

Heritage Hotel Motel Dorrigo



Every Picture Tells a Story

The Vacant Block of Land

The vacant block of land that started the Heritage Hotel Motel Dorrigo story can be seen in the background of the two photographs below.

The photograph of the war memorial being constructed would have been taken in 1921.

The war memorial was dedicated on 16th April 1921, some four years before the Hotel Dorrigo was built.





Hotel Dorrigo Under Construction

This photograph shows the Hotel Dorrigo under construction with the builders team and Michael Feros in his white shirt and waistcoat. (10th from left).

Hotel Dorrigo - Drying the Laundry

The photograph below shows the debris of the Dunkley & Davis Pioneer Stores that was burnt down on 9th January 1927. It reopened for business in December 1929.

In the background is the Hotel Dorrigo. Note the sheets hanging to dry on the upstairs front verandah.

It rains a lot in Dorrigo. You can not have rain forests without a lot of rain.

In the early years of the hotel's operation there were no clothes dryers or commercial laundry services. The laundry had to be dried on the premises.

Besides the front verandah, Elene Feros used two other methods to dry the laundry.

The hotel kitchen was fitted with clothes lines. After the dinner guests were served the kitchen serving benches were pushed to the side and sheets were strung from the clothes lines across the kitchen. It was the Feros children's job to take the sheets from the laundry basket and hand them to their mother as she stood on a chair to reach the clothes line.

The wood fire combustion stove was fully stocked and provided sufficient heat to dry the sheets over night.

The second drying area used by Elene was in the motor room outside the bar cellar. The motors provided the cooling system for the beer keg cool room. The motors, carrying out this function, generated heat. The motor room was fitted with clothes lines as was the kitchen. The procedures for drying clothes was the same as in the kitchen. The cellar motors provided sufficient heat to dry clothes over night.





The New Wing

The photo above depicts the eastern side of the hotel. The section of the hotel with the verandah was the original 1925 hotel. A section without a verandah was added in 1934.

The addition occurred as the hotel had insufficient rooms for the demands made by customers.



Coming out of the depression, the 1934 construction shows the austerity of the times.

- There was no verandah.
- The 16 bedrooms were the standard 13'6" long but only 9'6" wide. They were only single rooms. The original 1925 rooms varied in width from 11'6" to 14'6".
- The 1925 doors had decorative moldings. The 1934 doors had no decorative molding.
- The 1925 bathrooms were turned into bed rooms. The new doors were the simple 1934 door and the 1925 bathroom doors were reused on the new bathroom in the new wing even though they did not match the surrounding doors.

The new wing, however, had hot and cold water in each room, a larger communal shower room, a bathroom and toilet facilities.

Whilst the 'new wing' was built 75 years ago, it is still called the 'new wing' by the family.

1920s Greek Culture - the Dowry

This photo tells a social history story of Greek migrants to Australia between the two world wars.

The first is the wedding photo of Michael Feros and Elene Haniotis in February 1929.

Elene Haniotis was the oldest child of a family of five girls and one boy.

In Greece in the 1920s for women to marry they had to have a dowry or in Greek, a 'pricka'. As Elene's family were poor there was little prospects of her marrying in Athens.

Michael on the other hand was looking for a Greek bride.



coming from Greece. They fell in love, married and settled in Nowra. Jim operated the Red Rose Cafe in Junction Street. Without a dowry, the three sisters left in Athens, Irene, Elizabeth and Ann, never married. They lived well into their nineties.

Mine Host - Michael Feros

Michael Feros was mine host at Hotel Dorrigo from 1925 to 1969.

He derived a great deal of pleasure serving his clientele.

The photograph below shows Michael drinking with the boys in the public bar — the bar that stretched 55 feet around the corner of the hotel. Long bars were the fashion of the day in 1925, as patrons sat at the bar to drink. The current public bar includes all of the patrons area and service area of the 1925 bar.

The larger ladies lounge is the current service area for all the bars.

The space behind the bar was about as much as the space available for patrons, and the walking distances to serve patrons so great that 5 barmen were needed to keep service up to patrons. The layout of the 1925 public bar and ladies lounges is provided in diagram below.

A mutual cousin arranged the match or 'proxinia'. Elene travelled to Australia and stayed with another cousin in Bowral. After Michael visited three times the parties confirmed the match and the wedding took place on January 29th 1929.

The second photo shows, from the left, Elene, Michael and Elene's second sister Penelope, on the back stairs of Hotel Dorrigo in 1935. The stairs led to a sunken fernery garden. The veranda post on the left is the post in the Bistro near the cutlery bench.

Elene arranged for her sister Penelope to come in 1935.

Elene was worried about where she would find a suitable husband for Penelope in Dorrigo. However, cupid solved the problem. Penelope met Jim Castrisos on the boat

