

Original Kerami Guesthouse

Woods Point Road, Marysville

Kerami is a name that is well-known in Marysville. There's the original Kerami Guesthouse, Kerami Crescent, Kerami Walk, Kerami Timeshare and Kerami Manor. The name's origins¹ however have not been found.

In 1905² Sister Elizabeth Glover came to Marysville looking to develop a place for respite. She bought 6 lots of land on each side of the Woods Point Road heading east out of Marysville. In 1907, with Marion Curdie, Kerami House was built on Lot 4, being the lot nearest to the intersection with Pack Road (later the name Murchison Street was extended to the bridge). A year later Marion Curdie withdrew from the partnership.

The Argus, 5 Dec 1908

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 10.
at Twelve O'clock.
at the rooms 375 COLLINS-STREET.
UNRESERVED REALISATION SALE.
TO CLOSE PARTNERSHIP ACCOUNTS.

BAILLIEU PATTERSON and SONS PTY. LTD.
have received instructions from Miss Glover
and Miss M. Curdie to SELL by AUCTION, as
above, as a going concern, including the
furniture and effects,

That charming mountain home known as
"KERAMI,"
MARYSVILLE
with every up-to-date appointment.

The land comprises an area of 10¹/₄ acres³ on
the Steavenson River, and quite close to the
falls, and is beautifully laid out in gardens and
shrubberies. The residence, which has been
erected within the last 12 months, under the
best architectural direction, is W.B., with iron
roof, fibro cement linings, and contains

10 LARGE AND SPACIOUS ROOMS
kitchen, scullery, 2 bathrooms, and detached
man's room.

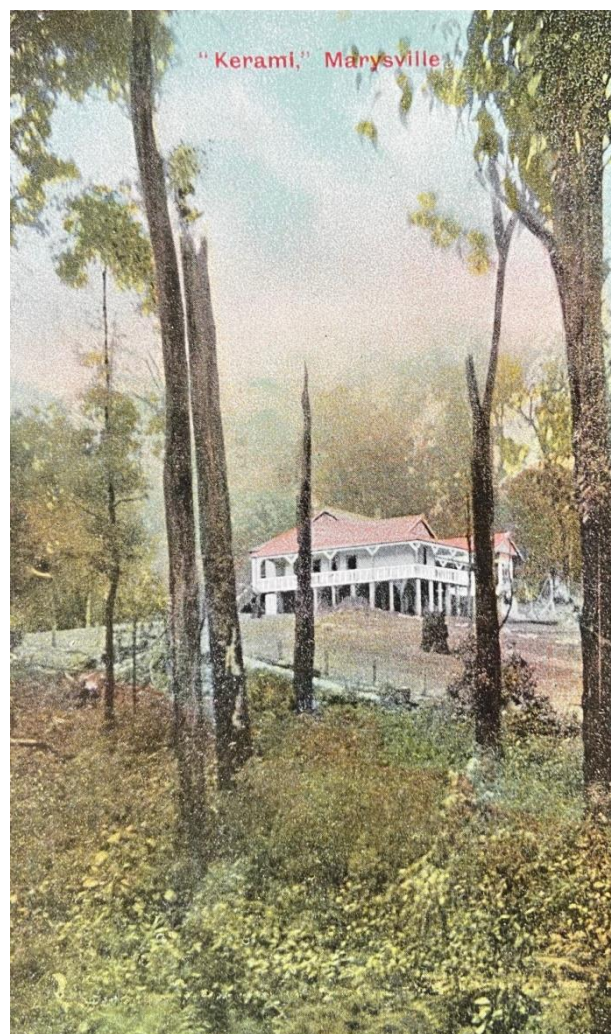
To anyone on the lookout for a perfect home
in the mountains, this sale affords an
opportunity of securing a place ready to go
into at once without the trouble of sending the
furnishings up here. With the home the whole
of the FURNITURE and EFFECTS, which are
quite new, will be included.

Terms, one-fourth cash, balance within one
month.

Title, certificate .

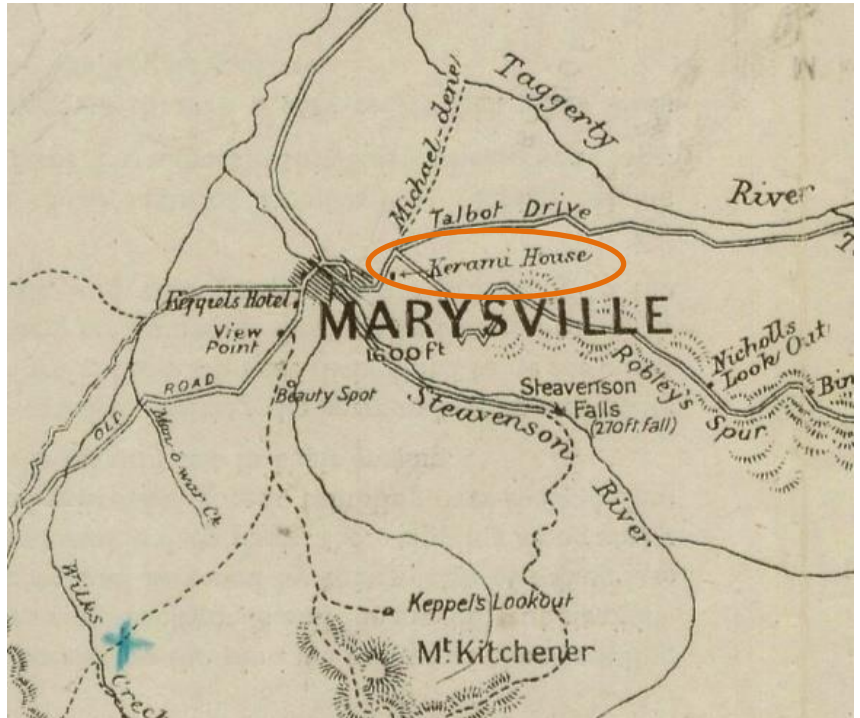
Solicitor, A. Wischer, 413 Chancery lane.

Further particulars, and inventory of furniture,
from the auctioneers, Baillieu Patterson and
Sons Pty. Ltd, 375 Collins st.



*Kerami House, in The Leader, 17 Oct 1908
later coloured as above.*

Elizabeth Glover secured the funds to retain Kerami and, with Sister Margaret Thomas joining her at Kerami, it became general accommodation. The establishment became very popular and was regularly reported in the social pages. Many of the clientele were the leading Melbourne doctors and professors at Melbourne University well-known to Elizabeth and Margaret. This great reputation was to continue on until the early 1930s.



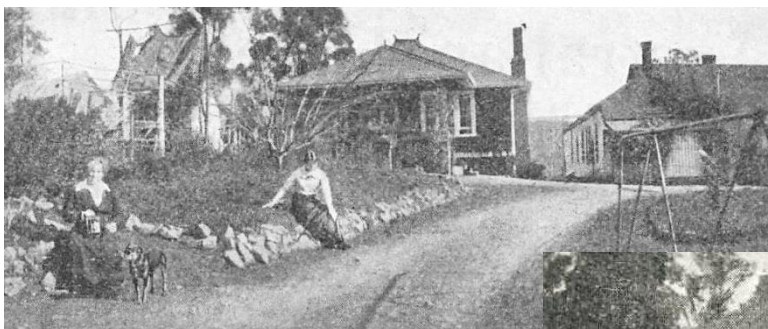
Sisters Glover and Thomas became involved in the Marysville & District Tourist & Progress Association which had been formed in 1907 to actively promote tourism in the area, organising tracks to nearby rivers, waterfalls and other attractions.

When Sisters Glover and Thomas left in 1914 Sister Helena Brayshay took over Kerami provided everything for its guests and their cars as seen in the advertisement here.

Her stay was short as she had health issues and died in 1919. Assisting Helena had been her friend Sister Elsie Bolam. With a bequest to Elsie in Helena's Will she was able to secure Kerami and Sister Elsie Bolam's association with Kerami and Marysville along with her companion, Lesley MacGowan, became legendary.

The Argus, 4 Sep 1916

MARYSVILLE - KERAMI Reopens Sept 1
First class - Accommodation, hot and cold baths, sewerage, gas, motor garage, petrol stocked.
Proprietress, H. Brayshay, Tel.1.



Kerami in the early 1920s was set in 18 acres of primeval forest sloping down from the Woods Point Road to the Steavenson River and Gallipoli Park. It had ample accommodation for 25 guests, with the latest conveniences.



Kerami's phone number, Marysville 1, was very easy to remember when medical help was needed from its nurse-owners.

Table Talk, 22 March 1923

The popular hostesses of "Kerami", Marysville (Misses Bolam and McGowan) have decided this season to keep their picturesquely situated house open during the autumn and winter months, in compliance with numerous requests by patrons who desire to enjoy the beautiful winter climate and picturesque surroundings of this salubrious district. Those who have not visited Marysville during the winter months have missed much of the pleasure to be enjoyed from the pleasant walks and the invigorating atmosphere at this time of the year.

Among the many famous Australian and overseas visitors were Pattie and Robert Menzies on their honeymoon in September 1920. Pattie was the daughter of John William Leckie of Alexandra, a long standing Victorian politician. Robert Menzies would become Australia's longest serving Prime Minister.

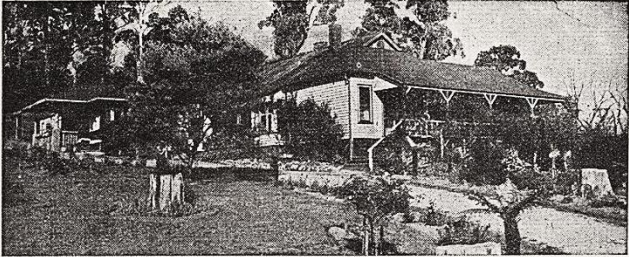
A Visitor's Book First entry 4 Oct 1920. Last entry 16 September 1925.

Dec 1922-Jan 1923 Lily Butler OBE mother of "Blighty"
12 August 1923 refers to "the Kindness and Consideration from
Miss Bolam and Miss Macgen (MacGowan) & staff"

This Visitors book was in the possession of Claire Keppel and the above transcribed by Rev George Edwards in his Research Notes. The original was lost in the 2009 Fires.

Table Talk, 18 Oct 1928

The Misses Bolam and MacGowan, of Kerami, Marysville, have disposed of their beautiful property to Mr and Mrs Ernest Robarts, of Nyora. They are not leaving the district as they have purchased The Crossways, Marysville, as a country home.

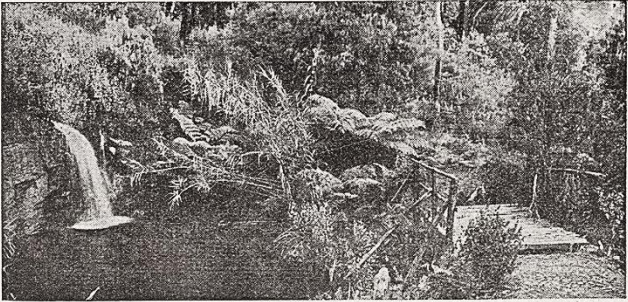


"Kerami"

"KERAMI"
1600ft. MARYSVILLE

The House of Distinction.
UNDER VICE-REGAL PATRONAGE
Situated at the gateway to the
richest wonderland of moun-
tains and waterfalls in Victoria.
Snow Sports during Winter.
SKI PARTIES SPECIALLY
CATERED FOR.

"KERAMI" is a R.A.C.V. HOUSE
and Stocks Best Australian Wines.
The House is electrically-lighted
throughout.
Bright Comfortable Rooms.
Wide Sunny Verandahs are a special
feature. Facing 4,000 ft. mountains
and attractive gardens.
Tennis. Clock Golf. Motor Trips on
Good Roads.
HOT AND COLD WATER.
SEWERED. GARAGES.
TARIFF: £4/4/- per week
ERNEST N. ROBERTS,
Proprietor
Telephone: Marysville One



A Corner of the Grounds

The Argus, 26 December 1928

KERAMI, Under New Management. A house of distinction. Best Australian wines, tennis, sunny verandahs, electric light throughout, all modern conv. Tel. Marysville 1. E. N. Robarts.

Ernest Nathaniel Robarts was from Healesville, being a boy there on his parent's farm "Nyora" and later was owner of this farm and guesthouse with his brother. He married in 1912 and soon was on the Healesville Shire Council, serving until 1928. Ernest gave his occupation as coach proprietor. Suffering ill health he was at Kerami from 1928 to 1930.



The wine licence at Kerami was transferred back to Elsie Bolam in 1930 when she went back to manage Kerami for Robarts and lived there again. Kerami was being advertised in early 1933 in the name of Bolam & MacGowan.

About this time Eric Dowdle was establishing his Mary guesthouse chain in Marysville. Marylands and Mary Lyn were up and running. In 1933 he purchased Kerami, built a new guesthouse further along the Woods Point Road on what had been part of Elsie Bolam's land and re-named it Mary Lodge.

The Argus, 14 Nov 1933

Permission to rebuild Kerami at Marysville for which there is a wine licence was granted on an application by J E Dowdle, the owner and licensee.
Plans were submitted.

Advertisement in The Argus, 10 Jan 1934

KERAMI Marysville's New Guest House - Every mod com private 9 hole golf links grass greens H and C each room tariff £3/15/ per week Tel 1 ERIC DOWDLE prop.

Elsie Bolam and Lesley MacGowan moved down the road to Narbethong to help at the Black Spur Hotel and then to Melbourne. They returned to retire in Marysville in 1942, living in the cottage they built and called Little Kerami, at the western end of Kerami Crescent. For information on all the nurses who ran Kerami for its first 30 years see their individual documents.

Eric Dowdle sold the property after WWII and it reverted back to Kerami and in 1969 it burnt down.

Years later Joe White's original house in Kerami Crescent was operated as Kerami Guesthouse. In 2023 this house is known as Kerami Manor having been rebuilt after the 2009 Fires.

ENDNOTES

¹ Researching the origin of the name suggested a Turkish connection but was not definitive.

² Starting dates reported vary and the 1908 auction is the only confirmed date.

³ The 3 lots on the south side of the Woods Point Road totalled just over 12 acres and probate of H Brayshay's Will in 1919 has the building on Lot 4 nearest to the main street.