

PEPPERS MANOR HOUSE

AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE



The history of Peppers Manor House, formerly known as Mount Broughton, runs parallel to the white settlement in this area. The land was originally part of a land grant of 1000 acres to Dr Charles Throsby who was part of a pioneering group sent by Governor Macquarie to open up Jervis Bay. Between 1810 and 1817 he built Glenfield Farm at Liverpool and Throsby Park at Moss Vale, now a restored heritage site in the care of the State Government. Dr Throsby was granted the Mount Broughton land in 1822, then about 700 acres, and named the property 'Wallton'. Following Dr Throsby's death in 1828, the land was inherited by his nephew Charles Throsby Jnr.

In 1824, Charles Throsby Jnr married Elizabeth Broughton, the daughter of William Broughton, a surgeon on the First Fleet. As a two-year old, Elizabeth (Betsey) Broughton was travelling to England with her mother when Maoris attacked the ship in New Zealand. All passengers were murdered with the exception of Betsy and three other passengers. Betsey was rescued about twelve months later by a Scottish timber merchant and taken to Lima where a Peruvian family cared for her. A year later she was placed on another ship and returned to her father in NSW. Elizabeth Broughton, after whom Mount Broughton and the estate was named, married Charles Throsby Jnr at age 17 and had 17 children.

Financial difficulties forced the Throsbys to sell their property in 1874 to Messrs Beit and Gilchrist who subdivided the land and sold it for a quick profit to Henry Edward Kater in 1878. Henry Edward was a pastoralist and this was the beginning of an era that lasted 90 years.

The Kater family first came to Australia in 1839 when Henry Herman Kater arrived in the colony. He was a distinguished scientist who invented both the prismatic compass and the English standard yard. His son Henry Edward built the first substantial home on this estate and used it as a country residence.

Henry Edward was director of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, chairman of the Commercial Banking Co. and director of the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital and in 1889 was appointed to the Legislative Council. His second son, Sir Norman Kater inherited the property in 1924. Sir Norman was a doctor but reluctantly abandoned his medical career to help his father with the family pastoral interests when his elder brother died. He extensively modified and extended the house in about 1926. Modification almost submerged the original house but there is still significant evidence of it in what is now the Music Room, the Games Room, the north east section of the front verandah, the detached servants quarters and Buttery near the new Garden Wing. He retained the basic structure of the north east corner, created the splendid baronial hall and added the second storey.

Room 7 was the housekeeper's quarters, the Elizabeth Broughton suite (Room 10) was the nursery and other upstairs rooms were family and guest bedrooms. What is now the Games

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Room was Sir Norman's bedroom and what is now the Taittinger Bar was two guest bedrooms and a bathroom. Water was very scarce in those days so Sir Norman had the bathtubs drilled in the sides to prevent them being filled too high. The top section of Katers Restaurant was the Billiard Room. Much of the timber work system and joinery was taken from the original house – the cocoa wood door handles, cedar doors and jarrah flooring were imported from America and the house was one of the first to have the American electric press button system. Water was supplied by seven wells and tanks and pumped by windmills on the property. The eleven fireplaces are good examples of colonial interior design of about the 1870s and those featuring fancy brickwork were constructed using bricks made on the estate. The stable block of slab and hand sawn weather-board construction probably dates from the 1870s and the sandstock brick coach house, complete with coachman's quarters and original shingle roof (now under iron) appears to be from the 1850s.

Sir Norman Kater was the last, along with Lady Lloyd-Jones of neighbouring 'Summerlees' to dispense with the family carriage, resplendent with the two coachmen in red uniforms, in the early 1920's and also the first in the district to own a Rolls Royce motor car. He is said to have stopped the Sydney to Melbourne train by waving a red flag when the train came through his property in order to ride to and from Sydney.

Sir Norman Kater died in 1965 and the property was sold to the Chittick brothers who, being only interested in the land, closed the house and the grounds, which quickly fell into disrepair. In 1970, Dr Lucas bought the house, by then on reduced acreage and used it for weekend entertaining for some time. The property then passed through several hands before being opened as a small guesthouse in 1979 by Mr and Mrs Davies.

In 1984 Geoff and Sue O'Reilly purchased the property and began an extensive restoration and renovation programme that included the expansion of accommodation and conference facilities.

In 1993 the estate became part of the Peppers Group and the charm that once was part of the Kater family home has been retained. As our guest, we hope you will relax and enjoy the simple pleasures of country living that each of us at Peppers Manor House treasure so much.