



## KIN KIN QLD



**Name: Kin Kin School of Arts**

**Address: 50 Main Street Kin Kin Queensland 4571**

### **The Town:**

Kin Kin lies between Pomona to the south and Gympie to the north, in South East Queensland. It is 135 kilometres north of Brisbane and 38 kilometres north west of Noosa Heads on the Sunshine Coast.

The town was established in the late 1870s

It has a population of 694 (2011 census).

The name Kin Kin comes from the Aboriginal *kauin kauin* meaning red soil but another source suggests it is the indigenous term meaning “plenty plenty, black ants” a reference to a species of small black ants that inhabited the area.

Kin Kin was first settled by timber-getters who moved into the area as early as 1864 felling valuable timber, especially kauri pine.

It was in June 1902 that a Mr J Turnbull took up a “selection” several miles south of the present township and was followed several months later by a Mr K Sorensen. The country was then dense virgin scrub and Mr Sorensen revealed that it took him and a Mr John Hansen with their two horses, a wagon and camping outfit, from 8.0’clock in the morning till sundown to complete the six mile journey from Cooran in the south.

By 1904 a track had been cut over the range and a road constructed.



After clearing the land and “burning off”, grass was planted, mostly paspalum, rhodes and clover, and then Mr Sorensen brought the first cattle into the area from Ipswich, north west of Brisbane

He later was a major dairy producer in the area and his cream was the first sent by horseback (pack saddle) to Cooran six miles south and then railed to Gympie 24 miles north.

Later around 1920 it went by four wheeled vehicle known as “the buckboard”.

More settlers came to the area including the Nash Brothers in 1903, sons of James Nash who found “alluvial” gold on 16<sup>th</sup> October 1867 at Gympie.

Other settlers brought cattle up from NSW and so the dairy industry developed.

Electricity came to Kin Kin in 1911 when the population was just 236, and sewerage in the 1940s by which time the population was around 500.

In 1912 only a store and butcher’s shop were available to farmers and selectors.

By 1918 the banana industry started to boom and many acres of land were cleared and planted. In the peak period 6.000 cases of bananas a week were produced and shipped from Kin Kin, transported by Moffat’s horse drawn wagon to Cooran Station. The farms employed 100 Chinese labourers.

By the mid 1920s the amenities had increased significantly: Kin Kin Dairy Company(1914-1937) the ES & A [English, Scottish and Australian] Bank, a motor garage, sawmill, blacksmith, Church of England church, Roman Catholic church and Kin Kin Hotel had all appeared.

In the 1960s bananas, pineapples and small crops, including bean growing, constituted the main industries. In the 1990s industries included production of macadamia nuts, ginger and to a lesser extent fruit, vegetable growing and dairying.

Today Kin Kin boasts a health retreat, bush food, hobby farms, artists, accommodation and small businesses.

### **Establishment:**

One acre of land was granted by the Queensland Department of Public Lands for the purpose of the building of a School of Arts on 8<sup>th</sup> August 1909.

A School of Arts Committee was formed in June 1909 to raise funds for the hall and the building was opened on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> July 1911.

Committee members were Chairman, M McWilliams; Honorary Secretary, C Vines; Honorary Treasurer, F Bowman; and Committee, J J Simpson, G Westbrook, W Rohan, E Palmer, W Kelly and C Gallan.

### **The Building:**

The building originally comprised a reading room, a library room and a hall, the size of the whole building being 50 feet by 28 feet with a small stage on which stood a new piano, supplied by Mr Sedgman of Gympie.

The timber came from Mr J Hetherington of Kin Kin sawmills.

Mr J Donnelly was the contractor and Mr C Duffy of Pomona was the plumber.

The building was constructed from weatherboard with a corrugated iron roof. The hardwood floor was constructed from spotted gum.

The cost was about £217 (pounds) and the piano £79. The Committee raised £80, government subsidy was £40, and another £20 was pledged. A bank loan was obtained for £150 with the Committee members as bondsmen.



As seen in the photograph of 1911 below, the hall was originally built on low blocks but was blown off by a cyclonic storm in 1924. Tenders were called and it was quickly rebuilt.



**Kin Kin School of Arts 1911**

Mr H F Walker MLA, the Minister for Agriculture and Stock, with his wife Mrs Walker opened the building with 200 people present. The very heavy rain on the day prevented more from attending but those present were asked to be subscribers to pay off the loan and raise money for improvements.

By the 1920s a gabled wing had been added along the western side of the original hall, which had also been extended to the rear, probably to its current size, and now had a trellised veranda and porch. Another small gabled extension over the veranda later provided housing for a projection box for showing films.

The present building is the culmination of several extensions.

In 2000 the hall was fitted out with a modern sound system through a donation from the Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association. In 2012 the Sunshine Coast Council removed asbestos sheeting and installed a new kitchen off the extension of a supper room.

A mural today is painted on the wall behind the stage depicting the local countryside.



**School of Arts with Extensions - circa 1920's**

### **History:**

The Kin Kin School of Arts building was the first School of Arts built between Brisbane and Gympie. The area was known as “the scrubs” of the North Coast Line. North Coast Line was the postal address of Kin Kin and surrounding areas in the district until the 1960s.

A Committee was formed in 1909 for the School of Arts building, with the first minutes recorded on 13<sup>th</sup> June 1909.

Early records show that the Kin Kin Township School, established in 1916, held classes in the hall for five years before a separate school building was provided.

By this time in the 1920s a gabled wing had been added along the western side of the original hall, which had also been extended to the rear and it now had a trellised verandah and porch.

Fund raising events continued for improvements to the building and these included boxing tournaments, annual balls for “Miss Dairy Queen”, “Miss Banana Queen”, and “Miss Commercial Queen”, Church of England and Roman Catholic Church debutante balls, St. Patrick’s Day ball, Cricket and Tennis Club balls.

The Queensland Country Women’s Association established a branch in 1925, meeting in the Building until it disbanded in 1974.

A nursery room was added at the back of the hall and cots had been attached to the walls to accommodate the small infants whilst their mothers attended the social functions. These cots were only dismantled in the late 1990s.

A ball in May 1930 was given for the benefit of the banana growers’ candidate Mona McGrath by the committee of that institution to raise funds to enlarge the hall.

Coloured streamers, Chinese lanterns, Japanese umbrellas and greenery formed the decoration.





Improvements were made again in 1931 comprising a supper and card room, dressing rooms and kitchenette.

The builders were Messrs Westbrook Bros of Cooroy and these additions were officially opened on April 17<sup>th</sup> 1931. In addition to the improvements an electric light system was installed.

The celebrations took the form of a ball which was well attended.

The Minister for Agriculture and Stock Mr H F Walker performed the opening ceremony.

The same evening the committee of the Sporting Bodies held a “Cinderella Dance” with their Queen competition candidate Miss Daisy Shepperson winning the final dance. She raised £33 at this event.

Mr Walker also unveiled a framed photograph of the candidate which is still in the hall today.

The large framed photographs of these “Queen” competitions, show *Miss Dairy* - Marie Connor, *Miss Commercial* - Daisy Shepperson, and *Miss Banana* - Mona McGrath.

They represent the industries that were of important economic benefit to the district at that time.

These three framed sepia photographs circa 1930 were taken by Murray’s Studio, Gympie showing the “Queen” with her ‘crown’ and the runners-up with their ‘lesser’ headdress, all with their ‘attendants’.



**Winner: “Dairy Queen”  
Marie Connor**

(standing)



**2<sup>nd</sup>: “Commercial Queen”  
Daisy Shepperson**

(centre)



3rd: *"Banana Queen"*  
**Mona McGrath**  
(centre)



One of the earliest  
photographs found  
was from 1918:

Isabel Keys as  
'Britannia'

at a Fancy Dress  
ball in the School  
of Arts.



In 1925 a Mr. Brittain took up a long term lease with the School of Arts for picture show purposes. He installed a “plant” and ran movies every Saturday night. The local cream truck collected patrons from surrounding districts to ensure maximum attendance. Movies were shown over a period of many years. A small gabled extension over the veranda was added to provide a projection box for showing films.

Mr Ken Lister showed the movies from 1958 to 1965. He also operated the projection box at Cooran Memorial School of Arts.

In the early stages the halls showed two movies on a Saturday night.

One was shown in Cooran and then transported to “the turnoff” to be collected by a Kin Kin resident to return for showing and at the same time giving the Cooran resident the film that had just been shown at Kin Kin. The intermission between films allowed the patrons to enjoy refreshments.

Fund raising events were the main source of entertainment and social get togethers in the area.

The hall was a central feature of the district and as recently as 2000 it was fitted out with a very good sound system through a donation from the Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association.

A local musician of international repute, Linsey Pollak at this time devised a musical event called “The Art of Food” based on the use of natural products to create music. Linsey is renowned for his carrot clarinet.

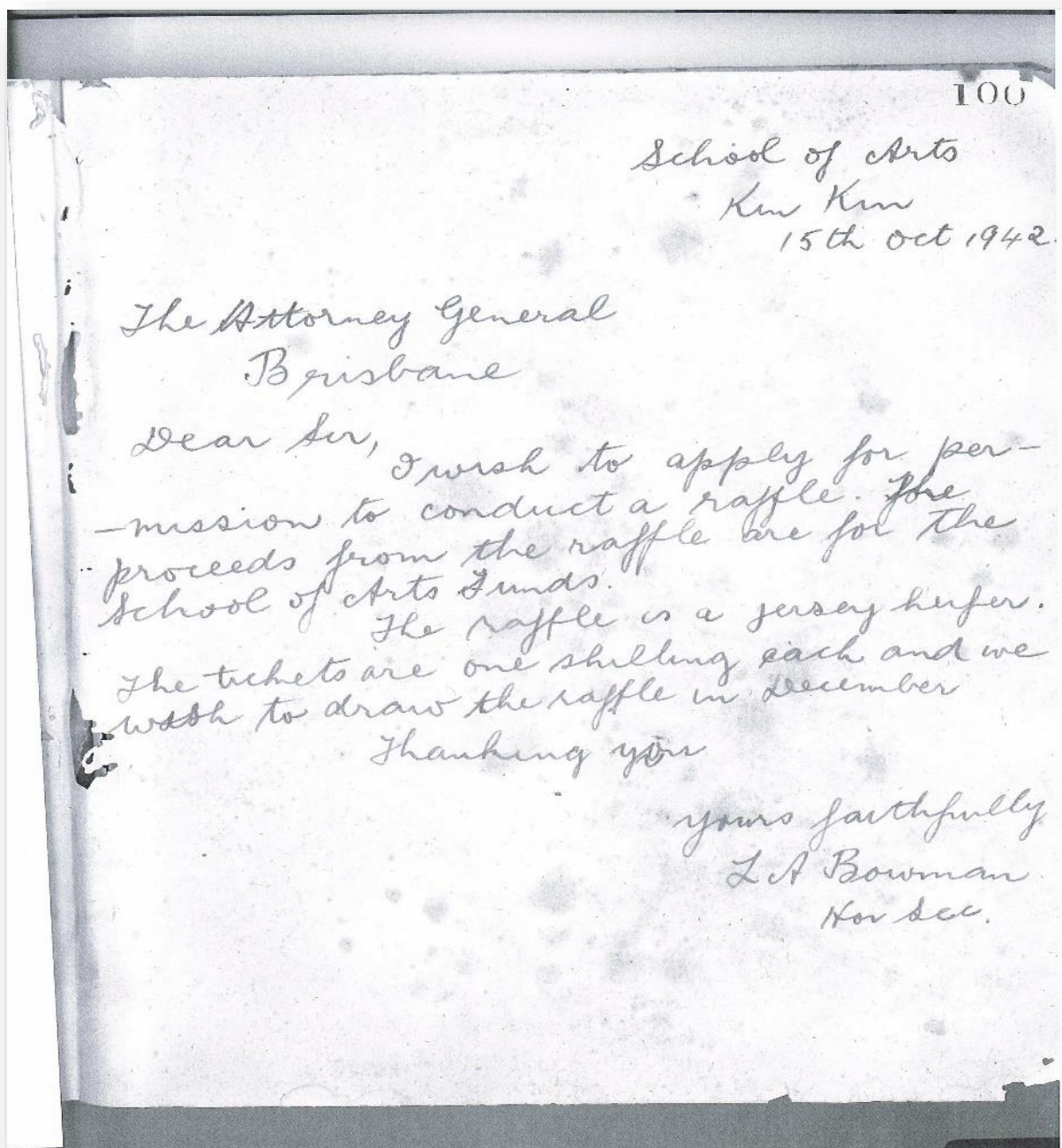






A letter to the Attorney General in the Queensland Government from the Hon. Secretary of the School of Arts, requesting permission to conduct a raffle in 1942 with the first prize being a Jersey heifer with the tickets for one shilling.

The letter is located in the archives boxes at the Noosa Museum Pomona which is run today by the Cooroorra Historical Society Inc.







### **Currently (2014):**

Due to the small population of this rural village and its geographical isolation the hall today is only occasionally used mainly by the Kin Kin Community Group, monthly art and craft markets, weddings, and when required, as an electoral polling booth.

The local custodians of the hall are very proud that they still have some pieces of chinaware, tea settings of Conway “Lavender Blue” china from England and pressed glassware, mainly vases, which they use for special events.

The kitchen area was modernised in 2012 by the then Sunshine Coast Council.

The floor is the original hardwood, spotted gum, and there are six of the original benches in the main hall and a recently painted mural depicting the local countryside.



### **Kin Kin School of Arts Main Hall - September 2013**

This photo shows the splendid spotted gum flooring of the hall.  
Several of six surviving original timber benches are sited along the walls.  
Also clearly visible is the recent addition of a painted mural of the lush countryside in which Kin Kin is situated.



**Acknowledgments:**

Ray Grady - Kin Kin resident - verbal memories

**References:**

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**Historic Photographs:** Courtesy of Cooroora Historical Society Inc.

**Photograph:** “carrot clarinet” Linsey Pollak website: [www.linseypollak.com](http://www.linseypollak.com)

**Photographs** (September 2013): Julia Gamble ADFAS Noosa Committee

**Research and compilation:** Julia Gamble ADFAS Noosa Committee

