

Riverstone in Other Parts of the World

Judith Lewis

In 1995 my husband Kevin and I were holidaying on Lord Howe Island when we came across a monument on a prominent part of the headland just across from the Lagoon Store. The inscription on the monument read:-

IN
MEMORY OF
ALLAN RIVERSTONE
McCULLOCH
NATURALIST
1885-1925
ERECTED BY
FRIENDS & FELLOW WORKERS

Research has revealed that Allan McCulloch had joined the Australian Museum at the age of thirteen as a volunteer, working without remuneration whilst awaiting the possibility of a paid position. At the age of sixteen Allan was appointed mechanical assistant to the Museum's zoologist, Edgar Ravenswood Waite. Waite moved to the Canterbury Museum in 1906 and Allan Riverstone McCulloch was his replacement at the Australian Museum. During his "apprenticeship" Allan's superiors encouraged the development of his obvious artistic talents, which were later refined by tuition under Sydney's leading art teacher, Julian Ashton.

In 1914 the Museum's scientific roll lists Allan McCulloch as - Vertebrate Zoologist. Of the eleven men listed on that roll, Allan was one of only three remaining in 1921 and his position was now in Ichthyology, where he was said to be working "prodigiously at descriptions of new species and on his check-list of Australian fishes".

In 1924, health deteriorating, and near nervous breakdown, Allan was granted a year's leave. During this period he visited Honolulu to attend the Pan-Pacific Fisheries Conference as an unofficial delegate of the New South Wales government. There he committed suicide in August 1925.

In explanation of his death, colleague T.C. Roughley wrote:

"...Mr McCulloch resolved to place the science of Australian ichthyology on a sound and systematic basis. Only those associated with the difficulties of this work can appreciate its magnitude...but Mr McCulloch was undeterred by obstacles which, to others, had proved insurmountable and eventually, by a lavish use of his strength and health, won through..."

There is photographic evidence of Allan at work on Lord Howe Island in 1921 and in New Guinea with Captain Frank Hurley in 1922-23.

Our second encounter with another 'Riverstone' was again on holiday, in 1998, in Far North Queensland. The caravan park in Cairns had a brochure on its office shelves proclaiming:

Riverstone
Experience
A Taste of Nostalgia &
The Real Australia

The brochure urged us to *Drop in for tea* at the *Riverstone* COLONIAL TEAHOUSE at Gordonvale on the Gillies Highway, south of Cairns, two kilometres from the Bruce Highway turnoff.

Caravan in tow, and in light rain, we headed for Gordonvale to “drop in for tea” at Riverstone. The owners Jan and Noel Alley made us most welcome. Cane farmer Noel was tending the beautiful garden surrounding this lovely home built in 1933 on the original site of Charley Alley’s 1877 ‘Riverstone Hostelry’. Jan was unpacking her shopping of fresh fruit and vegetables. Riverstone was hosting a garden wedding that coming weekend and Jan would be doing all the cooking.

Jan served us coffee and cake on the large verandah and we chatted about the two Riverstones. Jan’s story told of twenty-year-old William Saunders Alley from Gosport, near Portsmouth, England who was a sailor on the ‘John Davies’. Mary Banks from Haddington, South of the Firth of Forth, Scotland, was a passenger. A shipboard romance flourished and in the Colony of New South Wales the two married.

Charlie Alley, as he was known, possessed business acumen. He entered the hospitality industry as host of ‘The Ship Inn’, the ‘Queen’s Hotel’ and the ‘Duke of Cornwall’; acquired punts plying the river trade between Brisbane and Ipswich; went gold mining at Blackall, acquired a sailing ship and a steam launch ‘The Countess’ and traded between Smithfield and Cairns. They became cedar getters and in 1877 were the first white settlers on the rich river flats of the Musgrave River.

By 1880 the astute William Saunders Alley had built the ‘Riverstone Hotel’ and ‘Riverstone Homestead’ at which travellers crossing the range could rest overnight. The hotel operated until 1907 when it was burned to the ground.

Today Jan and Noel Alley are offering this same hospitality. They would not allow us to pay for our morning tea. We purchased a Riverstone placemat and a copy of Jan’s excellent book ‘Recollections and Recipes of Riverstone’ which is an absolute delight. (To repay their hospitality, on returning home, I posted to Jan a copy of Riverstone Public School’s ‘Centenary Recipe Book’.) The first page in Jan Alley’s book is indicative of this delightful couple.

JAN’S KITCHEN PRAYER

Oh, let my simple kitchen, Lord
Speak my humble duty,
And may I, through serving others
Contribute to Life’s beauty.

May all who come in through my door
Find friendship at my table
And may I always freely share
With those who are less able.

I’d like to invite all my friends
For bickies, cake and pie.
And then I’ll know my day’s complete
When nights are drawing nigh.

Although my deeds may not be great
Let my kitchen say my prayer
That everyone who needs a friend or food
May find some comfort there.

NOEL'S KITCHEN PRAYER

Thank God for dirty dishes,
They have a tale to tell,
Whilst other folk go hungry,
We're eating very well.
With home health and happiness
We wouldn't want to fuss,
For by this stack of evidence
God's very good to us.



The Riverstone Teahouse, Gordonvale QLD

Caravanning again, in 2003, we stayed at the Breakwall Van Park in Port Macquarie. The large boulders on the wall, beside the walkway, have all been 'decorated'. One of the boulders, painted in yellow and red (maroon and gold?) declares it is "RIVO'S STONE". There were a number of names painted thereon but, sadly, they were not included in my photo. Perhaps someone reading this may be able to enlighten me.

My fourth encounter with Riverstone is not really first hand. A friend had told me of a former neighbour whose son had developed an estate somewhere in the United States and had named it after his birthplace, Riverstone, NSW, Australia. The son was Alby Stockwell, whom I'd known when I was a child. My aunt Vera (Shepherd) was married to Alby's uncle Walter Jessop Stockwell and we saw quite a lot of Alby's parents Dick and Alma but not so much of Alby and his brother Neville who were much older than my brothers and I.

I was able to track down Alby's son, Richard who sent me the following information:

Alby was the Group General Manager – Housing for Hooker Corporation and he oversaw all of the housing operations for Hooker in both Australia and the USA right up until his retirement. This involved about 6,000 homes per year.

In the USA Hooker built under the name of Hooker Barnes Homes, incorporating (Barnes) the name of the company they purchased in order to get into the American market. They specialised in what we would call house and land packages, developing their own land from broadacres and selling the completed package. Riverstone was an estate located in Atlanta, Georgia.

I had mentioned to Richard that I might find something on the internet but he was sceptical because *the estate would have been developed, probably mid 1980s, long before the internet took off.* My internet search was not entirely in vain. I located numerous references to Riverstone in the suburb of Canton. Sadly, I had no reply to the e-mail I sent to the Canton Council, but the internet did supply a number of references to the shopping precinct of Riverstone and a map indicating Riverstone Boulevard and Riverstone Place.