

Boyup Brook Flax Mill



The Flax Mill at Boyup Brook is quoted as being 'History'. Well rightly so, it was a very large piece of Boyup's past. Built in 1941 for the treatment of flax grown in the area and necessary for war-time equipment for the armed forces. Tents, parachute harnesses, webbing, tarpaulins etc. were made from the flax fibre. One item alone that was manufactured for a munitions job was fire hose. The total hose manufactured equated to 28,000 miles long and 3" wide made entirely from Australian flax. Flax was also used in linoleum floor coverings.

In the 50's the second and third grade tow (short fibre) were sold to Japan to be used in cigarette papers and elsewhere in the world flax is used in the manufacture of clothing. Flax is the only fibre which becomes stronger when wet allowing the very coarse fibre to be used for ropes to tie up ships when docking.

Over 400 people were involved in the flax production throughout the district. The beer quota for The Boyup Brook hotel increased to more than all four Bridgetown hotels together.

One of the main reasons for the collapse of the flax industry in Australia was that the price of flax fell rapidly when the Russians flooded the market with low grade flax.

In the early 60's Bunnings, Cullity Timbers and Hearn Bros. were to form a company to make chipboard out of the flax shives and wood chips but this proposal was to fall through due to the decline of the building industry at the time.

After the closure of the mill sadly an auction was held and the workings were sold leaving only the buildings as a memory of the past. The office built into the front of the undercroft contains a replica of the Flax Mill as it was when it was fully operational. In 1982 the caravan park was moved from where the hockey grounds now stand, down onto the flax mill grounds. With camping sites, some with power and ensuite, it makes a great place to holiday while touring the south western region.