

The Flax Mill . . .



The Flax Mill at Boyup Brook is quoted as being 'History'. Well rightly so, it was a very large piece of Boyup's past. Built in 1941 for the treatment of flax grown in the area and necessary for war-time equipment for the armed forces. Tents, parachute harnesses, webbing, tarpaulins etc. were made from the flax fibre. One item alone that was manufactured for a munitions job was fire hose. The total hose manufactured equated to 28,000 miles long and 3" wide made entirely from Australian flax. Flax was also used in linoleum floor coverings.

In the 50's the second & third grade tow (short fibre) were sold to Japan to be used in cigarette papers and elsewhere in the world

flax is used in the manufacture of clothing.

Flax is the only fibre which becomes stronger when wet allowing the very coarse fibre to be used for ropes to tie up ships when docking.

Over 400 people were involved in the flax production throughout the district. The beer quota for The Boyup Brook hotel increased to more than all four Bridgetown hotels together.

One of the main reasons for the collapse of the flax industry in Australia was that the price of flax fell rapidly when the Russians flooded the market with low grade flax.

In the early 60's Bunnings, Cullity Timbers and Hearn Bros. were to form a company to make chipboard out of the flax shives and wood chips but this proposal was to fall through due to the decline of the building industry at the time.

After the closure of the mill sadly an auction was held and the workings were sold leaving only the buildings as a memory of the past.

Today the deseeding and storage buildings have been converted to large dorms with over 90 beds, great for school or church camps. Other buildings are used for indoor cricket and indoor volleyball. The Scutching room upstairs is a great hall for hire for small events. A recreation room complete with games area and a camp kitchen has been set-up for the use of those staying at the flax mill.

The office built into the front of the undercroft contains a replica of the Flax Mill as it was when it was fully operational.

In 1982 the caravan park was moved from where the hockey grounds now stand, down onto the flax mill grounds. With over 50 powered and camping sites, some with ensuites, it makes a great place to holiday while touring the south western region.