

**THE STORY OF “DALRY LODGE” - 32 DALRY RD, DARLINGTON
IN THE TIME OF BELLE (ISOBEL) AND EDSON (TED) BANKS (1944-1969)**

By JUDY LOVE - JAN 2001

(This story was told by Joy Hearn, daughter of Belle and Ted, who was a teenager in those early years and later lived in Darlington with her husband and children for many years (1958 - post 1980). Aged 70 in 2001 when she told this story, she lived at 41 Christowe Drive, Swan View. Joy passed away on 31st December 2017, aged 87.)

In 1944, Ted and Belle paid £2000 for Dalry Lodge. It was then a private home belonging to Judge Draper and his wife Bessie. Ted turned it into a guest house and installed a Manager and Housekeeper. He and his wife (and Joy) came up many weekends. Ted had a history of entrepreneurial-ship, having set up several dance halls and entertainment venues. He had been widowed early and met his second wife in the 1930's when called by her family, the Tilleys of boatbuilding and operating fame in Fremantle, to set up an entertainment venue (on-board dance floors, tour, picnics) centre on the well- known river steamer the “Zephr”. This extra job caused him to lose his main job in window dressing for both the Boans and Moores Stores (you couldn't have extra part time jobs in those days).

Belle too did her share of running enterprises as Ted set up various venues in Perth. One was Temple Court (later to become the Embassy ballroom); another was the Silver Dollar (a modern dance venue for United States Servicemen); another was the Ice Palais, the first ice skating rink in Perth (in 1949 it was in the old Luxo Theatre which later became Canterbury Court Ballroom). Joy was involved in both the skating venues, being sent by her folks to learn each form of skating and then taking a leading role in teaching and putting on shows to delight the participants. Belle was responsible mainly for the running of the Blue Room which was a ballroom dancing venue downstairs and a venue for roller skating upstairs (preceding ice skating).

Joy herself had been a performer since childhood, having won the Shirley Temple award in the 1930's at Fremantle. With tight, long, fair corkscrew ringlets and a sweet baby face, she impressed the judges by looking most like the little American film star of the time.

Belle had been entranced by Darlington when she and Ted had bought the property at 11 Bertram Road, Darlington. It had once been the Leschen's property and was 6 and half acres at the time. It was named “Joybells” for Joy, though she did not own it - and she later lived in it (from 1958) with her husband and family.

In Darlington in the 30's and 40's it was the hey-day of guest houses. In wartime cars were not plentiful and petrol was rationed. Greenmount Hill furthermore represented quite a challenge to the older cars because its slope meant that their petrol (which was in the rear) could not syphon to the engine, which would stop. Many cars in early times had to back up the steepest bits to keep the petrol running down to the engine! Darlington was in easy reach by train and attributed as having many curative properties, so in those times when TB was still around and surgical operations were not the quick fix of today and patients needed long periods of convalescence, the delightful bush setting of Darlington and other hills regions beckoned the holiday makers and sick people. Belle was a capable manager and fell in love with Dalry Lodge. Hence the 1944 purchase.

Darlington felt like the country and one has to remember that overseas holidays, motels, caravan parks and caravan travel, package tours to foreign countries, eco- tourism , adventure tourism and all of the things today's people think of as possibilities for holidays - these were still in the future. Joy Hearn feels that her father would love to have worked in tourism today with its creative possibilities - the family always felt he was born 30 years too early!

Joy still has the guest books in which guests of Dalry Lodge's peak periods from her parent's busiest time at Dalry Lodge (1944 - 50) would write their appreciation of their holidays. Some stayed 3 weeks, others, notably servicemen and often their honeymooning wives, stayed for less time. All commented on the tasteful furniture, antiques which decorated the dining and sitting rooms, the wonderful food, the well-set-up tables with their linen and fine glassware and cutlery, the fun they had around the piano community singing, the walks in the lovely garden and the kindly attention of the staff and particularly the Banks once they had come to live permanently at Dalry Lodge in 1953. Others indicated they had enjoyed card playing, reading from the fine library at Dalry. Still others chatted, knitted and crocheted. Many wrote their thoughts in verse, or in sketches, or in heart-felt letters.

The Missing Aunt sadly did not write her name or address - but there is one verse of an appreciative poem written in April 1946 which lets us know that the surname which she may have used is in the book. A "Mr Beaumont" was given a verse in the poem of appreciation which reads;

"A gentleman named Beaumont

He said he liked his beer.

But if amateurs suggested bridge

Would answer with a sneer."

Other guests of that April and who also got a verse in their honour, were Miss Tonkin (who knitted), Mrs Galbraith (who smoked) Mrs Greig (who played bridge), Mrs Trin (who swatted mosquitoes expertly), Mrs King (who sang well), Mr & Mrs Swan (who told good jokes), Faye-a "youngster" who got up to "pranks and prattle" and Mrs Roberts who "wept with laughter."

Gradually the numbers dwindled - at times 25 people had been there - and though a few permanent men boarders and one lady boarder remained, the scene was quiet by the late 50's. Belle made Devonshire teas for the day trippers, but Darlington was becoming a suburb of Perth and though Ted had one last entrepreneurial effort up his sleeve (a 1952 attempt to make a country club of Dalry Lodge, installing an outside dance floor and inviting guests to come up for a great dinner and dance and stay overnight) times had changed and it didn't 'go.'

Since their beloved daughter Joy had been resident in Darlington from 1958 firstly in a house in Darlington Road bought from Mrs Hudson and then on the 6 and a half acre Bertram Rd property they had bought for her for 500 pounds and named "Joybells" ... well life was pretty good for the Banks. They had grandchildren and loved the nearness to them. Jan and Shaun called in after school and Belle and Ted had time to spend with them. They cut down on their work force - the last gardener and laundress; Mr and Mrs Jenner, stopped work at Dalry in the 50's, after 6 years with the Banks.

In March 1969 Belle died peacefully in the garden at Dalry Lodge. Ted found the big house too much (and probably too lonely) and it was auctioned later in 1969. Its stock of fine china and antiques were either sold or given to family members. Joy particularly recalls a wonderful music box - a huge lovely piece of decorative carpentry with big metal disks with 30 recorded marches, minuets and waltzes which had been the highlight of many musical moments at Dalry Lodge - being sold to the late Lou Whiteman.

Dalry Lodge now began its life as a private house being sold to the Heffernans and later the Ryans. Others bought it later, including Helen & Brian Lever (1977 – post 1992).

Ted lived with Joy and her family for 10 years and died at 88.

We need to remember the gracious days of some guest houses and the simple pleasures they gave to holiday makers. Joy has pictures of Dalry Lodge which evoke these times in the 40's and 50's - and which may not come again.

Thanks for the memories, Joy!

Judy Love, 2001



Polyphon

Post Script

The earliest advertisements in the West Australian for the Guest House Dalry Lodge occur from late 1947 claiming – “Superior accommodation Ph 216 Darlington, tariff 12 /- per day”.

By 1949 the Lodge offered “Luncheons, afternoon teas, Devonshire dinners, parties etc”

Darlington locals used the Lodge for parties and wedding reception over the years while a Public Notice on the 23rd December 1954 stated they would be serving “Christmas Dinners”.

The West Australian social notes recorded some of the notable country residents who were holidaying at Dalry Lodge in the 1950's.

