

THE HISTORY OF YERONGA PART 10 DURING THE TIME OF STEPHENS SHIRE

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Martin Buzacott's home, *Yeronga-lea*, saw some dramatic changes during this period. It came onto the market in 1899 after it had witnessed the tragic death at 38 of its then owner, Premier Thomas Byrnes, who had contracted measles then pneumonia and died after a short illness. He had only been in office for six months. With the death of its prominent owner, there were local calls for the house and property, variously said to be between seven to 17 acres, to be made into a public park but this was not taken up by the local divisional board.¹ The house seems to have survived till sometime after World War II since it was mentioned as the venue for a fund-raiser in 1940 and appears on the aerial photography map of Brisbane in 1946.²



Martin Buzacott

The *Brisbane Courier* of Friday 20 June 1902 had a short notice announcing the arrival of the 'Yeronga Water Supply' with E. Denny Day having been awarded the contract from the Board of Waterworks. The supply of running water certainly assisted in reinvigorating land sales through to 1914.

It had taken almost 30 years for an effective local government administration to be established. In 1886 the Stephens Division (about nine square miles including Yeronga) was formed and became the local government, Stephens Shire, in 1903 with its office on Ipswich Road between Victoria Terrace and Junction Terrace.

On 1 October 1925, the Shire of Stephens was abolished, and its area became part of the new City of Brisbane City Council in 1927 which was almost 100 years after the Europeans first rowed up its river. Unfortunately for those interested in the history of this area, most of the files of the Stephens Shire appear to have been burnt in a bonfire out the back of the Council chambers as they prepared to close.

Yeronga has always been a favorite haunt for the cycling fraternity. Kingsley Parade resident, Stephen Glassop, was Secretary of the Brisbane Cycle Club and was such a keen cyclist that he and a friend rode their bikes from Sydney to Brisbane in 1907!³ This ride would be no mean feat even today but, given that at that time most of the roads was mud tracks from almost two months of rain, it was heroic. One need also remember that due to the small populations in the rural areas between major towns on their route, there were then few bridges across many creeks and rivers they encountered. From his kitchen window, Stephen would have looked out toward *Yeronga-lea*, and watched hundreds of cyclists streaming past down Feez Street every day. Stephen would be proud of his Yeronga cycling heritage.

¹ 'Suggested Reserve', *The Telegraph*, Wednesday, 11 March 1903, p. 3.

² *The Courier Mail*, Thursday, 18 April 1940, p. 13; Brisbane City Council PDOnline Interactive Mapping. http://olr13.brisbane.qld.gov.au/website/MN_CP/index.htm?

³ The *Queensland Times* (Saturday 13 April, 1907, p.40) carried a note that Messrs Glassop and Cutcheon 'arrived safely at Brisbane on Monday week after an overland trip from Sydney'. The cyclists declared that they would be pleased to give any information to cyclists contemplating such a trip.