

# HERITAGE PLACE

**NAME OF PLACE:** KONONG HOMESTEAD

**ADDRESS/LOCATION OF PLACE:** Coleraine-Edenhope Road KONONG WOOTONG

**STUDY NUMBER:** 127

**HERITAGE OVERLAY NUMBER:**

**OTHER NAME/S OF PLACE:** WEST KONONGWOOTONG

**PRECINCT:** outside

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA:** Southern Grampians Shire

**PARISH:** PARISH OF KONONG WOOTONG

**ACCESS DESCRIPTION:**

CFA 430 B7; VicRoads 72 C3; located on the east side of the Coleraine-Edenhope Road about 10.0km north of Coleraine.

**SIGNIFICANCE RATING:** Local



Konong Homestead, Coleraine - Edenhope Road, Konongwootong.

**Image Date:** 26/03/02

**EXTENT OF LISTING:**

To the extent of: 1. All the building and all of the garden and all of the land, excluding the interiors.

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## **PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:**

The present homestead building is a single storey sandstone structure with a hipped slate roof. The distinctive stone is typical of the area and is the same as that used at Konongwootong Creek homestead and Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Coleraine. The building is vernacular in its style with almost no ornament or special detailing apart from the dated keystone. It appears to have been a simple four-room cottage, symmetrical about a central passage. What may have been the front door has a rectangular fan light over it. The door is now glazed in the upper panels. The windows are simple double hung sashes. There is a large chimney and baker's oven associated with the present kitchen. Although the interiors have been altered and modernised, there are surviving Edwardian decorative details internally. A new stone wing has been added recently

Only one mature tree survives near the house, an English Oak, (*Quercus robur*) The dam used as a decorative water feature in Buvelot's painting of the house survives.

## **HISTORY:**

Three brothers, William, George and James Whyte, took up Koonongwootong, the original squatting run to the north of Coleraine, in 1840, as licence No. 303 in the Portland Bay district (B&K, 229). When it was gazetted in early 1849, it comprised 57,000 acres, ran 25,000 sheep and had been occupied since 1844 by William and George Whyte (Spreadborough, #303). It was located on the Koroite or Bryan's Creek about 6.5 kms north of Coleraine. In 1849, it was subdivided into Koonong Wootong, the Wilderness and Melville Forest when James and George Whyte held the licence. James and a John Whyte held the licence in 1852 and one year later it was transferred to John and David Carfrae (B&K, 42).

The Carfrae brothers subdivided the run further into East and West. The licence for West Koonong Wootong passed to William Swan in 1857. This licence was cancelled in 1870. The modern spelling of the name is Konongwootong dates from at least 1868 when it appears on a map of 'Victoria, including the Pastoral Runs with alterations' prepared by W. Owen. The map shows a homestead on the north bank of a tributary of the Konongwootong Creek. The original Konong Wootong homestead site is indicated at West Konongwootong.

William Swan had previously held the Ardgarten and Nangeela runs (B&K, 146). He was a councillor of Wannon Shire for several years. A strong supporter of the Presbyterian Church, he presented the land on which the Church and Manse were built in Coleraine. The crest attributed to the Swan Family shows a "hand holding a spear, in hand all ppr." (Henderson, 319). He had married Margaret McMurrick (or McMurrich), possibly before arriving in Australia. They had twin boys, Christian and John, born at Glenormiston whose births were registered at the Portland Presbyterian Church in 1843 (VPI, Reg. No 33930, 33931 and 863 and 864). Two daughters, Ann and Isabella, and a son James were also born at Glenormiston in 1846, 1847 and 1849 (VPI, Reg. No 34041 and 8032, 8179, 8553). Two daughters, Margaret and Mary, were born at Ardgarten in 1852 and 1853 (VPI, Reg. No. 34305, 9841). Their daughters, Catherine and Jessie were born after the family had moved to Konongwootong in 1858 and 1859 (VPI, Reg. No. 3088, 20195). Their last child, Duncan Donald was born at Konongwootong in 1862 (VPI, Reg. No. 13571). Margaret Swan died in 1867 aged 54 (VPI, Reg. No. 10040).

After his first wife died, William Swan married his niece who was many years his junior. They went overseas but, after only 3 months of marriage, William Swan died in Scotland, aged 54 (Henderson, 319). He left four sons and six or seven daughters. Because he died intestate there was some debate regarding the settling of his estate. He is said to have disowned his eldest son John, for reasons unknown. The Coleraine Albion on the 16th April 1936, noted "William Swan, third son of the late William Swan of Konongwootong passed away on 6th inst. of this month at Perth aged 81. An uncle of J. D. Ferrier and Mrs. J. B. Hamilton who are still well known residents in this district. There was a large family, but now there is only one surviving member, Mrs. J. T Edgar". This is confusing because there is no son called "William" is registered as born to William and Margaret Swan, none registered as born in or around 1855, and their third son was called "James".

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The property went to William Swan's third daughter, Margaret, and her husband, Dr. Robert Johnston who were married in 1876 (Sutherland, pers. comm.; VPI, Reg. No. 3182). Dr Johnston, who was born in Aberdeenshire, was not a practicing doctor but a 'gentleman doctor'. Mrs. Johnston remained on the property after her husband died. She was strongly opposed to the Closer Settlement Acts. Local rumour suggests that those who fought the Acts (and possibly those who were Catholic) had their properties broken up into smaller blocks. While this may have been the case at Konongwootong, there was also such an excellent supply of water from numerous springs that it lent itself to Closer Settlement. The two 'estates' created were North and South Konongwootong. All of the blocks were small, from 30 to 1,000 acres, becoming mostly dairy farms. The building fell into serious disrepair in the mid-twentieth century when it was unoccupied. James Edward Moyles, the owner of Konongwootong after the Second World War, died in 1962. His wife sold the land to Raymond and Elizabeth Sutherland who passed the land to their son Alistair and his wife Jessica, some years later.

The exact date of construction of the original homestead has not been determined but it may not have been started until well after 1857. It was stone and wood and, presumably, conventional in its scale and form. It was pulled down between 1905 and 09 (Sutherland, pers. comm.). The surviving house is the original servants' quarters of four small rooms. It has an elaborate keystone dated 1866 noting the ownership of William Swan by his initials on either side of a stylised flower. A painting of the original homestead complex by Louis Buvelot shows it sited looking over the water body to the west of current homestead. There are black swans on the water, presumably a reference to the owner's name. Abraham Louis Buvelot is described as being the 'Grandfather of Australian Art' (McCulloch, 108). He arrived in Australia from Switzerland in 1865 at the age of 51, after being ordered to emigrate to a warmer climate for reasons of poor health. Although he had enjoyed a very successful career as a painter in Europe and South America, he set up a photography shop in Melbourne where he was discovered by the art critic for the Argus, James Smith (ibid., 108). Buvelot's painting was typical of the landscapes produced in the European style, and he is credited with being the main source of inspiration to the founders of the Heidelberg School (ibid.). Buvelot painted his famous 'Waterpool at Coleraine' in 1871, when according to McGaffin, William Swan was the owner of that land, formerly Koroite Homestead. It is possible that Buvelot may have stayed with Swan at Konongwootong on one of his extensive sketching tours of the Western District.

## **THEMATIC CONTEXT:**

- 3. Developing local, regional and national economies
- 3.5 Developing primary production
  - 3.5.1 Grazing stock
  - 3.5.3 Developing agricultural industries

- 5 Working
- 5.8 Working on the land

## **CONDITION:**

Good

## **INTEGRITY:**

Fair degree of integrity

## **STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:**

What is Significant?

The present Konong Homestead is the surviving staff quarters for the West Konongwootong homestead, demolished at the beginning of the twentieth century. Originally a plain four-room cottage, with a hipped slate roof, it was built in 1866 of local sandstone for William Swan who had bought the squatting licence in 1857. It

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is of special interest because it appears in a painting of the original complex by Louis Buvelot who may have stayed there when he was painting his famous and prize-winning work, 'Waterhole at Coleraine' in 1871 which was purchased immediately by the National Gallery of Victoria. The house, which had fallen into serious disrepair after the Second World War, is now altered and extended and is in very good condition.

How is it significant?

Konong Homestead is of historical and cultural significance for the Southern Grampians Shire and the community of Coleraine.

Why is it Significant?

Konong Homestead is of historical significance as a remnant of the great Konongwootong squatting run established by the Whyte brothers and for its association with the Swan family. It is of cultural significance for its association with Louis Buvelot and his paintings of the homestead and 'Coleraine Waterhole'.

## COMPARISON:

096 Audley Homestead Complex, Branxholme-Byaduk Road Road, Branxholme

**ASSESSED BY:** TFH

**ASSESSMENT DATE:**

16-Dec-03

## EXISTING LISTINGS:

## HERITAGE STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS:

Include in VHR  Include in RNE  Include in Local Planning Scheme

No Recommendations for Inclusions

## REFERENCES:

Author	Title	Year	Page
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Allan McCulloch	Encyclopedia of Australian Art	1977	108-9
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Don Garden	Hamilton A Western District History	1984	
G. McGaffin	The Wannon Shire Centenary 1872-1972, A Brief History of the Shire of Wannon	1972	24-5
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Jessica Sutherland	Personal Communication 20/11/02	2002	
Paul de Serville	Pounds and Pedigrees	1991	
R V Billis and A S Kenyon	Pastoral Pioneers of Port Phillip	1974	var.
Robert Spreadborough & Hugh Anderson	Victorian Squatters	1983	
Robert. P. Whitworth	Bailliere's Victorian Gazetteer and Road Guide, containing the most recent and accurate information as to every place in the colony	1865	212