



As well as securing the property's water supply, the McDonald River to which "Romani" enjoys a 2.5km frontage is prized by anglers.

Grazing scale at 'Romani'

By PETER AUSTIN

WHEN A.P. ("Paddy") Maclean returned home to Australia from the First World War after taking part in the victorious 1916 Battle of Romani near Suez, he headed for the Kingstown area of southern New England.

His brother Jack was already established there on "Retreat", and Paddy lost no time taking up two adjacent blocks, "Harwood" and "Howe's", which he renamed "Romani" in

memory of the decisive battle.

More country was added later, and some portions sold off, but by 1958 when the Macleans sold it to the Cunich family, "Romani" was a substantial holding of 2730 hectares.

That remained the size of "Romani" until it was resold in 1964, bought this time by Harold Tonkin for his son, Barry.

And now, 51 years later, it's only a slightly smaller and still substantial "Romani" of 2217 hectares (5479ac) that Barry and his wife Lorraine are offering for sale to enable them to retire.

The couple plan to settle in nearby Armidale, and they have listed "Romani" for sale at \$4.5 million with David Nolan of Webster Nolan Real Estate, Sydney, and Frank Spilsbury of Elders Armidale.

At that price, the property is expected to attract interest from serious investors seeking scale and high-class infrastructure in a sound grazing area where real estate factors have not yet begun to distort values.

An additional attraction of this listing is the opportunity that will be afforded to a successful purchaser to negotiate the purchase of the present owner's well-regarded flock of Merino sheep and the Angus cattle herd.

Situated seven kilometres from Kingstown and 67km west of Armidale, "Romani" is a property of mostly open valley and undulating country with some rocky and timbered ridges.

Soil types encompass basalt, granite and trap loams and the property is cleared except for shelter and shade trees of box, apple, stringybark and kurradjong, and small pockets of retained shelter timber.

Pastures are a mix of native grasses

and introduced clovers, ryegrass and fescue, topdressed strategically over many years and now in good heart following recent falls of well-timed rain.

The owners estimate the property's carrying capacity at 13,000 DSE, or about 850 breeding cows and progeny.

Under their own mixed livestock regime, the Tonkins run a breeding herd of 440 Angus cows of Nairn Park and Bald Blair bloodlines and 2200 Merino ewes of Merryville blood, and their respective progeny. Calves are grown out and finished on crop, and 246 steers sold by the Tonkins since June have returned a creditable average of \$1589/head.

Water is a feature of the property, which has a 2.5km frontage to the permanent McDonald River and its several tributary streams, backed up by 29 dams and a summer-dominant 750mm average rainfall.

Improvements are of a high order, and include the substantial main homestead of brick and weather-board dating back to the 1870s but extended and updated by subsequent owners.

Set in sprawling lawns and gardens with outdoor entertaining area and tennis court, the five-bedroom homestead has formal lounge and dining rooms, a modern kitchen and a family room with granite fireplace.

Complementing the homestead is the four-bedroom manager's residence, rebuilt 10 years ago and featuring open-plan living, polished floorboards and wide, wrap-around bullnose verandahs.

Working improvements include a functional five-stall shearing shed, built in 1956 when the property carried 8500 sheep, with steel sheepyards incorporating covered race and three-way draft.

The timber cattle yards have a covered work area with crush and overhead lighting, and a stud sale ring - a hangover from earlier days when the present owners operated the Tarrawonga Poll Hereford stud.

Other structures include a stables complex with stud shed and day yard, machinery and hay sheds, workshop and silos.

■ Contact David Nolan, 0447 278 236, or Frank Spilsbury, (02) 6775 4500.



The gracious main homestead on "Romani" has north-facing verandahs and is set amid established lawns and gardens with a paved barbecue area and tennis court.