

A Brief History of the Wonga Park Post Office

The first Post Office in Wonga Park was a "Loose Bag" mail service, established by Mr G H Snith from 1 st July 1896. The service operated from Mr Smith's house on the north west corner of Jumping Creek Road, (then called Yarra Road) and Homestead Road.

Mr Smith had previously operated a store and butchers in Croydon Road, Croydon until 1893, when he became an occupant of a 35 acre block in the original subdivision. Mail, newspapers and stores were taken from Wonga Park (then called the Eight Hour Settlement) and Croydon, by Spring Cart.

Mr Smith operated a small store from his home and letters could be collected and posted there, with stamps made available as a courtesy service. Mr Smith also sold corned beef and other meat, stored in barrels.

As Mail Contractor, Mr Smith received a payment of eight (8) pounds per annum.

The Eight Hour Settlement was re-named Wonga Park in 1908 at around the time the next mail delivery office (by then re-named as a Receiving Office) was established in a house owned by Mr R Cocking situated in Dudley Road on the block next to the red box tree. (Close to the corner of Jumping Creek Rd) Mr Cocking carried the mail three times a week to and from Croydon, in a small white canvas-covered coach. The Cockings moved away from the area after their son was killed during the 1st World War.

Mrs Jones then ran the Receiving Office from her house on the corner of Paynters and Dudley Roads from around 1914. The first phone was put through to Wonga Park at this time and was mainly used to send and receive Telegrams. Mr Jones also ran the horse coach service to Croydon. The Receiving Office was upgraded to a Post Office from 1 November 1915.

The "Old Post Office" in Jumping Creek Road close to the intersection of Yarra and Dudley Roads was built by Mr Charles Marshall who owned the land from Jumping Creek Road through to the school. He continued to run the coach service and also operated a small grocery store. The Post Office continued to operate at this location with a number of owners until around 1963-64.

Arthur and Teddy Davis placed a cedar train carriage on the nearby corner (site of the restaurant, in the late 1940's where it operated as a kiosk/store During the 1950's the store was called the "Wonga-Rhon Store". The train carriage was relocated (also in the mid 1950's) to Paynters Road.

Mrs Hodges operated the Post Office from 1950 to the early 1960's and, assisted by her daughter, also operated the Wonga Park telephone exchange. In 1963, the Post Office relocated to the site of the present Restaurant on the north east corner of Jumping Creek and Dudley Road.

Mail continued to be collected by residents from the Post Office/General Store until 1983 when the first mail delivery commenced to houses within a one mile radius of the Store.

Australia Post decided to close the Wonga Park Post Office agency in 1989, as part of a national program which saw many similar small agencies closed down. The Post Office was then re-established in 1994 by M. Fankhauser and became the Licensed Post Office /Newsagency in the Wonga Park Village Shopping Centre until 1996. It then changed hands several times until eventually moving to the premises near the corner of Yarra and Homestead Roads.

Attempts have been made to clarify this information with Australia Post however to date they have not responded to the request. If you have any further information kindly advise the Historic Group.