

The Brickyards and the Men Who Worked There. 1917 Brickyards area renamed Westridge by Walter Burley Griffin.

The Brickyards were constructed in 1913 and by mid year were producing bricks. The men who came to built the yards were housed in the Railway Camp. The men who came to produce the bricks lived in segregated camps - married and single - in the area of present day Banks Street. The majority of single men lived under canvas - two men to each tent - and the married men in humpies constructed from hessian, tin and some timber.



Above: Left hand side Bill Boyd's truck ready to collect bricks for delivery – circa 1925. Photograph loaned by Jean Oldfield (nee Boyd).

By 1916 work ceased at the yards and did not recommence until 1921. At this time ten small brick cottages were erected in Section 64, ten ex-Molonglo cottages and a barracks moved to the area of Banks St as accommodation married and single men.

In 1927 new camps were built closer to the brickyards - for single and married men and a number of weatherboards constructed in the settlement to add to the few brick cottages. The ex-Molonglo cottages were removed as the building of the Forestry School was commenced and completed.

The main nursery was set up in Sheedy's Paddock in 1914 and men working there lived in old cottages in the grounds of Yarralumla House, a new cottage constructed in the nursery grounds and at Westridge (the name given to the emerging suburb by Walter Burley Griffin).

In 1924 the Manager of the Brickworks was WK Newbolte and the cost of making 1,000 bricks was 4 pounds 14 shillings. By 1925 this amount per thousand was reduced to 3 pounds 17/6d.

In 1925 Piece Work was introduced. The men who won contracts on 11 January, 1926 were GH Gallini, R Quigg, HB Charlton, M Ware, N Lawless, V Marsh, CW Riddle, Cliff Gallini.

Work started on 17 March, 1926 and HA Charlton of Rutledge St Queanbeyan operated a machine at 17/5d per 1,000 bricks.

Wheeling and Setting were by W Lawless & V Marsh for 4/6d per 1,000 common bricks and 6/- per 1000 face bricks.

Drawing - J Radcliffe was paid 4/6d per 1000 common and 5/- per 1000 face bricks.

By 24.3.1926 new rates had to be set. HA Charlton 5/6d per 1000 common,

W Lawless & V marsh 5/3d per 1000 common, 6/- per 1000 face bricks.

J Radcliffe 5/3d per 1000 common and 5/9d per 1000 face bricks.

The men worked a 44 hour week with 15 minute break for smoko. Bricks were delivered by light rail to the stacks at Ainslie (Civic), Railway (June 1926). Bricks were delivered to major sites such as Parliament House. Following the completion of Parliament House and other buildings necessary to operate the business of parliament building works slowed. By 23 March, 1928 the staff was reduced from 73 to (at 1.5.1928) 3 setters, 3 draggers, 3 burners, 4 pitmen, 4 wheelers, 2 mixermen, 2 panmen, 2 machinemen, 5 machineboys, 1 die maker, 1 presser, 1 fitter, 1 fitter's help, 1 horse & dray driver. The cost clerk was John Bryan and J Cooper was Manager of the Brickworks. The one brick machine made 50,000 bricks per week.

A list of employees at the Brickyard 27 February, 1939 contained the following names, occupation & suburb:

W Curley	Pit Foreman	Westridge
J Kinleysides	Pitman	Oaks Estate
A Blewitt	Jumperman	Oaks Estate
KC Johnston	Pitman	Queanbeyan
W Haines	Pitman	Westlake
K Ware	Pitman	Westlake
D Fletcher	Pitman	Ainslie
LD Horan	Pitman	Queanbeyan
W Lee	Pitman	Westridge
HM Lawless	Pitman	Capitol Hill
W Howes	Panman	Westridge
A Townsend	Panman	Westridge
MJ Ware	Machineman	Westridge
C Oldfield	Machineman	Westridge
W Ryan	Mixerman	Causeway
A Ware	Mixerman	Westridge
F McKay	Burner	Westridge
HL Noble	LM Burner	Westridge
JW Riddle	Burner	Westridge
M Johnson	Burner	Westridge
A Riddle	Burner	Westridge
HA Charlton	Burner	Ainslie
J Fisher	Setter	Queanbeyan
LN Colquhoun	Setter	Westridge
MJ Horan	Setter	Westridge
JH Riddle	Setter	Westridge
R Quigg	Setter	Ainslie
J Horan	Setter	Westridge
CH Riddle	Setter	Westridge
SC Riddle	Setter	Westridge
M Quigg	Setter	Westridge

N Quigg	Setter	Westridge
V Marsh	Setter	Westridge
H Ward	Blacksmith	Queanbeyan
A Burton	LH Fitter	Westridge
J Devlin	Fitter	Westridge
NC Webb	Fitter	Griffith
L Quigg	Youth	Westridge
D Boyd	Youth	Westridge
R O'Reilly	Youth	Causeway
K Elliott	Youth	Causeway
F McDermott	Youth	Causeway
DM White	Youth	Westlake
J Edwards	Youth	Westlake
W Hawke	Youth	Westlake.

In late April 1939 a number of men working at the Brickyards who lived outside the area were asked if they would, when cottages available, like to be moved to Westridge. They included:-

William McCulloch of 76 Causeway who requested a cottage at Griffith because he had two sons working near that suburb. (He lived at Westlake for a time.)

Thomas Smith of 13 Westlake (living with his in-laws) requested a cottage because he was newly married. He and his wife later moved into 17 Westlake - formerly occupied by a member of the Riddle family. On next page is a photograph of Tom's wife, Doris and her sister-in-law Patsy Blewitt (nee Corey).

EJ Ward of 105 Molonglo St, Queanbeyan owned his own house and did not want a move.

WR Riddle was boarding at Westridge and required a house so that he could bring his family from Sydney to Canberra.

W Fletcher of 11/23 Bonney St Ainslie was in the process of purchasing his cottage and did not require a move.

JA Greenwood c/o Weetangera Post Office lived in an old cottage which he didn't consider fit for habitation. He had to travel 25 miles per day.

W Howes declined because he was applying for a transfer to Jervis Bay.

A Riddle of 7 Wakefield Gardens Ainslie declined.

H J Taylor of 17 Kathleen St Queanbeyan said, Yes.

Jack F Shumack c/o Post Office, Westridge, Yes.

Vic Marsh, Federal St Queanbeyan, Yes.

A Underwood, Moore St, Queanbeyan, Yes.

F McRedmond, Brickworks, Yes.

K Ware, 40 Westlake, Yes.

W Lawless, c/o Queanbeyan PO, Yes.

WR Riddle, c/o Mr Riddle, Westridge. His family lived in Sydney and he wanted to move to Westridge.

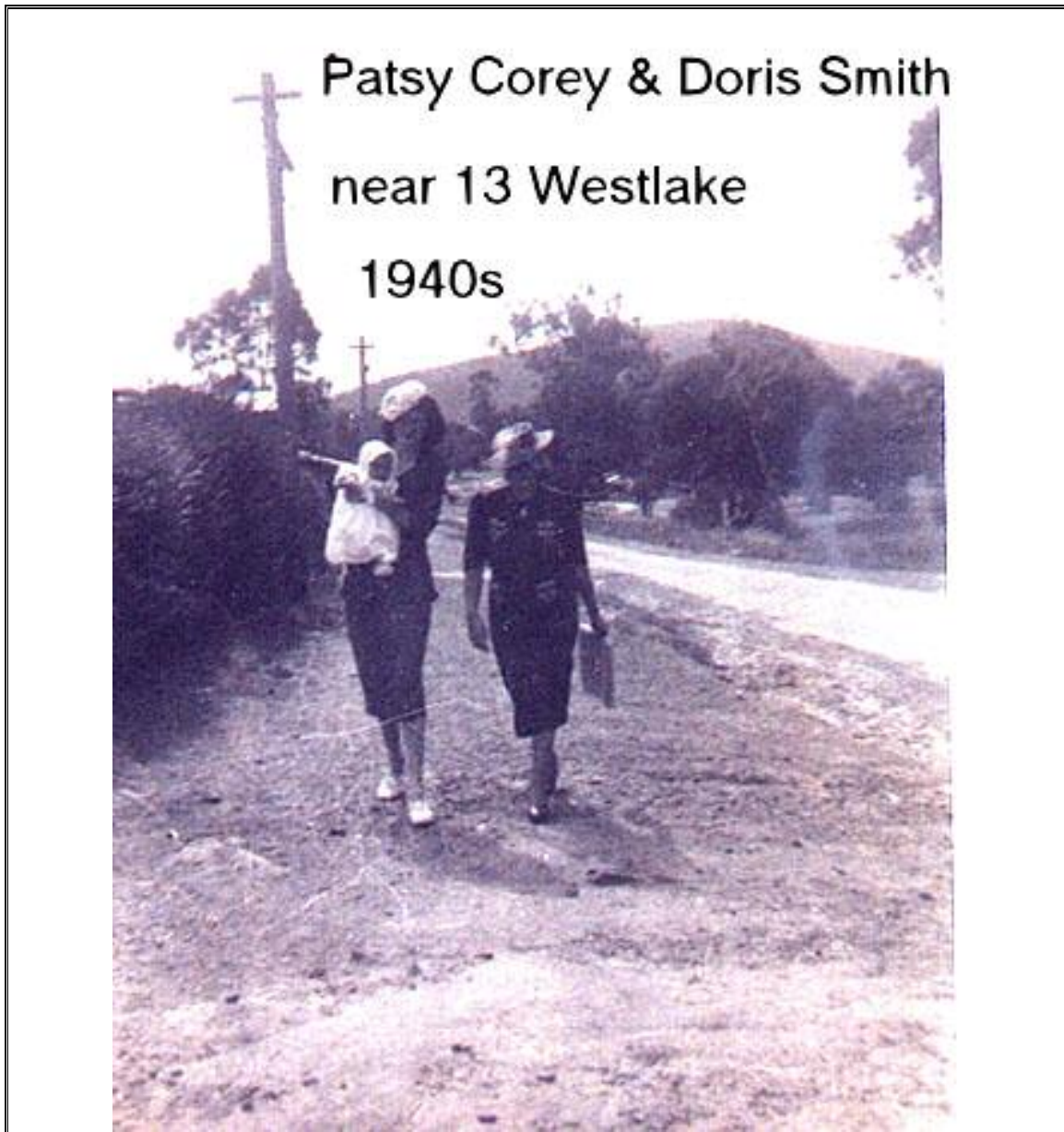
RW Quigg, Suttor St Ainslie, Yes.

K Johnston, Brickworks, Yes.

SG Riddle, has rooms, Westridge, Yes.

HR Charlton, Stornaway Rd, Queanbeyan, Yes.

CE Riddle, 17 Westlake, Yes.



Letters were also sent to:-

J Kinleysides, JA Greenwood, FJ Shumack, MJ Horan, EH Appleton, K Johnston, P McRedmond, JH Riddle, CE Riddle, AH Blewitt, NG Taylor, SG & WR Riddle, RW Quigg, W Ryan, EJ Ward, W Howes, WV Rees, HC Watts, RA Oldfield, AG Starkey, W McCullough, H Capello, W Haines, D Fletcher, K Ware.

The Brickyards closed during World War II and in August 1944 the Works Director made application for labourers required for the reopening of the brickworks. At that time there were still 6,000,000 bricks in stock but more were needed to keep up with the demand. Some of the key men were in the armed forces and others had been sent out of state. Several keymen, however whose services are essential for the re-opening of the works are at present employed under agreements under the Commonwealth Training Scheme.

Particulars of the men concerned are as follows:

M Townsend, Panman employed by Ritchie Bros Lidcombe.
J Shumack, setter, employed by Purcell Engineering Co, Park Rd Auburn.
C Oldfield, mixerman, (as above)
W Ryan, mixerman, employed by W Carpenter & Co, Camperdown.

Shortly afterwards on 28.4.1944 letters requesting them to return to the brickworks were sent to P McRedmond, Marsh, J Fisher, W Curley, W Haines, AH Blewitt, G Melville, GR Dignma, TC Kinleysides, H Nobel and P Cullen.

At the same time a number of men were released from the armed forces to rejoin the workforce at the brickyards. They were Sappers, N Quigg, W Hawke, GJ Summerfield, Driver Kelly and Patrick Norman. In February 1945 Sappers HJ Riddle & J Horan, Privates H Riddle and AL Blandon were released to return to the brickyards which had reopened on 25 September, 1944. On 4 October, 1945 the Brickwork's Camp was ready for occupation.

Below: Construction of the Brickworks in 1913.

