

Information on CROWAJINGALONG site and CHARNWOOD HOMESTEAD including Henry Hall and Edward Crace

Subsequent to our walk around Dunlop Grasslands on 23 June 2011, a sign appeared near what we thought was Crowajingalong homestead. It clearly indicates that the site was Charnwood Homestead. Thanks to further research by Don Gruber (shown below) it also appears that the other old site just north of the Binns St area is probably the Crowajingalong homestead site.

Henry Hall and Charnwood Homestead

This information comes largely from information on the [Hall and District Progress Association web site](#) plus some information gleaned from the ACT Government sign.

The Village of Hall was named after one of Canberra's earliest pioneers and Ginninderra's first resident landholder, Henry Hall Esq. JP of "Charnwood".

Henry Hall was born in Loughborough, England, in 1803, to John Hall of Loughborough and Mary (nee Middleton). He arrived in Port Jackson, NSW, from England, in 1823 aboard the brig "Francis", stopping in Hobart Town in August of that year (Sydney Gazette 4/9/1823). He carried with him a letter of introduction from British Home Secretary, Sir Robert Peel.

Soon after, Henry accepted the position as overseer of "St Heliers", a 1000 acre property at Lake Bathurst, south of Goulburn, granted to his cousin, Edward Smith Hall, by Governor Lachlan Macquarie in 1821. Edward Smith was well known at the time for founding The Monitor (later the Sydney Monitor) newspaper in 1826, published in a lane off George St., Sydney. Edward's editorials caused controversy in a number of ways including criticising the government. He was jailed at one stage, and while there continued to write his editorials, earning himself more jail time! The paper closed in 1842. Edward Smith was also the first Secretary of the Bank of New South Wales.

After a complex dispute with his cousin involving land at "St Heliers", Henry was granted 3472 acres of land in compensation (authorised by Sir Richard Bourke), in the Parish of Ginninderra, County of Murray. He named it "Charnwood" after the forest of Charnwood in Leicestershire, England, location of the Hall family residence. To imagine the property today it ranged from 2 kilometres north of Wallaroo road, south to almost Kippax, west to the Hall's Creek/Gooromon Pond junction, east to Mt Rogers.

Henry was married to Mary Fisher in St Philip's church, York Street, Sydney, by Chaplain William Cowper on 22 March 1837. Henry and wife Mary spent 40 years successfully running their property "Charnwood". They also leased "The Mullion", a sheep station across the Murrumbidgee River, north-west of "Charnwood" and a station at Yaouk, where he ran cattle. Yaouk was a long way south - around 75k m as the crow flies from "Charnwood", just outside today's Namadgi National Park, adjacent to the Murrumbidgee River.

The couple had 11 children (4 daughters and 7 sons), the first born in 1838. All, except possibly the first, were born at "Charnwood" and were baptised in Queanbeyan then at St John's the Baptist Anglican church, Canberry (now Reid, Canberra).

Stock kept by the Hall's at "Charnwood" included 3-4000 sheep, cattle, dairy cows, angora goats, donkeys, fox-hounds and horses, including, as it was stated at the time '...the best Arab that ever came to NSW, 'Abdula'...' (Queanbeyan Age). Hall bred high class Arabian horses, not so much for racing, but as utility horses with pace and endurance.

Trees planted at "Charnwood" included conifers, quinces, olives, oaks, grape vines and, an unusual species, osage orange or bow wood (*maclura pomifera*). This tree, native to North America, was used by native Americans to produce a bow (as in bow and arrow) due to the flexibility of it's wood. It produces a strange looking, grapefruit size green fruit which local kids have called "brain fruit" for years due to it's wrinkled appearance. Why this species was planted is a mystery - possibly for experiment as a crop? Surviving at the homestead site today are 2 huge olives, quinces and the osage (all of which still bear fruit); some conifers, oak and others. These plantings and some stone footings are all that remains of the old homestead.

Henry and his family were well involved in the community. They held one of the first pews at St John the Baptist Anglican church in 1845, the year the building was consecrated, along with Charles Campbell, George T. Palmer and others, and was no doubt involved in some way with it's establishment. Henry was one of the first church Wardens, from 1854-55 and in 1857-61. Henry was involved with opening and running of new schools in the district, such as Ginninderra, and was on the board of Glebe school in 1869.

The Hall's became well known for their hospitality with Mary described as a gentle, refined and gracious lady and Henry a good, all-round, rough and ready farmer. It is known Henry was a regular guest at George Palmer Snr's "Palmerville" attending the numerous functions held there such as fundraising

balls, dances and sporting events. He is thought to have played cricket with Ginninderra Cricket Club along with George Harcourt and others.

Edward Crace purchased Charnwood after Hall retired to Yass in 1874.

Both men had successful careers as farmers and graziers. Hall held positions including magistrate and Justice of the Peace. Crace was regarded as an astute businessman. Charnwood, together with his Ginninderra and Gungahlin estates, made him the biggest property owner in the district, with 20,150 acres. Other landholders of the time held between 40 and 320 acres.

Both men strived to secure justice through the law. Many of Hall's assigned convicts appeared before court for what today seemed like trivial offences. Crace's many disagreements with neighbouring settlers ended up in court over trespassing charges.

Information from New ACT Government sign near Crowajingalong Homestead Site

Private Frank Owen Southwell was a successful recipient of the soldier settlement scheme offered to returned soldiers from WW1. He had enlisted in Dec 1915 and served with the 13th Battalion AIF in France. He was 28 years of age. In 1917 he returned home after being medically discharged with trench feet. Frank was offered a block of land from the former Charnwood estate in 1922-23. Named Crowajingalong his grazier property thrived. Frank died in Canberra in 1972. He was survived by his wife Florrie.

Remnants on the site include a cement slab, fruit and pine trees.

Once the Territory was defined in 1912-13, the Charnwood estate was resumed and made available for lease by the government. For a brief period settlements were granted to returned WW1 servicemen.

This policy was introduced in 1915 after numerous wounded soldiers were repatriated home. The scheme rewarded applicants for patriotic duty and increased post-service employment.

With low interest rates and agriculture booming, optimism was high that settlements would be successful. However, only about 5% of applicants had farming experience. Many veterans had little or no capital. The scheme here was unique compared to the rest of the nation.

Leases were available for 5-7 years, 10-12 years and 25 year terms. Agreement conditions were strict; impromptu agent inspections, felled timber royalties and short deadlines to address maintenance issues or the lease could be cancelled.

Life on the land was tough. The depression, bushfires, floods and rabbit plaques were common trials ex-servicemen faced across the country. Despite these challenges veterans continued to farm into the mid-century.

After clemency appeals, the government offered rental concessions and quarterly instalments. Lessons were learned and similar schemes for WW1 veterans proved successful.

Email from Don Gruber 23 June 2011

From Lyall Gillespie's Ginninderra book, the Charnwood station was resumed between 1913 and 1917 as part of the establishment of the Federal Capital Territory.

Some returned soldiers were granted leases in the Ginninderra district and part of Charnwood station was made available for this purpose. Eric Charles Bondfield took up a lease in 1922 on the portion where the old Charnwood homestead stood and built his own house there. Frank Owen Southwell leased a nearby portion where he established his home 'Crowajingalong'.

From Lyall Gillespie's Southwell book, Frank Owen Southwell worked in an arms factory in NSW for 10 years after his return from the war and then settled as a grazier on his own property Crowajingalong near Hall. His wife was Florence Victoria Munday.

A 1920's map refers to Crowajingalong homestead as being 'of more recent origin'. Another map, circa 1912 shows Charnwood homestead close to Crowajingalong across the road to the east in a line with Rose Hill (circa Melba Copland Drive shops) and Palmerville.

Not clear what the ruins to the west of Crowajingalong near the carpark would be. But presumably another soldier settler block.

There was a cemetery on Charnwood station - presume this is now under houses?"

Locations GPS References WGS84/UTM 55H

Crowajingalong Homestead site (footings) 685516 6104369
Charnwood Homestead Site 685854 6104282