

Brief History of Kildallon:

Kildallon, in Court Street, Mudgee, was constructed in the late 1880s by pioneer merchant William Kellett. Unfortunately, no information is known on the precise date of construction, the architect nor the builder. The house is typical of substantial two-storeyed houses which are extant in Bathurst or Orange, so it was possibly designed by an architect from either of those two towns. The Kellett family was in residence at Kildallon by 1892, if not earlier.

William Kellett was born in 1836 in Kildallon, County Cavan in Ireland, hence the name of the house. He emigrated to Sydney with his parents and siblings per *United Kingdom* in 1844. In 1859 he came to Mudgee in conjunction with Nicholas Rowell to wind up an insolvent business – The Old Flagstaff Stores – on behalf of merchants Macarthur & Co., but they both decided that they should try to rescue the business and formed a partnership. Nicholas Rowell took up farming after a few years and William became a sole trader. He managed to forge a successful business, so that by the 1880s he could build a grand mansion commensurate with his success.

Kildallon had a large garden with a conservatory and the house was a centre of family life – the Kelletts were a very musical family and also devout Methodists. William moved to Sydney in his retirement in 1911 with his two unmarried daughters, leaving his two sons in charge of the family store. William died in Sydney in 1913, although his funeral was held in Mudgee, much regretted for his philanthropy. The house was left to William Kellett's two daughters, but as they remained living in Sydney until 1942 the house was leased to a series of tenants. The Misses Kellett never seemed to have resumed living at Kildallon, commissioning a cottage in Market Street in which to live.

In late 1944 the Mudgee CWA proposed to use Kildallon as a girl's hostel. A prime mover was Eva Langton, nee Loneragan, of Putta Bucca House, Mudgee, who was President of the Mudgee CWA at the time. The house was modified to accommodate a large group of girls and ultimately additional buildings were constructed on site. The CWA hostel functioned until 1983 when TAFE took over the site.

The buildings on site increased over time, and a variety of community organisations made use of the site. TAFE classes ceased on site in 2018, and the Mid-Western Regional Council acquired the property in 2021. Currently works are under way to accommodate a variety of proposed community uses which involves renovation of Kildallon House, regrettably vandalised in the past few years while vacant.

Regrettably, over time, the Kildallon House lost many of its original features, including the cast iron balustrade on the upper verandah – although the substantial cast iron posts and fringes remain on the ground floor – and marble chimneypieces were stolen from the ground floor. Amazingly, the impressive front door has remained intact.

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