

An Interpretative History of the Ginninderra Blacksmith Shop: From Inception to the Present Day (c.1859-2011)



(Photo taken by Angela Bremers during site visit 19 September 2011)

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Due Date: 18 November 2011

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks to Nigel Featherstone of the ACT Heritage Unit for his help and allowing me to visit the site. Special thanks also to the ACT Heritage Library, the National Archives Australia, the National Library of Australia, Canberra District Historical Society, Canberra Archaeological Society and the National Trust. Warm regards to Christine and Michael Bremers who listened patiently. Thanks also to Peter Dowling, Bethany Lance and Helen Cooke.

NOTE ON THE RESEARCH REPORT

In the process of researching this assignment I have not found much new archival information, however I was able to piece together a detailed history of the Ginninderra Blacksmith Shop which I think would be useful for interpretation of the site.

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INTERPRETATIVE HISTORY: GINNINDERRA BLACKSMITH SHOP

1.1 The Significance of the Ginninderra Blacksmith Shop

The Ginninderra Blacksmith Shop was an important part of the Ginninderra community, and an important part of the history of the Ginninderra district (Dowling & Cosgrove, 2002, p.25). As the shop where most metal implements needed for daily life and work would have been produced for the Ginninderra community and possibly surrounding districts, the Ginninderra Blacksmith Shop provides insight into one of the earliest European settlements in the ACT (Cosgrove & Dowling, 2002, p.28). The Ginninderra Blacksmith Shop is also the last known remaining village blacksmith shop in Canberra (Cosgrove & Dowling, 2002, p.28).

1.2 Ginninderra Blacksmith Shop and the Establishment of Ginninderra

The Ginninderra Blacksmith Shop was built about thirty years after the first European occupation of Ginninderra, and approximately 21,000 years after the first Indigenous occupation of the Canberra region (Gillespie, 1992, pp.1,6; Dowling, 2003, p.2). The Ginninderra district was settled by George Thomas Palmer Snr in the late 1820s, although he did not formally acquire the property until the 1830s (Gillespie, 1992, p.6). The estate passed from him to his daughter who married the manager Mr. William Davis (Gillespie, 1992, p.12). “In 1877 Edward Kendall Crace bought a partnership with William Davis who had enlarged Ginninderra by including the holding called Gungahleen, and had thereon erected a stone dwelling” (Griffiths, 1976, p.86). During the early 1820s to the early 1830s the Queanbeyan –Canberra district was rapidly settled, mostly with small farms and outstations, some of which consisted only of slab huts (Robinson, 1927, p.15). The population consisted mostly of men, the majority of whom were convicts (Robinson, 1927, p.15). Only in the 1830s did settlement in its true sense begin (Robinson, 1927, p.15). Men came with their families to the districts in the County of Murray (Robinson, 1927, p.15). In the late 1850s during the second stage of Ginninderra’s development, James Thompson Hatch the first blacksmith at the Ginninderra Blacksmith Shop arrived in Ginninderra (Schumack, 1977, p.32).

2.1 First Blacksmith at the Blacksmith Shop James Thompson Hatch (1859-1864)

James Thompson Hatch was born in Goulburn in 1837 to Irish migrants Robert and Mary Hatch (Fletcher ed., 1993, p.78; Warman, 1981, p.79). Throughout his life he resided at

Ginninderra, Tumut, Byrock and Brewarrina (Fletcher ed., 1993, p.78). In 1859, Hatch tried to score rich on the goldfields at Kiandra (Schumack, 1977, p.32). He was not as fortunate as he may have liked to be, but he made enough money to survive for a little while (Schumack, 1977, p.32). Upon his arrival in Ginninderra he became the village's first blacksmith (Besant & Avery, 1996, p.2). Roughly a year after he came back from the goldfields and became blacksmith he married Mary Jane Daley (see figure 1) (Schumack, 1977, p.32; Fletcher ed., 1993, p.78).



James Thompson Hatch, early Ginninderra blacksmith and his wife, Mary Jane Hatch nee Daley.

Figure 1: James Thompson Hatch and his wife Mary Jane Hatch nee Daley

Source: Gillespie, L, L, 1992, *Ginninderra Forerunner to Canberra A History of the Ginninderra District*, published by L.L Gillespie, Campbell, A.C.T.(p.27)

Not a lot of information is found in newspapers about the site when it was first built, but some sources state that it was built in 1859, the same year that other important establishments such as the Ginninderra Post Office went into operation (Dowling, 2003, p.2; Gillespie, 1992, p.27). Not a lot of information is found in old documents on which materials were originally used to construct the Ginninderra Blacksmith Shop however it was likely to have been made out of slabs of timber as it is now, as local timber would have been in ready supply (Gillespie, 1992, p.20). Corrugated iron may have been added later (Dowling, 2003, p.5). Other early buildings in Ginninderra were made from yellow box, stringy bark and red gum trees, with pioneers finding that yellow box could be used for homebuilding and stringy bark made

adequate roof material until corrugated iron could replace the wooden roof (Gillespie, 1992, p.20). The Ginninderra Blacksmith Shop was constructed close to the Canberra to Yass Road now called the Barton Highway (see figure 9) (Smith, 1975, p.52; Gillespie, 1992, p. 153). There appears to be little information about what Hatch's main jobs were during his time at the shop, however it seems likely that he would have worked on shoeing horses and making nails (Bartlett, c.1980, p.1). Some sources credit him with the establishment of the Blacksmith Shop; however some seem to think that the shop was there before Hatch was (Dowling, 2003, p.5). James Thompson Hatch worked at the Blacksmith Shop until he was replaced by Florence¹ Joseph MacAuliffe² (Gillespie, 1992, p.28).

2.2 Second Blacksmith at the Blacksmith Shop: Flourence MacAuliffe 1864-1874

Florence Joseph MacAuliffe, who married Mary Ann Flanagan in Goulburn in 1860, started working at the Blacksmith shop in 1864 (Gillespie, 1992, p.28; Procter ed., 2001, p.195). The historical record seems to have remembered him better than they did Hatch.

(1868, *Queanbeyan Age*, p.3; 'Another Fire', 1867, pp.4,5; 'Court of Petty Sessions' 1874, page 2; 'Wanted An Active Lad, as an apprentice blacksmith' 1864, p. 3; 'Legal And District News Queanbeyan Police Court', 1869, p. 2; Mrs Mary Sheehan', 1944, p.2). In 1864, about the time that he first started working at the Ginninderra Blacksmith Shop, MacAuliffe put an advertisement in the *Queanbeyan Age* and *General Advertiser* asking for a male to become his apprentice (Gillespie, 1992, p.28; 'Wanted An Active Lad, as an apprentice blacksmith' 1864, p. 3). The person who answered the advertisement was probably the one who later taught him how to make ploughs. One of the most notable contributions MacAuliffe made to the community was the development of high standard plough (Schumack, 1977, p.76). He found a former employee of Murdoch & Co., in Scotland to teach him how to make ploughs (Schumack, 1977, p.76). The ploughs that MacAuliffe made readily were an improvement on the earlier cruder wooden ploughs used by farmers throughout the southern districts (Schumack, 1977, 76). This was appreciated as many of the estates in Ginninderra were farming properties and the cheaper better quality plough made by MacAuliffe was exactly what they needed (Gillespie, 1992, p.20). In 1873 one of MacAuliffe's ploughs was used in the *Queanbeyan District Annual Ploughing Match* ('Local and District News Annual Ploughing Matches', 1873, p.3). John Southwell won first place in the second match using MacAuliffe's plough ('Local and District News Annual Ploughing Matches', 1873, p.3). One

¹ In some records Florence is spelled as Flourence.

² In some records his surname is spelt as McAuliffe not MacAuliffe

of the other competitors “used a plough manufactured by Cox of Goulburn” and another competitor for the under eighteen match used a wooden colonial plough (‘Local and District News Annual Ploughing Matches’, 1873, p.3). MacAuliffe’s plough had an honourable mention: “spoken highly of by all practical ploughmen on the ground and was certainly, so far as our judgement goes, a model implement”, whereas the other ploughs did not receive such an honourable mention (‘Local and District News Annual Ploughing Matches’, 1873, p.3). While the newspapers noted how good MacAuliffe’s ploughs were, they also mentioned a controversy over the lending of someone else’s plough, that he had lent to someone after it had been left in his shop for two years for repairs (‘Court of Petty Sessions’ 1874, p.2). Another person who had asked the original owner for the plough, came to the shop asking for the plough and was told that it had been lent to someone else (‘Court of Petty Sessions’ 1874, p.2). The matter was brought to the Court of Petty sessions when the second person demanded the use of the plough (‘Court of Petty Sessions’ 1874, p.2). The court decided that MacAuliffe had no right to lend the plough in the first place (‘Court of Petty Sessions’ 1874, p.2). Despite this incident he had a fairly good reputation while he was in Ginninderra as he was noted to be a good craftsman by members of the community (1868, *Queanbeyan Age*, p.3). For example, Edward Smith wrote in to the *Queanbeyan Age* in 1868 that MacAuliffe did a terrific job at fixing his thrasher³ -- a thrasher being an agricultural machine used to separate the grain from the straw -- and above that MacAuliffe charged a reasonable amount for the service (1868, *Queanbeyan Age*, p.3; Reader’s Digest Library of Essential Knowledge, 1980, p.1034). MacAuliffe’s residences were dangerously close to the Blacksmith Shop (‘Another Fire’, 1867, pp.4, 5). In 1867 his family woke up one Sunday night in October to discover that their premises were on fire (‘Another Fire’, 1867, pp.4, 5). They managed to escape by moving away some bark and slabs (‘Another Fire’, 1867, p.4, 5). Their dwelling was later reconstructed 10-20 metres away from the Blacksmith Shop (Dowling, 2003, p.6). In 1874 George Curran took over the Blacksmith Shop (Gillespie, 1992 p.2).

2.3. Third blacksmith at the Blacksmith Shop: George Curran 1875-1889

George Curran was born in Queanbeyan to Joseph and Margaret Curran in 1852 (Fletcher ed., 1993, p.38; Maher, c.1981, p.28). He married Mary Ann Hatch, possibly a relative of James

³ Thrasher is spelt as thresher.

Thompson Hatch, in 1876⁴ (see Figure 2) (Fletcher ed., 1993, p.38). From 1874-1889 he lived in Ginninderra and worked at the Ginninderra Blacksmith Shop (Fletcher ed., 1993, p.38). George Curran resided in what later became the telegraph office in 1879 after George Curran had moved to a more comfortable dwelling (Gillespie, 1992, p.96).



Figure 2: "George Curran and his wife Mary Ann (nee Hatch)."

Source: Maher, B, c.1981, *In Praise of Pioneers: an Account of the Keefe and Curran families, Queanbeyan district*, printed by Printwrite Fastprint, Canberra (p.26).

According to the Biographical Register of Canberra and Queanbeyan, he played cricket, was a member of the One Tree Hill Jockey Club, the Ginninderra Free Selector's Association and the Ginninderra Protection Union (Procter ed., 2001, p. 67). Helen Cooke's report on the History of Gungahlin stated that the Ginninderra Blacksmith Shop was often used as a meeting place for those organisations (Cooke, 2010, p.15). Proprietor Ellis Smith advertised his horse in the Queanbeyan Age for breeding purposes ('To Horse Breeders the Draught Stallion Challenger', 1886, p.3). The caretaker of the horse was George Curran who was to supply the horse and other owners mares sent to breed with Smith's horse with grass and

⁴ There is a little confusion on whether Mary Ann Hatch was a niece or daughter to James Thompson Hatch. The *Australian Capital Territory Interim Heritage Places Register* states that George Curran married James' daughter Mary Ann Hatch (p.2). The *Biographical Register of Canberra and Queanbeyan 1820-1930* says that James had a daughter called Mary Ann however, it was William Hatch and Margaret Hatch nee Nugent's daughter also named Mary Ann who married George Curran (p.138). Marion Warman's *Hatch Family in Australia* family tree also suggests that George Curran's wife Mary Ann Hatch was James' niece (pp. 3, 11).

water ('To Horse Breeders the Draught Stallion Challenger', 1886, p.3). Ellis Smith must have trusted George Curran and probably thought Curran's skills as a blacksmith shoeing horses may be useful for taking care of the horses. George Curran's apprentice was his nephew Henry Roland Curran (Maher, c.1981, p.27?). Henry Roland Curran returned to the Ginninderra Blacksmith Shop two years after he and George left (Warman, 1981, p.27). George left to start up business in Bungendore ('From Our Correspondent: Gininderra, 1889, p.2). Henry's granddaughter states that Henry had gone to work in Sydney before he came to work in the Ginninderra Blacksmith Shop (Maher, c.1981, p.31). The statement may have meant that Henry Curran may have worked in Sydney before he became apprentice to his uncle. The article suggests that maybe Henry Curran did not go with his uncle to Bungendore, or if he did it was not for very long. Not a lot of information is contained about George Curran's abilities, however judging by what information is obtained about Henry Roland Curran's abilities, we can ascertain what George Curran was able to do. Henry Roland Curran could shoe horses, fix and make wheels ('Mr H. R. Curran, Gininderra', 1906, p.2; 'Pioneers Vote Again After Wait of 43 Years', 1949, p.2). He was also able to replace worn out parts from sulkies and drays – which seem to be two types of horse drawn vehicles (Dowling, 2003, p.15; 'Vehicles', 1928, p.23). Judging by one newspaper article in the Queanbeyan Age and Queanbeyan Observer in 1915, a R. Curran took over the [Bungendore] "Coachbuilding & General Blacksmith Business lately carried on by George Curran of Bungendore" ('R Curran', 1915, p. 3). The article does not state whether other blacksmiths or wheelwrights worked in the shop ('R Curran', 1915, p. 3). Ascertaining George Curran's skills in carriage repair is not possible from that article. Judging by his 15 year stay in Ginninderra it can be assumed that he was able to shoe horses and fix wheels and make some farming implements. He was likely to be a good worker to have maintained his business for so long. Alexander Warwick became blacksmith at the Ginninderra Blacksmith Shop after George Curran decided to take his business to Bungendore ('From Our Correspondent: Gininderra, 1889, p.2). In 1889, this event warranted a mention in the Queanbeyan Age ('From Our Correspondent: Gininderra, 1889, p.2). The Queanbeyan Age article who also described George Curran as "genial" wished George Curran the best of luck in his future endeavours and welcomed Alexander Warwick as the next Ginninderra blacksmith ('From Our Correspondent: Gininderra, 1889, p.2).

2.4 Fourth Blacksmith at the Ginninderra Blacksmith Shop: Alexander Warwick 1889-1891

Alexander Warwick was not only a blacksmith, but a wheelwright and inventor ('The Warwick Patent', 1915, p.3). Alexander Warwick invented a 'break of gauge' system which won approval from Mr. Hoyle the Minister of Railways for its potential to solve issues caused by incompatible railway tracks between the different states ('The Warwick Patent', 1915, p.3). The different railway tracks between the states were a result of the different miles of track per population numbers (Jackson, 1977, p.86). South Australia and Queensland which were less populous and had more track mileage had built narrower and lighter weight tracks than New South Wales and Victoria (Jackson, 1977, p.86). As rail was the main inland transport system this was a major problem (Jackson, 1977, p.86). After federation this issue was even more on the agenda as effective interstate transport and communication were now more necessary than ever (Jackson, 1977, p. 89). Warwick's break of gauge patent mentioned in the Queanbeyan Age and Observer in 1915 described how the invention worked: "by making the wheels of the rolling stock [rolling stock meaning a vehicle with wheels] a double flange design [flange meaning "a projection used for strength or for attaching to another object"] the difficulty of travelling or training commerce from one State to another, without altering the different lines, could be overcome" ('The Warwick Patent', 1915, p.3; wordnet Princeton definition of rolling stock, viewed 2011; Wordnet Princeton: Flange). The article stated that the invention could potentially save the government millions of pounds in fixing interstate railway tracks ('The Warwick Patent', 1915, p.3). Not much information is contained about whether Warwick's patent was accepted, however his invention shows his analytical ability and his experience as a wheelwright, something that would have undoubtedly been used during his time as blacksmith at Ginninderra. In 1891 The Maitland Mercury & Hunter River General Advertiser had a requestation order for "26.—Alexander Warwick, of Gininderra, near Queanbeyan, blacksmith" ('Bankruptcy Proceedings', 1891). The reason for bankruptcy proceeding is not stated, however roughly around the time Warwick began working at Ginninderra, Francis Brown established his Blacksmith Shop in the neighbouring village of Hall (Gillespie, 1992, p.213). Hall was a rival village to Ginninderra and was located a few miles away (Smith, 1975, p.4). There may be other reasons for Warwick's bankruptcy and departure as Henry Roland Curran who replaced him in 1891 did remarkably well (Maher, c.1981, p.31).

2.5 Fifth Blacksmith at the Ginninderra Blacksmith Shop: Henry Roland Curran 1891-1949

In 1891 Henry Roland Curran came to start his own business in the blacksmith shop that his uncle George Curran had worked in previously (Warman, 1981, p.27). Henry Curran lived in a small weatherboard cottage he constructed himself located south of the Blacksmith Shop (Cosgrove, 2003, p.6). He would become familiar to all Ginninderra residents, as he was featured in newspapers articles several times in relation to village events and a few times in relation to his work as blacksmith ('Hall News By Our Correspondent Annual Tennis meetings', 1935, p.4; 'Local and General', 1906, p. 2; 'Mr H. R. Curran, Gininderra', 1906, p.2; 'Show Veteran ends 40 Years Span', 1944, p. 6; 'One Tree Hill Race Club Ginninderra', 1906, p. 5). He retired in 1949 (Dowling, 2003, p.15). From 1891- 1949 he repaired wagons and wheels and shod horses (McAppion in Maher, 1981, p.31; Dowling, 2003, p.15; 'Pioneers Vote Again after Wait of 43 Years, 1949, p.2). In 1906 he was advertised in the Age as being "favourably known in the district as a first –class tradesman and has built up a large business. His premises are commodious and fitted up in a manner which enables him to turn out work entrusted to him in good style" ('Mr H. R. Curran, Gininderra', 1906, p.2). Another advertisement in The Age less than two months later says that he is willing to provide wheelwrighting, blacksmithing and farriering (horse shoeing) work at the lowest prices ('Local and General', 1906, p. 2). Curran seemed to do reasonably well considering the presence of another blacksmith in Hall and the establishment of a coachbuilding business roughly a few miles away (Smith, 1975, p.4, 5; Gillespie, 1992, p. 132). The coachbuilding business may have actually exacerbated the need for a blacksmith in Ginninderra, although by 1901 Frank Brown's smithy was taken over by George Kinlyside who managed the shop with his Coach building establishment, therefore the presence of a blacksmith nearby in Ginninderra may not have catered to the carriage owners needs for repairs (Gillespie, 1992, p.132). Henry Roland Curran would have been known throughout the Ginninderra community as he was part of the Ginninderra Tennis Club in 1935, committee member of the Ginninderra One Tree Hill Race Club in 1906 and as treasurer of the Ginninderra Farmers Union ('Show Veteran ends 40 Years Span', 1944, p. 6; 'One Tree Hill Race Club Ginninderra', 1906, p. 5; Hall News By Our Correspondent Annual Tennis meetings', 1935, p.4). Presumably if he was not renowned for his abilities as a blacksmith he would not have been allowed to take prominent positions in those organisations. The Ginninderra Blacksmith Shop was mentioned in the Canberra Times in 1949 in celebration of pioneers being allowed

to vote in a federal election 43 years since they last voted ('Pioneers Vote Again After Wait of 43 Years', 1949, p.2). No explanation was given in the article over why they were not granted the right to vote for forty three years ('Pioneers Vote Again After Wait of 43 Years', 1949, p.2). A photograph of the Ginninderra Blacksmith Shop was included in the article, describing how in 1901 it had been used as a polling booth and that it had a huge banner strung across it promoting one of the candidates (see Figure 3) ('Pioneers Vote Again After Wait of 43 Years', 1949, p.2).



Figure 3: Oldest known photograph of the Ginninderra blacksmith Shop, approx. 1949

Source: 'Pioneers Vote Again After Wait of 43 Years', 1949, *The Canberra Times*, December 12 p. 2, retrieved 21 August 2011 from Trove database

Another photograph is also included of Henry Roland Curran shoeing a horse (see figure 4).



Figure 4: Henry Roland Curran shoeing a horse. c. 1949

Source: 'Pioneers Vote Again After Wait of 43 Years', 1949, *The Canberra Times*, December 12, p. 2, retrieved 21 August 2011 from Trove database.

The Canberra Times photograph of the Ginninderra Blacksmith Shop is stated to be the oldest known photograph of the Blacksmith Shop (Dowling & Ireland, 2011, p.7⁵). This is true as other photographs one captioned "side view of George Curran's blacksmith shop and house" does not state if it is in Bungendore or in Ginninderra (Maher, c.1981, p.27?). The photograph does not resemble the Ginninderra Blacksmith Shop in its current state. Another photograph captioned "George Curran and his nephew Henry Curran – blacksmiths, Ginninderra" is also captioned in another book as being "George Curran with nephew Harry Curran at Bungendore Blacksmith's Shop" (Maher, c.1981, p.27?; Warman, 1981, p.28). Another depiction of Henry Roland Curran was in Eirene Mort's *Old Canberra Sketchbook of the 1920s* published posthumously in 1987 (Mort, 1987, p. 67; Biography – Eirene Mort, Australian Dictionary of Biography, viewed 2011). The book displays one sketch of Curran working on a horseshoe at his anvil (figure 5) (Mort, 1987, p. 67). Something that looks like a heavy hammer or sledge is in the doorway (Mort, 1987, p. 67). The doors are made out of wood and the roof appears to be made out of corrugated iron supported underneath by wooden slabs. Curran is depicted with his face down concentrating on the horse shoe on the anvil.

⁵ Report was prepared by Peter Dowling and reviewed by Tracy Ireland



Figure 5: Henry Roland Curran working in the forge.

Page says: "Ginninderra – Blacksmith. 1923. Pencil. 20 x 13 cm

Ginninderra Blacksmith

Source: Mort, E, 1987, *old Canberra Sketchbook of the 1920s*, National Library of Australia, Canberra. (p.67).

In 1954 Henry Roland Curran was one of seven Canberra pioneers who met Queen Elizabeth II on her first royal tour of Australia (Becker, 2005, p.4). The article states that Henry Curran was an orphan, which according to notes held at the National Trust, is accurate.

3.0 Blacksmithing in Australia and the Ginninderra Blacksmith Shop

Evidence seems to suggest that there were many blacksmith businesses in Australia during the mid-late nineteenth century until the early twentieth century (Smith, Australian Trade Union Archives, c.2010; Arnold, 2011, pp.542, 547, 551, 553,554 555). It appears that any respectable village establishment had a blacksmith (Smith, 1975, p.5). There appear to be about one blacksmith shop in Bungendore where George Curran worked later in his life ('R Curran', 1915, p. 3). There were also blacksmiths in Queanbeyan and Hall (Smith, 1975, p.5; 'Thos. Fowlie,' 1911, p.5) Photos of blacksmith shops show that carriage makers, wheelwrights and farriers often operated from the same shop (Arnold, 2011, pp.542, 547, 551, 553,554 555). In Hall the Blacksmith Shop was taken over by the owner of the Carriage Maker shop (Gillespie, 1992, p. 132). Examples of both combined shops and blacksmith shops are evident with other metal working shops in Australia -- some identified as being in Victoria -- such as: J. & C. Anselmi Coach Builder and General Smith; Donald Foundry W. M. Hearn Engineer Blacksmith and Wheelwright Agent for Hornsby's Duplicates; Grant & Connors Coachbuilders and General Blacksmiths in Shepparton; James Phelps Birchip Foundry and Wagon Factory; Furphy's Foundry Agricultural Machine & Implement Factory; J. Marchant Goulburn Valley Implement Works General Blacksmith & Wheelwright Local Agent for J.Nicholson & Co and McCalman Garde and Co. Agent for McGormick Reaper and Binder in Duplicates; A. Sutherland Agricultural Implement Maker; R. Avard & Sons Kerang Iron & Brass Foundry Agricultural Implement Makers & General Blacksmiths; J Hurst Shoeing & General Smith Wheelwright (?); and the Echuca Foundry (see figures 6-8) (Arnold, 2011, pp.542, 547, 551, 553,554 555).

In a farming village like Ginninderra it would have been necessary to have someone who could operate a forge and could work as a wheelwright, farrier and a general blacksmith who could produce simpler agricultural and manufacturing implements (Bartlett, c.1980, p.1). Henry Roland Curran seemed to meet all of these needs. Judging by photographs, the Ginninderra Blacksmith Shop also looks roughly the same size as some of the other blacksmith shops in the ACT region and Victoria (see Figures 6-8) (Arnold, 2011, pp. 542, 544; Smith, 1975, photo 11).

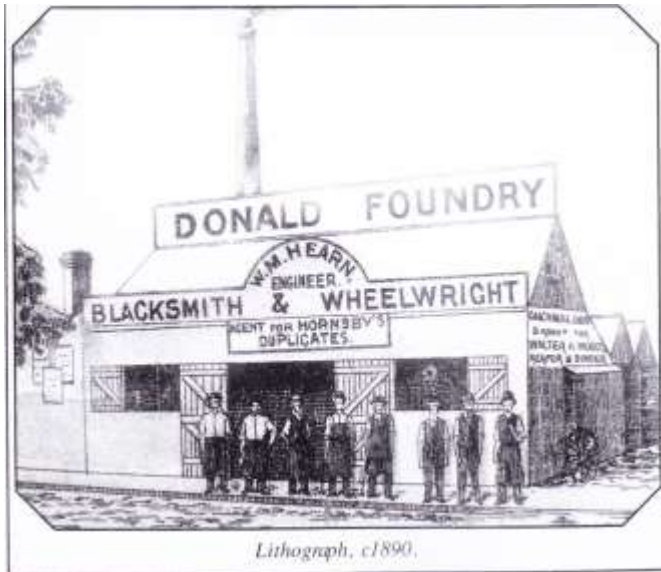


Figure 6: Blacksmith and Wheelwright Shop located in Donald, Victoria.

Source: Arnold, K, 2011, *A Century of farm yard relics in Australia*, vol.1, Crown Castleton Publishers, Bendigo, Victoria. (p.544).



11. George Kinlyside's workshop and men employed there. George is standing at right with his hand on a poison cart. By courtesy of Colin Kinlyside.

Figure 7: Hall Blacksmith Shop. n.d

Source: Smith, L, R, 1975, *Memories of Hall*, Roebuck Society Publication No.14, Canberra. (photo 11).



Figure 8: Coachbuilder and General Smith shop, possibly from Victoria.

Source: Arnold, K, 2011, *A Century of farm yard relics in Australia*, vol.1, Crown Castleton Publishers, Bendigo, Victoria. (p.542).

Despite the prominence of Blacksmith shops in rural villages and the role they played in pre mid 20th century European society in Australia, blacksmithing has faced a general decline (Cosgrove & Dowling, 2002, p.24).

A number of blacksmiths shops went out of business or their owners retired in the early to mid 20th century (Smith, 1975, p.10; Arnold, 2011, p. 544; 'Pioneers Vote Again After Wait of 43 Years', 1949, p.2). The first blacksmith shop in Buckrabanyule stopped trading in 1967 (Arnold, 2011, p.544). Mr Clyde Hollingworth -- a blacksmith at Hall -- employed by his brother in law George Kinlyside, died while fighting in the First World War (Smith, 1975, p.10). Since Collingworth's death there has been no permanent blacksmith in Hall (Smith, 1975, p.10). The fact that Henry Roland Curran was able to maintain his business for so long is no little achievement. In the 1890s there was a depression throughout Australia, however he kept his business running until 1949 (Gillespie, 1992, p.104; Dowling, 2003, p.15). Curran was also blacksmith during the time of the two World Wars and the Great Depression of the 1930s. He may have been affected by those events, however at some point he and his family were doing well enough that his granddaughter remembered that "each one of his immediate family owned their own sulky" (McAppion in Maher, 1981, p.31.) She also stated that "He [Henry Curran] built all the horse drawn vehicles for the district" (McAppion in Maher, 1981, p.31). Roughly around this time Curran's business would have been challenged by the fact

that Ginninderra was also losing many of its prominent families as a result of the federal government regaining freehold land from pioneer families (Gillespie, 1992, p. xxi). This was one of the many reasons why the formation of the Federal Capital Territory (now usually referred to as the Australian Capital Territory) led to the decline of Ginninderra (Gillespie, 1992, pp. xxi, 194-195). The development of the City centre in the ACT also drew away lots of families as new education and entertainment facilities became available, especially with the late night shopping hours on a Friday evening and the opening of Manuka Pool (Gillespie, 1992, pp.194, 195, 198).

In modern times it seems easy to forget the role that blacksmiths had in the development of Australia. Blacksmith forges were established soon after European settlement of Australia (Shaw ed., 1986, p.405). Since then they seemed to have emerged in rural villages where metal working factories would have been harder to come by (Bartlett, c.1980, p.1). Most of the implements used during the nineteenth century were made by settlers as the amount of time it took to transport material from England was too long (Jackson, 1977, p.112). During the gold rushes of New South Wales, labour was in short supply (Jackson, 1977, p.113). Product prices rose (Jackson, 1977, p.113). Transport in the ACT would have relied heavily on horse power as cars did not emerge until sometime in the late nineteenth century (Shaw ed., 1986, p.651). Until 1869 when railway first came to Goulburn, farmers in the Ginninderra region who sought to sell produce in Sydney had to travel by horse and wagon (Smith, 1975, pp.74-75). The rivers near the Ginninderra region would probably not have been suitable for boat transportation leaving people with the option of travelling on foot or on horseback. Even with railway development blacksmiths would have been needed to shoe horses and make implements such as ploughs to help farming families to construct new outbuildings and therefore earn their living (Bartlett, c.1980, p.1; Gillespie, 1992, p.20). The Ginninderra blacksmith shop was very close to the Canberra to Yass Road now the Barton Highway, therefore it is not unlikely that people may have stopped at the Ginninderra Blacksmith Shop for wagon or horse shoe repairs for their journey to Goulburn if they wished to transport produce to Sydney.

The advent of motor power and agricultural machines reduced the need for blacksmiths in some districts (Smith, 1975, p.10). This seems to be reflected with the deregistration of The Blacksmith's Society of Australia in 1965, although enough blacksmiths remained and joined the Boilermakers of Australia, later to be renamed the "Boilermakers and Blacksmiths Society of Australia" (Smith, Australian Trade Union Archives, c.2010). Blacksmiths still

exist, but they do not appear to play a huge role in city life or metal production as they did during and prior to the nineteenth century (Cosgrove & Dowling, 2002, p.24).

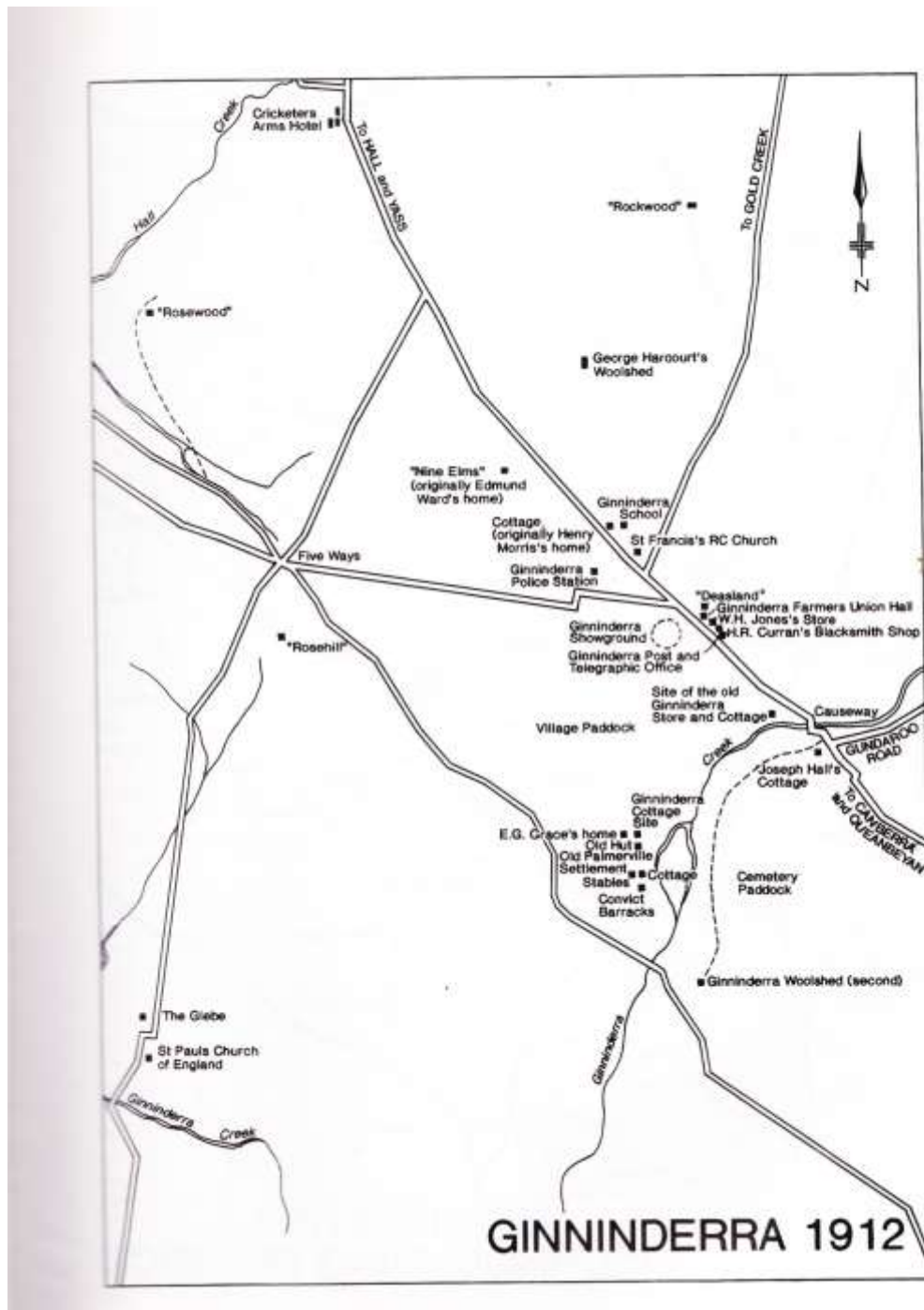
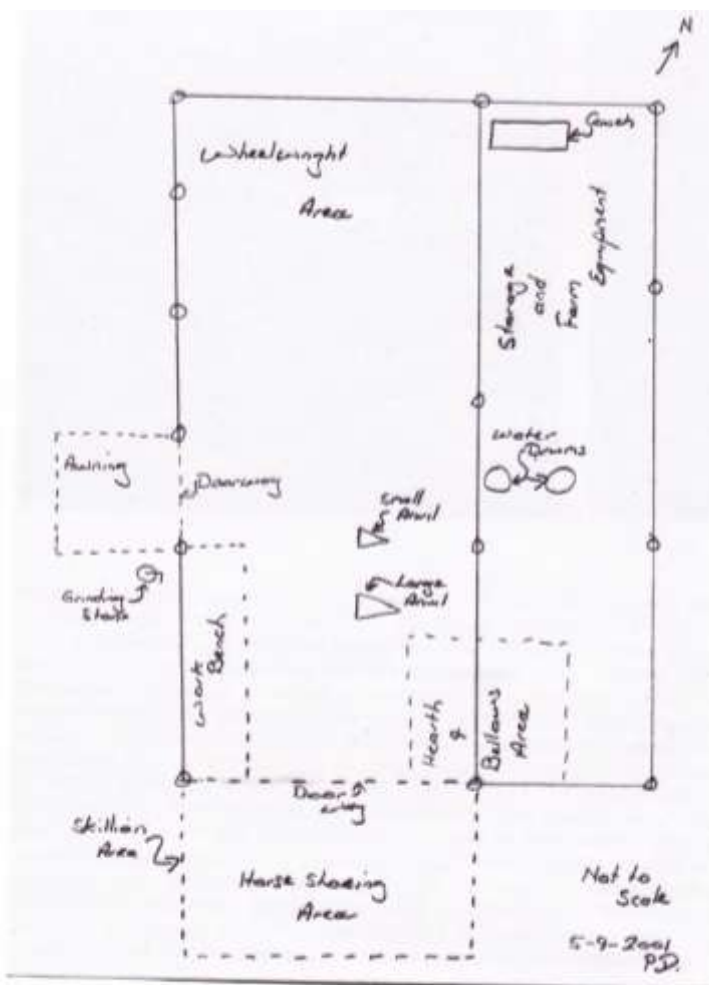


Figure 9: Map of Ginninderra in 1912. Note that the Ginninderra Blacksmith Shop is located near the Canberra –Yass Road, the Ginninderra Showground, W. H. Jones Store and the Ginninderra post and Telegraph Office.

Source: Gillespie, L, L, 1992, *Ginninderra Forerunner to Canberra A History of the Ginninderra District*, published by L.L Gillespie, Campbell, A.C.T. p.153.

4.0 Archaeological Evidence and interpretation of the site

According to Peter Dowling's *Ginninderra Blacksmith's Shop, Canberra. Historical, archaeological and conservation perspectives* (2003) the awning and horse shoeing area both of which were extensions to the building no longer exist (Dowling, 2003, pp.11,12). The insight given by Wilson seemed to match archaeological evidence of the site (Dowling, 2003, p. 14). The recollections of McAppion and insight from retired blacksmith Mr. Henry (Bill) Wilson who spent three hours on site gave remarkable insight into the blacksmith shop (Dowling, 2003, pp. 10, 14).



The following descriptions of the interior and exterior of the blacksmith's shop are taken from the preliminary results and observations from the surface survey and the comments and recollections from McAppion and Wilson.

Figure 10: sketch of blacksmith shop and layout as remembered by McAppion the last blacksmith's granddaughter, based also upon retired blacksmith's observations and a surface survey of the site (p. 12). The dotted lines indicate parts that no longer exist or were destroyed (p. 11).

Source: Dowling, P, 2003, *Ginninderra Blacksmith's Shop, Canberra. Historical, archaeological and conservation perspectives draft*. (p.12)

Wilson was able to identify whether horse shoes left in the shop were made for race horses or farm horses (Dowling, 2003, p.14).

The interior consisted of a forge, work bench, horse shoeing area, hearth, storage space where farm equipment was stored, couch, bellows area, wheelwright area and a grinding stone (see figure 10) (Dowling, 2003, p.12). Eirene Mort's sketch mentioned earlier gives a rough idea of what the forge looked like in 1923 showing that it was made up of stone, with a wooden door (see figure 5) (Mort, 1987, p.67). The forge was dismantled sometime after the blacksmith shop had been abandoned (Dowling, 2011, p.20). During a site visit in September 2011 there was a small pile of stones backed up against the wall (see figure 13).

The artefacts observed on site in September and November 2011 by the author included: horse shoes, a spanner- like artefact, bellows, a possible blade from a saw, a tong-like artefact, a piece from a plate or cup, thin rusted metal sheets, nails, flattened metal cup, metal embedded in the ground, circular metal artefact with metal bar crossing the middle which would have looked like an iron tyre which is attached to a wheel if it were not for the metal bar across the middle, metal plate with a metallic semi sphere on top, u-bolt, a broken Reschs Limited beer bottle, y-shaped metal artefact that might look like part of a plough, a small brush possibly used to groom horses and something that may be a puncher (see figures 11-24).

Other artefacts found on the site but not depicted in this report are: rusted chains, a seemingly modern liquor lid, lantern, what appears to be a modern garden rake, hooks, work bench, rake except that the horizontal bar at the end crossed the middle of the handle, a piece of fabric that looked as though it could have been a smock or a cap, a j-shaped metal artefact and a mostly buried rubber soled shoe.



Figure 11: Horse shoe



Figure 12: Spanner like artefact



Figure 13: Bellows



Figure 14: Saw like artefact with metal cup, metal sheet and nail.



Figure 15: Tong-like artefact



Figure 16: Broken off piece of a plate or cup



Figure 17: Rusted nail with nut and a rusted piece of sheet metal



Figure 18: Metal cup



Figure 19: Metal subterranean hollow poles



Figure 20: Iron tyre – like artefact



Figure 21: U-bolt artefact, a metal plate with cap



Figure 22: Broken Reschs Limited beer bottle. Please note that the measurement is in inches.



Figure 23: Y shaped metal artefact, possibly a plough?



Figure 24: Brush possibly to groom horses

The forge is the room or section of a room where the metal is heated (Bartlett, c.1980, p.3). The metal is usually heated in a hearth heated by fire, bed of coal or coke (Webber, 1971, p.50). A shovel is used to arrange fuel to surround the fire (Webber, 1971, p.50). The fire in the hearth is sustained by a hand operated device called the bellows (see figure 13) (Webber, 1971, p.50). Using the bellows required skill (Godden ed., 1992, p.8). When wrongly used they could suck in the air, causing a build up of gases resulting in combustion (Godden ed., 1992, p.8). At the farthest end away from the hearth would be a trough of cool water to dip the metal into after they had been heated (Webber, 1971, p.50). In the Ginninderra Blacksmith Shop the cool water troughs were referred to as water drums and were located at an estimated metre or two away from the anvils and the hearth (Dowling, 2003, p. 12). The cooling down process is sometime referred to as hardening and tempering (Webber, 1971, p.50). The purpose of the cool water is to put out the fire on the tools and to strengthen the metal (Webber, 1971, pp. 47, 50).

Before the metals are placed at the cooling trough the metals would be cut or hammered at the anvils (Webber, 1971, p.47; Bartlett, c.1980, p.3). The two anvils which are no longer in the Ginninderra Blacksmith shop would have been used as a work bench to bend, cut, make a hole in and hammer the metal (Webber, 1971, p.47; Bartlett, c.1980, p.3). The two anvils formerly in the Ginninderra Blacksmith Shop were of different sizes: a small anvil and a large anvil (Dowling, 2003, p.12). Anvils contained a horn, which is a long cone or horn shaped end which was used for bending and sometimes curving the metal (see figure 25) (Webber, 1971, p.52). Between the face and the horn is a “table” sometimes referred to as a “chipping block” where iron is placed and cut by a cold chisel so that the chisel is not damaged “by passing through the iron on to the surface below” (Webber, 1971, p.52; Bartlett, c.1980, p.4). The “punching hole” sometimes known as the “pritchel hole” is used to place a piece of hot iron when making a hole in it (Webber, 1971, p.52). The hole would probably be created on the metal directly over the punching hole (Webber, 1971, p.52). The punching hole would have been essential for making horse shoes and nails as it would have been used to create holes in the horse shoes so that nails could fit the shoe to the horse’s hooves (Webber, 1971, p.52). On the anvil is also a square hole used to fit top and bottom swages used to help work the metal (Webber, 1971, p.52; Godden ed., 1992, 18). A good quality anvil was required to turn out good work (Webber, 1971, p.51). One of the qualities of a good anvil was the ability to create a “spring” when the metal object placed on the anvil was hit (Webber, 1971, p.51). The spring contributed to the strength of the following blow to the

metal (Webber, 1971, pp.51-52). When working with metals a variety of other tools are used such as a steel leg vice, punches, sledge or “heavy hammer” cold and hot chisels and tongs (Webber, 1971, p.52-54 Godden ed., 1992, p.17).

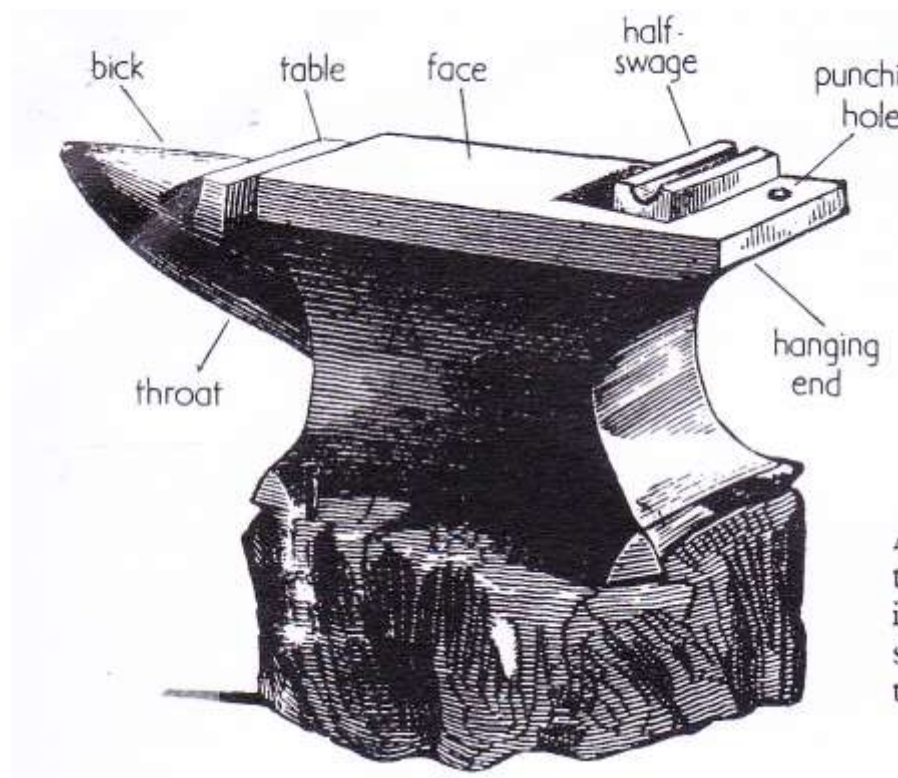


Figure 25: A descriptive diagram of an anvil.

Source: Webber, R, 1971, *Village blacksmith*, David & Charles: Newton Abbot. (p.52).

“A steel leg vice was used to capture the strain and shock at the jaws to be taken by the leg, which is often let into a steel socket on the floor” (Webber, 1971, p.53). The hand held hammer would be used to shape metals, whereas the sledge or heavy hammer would be used to strike heavier material (Webber, 1971, p.54). The sledge hammer could weigh up to 9kg and had a long handle (Webber, 1971, p.54). The blacksmith used tongs to hold hot pieces of metal (Godden ed., 1992, p.17). A punch looks much like a hammer except its head has a narrower end used to start holes in the metal which are then completed by a drift (Webber, 1971, p.54; Godden ed., 1992, p.21). The cold and hot chisels were used for cutting cold and hot metals, respectively (Godden ed., 1992, p.20).

The artefacts found at the Ginninderra Blacksmith Shop show that one of Henry Roland Curran’s primary jobs was to shoe horses. The scatter of horseshoes around the building, suggests this. As the last blacksmith at the Ginninderra Blacksmith Shop and the man to have

worked there the longest, it seems most likely that the horse shoes were from Henry Roland's time. An extra tool required for him to shoe horses would be a nailing on hammer (Webber, 1971, p.58). Pincers to remove nails, a hoof-clipper for chopping off unnecessary material from the hoof and other tools to prepare the hoof for shoeing (Webber, 1971, p.58). The blacksmith would likely have needed to know how to make a variety of horse shoes: horse shoes for race horses and horse shoes for farm horses (Webber, 1971, p.58, 60). A race horse's shoe would require a different number of nails than a farm horse's shoe (Webber, 1971, pp.58, 60). Most artefacts tested – with a magnet— indicate that most of them contained iron. Some of the tools from the Blacksmith Shop had been kept by Henry Roland Curran's Grandson (Appendix C p. 58 of Bordiss's A Cultural heritage Assessment of Henry Roland Curran's Tools).

One artefact still located on the site was the bottom half of a beer bottle embedded in the ground with the words:

SYDNEY

THIS BOTTLE ALWAYS REMAINS

THE PROPERTY OF RESCHS LIMITED

MADE IN AUSTRALIA

The bottle seems to be a beer bottle from one of Edmund Resch's breweries in New South Wales (Walsh, c.1988). It is not clear when "Reschs Ltd" came into existence but, Edmund Resch owned the Sydney Allt's Brewing & Wine and Spirit Co. Ltd by 1897 and the New South Wales Lager Bier Brewing Co. Ltd by 1900 (Walsh, c.1988). He was renowned for his skill as a brewer (Walsh, c.1988). The beer bottle may have belonged to anyone who went to the shop or Henry Roland Curran who was noted by his surviving granddaughter that he sometimes drank alcohol (McAppion in Maher, 1981, p.32). The name Reschs Limited was probably used by Edmund Resch and not his brother Richard Frederick Edward Nicolas with whom he bought two drink factories (Walsh, c.1988). It appears that the Allt's Brewing & Wine and Spirit Co. Ltd was in Sydney hence Resch coming to live in Sydney while he managed it for the previous owner (Walsh, c.1988).

There was also an archaeological report of the Ginninderra blacksmith's shop for the Canberra Archaeological Society by Angela Besant and Stephen Avery (Besant & Avery, 2006). The archaeological survey was carried out because a glass artefact showing what

could be an aboriginal crafting technique had been found on a previous occasion (Besant & Avery, 1996, p.11). The survey found 'an eclectic mix of Aboriginal, historic and industrial artefacts' (Besant & Avery, 1996, p.26) The aboriginal glass artefact was probably crafted by an aboriginal worker at the Ginninderra blacksmith shop: Bobby Hamilton who was known for helping MacAuliffe when his residences were on fire (Besant & Avery, 1996, p.28).

The artefacts found during the Canberra Archaeological Society survey and artefacts found in situ during visits by the author of this report show the nexus between work and home life (Besant & Avery, 1996, p.25). The cups, a piece broken off a plate demonstrate work connections with home, unless the two artefacts were stored there after the blacksmith shop had been abandoned. Most of the tools have been removed; however, the general structure of the Blacksmith Shop is still intact. The different wheelwrighting, farriering and blacksmithing tools are also evident of the work required of a blacksmith in a rural farming village (Bartlett, c.1980, p.1). The awning, work bench and horse shoeing area no longer exist (see figure 10) (Dowling, 2003, p.11). There are hollow metal poles stuck in the ground barely above ground level surrounding the Ginninderra Blacksmith shop that might indicate that the building used to be larger (see figure 19).

The Ginninderra Blacksmith Shop is a rectangular shaped building constructed out of timber slabs and corrugated iron (Dowling, 2003, p.2). The shop now has two entrances: one where the horseshoeing area used to be and the other entrance to where the storage room used to be. It is unclear whether the second entrance had been there before the Shop had been abandoned. Henry Roland's cottage no longer remains (Dowling, 2003, p.6). On the cottage site is the service depot of the Gold Creek Country Club (Dowling, 2003, p.6).

5.0 Efforts to Conserve the Ginninderra Blacksmith Shop

The Ginninderra Post Office structure where George Curran used to live before it became the Ginninderra Post Office, no longer remains (Dowling, 2003, p.6).

The Ginninderra Blacksmith Shop was realised as an important part of the history of the ACT as early as 1988 when the National Capital Development Commission included the site in the Sites of Significance in the ACT, volume three (Sites of Significance in the ACT, 1988, pp.24-26). The book also shows that the site had no protective fence and was covered in weeds (p.24). The posts were leaning and the artefacts were exposed to the elements (see

figure 26 and figure 27) (pp.24-25). Despite its history of neglect, conservation efforts have managed to conserve the building (Dowling & Ireland, 2011, p.3).

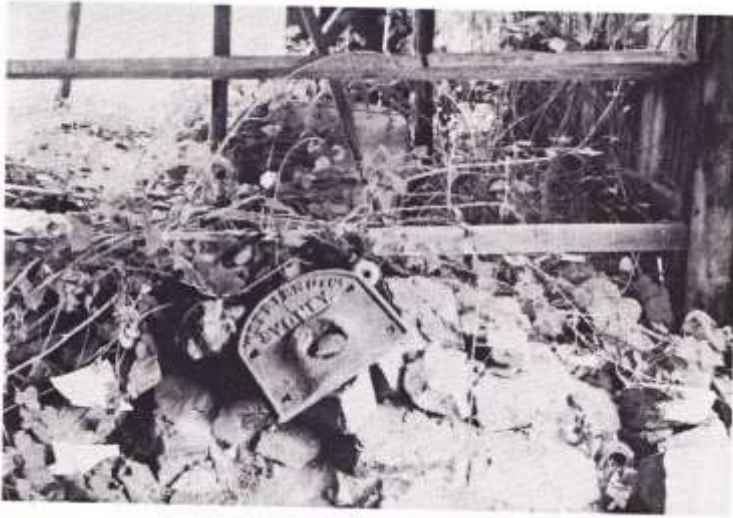


Figure 26: Sites of Significance photo of the Ginninderra Blacksmith Shop showing the "remains of the forge and bellows." c.1988

Source: 1988, *Sites of Significance*, vol.3, National Capital Development Commission, Canberra, ACT. (p.25).



Figure 27: Sites of Significance photo of the "Northern side of the Ginninderra Blacksmith Shop". c. 1988. The site has improved since then.

Source: 1988, *Sites of Significance*, vol.3, National Capital Development Commission, Canberra, ACT. (p.24)

Since its inclusion in the National Capital Development Commission Sites of Significance, the Ginninderra Blacksmith Shop has been the subject of about three university student assignments, at least one archaeological survey assessing its significance, an official conservation management plan, and a supplementary conservation policy document (McCarthy, 1992; Bordiss, no date; Bordiss, 2003; Besant & Avery, 1996, Cosgrove & Dowling 2002; Dowling & Ireland, 2011). In 1992 one student provided a management report for the Ginninderra Blacksmith Shop noting conservation issues and the state of repair (McCarthy, 1992).

In 1993 the Ginninderra Blacksmith Shop was added to the Heritage Interim Register in recognition of its cultural heritage values as a “place of exceptional interest and way of life and function that is no longer practiced” (Heritage Interim Register on file at the National Trust, pp. 1, 3). “The horizontal slab construction is a rare construction method for the ACT... and the Ginninderra Blacksmith Shop is the only remaining village blacksmith’s workshop in the ACT” (Heritage Interim Register on file at the National Trust, pp. 3). The register recognised the importance of the blacksmith shop in village life in the rural farming phase of European settlement of Australia (Heritage Interim Register on file at the National Trust, p. 3). The site was also recognised for its educational values (Heritage Interim Register on file at the National Trust, p. 3).

In 2002 the Ginninderra Blacksmith Shop was placed on the National Trust Endangered Places List (c.2002, National Trust Endangered places 2002 Ginninderra Blacksmith Shop).

A conservation plan was published for the National Trust by Dowling and Cosgrove in 2002 noting the state of deterioration and stating that the site should be restored to its 1930-1940s state (Cosgrove & Dowling, 2002, p.31). Since the 2002 Conservation Management Plan the structure has been stabilised and reinforced by metal rods (Dowling & Ireland, 2011, p.3). Weeds have been cleared; a security fence has been established around the site and an interpretative sign has been established outside the fenced area (see figures 28 and 29, evident on site visit in September 2011).



Figure 28: Part of a metal rod stabilising the structure.



Figure 29: Security fence and interpretative panel

The ACT Heritage Grants Program Successful Projects report states that a grant of \$8906 was given towards production of a CD ROM aimed at interpreting the site (Environment ACT ACT Urban Services Heritage Grants Program Successful Projects 2004-05).

A hands on heritage flier that looks as if it's been designed for school children has a small picture of the Ginninderra Blacksmith shop (ACT VET half-yearly outlook Hands On: What is Heritage? Heritage in the ACT).

In 2008 the National Trust stated as part of the National Trust festival that it would give guided tours of some of Canberra's heritage places, one of which was the Ginninderra Blacksmith's Shop (2008, National Trust of Australia Media Release National Trust Festival viewed 10 November 2011).

In 2011 a Supplementary Policy for the Ginninderra Blacksmith Shop was written due to budget allocations towards conservation of the Ginninderra Blacksmith Shop and other heritage listed places (Dowling & Ireland, 2011, p.2). The Supplementary Policy also bears insight into the objects in the Shop. Parts of the bellows had been taken off, the leather and wooden sections had deteriorated (Dowling & Ireland, 2011, p.19). The stones from the forge have been removed and relocated, although some still remain inside against the back wall (Dowling & Ireland, 2011, p.20).

In 2003 a student wrote a Heritage Study of the Tools used by Henry Roland Curran (Bordiss, 2003). This exceptional work described the application of the tools used by Henry Roland Curran, some of which were kept by his grandson (Bordiss, 2003). The report included transcripts of interviews with Lance Curran and Beulah McAppion-- Henry's surviving grandchildren (Bordiss, 2003, Appendix C and Appendix D). A plan for an internet site explaining the Ginninderra Blacksmith Shop was also written by the same student (Bordiss, no date).

The Canberra Archaeological Survey Report done on the Ginninderra Blacksmith Shop also stated that the disturbance in artefact levels may have been due to the horses shoed in the area as horse hooves tend to compact the soil (Besant & Avery, 1996, p.25). Attempts to eradicate rabbits from the area may also disturbed the artefacts (Besant & Avery, 1996, p.25).

The Conservation Council of the ACT Region published a small booklet on Gungahlin's Treasures: A Guide to Interpreting the Regions Heritage under the ACT Heritage Grants Program (Gungahlin's Treasures, c.2009). The booklet contains a little information about the Ginninderra Blacksmith Shop (Gungahlin's Treasures, c.2009, p.9).

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