

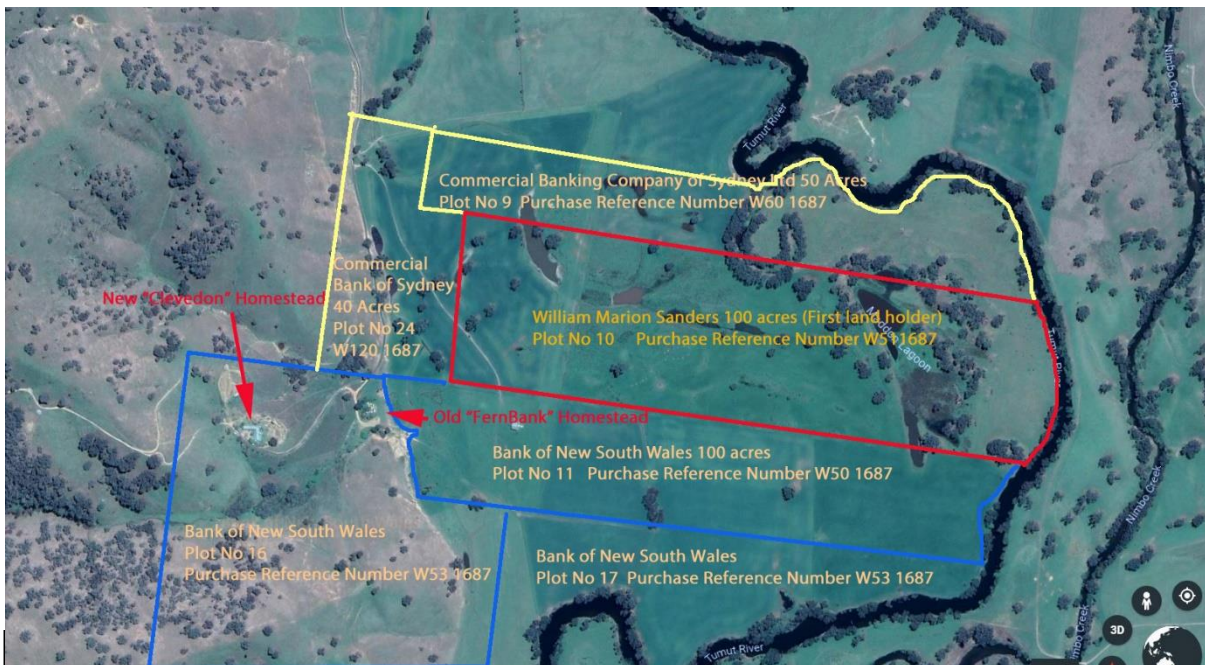
Note: From Stephen and Marianne (Hargreaves) Hansford, email 13 Apr. 2019, hansford53@gmx.com. She descends from John and Catherine Hargreaves via Frederick Milton H. and John Edgar H.

John Hargreaves land acquisition at Tarrabandra – “Fernbank” property.

During the last three weeks of March 2019, Marianne and I went to Tumut to try and provide answers to the following family history questions:

- Where did John and Catherine Hargreaves and their family live at Tarrabandra – ie., where was “Fernbank”?
- How big was his property?
- Is the “Fernbank” homestead still standing – if so could we find it and view it?

We know from the Hargreaves reunion (1990) book that John Hargreaves acquired 100 acres of river-front land from his brother-in-law William Marion Sanders. This property purchased from Will was called “Fernbank” in the reunion book. The property can be identified as Plot 10 on the Parish map for Tarrabandra. This purchase from Will was finalised on 11 March 1873, six years and 2 days after Will bought it at an auction of Crown Land in Gundagai.ⁱ The property became known as “Fernbank” and it is possible that Will gave it this name due to the amount of bracken fern growing on the slopes above the river flats.



Map 1: Sanders' land was located and surrounding properties with their first title ownership details.

Challenge: Will lived at Tarrabandra with his wife Sarah (Hargreaves) and family from 1866 until he sold the property to Johnⁱⁱ in 1873 – where did they live, as the homestead that his family (presumably) lived is not on the 100 acres he purchased – it is located on Plot 16 as shown on Map 1?

Solution: Evidence supports the idea that Will purchased the properties up-river and around him – 100 acres next to him (identified as Plot 11) as well as the 80 acre property next to it (identified as Plot 16) and also the 60 acre property identified as Plot 17.ⁱⁱⁱ John Syphers owned these three properties when he died in December 1863^{iv}. He lived at Tarrabandra and had a blacksmith shop in Gundagai. If he lived

FORFEITED CONDITIONAL PURCHASES.—The following conditional purchases have become forfeited for non-fulfilment by the selectors:— Donald McIntosh Queanbeyan, 40 acres; Maria Jenkins, Gundagai, 151 acres 1 rood 16 perches; John Syphers, Gundagai, 80 acres; James and Octavius Turner, Gundagai, 65 acres; Thomas Quilty, Tumut, 40 acres.

John Syphers forfeiture of the 80 acre block of land shortly after Will Sanders bought his 100 acre block provided the

at Tarrabandra then he most likely lived in the homestead on Plot 16. In November 1866 the 80 acre property (Plot 16) belonging to John Syphers was forfeited because the conditions associated with conditional purchase were not being met (because John died three years previously and so no-one was making the necessary improvements over the three year period)^v. Will may have instigated this forfeiture as he needed ownership of the homestead and land. All three properties ended up in Will's hands, possibly through similar mechanisms^{vi}.

The acquisition of Will Sanders' land by John turned out to be 340 acres, and not the 100 acres mentioned in the Hargreaves reunion book.

It is now possible to accurately show the land that John bought from Will Sanders in 1873 with the information provided in the advertisement combined with details shown later of land acquired by John that was owned by John Syphers (that must have been purchased by Will Sanders).

- Purchase of Will Sanders 100 acres – 11 March 1873. Plot 10.
- Conditional Purchase transfer from Will Sanders 100 acres – 11 March 1873. Plot 11, CP 91/3825 (see footnote iii below).
- Conditional Purchase transfer from Will Sanders 60 acres – 11 March 1873. Plot 17, ACP 127/749 (see footnote iii below).
- Conditional Purchase transfer from Will Sanders 80 acres – 11 March 1873. Plot 16, ACP 128/750 (see footnote iii below). This is the block with "Fernbank" homestead on it.

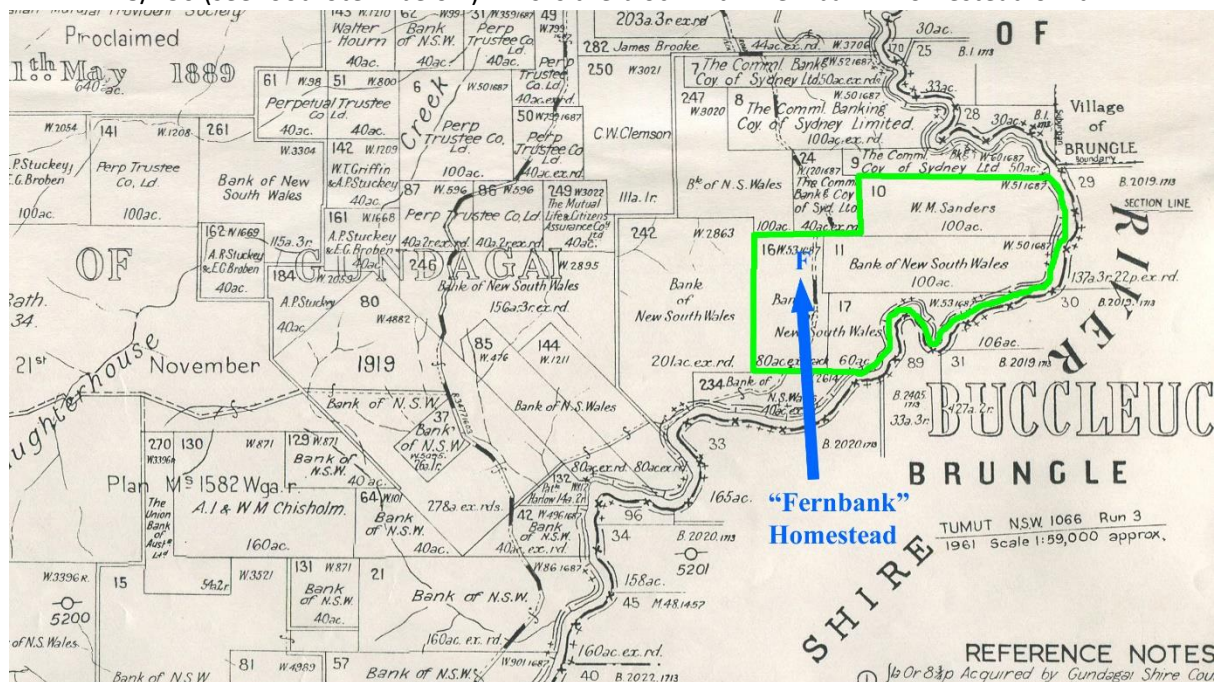
For Private Sale,
(IN CONSEQUENCE OF THE OWNER'S INTENTION TO LEAVE THE COLONY,)

THAT VALUABLE LANDED ESTATE situate on the Tumut River, about 8 miles from Gundagai, well known as **FERN BANK**, the property of Mr. **W. M. SANDERS**.

This very desirable property consists of 340 ACRES of rich alluvial land to which is attached a Pre-lease of 700 ACRES securely fenced. The Improvements consist of 8 PADDOCKS securely fenced and all well watered. Substantially built **STONE DWELLING-HOUSE**, Detached Kitchen, Large Sheds, Orchard, Vineyard, &c., &c.

Full particulars on application to
W. M. SANDERS,
Fern Bank,
Tumut River.

Will Sanders advertisement for his property. Notice it includes 340 acres as well as a description of Fernbank homestead – stone dwelling-house with detached kitchen. Gundagai Times newspaper, Sat 18 Jan 1873 - page 3



Map 2: This marked up Parish map for Tarrabandra identifies the four blocks of land that John Hargreaves purchased from Will Sanders in March 1873. Plots 16, 17 and 11 were owned (via Conditional Purchase) by John Syphers before Will Sanders acquired them through transfer of Conditional Purchase. "Fernbank" homestead is marked on Plot 16 (the 80 acres of land forfeited by John Syphers family in 1873).

John then went on to acquire significant land over the next 35 years. His farming prowess was recognised by his peers in the district. There is a significant number of newspaper articles referring to his exceptional crops (particularly the yields of corn/maize) and the produce farmed at “Fernbank”. He acquired the rights to produce wine from his vineyard in March 1877.

ON Tuesday applications for wine licenses were granted to James Craine, of Five-mile Creek, and John Hargreaves, of Tarrabandra; also a slaughtering license to John Woodbridge.

John Hargreaves was granted a license to produce wine at “Fernbank” (Gundagai Times newspaper Friday 9 Mar 1877 – page 2).

Following are some of the goods that John produced during his time at “Fernbank”.

- Corn/maize,
- Cereal crops - Oats, wheat and barley,
- Pumpkins, melons,
- Grapes (wine),
- Tobacco (probably – referred to in sale notice),
- Dairy, sheep and beef cattle

About the finest crops in the district are possessed by Mr. John Hargreaves, of Tarrabandra. It is estimated his wheat crop will yield over 40 bushels per acre and oats fully 50 bushels, whilst the maize is in such a healthy and forward condition that an immense yield is expected.

A couple of typical news articles about John’s farm and the excellent crops he produced. His yields were a standout as well as the quality. He had perfect ingredients for growing corn – plenty of water (the groundwater level would be quite close to the surface on the river flats) combined with plenty of summer heat. Maize cobs weighing 2 1/2 lbs is amazing!

THE prolonged duration of the excessive heat has not, happily, injured the maize crops in this quarter. Mr. John Hargreaves’ rich alluvial land at Tarrabandra, on the Tumut river, will outstrip in yield all former years; his only regret is that he had not put more than 40 acres under crop, as 100 bushels to the acre, which is reckoned will be the outcome, is too good to miss garnering off the unsown lands which adjoin the paddocks under notice. Mr. Hargreaves has likewise a prolific crop of pumpkins and water melons. It is to be hoped that at the forth-coming show Mr. Hargreaves may exhibit some cobs of his new season’s corn, many of which contain over 1000 grains and weigh over 2½ lbs.

The following are some of the wonderful crops...

John was fortunate that he was able to acquire such a fantastic river-front property with excellent soil from his brother-in-law Will Sanders at a time when he was ready to give up gold mining. He was blessed to have had the cash to buy the land at this time also, having made at least 2,000 pounds from his gold mining exploits. This enabled him to purchase excellent land at the right time in his life and set him up for a successful farming future. His time at “Fernbank” stretched out to thirty five and a half years.

After working hard for that long, enduring many floods, fires, loss of children as well as many happy, wonderful times, John and Catherine decided it was time to retire and move to Sydney with their youngest daughter (Elsie). The property was auctioned on Thursday 10th September 1908 at 11am. The successful purchaser was Archibald Pyle Stuckey. He owned considerable land in the surrounding hills and would have relished the opportunity to acquire such fertile river flats to add to his grazing property portfolio.

On John’s 67th birthday they had one final, grand, celebration party; combined with a send-off from their neighbours and family at “Fernbank”. The old “Fernbank” homestead must have been rocking that night of 11th November 1908!

Following is the record of purchase or transfer of conditional purchase land during the period he lived at “Fernbank”^{vii}:

- e. Conditional Purchase selection of 80 acres -24th April 1873. Plot 144, CP 1770/4756.
- f. Conditional Purchase selection of 80 acres – 24th September 1874. Plot 85, ACP 2978/10903.
- g. Conditional Purchase selection of 40 acres – 12 April 1883. Most likely Plot 234, ACP 45.
- h. Conditional Purchase selection of 201 acres – 7 August 1884. Plot 242, ACP 57.
- i. Conditional Purchase selection of 156 acres 3 roods – 13th November 1884. Plot 246, ACP 106.

The total of this land is 897 acres, 3 roods – the same amount listed in the ‘Sale by Auction’ article in the newspaper advertising “Fernbank” in 1908 when John sold and moved to Summer-Hill in Sydney^{viii}.

The description of John’s farm at the time of Auction provides an insight into the quality of the property:- *‘The Fernbank Estate of 897 acres, freehold, on the Tumut River, midway between Tumut and Gundagai, and 10 miles between each town. The estate has about 8 miles frontage to the Tumut River, 800 acres being rich alluvial maize flats, the balance being sound hilly, grazing country. There is a comfortable stone house, kitchen, sheds, etc., and the property is divided into 14 paddocks, and is highly improved.’*

John sold all of his property to Archibald Pyle Stuckey for five thousand seven hundred and seventy five pounds. That is equivalent to approx. Aus\$1.35Mil in today’s currency. John’s gold mining and farming ventures certainly paid dividends through his lifetime.

John also bought a significant amount of quality farming equipment during the time he owned it. He held a clearing sale by auction on Thursday, 19th November 1908 at 11am. The following equipment was listed in the auction advertising:- *‘Farming Implements: Stripper, Cleaner, Reaper and Binder, Corn Thresher, Wheat and Oat Thresher, Horse Power Chaff Cutter, Corn Cracker Ploughs, Harrow and Sundries. Also 4 ton Waggon (sic), 6 cwt Scales, complete Blacksmith’s outfit (evidence of John Syphers’ previous presence?), Single Hooded Buggy, Pole and Shafts, and Double and Single Harness, Saddles and Bridles, and Water Tanks. Household Furniture: Hapsburg Piano, Wardrobes, Dressing Tables, Combination Chests, Chairs, Couches, Tables, Double and Single Bedsteads, Pictures, Sewing Machine, Mangle, Glassware, Crockery, Household Linen, Kitchen Utensils and Sundries.’*

With the sale of all of his farming equipment as well as much of his household goods, John and Catherine, with their daughter Elsie were ready to close the successful farming chapter of their lives and move to retirement in the ‘big smoke’ of Sydney. It was time to climb into their coach, take the reigns of the horses and disappear over the hills to Gundagai and beyond. No more floods, bushfires, or ears being bitten by horses – just the quiet life of retirement in the ‘burbs’!

AUCTION SALE

MR. JOHN HARGREAVES'
“Ferndale”
ESTATE

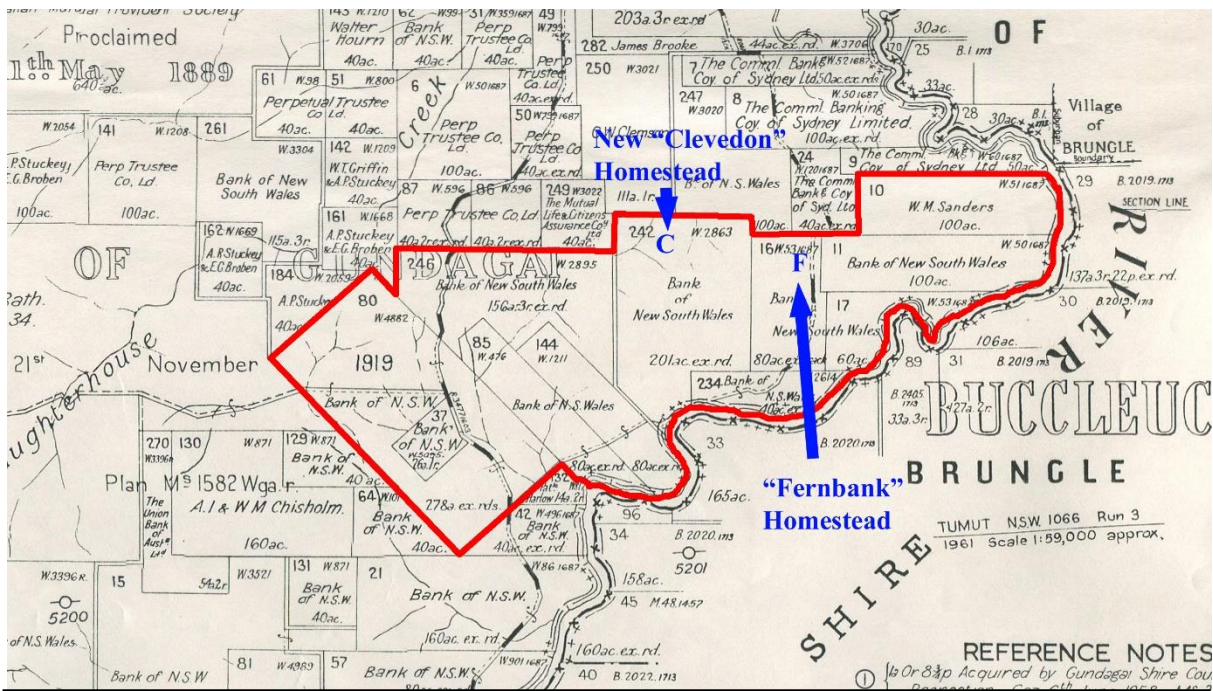
W. E. KYLE

HAS received instructions from MR. JOHN HARGREAVES
 TO SELL BY PUBLIC AUCTION
 at
 WALKER'S HALL, GUNDAGAI,
Thursday, September 10.
 at 11 o'clock.

The “Fernbank” Estate, of 897 acres, freehold, on the Tumut River, midway between Gundagai and Tumut and 10 miles from each town.

The Estate has about 8 miles frontage to the Tumut River, 800 acres being rich alluvial maize flats, the balance being sound, hilly grazing country. There is a comfortable stone house, kitchen, sheds, etc. and the property is sub-divided into 14 paddocks, and is highly improved. Eighty acres are now under oats. This is actually the most valuable and compact property on the Tumut River. It is an ideal place for dairying, or maize, oats and tobacco growing, and also mixed farming. A crop failure being unknown. Mr. Hargreaves (who has held the property for forty years) intends retiring, and the estate is in consequence for absolute sale. No better place could possibly be put on the market, and inspection is confidently recommended.

The advertisement for the auction of John’s farm at Tarrabandra. The farm was sold to John’s neighbour – Archibald Pyle Stuckey.



Map 3: The land of “Fernbank” property at Tarrabandra that John owned at the time he sold the property to A.P. Stuckey in September 1908. Note that Stuckey is listed as the original title holder of the land joining John’s above Plot 80 on the left side of “Fernbank”. Stuckey named the property “Clevedon” – the name remains today.

With the first two goals accomplished for our March 2019 trip to Tumut – the location and size of John’s farm at Tarrabandra, we set about organizing a visit to the old homestead of “Fernbank”. We were fortunate to be assisted miraculously with this opportunity by meeting the wife of a Stuckey family descendant on the road to Clevedon (literally – Clara Stuckey was walking on the road and we stopped to talk with her), and she and her husband Jim were able to organise the visit to the homestead with the current owners. The goal was to find the old “Fernbank” homestead shown in the photos in the Hargreaves reunion book and to establish if it was still standing today.



Fernbank homestead – photo at left is from the Reunion book, the photo at right was taken March 2019. Note the trees on the hill in the background – this is the same view of the homestead years ago and now.

We visited the ruins of the old homestead and established (without any doubts) that the homestead walls are still standing, almost as solid as the day they were built. The roof is gone, as are the floor and windows, however the magnificent location and atmosphere of that old homestead still remains and we could almost hear the sounds of children playing, or Edwin playing his music where the front verandah once stood. It was easy to imagine where the family sat to enjoy the beautiful warm

summer evenings looking out over the Tumut river plains with those magnificent corn crops waiving in the breeze. The separate kitchen and laundry still stand at the rear of the home and the fireplaces for each of the five rooms of the main home are still intact.



The homestead front in 1990 shown left and the homestead front in March 2019 shown right. The roof and verandah are gone but the three front room entrances are visible with the three chimneys for the fireplaces in each room.



This photo is taken of the right side of the home showing clearly the separate kitchen and wash-room at the rear (right in this photo). There is a tree growing inside one of the rear two rooms of the main home.

ⁱ William Marion Sanders purchased 100 acres at Tarrabandra for 100 pounds at an auction of Crown Land on 9th March 1866. Will's name remains on the Parish land maps as he was the original freehold owner.

ⁱⁱ The Gundagai Times newspaper of Sat 11 Sep 1869, page 2 records the death of D.M.Elliott at the house of Mr. W. Sanders of Tarrabandra. Elliott was living with the Sanders at the time. This is evidence that Will and Sarah had a home at Tarrabandra – presumably the homestead “Fernbank” that John and Catherine later lived in when they purchased the property of Will in March 1873. They wouldn't have lived on the 100 acres of river flats as it was flood-prone.

ⁱⁱⁱ John Hargreaves made a transfer of Conditional Purchase (CP) of the 100, 80 and 60 acre properties listed and may have transferred them from Will Sanders at the time of purchase of the freehold land. Will may have acquired them by transfer of conditional purchase from the original conditional purchase owner - John Syphers when he died in 1869. This provided him formal access to the homestead “Fernbank”. Source: Sale of the properties by John Hargreaves to Archibald Pile Stuckey in November 1908 – document 567, book 872, NSW Lands Department.

^{iv} Death of John Syphers – Empire (Sydney) newspaper Thursday 24th December 1863, page 8.

^v Forfeited Conditional Purchases – Tumut & Adelong newspaper Monday 12th November 1866, page 2.

^{vi} The advertisement for Will's property of Fernbank in 1873 list he owned 340 acres of land. This means he acquired Syphers land sometime between 1866 and 1873. It also listed the Fernbank homestead with a perfect description of what it was like with a detached kitchen.

vii When John sold his 897 acre property to Archibald Pyle Stuckey in 1908 the sale documents list the individual blocks of land and original owners and acquisition dates.

viii Adelong and Tumut Express Newspaper Friday 28th August 1908, page 2.