



## The rise and fall of Granite Town

Extracts from the Moruya Examiner

In December we had a visit from Bill Glennie, a Scottish historian who is researching the role of Aberdeen stone masons in the erection of the Sydney Harbour Bridge. As part of that research he had scanned the State Library copies of the Moruya Examiner for the years 1924 to 1932, noting all references to the Moruya quarry. He has donated his 48 pages of extracts to the museum's collection. The following are taken from those pages.

### *The Rise*

**November 15, 1924** Quite a stir was caused here on Tuesday morning when the 'advance squad' of Dorman Long and Co's employees arrived in 3 special cars. They were met by the officers of the Eurobodalla Shire at the Council Chamber. With the exception of Mr Martin, the Co's manager in Sydney, the other gentlemen are only recent arrivals from Scotland. After luncheon had been partaken of, an inspection of the granite quarry was made, the officers expressing themselves as highly delighted with the appearance of the stone. Messrs Gilmore etc have been busy ensconcing themselves in the cottages rented to them by Messrs Preddy and Jenner.

**January 24, 1925** It is proposed to establish what is known in the old country as a 'Garden City'. This consists of a block of comfortable dwellings for the use of the Co's employees, who will be expected to pay a small rental. There will be a big dining room for the use of a hall where all classes of recreation may be indulged in. It is also proposed to run a supply store on a co-operative basis. We are led to believe that the Moruya Quarry is a permanent work, and will not cease operations at the completion of the North Shore Bridge.

**May 23, 1925** A start has been made with the erection of employees' cottages and also a big dormitory and dining room for the single men, and before many months quite a fair sized village will have appeared.

**August 1, 1925** Six three-roomed cottages have been completed and are occupied, and the four-roomed cottages will soon be finished. It is expected that in the course of a few weeks, the whole of the works will be in operation.

**March 20, 1926** So far no appointment has been made to fill Mr Fowler's position as teacher at the Newstead Public School. There is every possibility that the school will be removed from Newstead to Dorman Long's quarry across the river. At present there are 16 children at the latter place, and 19 more, whose ages range from 6 to 14 years, are expected to arrive with their parents from Scotland next month.

**May 1, 1926** Mr H J Bell, MLA, has been notified by Hon T D Mutch, Minister for Education, that careful consideration has been given to his representations on behalf of Dorman Long and Co, who desire the establishment of a public school in connection with the new quarries recently opened by them at Granite Town, via Moruya. Following on a report on the question which was furnished at Mr Mutch's request, he has decided that a building to accommodate 30 pupils will be erected with as little delay as possible on a site to be made available for that purpose.



**June 19, 1926** An additional twelve houses are being built and when these are completed Granite Town will be able to boast of a total of 61 houses. Mr Martin Rose is ably sweeping the paint brush, applying a battleship grey colour to the houses, and painting the roofs red. This promises to greatly increase the congenial appearance of the village. The long discussed Co-operative store has at last begun to make an appearance. It is being built on the southern slope of the village adjacent

to the bachelors' quarters. The people are eagerly awaiting the opportunity of reaping the benefits expected to be offered by the Malabar Co-op Society.

**September 25, 1926** A successful whist drive and dance was held in the Bachelors' Quarters in aid of the new school funds on Tuesday night last. Mrs J Hughes was successful in the ladies' division, being rewarded with a prime duck for her prowess, while Mr Haysom vanquished the male opposition in securing the gentleman's

prize – two boxes of cigarettes. The booby prizes consisted of two packets of the ever-trusty Epsom Salts, and were won by Mr Cowgill and Mrs Grant respectively. Dancing was then indulged in, the music being supplied by the now famous Walton Jaffrey combination, assisted by Mr Spada Vecchia who tickled his mandolin to the delight of all. A tasty supper was provided by a willing band of ladies. There were between 60 and 70 present, and the school funds should benefit considerably. On Friday 17<sup>th</sup> inst, Mesdames A Simpson and W Jaffrey made a collection at the Quarry in aid of a children's picnic to celebrate the opening of the Granite Town school and met with a very liberal response, collecting somewhere in the region of £9. The date of the opening of the new school is still indefinite, as furniture and other equipment is yet to be provided. The building itself is complete, including the painting. The co-operative store and the post office are now in full swing. Mr Graham is proving a most competent and obliging storekeeper. In her capacity as postmistress, Miss M Davidson is doing excellently and an amazing monetary turnover is reported. There are now 55 cottages in occupancy here, and Mr Martin Rose's ever oscillating paint brush is effecting a wonderful transformation. Assisted by his son, Don, he is fast causing Granite Town to assume the appearance of a very imposing village. There are at present 217 employees at the quarry, which includes 77 stonemasons. There is still one thing lacking in Granite Town, and that is a public hall. It is to be hoped that a movement will soon be instigated towards this very necessary establishment. It would materially brighten up things for the residents, who must at times find it hard to fill in time, especially in the evenings.

**November 20, 1926** Progress at Granite Town: they now have a Granite Town Association, with Mr Fred Bunker as a live-wire secretary. The residents of the Quarry village will soon find their leisure hours more endurable. It is said that a public hall will appear shortly. This will certainly alter life considerably and will be the realisation of a long felt want. Already the piles have been driven for swimming baths and the villagers feel distinctly proud of the fact that they are putting one over on Moruya, who cannot even boast the semblance of a swimming pool. A tennis court will also shortly be excavated, and the Moruya club may soon be expecting a formidable team to dispute their supremacy.

### *The Good Years*

**January 22, 1927** The Granite Town Progressive Association, under the capable guidance of Mr F Bunker, continues to make headway and last month showed a large increase of membership, which is naturally expected with the activities which are being put in hand. The Music Class, under the guidance of Mr J Cowgill, has recently been inaugurated, and much interest is being evinced. The progress which is being shown by the members of the Boys' Club is very noticeable, and reflects credit on their instructor, Mr A Gerrard. This association, with regard for its members' welfare, has recently added a dancing class, which is being well patronised. The fortnightly Whist Drives continue popular. The residents have spent some very enjoyable social evenings in the quarry mess room, but have always felt that this building is not quite adequate. It can be stated with certainty that a commodious recreation hall will make its appearance in the near future. This has been a long felt want, and Granite Town people are anxiously awaiting its erection. The swimming pool has been practically completed, and our friends from chilly Scotland, frequently take advantage of the pool, to gain respite from the Australian sun. On hot afternoons the pool is taxed to its utmost capacity, old and young alike revelling in its coolness. It is reported that the erection of six more four-roomed cottages is contemplated. This will bring the total up to 67 houses. A census was recently taken which revealed that the population of Granite Town is now 304. Owing to the increased number of pupils on the roll the Department has deemed it necessary to provide the school with two teachers. The co-operative store reports satisfactory dealing, despite numerous prophecies of a premature downfall.



**April 9, 1927** Additions have been made to the school at Granite Town. The building came in sections from Sydney and was erected in about 4 days. Increased business is reported at the Granite Town store. This has necessitated enlarging the building. This work is now almost completed.

**May 21, 1927** The residents of Granite Town must be very grateful to see the progress made with the recreation hall. The granite foundation is completed and the flooring joists laid.

**July 16, 1927** The piano for Granite Town's new recreation hall arrived from Sydney this week. This will afford the Progressive Jazz Band time to become proficient in the latest tunes before the official opening of the building.

**July 30, 1927** The hall is now well on the way to completion and everyone is keenly looking forward to the opening night which should be a memorable one. Already arrangements are in hand for the celebrations and there is every prospect of a record crowd. The hall is a **first** class building ceiled and lined, and having a top

notch dancing floor of the best jarrah. It is built along orthodox lines except that a fireplace is situated in the middle of the eastern wall. There will be a commodious stage and cloakrooms, and the building is liberally ventilated. It is expected that the hall will be finished in about two weeks' time. A right royal time was spent by the large number of patrons who attended the ball organised by the Granite Town Progressive Association on Friday night of last week. Merriment reigned supreme till the conclusion of the lengthy programme of 40 dances in the wee sma' hours.

**August 20, 1927** Granite Town will be en fete on Friday night 2 September as the Progressive Association will celebrate the opening of the new hall there on that day by a grand concert and dance. The Progressive Jazz Band will supply the music.

**September 17, 1927** Under the direction of Mrs McIlroy, the popular mistress at the Granite Town Public School, a Kinderspiel, "Dan the Newsboy", will be given by the children in the new hall there on Friday night next, 23 inst. A pleasant evening is anticipated as the children have had a good training under their capable tutor. A dance will follow. Mr Allison conducted the first Presbyterian service in the new hall on Sunday night last. There was a splendid congregation and the whole service was of a very hearty character and gave promise of great things in the future so far as the Presbyterian Church is concerned. 70 children attend Sunday School and they all seem anxious for good things.

**February 18, 1928** The annual garden competition originated by Dorman Long and Co for Granite Town residents resulted this year as follows: Mr W Cochrane 1; Mr Geo Allan 2; Mr Andrew Benzie 3. Anyone visiting the quarry may see for themselves what a fine garden the winner has created.

**June 2, 1928** Grand Concert by Granite Town Boy Scouts. HUGE SUCCESS. For their first concert the Granite Town Boy Scouts received the patronage of over 200 people, and the large crowd fully demonstrated by vociferous encores its keen appreciation of the programme presented.

**June 23, 1928** Granite Town Progressive Association STOP! LOOK! LISTEN! A BIG BALL will be held in the Quarry Hall on FRIDAY NIGHT, 20<sup>th</sup> JULY, 1928 All the latest music supplied by the Progressive Jazz Orchestra 1700 square feet dancing space

**August 4, 1928** The magnificent sum of £91 odd has been collected during the past year for the Granite Town Boy Scouts and this fine troop is now in possession of a complete outfit, including tents, cooking utensils, etc. Our Scotch friends are deserving of every credit for their united effort and keen interest taken in the welfare of their young boys.

**September 22, 1928** As a result of the effort of the Granite Town school children on behalf of the Hospital Ball fund, the splendid sum of £16 was realised. School Hospital Day was held at Granite Town Public School on Friday afternoon, 14<sup>th</sup> inst. The venture was very successful, though all arrangements were made at a few days' notice. A penny concert, sweets, produce and flower stalls, a hoop-la and a tea room all did a thriving business.

**December 15, 1928** The Granite Town School Concert held on Thursday was a most successful function from every point of view. The varied programme was appreciated thoroughly by all present. The task of finding a part for each of 85 pupils was successfully carried out, and the return financially was most satisfactory. The gross receipts for the concert amounted to £16 17s, and the expenses were only £1 10s, so the sum of £15 3s was netted. This will be used in equipment for the school. The dance which followed was well attended and this was managed by the Progress Committee, who are handing any balance also to the school fund.

**June 1, 1929** Granite Town will be en fete on Friday night 28 June, when under the auspices of the Granite Town Progressive Association a grand ball will be held in aid of the Moruya Hospital. Novelty dances will be a speciality.

**June 8, 1929** Empire day was celebrated during the forenoon on 24 May at Granite Town. A programme of songs suitable for the occasion being rendered lustily by the pupils. The action songs of the flag by the pupils were very picturesque.

**January 18, 1930** Granite Town residents are not going to let Moruya secure all the bargains going just now, so their smart young store-keeper, Mr P Carden, is to the fore with a big sale. Note the splendid reductions advertised this week.

### *The Fall*

**June 21, 1930** Advert from Dorman Long and Co: "Tenders required for the purchase and removal of timber building lately used as the general store. The building consists of shop measuring 29 feet x 21 feet, storehouse 21 feet x 19 feet, and dwelling house containing 3 rooms, 12 feet x 9 feet. Roofing: corrugated iron. The highest or any tender will not necessarily be accepted".

**October 18, 1930** The Scotch concert and dance at Granite Town on Friday last proved most successful, the energetic secretary, Mr V Watt, having all details in order. A sparkling programme was rendered before an appreciative audience and prizes were given for various items.

**January 3, 1931** Price Wanted TO MOVE STORE and POST OFFICE BUILDINGS at GRANITE TOWN and RE-ERECT at TUROSS. Apply – H J BURBIDGE, Bodalla

**February 7, 1931** It is expected that Dorman Long and Co's bridge contract with the State Government will be completed by September.

**April 18, 1931** Tenders are called for removal of one 4-roomed cottage from Granite Town to Moruya Heads. Apply – J Breen, Moruya.

**May 9, 1931** Empire Day was celebrated at Granite Town School on Wednesday. The little community of sturdy Scots has begun to show signs of dispersal. Numbers of well known families have already sailed. Many of the cottages too are being removed and the neat gardens so much in evidence last year are neglected.

**May 23, 1931** The Caledonian Society. 'It was decided to wind up the society with a social and dance in the Centennial Hall on Friday night next, 29<sup>th</sup> inst. Owing to the contemplating closing down of Dorman Long's quarry works in a few months, the Caledonian Society, instituted in this district by the sons and daughters from the land of the heather, will also cease functioning. As a grand finale of 6 years' work, a social and dance will be held in the Centennial Hall on Friday night next, 29<sup>th</sup> inst.

**August 8, 1931** Mr J Brogan is re-erecting one of the quarry cottages on Mrs A Russell's property in Hawdon Street, Gundary. Miss Russell of Wamban will be the occupant. FOR SALE Quarry cottages: 4 rooms £30 3 rooms £25 Apply Quarry Office Granite Town.

**August 22, 1931** At the invitation of the Italian community at Dorman Long's quarry, a large number of guests assembled in the Granite Town Hall on Friday night last week. A happy time was spent in 'tripping the light fantastic' after which a sumptuous supper was partaken of. At the conclusion of the evening the hosts took the opportunity of bidding farewell to their Australian friends.

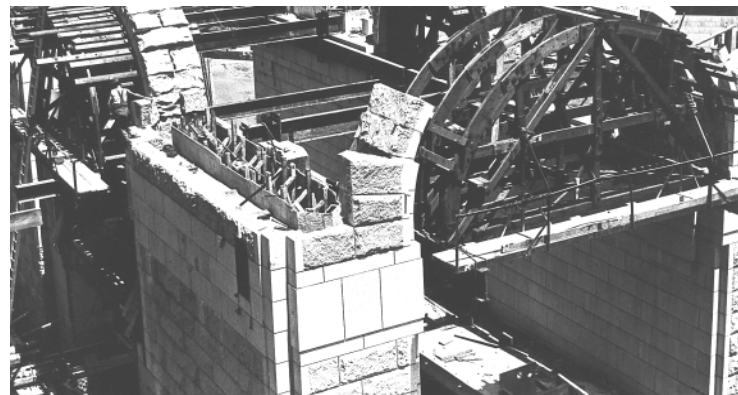
**September 5, 1931** Our readers' attention is drawn to Granite Town Progressive Association's sale of various articles belonging to the hall which was recently sold. The Trustees will generously devote the proceeds of the sale to the Moruya Hospital.

**October 24, 1931** Silence reigns supreme at Granite Town. What was a few weeks ago a hive of industry is now as quiet as the proverbial mouse. Nearly all the families have taken their departure. The huge machinery has been dismantled, sheds demolished, and all tools of trade laid aside, and the once busy quarry works of Dorman Long and Co is now a scene of desolation. The acting manager, Mr McLean, and a few other officials, will remain on until everything is cleared up. It is indeed sad to witness the demolition of the splendid works that were such a valuable asset to our district.

**November 14, 1931** The attendance at Granite Town Public School shrunk this term from 49 to 5, and was closed on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> inst.



Above: Work at the Quarry Face



Above Right: The Pylons under construction, they provide a lasting memorial to the people of Granite Town.