

Finding old Tillimby: a desktop review from archival photographs, historical satellite imagery and other publicly available sources.

Note: Tillimby is private property. This document was prepared without visiting the property.

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Tillimby's sundial survives today as a relic of a colonial-era garden, presumably near the main residence. Both garden and residence are long gone. The sundial therefore provides a reliable point of reference for the interpretation of other evidence. Athel D'Ombra's photos (c1960s?) show the sundial and the "servants' quarters".



Above and below: sundial and "servants' quarters" at Tillimby, c1960s (Athel D'Ombra, Newcastle University Cultural Collections).



On the next page there is a colour photograph of the rear of the servants' quarters. Note the cluster of chimneys on the eastern end, and the timber infill on the verandah. These are vital clues to identifying the building in other photos.



The servants' quarters photographed from the opposite side to D'Ombra's. (Paterson Historical Society, courtesy of Greg Priestley).

The 1987 Dungog Shire Heritage Study recorded that Tillimby's "service wing" (servants' quarters) had recently been demolished but remnant foundation survived. The study noted that the "service wing" was constructed as a residence in the 1820s and then became a service building (presumably kitchen, storeroom and servants' quarters) to a c1835 residence built nearby which the earlier building outlasted. The 1987 study included a photo of the sundial, unfenced, in a view looking north west.

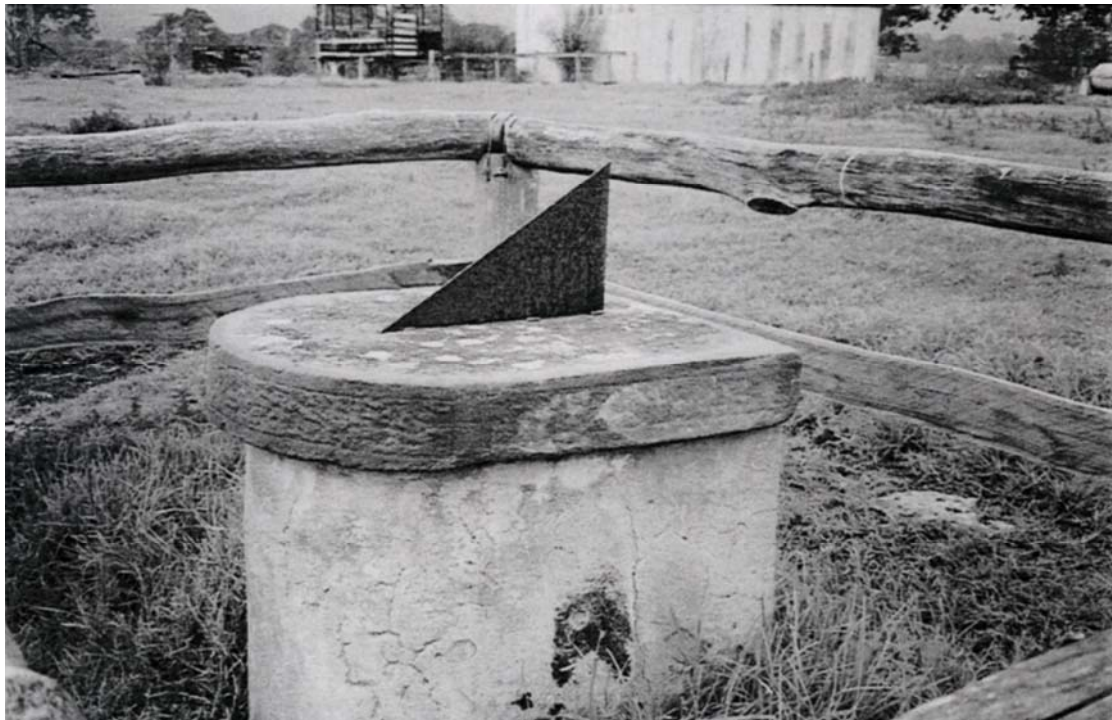


Tillimby's sundial, looking north west. (Dungog Heritage Study 1987).

The next available evidence comes from photos taken in 1998 by the late Bill Anderson and used in Dulcie Hartley's book "John Herring Boughton of Tillimby". The first photo shows two of the chimneys on the eastern end of the servants' quarters. The second shows that the sundial has now been fenced off to protect it from livestock.



Above: the chimneys of the servants' quarters in 1998. Below: the sundial (Bill Anderson).



Armed with this evidence, we can use satellite imagery to locate the sundial and residual footprint of the servants' quarters in the current landscape. Both are clearly evident in satellite images from 2009 and 2010, the fence around the sundial making it easy to spot.



The 2010 Google Earth satellite image showing Tillimby (arrows added). The sundial is indicated by the arrow in mid image, the rubble footprint of the servants' quarters by the right arrow.

The detail in the above image, including a small shed immediately to the east of the servants' quarters and an old power/telegraph pole nearby, crosschecks accurately with the detail in the c1960s D'Ombra photos before the building was demolished.

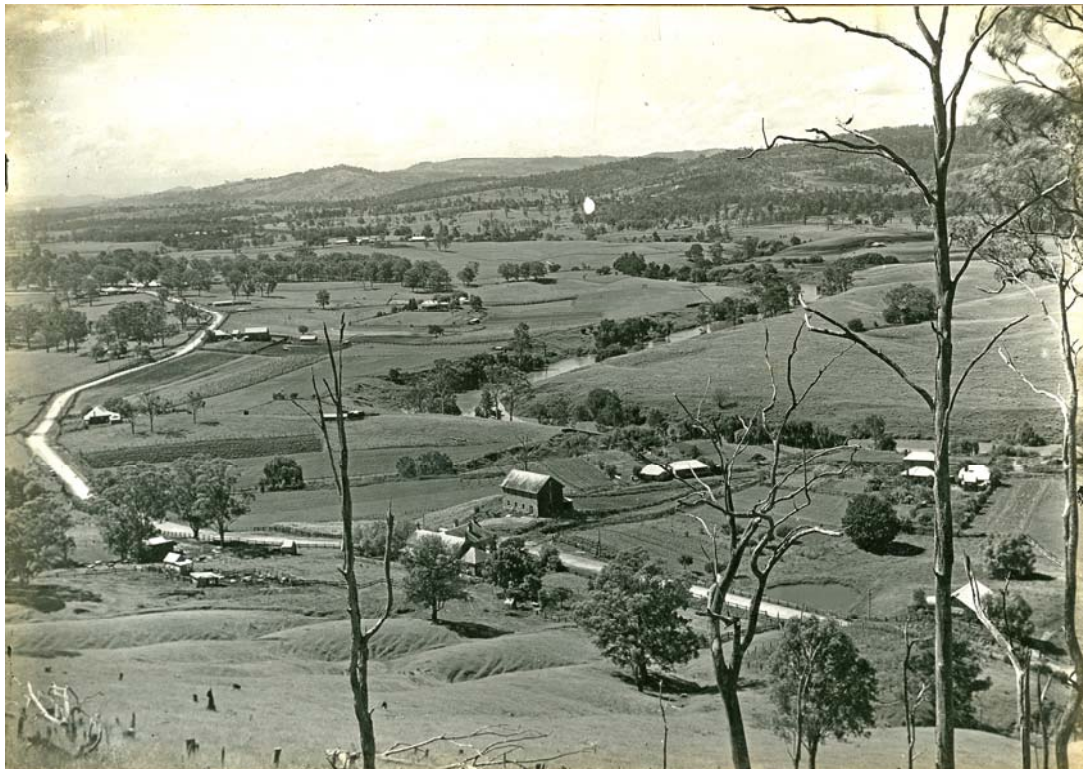
For the record the GPS location of the sundial is 32° 34.684'S; 151° 36.713'E. The centre of the Servants' quarters is 32° 34.686'S; 151° 36.740'E.

The satellite imagery shows that construction of stockyards near the sundial began in 2013. By 2014 the yards surrounded the sundial which was now protected by a new fence around it, within the yards.



Satellite image from 2016 showing the sundial within a set of stockyards. (Google Earth).

Having recorded the surviving above-ground evidence, we can now focus on historical photos. Below is a view taken from Jordan's hill looking north c1920s. The cluster of buildings at Tillimby can just be seen in the background (photo: Paterson Historical Soc).



What could we expect to see in the complex of buildings at Tillimby in the 1920s? When Tillimby was advertised for sale in 1854 there was "*an excellent brick-built dwelling-house and offices, with stables, coach-house, smithy etc, and extensive and fertile gardens*" (Maitland Mercury, 15 March 1854). When advertised for lease in 1858 the house contained 10 rooms, detached kitchen, servants' bedrooms, larder, laundry, store rooms etc (Maitland Mercury 22 May 1858).

We don't know how much of this survived into the 1900s. When Tillimby was subdivided in 1924 the improvements on the homestead block were described as "*two brick houses, telephone connection from Paterson, garage, buggy and harness rooms, dairy, bails, etc., and stock yards. Loose boxes, exercise yards, and substantially built shed, all in good order*" (poster, Paterson Historical Society).

Here is the detail of Tillimby from the c1920s photo taken from Jordan's hill.

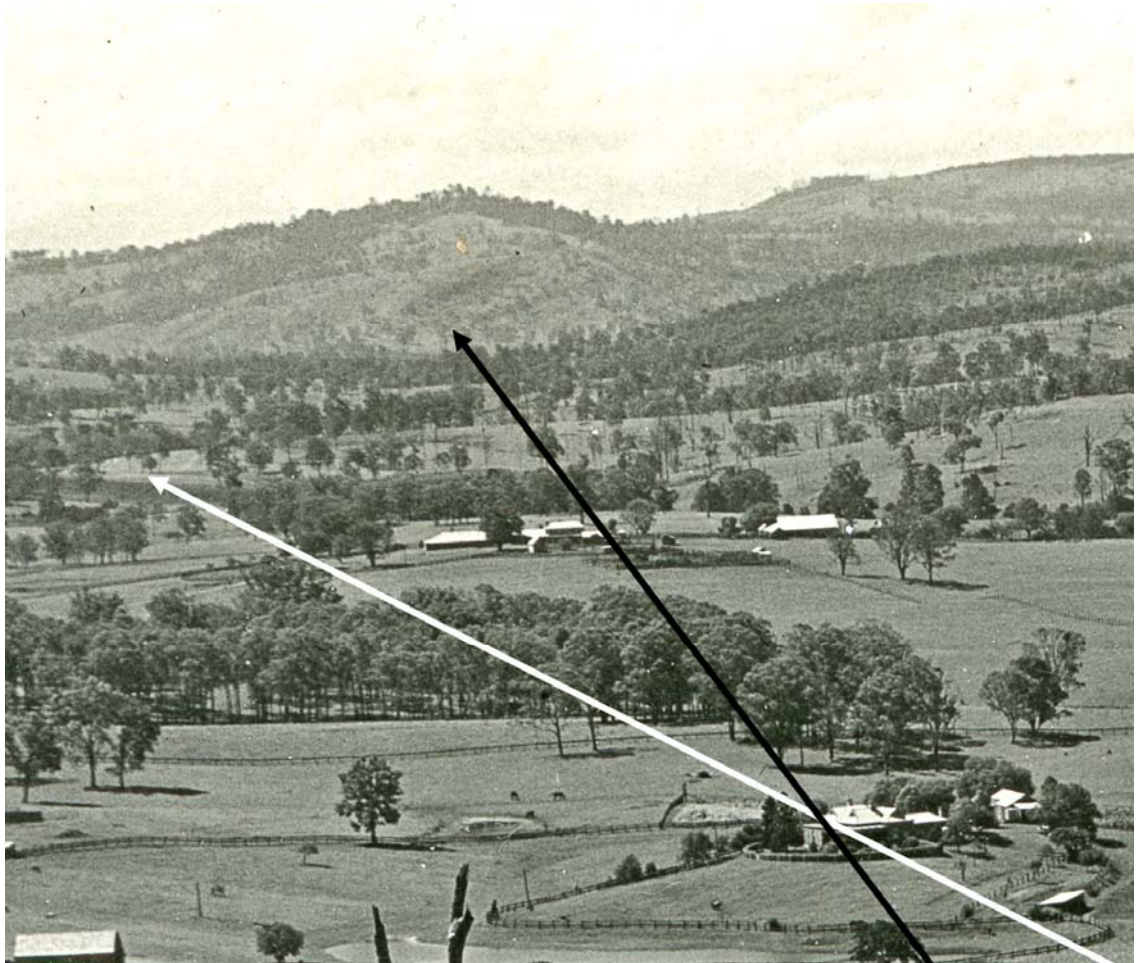


From the above detail it seems that a two-storey building, most likely the homestead, survived into the 1920s and appears to be a somewhat grand residence.

The next challenge is to locate the main residence in today's landscape using features from the Jordan's hill photo that are evident today. To achieve this a line was drawn from the south east corner of Corner's grain store, through the north west corner of Cintra (the black line in the photo on the next page). As a crosscheck another line was drawn from Jordan's house (before recent additions) through Cintra (the white line on the next page). The black line passes through the southern edge of Tillimby homestead. The white line passes about two and a half house lengths to the north west of Tillimby homestead. These same lines were then drawn on a modern satellite image to locate the homestead in the modern landscape.



Above and below: locating Tillimby homestead using reference points that survive today.





Above: the same lines passing through Tillimby, drawn on a 2016 satellite image.

Using the lines and natural features, Tillimby homestead has now been located with reasonable certainty (the dimensions of the house are approximate).

Now it is time to turn attention to an unidentified photo in the Paterson Historical Society collection that I have for some time suspected was Tillimby. It is stamped with the creator's name "Kerry & Co.". This photographic firm operated from 1890 to 1917. Before viewing the photo, we need to rotate the above satellite image, with homestead and servants' quarters superimposed, to match the view of the Kerry photo.



The location and dimensions of the servants' quarters and Tillimby homestead match those in the Kerry photo below. Also see more detail on the next page.





Using magnification, a close examination of the smaller building in the middle foreground shows the timber infill on this side matches the colour photo of the servants' quarters shown earlier. The chimney cluster on the end of the building is also evident under high magnification. All the features of the building, including its distinctive asymmetrical ends, match the previous photographic evidence of the Tillimby servants' quarters.

Taking all the evidence into account, I believe the large building in the centre of the Kerry photo above is Tillimby homestead, c1900. This means we have two views of Tillimby homestead – the view from Jordan's hill c1920s and the Kerry photo c1900.