

# Notes re the beginning of the Log Cabin

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*With the 2009 fires destroying all of the records of the MDHS much information was lost. This document pulls together a number of known facts to give a time for the building of The Log Cabin.*

Thomas Henry Branchflower according to his son, Gerald built The Log Cabin in the traditional way - no nails - and worked on the Mary chain of guesthouses.

Thomas arrived in Melbourne from England late in 1921 with his wife and baby. His occupation was listed as carpenter on the passenger list. He worked around Melbourne as a piano maker<sup>1</sup> til late in the 1920s.

Thomas' family recall he was in Marysville in the 1930s and worked on the Mary Chain. He was registered on the 1931 and 1934 Electoral rolls as a cabinetmaker in Marysville

Reflecting on Thomas' background in England and short time in Australia it is doubtful he had much knowledge on log cabin building and most likely was part of a team. The fact that he was involved gives a time span for the building of the Log Cabin. This is further refined by the activities of Gwendoline Pitman which are discussed below.

In 1918<sup>2</sup> Gwendoline's father, Clarence purchased Kooringa Guesthouse in Marysville<sup>3</sup> and his daughters Olive and Gwendoline were involved in running the guesthouse.

In March 1926 Clarence died in Marysville and in July 1926 Olive Pitman went for a walk, supposedly to visit her father's grave at the cemetery, never to return. This left Gwendoline and her mother to run Kooringa.

Struggling to continue they sold Kooringa to Wilbur Anderson in 1930. Gwendoline stayed in Marysville and her mother returned to live with her son in Melbourne.

Meanwhile Gwendoline was granted probate of Olive's Will and received £600, a considerable amount at the time - money to contribute to the building of The Log Cabin.

Gwendoline operated an artist and souvenir shop in the newly built Log Cabin in partnership with Peter Mackey, a Melbourne optician and artist. Peter lived in Melbourne and Gwendoline at the Log Cabin.

She lived there until she died in Marysville in 1931 from severe burns. She used a small petrol stove for cooking. This was the height of the Depression and Gwendoline was very preoccupied by money worries. The circumstances were not straight forward and it could well have been that she took her own life.

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<sup>1</sup> Electoral Rolls list Thomas for 1924, 25 & 26 in Melbourne as piano maker.

<sup>2</sup> Electoral Roll 1918

<sup>3</sup> See Pitman Family information in Kooringa Folder.