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Wor. Bro. JAMES KIBBLE (1858-1944)

BLACKSMITH, WHEELWRIGHT, FARRIER.

Within five weeks of establishing the Colony of New South Wales Captain Arthur Phillip sailed northwards with a group of Officers and Marines and entered what is now Broken Bay and followed a course into what was called "the north-east arm". In 1789 he again visited the area and it was subsequently named Brisbane Water, where modern day Gosford now stands. The land was low lying and situated between high rocky ground on either side. A small stream flowed into the bay, which had mangrove trees growing along its shoreline.

He was not impressed by what he saw and returned to his original course and proceeded to explore the Hawkesbury River where he found the farming land that was so necessary for the food for the growing settlement.

Eventually a settlement was founded near the mouth of the stream he discovered and it was to become a port for coastal ships bringing in supplies for the settlers and taking out timber from the many mills that had developed in the district. It was to this settlement that James Kibble arrived in 1886. The town had been named Gosford by Governor Gipps in 1839 after, it is believed, Archibald Acheson, the 2nd Earl of Gosford.

James Kibble was born in Victoria in January 1858, the son of English immigrants. He became an apprentice to a blacksmith in Albury, New South Wales. His life of total abstinence from alcohol began in Albury when he joined the Good Templars and signed their pledge.

On completion of his apprenticeship he went to Mount Hope, a copper mining town north-west of Lake Cargellico, NSW. It was here that he met and married Elizabeth Archer. In 1886, when the mining petered out, he headed for Gosford, New South Wales.

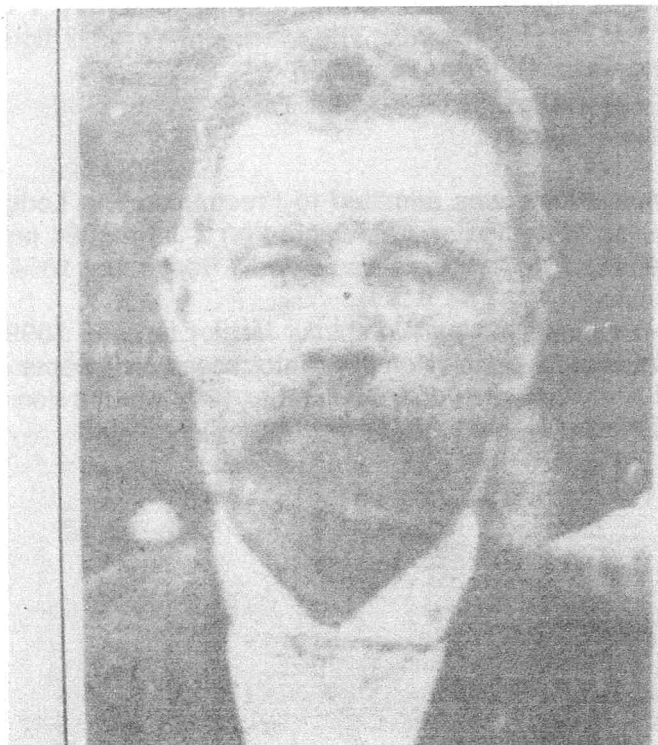
He commenced working for Chris Palmer who had a blacksmith shop on the corner of present day Mann and Donnison Streets. Within a short time he purchased the business. A photo of the premises taken at the time shows

JAMES KIBBLE
GENERAL BLACKSMITH
WHEELWRIGHT & FARRIER

on the front of the building.

In 1896 he started investing in property buying his first block of land in Mann St. (Gosford's main street and for a long time a section of the Pacific Highway). This was to be the first of many land purchases.

In 1900 he purchased most of the area known as Allison's paddock, a swampy area with a little creek running through it, later to be known as the Kibble Estate. On this land he



built little workers cottages as funds would permit; in the end he built 60 of them.

They were basic but substantial and were all of the same design. A simple design with a central front door, front and back verandahs, and a gable roof. A photo, taken during World War II, shows 2 of the cottages; an oblong shape, wide side to and almost on the street.

They were described as modest, sound and practical no frill accommodation. It is reported that James Kibble could be a hard man, when it suited, but tenant after tenant gave testimony to his kindness. He always listened to stories of bad luck, often deferring rent until a situation improved; he lowered rents when he thought that circumstances were genuine and even sold houses to tenants whose ambitions were to become owners of their own homes. In later years some of the cottages were transported to West Gosford.

In 1893 James Kibble was elected as an Alderman on the local Council and later he became Shire President. He had a reputation of being a progressive man. It was due to his efforts that land was set aside next to the Railway Station for a park which is now known as Burnes Park. He was responsible for improving the town's sanitation by introducing the pan system thus doing away with the pit system. Although a he was always busy he was Chairman of the first Tourist Bureau, a trustee of the School of Arts, supporter of wildflower shows, supporter of the Church of England until he fell out with the minister over drink.. He then joined the Methodist Church which supported his teetotal beliefs. He was one of the first that supported the establishment of a hospital in the town.

A number of proposals for the Kibble Estate were put forward after its purchase by the Council in 1945 all of which caused a lot of furious debate-. In the beginning one of the cottages was leased and became an outlet for fruit and vegetables. Then a proposal was put forward that a community hotel be built but this idea was rejected by the very people forming the community. In 1961 Westfield Development Corporation was invited to submit a proposal and this was soundly rejected as was an idea to build a Civic Theatre. Then a suggestion for a Library was put forward and as the plan did not receive too many objections work began in 1969.

During this period the Kibble Estate had been used as a car park and did not come to be the green oasis that it is now, Kibble Park, until 1979. Further changes were made during 2006/7.

In 1984 a number of brethren expressed interest in forming a Daylight Lodge. As a result a meeting was called on 3 December 1984 at which 16 brethren were present. It was decided to proceed and a Steering Committee was formed under the Chairmanship of VWBro. Eric Leggett (now RWBro.) and this committee met 7 days later to set down the programme to establish the Lodge and to invite lodge Morning Star to act as sponsor Lodge. It was decided to seek approval from Grand Lodge to name the Lodge after James Kibble. The necessary approvals having been received Lodge James Kibble Daylight No. 985 was consecrated on Saturday 1 February 1986. The Foundation WMaster was RWBro. W.H. Richards. The black-smith's anvil figures prominently in the Lodge logo and in the honours to visitors in the South.

Masonic Record.

James Kibble was admitted to Freemasonry in Lodge Rising Sun 206 at Gosford on 5 May 1894. Passed to the Fellowcraft Degree on 2 June 1894 and became a Master Mason on 7 July 1894. His Grand Lodge Certificate was dated 1 September 1894.

He was installed as Worshipful Master in June 1899. The Lodge applied to the Board of General Purposes for permission to go into recess on 7 September 1900. Approval was granted and the Lodge did not meet again until September 1901 when it decided to surrender its Charter . James Kibble was still Master at that time.

At the December Communication of Grand Lodge the Board reported that 'The Warrant of Lodge Rising Sun, No. 206, Gosford, has been returned, the members being unable to continue the active work of Freemasonry. The Lodge has donated its regalia and furniture to the Board of Benevolence.'

The Lodge was later reformed and consecrated on 29 September, 1917, as Lodge Rising Sun No. 311, and James Kibble was a Foundation member. As the new lodge needed a home James Kibble built a weatherboard building on land he owned on the corner of Beane and Mann Sts. And next door built a cottage for use as a South The buildings were built of a similar form as his workers' cottages. One old mason described the lodge room 'as cold as charity in the winter and in summer as hot as hell'.

He and his wife Catherine (nee Archer) were childless and she pre-deceased him by a number of years. He died at Aquith in 1944 having moved there in 1924. His estate was divided amongst 39 beneficiaries.

E. F. Waugh
29 February 2008

Acknowledgements

Masonry in the Central Coast 1892-1992 Phillippe Ed. Tabuteau KOPA, BACC(DLI) JP &
Joan Fenton Ass.Dip. LAH,JP. Published by Gosford District Local History Group 1993

The Central Coast of New South Wales The James Kibble Story- Ron Coleman.
Formerly of Lodge Pacific 114 & Kincumber Valley Studio



Two Kibble cottages as back-ground to a VAD parade during World War II.