

Courthouse History



PHOTO BY BELAMOUR WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHY

The Olde Courthouse Restaurant was built in 1853 by Francis Edward Bigge who purchased the land at Paxton Street Cleveland on the 17th of May, 1852 for the sum of 13.79.

Francis Bigge was a wealthy land and property owner who also owned a pub in the Cleveland area.

The Olde Courthouse is a superb example of Early Colonial Cottage Architecture with its handmade brick walls and sandstone window sills, which were brought out from England as ballast on the sailing ships.

Francis Bigge rented this cottage to the Colonial Secretary for the purpose of a Court House, and a police lock up at a rental of Forty Pounds per annum (40.00) in 1859.

The Courthouse worked in conjunction with St Helena Island where some of the most violent prisoners were held for trial and transported for sentence to the Olde Courthouse.

Sunday School and Church Services were held here from 1859. It was Cleveland's first place of worship. One of the Sunday school teachers and wife of Francis Bigge, Mrs. Elizabeth Bigge is said to still wander the premises.

She died of hanging, but her spirit has returned to the place where she was the happiest, and although there have been many sightings, she seems to just co-exist peacefully and keeps a watchful eye on the place when we are not here....

The Olde Courthouse stood derelict, neglected and unloved for many years and in 1961 Mr. & Mrs. Edmonds bought it and partly restored it to its former old world charm. The new section was added in 1978 by Harry & Ann Garms who put great effort into finding suitable building materials, so as not to detract from this superb country cottage. After much searching and enquiries they acquired the beautifully coloured Sandstone and Porphyry used to construct the main wall from the foundations of the Old Supreme Court House in George Street Brisbane, which was demolished in 1978.

The Supreme Court House was built in 1875 at a cost of 33,589 at a time when grand buildings were being demolished to make way for new and modern ones. Ann Garms had the foresight to salvage important historical furniture, which is now used to embellish the rooms of The Olde Courthouse.