From the Collection – Bills Horse Trough

by Coal Creek Curatorial Officer - 22 October 2009

Coal Creek's "Bills Horse Trough" 2009

Just before the General Store in Coal Creek you may notice a concrete trough tucked discreetly up against a steep, rock retaining wall. On closer inspection you will see the words: Donated by Annis & George Bills, Australia. The trough is one of several hundreds located throughout NSW and Victoria. It is known as a Bills Horse Trough.

There is a web site dedicated to the horse troughs and Annis and George Bills; their backgrounds and the story of how the troughs came to be is repeated for you below:-

> *The story begins in 1859 when George Bills was born in Brighton England. He came to Australia as a young man, and he and his brother established a wire mattress manufacturing business in Kent St Sydney, which operated successfully over many years.*
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> *During his lifetime, he took a keen interest in seeking out cases of human need and gave many thousands of pounds anonymously to assist the needy folk.*
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> *George Bills died 14 Dec 1927 and his wife, Annis died on the 20 Jun 1910. After providing some personal bequests, his will directed the income from the residue of his estate to be used to provide troughs for horses, and for the purpose of preventing cruelty, and alleviating the sufferings of animals in any country.*
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> *More then 500 troughs were erected in Australia mostly in New South Wales and Victoria, and some in overseas countries---England, Ireland, Switzerland [for donkeys] and Japan. Rolca concrete products supplied many hundreds of the troughs in Victoria and New South Wales.*
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> *Troughs were supplied on application to the Bills Trust by Councils, and truckloads of 10 would often leave the Rocla Factory for installation by a team of men in country towns. Most of the troughs were made and supplied in the 1930's in Victoria.*

http://members.iinet.net.au/~geogem/index5.htm