

## A KENEALLY FAMILY CELEBRATION

To celebrate the 90<sup>th</sup> birthday of Don, the grandson of Timothy Keneally, who settled at Gordon and Wyacca in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Don and family members returned to Quorn on 16<sup>th</sup> May.

Timothy arrived in South Australia in 1864 from Newmarket, County Cork, Ireland, and married Bridget McCarthy. Timothy and Bridget bought two blocks of farm land at Gordon and Wyacca, so that when feed ran out on one farm they moved to the other.

In 1895, Timothy died, leaving Bridget with three young boys, Timothy, John and Daniel. Bridget drove the boys in a spring dray to Wyacca, where there was plenty of firewood and a good well. They took with them 70 head of cattle and eight horses. The house was a dugout with a pine and galvanised hut on top. Timothy and John went to school at Wyacca and Daniel to Castle Springs. The family grew wheat in the good years – 1909, 1910, 1916 and 1917 – reaping 1000 bags in 1916.

Timothy and John enlisted in the First World War, and sadly, Timothy was killed on the day



Don Keneally at the family farmhouse at Gordon (now Allumbie Station)

before he was due to meet with John.

John returned to SA and was given a soldier settlement block not far from the family farm at Gordon.

John and his younger brother, Daniel married sisters, Frances and Kathleen Clancy, but Daniel left the area for some years.

John and Frances had five sons. The older boys went to school at Castle Springs, but were required to help their father at home, so their attendance was irregular. John, like many men of his era, could do most things. He built the stone family home, and as the family grew, the boys helped him build extensions, did fencing and farm work. He had a reputation for fixing windmills and worked on properties anywhere from Gordon to Wilpena.

After several bad seasons John came in to Quorn to work, so that he could keep the property going. Eventually the family moved in to Quorn permanently, living in the house on the corner of Pool Street and Oval Road. The youngest son, Jack, stayed on the farm until it was sold.

Don started work at the railways in Quorn at the age of 16, and became a driver. He married Mary Hanna, and bought a house in Lytton Street, North Quorn. Five of their seven children – Patricia, Brenda, Vincent, Josie and Denise were born in Quorn and lived in the same house until late in the 1950s, when they moved to Port Augusta.

On 16<sup>th</sup> May, Don, who is the only living member of his family, returned to Quorn to celebrate his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. He vividly recalled his 30 years driving steam trains – the best years of his life. He remembered how each train had its ‘personality’, and was driven accordingly. He was excited to be given a short ride on the footplate of the train running in Quorn on the day of his party.

The house built by John Keneally is still partly standing and the shearing shed is still in use today. Castle Springs school may be a pile of stones, but the memories remain.