

The Bambridge Family

Clarrie Neal

Family history believes the name was originally Bambach and it is of German /Jewish origins. It is believed the change of name occurred in 1855. Alfred Bambridge was born in 1859 in London and was one of 13 children. As a young man he came to Australia with his two brothers, Arthur and Harold who settled in Victoria and South Australia.

It appears Alfred arrived in Riverstone in the 1880s as the *Gazette* of 19/10/1889 noted that storekeepers Bambridge and Taylor had dissolved their partnership, with Taylor selling his share to L J Darling. The Bambridge/Darling partnership flourished and with a two storey building and twelve employees it became the largest store in Riverstone. The partnership continued until the 9th January 1897, when Alfred sold his share to L J Darling who continued the business alone.

It appears that Alfred's brother Arthur may have also settled in Riverstone at this time as the *Gazette* 24/5/1890 noted that bakers Krause & Gobel had sold out to Arthur Bambridge. On the 9/5/1896 the *Gazette* noted that Arthur, after spending nine years in the colonies, was to visit England.



Alfred, Katherine, Horace Phillip and Arthur Bambridge. Photo: Bambridge family.

The *Gazette* makes several other references to the Bambridge family –

24/4/1897 - A Bambridge building next to John Schofields.

24/7/1897 - Mr Bambridge's first brick cottage in Crown Rd completed.

16/10/1897 - Mr Bambridge's second cottage in Crown Rd finished.

29/1/1898 - Alfred Bambridge moves into house opposite Dr. Studdy. (In later years this house itself became known as the doctor's house)

9/4/1898 – 'The Camp' - Mr A. Bambridge's cottage on the Windsor Rd.

18/2/1899 - Mr Bambridge opened his new store.

7/4/1900 - Details of a tender for Rouse Hill police station won by A. Bambridge.

27/4/1902 - Advert for clearing sale for Mr Bambridge. Land records indicate members of the Bambridge family owned the land in Garfield Rd, from Alfred's store next to the picture show, up to the top of the hill, opposite Pitt St.

Alfred married Katherine McMunn in 1889 and there were four children - 1. Phillip G, 2. Arthur J. 3. Horace P. 4. Helen, who died in infancy. It is not known where the family first lived, but the *Gazette* 29/1/1898 noted they moved into their new house in Garfield Rd, opposite Dr Studdy.

1. Phillip served in WW 1 and served in Egypt and France where he was gassed. He died many years later in 1959. During the War the *Gazette* noted -

9/7/1915 - Phil Bambridge in training at Liverpool.

14/4/1916 - Gunner Phil Bambridge sends letter from Egypt.

29/6/1917 - Phil Bambridge, machine gunner suffering illness.

11/10/1918 - Phil Bambridge returns home.

2. Arthur J. trained as a school teacher and served at Thirroul and Tenterfield before being ordained as a priest in 1930.

3. Horace P. trained as a teacher after attending St. Aloysius College at Milsons Point. In term breaks he came to Riverstone to deliver grocery orders from his father's shop to local residents and rations to the aborigine's camp at Rooty Hill. En route he often visited the Cassidy family at Marsden Park.

Horace married Cecilia Cassidy on the 22/4/1925 in St. Marys Cathedral, Sydney, and they first lived at Clovelly before moving into their new home at 663 Garfield Road. Horace and Cecilia reared four daughters -1. Sheila b.1926; 2. Joan b. 1927; 3. Elizabeth b.1930; 4. Carmel b.1937.



Bambridge's shop in later years after it was sold by the family.

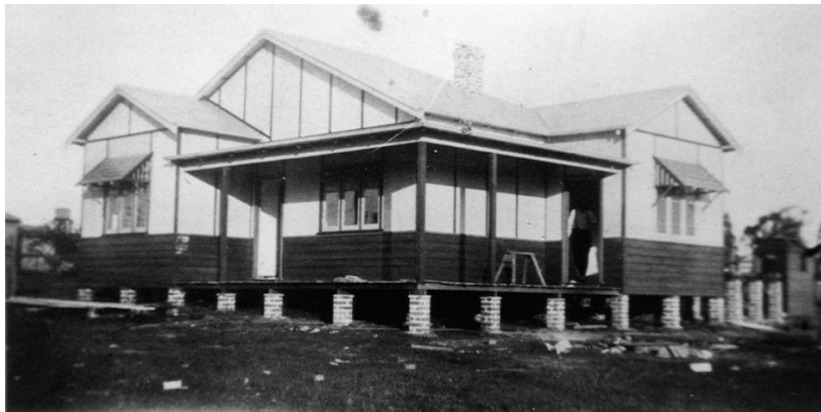
Daughter Carmel recalled *-I think Grandfather Alfred may have brought his family inheritance with him and used it to buy property in Australia. My mother pointed out a paddock near South Creek where he used to graze his horses used with the carts to deliver groceries, The Bambridge sons attended St. Josephs at Hunters Hill and St. Aloysius at Milsons Point, so I presume they lived in Sydney as my grandmother's family owned properties there.*

Some stories were told about the debating evenings that my grandparents hosted. There was always a sense that my grandmother was very much a 'lady' and that my grandfather played the part of a crusty English squire and retained his strong Anglican beliefs until his death in 1928. I was born in the doctor's house, which used to be one of the homes of Alfred and Katherine Bambridge. In the 1930's this building was referred to as the 'old hospital' and there is a photo of my father Horace and his brother Arthur standing at the front gate.

Early in their marriage, my parents Horace and Cecilia lived at Clovelly. When they moved to Riverstone they first lived in the house opposite Pitt Street. I believe that it was the effects of the Great Depression that forced the family to rent out their new home in Garfield Road, and the family then went to live in the house at the rear of their shop next to the Olympia theatre.

My memory of the shop goes back to the period of WW 2 when my father was in the army and my mother managed the shop, with the help of Alan Voysey, and later Roy Cook. As I understand it, my grandfather Alfred Bambridge had the shop from the beginning. I grew up living in the house behind the shop and after the War in the house opposite the Post Office. I was not old enough to work in the shop, but can remember climbing on the bags of sugar, needing to be lifted up to reach the counter and enjoying the mixtures of aromas that came from the different areas. The boiled lollies were in tightly lidded glass containers and the biscuit tins were placed well out of reach. Tins of jelly crystals come to mind, and the phone ringing in the dark recesses of the back section of the store. My sisters told of the Ford truck used by Dad for deliveries being left out the front one day and how they let the brake off and screamed as it ran down the hill into the railway gates.

Generally I remember the shop being out of bounds. Alan Voysey often welcomed me home from school from behind the counter if it happened that my mother was absent. Alan eventually joined the army. We used the small lane way near Murrell's picture show as an entrance after I had been bowled over by someone who left their bike inside the other entrance on their way to the train. That lane way was often used on warm nights to sneak narrow views of the movies through the palings when the theatre doors were open. Dear Mr Murrell had a very deep cough warning us at times.



The Bambridge family home in Garfield Road, opposite the post office. Photo: Bambridge family.

Carmel attended St. Joseph's College and St Matthew's School at Windsor. Leaving school at fifteen, she trained and worked as a stenographer in the Commonwealth Public Service for eighteen months. Throughout her school years and until she entered the Convent, she learnt piano from Mrs Parker and Bill Roberts at Riverstone and from the Sisters at Windsor.

In 1955 Carmel entered the Convent of the Good Samaritan Congregation and after three years as a novitiate was professed as a religious in 1958. She continued with her studies to acquire a B.A. (Monash), M.Ed.Admin.(UNE), and Ph.D.(Macquarie). The latter involved work and cultural experience in Northern Ireland, Romania and Rome. After working in schools in many parts of Australia, in 2000 she was appointed as Head of College at St. Raphael's Women's College at James Cook University, Townsville, where she remained until 2003.

Carmel believes she has been blessed with the opportunities she has been given as a Sister in the Good Samaritan Congregation, and is grateful for her background of family life, social life, and the values that remain from her early life in Riverstone.

Compiled by Clarrie Neal from information and photos provided by Carmel Bambridge in September 2004 and October 2008.