



THE KILN

Issue 18
June 2008



www.vicnet.net.au/~fofkk

Caring for the Environment and our Cultural Heritage

HI FOLKS,

A Message from our immediate past President

An end of an era is upon us. I have been associated with FOKK since 2000. During that time I have been honoured to hold the office of Property Officer and later President for the last two and a half years. Within that time there have been many projects undertaken by the FOKK. The first that springs to mind was the Water Wheel, along with the bridge on Thornton Track. We also erected horse yards, fencing, replaced the flue in the main hut, replaced a ceiling in another hut and did tree planting, landscaping and many other things I cannot remember. We were lucky to acquire some gas producers of many different styles and uses. One such gas producer, which was picked up from Nathalia, was used to irrigate the fields which grew wheat to be sent over to feed the "Rats of Tobruk" in WW2. Such historic artefacts like these are truly a rare and valuable asset to the Kiln.

On my journey I have met many people from all walks of life, who banded together and helped make the Kiln what it is today. Valuable friendships have been made and never forgotten.

This year we have been as busy as ever, replacing rails on the hut fences, tree planting. We have installed interpretation boards to assist our visitors with important historic information. Alfred has worked tirelessly to receive various grants which assisted in maintenance and the purchase of a camera to keep records of daily activities and events.

Horse riders can breathe a sigh of relief as a new toilet will be erected along Scout Camp Track. Whew! Jason Wood MP rang me to touch base on what was happening around the Kiln. Jason is very enthusiastic about the Kiln due to being involved with the scouts in earlier years. He remarked how impressed he was with the work carried out by our ageing team on a shoe string budget!

The Festival this year was a huge success, due to our committee and members. We had the highest crowd attendance on record. Red Cross did a fabulous job in catering for the visitors. Our participants excelled in entertaining the public plus we had some new exhibits which delighted everybody. The bank robbery, a favourite with the visitors, was led by a new member of the gang, Shane from Yellingbo, who fitted right into the role acting along side the legendary Mad Molly. We are waiting the Academy's to call us! This festival was made possible due to the assistance of Parks Victoria who support us. A special mention must be made of Ralph Angelico and Rod Stevens who assisted in making the day run smoothly.

We were delighted that Bernice Dowling from Parks could attend to enjoy the day. Bernice was overwhelmed with our efforts and congratulated FOKK.

It is with regret that I must step down from my presidential role as I have moved residence. However I will still be involved with ongoing works and the festival next year. I thank each and every one of you who have supported me. □

Thanks, Dick Cleary

COMING EVENTS

The Friends of Kurth Kiln meet regularly once a month for a meeting and routine maintenance Working Bee. Our Annual General Meeting in 2008 is scheduled for 11 October. Special Meetings can be called by any committee member at any time should the need arise.

General Meetings / Working Bees on the second Saturday each month starting at 10am:						
July	12	August	9	September	13	
October	11	AGM	November	8	December	13

The date for the 2009 Kurth Kiln Heritage Festival has been set for 19 April

We welcome our new Members: Gary & Lyn Pendlebury; Byron, Vicki and Isabella Kurth, Gary & Leanne Ricardo/Davey; Neil and Lorraine McCluskey, and encourage their participation.

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Membership Form

This Newsletter is published by the Friends of Kurth Kiln: a group of people concerned with the preservation of the heritage in the Kurth Kiln Site.

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RANGER'S REPORT

Thank you from Parks Victoria to Dick and Kerri for your involvement with the Kurth Kiln Friends group over the many years, and especially when Dick was president and Kerri the secretary for the last two and a half years. We wish Dick and Kerri all the best in their new adventure at Woodside.

The recent Kurth Kiln Festival was another success due to the efforts of Friends of Kurth Kiln and especially Dick and Kerri. The Red Cross did a fantastic job at the festival with food and beverage and with a large crowd on the day their effort was well appreciated by Parks Victoria.

The feed back was very positive and Parks Victoria is happy to be involved with the Kurth Kiln Friends again.

Ken Banks is the president until the next annual meeting later this year. Thanks Ken!

The vegetation growth around Kurth Kiln area from the different projects over the years is fantastic and is a credit to the involvement of all the Friends and school groups over this time.

Maintenance work has been carried out on the huts recently and this will be ongoing. The roof capping on the huts was completed and general work on the other roof huts as well. The chimney will be assessed for damage and work carried out in the near future.

Work to be completed by Kurth Kiln Friends in the coming months is the fence maintenance work around the huts and staining the post and rail fence.

EDITORIAL

It was a mighty storm that swept through Melbourne in early April. But by Saturday 5 everything was cleaned up. On Sunday the weather was beautiful; we could not have picked it better for our annual Heritage Festival if we had tried. People turned up in great numbers; some estimated the attendance at over 600. In fact, the Red Cross (thanks for a job well done) said they ran out of some barbeque essentials by about 14:30. The bank-robbery went off without a hitch (not sure this is the right expression here) with a new twist in the never-ending romance between bank teller Molly and Frankie (the charming bank robber) producing more shotgun fireworks.

Our thanks to the many volunteer groups bringing their displays and their activities, adding variety to the festival. A special thanks to Dick and Kerri for bringing it all together on the day. An A3 festival poster in the Kurth Kiln interpretation boxes and on our Internet site tells the story

This year we have applied for funding to bulk-print our promotional brochure, for an Interpretation Board for the site of the Portable Steel Charcoal Kiln in Tonimbuk, and for a Showcase to display some of the larger Kurth Kiln Heritage Machinery to the public.

Our six donated Gas Producers are still in temporary storage, awaiting the outcome of the latest Kurth Kiln Heritage Action Plan. I recommend to you the very relevant Reminiscences of Mr Graeme Tibbett (one of the donors) on page 5 & 6 on "Life without Petrol".

The re-vegetation done last year along the heritage fencing has taken on well and is already outgrowing the protective sleeves everywhere. □

Alfred Klink



A new toilet is replacing the existing toilet on Scout Camp Track. It will be an all steel construction with a 3200 litre septic tank to be installed also.

Hopefully this will lead to more toilets being replaced around Kurth Kiln area.

Good news from the Parks Victoria Gembrook: Andy, Kim and Kali Musgrove have an addition to the family, a boy with the healthy weight of 9lb 8ozs and his name is Flynn. Mum and son are well and Andy enjoying his time off with the family. □

Cheers and Good Health

Ralph Angelico

BUSHWALKS AT KURTH KILN

Many groups come to Kurth Kiln to have a picnic and to enjoy the natural environment. Bushwalking is an excellent way to appreciate our precious nature. There are many picturesque bush tracks around Kurth Kiln; both short and long walks to match people's expectation and time frames.



Often groups are happy to have someone from the Friends Group help them with a route and tell them about the cultural history of Kurth Kiln. The Friends of Kurth Kiln are always delighted to give a talk about the Kiln and its history, help recce a walk and/or join in the walk. □

For further information please ring Ursula on 5967 4201.

AROUND THE KILN

An historic occasion, four Generations of Kurth involved with Kurth Kiln.

Two of Professor Ernest Edgar Kurth children, Dorothy and Dudley are members of the Friends of Kurth Kiln group.

On 13 January Dorothy Kurth brought Dudley's son Byron, together with his wife Vicki and daughter Isabella to visit Kurth Kiln. It was Byron, Vicky and Isabella's first visit to Kurth Kiln as they reside in Queensland.

The young family was very interested in the historic Kiln Byron's grandfather had built, how it operated and why the site was chosen. They looked at the huts and the artefacts and were interested in the work the Friends Group does.

Dorothy told stories of the family's visit to Kurth Kiln around the 1970's.

On the day Byron, Vicki and Isabella all joined the friends group. We felt it was an historic occasion, as Isabella, aged ten, is the fourth generation of the Kurth family to be involved with Kurth Kiln.



Dorothy, Byron, Isabella and Vicki Kurth

Dorothy, who lives in Victoria, regularly comes to the Heritage Festival, sometimes together with Dudley, who also lives in Queensland. Dorothy is interested in researching the Kurth Family history and both she and Dudley have contributed previous articles to the "Kiln" newsletter.

After the visit Isabella wrote the following story:

My Trip to the Kurth Kiln

In January this year, when we were down from Port Douglas holidaying in Melbourne, my family, friends and I went to my great grandpas Kiln. At the park we all got photos next to the kiln and had lunch in the display centre. After that the Klinks showed us around the huts. I had never met my great grandfather so I thought that at it was pretty neat that I was standing right next to his Kiln that no one else had invented before. I greatly appreciate the work that the Friends of the Kurth Kiln have put into making this place so special. I am looking forward to coming back and camping with all my friends and family. I would just say another thank-you to the Friends of Kurth Kiln for keeping my great grandpas memory alive, and to my great auntie Dorothy for taking me there.

□

By Bella Kurth, 10



Isabella filling out the membership form



Kurth Kiln, a picturesque place to get married.

Kurth Kiln is becoming a popular place not only for taking wedding photos, but also having the wedding ceremony and reception there.

Kim and Rex married at Kurth Kiln on Saturday 29 December. The heavens smiled on them with bright sunlight. They took their vows in the caretaker's compound, with family and many friends looking on.

Being keen campers, they had opted to also have the reception at Kurth Kiln. Marquees had been erected and the wedding meal cooked in camp ovens.

Kim and Rex choose to spend their honeymoon camping at Kurth Kiln.

When they said good-bye, they donated four of the small tables.

AMONGST FRIENDS

The Friends of Kurth Kiln were invited to participate in a day-long Community Seminar-Forum Day

“Conserving our Landscapes in a Changing World”

A Shire of Yarra Ranges Forum in Yarra Glen 6 June 2008



Katie Jacobson

Katie Jacobson, Yarra Ranges Landcare Facilitator organised the Community Forum

After the welcome Alison Laing, CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems (Canberra) spoke about the changing climate and of the many alternative management practices we will need to adopt.



Alison Laing

During the morning we heard Dr. Roger Jones, Principal Research Scientist with the Centre for Australian Weather and Climate change, concluding with immediate actions which should be taken:

- Identifying shared risks between climate, fragmentation, hydrology etc.
- Expert mapping of change pressures on large systems,
- Active monitoring, testing and observing change processes
- Large scale re-vegetation such as direct seeding
- Change from conservation to stewardship model
- Significant new investment in knowledge and management
- Invest in biodiversity in a planned manner .



Dr. Roger Jones

Dr. KS Tan and Carolyn Tsioulos, Melbourne Water, Urban Water Planning team, spoke about water and sewage management. Their adaptation proposals were:

- Monitoring waterways
- Fencing waterways
- Provision of shade refuges and habitat along waterways
- Improved bank stabilisation
- Review wetlands design requirements
- Investigate more water efficient land management practices
- Decentralised or underground water quality treatment
- Research into impacts of bio-diversity.



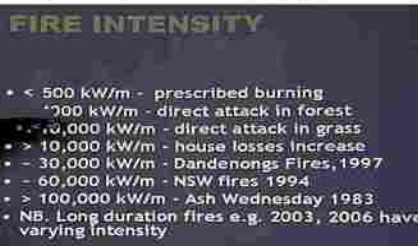
Dr KS Tan



Carolyn Tsioulos

Owen Gooding CFA, Community Safety team and Anthony Hester, Parks Victoria, spoke about Fire Ecology. They listed the following challenges for the future:

- Will we need to increase prescribed burn off?
- What are we trying to protect?
- What are the risks of burning to not burning?
- Do we have to put out all fires?
- Do we need an acceptance of fire as normal?

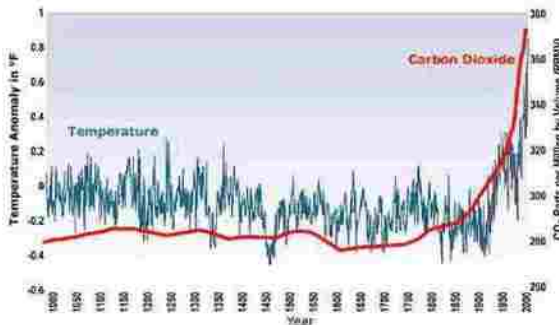


Owen Gooding



Anthony Hester

All graphs shown global warming linked to increases in Greenhouse gases at an alarming rate (see below).



The lunch break in the Club Room with its picturesque panoramic view (see above) was a relaxing interlude in the feature-packed schedule of the day. It also gave an opportunity to mingle and a chance to discuss the various issues with the presenters and other participants.

The afternoon session began with Ian Penrose, Yarra Riverkeeper Association, talking about the Yarra. Our precious Yarra is suffering from urban expansion, polluted waters and loss of flows. Ian's aim is to improve our understanding of the problem, and an appreciation of the Yarra – its delights as well as its plights, so that all of us can look after it better. “Go out and enjoy the river, treasure and value it, tell other people of your passion for the river”.



Ian Penrose

During the Forum Workshops “The Next Steps”, Ian Penrose’s theme proved a good start: Be passionate in your efforts to defend the bush, the environment, the cultural heritage or whatever you are volunteering for. It is a motivating way to pass on your message about your concern for the environment. In seven groups the participants debated individual concerns and filled numerous butcher-sheets with notes.

The Friends of Kurth Kiln sincerely thank the Shire of Yarra Ranges for organising the friendly and highly informative forum.

REFLECTIONS

Gas Producer Reminiscences

by Graeme Tibbett © 28 February 2008

Mr. Graeme Tibbett has given a well preserved Gas Producer Unit on permanent loan to Kurth Kiln for the proposed Gas Producer Display. Many visitors show an interest in the Gas Producer Collection, which is indeed a great asset, when showing schools and other groups around the kiln site.

On Thursday 21 February, members of the Friends Group attended when Mr. Don Bartlett, President of Engineering Heritage Victoria, gave a presentation on "Producer Gas and the Australian Motorist". Mr Tibbett, a member of that organisation, kindly agreed to write the Gas Producer Reminiscences below.



Memories of my war time experience of travelling with these devices.

My first vehicle fitted with a NASCO model, was a 1926 Chrysler 60 Tourer. The unit was mounted on a heavy carrier attached to the back of the vehicle. It consisted of a hopper, which from memory was about 2 feet square and about 3 feet high. The air was admitted at the side of the hopper about 5–6 inches above the bottom through a fitting known as a tuyere (pronounced TWEE-ER) which was made of some ceramic material somewhat akin to fire bricks used in furnaces.

There was a fairly heavy round lid on top through which the charcoal was loaded and it was clamped down by a toggle device onto a seal made from asbestos rope. The lid had to be airtight and there had to be no other leaks as any ingress of air anywhere else but through the tuyere, would cause the fire to go towards the leak and burn the side out of the hopper.

The fire itself was not very large and was concentrated around the tuyere and as it burned the charcoal, so further charcoal would feed down from the hopper. The fire produced gas and ash, and if the charcoal was of low grade and contained impurities, hard slag was formed and this had to be removed from time to time from an ash trap at the bottom through an airtight trapdoor.

On the side of the unit was a gas filter through which the gas was passed to remove as much grit as possible before it was fed into the engine through a "T" fitting, with a butterfly valve usually fitted under the normal carburetor.

The filter on my first unit consisted of, I think, four white felt bags over wire frames. They were about 12 inches by 24 inches by 1¼ inches thick and the gas passed from the outside to the inside of the bags. Dust was collected and fell into the ash trap. The gas hose from the unit to the engine was rubber, about 1½ inches in diameter.

To operate, the hopper was filled through the top opening with charcoal, the lid locked down and the motor started on petrol. The gas valve in the "T" fitting was cracked open then a piece of wire with a rag tied on the end was dipped in kerosene and lit and pushed into the tuyere where the flame was sucked into the charcoal and ignited it.

One then got into the vehicle, and with the judicious use of the accelerator, "T" valve and choke, gas would be drawn into the engine and then the petrol would be shut off and everything was ready to go. This procedure took about 13 minutes.

Later models used an electric blower to start the process and so some petrol was saved. Here something needs to be said about filters. They were necessary of course to remove grit, but they restricted gas flow. In my experience the motor only produced about 60–70 per cent of the normal petrol engine, even if the gas unit was working at 100%, due to lower thermal efficiency of gas compared to petrol. So filters needed to be as unrestricted as possible. Of course, if they were too unrestricted, the motor wore out faster.

There were other factors that reduced the efficiency of the whole system. First, the charcoal quality varied markedly for various reasons; such as, the wood it was made from, the method in which it was made, amount of moisture it contained, size of the pieces, etc.

Red gum appeared to be one of the best, but every farmer for miles around got into the act of making 'charcoal' and some used any old wood that was handy.

If charcoal had a lot of moisture in it, this was passed through the system and filters made of felt soaked it up and swelled as felt will when wet, and stopped gas getting through. Some filters using oiled sisal were not affected so much but were not so efficient at dust removal. Things weren't meant to be easy!

The charcoal was available at-most service stations in old potato sacks at 10/- (\$1.00). If you needed to run any distance in the country where garages were few you then had to carry one or two bags on the running boards or mudguards, or wherever they would fit.

After driving for some time all the charcoal in the hopper would be consumed so it had to be refilled. This was helped if you could find a downhill run, as after refilling you could get the gas through again by coasting down in top gear and drawing the gas through the system, so would not need to use petrol again.

Keep in mind that petrol was rationed at that time to about 1 gallon per month and 1 gallon every two months for a motorcycle, so one saved as much as possible.

The refilling operation meant that the top lid was unlocked after the motor was shut off. You then stepped back for about a minute, because there was gas in the hopper, which would ignite in a loud whoosh through the top opening.

Many people lost eyebrows, the front of their hair etc, through looking in to see how much fuel was left, too early. You then tipped the bag of charcoal in and locked the lid again. You never wore good clothes in those days

as the tipping exercise released a lot of sooty black dust.

The advantage of using gas producers was that at least you got some use out of your vehicle. The disadvantages were if it was dirty, and the loss of power, particularly on hills. I got over that by mounting a one gallon tin on the firewall of the scuttle for petrol to use to start the motor, and filling the petrol tank with power kerosene to run the motor till the gas came through.

I had two accelerator pedals on the floor, one for gas, and one for power kerosene so I could boost the car over hills by using both pedals. The authorities, of course, at that time frowned upon the use of kerosene. (And probably still do ?)

My second car was a 1931 Oakland V8 sedan. I made the GPU myself and mounted it on a one-wheel trailer. I made the tuyere out of steel but it was water cooled to stop it burning out in the intense heat of the fire.

I later wondered if a motor bike would work on gas, so I bought a Harley Davidson outfit for 5 pounds (\$10.00 – I wish I still had it today) and made a small unit to go on the back of the sidecar. The hopper was a five gallon drum modified to suit. The filter was one of Mother's old sugar canisters, with a couple of quarts of old engine oil in the bottom, into which the incoming gas threw its heavy particles, then went up through some oily sisal. The Harley went well and I rode it from Brunswick to Maribyrnong every day to work. It eventually came to a sad end one day when, going through central Melbourne, for some reason it backfired, and blew the bottom out of the filter and spread oil all over Elizabeth Street.

I lived in Bendigo for some time during the war years and took up to seven passengers in the Chrysler to Melbourne and back each weekend for 25 shillings (\$2.50) each. I would use two bags of charcoal each way at 10 shillings (\$1.00) each. As the vehicle was only a five-seater (plus driver) I put two 5 gallon drums with cushions on the floor for the extra two passengers.

Incidentally, I would travel from Bendigo to Melbourne and see only 2-3 other vehicles at night on the run except in towns such as Kyneton, Woodend, etc. Things have changed; with the freeways and the Calder Highway

upgrades, the distance then was 100 miles and took between 3-4 hours on a good run.

A couple of other things come to mind of experiences I had during these times:

I was travelling to Bendigo (where I lived at the time) at night with a mate in his Ford Coupe, about a 1935 model, and we had to refill the hopper about 5-6 miles from Kyneton. When he was locking the top of the lid down, the locking toggle broke and as we couldn't afford any air leaks, I sat on top of the hopper until we got to Kyneton and got it fixed.

On one of the trips from Bendigo to Melbourne at night I noticed in the rear view mirror a lot of glowing red spots, on the road behind me, so I stopped and found a bag of charcoal I had tied on the frame of the burner was well alight, and dropping burning lumps of charcoal along the highway.

Sometimes the charcoal contained a lot of excess moisture and would stop the felt filters from working as efficiently as they should. So quite a few times I have stopped on the side of the road, and dumped the whole of the hopper load on the ground and refilled with fresh charcoal. I always picked a place that was very clean, and I don't think I started any bush fires.

Incidentally, Producer Gas is CO, i.e. carbon monoxide which is very toxic. One night after arriving at Bendigo about 1:00am, I was getting a bit tired and after parking the car in the garage I just relaxed in my car and went to sleep. Suddenly I found myself feeling somewhat strange, and got up. I was probably lucky it was not my last sleep.

On one other trip down I had my usual me and seven passengers, and a trailer with a canvas cover over a load of luggage. On the way I saw a sailor hitching a ride and as there were not many other cars on the road, I offered to let him sit in the trailer. This he did, with his back to the wind and his coat collar pulled up. That was before we got to Kyneton. When we got to North Essendon and met the tram tracks, I stopped for the first time since picking him up, and went back to tell him he could catch his tram. He wasn't there, and to this day, despite making some discreet inquiries, I don't know what happened to him. □

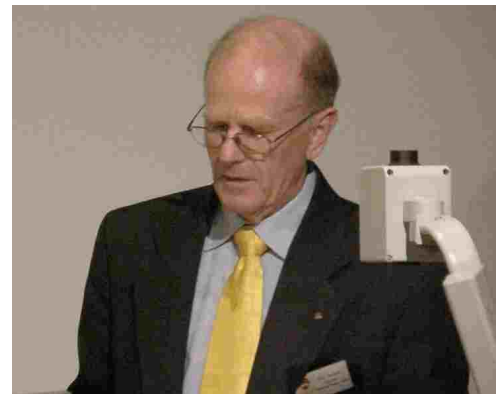
DON BARTLETT, PRESIDENT, ENGINEERING HERITAGE VICTORIA

Don Bartlett's Gas Producer Reminiscences included technical details about Charcoal Production, Gas Producers and Producer Gas, as well as historical data. He spoke about the chemistry of Producer Gas. The ideal charcoal, Don said jokingly, should be compact, free from dust, regular in size, giving a rich gas, free from tars and injurious products. It should not "coke" the generator, should not absorb water, should not soil the cloths, should not have an offensive odour. In short – it doesn't exist!

Some of the historic snapshot data were:

- Petrol was 22pence per gallon in 1920
- 20 pence per gallon in 1938. (Projected \$1.09/litre in 2001).
- 18 pence per gallon in 1956
- Minimum weekly wage in 1939-40 about \$10.00.
- Tests gave 80% savings for Producer Gas over Petrol.
- GPU cost £45-70 in 1939. A new Austin car would cost £250.

The Fuel crisis eased in 1944-45 but for some reason petrol rationing continued long after the war – limited to 180 miles per month – until it was abandoned in 1949 after a High Court appeal. □



PETER CHANDLER REMEMBERS



Mr Chandler came to the Heritage Festival

We first met Mr. Peter Chandler on 27 January, when the Gembrook Market Committee invited the Friends of Kurth Kiln to bring their display to the Market.

Mr. Chandler told us of his recollection of Gas Producers and sent us the following article:

I remember back into the early forties when charcoal was used in so-called Gas Producers as a substitute for petrol. One of the first Gas Producers I remember was installed in one of the Belgrave Taxis, then soon after in the Belgrave U.S. Buses. The Buses travelled each day down to their Depot in Flinders Street, Melbourne and back again all over the Dandenong Ranges.

As this was during World War II, petrol was very scarce. Rationing was introduced in 1941 to control its use, and you had to have Petrol Vouchers to obtain it.

I also remember when the drivers of these buses were due to commence work, they had to "fire up" their Gas Producers with dry wood, then fill up with some coke to produce their gas.

There was always clouds of black smoke before they had sufficient gas to start up their day on the road.

□

Peter Chandler

PORTABLE KILN ON TONIMBUK ROAD

On the side of Tonimbuk Road, deep in the Bunyip State Forest, stands a remarkable steel structure. Somewhat reminiscent of an old bus-stop shelter it has been slowly rusting away in the bush for over 50 years. Do you know what it is? Do you have information who made it and when, and how it was being used?

The general consensus is that it is actually a purpose designed, portable charcoal kiln that may have been part of the early war-time efforts to manufacture charcoal for the motor industry. During the days of petrol rationing, charcoal was used by many in so-called Gas Producers as a substitute for petrol. Constructed from heavy gauge angle iron and steel sheeting, with welded and rivetted joints, the lower sides have now crumbled away and there is no integral floor, which we presume it would have had at one stage. The entrance opening has no door, although heavy anchor points at the door frame suggest a substantial cover. A number of different size rectangular openings in both the sloping sides of the gable roof defy definition.

Badly corroded remnants of steel skids suggest the kiln was originally dragged by bullocks, horses or tractor from site to site to locations with large stands of wood suitable for the manufacture of charcoal.

The Friends of Kurth Kiln have applied for funding for an Interpretation Board to be erected on site, to identify the historic structure and to give the public the available information.

A Cardinia Shire Heritage Study on Heritage Places identifies the site as follows:

- The kiln is thought to have been used in WW II for charcoal burning for Producer Gas as an alternate fuel .
- It was reputedly part of an operation involving Internees camped nearby in Camp Road.
- The *Minark Heritage Victoria* database describes this kiln as "of high scientific and historical significance".
- The c1940 dated kiln is of significance to the Cardinia Shire and potentially to the State of Victoria, because it provides evidence of a particular phase in the development of the timber industry using local trees, and its reputed association with the use of Internee Labour.
- The kiln is one of only two known portable metal charcoal kilns in the State.



Ian Sullivan, Parks Victoria Heritage Coordinator and Ralph Angelico, Parks Victoria Gembrook Friends of Kurth Kiln Liaison Officer inspecting the Tonimbuk Kiln Structure.

□

FRIENDS OF KURTH KILN

a part of the Friends Groups of Parks Victoria

Application for Membership

I / we

M... ..
First Name Last Name

hereby apply for membership in the "Friends of Kurth Kiln Group"

My/our membership category is: (tick one ✓)

A Friend Membership at \$5:00 annual fee

A Group / Fam. Membership at \$10:00 annual fee.

My/our current address is

City State Postcode

Telephone Fax

E-mail

Signature Date / / 2007

The following details are helpful in the administration of the Group and for future reference. You may furnish this information at your discretion:

Occupation/Profession

Hobbies age

Marital status: married single other

Spouse's Name

Children; under the age of 18

Payment of your Membership contributions can be made at the next Meeting, or included with this application and sent to:

Friends of Kurth Kiln, Post Office Box 169 WOORI YALLOCK Vic. 3139

Telephone/Fax (03) 5967 4201; E-mail: auk@c031.aone.net.au

INTRODUCING FERTILIZERS TO GEMBROOK

During the depression in the early 30's the government subsidised the price of fertilizer so that farmers could afford to top-dress their paddocks. Prior to this the grass paddocks had not known what superphosphates were. Phosphate is the only additive our basalt soil needs to make it a complete soil.

There are odd parts of Australia that are complete soils such as the Darling Downs in Queensland and small areas in New South Wales and Victoria.

When I was a boy, what was referred to as poor land and not worth clearing is now quite productive land since the use of trace elements and a regular supply of superphosphates has been researched. The price of superphosphate was £3.10 a ton, and what was called 6 + 1 (6 parts of superphosphates and one of ammonia), for growing vegetables and potatoes, was £6 per ton.

When my brother-in-law and I started growing potatoes in 1935 for 5 years (before selling out and enlisting in the army for WWII) we used to put a third of a ton of 6 + 1 to the acre for potatoes. In the early 50's, when farmers started irrigating potatoes, they used to put a ton of fertilizer to the acre and by that time the government no longer subsidised the price and it had gone up. During the war the government took over the sale of potatoes and paid the growers £12.10 a ton. All potatoes went to the government store and they would pay you on delivery.

When I came back from the war and started growing potatoes again I was under this system but after a few years it went back to supply and demand. Quite a few years ago when I was buying a lot of fertilizer through Pivot they asked the customers to buy shares in the company, 165 at £3 each, so I bought them, Since then they joined with Inviter, so now it is Inviter-Pivot and the shares are £190 each. You can understand why fertilizer is now \$1,000.00 a ton. Confucius said: "the best fertilizer for the farm is the farmer's own footsteps".

G. Parker

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POSTAGE



To