

Oatley Heritage and Historical Society

Presentation by John Whitbread on February 24th 2017

Title—George Peisley

Personalities of Oatley

GEORGE PEASLEY/PEISLEY
(alias Sparkes; alias Williams)
1849 - 1939



OATLEY IN EARLY DAYS by D.J.HATTON (1981) **PEASLEY THE BUSHRANGER**

In the gully going down to Gungah Bay was the hideout of Peasley the bushranger and cattle duffer (no relation to the Peasleys of Rosa Street). He would steal cattle and horses from farms around, drive them down past the present Oatley Bowling Club along a bridle track into the bush gully and through to the end of the present Llewellyn Street. Here, he stabled his horse. At the top end of Llewellyn Street he lived in a cave which was a good hideout as it was entered through a hole from a flat ledge at floor level, but once inside, it was big enough to stand up in. There was a hole in the rock above which commanded an excellent view of the little used track and allowed him to see without being seen. The roof of the cave was smoke encrusted so it had probably been used for years as a dwelling. Those children who knew about the cave found it a good place to play but it was not known to all as it was well concealed, and you would not know it was there until you were right upon it. When Peasley wished to dispose of his stock, he drove them back up the track and sold them to the several butchers who were willing to take a risk for the reduced price. His regular practices led to his downfall, for the bridle track became so well worn that it was a give-away. In the early 1900's, two mounted policemen surprised him and he was arrested and escorted on horseback up the bridle track to his trial.

(This account of his capture is at variance with the following newspaper items).

SATURDAY 24 FEBRUARY 1894 – AUSTRALIAN STAR – SYDNEY NSW

Horse stolen from Peakhurst

Two men, George Peasley and Joseph McKay were tried at Central Criminal Court yesterday on a charge of stealing a chestnut horse December last at Peakhurst. McKay was acquitted but Peasley was found guilty and sentenced to four years' penal servitude. Peasley's occupation was given as "carter".

3 NOVEMBER 1896 – ARMIDALE EXPRESS

Escape from Prison

At the Kempsey Quarter Sessions George Peasley and Henry Hunter were charged with having escaped from Trial Bay prison. They gave their reason for escaping was because of the unbearable behaviour of fellow prisoners. A gaol official said the two men made no complaints and were well conducted. He acknowledged that there was a “push” in existence and said he did all in his power to break up the gang. Peasley said he would rather spend the remainder of his time in solitary confinement than be sent back to Trial Bay. The Judge sentenced the prisoners to six months in Darlinghurst gaol, and said the sentence had been passed as more of a deterrent than as a punishment.

6 AUGUST 1898

Stolen Goods – Policeman Shot

In the vicinity of Cabramatta, George Peasley and another man Henry Hunter were found to have hidden in the bush some fowls and harness, known to be stolen. Constable Samuel McLean waited for them to return and retrieve the stolen property, and then arrested them. They struggled with the constable on the way to Liverpool Police Station and in the struggle the constable was shot. They both ran away, Hunter was arrested near Richmond on August 12. Peasley escaped. This is the newspaper account:-

“Attempted Murder and Escaping from Custody, Liverpool – about noon on the 6th August (1898) Constable McLean of the Liverpool police arrested two men named George Peasley, alias Sparkes alias Williams and Henry Burnett Hunter at Cabramatta on a charge of larceny; and while escorting them to the Liverpool lock-up the constable was brutally assaulted by the offenders, who secured his police revolver. Peasley then fired two shots at the constable, one wounding him in the left arm, the offenders then effected their escape. Offenders retained possession of the constable’s revolver, which is of the British bull dog type, also belt and ammunition”.

Description of the men followed. Peasley was a native of Kingsgrove, near Canterbury, and about 38 or 40 years of age. The other man was said to be a native of Bathurst, 36 to 38 years of age.

A warrant was issued by Liverpool Bench for the arrest of the offenders on a charge of attempted murder, and a reward of £50 was offered for information that should lead to the apprehension of each of the offenders.

At Court Peasley and Hunter said that the revolver was discharged accidentally during the struggle, and that there was no intent to shoot the policeman. They did not know that McLean had been shot until the next day. They were subsequently acquitted.

TUESDAY 16 AUGUST 1898 – EVENING NEWS

THE SEARCH FOR PEISLEY

Our Sutherland correspondent writes: Peisley is supposed to have been seen on Friday at an unfinished building in Sutherland, and asked for a shakedown. He was shown to a bunk, and in the morning before leaving thanked the man who had given him lodging, remarking, "This is a fine country, but I wish I was in Dixie." Peisley knows many settlers in this locality, and he could have come here by the old Liverpool Road, leaving Heathcote to his right. It is also reported that the son of a settler on the banks of the Woronora ferried a man answering to Peisley's description across. Once over he could easily make for Peakhurst and Hurstville, in which locality he was born.

THURSDAY 18 AUGUST 1898 – THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD

POLICE ENCOUNTER WITH PEISLEY

...The police on Tuesday night ascertained that Peisley had many friends in the neighbourhood. Further that Mrs Peisley that evening purchased a quantity of provisions from a local shopkeeper. Her movements were watched, and yesterday morning she was found in a small cave about a quarter of a mile from the Como Railway station. Her husband, who was near her, upon seeing the police approaching, fired upon them. The police separated Peisley from his wife and then a sharp encounter followed in which nine or ten shots were fired, mostly at close quarters. Peisley, who was in almost a nude condition, then made good his escape in the direction of the Woronora River.

THURSDAY 18 August 1898 – EVENING NEWS – SYDNEY NSW

PEISLEY PURSUED

THE CHASE BY THE POLICE

THE ENCOUNTER DESCRIBED

THE FUGITIVE'S CAVE

WHAT THE POLICE FOUND

DETAILS OF THE ESCAPE

It is thought that Peisley will make for the Salt Pan Creek, some miles further up the river. He is familiar with every gully and river in the surrounding district. Gunyah Bay is probably about four miles from the gully where Peisley had the brush with the police yesterday. Once across, he would probably make for what is known as the Little Forest, a belt of thickly covered country which would materially hamper the operations of search parties. The fugitive, when he escaped yesterday, was barefooted. He wore a pair of grey tweed trousers, patched with some lighter material, and a check pattern shirt, with small spots. The last reliable information that can be gleaned concerning the wanted man came from some fishermen. They were in a boat on Gunyah Bay, which is about a mile from Oatley to the right of the railway line. As Peisley, after returning the fire of the police, sprang over boulders and through scrub, he headed for the water. Gaining the fringe of the bay, he turned sharply to the right, and ran along a little strip of sandy shore with the police behind.

His was a desperate predicament, but he did not hesitate. Divesting himself of his clothes he was about to plunge into the water, with the intention doubtless of swimming across to Jewfish Point, on the opposite side of the bay, when he caught sight of the fishermen who had been attracted to the spot by the sound of the shooting. Peisley, on finding his escape by water threatened also, pointed his revolver at the fishermen, wheeled around, doubling upon his track and apparently running into the very arms of his pursuers. The last sight that the fishermen caught of the fugitive was as he disappeared into the bush in a semi-nude condition. He carried his clothing under his left arm, and in his right hand the revolver. The cave where he had been hidden, and in front of which he encountered the police, is a splendid place of concealment. It stands at the head of the gully which dips down to Gunyah Bay. It is formed of a huge rock, which has been hollowed out by some process of nature into a huge cavern-like apartment, measuring about 40 foot in circumference. It is lofty, and a man of ordinary stature might easily stand upright in it without suffering the slightest inconvenience. From the rear it is impregnable, for the rock runs well in to the hill. Access is only possible from the front and the entrance is so well concealed that it would easily be passed unnoticed.



Following the bush track from Oatley Station, the route towards the bay, after about a mile has been traversed dips suddenly down into a gully, thickly covered with undergrowth. From the left of the gully juts out a little promontory, crowned by a solitary gum tree. Beneath was Peasley's hiding place. The entrance to the cave, underneath a projecting ledge of rock, is almost as high as a man's shoulder. It is only reached after a stiff climb. An armed and determined man might hold it for days against overwhelming odds. There is abundant proof that McLean's assailant had been in residence for several days. The police, who had been seeking Peasley since Monday, had traced the fugitive over a big tract of country. They first struck his tracks on the Woronora River, and followed them for the two succeeding days. They searched the surrounding country thoroughly from Sutherland for miles along the river and far away inland. All Tuesday night was spent on the water searching the innumerable bays and inlets that abound on the river. The police speculated

that Peisley had returned to his old haunts and so it proved. One party stood for a moment on a huge ledge of rocks. One officer actually rested against a gum tree, the better to survey the surrounding country. They talked and discussed the probabilities of Peisley's speedy capture, and all the while the very man they were seeking, with a price already on his head lay beneath their very feet listening to every word that was being uttered. The police retraced their steps to rejoin their fellows near the railway line. It was then that Peisley committed an almost fatal error. Under the impression that his pursuers had finally departed, he quitted the cave in order to obtain some water to boil his billy. He was in the act of placing it on a fire when the police surprised him. Peisley was some distance down the gully from his hiding place. The first intimation the police had of his presence was to see him spring up and make for the shelter of a big boulder, a little higher up the gully. He was recognised and called upon to stand, but ignored the command. The police fired at him but the bullets passed by. As he reached a haven, in the shape of a protecting rock, for an instant he paused, then his revolver rang out as he fired a couple of shots. Over scrub and boulders dashed the police after the runaway. Another posse of police were attracted to the chase by the sound of shots and Peisley was covered to both the right and left. Every inch of the ground was subjected to the closest search. All concerned naturally asked where he could have got to, and up to the time of writing (1pm) this problem is yet unsolved. Darkness closing in favoured the escapee. All track of Peisley having been lost for the time, the next move on the part of the police was to the cave itself. Mrs. Peisley, it was found, was within. She was requested to come out, and did so, after dressing. Then Standix drew himself into the aperture. A series of surprises were in store for him. The very snugness of the place astonished him. Two natural shelves of rock had been utilised for supports for a number of thick palings, laid lengthwise. Over these were laid sheets of bark laid transversely, which in turn were covered with ferns and dry leaves. Thus was improvised an excellent bed. Where Peisley's head would rest was a natural peephole in the rock, whence an excellent view of the surrounding country on three sides could be obtained. When not in use a piece of newspaper was stuffed in the aperture. Judging by the appearance of the interior of the cave, the half-famished man must have been having a good time. Standix and his men brought forth portion of a tin of salmon, a piece of cheese, a loaf of bread and pot of tea freshly brewed. There was also found in the place a woman's skirt, three tweed coats, a pair of serge pants, boots and socks, a box of matches, and a candle. Mrs. Peisley naturally felt alarmed for the safety of her husband. She inquired if he had been shot or arrested, and expressed her intention of sticking with him to the last. She also stated that her husband was supplied with ammunition, and further that hearing the police talking over their heads she had advised her husband to surrender himself, but that he had declined, adding that he would never be taken alive while he had a shot left. Peisley, it was evident, was pretty well posted as to current topics, for in the cave were copies of the Evening News of Tuesday. In the paper the account describing the hunt for Peisley had received more than ordinary attention, for that portion of the paper was well thumbed and marked. The fugitive obtained his supplies from the store at Oatley. The tracks of his hob-nailed boots could be distinctly made out leading to and from the cave. Mrs. Peisley made no secret of the fact that she usually obtained supplies for her husband, who since he had been in seclusion at Oatley usually accompanied his consort on those shopping excursions to within a short distance of the local store. In his desperate plight, semi-nude and famishing,

it is thought that Peisley's capture is a matter of a few hours – escape for him the police look upon as hopeless.

THURSDAY 18 August 1898 – EVENING NEWS – SYDNEY NSW

MRS. PEISLEY BEFORE THE COURT

Ellen Barker, alias Peisley, 37, was before Mr. G.H. Smithers, S.M., at the Newtown Police Court today, on a charge of having insufficient means of support. The police had suspected that someone must be supplying Peisley, who is wanted in connection with the Parramatta shooting case, with food, and as a consequence, kept a close watch upon the movements of the woman Barker, or Mrs. Peisley, which nearly resulted in Peisley's capture near Oatley Bay, yesterday. On application of the police, the woman was remanded till Monday next.

FRIDAY 19 August 1898 – EVENING NEWS – SYDNEY NSW

CAPTURE OF PEISLEY

AN EXCITING TIME

A CROSS-COUNTRY CHASE

A DASH THROUGH A SWAMP

A PERILOUS PREDICAMENT

COLLAPSE AND SURRENDER

Peisley was captured late yesterday afternoon at Bulli (Wolli?) Swamp, in the vicinity of Arncliffe Station, the actual arresting officer being Detective Donovan. Notwithstanding the elaborate police precautions, the man succeeded in effecting his escape from the neighbourhood of Oatley. Detective Goulder who was in charge of operations there, and who did yeoman service, covering as much as twenty miles during the day while seeking his man, was the first to ascertain beyond a doubt that Peisley had escaped and was heading towards the city. Quickly following this up by other inquiries, Goulder soon got upon the track of the much-wanted man and hunted the man, he found, had crossed the railway line the other side of Oatley, and was proceeding towards Rockdale, keeping well out of sight of the main road, and as far from the dwellings as possible. This information the officer was quick to act upon. He immediately telegraphed to Superintendent Camphin, acquainting him with what he had learned and asking for reinforcements to be sent to Kogarah, with a view of intercepting Peisley. The reinforcements were sent. Detraining at Rockdale, the party made its way down towards the Brighton racecourse, where they concealed themselves in the vicinity of some thick scrub, and kept a sharp lookout. Goulder, in the meantime, had more ground to cover. He was at Oatley and had to reach Rockdale in order to effect a junction with the others. Before his arrival Peisley put in an appearance. Donovan, who was lying on top of a little hillock, saw the face of the hunted man appear cautiously through the scrub about a quarter of a mile from the beach. He looked round several times, as if anxious to take a careful survey of the locality, and at last, under the impression that the coast was clear, he made a dash through the next clump of bush many hundred yards away. Up rose the two detectives and Lipscombe simultaneously. They called out to Peisley to surrender, or he would be shot. The latter, by way of reply, rushed forward at an increased rate of speed. Notwithstanding his privations and the hardships he

had undergone the previous evening, the fugitive evinced no signs of surrender or of weakness. The pursuers were fresh, but they soon found that the escapee was more than a match for them. The police gained upon their man at first, but Peisley, as if nerving himself for a final and last desperate dash, drew away again, and increased his lead by several hundred yards. Thus the chase went on for at least a mile. Peisley headed towards Arncliffe Hill. Fearful of losing him, and after repeated commands for him to stop, Constable Lipscombe drew his revolver, and took aim at the flying criminal, and fired. The distance was fully 300 yards, and while it missed its intended mark, it tore up the ground to the right of the runaway. But next moment he was over the hill, with the pursuers gamely following, but slowly losing ground. Peisley inclined towards the left on gaining Arncliffe Hill, and headed for the low-lying country on the other side of the railway line. He crossed the line within a short distance of the Station and dashed into a big swamp, which he negotiated in excellent style, but which proved anything but pleasant to the pursuers. Here Lipscombe struck a deep part and was immersed almost up to his neck. He is a heavy man and one result of the mishap will be to destroy a suit of clothes. Brown dropped in the slimy mass to his waist, and Detective Donovan was equally unfortunate. Peisley, getting clear of the swamp made a bee-line for the Chinamen's gardens in the neighbourhood of what is locally known as "Wolli Swamp". Things were now getting desperate with the pursuing party, and finding it impossible to overtake the man on foot Donovan, who was mud almost from head to heels somewhat surprised one of the residents by rushing into the yard and mounting a horse that was standing handy. The time he had to lose in securing the animal was very favourable to the fugitive. He actually got out of sight, for the pace had been a very hot one, and neither police nor detectives are expected to be cross-country champions, especially when the distance exceeds three miles as it did in this instance. For about five minutes the officers lost sight of their man completely, and it was feared he had again made good his escape. Donovan, mounted, however, galloped over the intervening country to the left of the gardens, while Brown and Lipscombe followed on foot. Gaining a neighbouring ridge, Donovan once more caught sight of Peisley. He was running as strong as ever, and showed not the slightest trace of fatigue. The detective made a second detour so as to cut off the fugitive from some bush for which he was making. It was a mad, exciting race, this contest between man and beast. The horse was galloping at its hardest, and the escapee, who saw a prison cell awaiting him should he fail, strained every nerve to reach cover, where he hoped once more to elude pursuit and probably escape. No one could help admiring the fugitive's splendid pluck, as he felt the grasp of the law tightening upon him. He struggled to the last, as cool as if he had just started on a few hundred yards' sprint. But matters were rapidly approaching climax, and Peisley's career of unchecked freedom was drawing to an end. Donovan gained the hill in front of him, and wheeling sharply about, started to ride his man down. Notwithstanding the apparent hopelessness of the struggle, Peisley turned about, on seeing the officer had headed him off, and was about to head back down the hill when Donovan covered him with his revolver. Barely fifty yards separated the men "Dead or alive I'll take you, so up with your hands" was the command that rang in Peisley's ears. For a moment he hesitated, then slowly up went his hands in a token of surrender. Donovan, fearing that he was armed and would show fight, dismounted and approached cautiously. "It's all right, old man, I am unarmed now," remarked the prisoner, as he sank upon the ground from sheer exhaustion. Having satisfied himself upon this point, the officer handcuffed him, just as the others of the party put in an appearance. The prisoner, who was clothed in a dark pair of trousers and checked shirt, with a handkerchief

knotted loose round his neck, had managed during the interval between his brush on Wednesday and capture yesterday to secure an old pair of boots and a pair of socks. These were unlaced, and must have hampered his progress considerably. Early in the chase Peisley sought to remove his boots, but the proximity of the police forced him to abandon the attempt. The clothing which he wore was ragged and torn, and his hands and his arms bore mute but eloquent testimony to frequent contact with sharp rocks and scrub. On reaching Arncliffe, the prisoner was conveyed by train to Sydney, and lodged at No. 2 Station. He was searched, and, as he had previously stated was unarmed. The news of his capture spread quickly, and a crowd surrounded the Arncliffe and Sydney Stations to catch a glimpse of the man. To the arresting officers Peisley chatted without restraint. He remarked that he was "full up of it" (meaning the hunt), and with a weary sigh, added that he was very glad "that he was taken". The whole of the officers concerned were fairly "pumped out", as they say in sporting parlance, after their unwanted exertions. Peisley will appear in central police court today. To Detective Donovan and those associated with him too much credit cannot be given for the promptitude they displayed in running Peisley to earth, practically in twenty-four hours after he had for weeks practically defied every attempt to secure him. The detectives were hopeful of ascertaining what Peisley did with the revolver taken from Constable McLean. When told of the number of police pursuing him, Peisley smiled in a self satisfied sort of way, evidently looking upon himself as a man of some importance. The detectives, police and members of the press are indebted to the railway officials at the several stations between Arncliffe and Oatley for the valuable assistance rendered. At the latter place Stationmaster Brown on Wednesday remained at his post until midnight, transmitting messages to Sydney for the police.

FRIDAY 19 AUG 1898 – EVENING NEWS

PEISLEY BEFORE COURT

THIS MORNING'S PROCEEDINGS

HIS OPINIONS IN GENERAL

Geo. Peisley, the man who was captured yesterday by Detective Donovan, does not impress one on sight with being as desperate an individual as his exploits of the past few days prove him to be. From a view of him at the Central Police Court today he presents a facial appearance exactly similar to that of the photo presented in the "Evening News". He is of medium to slender build, but wiry and active withal, and his face is precisely that of a typical bushman. He is taking things quite philosophically, and seems rather glad than otherwise that he is safe in custody. He converses freely with his captors, and while not too boastful of his past few days' experience, every accent and word betray the most complete contempt for the police, in so far as their shooting capabilities are concerned. With regard to his capture by Detective Donovan he was chatty enough.

"I am pleased," he said, "that Donovan did take me. I'm satisfied a good man took me. He treated me like a man. He was not like the others who would have shot me on sight, without giving me a show."

You had a pretty hard time of it yesterday? Oh, yes. It was pretty stiff running, as the swamp was nearly up to my knees.

It was soft, then?

Rather, Donovan knows that.

I suppose you didn't mind being shot at?

Not a bit. I'm satisfied that the police can't hit a haystack after the chances they had at me.

One fellow shot pretty well. He had a go at me about 30 yards away, and the shot came about five yards from me; and another gave me a close shave. But the others_____.

(Peisley's look was quite sufficient to explain what he meant). You had no shooting irons yourself when you were caught? What became of them?

Ugh!

This question was too much of a home thrust for Peisley, and as he peered at his questioner through the little aperture an ugly gleam came into his eyes, which boded no good, as there came over him the recollection of what might have occurred had he the possession of the weapon prior to his capture. He became silent and sulky, and his answers were short. He has the odd habit of shuffling his feet when spoken to, and that shy sort of manner peculiar to bush dwellers when asked a question. He places his head at an angle, looks down at the ground, and then with a sharp upward motion of the head replies, peering sideways at his questioner.

It transpires that he was well-fed and looked after during his adventures, and this fact he made known to Detective Donovan when he offered him food at Arncliffe.

Peisley's breakfast was brought to him, and he retired into the cell to discuss it. From his demeanour he does not seem to realise the serious position that he is in. He thinks that it will mean about "ten-penny worth," i.e., ten years, and does not seem to realise that a capital charge is hanging over his head.

He is described as 38 years of age, and a carter by occupation, and a native of NSW, with the following aliases: Sparkes and Williams.

Detective Donovan gave evidence as to his arrest, and to charging him with shooting at Constable McLean with intent to murder him. He made no reply to the question at once, but afterwards said that he did not know that he had shot the constable until the following day.

An application was made for a remand to Parramatta, Peisley saying, in a low tone, in reply to the bench, "I have nothing to say".

The remand was granted, and the accused was removed from the dock. He will be removed to Parramatta this afternoon".

WEDNESDAY 31 AUGUST 1898 – AUSTRALIAN STAR

The Arrest of Ellen Peisley – Debate in the Assembly

The NSW Legislative Assembly adjourned last night for the purpose of ventilating the circumstances of the arrest of Ellen Peisley.

The debate was whether she should have been arrested for vagrancy or for as an accessory after the fact, and if the police had exceeded their duty. It was noted that if she was arrested for vagrancy then the police would have their hands full arresting those thousands sleeping out in the Domain!

It was evident that she was arrested by the police hoping she would "squeak" and say where Peisley was.

SATURDAY 8 Oct 1898 – EVENING NEWS

SHOOTING AT POLICE PEISLEY SENTENCED FOUR YEARS' HARD LABOUR

George Peisley, who was convicted at the Central Criminal Court yesterday on a charge of having shot at Constables Joyce and Alexander Brown at Oatley last month, with intent to prevent his lawful apprehension, was brought up for sentence today, before his Honor Mr. Justice Owen. When asked if had anything to say why sentence should not be passed, he replied that he had nothing to say.

His Honor said that the crime of which he had been found guilty was a serious one, and rendered the prisoner liable to penal servitude for life. As the jury had taken a lenient view of the matter, and acquitted him of the charge of intent to do grievous bodily harm, his Honor would take notice of that, and pass a lighter sentence than he otherwise would have done. He sentenced the prisoner to four years' hard labor in Darlinghurst Gaol. Peisley asked for leave to petition, but his Honor saw no reason why he should give special leave, and refused the request.

SUNDAY 16 OCTOBER 1898 – TRUTH

Attempted suicide

.....The incidents of his arrest were most graphically reported by a press which delights in purveying the horrible, but never bothers – unless the victim be a man of influence and social importance – to expose the horrible in such a manner to excite the loathing and just contempt of the community, thus paving the way to a reformation. PEISLEY WAS ACQUITTED of the charge alleged against him. But it is not the custom of Botany Bay justice to let a victim slip through its fingers once its grip closes on him. Peisley was again arrested on another charge, and this time the jury found him guilty, and he was sentenced to a term of imprisonment. No wonder that under such a persecution he was driven to great mental anguish, and suffered exceedingly. No wonder he verged on insanity, and last Thursday night, when locked in his cell at Darlinghurst he attempted to END HIS MISERABLE LIFE. Prisoners undergoing the sentence allotted to Peisley are not condemned to the plank bed. A hammock is allowed them by a kind and humane prison system. Inside each door is an iron grating making a second door. And it was per medium of the hammock and this iron door that Peisley sought to swing himself into eternity. At immense labour and the expenditure of much time and ingenuity Peisley succeeded in unravelling the side rope of the hammock from the meshes of the net. This he fastened securely to the top bar of the gate, the other end he tied around his neck, and jump.

But it was not to be. As Peisley lapsed into unconsciousness he commenced to struggle. His feet beating against the door aroused the attention of a warder. It did not take long to cut the poor fellow down and to restore him to consciousness. Of course the daily press took NO NOTICE OF THE INCIDENT.

20 years later

SATURDAY 15 March 1919 – NEPEAN TIMES

Shooting of Tpr. McLean

The trial of George Peasley, at Parramatta Sessions recently (on charges of maliciously inflicting grievous bodily harm on two persons at Bargo) revives some ancient history, viz., The shooting of Trooper McLean (now Sergeant McLean) some 20 years ago, at Cabramatta.

Peasley had suspected that his partner (described as the widow, Mrs. Barker) was having an affair with their neighbour and Peasley had viciously attacked them both with a 3 foot wattle branch, with a knob. He was sentenced to 3 months in Bathurst Gaol.

There are various other items between 1920 and 1939 in the Nepean Times and other newspapers re George Peasley of Western Road, Kingswood. These related to the:

- Sale of horses, harnesses and the like and to court appearances for the non-return of articles; and droving horses without a permit.
- Theft of boots from a car in Parramatta, and other occurrences.

His partner, Ellen Barker, is mentioned in a 1930's court case as suffering from severe arthritis.

George Peasley of Western Road Kingswood died February 1939, aged 89. He is buried in the Church of England portion of Penrith General Cemetery. His occupation was given as "dealer".

This history compiled from various articles by OHHS member John Whitbread (2016).