

Mt. Ommaney – a historical timeline

The hill from which the suburb Mt Ommaney takes its name was a known feature of the riverside outer Brisbane area from early days of European settlement.

Dec. 1823: Explorer and surveyor John Oxley landed at the base of Mt Ommaney, climbed the hill and took bearings. He named it 'Green Hills'. See <http://cshsoc.files.wordpress.com/2012/10/john-oxley-amalgamated.pdf>



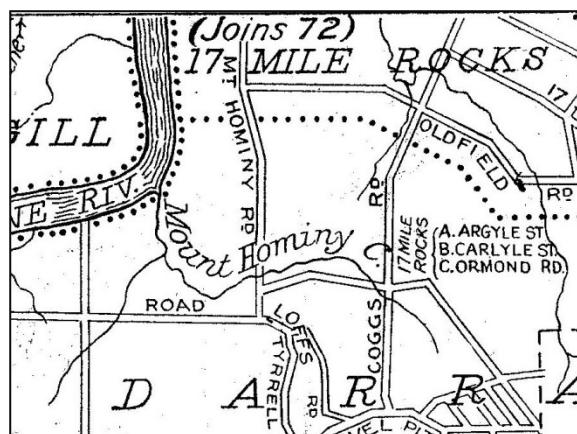
Scene looking up and down river from Mt Ommaney

1846: Change of Name. By this year, the hill had been renamed Mt. Ommaney. The feature was mentioned by this name in a newspaper article about a steamship trip upriver to Ipswich. The reason for this change of name is still being researched but it is clear that the name was in use at least seven years before Dr Simpson's nephew John Mansel Ommaney arrived in Australia and almost nine years before his accidental death.

1850s: First land usage by Europeans. The first known usage by Europeans of the land on Mt. Ommaney was that by Dr. Stephen Simpson of Wolston Estate. He held the land under pastoral leasehold arrangements from 1851. Simpson used his lands for horse-breeding and cattle grazing. His leases were taken over by the next owner of Wolston Estate, Matthew Goggs, in 1860-1.

1863: Another Change of Name - the 'Hominy' period. The spelling 'Hominy' referring to Mt Ommaney appeared on a Survey Plan by surveyor A. P. Lindo in 1863. This spelling was retained in official and common usage until about 1950 when the spelling was changed back to 'Ommaney'. The image from the 1950-51 Refidex illustrates the usage of 'Hominy' but later editions used the 'Ommaney' spelling.

1863-4: Govt sale of Mt Ommaney lands. When the Government cancelled leasehold arrangements and auctioned land as freehold, Matthew Goggs (Simpson's successor at Wolston House) purchased land on south-easterly, southern and south-westerly slopes, including the peak. The Goggs family also undertook pastoral activities, particularly horse breeding and fattening of beef cattle. The land remained part of Wolston Estate until the early 20th century.



The northerly and easterly slopes were sold as small farms, there being several different owners, including the Logan brothers, in the 19th century. Agriculture was the predominant farming activity for most of the 19th century. However, in the Mt Ommaney area it is likely that two of the owners, George and Thomas Logan engaged in timber-getting as well as agriculture. George had earned his living from timber-getting for years prior to taking up farming.



1901-1960: Early 20th century land usage. Agriculture was replaced by mixed farming, including horse-breeding and/or by dairy farming, late in the 19th and early 20th century. Some fruit farming was also undertaken.

1901: Subdivision and marketing of Wolston Estate. The subdivisions of Wolston Estate were sold gradually over many years. The land at the peak and slopes of Mount Ommaney, comprised of original land portions 331 and 332, were marketed as separate parcels of land, as was portion 230 on the southern part of this high ridge and southern and western slopes..

1904 - Portion 331: August Maurer purchased a portion 331 on the northern slopes of Mt Ommaney. He already owned adjacent portions north of portion 331.

1921-1925 - Portion 332: Arthur Maurer's daughter Amelia Moore and her husband acquired the land high on Mt. Hominy (portion 332) in 1921 but in 1925, Archbishop Duhig, the Catholic Archbishop of Brisbane, bought it from the Moores. The purchase was announced by the media (see below). One source – a communication from the then Provincial of the Order of St Augustine – indicates that this purchase was motivated by the possibility of establishing a seminary (to educate and train future priests) at Mt Ommaney. This project was said to have been abandoned in favour of creation of the Banyo seminary.

The Scalia family, an Italian family Scalia who had been brought to Australia by the Catholic Church, lived on the Church's portion 332 but were not earning their living from farming. Mr Scalia had a job and also grew vegetables which he sold by hawking. The house had a cellar made with hewn stone (information from Norm Bremner): years later, only the cellar and a nearby mango tree remained.

PURCHASE OF MOUNT HOMINY.

Mount Hominy, Darra, one of the highest positions on the Brisbane River, with a magnificent panoramic view overlooking practically the largest portion of Brisbane, has been acquired by Dr. Duhig, Archbishop of Brisbane, from Mrs. A. Moore for Catholic Church purposes. The property covers an area of 40 acres, has a large river frontage, is bounded by Mount Hominy Creek, and is opposite to the land given in trust for University purposes. The view obtainable from the property is magnificent. The area is well improved, having been used as a fruit farm for a number of years, and a good dwelling is erected on it. The property was purchased on a walk in walk out basis, and the price paid was in the vicinity of £2000. The sale was effected through the agency of Messrs. T. Gillan and Son.

The Brisbane Courier 21 March 1925

1927 - Portion 230: Brisbane City Council purchased portion 230 from the Goggsses but it was sold to Mr and Mrs Moore in 1934. They held it until 1940 when Edward Matterface bought it.

Another Maurer descendant, Fred Maurer, owned and farmed the low lying land on the southern and western side of Mt Ommaney, the hub of this farm being near the old silo that still stands on the McLeod Golf Course. Ian Marr bought the farm from Fred Maurer in 1940. He had the silo built about 1943. See <http://cshsoc.files.wordpress.com/2012/06/silo-story1.pdf>. Alan Marr also built a dam on Mt Ommaney Creek. He grew sorghum on the flat land nearby.

1924-1931: Establishment of a riverside quarry at Mt Ommaney. Garnet Rock Quarry (also sometimes referred to as Carr's old quarry) operated at Mt. Ommaney, then known as Mt. Hominy. See <http://cshsoc.files.wordpress.com/2012/09/quarry-story.pdf>

1948-59: The Augustinian period. An Order of Catholic priests, the Order of St Augustine, acquired the land formerly owned by the Catholic Archdiocese, along with portion 230 and also Alan Marr's dairy farm. There were plans to build a boarding college and monastery on the land. These plans did not eventuate but the Augustinians maintained the dairy farm, using a resident farm manager, for over 10 years. Read more about the Augustinian activities at Mt Ommaney at the following <https://cshsoc.files.wordpress.com/2018/10/the-augustinians-at-mt-ommaney.pdf>

Recreational excursions to Mt Ommaney. During the 20th century, Mt Ommaney was a destination for recreational excursions as well as for pilgrimages to the Catholic shrine (see above link to the article on the Augustinians). A 1932 article in the *Sports Referee* (see below) recommended it as a destination for hikers,

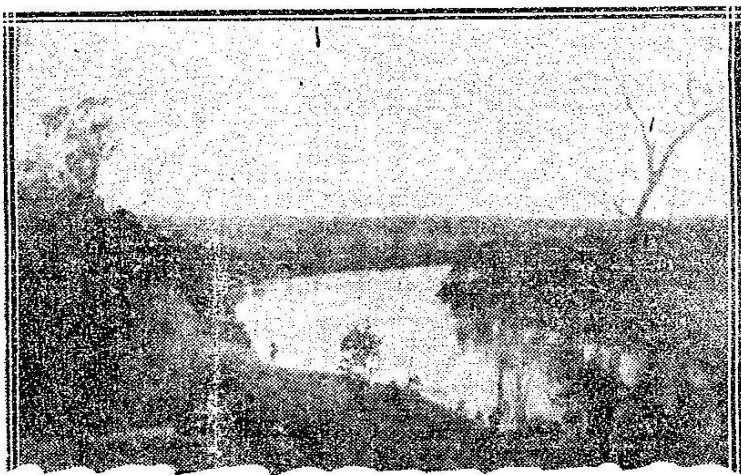
with a return walk from Oxley Railway Station to Darra Railway Station via Mt Ommaney.

AUGUST 20, 1932.—(12.)

Where Shall We Go Hiking?—No. 3.

Mount Hominy and Some Charming River Scenes.

Localising a line from a famous poet, one may well ask: What do we of Brisbane know, who only Brisbane knew? There are scores of beautiful scenes around this metropolis of ours which have never been viewed by the majority of its citizens—places whose very names are unknown to thousands of Brisbane people. The hiking pastime is a means of remedying some of this ignorance.



A charming landscape, as seen from Mt. Hominy, looking south-westwards.

Perhaps it hardly deserves the title of mount, but it provides a stiff climb from the river's edge, and at its crest is obtainable as delightful a panorama as one could wish to see including the main range and the peaks along the southern border—over 100 miles away—Moggill, Brookfield, Sanford, the northern suburbs, and the South Coast district.

For hikers, the best route to this natural grand stand is via Oxley, or Darra, which are on the main road to Inswich. The shortest road from the

1960 onwards: Suburban Development

A reservoir was installed near the summit of Mt Ommaney in 1987, under the Agreement between Centenary Estates Ltd, the developers, and Brisbane City Council. This Brisbane City Council 32.7ml reservoir is supplied by gravity from Mt Crosby and services the approximately 24km² Mt Ommaney water catchment.

Although the suburb Mt Ommaney was formally established in January 1970, the slopes of Mt Ommaney remained undeveloped for a long time. Housing gradually extended uphill toward the summit and on the south-western slopes overlooking McLeod Golf Course in the late 1970s, 1980s and 1990s.

1996 onwards: the Bushland Reserve

1996: Brisbane City Council established a bushland reserve extending from the river and Mt Ommaney Creek near its mouth toward the summit. Originally known as Coolaroo Crescent Park, it was later re-named Mt Ommaney Bushland Reserve. It includes a 1.2 kilometre track created by the Council in 1996 and popular among hikers, joggers and birdwatchers. this was originally named Mount Ommaney Walkway. Greening Australia planted native species.

About the same time, the Jindalee Bushcare Group was formed on the initiative of Councillor Christine Watson to care for the bushland along the walkway.

1999: a dry rainforest regeneration project commenced at the south-western (Westlake) end of the Walkway.



This was due to the vision of then local resident and student, Chris Wiley, now a highly qualified ecologist. The area covered by the regeneration project has gradually expanded, supported initially by the efforts of a number of local volunteers including, on a long-term basis, the Jindalee Bushcare Group, led for many years by Noel and Claire Wilson.

2009 naming of Wiley's Scrub: the highly successful regenerated dry rainforest at the Summit Place entrance to the reserve was named Wiley's Scrub in recognition of Chris Wiley's vision and expertise in spearheading the regeneration efforts as well as his ongoing active contribution to the regeneration.

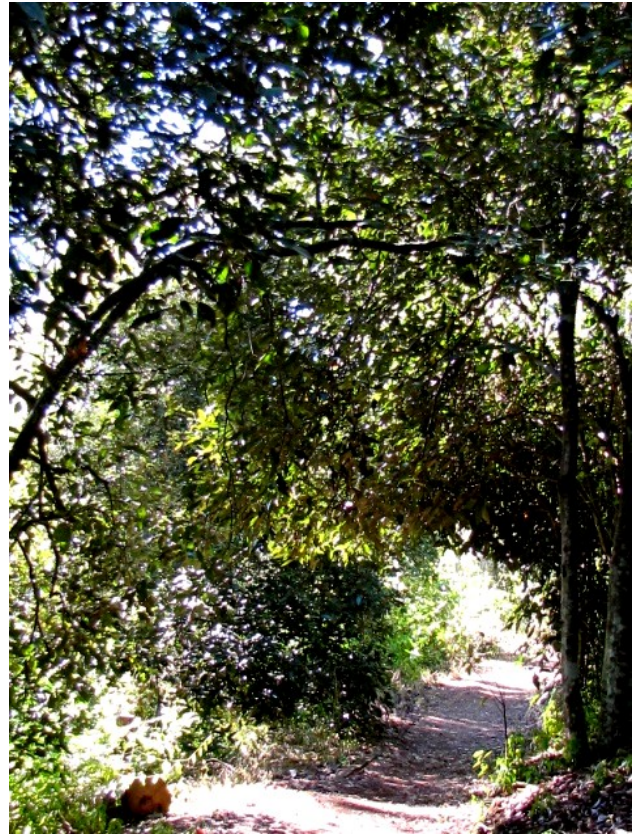
Noel and Claire Wilson at Re-naming Event. 8 September 2018.
Photo courtesy of Caroline Hamilton

Sept. 2018 re-naming of the Mt Ommaney Walkway to become Wilsons Walkway. This change recognized the outstanding efforts of long-term leaders of the Jindalee Bushcare Group, Noel and Claire Wilson, in leading, maintaining and supporting a very active group of volunteers who

looked after the Mt Ommaney Reserve, 1996-2012. Their efforts have resulted in ongoing active support of the reserve by the Jindalee Bushcare Group, now led by Shealagh Walker.

For more information about the re-naming of the walkway, see the article on page 5 of Nov. 2018 newsletter of Centenary and District Environment Action Ltd.

<http://www.cdea.org.au/cdea3/index.php/newsletters-etc/cdea-newsletters/115-cdea-newsletter-november-2018/file>



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