

HISTORICAL RESEARCH: "KENTON PARK", GUMERACHA

"Kenton Park" was the home of William Beavis Randell, a Baptist miller from Kenton in Devon, who came to South Australia in October 1837, at the invitation of George Fife Angas. "When he (Randell) became insolvent, Angas helped him and persuaded him to take charge of the (S.A.) Company's corn and saw mills. In the colony he was assigned to stock and dairy operations, which isolated him from the main settlement". Randell lived in Adelaide for four years and during this time (1838-41) was actively involved in the establishment of the Baptist Church in South Australia, becoming one of its first two deacons in 1838. "Baptist meetings (in Adelaide) began in July 1838, largely through the activity of David McLaren and W.B. Randell".

In 1841-42, Randell selected land for the S.A. Company at the "Sources of the Torrens" and while doing so applied for land for his own property. After the land was surveyed, 966 acres, known as "Randell's Estate", was granted and in 1843, Randell and his family moved to the Gumeracha district. Randell remained in the employ of the S.A. Company until either September 1844, or December 1845 (there is some confusion about the date), and then resigned due to the "continued interference of the Colonial Manager with his department,..." As he had already partly developed and stocked "Kenton Park", Gumeracha, he devoted himself entirely towards its fuller development"

The "new and thriving" Baptist congregation at Gumeracha had been established by Randell and "other officers of the South Australian Company", meetings were at first held in Randell's barn at his "Kenton Park" property, and then in the kitchen of his house. After the kitchen proved to be too small to contain "all those who desired to participate in those Lord's Day fellowship meetings", Randell donated land and £50 for the building of a church, which was duly opened in February, 1846. This chapel was one of the first constructed for the Baptist Church in South Australia. As the Randell home was used for church services before the completion of the chapel in February 1846, the construction of "Kenton Park" house must therefore date between the years 1843 and 1846.

W.B. Randell's other activities in the township of Gumeracha included the building of "the first and only flour mill", which was managed by his son John, and the donating of land for the site of the Institute Building. He succeeded in developing his own Kenton Park estate along English lines to the extent that it received almost a full page description in "Our Inheritance in the Hills" of 1889. "The garden is one of the oldest in the colony, and contains magnificent wide-spread oaks and other varieties of English trees, such as chesnuts, poplars etc..... The land surrounding the garden is divided into fields by hedges of hawthorn and furze, giving a particularly English look to the landscape, and the illusion is heightened by the presence of several varieties of English song birds".

Beavis Randell died in 1876, and his famous son (Captain) William Richard Randell came to live at Kenton Park until his own death in 1911. Captain Randell was the first man to sail a steam boat on the River Murray in March, 1853. After working on his father's property and in the Gumeracha Flour Mill, he built the "Mary Ann" with the help of his brothers, and then

carted the boat to Mannum, where, following a successful trial run, he made a journey of three weeks on the river. Following his return to Kenton Park, he was elected to State Parliament as member for the district of Gumeracha in 1883 and held this position until 1889.

Thus, "Kenton Park" has been associated with two prominent men who have both played roles of historical significance in South Australia's development. William Beavis Randell was instrumental in opening up the Gumeracha district to settlement and played a major role in the township's establishment, being responsible for the building of the Baptist Church, flour mill and Institute. He is also associated with the beginnings of the Baptist Church in both Adelaide and Gumeracha, and, in addition, with the early years of operation of the S.A. Company in the district in which he played a crucial part; William Richard Randell attained his distinction as one of the first explorers of the Murray. It is noteworthy that Kenton Park remains in the Randell family today, and thus has a history of continuous ownership by the one, original, family of nearly 140 years.

Sources:

Pastoral Pioneers of South Australia, R. Cockburn, 1925, Pgs. 176-177

A History of Gumeracha and District, 1839-1939, J.E. Monfries, 1939.

Our Inheritance in the Hills, G. Sutherland, 1889, Pgs. 40-41

The Story of Our First Hundred Years - The Baptist Church of South Australia, Rev. H. Estcourt Hughes, 1937, Pg. 34.

Annely Aeuckens
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REGISTER HISTORIAN

6/8/81

South Australian Heritage Act 1978-80	REGISTER OF STATE HERITAGE ITEMS ITEM EVALUATION SHEET BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES	Office Use: File No.
PERIOD 1837-1851 1852-1883	ITEM: HOUSE AND BARN, "KENTON PARK" MANNUM ROAD, GUMERACHA. THEME HOUSING, PRIMARY INDUSTRY GRAZING, PERSON	Comp. Ref.
COMPONENT	COMMENT	GRADING E VG AG FP NA
<u>History</u>		
1. Context	Associated with the early history of the Gumeracha district.	*
2. Person/Group	Built for William Beavis Randell, friend of George Fife Angas, one of the first 'sub-managers' of the S.A. Company and considered to be the founder of Gumeracha and district. Father of William Richard Randell first navigation of the River Murray by Steam Boat, who also lived here 1876-1911	*
3. Event	No event	*
<u>Architecture</u>		
4. Architect Builder	- -	
5. Age	Construction of Barn and Sheds believed to have been begun late 1840s - House probably later.	*
6. Style	Late to early Victorian	*
7. Design	House built on two levels, symmetrical about front facade. Pointed arch windows on upper level give the House an ecclesiastic air.	*
8. Construction	Random stone with dimensioned stone around openings and corners. All buildings originally covered with timber shingles - now covered with corrugated iron. Roof to barn supported by king post trusses.	*
9. Interior	Basically intact	*
<u>Environment</u>		
10. Continuity		*
11. Local Character	Of importance in establshing the rural character of the area.	*
12. Landmark	Visually not particularly conspicuous but historically a well known property	*

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COMPONENT	COMMENT	GRADING				
		E	VG	AG	FP	NA
<u>Integrity</u>						
13. Alterations	Buildings have suffered little alteration and retain most of their original materials and design features. Park setting has been retained.	*				
14. Condition	Buildings are in good condition structurally Some stonework needs attention.		*			
<u>Compatability for Reuse</u>						
15. Compatability	Present use is compatible with current land use and zoning.	*				
16. Adapability	Limited adapability			*		
17. Interpretation	High potential for interpretation		*			

RARITY/SCARCITY		
STATUS:	National Trust CLASSIFIED LIST	National Estate REGISTERED ITEM
EVALUATED BY		DATE
REVIEWED BY		DATE
SOUTH AUSTRALIAN HERITAGE COMMITTEE CATEGORIZATION		DATE

GUMERACHA HERITAGE SURVEY

Survey Place No: GU 42

Site Description: Homestead and Outbuilding, 'Kenton Park'
Mannum Road
GUMERACHA SA 5233

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE:

Architectural -

Large two storey house constructed of random stonework with cut stone quoins on a sloping site. Hipped corrugated galvanised iron roof. Verandahs encircle the house. The facade wall verandah includes a balcony. The openings are generally symmetrically arranged. The upper floor windows are multi-paned with lancet shaped arched heads. The lower floor windows have flat arched heads, and are also multi-paned. The barn is a large gable ended building also of random stonework, but with Classically derived arched openings.

Historical -

'Kenton Park' was the home of William Beavis Randell and his family, a Baptist miller from Kenton in Devon, who came to South Australia in October 1837, at the invitation of George Fife Angas. Randell lived in Adelaide for four years and during this time (1838-41) was actively involved in the establishment of the Baptist Church in South Australia, becoming one of its first two deacons in 1838.

In 1841-2, Randell selected land for the South Australian Company at the 'Sources of the Torrens', and while doing so applied for land for his own property. After the land was surveyed, 966 acres, known as 'Randell's Estate', was granted and in 1843, Randell and his family moved to the Gumeracha district. Randell remained in the employ of the South Australian Company until either September 1844, or December 1845 (there is some confusion about the date) and then resigned.

The new Baptist congregation at Gumeracha had been established by Randell and other officers of the South Australian Company. Meetings were at first held in Randell's barn at his 'Kenton Park' property, and then in the kitchen of his house. After the kitchen proved to be too small to contain the congregation, Randell donated land and fifty pounds for the building of a church, which was opened in February 1846. As the Randell home was used for church services before the completion of the chapel in February 1846, the construction of 'Kenton Park' house must therefore date between the years 1843 and 1846.

WB Randell's other activities in the township of Gumeracha included the building of the first flour mill which was managed by his son John, and the donating of land for the site of the Institute Building. He succeeded in developing 'Kenton Park' estate along English lines.

WB Randell died in 1876, and his son, Captain William Richard Randell came to live at 'Kenton Park' until his death in 1911.

GUMERACHA HERITAGE SURVEY

Survey Place No:

GU 42

Site Description:

Homestead and Outbuilding, 'Kenton Park'
Mannum Road
GUMERACHA SA 5233

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'Kenton Park' has been associated with two prominent men who have both played roles of historical significance in South Australia's development. WB Randell was instrumental in opening up the Gumeracha district to settlement and played a major role in the township's establishment, being responsible for the building of the Baptist Church, flour mill and Institute. He is also associated with the beginnings of the Baptist Church in both Adelaide and Gumeracha, and in addition, with the early years operation of the South Australian Company in the district, in which he played a crucial part. WR Randell attained his distinction as one of the first explorers of the Murray. It is noteworthy that 'Kenton Park' remains in the Randell family today, and thus has a history of continuous ownership by the original family.

This homestead is important because of its close connection with the early history of Gumeracha and district through its first owner, William Beavis Randell, and in general, by its association with the Randell family who continued to play a prominent role in the area.

References -

Jim Faull & Gordon Young, People, Places and Buildings, Rural Settlements in the Adelaide Hills South Australia, 1986, pp. 18-20.
State Heritage Branch, File No 10514.

GUMERACHA HERITAGE SURVEY

Survey Place No: GU 42
Site Description: Homestead and Outbuilding, 'Kenton Park'
Mannum Road
GUMERACHA SA 5233

Location: Mannum Road
GUMERACHA SA 5233

Mapsheet: Onkaparinga 6628 - 2

AMG Reference: 3072 614.470

Description: Stone House and Farm Outbuilding

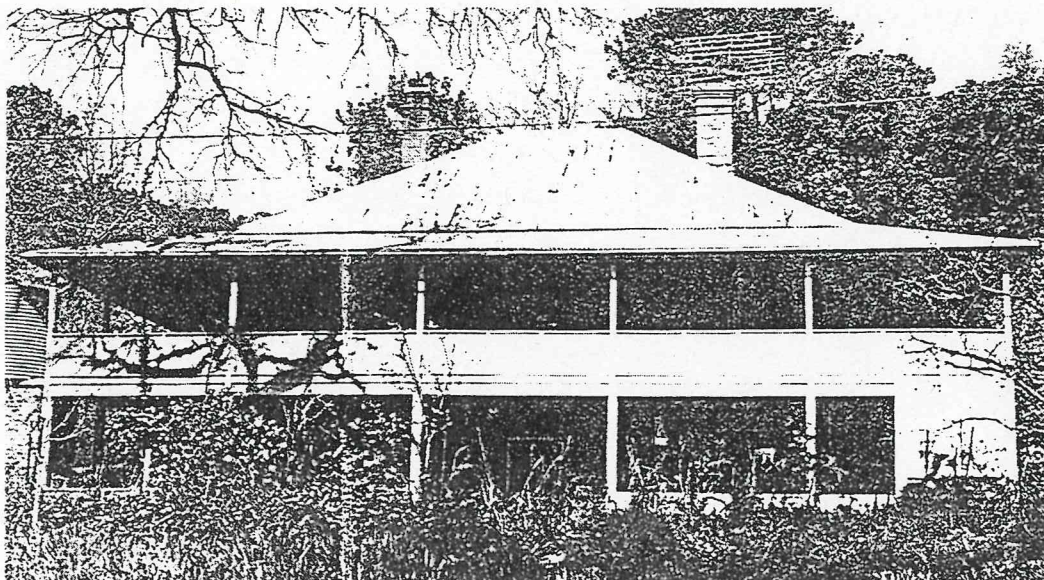
Land Description: Allotment
Section No. 6046
Hundred of Talunga
Certificate of Title 2333/99

LGA: District Council of Gumeracha

Owner: Mr. I.E. Randell
P.O. Box 8
GUMERACHA SA 5233

Heritage Status: State Heritage Register, Registered No. 10514

Photographs: Film No. From State Heritage Branch file
Negative No.





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