

WELCOME TO MAYO'S COTTAGE

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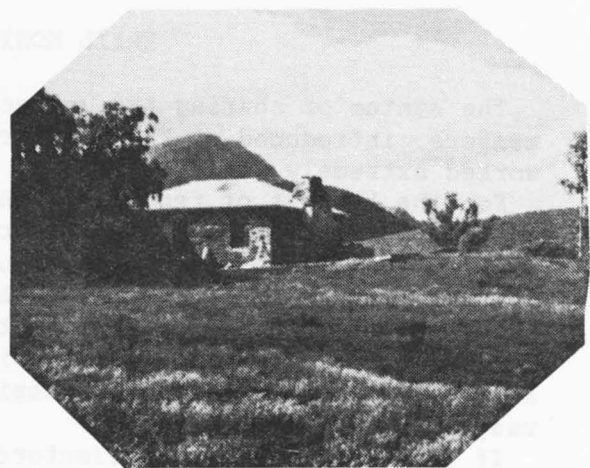
This cottage has been carefully restored for your benefit by seven unemployed and homeless persons from the Wright Court Day Centre in Adelaide. The project was co-ordinated by the Adelaide Central Mission and funded by the Department of Recreation and Sport.

In August, 1988, as a special Bi-Centennial project, the cottage was converted from a crumbling ruin to its present state. All of the persons engaged in the work, which took less than three weeks, had a most uplifting time during the construction. The team included Paul Nicholas as Co-ordinator, Chris Parker and Keith Hall in charge of carpentry and roofing, Maurice King, Andy Holt, Robert Harris Ron Cochrane and Leon Kirvan on stone and slate work. Special thanks to the owners of Wonaka, Peter and Marion McInnes with their children, Malcolm and Erica.

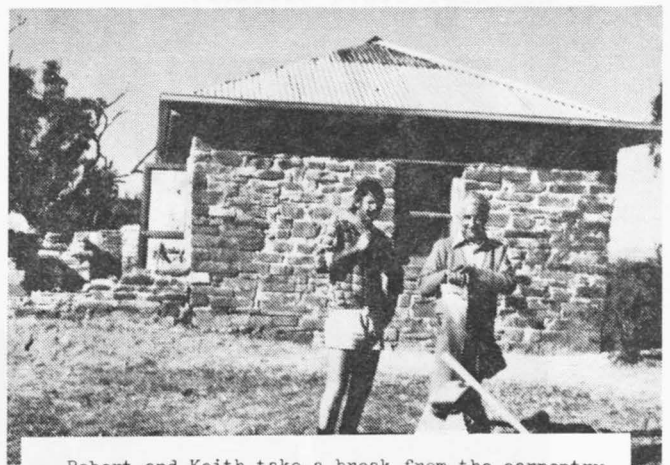
This project marks the first shelter on the Heyden Trail and it significantly demonstrates co-operation between State Government, private property owners and a community service organisation.

We trust you will enjoy your stay in this shelter.

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Maurice and Chris concentrate on stone work



Robert and Keith take a break from the carpentry



Paul sets the key stone

## MAYO'S COTTAGE THE HISTORY BEYOND GOYDER'S LINE

By Malcolm Wehr  
**THE MAYO STORY**  
William Mayo worked as a ganger for the railways for sometime, firstly at Beltana. Then he and his wife Mary moved southwards to Hookina where Evie, the last of eleven children, was born.

Three of the eleven Mayo children died at birth, due to poor medical facilities in the far north of South Australia at the time. Doctors were not available to assist women during child-birth in these areas, often the only help was a woman with an elementary knowledge of midwifery.

It was 1899 when the Mayo family moved to the small humble cottage on the banks of the Wonaka Creek. When they arrived at the homestead in its picturesque setting, their main possession was courage, but they left the property with less.



Ron and Leon keeping up the mortar



Andy looking for the right stone

#### HOUSE RULES

ALL WALKERS ARE WELCOME -- MAKE ROOM TO SHARE IF OTHERS COME ALONG.

THIS IS MEANT FOR SHORT TERM STAYS ONLY -- TWO OR THREE DAYS MAXIMUM.

NO FIREARMS -- NO SHOOTING.

REPLACE ALL FIREWOOD USED FOR NEXT WALKER.

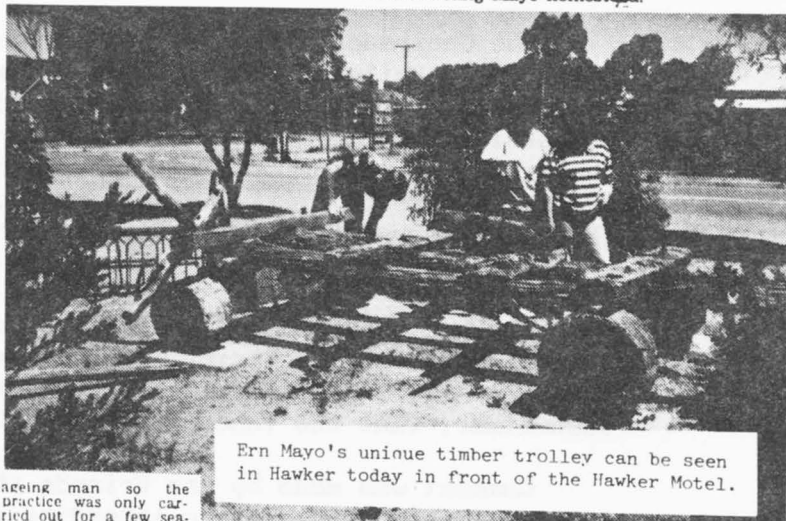
LEAVE COTTAGE IN BETTER AND CLEANER STATE THAN WHEN YOU ARRIVED.

LEAVE NAME, ADDRESS AND COMMENT IN VISITORS BOOK.

In case of emergency, the Wonoka Homestead is  
3.5 km. S.S.W.



The crumbling Mayo homestead.



Ern Mayo's unique timber trolley can be seen in Hawker today in front of the Hawker Motel.

ageing man so the practice was only carried out for a few seasons

As was often the case on farms, the wife and daughters were in charge of milking on the Mayo property. Evie, being the youngest, milked the goats while the older ones helped with the cows. Both the goat's and cow's milk was separated together and the cream was taken to Hawker once a week, from there sent to Adelaide by train. Good returns were received for the cream as the combined quality was high.

When medical aid was needed Mrs Mayo would have to travel to Quorn with a horse and sulky, a long journey in those days.

Life on the banks of the Wonoka must have been pleasant in such attractive surroundings.

even though it wasn't rewarding financially. Floods were often a nuisance, often huge red-gum stumps would rumble past at the height of the flood.

It became difficult to make a living at Wonoka, but to supplement farm income the Mayos secured a contract to supply railway sleepers for the re-timbering of the Port Augusta-Marree railway line, then used by the famous Ghan. Fortunately the creek passing through the Mayo property was lined with red-gums to make ideal sleepers.

One of the Mayo sons, Ern, built a unique four-wheeled timber trolley out of a red-gum lopped near the homestead. The wheels were cut from the red-gum trunk, the axles greased with animal fat which incidentally can still be seen on the axles today, many decades later.

The Mayos felled huge red-gums along the creek bank with a cross-cut saw, then cut again by hand, these large trees into suitable lengths for haulage. Some of the huge trees were 1 1/2 to 2 metres in diameter. The home made trolley was designed for hauling these mammoth logs along the creek bed through soft sand and over rough rocks. Perhaps the designer of this trolley was several generations ahead, by fitting wide wheels or fairs to his vehicle, so it didn't get bogged in the creek bed.

After arriving home with the logs they were rolled over a saw pit, and then entirely by hand, fashioned into railway sleepers. The person in the pit wore glasses to protect his eyes from sawdust, but still climbed out very dirty and no doubt an extremely tired person after a day's work.

A major expense for the Mayo family was the purchase of two bullock teams for haulage along the creek bed and then into Hawker. It appears the Mayo sons did most of the work involved in cutting sleepers. After one hundred sleepers were cut by hand they were then delivered to Hawker by wagon.

The twenty kilometre journey to Hawker was done in two stages taking 1 1/2 days.

Ern and Will Jnr. delivered the timber and started with their load about midday with eight bullocks hitched to the wagon. Following the wagon, was a rescue team of eight bullocks. It was a hard haul into Hawker so the Mayos took care of their animals. About halfway they camped for the night and then completed the journey to Hawker the next day. The return journey was easy and was completed in a day.

In 1913, and 1914 severe drought cropped the Mayo venture so William Mayo returned to the railways until he reached retirement.

I've been out to the remnants of the Mayo farm twice recently, which has now been swallowed up into a bigger run. The first time Jeff and Fran Findley, proprietors of the Outback Motel, Hawker, drove me out there in a four wheel drive. The second time was Easter, when we camped under the stars.

The tiny crumbling cottage is still standing without its roof. The rafters, like the Mayo hopes, fell to the floor. The saw-pit was cut into the bank of the creek and bricked up on three sides with river stone. It's still there in good condition. The cellar walls have fallen in, partly filling the small excavation.

As I walked along the creek bed I noticed where the Mayo saws had worked many years earlier. Some trees had died after cutting while others sprouted again and are still living.

Bird life at the permanent settlement was surprising, as several species of parrots were observed, finches, honeyeaters, wild ducks and the usual galahs and white cockatoos. At picnic time I was awakened by white cockatoos flying low overhead.

Just a short distance north of the Mayo ruins is the Mayo Gorge, named after the family. A very attractive and peaceful area, well off the beaten track. Running water splashing over salmon pink rocks invited my young sons in for a very chilly swim. We were sorry to have to leave this idyllic setting and head home when our time expired.

Regardless of employment I doubt whether many readers would have to work like the Mayos did when trying to eke out a living at Wonoka.

They may have failed in their venture, but they were stout-hearted people, prepared to have a go in the true spirit of the Australian pioneers.