

## Granite Town, Moruya Articles from “Sydney Mail”

This article appeared in the “Sydney Mail” 12<sup>th</sup> September 1928. The journalist admits he was there well over a year before writing the article so his memories may be somewhat muddled. A resident of Moruya certainly seemed to think so.

A sketch of the township which has sprung up around the quarries near Moruya, which supplied the beautiful block of granite for the Cenotaph, and are now supplying most of the stone work for the North Shore Bridge. By R.C.

Many people have wondered where the beautiful piece of granite that forms the Cenotaph in Martin Place came from. I heard one man, an otherwise good Australian, inform a friend that it came all the way from Scotland, possibly because when one thinks of granite one thinks of Scotland. Actually the Cenotaph was hewn from a round, green hill a little way from Moruya, on the South Coast, New South Wales, just as the granite for the North Shore Bridge is being hewn at the present moment. There, among green flats rich with grass and spattered with cosy little dairy farms, over two hundred men are gnawing with their gelignite and throbbing machines into the side of the hill, revealing the grey-white granite that you would never suspect lurked there at all.

When Dorman, Long and Co., the owners of the quarries, began to hew the granite a few huts were all that clustered about the busy scene; but now a village has sprung up – Granite-Town: and today you may go there and find about 200 houses, forming as neat a little township as you could find in the continent. It is so compact and cosy, indeed after strolling easily for a mile and a half along the river bank from Moruya, crossing a little bridge and climbing a slight rise, you come upon Granite Town with astonishing suddenness, as though it has appeared in its green hollow by magic. At first you will, perhaps, rub your eyes to make sure you are not staring at a mirage, but it is real, as the grey feathers of smoke curling from the chimneys and the rasping of the machines in the quarries, testify. There before you is the township. The houses, small and dull red, are not thrown higgledy-piggledy over the hollow; they are laid out in level streets, each with its name board at the corner, and each smoothly blue-metalled. Nearly all the houses are the same pattern, with tiny gardens at the back and front, and in a surprising number you will find a garage, testifying to the good money earned by the quarrymen. The town so far has only one store, but it sells everything from a clove to a cauliflower, it serves the townspeople well until shopping night in Moruya. The town has its own progress society too, which holds dances – old time mostly – and euchre parties once a week in an adequate hall. A quarter of a mile away, alone by the fringes of a tiny lake, is the school house – placed there so that lessons will not be interrupted by the noise from the quarries – a noise that is like the shrill chorus of a million cicadas.

The whole township was built by Dorman, Long and Co. It is curiously self-contained and curiously unlike any other town in Australia. Perhaps it is because nearly every inhabitant is a Scotsman, as Dorman, Long and Co. brought out from Home most of its own workers, men who were born and bred on granite hills. Half the people who visit Moruya and the South Coast

go away without having heard of Granite Town. For one thing you cannot possibly see it until you are within thirty yards of it; and again, it is far too busy a place to advertise itself. However any visitor is welcomed by the pleasant Scotch manager to watch the huge blocks of granite being blasted from the giant yawning hole that has been cut in the hillside. I visited Granite Town in May of last year, and was just in time to see the huge block blown out which skilled finders and machines quickly transmuted into smooth, shining beauty that is now the Cenotaph.

A Moruya resident did not agree with all the descriptions of Granite Town in the above article and wrote to the "Sydney Mail". The letter appeared 17<sup>th</sup> October 1928.

"A MORUYA RESIDENT" writes:-

A recent article in the "Mail" on "Granite Town" stated that the town was built in a hollow; whereas it stands on the top and sides of a hill. It is plainly seen from Moruya; in fact I can see a good part of it from my front garden and I live over two miles away. The houses are not red but dark slate colour, with red roofs. Water is brought from Sydney by Dorman, Long and Co.'s boats and stored in large tanks from which pipes are laid on to the houses. The houses are in neat rows and form a compact little village; but the streets are not blue-metalled nor are they named. There are two long buildings for bachelors on the bank of the river, one being for Italians, a considerable number of them being employed there. A few of the Italians who have their wives with them occupy houses. The store is also near the river, but the tradespeople from Moruya are down every day, and on Saturday the Granite Town folks are nearly all up in the town. They have a really good hall in which they have a dance nearly every week, to which many townspeople go. Whist drives are also popular. The school is built on a rise just across a little gully from Granite Town. It is only a couple of hundred yards from the nearest houses, and is near the bank of Malabar Creek, which runs into Moruya River a short distance above the quarry. There is not a lake within miles but the creek broadens out into a marsh just there. We do not speak of it as Granite Town here; it is just known as "The Quarry". I am not sure as to the number of houses but I think there are about sixty.