

Joseph Kenworthy

Joseph Kenworthy arrived in the colony on 6 December 1842.¹ A year later, he advertised:

“Joseph Kenworthy, blacksmith, farrier etc, begs most respectfully to apprise the farmers and inhabitants of York and neighbourhood, that he has rented a shop of Mr Monger, adjoining his premises, where he intends carrying on the above business, and trusts that he will realise that encouragement which it will ever be his endeavour to merit.”²

This must be a reference to the blacksmith’s shop in Christie Retreat.³

In July 1846, Henry T Franklin advertised that he had “revived, in all its various branches, the old established blacksmith’s business formerly carried on in York by Joseph Kenworthy”.

Kenworthy had not ceased trading, he had simply moved. Kenworthy had to announce the truth so published an advertisement which said:

”A rather ludicrous advertisement appearing in the Inquirer of the 15th July, of one Henry T. Franklin having, by his extraordinary powers, revived a business which had seen no decline, but, on the contrary, had ever been steadily on the increase, and which business he states to have been formerly carried on by me in York, thereby giving the public reason to suppose (if he means anything at all) that I had resigned my profession to him j I beg most distinctly and yet most respectfully to inform my employers and the public at large, that / have not given up my business, but that I have removed from the forge which I rented of J. H. Monger to one I have erected on the premises adjoining to the church in York. I hereby also tender my most grateful acknowledgments for past favours, and promise that no exertion on my part shall be wanting to satisfy the public in future.

JOSEPH KENWORTHY,
Blacksmith
York
July 26, 1846.

This letter shows Kenworthy as articulate and intelligent, and a wit. The anonymous carter who later wrote a series of letters to the paper under the name “A Carter” complaining about Kenworthy described him as standing by his forge all day teaching “Theology, Geography, History and Meteorology” to those present, “entering most minutely into many interesting notes concerning the siege and destruction of Jerusalem, pointing out how tenderly Vespasian and Titus preserved all the “shoemiths” of Jerusalem....”⁴ So like a preacher was Kenworthy that at least on one occasion when there was no priest in York, he performed the role of preacher.⁵

Kenworthy did not stay long leasing from Monger, as he appears to have taken the premises formerly occupied by Thomas Wallace next to the church in Church St.⁶

¹ Rica Erickson, ed., Dictionary of Western Australians,.

² Inquirer, 17 January 1844, p.6.

³ In 1854, Kenworthy also took the first Town Lot, being Lot 4: John E Deacon: A Survey of the Historical Development of the Avon Valley with Particular Reference to York, Western Australia During the Years 1830-1850, UWA, 1948, p.159.

⁴ Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News, 3 June 1848, p.3.

⁵ Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News, 18 April 1851, p.2.

⁶ The street is probably the southern extension of Avon Tce, and the Church St John’s.

For a while, Kenworthy had a monopoly in York. He charged 8 shillings to show a horse plus a bottle of wine or brandy (the equivalent of an extra 5 shillings). He acknowledged that his charges were exorbitant but said he was not willing to lower his price until someone else came and competed with him.⁷ Kenworthy also took a long time to do his work to the frustration of the carters.

“A Carter” wrote of him as follows:

“The loss of time and expense incurred in York from the scarcity and want of more Blacksmiths and Horseshoers, is beyond measure. Teams from every corner of the district flock in there-every horse that travels the York road is taken there to be shod-taken to one only shop,' where there is one only man to' make the shoes and shoe the horses. Hence arises the delay which almost every one so materially feels. It is not alone that the owner of the team suffers through this delay, so injurious to the colony at large, but the animals themselves suffer. It is the sorest trial our horses undergo. They are taken to the forge, where they stand for three, six, and nine hours at one spell-starving all the while, before the shoer, from press for time and too much work, can touch them. - At this moment there is fully sufficient work for three horse-shoers at York. Between seventy and eighty horses were seen at one time at one of the stations upon the York road, all of which were required to be shod before they could travel that road, and if this number can be met with at one of the stations upon that road, what must be the entire number of horses that require shoes for travelling upon that and other roads? Etc Signed “A Carter”.⁸

The articulate Joseph Kenworthy could not resist replying:

To the Editor of the "Independent Journal"
Sir,-Seeing in your journal of the 8th April, a wholesale advertisement for " Horse- shoer's," for the York district, together with a letter in another column of the same number, emanating evidently from the same pen, calling the attention of those "Horse-shoers" who might have accidentally overlooked the advertisement, to the great, the "luxuriant " privilege«, held out to them in its contents; I feel myself called upon, in justice to those (if any there are in the colony) of them who think of removing from where they now are, to admonish them against being lured by false representations, or they may possibly regret having placed too much confidence in them. I flatter myself, Sir, that I know as well as any " Carter " on the road, what amount of horse-shoeing there is in the district, and I most unequivocally assert, that during this busy season, the shoeing business has only averaged about one horse a day; providing that the shoes put on had been confined to as many horses as could have worn them ; many horses are on the roads without any shoes at all, and many more are only shod on two feet. One horse a day to shoe at York ! What a "luxuriant harvest" for three shoeing smiths ! ! There is something, Sir, so degrading, ' a something so cowardly and mean, about anonymous letters, that, having stated what I conceive my fellow tradesmen had a right to know, I leave the writer and his letter to the contempt they are entitled to, strongly advising him, the next time he wishes to figure in print, to speak only that which is true, and then he need not be ashamed to own his name. I will not trespass more upon your columns, but humbly subscribe myself. Yours, &c,
Joseph Kenworthy.
York, April 24,1848.⁹

⁷ Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News, 20 May 1848, p.3.

⁸ Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News, 8 April 1848, p.3.

⁹ Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News, 29 April 1848, p.3.

“A Carter” refused to divulge his name, saying: We are great chums now and I wish to remain so until these two shoe smiths who will shortly be here have arrived and are placed on either side of him.¹⁰

Kenworthy was not poor as he was named as one of the shareholders in the Western Australian Mining Company in March 1850.¹¹ On the other hand, he could not have been making so much money as in 1851, in addition to his “horse-shoeing”, he contracted to carry the mail from Guildford to York,¹² for which he was praised for delivering the mail on time.¹³

Being near the Church, Kenworthy must have been a customer of the Kings Head Hotel, so the opening of a new hotel, the Castle Hotel, by Samuel Craig in 1854 was an opportunity for Kenworthy to show support for his usual pub and he informed on Samuel Craig in the short time he ceased trading at Monger’s York Hotel and moved to his new Castle Hotel.

There appears to have been an incident in 1855 when the new Anglican Church was being built because Kenworthy resigned his situation as clerk of the Church, but was alleged to have taken all the candlesticks, causing the “light of the Church” to be extinguished according to the Inquirer.¹⁴ This accusation was denied by a reader called “A Lover of Truth”: “Had the correspondent to the Inquirer gone to church he would have found quite sufficient light to have enabled him to read the responses, as Mr Kenworthy had not removed a single candlestick.”¹⁵

Joseph’s wife died on 29 May 1857 “leaving a numerous family to mourn the loss of a kind and indulgent mother”.¹⁶

In July 1857, Kenworthy was appointed the York agent for a watch and clockmaker, John Bowra.¹⁷

On 17 August 1860, Kenworthy was trying to cross the river at Monger’s Ford with his son on a horse that had cost 70 pounds. This was “at a time when the current was strong and the river was high. Kenworthy’s son was swept away by the current “being providentially driven against a tree”. Kenworthy and Stephen Parker followed the river down one mile and found the boy perched on a stump, “the grim, wide-spreading waters rushing under and past him.” A boat was got to him and he was rescued but In the process the valuable horse was drowned.^{18 19}

Kenworthy must have liked valuable horses because the next year, Kenworthy advertised that is “powerful cart stallion” named “Duke” would stand at his stables.²⁰

In 1862, Kenworthy leased Avon Location A “(on the eastern or upper side of the new road from York to Northam”).²¹

¹⁰ Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News, 3 June 1848, p.3.

¹¹ Inquirer, 6 March 1850, p.2.

¹² Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News, 18 April 1851, p.2.

¹³ Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News, 12 September 1851, p.2.; but see letter to the paper by Kenworthy: Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News, 3 October 1851, p.3.

¹⁴ Inquirer, 23 May 1855, p.3.

¹⁵ Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News, 8 June 1855, p.3.

¹⁶ Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News, 5 June 1857, p.2; Inquirer 10 June 1857, p.2.

¹⁷ Inquirer and Commercial News, 22 JJuly 1857, p.2.

¹⁸ Inquirer and Commercial News, 12 September 1860, p.2. ¹⁸

¹⁹ Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News, 24 August 1860, p.2..

²⁰ Inquirer and Commercial News, 27 November 1861, p.1.

²¹ Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News, 29 August 1862, p.2.

In an advertisement dated 4 December 1867, Kenworthy put up for sale his home and all its contents, his blacksmith's tools, mail cart, the horse "Duke" and other horses, saying he was "about to leave the district".²²

In an advertisement dated 8 January,, 1868, Joseph Kenworthy announced from Perth that he had taken the business of Blacksmith and Farrier "heretofore carried on by Mr James Ougden".²³

Kenworthy died at his home in Murray St, Perth on 1 September 1883 aged 70 years.²⁴ He was described as a "hard-working man".²⁵

His son JA Kenworthy advertised shoeing and general blacksmith business in Avon Terrace, York on 10 March 1888.²⁶ He lived in Blandstown.²⁷

Rob Garton Smith
President
The York Society (Inc)
September 2020

²² Herald, 7 December 1867, p.2.

²³ Inquirer and Commercial News, 8 January 1868, p.2.

²⁴ Eastern Districts Chronicle, 7 September 1883, p.3.

²⁵ Eastern Districts Chronicle, 7 September 1883, p.3.

²⁶ Eastern Districts Chronicle, 14 April 1888, p.1.

²⁷ Eastern Districts Chronicle, 16 January 1892, p.8.