



# THE PIONEER

RURAL & RESIDENTIAL  
PROPERTY

## Sketchley's Island – Allworth



The land granted under Torrens Title purchased by Thomas Sketchley in 1922, was originally called Flying Fox Island. It comprised 60 acres along with two unnamed islands on the North East side. It is assumed that after Thomas Sketchley was married in 1908 he leased the island for a number of years before he purchased it in 1922. It has been owned by 3 generations of Sketchley's since its purchase; Thomas, his youngest son Percy and Percy's only son Keith. Thomas was employed by The Hunter River Steam Ship Co. as wharf manager at Allworth for 30 years. He established the dairy on the island, with a supply of cream 3 times a week to the Hexham Butter Factory. With the by-product; light milk - he reared the calves and pigs.

In 1941 Percy and his wife Della continued the dairy for the next 50 years, building a new brick dairy and bales in 1956. The herd consisted mainly of Durham and Jersey cows. They were milking approx. 25 head twice a day until retirement. After retiring from dairying in 1991, Percy reared Red Poll beef cattle. He also maintained a very good orchard growing oranges, mandarins, peaches, pears and Granny Smith apples – with no problems of fruit fly when the orchard was established.

As part of his business he hired row boats to weekend fishermen as Allworth was an excellent rock oyster growing area. He leased

some very good oyster leases, exporting to Red Funnel Fisheries Newcastle for the Sydney and local markets. Perhaps the best lease was located between the South East end of Flying Fox Island and the very small Kitchener Island. At low tide a 20 Litre drum could be filled with oysters without moving from the spot. The excellent tidal flow over the stones increased the good quality of oysters that was produced.

The island also has very rich soil. To manage the herd, the in-calf cows were taken to another property on the mainland. The return with their calves was a very smooth transition as the stock reared there loved to come back.

A story in Thomas' day of an old horse reared on the island sold through its life and having several owners just turned up one day on the island to die. It was allowed to see out the remainder of its life there.

There is a well on the island, located about 60 metres from the salt Karuah river. It has provided good fresh stock water for over 100 years.

Prior to 1900 there was a house located not far from the well where a local family lived. The house had been demolished by the early 1920's before the island was purchased by Thomas. While the Sketchley's never lived on the island, they lived directly across the Karuah River within Allworth. They would travel to the island several times a day by row boat.

~ Keith Sketchley - June 2012

*\*Note: The Island was gazetted in 1986 as Kitcheners Island but will surely be always known as "Sketchley's Island" to the locals.*

**The Island is listed for sale with Denise Haynes of R & R Property  
Price: Offers over \$550,000 - Contact 0414 725 482**



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