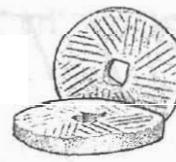


KURRAJONG - COMLEROY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC

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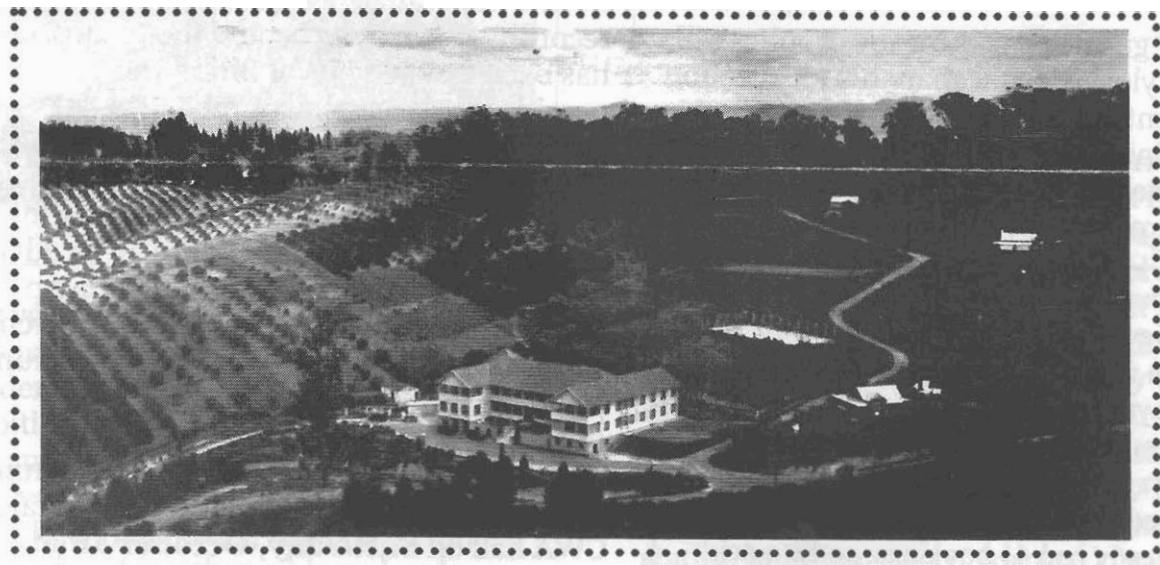
The Millstone

2003 - Volume Two, Issue Five: September-October, 2003

"THE MILLSTONE" REFERS TO THE LITTLE WHEENEY CREEK MILLSTONES ON DISPLAY AT KURRAJONG MEMORIAL PARK, BELIEVED TO BE THE OLDEST ITEMS OF EUROPEAN SETTLEMENT IN "THE KURRAJONG". THIS EXTRACT FROM THE FIRST EDITION OF "THE MILLSTONE", JANUARY-FEBRUARY, 2002

SEE YOU AT: BTTK #3, OCT 17
WORK FOR THE DOLE PHOTO DISPLAY,
KURRAJONG CWA HALL, OCT 18+19

MILLSTONE EXHIBITION, Oct 19



KURRAJONG HEIGHTS HOTEL, 1933, FIVE YEARS AFTER ITS 1928 GRAND OPENING
COME AND HEAR ONE OF OUR GUEST SPEAKERS, PHIL PECK TALK ABOUT HIS FAMILY AND THE HOTEL

BTTK #3:

Back to 'the Kurrajong', number 3

Put this date in your diary:

Friday, October 17 at 7pm.

The evening starts with a 45-minute preview of our historic photo display at the Kurrajong CWA hall. We then walk across the road to the Valley View Café for a light supper and an evening where we will hear Mr Phil Peck talk about the Kurrajong Heights Hotel, which opened 75 years ago in August, 1928.

Mr Peck said his father was the 13th child born to Henry and Mary Peck, and Henry Edward Peck was the couple's second child.

Mr Peck will recount some of the stories he was told about "H.E.", the building of the Hotel, and other family achievements.



Our second guest speaker for the evening will be Geoff Taylor who will share his recollection of the "eccentrics" of Kurrajong. Geoff warns that the opinions he expresses are his alone! Come and hear a side of history you are unlikely to read in the history books!

Join us for our 'Back to the Kurrajong' evening at Valley View Café, Kurrajong.

Meet at 7pm at the CWA hall to preview the photo display.

Then lite supper, with guest speakers, Phil Peck and Geoff Taylor.

Places limited to 60, and at the time of going to press we already had 41 bookings, so be quick!

**Bookings essential, Joy Shepherd, 4571 1524.
Cost \$15.**



Hidden Treasures of Kurrajong Historic Photo Display

This will be the third exhibition of historic photos of 'the Kurrajong' mounted by the Society since October 2001.

This year the exhibition will be the culmination of an exciting and innovative "Work for the Dole" project that has seen the Society work in partnership with Hawkesbury Skills over the past six months.

Treasurer Joy Shepherd applied for the funding and has been an excellent project leader, spending two days a week overseeing more than 800 photos as they were scanned onto disc by participants, Terry Church and Grace Fisher. In her "spare" time Joy has played detective, sourcing original photos from a wide range of Kurrajong people, recording the stories behind the photos. Joy has been assisted by Val Birch who has provided the accession numbers for the growing collection of photos. Towards the end of the project Marguerite Wyborn has assisted with preparing the cardboard backings for the photos, and Valerie Holland has given advice and assistance on the exhibition of Camp Mackay photos which support the research she is undertaking into this police boys run camp on Mill Road, Kurrajong.

In recognition of the Work for the Dole involvement in this project, an official launch of the exhibition will be held at the Kurrajong CWA hall on **Saturday, October 18 at 1.30pm. Afternoon tea will be served at a cost of \$5.**

Meet at the Millstones!

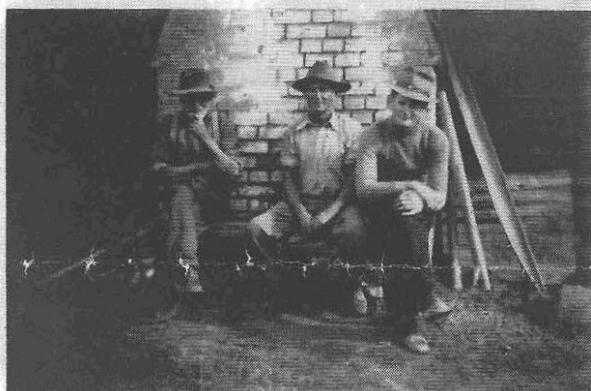
Just like last year the Society will mount an exhibition at the millstones at the entrance to Memorial Park Kurrajong, right in the very thick of the Scarecrow Festival. Up to 7000 people strolled past our display last year, and we achieved our objective of raising people's awareness of the importance of the millstones. Many, many people said they had no idea what the millstones were, where they had come from, or why they were on display at Memorial Park.

This exhibition is important in educating our community about this historic items as Hawkesbury Council has a plan to move the millstones when it upgrades the pedestrian access to Memorial Park and we want to make sure that the Society is consulted in choosing the new location for this monument. The relocation would also be a good opportunity to review the signage accompanying the millstones. The Society would like to see a better explanation of the Wheeney Creek mill, the role of the millstones and the importance to early Kurrajong.

Pop by and say 'hi' to Les Dollin from **9am to 4pm on Sunday, October 18.**

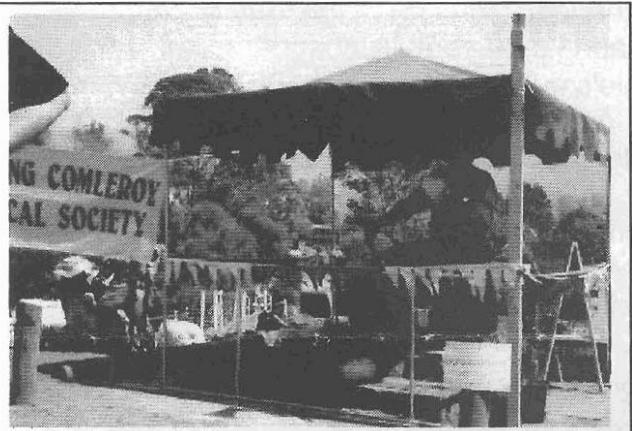
Look at some of our treasures

Dennis Simmons, who was our guest speaker at our combined dinner with the Rotary Club of Kurrajong-North Richmond in June, has also shared some of the treasures from his photo album with us - thanks Dennis.



Fascinated by our photos!

Page 2 includes a picture of the Kurrajong Heights Hotel, believed to be taken in the 1940s, and the second picture on page two is the fruit stall next door to the petrol station (now the BP) at Kurmond. The fruit shop was operated by Mr Stan Wilson from the mid 1950s to 1969. In 2001 the property was sold to John Gollan, owner of the BP. Mr Gollan has plans to extend the petrol station in 2003/4 to include 30 filling points. The picture on page two shows the original petrol station building was constructed from Bill Clark's concrete blocks, like the CWA hall.



After you've visited the millstones, be sure to come up to the CWA hall and view the "Hidden Treasures of Kurrajong" photo exhibition which will be open from 9am to 4pm on both Saturday and Sunday. Bring your money with you as we will be selling kurrajong trees, teaspoons, raffle tickets and a few other odds and sods.

Gathering the Information for a "Great Gathering of McMahons"

By Louise McMahon

Sorting through Mum's (Jean McMahon's) boxes of archives and photographs it is fascinating to gain a new perspective of the McMahon Family Reunion. I was a youngster when Mum organised the reunion and can recall the kitchen table piled high with letters, death certificates and jottings of family trees as Mum sorted out who belonged to who. As we only had a tiny house, and there was no office or desk, only the kitchen table to work on, rather than pack up and lose her place, Mum would often spread a tablecloth over all the paperwork so we could eat, and then she'd keep going where she left off.

Part of me now wishes I'd been more interested in the industry on the kitchen table - what an expert on local and family history I would now be - taught by one of the best. But children are rarely interested in family research until it is too late. I have a theory why. During the many months of research, planning and preparation, my job was to Keep Quiet and Not Interrupt. Certainly children are pesky and a nuisance underfoot, but if they aren't encouraged to take an interest, is it any wonder they don't? Of course now, as an adult I regret not being more involved. What am I going to do with all the boxes of Reunion material that have stayed mostly undisturbed at the bottom of Mum's wardrobe for 30 years?. It's like a mini- Dr Who Tardis, that wardrobe, able to transport me back in time. Letters scribbled by people saying they will be attending on Sept 16, or can't make it, or apologising at their handwriting cause they are rushing to catch the post. All the cursory "apologies" from local dignitaries who thought it too unimportant to attend, and then the later letters of regret (once they realised they could have had their picture in The Australian). And the receipts - Colo Shire Council acknowledging the \$20 paid to hire the park for the day, and account from Rubber Latex Laboratories at North Richmond (Hanna Match) for \$22.54 for 400 balloons. (Red, yellow, green and blue).

Another account from Tanglewood Screen Printers at Londonderry for 100 red ribbons, 100 green, 150 blue and 300 yellow (Worn to show which branch of the family each person belonged to - the yellows being the Thomas McMahons, Kathie's branch of the family, being the most fertile, obviously). And the bundles of letters of thanks.

"Dear Jean, Just a quick note to say a very big THANK YOU for all the sweat, tears and love you poured into the preparations for the Reunion. I hope its tremendous success has given you joy. What we saw would have taken a mountain of labour, but probably was only the tip of the iceberg. The collating of all those names, the working of the whole family tree, the printing of those charts, the tracking of down the family coat of arms and having it done on a wooden plaque and posters, the cleaning of the Church, arranging the gifts, contacting everyone and getting them to play their special roles etc, etc, etc, etc !!!!! "

In recognition of the 30th anniversary of the McMahon Family Reunion, and Mum's 35 years of dedicated family history research, and the fact it was her work that located Catharine's grave at Windsor and reawakened people's awareness of that 1867 tragedy, I have restored Catharine McMahon's headstone, as this was one of the few "to do's" on Mum's list that was left unfinished at the time of her death on March 13, 2003.

At Catharine's headstone, Sept, 2003



It was headlined as "A great Gathering of McMahons"

It was the McMahon Family Reunion, held 30 years ago on September 16, 1973 in McMahon Park, Kurrajong, attended by 730 family members and 150 guests who signed the visitors book.

While family reunions now are quite regular events, the McMahon Reunion in 1973 was one of the earliest to be held, and certainly one of the largest. That the idea was still quite a novelty in 1973 is evidenced by the fact that the national newspaper, *The Australian*, despatched a photographer to capture the event. The photo (below) appeared spread across page 3 of the broadsheet.

The reunion came about after Mrs Jean McMahon began researching family headstones in St Gregory's cemetery after Rowley McMahon joined with Vince McMahon and Phil Upton to establish the St Gregory's cemetery trust in 1969.

She decided to see how the families were connected, and how many living relatives she could contact.

She ended up with more than 1000 names, with 730 attending the reunion. Assisting her on the committee were Mrs Betty McMahon (Kathie's mother), Margaret McMahon and Biddy Armstrong. It was Jean's research that unlocked the story of Catherine Eather, nee McMahon, who drowned with her five children in the 1867 flood.

It was Jean's research which located Catharine's grave in the Windsor Catholic Cemetery (at the traffic lights at the corner of Richmond Road and George Street).

In March 2001 Jean applied to Hawkesbury Council (administrator of the cemetery) to restore Catharine's grave, which had been vandalised in 2000.



What's happening with La Tosca?

Bump into a KCHS member and the first thing they will ask is "What's happening with La Tosca?". The level of interest and concern about this heritage-listed Dunstan home is genuine and most heartening.

Newly-elected Society president, **Jennifer Stackhouse** contacted Hawkesbury City Council manager, building and development, Robert Montgomery to get the latest answer to the La Tosca question. Jennifer has contributed this report on that interview:

It has been more than six months since the appeal concerning the fate of La Tosca was heard in the NSW Land and Environment Court. The Court case was between the owners of La Tosca, and Hawkesbury City Council when the council rejected their application for demolition. The owners were ordered to restore the heritage house. No demolition is permitted on the site. Since that court date the owners have secured and weatherproofed the house with a cover over the roof and windows.

According to Hawkesbury City Council's building and development manager, Robert Mongomery, this is as far as the council can intervene. There is no time frame for future work.

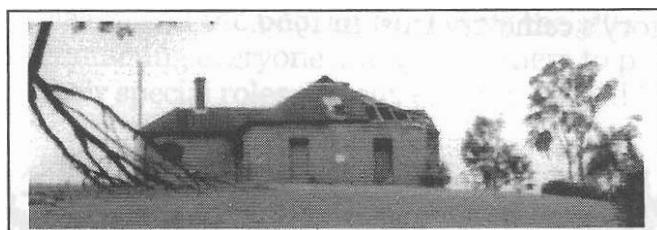
He is pleased to report that the property's owners have engaged a heritage architect who is investigating the available options. These include restoration, additions to the heritage house, future use and the available options. These include restoration, additions to the heritage house, future use and the construction of a second dwelling on the same property. This latter option may be possible under the council's heritage incentive scheme that allows the owners of heritage homes special considerations and approvals. It does not provide direct financial assistance.

"Normally the council would not be able to approve the building of second house on this property," Mr Montgomery explains.

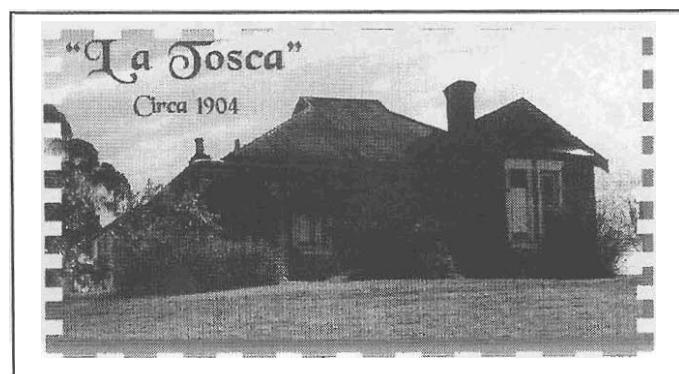
"However, for the owners of a heritage building, facing the expenses of restoration, the approval to build a second dwelling on the property may provide a second income, or could be used by family members.

"This type of incentive was offered to the owners of Buena Vista, a home directly opposite La Tosca. Both La Tosca and Buena Vista were built by the same Kurrajong family, the Dunstans. The second home on the Buena Vista property has been completed recently."

Mr Montgomerry says he is optimistic now about the future of La Tosca. The owners are talking to council, they've engaged a heritage architect and they've secured and weatherproofed the house, but restoration is not a quick process," he said.



Above: La Tosca in 2002, and last weekend, September 27, 2003.
Below: For sale, 2001.



Speaking of the Dunstons- What of Spring Grove?

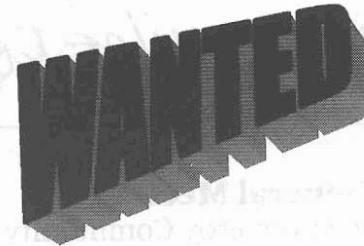
Society member, Mrs Betty Upton, has contributed some information to correct an item about Spring Grove at Kurrajong that appeared the last edition of the Millstone. The following is bits taken from a lengthy Gazette article, Saturday, December 18, 1909.

"Mr William Dunston, by Edwin Howell. (skip several flowery passages..... A more unselfish, hospitable, homely and sensible fruitgrower does not exist in this district. He was born at South Kurrajong, which is now known as Grose Vale, in 1845 on Box Hill farm, which was entailed property. He was the eldest son of 13 children and of course in time succeeded to Box Hill." (In a convoluted way the article explains that William's sons Charles and Claude inherited part of Box Hill). The article says at 21 William married Rachael Ball "whose father then owned the property now known as Spring Grove. Miss Ball was also born of Kurrajong, so we have a thoroughly native family.....

"Immediately after his marriage Mr Dunston obtained a life lease of the 70-acre farm from his father-in-law...". Rachael eventually inherited the farm and William bought 20 neighbouring acres from Quinns. He then bought 50 acres from Bouchers and 50 acres from Richard Holdsworth, according to the article. "He next fastened his gaze on Leary's and Kennedy's holdings of 60 acres and ... and to consolidate his property next added some 12 acres of Upp's.

"It must be admitted that in possessing land of a chocolate and dark loamy nature, and having Wheeney Creek and three others through the property, Mr Dunston has an advantage over some....

Mr Dunston's family consists of nine sons and three daughters, the eldest son being 48 years of age. The loss some time ago of the eldest daughter caused a grief which has never passed away. Eight sons have been placed on orchards surrounding the original 70 acres Spring Grove, the youngest son Carlton is looked upon as the bright jewel of the family"



Society members to assist at all KCHS events in October.

**Three or four people cannot run a supper with guest speakers, an official launch of our photo exhibition on view for two full days, plus mount a millstone display without some help.
With more than 100 KCHS members, a few extra hands on deck would be much appreciated
Please contact Joy Shepherd on 4571 1524 and sign on for a shift!
Even an hour or two will help make our events a success.**

for sale

*Rows of seats from the Kurrajong Picture Theatre. Authentic. Unique opportunity
Contact Megan on 4576 0033.*

The Millstone is written and edited by Kurrajong-Comleroy Historical Society secretary, Louise McMahon. Contributions are always welcome and acknowledged.

PO Box 174 Kurmond, NSW, 2757

Comleroy Community School of Arts: Drawing classes begin on Thursday, October 23 from 10am. Genda Ewin says everyone is capable of learning to draw. She can teach you. Phone 4576 0075.

Society milestones for our Millstone

- **Annual General Meeting**

Was held at the Comleroy Community School of Arts hall on Tuesday, August 19 at 7.30pm.

Our foundation president, Kathie McMahon had earlier advised the committee she did not intend to seek election to the position of president for 2003-2004 due to her many family issues. The committee extended its understanding for the many demands being made on Kathie's time by her family in Canada, and thanked her for her contribution. This thanks was endorsed by those attending the AGM.

Our new president for 2003-2004 is Jennifer Stackhouse; vice-president, Kathie McMahon; secretary, Louise McMahon; treasurer, Joy Shepherd; and committee members, Val Birch and Les Dollin are joined by new members, Pat O'Toole and Airdrie Martin.

While not a formal position on the committee, Marguerite Wyborn volunteered to take the role of "hospitality captain", overseeing that refreshments are provided at the meetings.

- **Thanks to guest speaker, Greg Upton**

Greg provided the meeting that followed with a fascinating account of a little-known road at the back of his home on Bowen Mountain. Greg is continuing to research this road and has agreed to take a members-only Society field trip to travel this "road less travelled", possibly in March on a date to be advised.

- **Annual Report, 2002-2003**

The report written by Society secretary, Louise has received a very strong and positive response. My thanks to treasurer, joy Shepherd for her assistance and to Jennifer Stackhouse for proof-reading.

- **Thanks to auditor, Tony Roberts**

We are very grateful to Mr Rpberts, a local CPA, for auditing our books, as this puts us on a very "professional" level.

- **Thanks to Mrs Gladys Vincent**

Joy's mother, and Society member, Mrs Vincent, has donated a laminating machine to the Society to assist us with our photo exhibition preparations. Thank you very much!

- **It's on again! The much rained-out Mackenzie Farm visit!**

Society members, Vera and Gerry Bentvelzen have invited us to hold our last meeting for the year, our December 16 "Christmas meeting" at McKenzie Farm. Members will recall that both dates when we were planning on visiting were rained out with torrential downpours. Let's risk breaking the drought by scheduling another visit.

Instead of gathering at Comleroy hall for our regular meeting on Tuesday, December 16, we will meet at Mackenzie Farm from 6pm for a barbecue and Christmas get-together.

This is a members-only event.

Vera will provide tea, coffee, condiments, and the barbecue, but it is a "bring all your own meat and other bits" affair.

Reflecting on the planning for the two abandoned events, Vera felt she would like to have known how many people to expect. So while there is no charge for the visit, please phone **Joy Shepherd on 4571 1524 to book by Sunday evening, December 14.**

- **Louisa Atkinson, Day of Tribute, Sunday, November 23**

For the second year our Society will join with our near neighbours, the Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine Historical Society and the Mount Tomah Botanic Garden to present a Day or Tribute to world-recognised botanist and one-time Kurrajong Heights resident, Louisa Atkinson. Special guest speaker will be published Louisa expert, author, Patricia Clark. Cost is \$15 for the 9am guided walk to see Louisa's plant; \$15 to hear the talks, starting at 2pm. Afternoon tea served.
Book with Jan Allen on 4567-3017