

# Russell Hill 1928

The temporary suburb of Russell Hill was on a site near to the present Campbell Shops. It consisted of 120 sites for houses built by owners. Many who had lived at Riverbourne (1925-1927) moved to Russell Hill. Riverbourne was on the south bank of the Molonglo River three miles from the Queanbeyan Post Office. Russell Hill had its own school and was never connected to electricity or sewerage. Between late 1926 and mid 1927 one of the residents was HLB Lasseter who came to Canberra to work. He worked as a carpenter on a number of weatherboard cottages in Ainslie.

## MEMORIES OF RUSSELL HILL

by D Cashmore nee Davis

*I came to Canberra for the opening of Parliament in 1927 - later we lived here. I didn't know of so many temporary dwellings in the early period...*

*The majority of men were tradesmen [who came to Russell Hill] and therefore built nice little homes for their families. They were built knowing it may be a matter of just a few years before being demolished and build or buy in other vicinities.*

*Most homes were typical of the type of small cottages built at the coast for holiday makers in those years when the folk left their nice comfortable homes with all mod cons in*

*Canberra and holidayed by the sea at the South Coast in much the same type of houses except unlike Canberra no pan service, no running water. Tank water - sometimes sanitary pits on the same block as the supply of bore water from the wells. One of our friends discovered a dead possum in the water tank at the end of their holidays !*

*My Father came to Canberra for a working contract, decided to stay. Our home was sold at Wentworth Falls in the Blue Mountains. We rented a house in Queanbeyan and I attended school there..... My Father was negotiating with the ACT Government of the day to lease 40 acres of land on Jerrabomberra Avenue where he wanted to build our permanent home. He was informed that he had to be a resident of the AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL COMMISSION, as it was then, to be eligible.*

*Homes were being built for Public Servants only as homes were available more Public Servants were transferred to Canberra, men in the labour force only had a choice of one of the temporary sites.*

*My Dad built a five roomed weatherboard cottage plus double garage with bathroom, pantry, laundry and woodshed. Lots of cupboards and built-ins. [House] painted chocolate with white trim. There was an outside toilet with pan service.*

*I have found a photograph of the home - was quite an attractive little place. There was no*

*electricity. We had a chip heater at the end of the bath with shower above, wood stove, large cast iron urn on the stove for hot water. The primus was used a lot - was amazing with the aid of various steam cookers and a ring stove gadget - cakes were successfully baked etc. The primus stove was an asset. We had kerosene lights and kerosene refrigerator, a petrol iron - was pumped and worked with pressure and also pressure lamps. The copper and cement tubs in the laundry.*

*The piano was in the lounge. I took lessons with Miss English at Ainslie and later Miss Scrivener at Red Hill, elocution with Yetiee Sandan of Ainslie. It was popular to learn music in those days.*

*Next to us was an attractive little home. The Thompsons were English. He was a painter, built a three bedroom fibro home plus attached garage, painted white with black battens to trim.*

*Mr Thompson did a lot of work at the Institute of Anatomy. There are decorative golden kookaburras moulded above doorways etc as decoration - still there today. The Thompsons eventually shifted to the suburb of Griffith long after my departure. Their daughter attended Girls Grammar School from Russell Hill. She was much younger than me of course.*

*There were a few homes which looked a bit basic but I know of none built with kerosene tins or the likes. Generally people there took a lot of pride in their homes. I remember some lovely little homes and great gardens. One friend of ours had the most beautiful ferns under various shade houses in the grounds.*

*Jack Wright was a keen exhibitor at the Canberra Horticultural Shows. Later they built at Bass Gardens, Forrest. For many years he wrote the garden section in The Canberra Times. The Dockers were neighbours. Ed Dockar later became The Hardware Pty Ltd at Braddon and still there today.*

*I attended St Gabriel's School at Reid - a two storey stone building, original home for the Pastor of St John's Church of England. We wore navy blue uniforms and black stockings. Sister Hilda, a nun, used to roam around the place dressed in full old style (Nun Habit). She was a great favourite with the children. Eventually the Girls Grammar School was built, St Gabriel's closed and the pupils transferred. I had to catch a bus at Reid for Grammar. It was quite a walk to and from Reid. There was no bus service to Russell Hill in those days...*

*Life was good until the Great Depression hit and Lang closed the banks. My parents were devastated. The money they from the sale of our previous home was in the bank and they had no access to it. They feared that they may lose their money for the future permanent*

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home entirely. I was taken from Grammar and attended the local school. Mr McGee was the Headmaster then. Later attended Telopea Park High. Was quite a walk across the flat and over the footbridge behind the Power House and up to Telopea School. The alternative was for bad weather and flooding - catch the bus at Reid. I left later and did correspondence course TCS of Sydney - also fashion design. I booked some private tuition with various private teachers in Art work etc...

Mrs Burr ran the small store and Post Office [at Russell Hill]. There was no mail delivery. We collected our mail. A tennis court run by a club played competitive tennis with other clubs was popular and an asset for practice.

A keen Progress Association watched over the little village. I remember they fought really hard to stop the school from being used for a Saturday Night Dance. They declared that such dances would bring drunkenness and larrikinism. The Dancers won. We lived close to the school and I could hear the music on Saturday nights and wished that I was allowed to go. However we soon departed after that.

The bad thing about living at this address was the stigma created by some types of people of that era. Snobbishness was rife in those early Canberra years when there was such a small population with inflated opinions of social position...

My dad met the famed Lasseter. He wasn't very impressed. His impression was that he told a lot of questionable stories and the last straw was when he claimed to have designed the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Lasseter's neighbours were not impressed either. I remember cats were rare at Russell Hill and Mr Lasseter owned several very decorative catskin rugs, his hobby!

Russell Hill was a really pleasant little place to live situated in one of the nice settings in Canberra, a flat area surrounded by gentle hills and old gum trees. Of course part of where the expensive suburb of Campbell exists today.

Judging from the old gum trees the present school of Campbell is near to where the original school was. Obviously when Campbell was surveyed the area was completely changed. Russell Hill occupied a small part with approximately 250 dwellings in the vicinity of the present shopping centre. The front of our home faced west, a corner block of the front row, up to the left of the school.

I appreciated Russell Hill because it was individual and no pre-fabricated homes all the same, like barracks, which the Government liked to offer at that period. However there was a well run school, complete with a children's playground with swings, see-saws, horizontal bars, rings that hung on chains,

all thanks to the Progress Association. There was a good communal spirit among the people. A home was burnt down and the people rallied around and collected money for the replacement of the home for the unfortunate victims.

The older children used to play on going games of vigero and hockey on the flat near the tennis court. Rafferty's Rules applied and was lots of fun.

Bonfire nights were popular. Children and their families built huge bon fires. There was lots of bush and fuel around then. Cracker Night was very popular...

In 1945 I returned to Canberra and lived in the suburb of Griffith with our three children. One of the young wives whose husband ... worked with my husband [in Germany] returned to Canberra. That was about 1947. She visited me and invited me to visit her, quite apologetically she explained that her husband and self were living in a little place at Russell Hill. She believed it was not fashionable to live there, was government owned and cheap rent, but do come and visit giving me instructions. I couldn't be bothered enlightening her. However made the visit and was interested to note the house had belonged to Mr & Mrs Clark and their two children. Mr Clark was in the building trade and built a nice little cottage. There were very few places existing at that time. After 32 years the house was still in good condition...

ALLEN, Benjamin storeman

ALWARD, John labourer

John Arthur Alward, son of John and Alice Alward was married to Amy and had a son. His address was 46 Lander Street Hamilton in NSW. He left his family to find work in Canberra and was at the time of his death living at Russell Hill. He died on 22nd November, 1928 aged 42 years and is buried in St John the Baptist Church Cemetery. Reference *St John's Churchyard* by Jean Salisbury.

ARMPFIELD, Jean & Ernest hd & labourer

AXELBY, Elsie & Albert hd & labourer

Elsie Bridget Axelby died on 2nd April, 1960 (age 60) was buried at Woden Cemetery in the Catholic Section on 5th April 1960. Her husband Albert Richard Axelby died on 10th May, 1973 and is buried in the ex-servicemen's section Woden Cemetery.

114 BATESON, Minna & Alfred hd & carpenter

15 BEGENT, Florence & James hd & carpenter  
Florence Begent died on the 8th and was buried at Woden Cemetery on 10th November 1966. She was 75 and is buried in the same grave as her husband James Clement who died on the 19th was buried 23rd

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May, 1957. Marie, wife of Rec Carter and daughter of Florence and James Begent died on 28th April 1940 aged 28 years. She is buried in Woden Cemetery.

BOON, Rosina & James hd & gardener  
James and Rosina Boon are buried in Woden Cemetery. He was buried on 13th May, 1955 and she on 4th August 1992. They are buried next to each other. James Boon died on 1th May 1955 aged 66 years and his grave was paid by Ivan Flanagan of 68 Patterson Street Ainslie.

BOREHAM, Mary & Heric hd & labourer

BRASH, Alice & William hd & labourer

BROWN, Beatrice & Neil hd & labourer

BURR, Mary & James hd & ganger

BURR, Emma & James hd & storekeeper  
Emma Burr was buried at Woden Cemetery on 13th September 1937. She died on the 11<sup>th</sup> September 1937 aged 62. Her grave was paid by James Burr of Russell Hill. Mrs Burr ran the Post Office

CARROLL, Isabell & Oscar hd & labourer

CARTER, Iris & Robert hd & haulage contractor

CASH, Walter motor driver

CHAPMAN, Amy, Arthur & Henry hd, motor driver & ---  
Amy Chapman died on 29th August 1971 and is buried at Woden Cemetery. In the next grave his Arthur Herbert Chapman who was buried on 1st July, 1965.

CLARK, Rosalie & William hd & labourer

29 CLARK, Violet & Frederick hd & carpenter

CONROY, Eileen & Patrick hd & linesman

101 COWAN, Bridget & James hd & clerk  
James Joseph Cowan was buried in the RC Section of Woden Cemetery on 29th October 1960.

COWIE, Georgina, Arthur & John hd, labourer & chainman  
Georgina was buried in the Anglican Section of Woden Cemetery on 15th May, 1961 and her husband John in the same grave. He died 25th October 1979.

CURRIE, May & Charles hd & labourer

DAVIS, Minnie & Arthur hd & carpenter  
Minnie Hilda Davis died 8th June, 1973 and was buried in the Methodist Section of Woden Cemetery.

Her Husband Arthur F was buried in the next grave. He died 2nd June, 1969.

DOBSON, Edith & Robert hd & cartage contractor

*The Ambassadors* DOCKER, Gladys & Edmund hd & plumber

DOYLE, Greta & Michael hd & contractor  
Michael Joseph Doyle was buried in the RC Section of Woden Cemetery on 27th June, 1958. He died on 25<sup>th</sup> June 1958 aged 64. His grave was paid by Michael J Doyle (same person?) of 10 Toms Crescent Ainslie

98 DUNN, Ada & George hd & drayman  
Ada Dunn was buried in the Anglican Section of Woden Cemetery on 7th December 1946 and her husband was buried in the same grave on 17th September, 1957. George Michael Dunn and Ada in 1946 lived at 88 Causeway. She died on 5<sup>th</sup> December 1946 aged 73 years.

DWYER, Mildred & Kenneth hd & carpenter  
Mildred Mary Dwyer died on 18th July 1968 and is buried at Woden Cemetery in the Roman Catholic Section. Kenneth Robert died on 5th August 1974 and is buried in the same grave.

EMSLIE, Rita & Cleveland hd & chainman  
Maxwell James Emslie, son of Rita and Cleveland died aged 8 hours on 11th February, 1928. He is buried in St John the Baptist Church Cemetery. Reference *St John's Churchyard* by Jean Salisbury.

GARDINER, Ellen & Albert hd & horse driver  
Ellen Jane was buried in Woden Cemetery on 22nd March, 1956. Ernest Albert was buried in the same grave in the Anglican section on 21st March 1963.

83 GAYLARD, Elizabeth & Henry hd & carpenter  
Elizabeth Norma Gaylard died on 27th July 1977 and is buried in the Anglican Section of Woden Cemetery. Henry James Gaylard died on 24th October, 1986 and is buried in the next grave.

80 GEARY, Katherine & Leonard hd & carpenter

GINNS, Myrtle & Charles hd & labourer

GRANT, Teresa & Frederick hd & labourer  
Teresa Maud Grant was buried in Woden Cemetery on 25th May 1970

GREEN, Alice & Albert hd & blacksmith

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HAMMOND, Daisy & Lysle hd & labourer  
Daisy May Hammond was buried in Woden Cemetery on 13th November 1967. Lysle Ernscliff Hammond was buried in the next grave on 27th May, 1957. He died on 25<sup>th</sup> May aged 62. His address at that time was 13, Seventh Street Narrabundah. His grave was paid by Neville Francis Wallace of 42 Boolimba Crescent Narrabundah.

HARRISON, Esther & John hd & cartage contractor

Boyd Carlisle Robinson Harrison, son of John and Esther died on 2nd August 1928 aged one month. His tombstone in St John the Baptist Church Cemetery notes that he was the brother of John and Pat. Esther Mary Harrison was buried in Woden Cemetery on 20th July, 1955. In the next grave is John Henry - also buried on 20th July, 1955. The next grave is the body of John Harrison buried 6th December 1966.

HAWKINS, Dulcie & Dinniss hd & ganger  
Dulcie Olevine Hawkins was buried at Gungahlin. She died 30th March, 1992.

HOLLAND, Mary & John hd & labourer

HILL, Rita & Wallace hd & painter

26 HOLMES, Elizabeth & Harold hd & watchman

Elizabeth Mary Holmes was buried in Woden Cemetery on 19th November 1968.

HUNTINGFORD, Catherine & Christopher hd & labourer

Catherine Maud Lillian Huntingford was buried in the RC Section of Woden Cemetery on 17th July, 1963.

HYDE, Linda & Benjamin hd & labourer

HYDE, Clarice & Charles hd & laundryman  
Charles Arthur Joseph Hyde died on 31st March, 1997 and is buried in the Gungahlin Cemetery. In the next grave is Clara Emily Hyde who died on 3rd May, 1985.

INNES, Jessie, Ewart & William hd, labourer & painter

89 JACKSON, Adelaide hd

JOHNSON, Pearl & Charles hd & labourer  
A Pearl Johnson died on 23rd October, 1991 and is buried in the Anglican Section of Woden Cemetery.

36 JOHNSON, Mary & Joseph hd & labourer  
A Joseph Johnson was buried in Woden Cemetery in the RC Section on 14th February 1937. He died on 13<sup>th</sup> February 1937 aged 53 and his grave was paid by JW Johnson of Ainslie. Buried in the same grave is Mary Jane who was buried on 2nd December 1942.

She died on 30<sup>th</sup> November 1942 aged 58 years and her grave was also paid by JW Johnson of 32 Suttor Street Ainslie.

12 KENNEDY, Margaret & Joseph hd & labourer

KING, Florence & Paul hd & labourer

LAWLER, Frederick labourer

16 LITTLEFIELD, Sussanah & William hd & cook

Sussanah May Littlefield was buried in the Anglican Section of Woden Cemetery on 18th July, 1957. In the same grave is William Henry Littlefield who was buried on 20th June, 1970.

LLOYD, Blanche & Edward hd & labourer  
Blanche Elizabeth Lloyd died on 14th April, 1974 and is buried in the Anglican Section of Woden Cemetery. In the same grave is Edward Thomas Lloyd who was buried on 27th November, 1951. He died on 25<sup>th</sup> November 1951 aged 63. His address then was 8 Causeway and his grave was paid by William George Lloyd of 4 Bougainville Street Manuka.

54 McCORMICK, Hilda & Alfred hd & watchman

McCROREY, Marie & Charles hd & labourer  
Charles Henry McCrorey was buried in the RC Section of Woden Cemetery on 1st September, 1953. In the same grave is Marie Mary McCrorey who was buried on 27th May, 1953.

McCULLOUGH, Catherine & William hd & carpenter

In 1924 the McCullough family lived at Westlake. They later moved from Russell Hill (?) to Causeway. Catherine was buried in the Baptist Section of Woden Cemetery on 2nd June 1966. William McCullough died on 9th February 1972 and is buried in the same grave.

17 McFARLANE, Eva & Andrew hd & quarryman

McINTYRE, Evelyn & Walter hd & labourer  
Evelyn Mary McIntyre was buried in the RC Section of Woden Cemetery on 20th March, 1964. A Walter Joseph John McIntyre was also buried in the RC Section of Woden Cemetery on 30th September, 1960. The Walter mentioned in this electoral roll section was Walter John McIntyre.

McKUEN, William labourer

McLEOD, Bertha & Angus hd & gardener

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MARLOWE, May & Edward hd & camp cook

MARSHALL, Clair, Selena, George, Joseph & William wood merchant, hd, labourer, labourer & labourer

Clair Marshall was buried in Woden Cemetery in the RC Section on 10th October 1969 (B331). Joseph Henry Marshall was buried in the RC Section of Woden Cemetery on 27th February 1965. Selena Elizabeth was buried in the RC Section of Woden Cemetery on 16th April 1951 and in the next grave is William James Marshall who died on 13th April 1979. George Marshall was buried in the same grave as William on 28th August 1951. He died on 27<sup>th</sup> August 1951 aged 79 and his grave was paid by Mrs Clair Marshall of 5 Toms Crescent Ainslie.

13 MATTHEWS, Lizzie hd

MAYES, Flora & Charles hd & labourer  
Charles Edward Mayes died on 4th October 1970 and was buried in the Anglican Section of Woden Cemetery. In the next grave is Flora Mayes who was buried on 7th March, 1962.

MILES, Henrietta hd

MOON, Violet & William hd & watchman

MOORE, Thomas plumber

MORTON, Evelyn & Frederick hd & carpenter  
Evelyn Gladys Morton was buried in the Anglican Section of Woden Cemetery on 6th January, 1970. Frederick Cyril Morton was buried in another section of the Anglican Section of Woden Cemetery on 1st September, 1953. He died on 3ed August 1953 aged 60. His address was 25 Ebden Street Ainslie and his grave was paid by Cyril Ronnel Morton of 40 Tyson Street Ainslie.

MURRAY, Ellen, William & James hd, labourer & labourer

63 NOBLE, Ada & Stanley hd & labourer

59 PATERSON, Emily & Eric hd & electrician

89 PHILLIPS, Elizabeth & James hd & labourer

14 PHIPP, Alice & Alexander hd & labourer

PHIPP, Ernest motor driver

PITNEY, Mildred & Frederick hd & miner  
Frederick Charles Pitney was buried in Woden Cemetery in the Anglican Section on 10th July, 1945. He died on 8<sup>th</sup> July 1945 aged 60 and his grave was paid by Mildred Hollis Pitney of Russell Hill.

POWER, Annie & William hd & labourer

Annie Power was buried in Woden Cemetery in the RC Section on 8th July, 1954. She died on 6<sup>th</sup> July 1954 aged 83. Her address and that of Richard Power who paid for the grave was 37 Causeway. Buried in the same grave is William Thomas Power. Dates of death and burial are not known.

RAMSDEN, Kathleen & Fred hd & carter

REYNOLDS, Clarice & Thomas hd & labourer  
Mr Reynolds was the camp steward and was in charge of the keys for the tennis court. Thomas Charles was the father of three children at the time of his death aged 35 years on 18th August 1929. His father-in-law Henry Chapman was buried in the same grave in 1939. Mrs Reynolds and children later moved to Westlake. Reference *St John's Churchyard* by Jean Salisbury. Henry Chapman died on 7th January 1939 - aged 83 years. He married Catherine Morrison in 1883.

RICHARDSON, Norah & Patrick hd & motor driver

Norah Richardson died on 6th October, 1980 and is buried in Gungahlin Cemetery. A Patrick Laurel Richardson was buried in the Ex-Servicemen's Section of Woden Cemetery.

ROBINSON, Ethel & Amos hd & labourer

The family later moved to 57 Westlake. Ethel Grace Robinson died on 8th July, 1977 and is buried in the Anglican Section of Woden Cemetery. Amos Herbert was also buried in Woden Cemetery in another section of the Anglican portion. He was buried on 20th December, 1944. He was 61 years of age. Their son, Clarence died on 15th July, 1930 (one month short of his eighteenth birthday). He is buried in St John the Baptist Church Cemetery at Reid.

ROSS, Nora & Andres hd & painter

SHEPHERD, Sarah & Archibald hd & labourer  
Archibald Shepherd was buried in the Anglican Section of the Woden Cemetery on 20th February 1951. He died on 18<sup>th</sup> February 1951 aged 67. Colin Shepherd of 23 Ebden Street Braddon paid for the grave. Buried in the same grave is Sarah Shepherd who died on 26th June, 1974.

SHUMACK, Mary hd

SKERRY, Lily & Thomas hd & labourer  
Thomas Robert Skerry was buried in the Anglican Section of Woden Cemetery on 18th July, 1967.

SMITH, Elizabeth & John hd & labourer  
Later moved to Westlake. Buried in the RC Section of

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Woden Cemetery are Elizabeth Smith who was buried on 7th September 1939. She died on 6<sup>th</sup> September 1939 aged 54 and her grave was paid by John FR Smith of Westlake. In the same grave is John Francis Robert Smith who was buried on 18th March, 1960. In the next grave is John Francis Robert Smith who was buried on 15th February, 1941. He died on 14<sup>th</sup> February 1941. [The family name was Brooking – known as Smith]

122 SMITH, Jane & George hd & labourer  
George Andrew, son of Jane Lucy (nee Nye) and George Smith was 7 months of age when he died on 18th January, 1928 from whooping cough. He is buried in St John the Baptist Church Cemetery in Reid ACT. Reference *St John's Churchyard* by Jean Salisbury.

SOUTHWELL, Lilia & George hd & ranger  
George Stanley Southwell was buried in the RC Section of Woden Cemetery on 29th December, 1960. In the same grave buried on 24th October 1968 is Lila Ethel Maud Southwell.

SPEERING, Annette, Alfred & Luke hd,  
labourer & labourer  
Alfred Speering was buried in the Woden Cemetery on 17th December 1944. He died on 15<sup>th</sup> December 1944 aged 68. His address was 102 Causeway and he had paid for his own grave. Annette Ellen Speering was buried in the RC Section of Woden Cemetery on 19th August 1967.

77 SUTTON, Emily & George hd & carpenter  
Emily Isobel Sutton was buried in the Anglican Section of the Woden Cemetery on 20th July, 1982.

19 SUTTON, Winifred & Alfred hd & labourer

76 THOMAS, Isabel & Stanley hd & labourer

112 THOMPSON, Gwenydd & William hd & painter  
Gwenydd Rosalin Thompson died on 13th December 1970. William Frederick Thompson was buried in the Ex-Servicemen's Section of the Woden Cemetery on 15th March 1978.

THURTELL, Margaret & Ernest hd & linesman

TILYARD, Eva, Cyril & Merrick hd, plasterer & labourer  
Baby Tilyard was buried in the Anglican Section of Woden Cemetery on 23rd April 1938 (C280). Cyril John Tilyard was buried in the Anglican Section of Woden Cemetery on 1st August 1960 (C282). In the next grave buried on 23rd May 1957 (C283).

95 TWEEDLEY, Marion & William hd & carpenter

WAGHORN, Winifred & Sydney hd & labourer

WALLACE, Austin labourer

WHITE, Margaret & George hd & maintenanceman

WILL, Alice & Edward hd & bricklayer

WILLIAMS, Esther & Thomas hd & labourer  
Thomas Titus was the son of Thomas and Ellena Williams. He was born in Victoria. He married Louie Moore by whom he had two children. He then married Esther White and fathered another three children. He died on the 11th March 1931 aged 56 years and is buried in St John the Baptist Church Cemetery. Reference *St John's Churchyard* by Jean Salisbury.

WILLIAMS, Gladys & Frederick hd & labourer  
Frederick George Williams died on 9th September, 1971. In the next grave in the RC Section of Woden Cemetery is Gladys May who was buried on 20th October, 1969.

WRIGHT, Victoria & John hd & carrier  
John Thomas Wright died on 23rd January, 1985 and is buried in the Ex-Servicemen's Section of the Woden Cemetery.

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25 March, 1927 a list of children in the settlement was recorded. It is as follows:

J SMITH, Francis, Elizabeth, Thomas,  
PHIPPEN, nil,  
O'CONNELL, Maureen,  
A H CHAPMAN, Eileen,  
J BURR Jr, James, Peter, Terry & Maureen,  
G FIELD, Madge, Percy, Stella & Malcolm  
N BROWN, nil,  
J KENNEDY, Bert & Martha,  
A M PHIPPS, Ernest,  
J BEGENT, Jack, Mollie & Harold,  
R EADY, Albert, R SHAW, nil,  
C CURRIE, Norma,  
F MILES, Terry & Frederick,  
J SULLIVAN, Keith, Mervyn & Leonard  
A McCORMICK, Francis & Margaret  
W COOPER, William Trevor & Eric  
C HUNTINGFORD, Percy & Olga,  
AG VENABLES, Gloria,  
C WILLIAMS, Phyllis & Robert,  
W CLARK, William, Elvina, George, Lorna & Gordon,  
FC MORTON, William, Cyril, Charles & Evelyn, RJ  
BURKE, June,  
JT STAPLETON, Sylvia,  
HF LORD, Dorothy,  
T LOYD, Kathleen, Frederick, William & Mary, D  
McKENZIE, Warwick,

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GEO WYBAR, Joyce, Moyna, George & Leslie, LHB  
Lasseter, Robert, Betty (Lasseter shortly after this time  
left for Sydney and then his ill-fated trip to the  
Northern Territory),

D HAWKINS

CH McCROREY, Terence, Molley, Reg & Jean  
F GRANT, Pearl, Daniel, Edward, Clare & Grace  
LA GEORGE, Stanley,

F RAMSDEN

L PROUD,

J COWIE, Robert & James

E NANCARROW, Gladys & Edwin,

A NYE, Gilbert,

T WILLIAMS, Lorna & William,

J MURRAY, William & James,

R HILL, Muriel, J BOON, Rosina, Irene, Lorna &  
Marjory,

RA DOBSON, Douglas, Joy & Lexa,

H HOLMES, Norma,

C EMSLIE, Gwyneth,

C MAYES,

F CLARK, Doris & Edgar,

J BURR sn, F PITNEY, John,

H McARTHUR, Jean, P CONROY, Mary, Patrick &  
John,

J JOHNSON,

E WILL, Claude, Ethel & Arthur,

S NOBLE, Jean,

W THOMPSON, Jean,

J HOLLAND, Leonie,

J McCONEY, Audrey,

A SHEPHERD, Noel & Colin,

C DYER,

A BOREHAM,

A ARMFIELD,

N MAXWELL, Thomas & Sylvia (Norman Maxwell  
and his wife Margaret - known as Peggy - moved to  
43 Westlake. He was a son of Phillip Thomas  
Maxwell, Auctioneer, of Queanbeyan.

W McCULLOUGH, Mary, William & Joseph (lived  
at Westlake prior to move to Russell Hill),

E FARNHAM,

A GIBBS,

E DOCKAR, Edmund,

L GEARY, Catherine,

W COCHRAN, Hilda,

A GREEN, Cecil & Enid,

BLANCHFLOWER,

L THOMAS,

R WALKER, Maxwell & Keith,

E BROWN, Norman, Dulcie, Albert & Stanley,

A BATESON, Diana & Marcelline,

B HYDE, Mary,

T HEATH, Ronald,

A DAVIS, Daphne,

E CASSIDY, Frederick, Eileen & William,

E DAY, Rodney,

S BROWNLEY, Cyril,

C HAMMOND, Doreen, Lysle & Ruby,

H BOREHAM, Colin & Maxwell,

J HOLLAND, Leonie,

D BUCKLEY, Richard, Betty & Frederick,

J HODGE, Mary, Kathleen, John & Mavis,

W INNES,

J PHILLIPS, Mary & Eric,

W SHUMACK, Kathleen, Hazel, Ellen, John & Allan,

F WILLIAMS, Grace, Lilly, Hazel, Daphne, Harold,

Leonard, Olga & Mervyn,

GEO WHITE,

MUNN,

M MITCHELL,

W TWEEDLY, Veram, Sydney, Jean & Sylvia, M

AMBLER, Stanley,

W BRASH, William, Norman & Stanley,

A ROBINSON, Frances, Phillip, Leo, Catherine,

Vivian & Daphne,

T REYNOLDS, Douglas & Harold,

G CAVANAGH, Glyn,

T NOLAN



Above: Sir John Butters, First Commissioner of  
Federal Capital Advisory Commission. He is the  
person responsible for the following letter about the  
merits of Russell Hill versus Molonglo.

## RUSSELL HILL & MOLONGLO SETTLEMENTS

The Federal Capital Advisory Committee was in  
charge of building works from 1920 to the beginning  
of 1925 when the Federal Capital Commission (FCC  
1925-March 1930) under the direction of John Butters,  
First Commissioner, took over. Molonglo was  
converted into accommodation for workmen under the  
auspices of FCAC and Russell Hill under the FCC. In  
one way Russell Hill like Riverbourne (1925-1927)  
before it was an admittance of defeat by the FCC who  
were unable to provide decent accommodation for  
workmen.

Russell Hill was established in 1926 in what is now  
the modern suburb of Campbell. One hundred &  
twenty house sites were marked for men to construct  
cottages for themselves and their families. Molonglo  
on the other hand was an ex-internment camp  
hurriedly built in twelve weeks in 1918. In 1920/1921  
the remaining buildings not sold off and removed were  
converted into workmen's cottages (120) and a single  
Tradesmen's Barracks. The FCC wanted to get rid of  
Russell Hill and suggested that Russell Hill should be  
removed by 1929. Molonglo was considered by the  
FCC to be good and suitable accommodation for  
workmen. Following is a letter promoting that choice.

## Russell Hill 1928

Australian Archives: CP464/5 10/15  
RUSSELL HILL

*The Chief Commissioner to-day made the following statement explaining the Commission's policy and intentions in connection with the Russell Hill Settlement. "In order that the public of Canberra in general and the residents of Russell Hill settlement in particular may understand clearly the history of Russell Hill settlement and the Commission's intentions with regard to the future, I should be glad if the press would publish the following.*

*At a certain point during the peak period of construction there was ample work for unskilled labor in Canberra and a shortage of work in New South Wales generally and one of the results of this was an influx of people, almost destitute, some of whom arrived with a wife and several small children and practically nothing but what they stood up in. The Commission had no accommodation available for these people and no prospects of being able to house them for some considerable time. Possibly the sound thing for the Commission to have done would have been to have refused them work and send them back from whence they came. Instead of this, however, a special effort was made to meet the situation; they were given sites upon which a camp at Russell Hill and elsewhere and found temporary employment, every such individual being warned that he could only be allowed to camp temporarily and could only be given employment until such time as he had accumulated enough money to go and seek employment elsewhere. The number of such families arose to well over 100 and they all eventually congregated at Russell Hill under conditions that permitted of proper supervision from a hygienic point of view. Every tenant had the whole situation thoroughly and clearly explained to him and each signed an undertaking not to erect any buildings on the site without written authority and an acknowledgment of the fact that the Commission might have to ask the tenant to leave the site at a fortnight's notice. As much as two years ago specific instructions were given to commence and carry out the Commission's established policy in connection with this settlement by demolishing completely the hutment immediately a family left the site, but in order to alleviate hardship authority was given by which even although unauthorized structures had been erected they might be sold once to an incoming tenant if the place was reasonably fit for habitation. In August 1927 a letter was sent to the Honorary Secretary of the District Committee of the Social Service Association in which the whole matter was explained and a special reminder was given that the whole settlement would have to be completely demolished at an early date [It lasted into the 1950s]. At about the same time a number of the residents at Russell Hill settlement called at the office with a petition from the residents with regard to certain conditions at the settlement and in replying to them*

*the earlier notifications with regard to tenancy were repeated in writing as the following paragraph in the letter shows:- "It was made perfectly clear to everyone that the settlement was of a very temporary character and might be demolished within the next three years." And in another paragraph it was stated that the Commission "is doing everything reasonable to make the camping conditions there as comfortable and as sanitary as the circumstances will permit, but that it definitely intends to demolish the whole settlement at the very earliest possible moment." Since that date on a number of occasions similar warnings have been given, and the policy of demolishing anything left on a site after a resident has vacated it has been followed up continuously.*

*I hope that this has made clear - (1) How the settlement came to be established in the first place; (2) That every tenant has known from the beginning that the whole settlement was of a temporary character and was liable to be abolished just as soon as the Commission could conveniently arrange to do so without inflicting any serious hardship. It may be mentioned incidentally that the mere existence of Russell Hill settlement involves the public of Australia in considerable expense. [NB the settlement was not connected to sewer or electricity system - water was connected to the settlement - there was a rough track into the settlement - hard to understand where & how the "considerable expense" came into being!] The Commission maintains a camp supervisor; we have had to establish a sanitary service and a garbage removal system, and in addition a local school. The mere existence of that school is an embarrassment in that the available supply of teachers does not meet the demand and it is obviously unsound and unfair to maintain a school establishment in excess of the requirements and leave a shortage elsewhere. There is ample accommodation for additional pupils at Molonglo and Telopea Park [several miles away across the other side of the Molonglo River - and no buses could get into Russell Hill], whilst the other services could be provided very much more cheaply elsewhere than at Russell Hill.*

*Now with regard to the method which the Commission had in mind and still intends to pursue in abolishing this settlement, I may say that the Commission hoped to have been able to build a considerable number of permanent workmen's cottages during the last twelve months but owing to the reduction of funds available to it this has had to be postponed. The effect of this has been that the rate at which the settlement is being abolished has been less than was hoped for. The first positive step towards the end has been that which was taken recently. Instructions were given that as every cottage at Molonglo, Causeway, Eastlake and Westlake became vacant they were to be reconditioned and after preliminary adjustments of tenancies in order of priority of application the ultimate vacancies were to be filled by transferring Russell Hill residents who were living in bag huts or other tenements of an*



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unsatisfactory character. The residents concerned have been given ample notice and will be required to conform to the instructions which have been laid down. The existing vacancies in the established settlements having been filled, every new vacancy will be similarly used to place a Russell Hill resident who is living under the least satisfactory conditions existing at Russell Hill at the time. How many months will elapse before it is possible to eliminate all unsatisfactory housing at Russell Hill it is impossible to say, but it may be recognised as quite definite that a large proportion of the residences at Russell Hill are considered by the Government and the Commission as most unsatisfactory and that what has been referred to in Parliament and elsewhere as "slums" at Russell Hill must be abolished as soon as we can arrange for it.

The Commission throughout has done everything possible to obviate hardship, and as a matter of fact has obviated it, and it will do its best to obviate hardship in the future, and it is unfortunate that the Commission is not being assisted by the local residents and others in this connection. The tenements at Molonglo and Russell Hill have been inspected both by the Territorial Medical Officer for Health and by the Director-General of Health for the Commonwealth and as a result of these inspections the Government and the Commission are satisfied that the Commission's policy is sound and that it should have the co-operation of the public of Canberra in eliminating an undoubted blot on Canberra such as exists in a considerable proportion of the Russell Hill settlement.

A careful study of the probable requirements for workmen's housing and money likely to be available during the next few years indicates clearly that it will be some years before the Molonglo Settlement can in turn be abolished and in the meantime, the provisions of the Housing Act are available to Canberra workmen to enable them to build their own homes within the City area. As has already been announced the Commission has experimented with the construction of some further temporary housing to utilize the present surplus of workmen's cubicle material, and if this experiment proves successful a number of cottages of this class will be made available as close as possible to existing City services, schools, and shopping facilities, but not at Molonglo as was suggested by certain individuals recently. The settlement at Molonglo will not be increased in size.

So far as good class residences are concerned at Russell Hill, these will be left until the last. The owners of these buildings deliberately ignored the warnings which were given them and the instructions that written approval had to be obtained before the buildings were proceeded with. They must accept full responsibility for any expense involved in removing their cottages elsewhere or selling the material, but

even here the Commission will do everything possible to alleviate hardship.

Summarising the whole situation I desire to say that this whole matter has been most carefully considered by the Minister and the Commission. It must be admitted that the Russell Hill settlement as it exists today is most undesirable, that quite apart altogether from the merits or demerits of the Molonglo or Westlake settlements, it must go, and that obviously it must go before these two. Many thousands of pounds of public money have been spent in converting the Molonglo settlement from tenements into cottages, and that the situation which has developed as a result of circumstances outside the control of the Commission cannot be cleared up in a day.

The Commission, as the administrative authority, could of course adopt the easy course, but the present unsatisfactory conditions cannot be cleaned up in that way, whereas, the pursuance of the Commission's established policy in this matter will clean it up without hardship to anyone.

## REPORT OF RELATIVE MERITS, FROM A HEALTH POINT OF VIEW OF MOLONGLO AND RUSSELL HILL SETTLEMENTS

### **Locality.**

Molonglo settlement is located on land which slopes from the crest of a low hill, northeasterly, towards the Molonglo River. The slope is uniform and is ample to provide good natural drainage. The surrounding area is treeless and the settlement receives little shelter from the prevailing winds.

Russell Hill settlement is situated on the north-western slope of Russell Hill, in lightly timbered country. It is sheltered to the north and north-west by low knolls and is not exposed in any degree to the prevailing winds. The whole settlement is situated on comparatively steep slopes, and the natural drainage is excellent.

### **Layout.**

Molonglo settlement, which was originally designed as an internment camp for prisoners of war, is laid out in an orderly manner with streets at right angles to one another. There are 96 cottages situated on blocks with frontages of 30 to 44 feet. The front gardens are of moderate size and the back yards comparatively small.

At Russell Hill there are 98 dwellings well grouped on small allotments in well defined streets. The road surfaces in both localities are unmade.

### **Drainage**

Although there is a satisfactory natural surface slope at Molonglo there are a number of artificial depressions in which water tends to accumulate after

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rain, forming shallow pools and mud holes. These could readily drained, however. At Russell Hill, there is no evidence of any accumulations of surface water in the settlement. Below the settlement there is a small gravel pit which contains a small amount of water after rain, but this has no sanitary significance.

## **Population.**

Molonglo has at present a population of about 655 of whom 113 are under 5 years of age, and 96 between the ages of 5 and 12. The attendance at the local school is 120. The population of Russell Hill is not recorded, but there are 89 homes and the school roll includes 120 names. There would appear to be fewer infants in the settlement than at Molonglo.

## **Housing.**

All the cottages at Molonglo are of wooden construction and are of two types. The smaller cottages have three rooms, a bathroom and an indoor water closet, while in the larger type there are five rooms. A detached wash-house is provided for each cottage. In most cases the outer walls of the cottages have an air space between the shell and the lining. In some cases, however the lining is in contact with the shell, no air spaces being provided. The partition walls are all constructed of a double thickness of timber, but without an air space. The floors are well above ground level. No fire places are provided, cooking being done on small stoves placed in the kitchens and equipped with iron chimneys. There is no provision for heating apart from these stoves. [NB These improvements of separating the long barracks into individual houses and providing an indoor WC and bathroom occurred in 1927. Prior to that there was no double timber used on the outside walls and the wind used to come through the cracks between the timber - it was still wet when put in situ and as it dried shrank.]

The houses at Russell Hill, on the other hand, have been erected entirely according to the enterprise and resources of the occupier. Bagging, kerosene, tin galvanised iron, weather boards, packing cases, malthoid and fibro-cement, have all been used. The dwellings vary from primitive humpies to neat and well built cottages. Even in the case of most of the humpies, however, fire places are built in and windows glazed. The number of rooms seems to range from two to five. The homes, though flimsy in appearance, appear to be well kept, clean and moderately comfortable.

It is debatable to what extent the aesthetics of home architecture may effect habits and so health. Molonglo presents a barrack-like orderliness. Russell Hill has a picturesque independence.

## **Sewerage and Nightsoil Disposal.**

Molonglo is provided with a water carriage sewerage system, the sewage being dealt with in a community septic tank situated well away from habitations. The

service appears to be in good order. In Russell Hill there is a free sanitary service, and disposal is affected by dumping into the city sewerage system. In general privies are of a good type and well maintained.

## **Garbage.**

Both settlements are included in the city garbage removal service.

## **Water.**

Water is provided to both settlements from the city water supply.

## **Light.**

Molonglo is provided with electric light; both no lighting service is available at Russell Hill.

## **Fire Protection.**

Hydrants are provided at both settlements, but the dwellings at Russell Hill are of a more fire resisting nature, and are situated at greater distance from one another than is the case at Molonglo, where the fire risk appears to be considerable. No fires, however, have occurred at Molonglo in the past.

## **Personal Hygiene.**

In both settlements the inhabitants are a good type of Australian working class, better than a random sample of population from a city industrial suburb. Carelessness in personal habits of hygiene is not noticeably in evidence at either settlement. A relatively high standard of personal hygiene is indicated by the cleanliness and tidiness of children, the house surroundings, gardens and yards and (the inspection being made on washing day) the washing on the line. There is little to choose between the settlements on the grounds of personal habits that might affect community health.

## **Mortality and Morbidity.**

The sickness records of both settlements are remarkably good. Local medical practitioners have always commented on the general healthiness of all camps in the Territory. Notifications of infectious diseases are few. In the past nine months the only notifications from the settlements have been:-

Molonglo: One Scarlet fever  
One suspected diphtheria (probably negative)  
One mumps (reported. Not notifiable)

Russell Hill: One scarlet fever  
One erysipelas

This compares well with notifications for the City as a whole, the records for 1928 being:-

Diphtheria	9
Scarlet fever	13
Erysipelas	2
Tuberculosis	2
Measles	16

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*Recent deaths for Molonglo settlement have been extracted from the Register as follows:*

*Adults: One accident  
One general peritonitis (infected uterus)  
One malignant rheumatic pyoemia*

*One lymf ... [typed over - paper slipped in typewriter]*

*Children Under Five:*

*12.9.27 Whooping cough  
6.12.27 Cerebral Congestion: intestinal toxemia  
13.3.28 Enteritis  
19.3.28 Gastro-enteritis  
18.6.28 Asthenia (Breech birth)  
7.9.1928 Broncho pneumonia*

*Deaths recorded from Russell Hill are not available.*

*The Mothercraft Society maintains a branch centre at Molonglo where the nurse attends once a week. There is no centre at Russell Hill, but the nurse visits the settlement. Infant health in both settlements appears to be relatively satisfactory. In this matter, however, the individual factor of the mother is usually of more importance than environment. Considering the number of young children in both settlements, the mortality and morbidity statistics are remarkably good.*

## **Conclusion.**

*From the above detailed consideration, it is difficult to express any opinion as to the relative merits of the two settlements from the viewpoint of personal or community health.*

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Australian Archives CP464/5 10/15  
*NOTES OF DEPUTATION OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY CITIZENS LEAGUE WHICH WAITED UPON THE MINISTER FOR HOME AFFAIRS ON THE 4th APRIL, 1929.*

*PRESENT: Dr Alcorn, Colonel Walker, Mr McInis*

*The Minister referred to the unfulfilled promise mentioned in the Canberra Times of the 4th April, 1929, and asked the particulars of the promise.*

*DR ALCORN stated that the reference was to the fact that the Minister promised them at their last interview that he would communicate with the League before taking definite action.*

*The Commission had issued Orders that the residents of Russell Hill must go to the Molonglo Settlement. Certain of the residents had got written notice that they must leave within a fortnight of the date of the notice.*

*As a medical man he considered Russell Hill a much more suitable place than the site at Molonglo, which was low and unprotected.*

*The Molonglo site had been condemned by the representatives of Germany when it was used as an internment Camp. The houses were rotten and were covered with dust which penetrated through the cracks in the walls. They could not be compared with most of the houses at Russell Hill.*

*A lot of bag structures at Russell Hill are much better than the houses at Molonglo.*

*Russell Hill is sheltered by timber and the houses are built on a virgin site as against a contaminated site at Molonglo.*

*Although the Molonglo site is sewered, sanitation is not everything. There should be facilities for the protection of people's bodies.*

*He did not agree with the statement by the Health Authorities that the Molonglo site was as healthy as Russell Hill.*

*COLONEL GOODWIN No one considers that Russell Hill should remain indefinitely. Some of the residents have spent between 150 pounds and 200 pounds on their houses. They were told they would be permitted to live there for five years.*

*The Molonglo site is better theoretically, but the locality is nothing like Russell Hill.*

*THE MINISTER Informed the deputation that he had paid a personal visit to both areas. He did not agree that Russell Hill was a better site than Molonglo which was sewered and had better conveniences.*

*The position was that the people of Russell Hill were informed quite definitely at the outset that they would be permitted to live there as a purely temporary measure. They had no definite tenure.*

*It was not the policy to remove everybody from Russell Hill to Molonglo. The idea was that Russell Hill should gradually close down.*

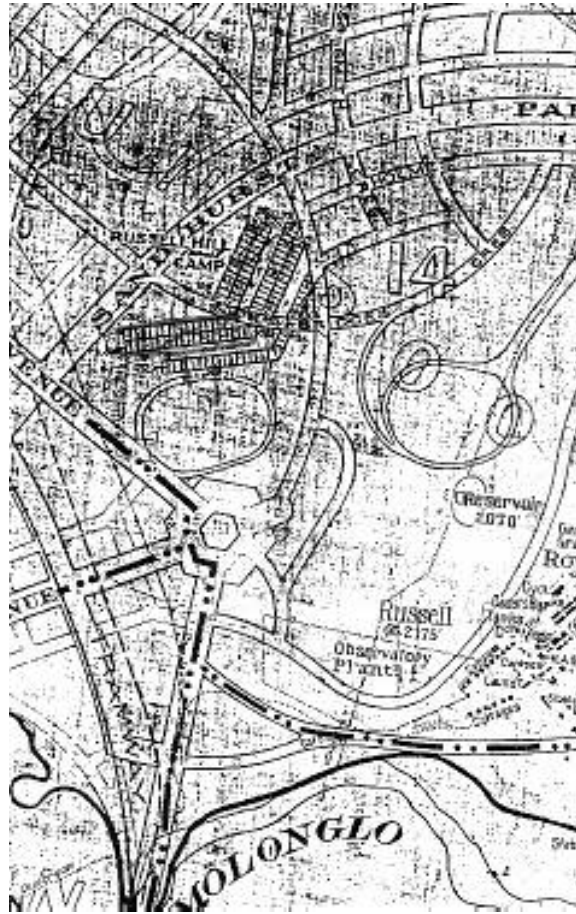
*Some of the houses at Russell Hill were satisfactory but others were disgraceful. The area was not sewered, and if an epidemic broke out both the Government and the Commission would be blamed for permitting such a state of affairs to exist. It would take from eighteen months to two years to eliminate Russell Hill. The movement would be gradual and would be effected with as little hardship as possible to the residents. He had to regard the matter from various angles. It was full of perplexities.*

*On the conclusion of the interview Dr Alcorn mentioned that if the Government persisted in*

# Russell Hill 1928

removing people from Russell Hill, his League would have to take up the question of provision of funds to

enable the legal aspect of the matter to be considered.



Above Clarrie Robinson at Russell Hill. The family moved to Westlake. Clarrie died in his late teens as a result of an accident.