and seaside.



Harold E Cooke (youngest child of William and Jane), married Amelia A Riddell. 1929. These were the last people of the family to live in Billow View. They continued the guesthouse with the family hospitality continuing. They owned one of the first cars in Gerringong and used it to drive to the station to collect guests from the train and transport them to Billow View. Harold Cooke was on the Gerringong Municipal Council, he was first elected in December 1931, he remained on council and was elected Mayor on December 15th 1941. He stood for council in December 1944 but was unsuccessful that year. It is believed that council meetings in these days could be some what heated, with debate and arguments of strong convictions.

In WW2, Harold was Chief Warden for the Gerringong Municipality. Some of his duties would have been to see that homes had black-out on their windows and car lights were dimmed .

Balls and dances were held at Billow View.

On New Years Eve guests from Billow View would dress up in fancy dress costume and parade about the main street. A group of Catholic nuns from Wagga regularly visited the guest house and Harold used to escort them to the Boat Harbour baths and clear the baths of other swimmers so that the nuns could bathe in privacy. There has also been a Cooke reunion held at the old home. And many years later, their daughter Marcelle Wilson returned to celebrate her 80th Birthday. In 1958 Harold & Millie sold "Billow View" to the Christian Brothers. The site included the hill at the back, down to Jupiter Street and the corner block across the road in Belinda street, this block had been kept to preserve the view of Warri Beach.

Harold and Millie built a new home next door and ran it as a small guesthouse.

In 1984, the Uniting Church bought their home as residence for the Uniting Church Minister, who still lives there in 2014.

Harold E Cooke died on 20.11 1971, and Amelia (Millie) in 1975.

The Catholic Church Christian Brothers bought "Billow View" and adjoining land, in 1958. It has been used as a retreat for priests, brothers and school groups. It is still owned by the Christian Brothers.

In 1981 a motel style building was built at the side.

In 2000 the hill at the back was sold. In 2004 restoration work was carried out on "Billow View" under heritage orders to preserve the outside appearance and use old timber where needed.

Later a new accommodation building was built at the back. This building has a large dining room and full kitchen and long closed in back verandah, with a great outlook.

All buildings are in excellent condition and used as holiday accommodation for families or small groups.



In recent years many people, who as children visited Billow View when the Cooke's ran it as a guest house, have returned to enjoy the refurbished facilities. There has also been a Cooke reunion held at the old home and Marcelle Wilson (daughter of William and Jane Cooke) returned to celebrate her 80th Birthday.

The Gerringong & District Historical Society Inc. wish to thank Brother Kevin Moss and the Christian Brothers archives, for loaning us the Silver Water Jug engraved "Billow View" and documents and guest book from their archives to study for this special occasion of opening to the public "Billow View" on Thursday 10th October 2013, when 65 people took the opportunity to return, or view for the first time "Billow View"

Margaret Sharpe

Publicity Officer GDHS

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