

Manual Telephone, “Glen Obi”, Obi Obi



The manual Ericcson telephone was installed in the hallway of the home on the dairy farm “Glen Obi” at Obi Obi. The phone was manufactured by L.M. Ericcson & Co, Stockholm on 24 January 1911 (label inside the phone). The Subscriber’s Apparatus Card (inside the phone) shows the phone number, Obi Obi 8, and the first entry is on 4 June 1936, marked “Inspection”. The phone was in continuous use until an automatic phone service was installed in Obi Obi in the 1960s.

Mr James Hornibrook settled on “Glen Obi” sometime before 1897 as he met his future wife locally at Montville and they married in October 1897. Hornibrooks lived there until moving to Brisbane in 1911 because of ill health (see Mrs Hornibrook’s obituary, Nambour Chronicle, 11 October 1963). They retained ownership and commenced sharefarming. Mr R. (Dick) Spreadborough and his wife sharefarmed for decades, possibly from 1911, and ending in about 1955. The Spreadborough’s had a daughter, Hazel. The Subscriber’s Apparatus Card has the name “R. Spreadborough”.

The dates in the telephone raise questions of where the telephone was used from 1911 to 1936... and was 1936 the date when a phone service was first provided to Obi Obi? The year of manufacture, 1911, coincides with the Hornibrooks moving to Brisbane, so it could have initially been their phone in Brisbane. Hornibrooks lived at 24 Dalrymple Heights, Wilston.

From about 1955, another family sharefarmed until Mrs Hornibrook sold the farm after at least 60 years, in February 1957, to Jim and Kathleen Wilson (néé Porter). The phone service, Obi Obi 8, was transferred to Jim and Kathleen for £5. 19s. 2d paid to the Postmaster-General’s Department, Nambour on 26 February 1957. Jim and Kathleen owned the dairy farm at the time the manual service was discontinued. They retained the telephone for about 50 years until it was donated in the name of the Estate of Kathleen Wilson in October 2017. Wilsons sold the dairy farm to Greg and Hazel Woods in 1973 and the current address is 89 Falls Creek Road, Obi Obi.

Bruce Wilson
13 May 2019