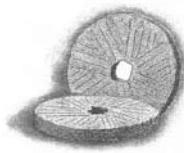


# THE



# MILLSTONE

KURRAJONG - COMLEROY HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC

PO Box 174 Kurmond, NSW, 2757

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 4; MAY-JUNE 2006

*The Kurrajong-Comleroy Historical Society is dedicated to researching, recording, preserving and championing the history of "the Kurrajong", the district bounded by the Hawkesbury River at North Richmond, the Grose River, "Cut Rock" at Kurrajong Heights, along Comleroy and Blaxlands Ridge Roads to East Kurrajong, and to the Colo River. "The Millstone" refers to the Little Wheeney Creek millstones on display at Kurrajong Memorial Park. Logo designed for the Society by artist Tony Dixon.*

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*Top: 203 guests gather outside the Upper Colo Anglican Church during its centenary celebrations [Photo by Valerie Holland].*

*Above: Joy and Phillip Shepherd, their grandson Ben Renaud, Valerie Birch, Peter and Airdrie Martin, Valerie and Frank Holland and Les and Anne Dollin stand next to a sulky in the church grounds [Photo supplied by Valerie Holland].*

*See story on page 6.*

# News & Information

Compiled by Jennifer Stackhouse



## Archiving your documents

Where do you keep those special family photographs and precious documents? In a shoebox under the bed? Years ago, many of us got caught with those wretched sticky photo albums which ended up discolouring and ruining our photos.

Would you like to know how to archive them correctly, for the future generations?

The society is having a full day workshop on just this subject. We have arranged for Kylie Rees, the Archivist for the Royal Australian Historical Society to come to the Deerubbin Centre in Windsor on Tuesday, 8 August from 9 am to 3 pm. Kylie will bring the materials along with her, which will be available for sale, and show us ‘hands on’ how we should be looking after our treasures. The workshop is being organised in conjunction with Hawkesbury Family History Group, and charges are still being finalised.

For further details and to register your interest please call Joy Shepherd on (02) 4571 1524.

## Positions vacant

A big thanks to Robyn Fuller, who has taken over the task of supplying name tags to members attending our events. We are looking a whole lot smarter with our personalised tags, complete with our Millstone logo. If anyone out there would just like to help us in some other small way, we do have lots of other tasks that need a helping hand. Being more involved in the KCHS is fun and rewarding.

**Mail out co-ordinator:** Joy Shepherd is no longer able to be responsible for the printing and mailing of ‘The Millstone’ each two months. This vital job entails purchasing the pre-paid envelopes, stamping return address on the back, purchasing the A3 paper for printing, picking up the completed address labels from the treasurer, along with any receipts etc to be included in mailout, taking the copy to the printer in Windsor, collecting the completed newsletters a couple of days later, and folding them, putting them

in the envelopes and mailing them out! The costs of purchases will be reimbursed from our funds. Benefits: First to read the newsletter!

**Photographer:** The district is changing daily before our very eyes, particularly in North Richmond and Kurmond. The society now has its own digital camera. Is there anyone out there who would be willing to get out on the streets and do some recording for the future? These cameras are dead set easy to work, doesn’t matter how many pictures you take, and if you don’t like them, you just wipe them and have another go!

**Archiving:** Another project we would like to start requires the archiving of Births, Deaths, Marriages, Obituaries and other items of interest from our local papers. We just need someone to scan the papers each week, cut out these articles, and archive them into albums. You can work at home! It would be great if someone with a little time on their hands who already enjoys reading the local papers would be prepared to start this project. This will become a valuable asset when we do actually find a home. Once again all costs will be reimbursed.

If you have some time to contribute and an interest in any of these jobs, please contact Frank Holland on (02) 4573 2226.

## Kurrajong’s radio museum



KCHS member Ian O’Toole has a passion for radio. Historic radios and radio equipment particularly with a military connection. His museum has blossomed on the site of the old Pixie Mushroom farm. It will be open and on display to the members who join our film night in late May.

“The official title of the museum is Kurrajong Radio Museum,” explains Ian. “People with the net could check it out by searching Kurrajong Radio Museum on Google.”

The site will even tell them how to get here he adds! And he promises there are hundreds of pictures of the museum on the website. “The museum is the culmination of close to 5 years of radio collecting,” says Ian. “Prior to moving here the radios were part of the Castle Hill Military Radio Collection, which I operated for 20 odd years.

“The main thrust of the collection is in the area of radios from the armed services and it is recognised by many as one of the world’s most diverse collections of service radio equipment,” says Ian. “It also contains professional, commercial, broadcasting and domestic components of some significance.

“Much of the equipment is in working order which makes it very unusual for a museum of this type.”

The museum is very hands on. “Visitors are able to listen to radios, listen to old radio programs and try their hand at morse code,” Ian explains.

He promises his collection is not just for radio buffs. “It has been specifically designed to have universal appeal,” he says. “The aim is to have visiting groups from various organisations visit by appointment as well as being open at weekends for the general public.”

We are getting a sneak preview. For details of the film night, see page 8.

## New Members

By Joy Shepherd

We are pleased to welcome **Ron Madden** of North Richmond as a new member to our society.

Ron’s roots go way back in the Hawkesbury. He is a member of the Elizabeth Celey Family Research Group, and of course, a direct descendent of Elizabeth Celey, who was tried in Somerset for stealing apparel in 1795. She was transported “Beyond the Seas” for a term of seven years, arriving in Sydney on 18 July 1798. She married John Rogers in 1798, and all three of her daughters settled in North Richmond and Kurrajong in the early 1800s.

Ron has always had a keen interest in family and local history. In fact, in some circles he is known as ‘Mr History’. Like the Shepherds, the Madden family have had four generations attending Kurmond Primary school, and he was very involved in the recent 85th Anniversary celebrations. Ron has already been very willing to share his knowledge, research and photographs with the Society, so we are now really happy to have him as a full member.



# SOCIETY'S LIBRARY COLLECTION GROWS STRONG



**Under the able stewardship of archivist Val Birch, our collection of books and other material is continuing to grow. Many of the books in the library have been donated by members and we thank them for the kindness and generosity. Val Birch has provided the following list as a record of acquisitions and donations. Books are available for reference or borrowing. For more information, contact Val on (02) 4573 2346.**

St. Gregory's Catholic Church Kurrajong.  
Compiled by Rita Crane and Margaret McMahon  
Donated by Vera and Gerry Bentvelzen

Sacred to the Memory. A study of Wilberforce Cemetery.  
By Cathy and Nicholas McHardy  
Donated by Vera and Gerry Bentvelzen

Back from the Brink. Blue Gum Forest and the Grose Wilderness  
By Andy McQueen  
Donated by Vera and Gerry Bentvelzen

The Commandants  
The Tyrants who Ruled Norfolk Island  
By M. G. Britts  
Donated by Vera Bentvelzen

Convict Kingston  
By Nan Smith  
Donated by Vera Bentvelzen

Hell and Paradise  
The Norfolk – Bounty – Pitcairn Saga  
From Shearwater Press  
Donated by Vera Bentvelzen

Bilpin. A Local History  
By Meredyth Hungerford.  
Donated by Meredyth Hungerford.

A History of Comleroy Rd Wesleyan Methodist Church Kurrajong  
Compiled by Patricia Willmott.  
Donated by Patricia Willmott

A Little Girl living on Blaxlands Ridge in the 1930's  
Reminiscences of Eda Moss nee Kirkwood.  
Donated by Eda Moss

Louisa Atkinson of the Kurrajong  
Donated by Thelma Groch

Pioneer Writer. The life of Louisa Atkinson  
By Patricia Clarke  
Donated by Jennifer Stackhouse

Tom Hellicar's Children  
By Louisa Atkinson  
Donated by Jennifer Stackhouse.

The First Generation Wollemi Pines  
Collectors Edition  
Donated by Jennifer Stackhouse

The Black and White of Kurrajong  
Drawings of the Kurrajong District  
By Tony Dixon  
Donated by Jennifer Stackhouse

WWI Hawkesbury Heroes. Volume One and Volume Two  
Windsor and Richmond Gazette newspaper extracts reports and letters from the front  
Compiled by Rod and Wendy Gow and Val Birch  
Donated by Valerie Birch

The Blue Mountains – Bells Line Tourism Book  
Donated by Valerie Birch

Bush Schools  
Past and Present of Patrick Plains  
Compiled by Singleton Historical Society  
Donated by Valerie Birch

Comboyne  
Chronicles of the early days  
By Rod and Wendy Gow  
Donated by Valerie Birch

Australia 1828 Census Report on North Richmond of New South Wales  
From the Library of Australian History  
Donated by Valerie Birch

Highways and By-Ways of the Sydney Region  
Pencil Drawings of 19th Century barns, buildings, farmhouses and cottages  
By Daphne Kingston  
Donated by Daphne Kingston

The Hawkesbury River Traders  
By Jean Purcell  
Donated by Comleroy Road Public School

A History of Comleroy Road Public School established 1880  
Compiled by Comleroy Road Public School

The Rocks – Sydney a changing place 1855  
40 Educational photographs  
Compiled by Comleroy Road Public School

Memories of Yesteryear Volume 3  
A collection of stories from the Hawkesbury  
Compiled by Kathie McMahon

On the Kurrajong  
Compiled by Val Birch  
Published by the Kurrajong Comleroy Historical Society

Kurrajong An Early History  
By Vivienne Webb  
Purchased by the Kurrajong Comleroy Historical Society

Somewhat perilous  
The journeys of Singleton, Parr, Howe, Myles and Blaxland  
In the Northern Blue Mountains  
By Andy Macqueen  
Purchased by the Kurrajong Comleroy Historical Society

Shingles Slabs and Sandstone  
A history of early Singleton district homes to 1870  
Compiled by the Singleton Historical Society  
Donated by the Singleton Historical Society

Ben Singleton 1788 – 1853 Pioneer  
Compiled by Kath Mahaffey  
Donated by the Singleton Historical Society

The Males Family Tree  
Compiled by Gwen Barclay  
Donated by Gwen Barclay

Pansy The Richmond to Kurrajong Railway  
From Tourist Railway Association Kurrajong Inc.  
Donated by TRAK

Poems by Gladys Conolan  
Illustrated by Bryan Evans  
Donated by Lola Conolan

A Brief History of St. Gregory's Catholic Church Old Bells Line of Road, Kurrajong New South Wales  
Compiled by Cathy McHardy from research by Rita Crane  
Donated by Cathy McHardy

Recollections of Pioneer John Allan  
Manning River and Liverpool Plains 1828 – 1876  
Transcribed by Rod and Wendy Gow  
Donated by Rod and Wendy Gow

Kurmond Public School 1920 – 1995  
Produced by the 75th Anniversary Celebration Committee of 1995  
Compiled by Gladys Vincent

Outback Heroes  
By Patsy Adam-Smith  
Donated by Gladys Vincent

Australia's Yesterday  
A look at our recent past  
From Readers Digest Services Pty. Ltd.  
Donated by Gladys Vincent

Hawkesbury Heritage  
By Stan Stevens  
Donated by Gladys Vincent

Footsteps along the Ridge  
The first 125 years of Kurrajong East Public School  
By Kurrajong East Public School History Committee  
Purchased by the Kurrajong Comleroy Historical Society

The Macquarie Schoolhouse and St. John's Church Wilberforce  
From St. John's Church of England at Wilberforce  
Purchased by the Kurrajong Comleroy Historical Society

Byways of Steam with section on the Richmond Branch  
Eveleigh Press  
Purchased by the Kurrajong Comleroy Historical Society

Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society  
December 2005  
Volume 91 Part 2

Longleat to Kurmond  
The Journey of a Soldier Settlement School 1920 – 2005  
From Kurmond Public School  
Purchased by the Kurrajong Comleroy Historical Society

Some Ups and Downs of an Old Richmondite.  
Reminiscences of Alfred Smith written in 1910  
And published in the Windsor and Richmond Gazette  
Purchased by the Kurrajong Comleroy Historical Society

Pictorial History of Hawkesbury  
Compiled by Michelle Nichols  
Purchased by the Kurrajong Comleroy Historical Society

The Coloites  
History of the Colo River Valley 1789 – 1945  
By Diana Hazard  
Purchased by the Kurrajong Comleroy Historical Society

When We Were Boys Together  
Reminiscences of the Hawkesbury District  
By J. C. L. Fitzpatrick  
Purchased by the Kurrajong Comleroy Historical Society

The Good Old Days  
As recalled by Elizabeth Rhodes  
Purchased by the Kurrajong Comleroy Historical Society

The Westbury Story  
1897 – 1997  
Compiled by Olga Williams to celebrate the centenary of the building of Westbury  
Donated by Bill Sorby

Wilberforce Public School  
Striving for Success through 125 years  
For the 125th celebrations of Wilberforce Public School in October 2005  
Purchased by the Kurrajong Comleroy Historical Society

Oral History Handbook  
By Beth M. Robertson  
Purchased by the Kurrajong Comleroy Historical Society

Copyright for Book Publishers  
Australian Copyright Council  
Purchased by the Kurrajong Comleroy Historical Society

Where is Grandma's Teapot?  
Record Keeping for Historical Museums  
Purchased by the Kurrajong Comleroy Historical Society

Books held by the Kurrajong Comleroy Historical Society  
As at 9th March 2006

# THE HIDDEN HISTORY OF THE OLD GRAIN ROAD OF THE HAWKESBURY

On Tuesday 21 February 2006, 19 members of KCHS followed leader Les Dollin along the historic Grain Road. Anne and Les Dollin tell the story.

Most drivers whizzing along today's Kurmond Road would be quite unaware of the historic significance of this road - one of the earliest government roads built in the very first days of Kurrajong's history. This fascinating road was then known as the Grain Road.

The old Grain Road was a convict built road that originally ran from the Singleton brothers' grain mills on Little Wheeny Creek to Wilberforce on the

Hawkesbury River. Bullock teams used to haul heavy loads of grain up the Grain Road to the mills where the wheat was ground into flour. Then the bags of flour were hauled back down this old road to Wilberforce to be loaded on sailing ships bound for old Sydney Town.

The KCHS Grain Road Trip in February started at Arthur and Sue Quigley's cafe in the Kurmond Newsagency. Over delicious scones, tea and coffee, Les Dollin took the group for a journey back in time to the origins of the old Grain Road, now known as Kurmond Road.

## The Old Grain Road story

The history of the old Grain Road revolves around two talented and capable brothers, Benjamin and James Singleton who built water-operated grain mills at Little Wheeny Creek. Their story begins in Portsmouth, England, over 200 years ago.

In 1791 more than 400 convicts, military corps and crew were boarding 'The Pitt', an overcrowded sailing ship bound for Port Jackson. Amongst the miserable passengers boarding that day was four year old Benjamin Singleton.

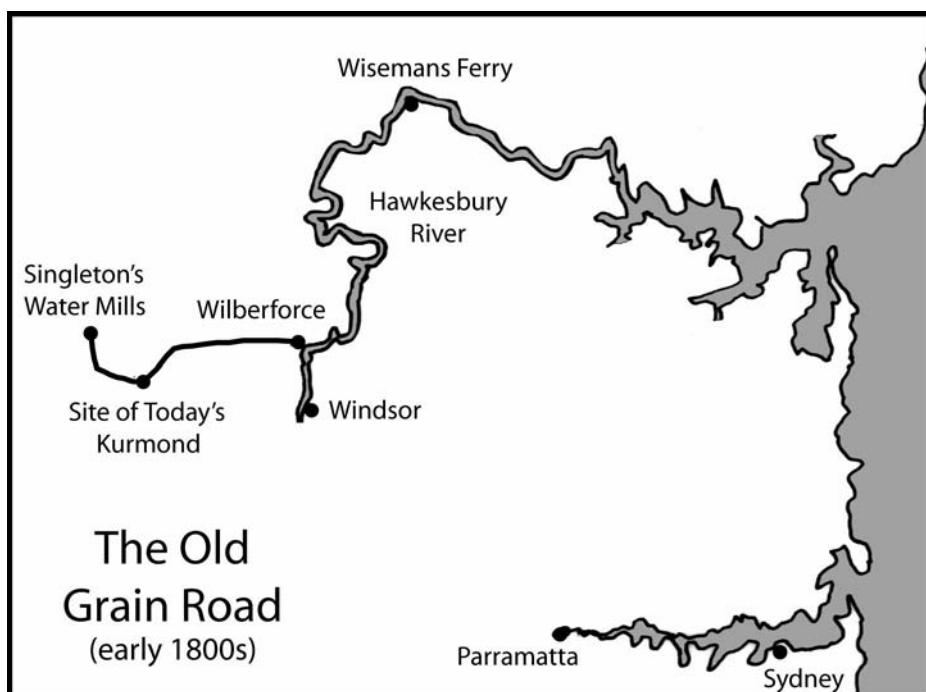
Benjamin's father, William Singleton, originally a farmer, had been working as a porter in London. One day William had picked up a parcel of linen left for delivery outside a warehouse and he tied it up in his apron. Unfortunately for William, the head porter, John Martin, caught him and William found himself at the Old Bailey facing charges

of feloniously stealing 27 yards of calico valued at 27 shillings. Despite the testimony of four character witnesses William was sentenced to seven years transportation to NSW. William's wife, Hannah, was encouraged to go to NSW too for the "sake of the colony". Their eldest son, James, then aged about 14, may have been apprenticed to a trade at that time because the family decided to leave him behind in England. Hannah, with just her two younger sons, Benjamin and Joseph, joined William as guests of the Crown on 'The Pitt', headed for Sydney, Australia.

After a perilous 30 week voyage on which many died, suffering from extreme heat, storms, the flux (gastroenteritis), scurvy

established a water-operated overshot grain mill. He called his mill the 'Speedwell'. Later Benjamin Singleton and his brother, James, built a second mill lower down Little Wheeny Creek to handle the huge demand for grinding grain.

In 1814 the value of wheat in the colony rose sharply due to a series of great floods, droughts and caterpillar plagues that had nearly brought the colony to starvation point. Governor Macquarie issued a decree that 10 shillings per bushel would be paid for wheat delivered to the King's Stores at Sydney. As a result settlers planted wheat everywhere and the wheat fields expanded from the Hawkesbury flood plains all the way up to Kurrajong.



*The trade route of the flour from the Singleton brothers' mills at Kurrajong via the old Grain Road to Wilberforce and then via ship along the Hawkesbury River to the King's Stores at Sydney and Parramatta in the early 1800s.*

and small pox, the convicts and settlers arrived in Sydney Harbour in February 1792. On their arrival, there were only two free women and two free boys in the colony. Benjamin and Joseph Singleton were those two boys.

By 1797 William Singleton had served his time and took up 90 acres at Mulgrave Place along the Hawkesbury River between Windsor and Pitt Town. William and Hannah put 60 acres under wheat and maize and had six more children. Then in 1808 the Singletons were reunited with their eldest son James, now about 30, who arrived as a free settler on 'The Aelous'.

The tall English wheat growing on the river flats would be worth much more if it were ground into flour. In 1810 Benjamin Singleton took up land at Little Wheeny Creek and

had ship building yards opposite Grano Point near Pitt Town. Grano owned a ship with an intriguing connection with the Little Wheeny Creek water mills.

John Grano owned an 18 ton sloop that carried grain on the Hawkesbury River. In 1804 this ship ran aground in Broken Bay and as all efforts to rescue her failed, Grano abandoned her. However, the ship was purchased "at all hazards" by Andrew Thompson who, with two other ships and 20 hands, succeeded in refloating her. This ship was called the 'Speedwell', a name later adopted by Benjamin Singleton for his first water mill on Little Wheeny Creek.

Bags of flour from the Singleton brothers' mills were hauled down the old Grain Road to be loaded on the grain ships at Wilberforce, bound for Sydney Town. The

## The Hawkesbury River trade

All of this wheat growing in the Hawkesbury increased the demand for transportation and a thriving shipping industry grew up along the Hawkesbury River. At that time the river was deep enough to allow sailing ships to carry cargo all the way up to the Hawkesbury district and ship builders became established on the river banks.

One of the best known ship builders was John Grano who

ships would then sail over 130km down the winding Hawkesbury River to Wisemans Ferry and on to Pittwater. Here the ships sheltered until the weather was favourable then the ships ventured out into the perilous open ocean to sail down into Port Jackson.

This marathon shipping journey was considered easier than hauling grain by bullock team down the notorious Windsor Road to Parramatta and Sydney. Furthermore, although the journey by ship was three times as long as the journey by land, the shipping freight was only two thirds the price of hauling it overland.

So the old Grain Road became a vital link between the Singleton brothers' water-operated mills on Little Wheeny Creek and Wilberforce, where the thriving shipping industry carried the flour onwards to the young colony.



## 1833 Grain Road map found!

In August 2005, 17 KCHS members toured the State Archives at Kingswood and spent the afternoon searching for old maps and documents about the Grain Road. A major find of the day was an original 1833 parchment map showing the route of the old Grain Road from Kurrajong to Wilberforce. This hand-painted map was entitled the 'Survey of Roads in the Districts of Wilberforce and the Kurrajong'. This map was marked A2 and belongs to a series of road maps showing the Kurrajong area in the 1830s.

Les had a copy of this old 1833 parchment map on display for the Grain Road Trip. The river was painted in blue, showing all the wharves, ferries and fords accessible from the Grain Road. The owners of early properties that the Grain Road passed through included (starting at the Kurrajong end) Rouse, Baldwin, Gosport, Raby, Cobcroft, Lock, Robinson, Malony, Dargan, Howarth, Dunstan and Atkins. The map showed several deviations, with the road then in use marked in colour.



*KCHS members on the Grain Road trip outside the historic schoolhouse / chapel at Wilberforce. [Photo courtesy Les Dollin].*

## Travelling on The Old Grain Road

Fortified by our Quig's Cafe scones and tea and inspired by this story, the group followed the old Grain Road down to Wilberforce. The old Grain Road follows a natural ridge line descending gradually from Kurrajong to the Hawkesbury River. The gentle grades of this unique route enabled the bullock teams to haul heavier loads between the river and the mills. Les encouraged the group as they drove down the road to imagine being teamsters driving bullock teams hauling bags of flour from Singleton's Mills bound for Sydney Town via the mighty grain ships of the Hawkesbury.

## Historical Wilberforce

At Wilberforce, Rev. Geoff Bates, senior minister of St John's Anglican Church, gave our group a fascinating tour of the 1820 schoolhouse/chapel and the original church built in 1859. This schoolhouse/chapel is the only survivor of four such buildings commissioned by Governor Macquarie.

The schoolhouse has been lovingly restored and the soft handmade brickwork has just been painted again to protect it. The ground floor with its low doorways used to be the schoolmaster's residence and it was fascinating to climb the stairs to the second storey schoolroom where the children used to study 180 years ago. Through the schoolroom window you could see, on the nearby church wall, a unique vertical sundial which the schoolmaster used to watch so he would know what time school was over.

After touring the old church we looked over the valley to see how close Pitt Town

is to Wilberforce - these two sister settlements are just on opposite sides of the river. The settlers did not regard the river as a barrier in those days but crossed it frequently using the Pitt Town Ferry.

Finally we took a fascinating stroll around the historic Wilberforce cemetery with headstones dating back to 1816 and burials as early as 1811. Graves of First and Second Fleeters can be seen, such as that of Matthew Everingham, 1817. Other familiar names represented in this graveyard include Becroft, Bowd, Cobcroft, Dunstan, Farlow, Gosper, Greentree, Izzard, Rose, Stubbs and Turnbull. Historical Windsor The group then went on to the

Windsor Museum in Thompsons Square to see relics of George Howell's early water-operated grain mill from the Hawkesbury District of Yarramundi and photographs, documents and artefacts of the Hawkesbury river trade. After a picnic lunch in the park, we visited Windsor's new Deerubbin Centre. Curator, Kathleen von Witt, opened up the art gallery especially for us so that we could see the spectacular ceramic and painting exhibitions by Les Blakebrough and Peter Cooley. Then Lending Services Librarian, Cathy McHardy, showed us around the excellent new facilities of the central library. Cathy, who is also a KCHS member, received the society's annual award in January 2006 for an outstanding contribution to local history. As a final highlight of the day, Cathy treated us to a behind the scenes tour of the Local Studies Collection. In a temperature controlled back room of the library is a treasure house of the district's old books, photographs and newspapers. Highly respected researcher, Michelle Nichols, another KCHS member, showed us examples of the valuable records, old Hawkesbury photographs, rare books and family donated items carefully preserved in the collection.

Floods, droughts and caterpillar plagues and the poor performance of early windmills nearly brought the early colony to starvation point in the early 1800s. Kurrajong's mills, the old Grain Road from Kurrajong to Wilberforce (a crucial haulage route that is now Kurmond Road) and the Hawkesbury River sailing ships played a vital role in the survival of the early colony of Sydney. Kurrajong should be very proud of its historic water-operated grain mills and the old Grain Road.

# UPPER COLO ANGLICAN CHURCH CELEBRATES CENTENARY

On a beautiful mild, clear sunny April Sunday morning 203 people filled the Upper Colo Anglican Church and its adjacent grassed area to join together in a commemoration and thanksgiving service to mark that church's centenary. Valerie Holland reports on this event which marked a major milestone in the history of the Upper Colo.

Two groups of guests gave the occasion a nostalgic atmosphere by arriving at the church in single horse drawn buggies. 'Coloites', ex-residents, friends and a group of 10 representing the Kurrajong-Comleroy Historical Society, shared this significant milestone in the life of this church and the community.

The old church, standing on the hill beside Comleroy Road as it leads to the Colo River, had been lovingly restored for the occasion. It was evident that many hours of labour had been employed on installing a new roof, new internal lighting and painting the internal walls white. Small multi-coloured glass paned arched windows add to the simplicity of this lovely building. Outside the church attention had been given to beautifying the grounds of both the church and its small cemetery and in the installation of a new ablution building.

## Pastoral care from Wilberforce

Reverend Geoff Bates, whose main pastoral care is the historic St Johns Anglican Church at Wilberforce, welcomed everyone to the service. He told of the church being originally opened on 5 April 1906, before 200 people, under the auspices of the Church of England. This was later the Anglican community when the church administration changed its name.

Reverend Bates talked about the difficulties that the early settlers had encountered in the 1800s, when the Colo River was the lifeblood of the community. He also emphasised the importance the settlers placed on their commitment to the church. Settlers were fiercely independent and lived for their family, community and their God. As many had large families, they only managed to survive by hard work. One hundred years later there had been considerable change. There were now no community halls in the valley and few operating churches. However



he said there were still lessons to be learned today, from the sacrifices that the early settlers were willing to make for the welfare of their families and the community.

## History of site

The original grantee of the land on which the Church was later constructed was Henry Hoile, who received his grant of 80 acres in 1823. Mr Thomas Gosper Junior bought the land from Mr Hoile in 1835 and later, in 1857, donated three quarters of an acre for a school and burial ground to the Church of England. A building was erected in that year. The history of Colo has been recorded in 'The Coloites' by Diana Hazard. In her book she writes: "From 1857 a building used as a combined school and church existed alongside the burial ground."

Brian (Mate) Gosper, a descendant of Thomas Roker Gosper, gave a few glimpses of the history of the church which had at one time had been part of the Kurrajong Parish. He said the church looked the best it had been in 30 years.

Brian told of the bricks having been made of clay, dug from the area and the construction as having been of the English stress style, in which there are full and half bricks utilised.

He explained that at one time there had been a dispute in the Gosper family about the usage of the building and the burial ground. As a result one member of the family refused to use the church or the burial ground.

After the Church service, visitors wandered through the small cemetery to ponder on the lives and dreams of those who had once been members of the community. Many poignant

stories were left untold, including that of the first burial of Charlotte Gill, "who died of a fall from her horse in 1842" (from 'The Coloites' by Diana Hazard). Another was of an old aboriginal man, Billy Tom, of whom it is said had "lived in a cave along the Colo River" and used to do odd jobs round the district, for which food was his payment. Tom died in 1923 and is thought to have been buried in his canoe in the lower right hand side of the burial ground where a simple metal cross stands.

Lunch was provided in the park grounds of the Somerset camping facility next to the Colo River, served on tables shaded by large eucalypts and some introduced trees. Guests enjoyed the opportunity of rekindling old associations and swapping many stories and photos of the past.

## Gosper House

Historic Gosper House built in 1870 on part of the original 80 acre land grant that was bought by Thomas Gosper Junior from Mr Hoile was kindly opened as part of the celebrations by the present owners Howard and Cheryl Smith. This delightful old residence has commanding views of the valley and is shaded by a number of beautiful trees. Visitors wandered up the sandstone stairs to the main entrance and paused to notice the 'S' shape style of the veranda's corrugated iron roofing. Inviting verandas shelter all sides of the building. The outside of the house has a warm ochre wash that covers the hand made bricks, the same bricks as those used in the building of the Upper Colo Church. Inside tall ceilings, thick timber doors and wide floor timbers give a warm ambience. The old kitchen has exposed brickwork and a large hearth.

At one time a mail sorting depot, later to be Upper Colo post office and telephone exchange, operated from a small room built onto the back of the kitchen. It was here in the early days drovers including Snowy Dubois, the last cattle drover to on Comleroy Road, used to collect droving permits.

The house has been sensitively restored over the past 10 years by the present owners, with some additions in bathing

and plumbing facilities to make life more comfortable.

## The Captain's House

Wal (Walter) Jones' former residence, commonly called by locals the Captain's House, housed a display of historic records and books arranged for the celebration.

Wal Jones had been captain of the river boat 'The Surprise' which had been part of a vibrant river trade and the life blood of the early Colo community. It had taken passengers and goods back and forth along the river as far as Brooklyn. His house, now part of the Somerset property, is a gracious old building of weatherboard construction, with inviting verandas, tall pressed metal ceilings and solid timber doors and floors. It has been altered to enable it to be used as quarters for the Somerset Centre and is now named "Somerset".

Arthur Crichton, owner of the Somerset Camping Complex, concluded the official proceedings and children were given the opportunity to ride in the horse drawn buggies in the park-like grounds of "Somerset".

*Acknowledgements: We are grateful to Wanda Deacon, secretary of the Upper Colo Valley Historical Society, Wendy Ward from the church restoration group and Arthur Crichton of Somerset, for inviting KCHS members to share in this centenary celebration.*

## New Members

By Valerie Holland

The Society warmly welcomes **George Patrick Henderson**. Originally from Ireland, George worked for many years in sales and marketing for the Dunlop company. This gave him the opportunity to travel the world. He spent some time living in New Zealand, where he watched the construction of the Auckland Bridge, which joined the city with the north shore. George returned to Ireland for a while, before visiting Australia to inspect cricket grounds. In 1961, at the end of this inspection tour, he learned that his father had died, so he decided to remain in Australia. Two years later George met his future wife, who was an Australian teacher of Irish descent. The pair moved to Castle Hill. After the death of his wife in 1997, his two daughters commenced discussions with him about moving closer to some of the family and have been helpful in assisting him. George recently made the move to Kurrajong and is happy to be near his daughter Felicity, her husband Brett and his granddaughter Shaelyn.

## MAKE A BEQUEST

Having our own premises in Kurrajong is one of the long-term goals of the Kurrajong Comleroy Historical Society. With current real estate prices it may seem unattainable but what if we are lucky enough to find a benefactor? Valerie and Frank Holland tell the story of how a benefactor helped a local historical society in the Blue Mountains.

On a recent visit to the Blue Mountains Historical Society's home at Wentworth Falls we were impressed by the facilities this group enjoys – a building with a meeting area, research room, kitchen and other facilities adjacent to an historic building which is furnished as a house museum.

The society was established in 1946. One of its biggest moves forward came from a bequest of the remaining parcel of land of a former 50 acre property, formerly owned by John McLaughlin. This incorporated historic 'Tarella Cottage', completed in 1920 and built by John McLaughlin as a mountain holiday home for his family. It was built on land granted at one pound per acre in 1879.

Over the years the land was subdivided. John's daughter Beryl purchased the cottage and land in 1937. It was used as a holiday home until 1953 when Beryl moved in full time with her recently widowed sister, Ida. In 1967 following further subdivision of the original property, Beryl had erected (at her own cost and to her own design) a museum building. This now forms the western part of the building now used as the historical society's headquarters.

Beryl was one of the first female architecture students and the University of Sydney and was a founder of the Blue Mountains Historical Society. Beryl McLaughlin died two months before her 100th birthday in 1988. Just before her death she transferred the other half of the subdivided land and the cottage 'Tarella'



to the historical society, and on her death left the remainder of her estate to the society. This very generous bequest provided the society with a means for growth. The land bequest is approximately 3 acres (1.5ha).<sup>1</sup>

With grant funds and much voluntary labour the society was able to extend the original museum to include a modern research centre. The building now contains two main rooms separated by a hall, kitchen and toilets. The main rooms are a large meeting room fitted out with seats from an old theatre and decorated with historic paintings and displays. The other room is dedicated to research and contains a well stocked library, a number of microfiche readers, numerous filing cabinets, compactors and systems for storing maps, photos and documents. Over the years much of the furnishings have been donated by local businesses, individuals and by local council. The original cottage, 'Tarella', has been preserved and houses a display of historic artefacts and furnishings including some McLaughlin family pieces and is a joy to tour.

The above is a story of growth and development that is mirrored in many other localities. With our very young society (now five years old) we look forward to one day having a similar facility so that the rich history of the Kurrajong district can be preserved for future generations. If you are thinking of making a bequest to a worthwhile cause we ask you to consider our need. Any and all donations would be most welcome.

### *More information*

Please contact Frank Holland, Project Officer, on 4573 2226 for information or to obtain a bequest form. 'Tarella' is in Falls Road, Wentworth Falls and is open four times a year.

### *Footnote*

<sup>1</sup> Information from 'The McLaughlin Family and Tarella' by B. Craven, 1995.



## Dates For your diary

### \* Tuesday 9 to Wednesday 10 May – On the Bell's Line of Road

There is still a chance to join our exciting overnight exploration of the Bells Line of Road from Kurrajong to Hartley. We will visit Mt Tomah Botanic Gardens, Bell, Mt Victoria and Hartley and many other points of interest. Learn how the road was built and find out about the families who lived on and used the road. The tour is led by Les Dollin. Guest speaker at our evening dinner will be Trish Downes, who will talk about families of the area.

Where: Travel by individual car (car pooling available).

Time: 9.00am departure

Cost: \$99 (accommodation, dinner and breakfast). All other meals at own expense. Overnight accommodation including dinner, bed and breakfast has been arranged at the Manor House, Mt Victoria for \$99 (per person, twin share). If you are intending to join this excursion, please forward a deposit and booking fee of \$30 in total as soon as possible.

More information: Frank and Valerie Holland (02) 4573 2226

### \* Monday 29 May – Film night

Join us for an old fashioned night at the movies. Films to be screened date from the 1930s to the present day with 'The Squatters Daughter', 'A Nation is Built' and the recently released 'Devils Wilderness', a film which charts the retracing of the route of George Caley from Kurrajong to Mt Tomah. As a bonus we will explore Ian O'Toole's Radio Museum.

Where: Kurrajong Radio Museum, 842

Bells Line of Road, Kurrajong Hills (located on northern side of road). Some parking on the property.

Time: 7.30pm on

Cost: \$5 (plus packets of Jaffas for sale, byo mug for coffee and tea)

More information: Ian and Pat O'Toole (02) 4573 0601

### \* Tuesday 13 June – Day outing, Kurrajong

A chance to explore one of Kurrajong's historic properties and enjoy a picnic lunch. Where: Meet at Memorial Park, Kurrajong Village. Car pooling available.

Time: 11am

Cost: No charge, but byo lunch and thermos.

More information: Kathie McMahon on (02) 4567 7105.

### \* Sunday 23 July - Midwinter Dinner

This year our usual Midwinter Dinner will be a daytime event. We will be enjoying 'Christmas in July' on the Hawkesbury Paddlewheeler. Meet at 11.45 am at Windsor wharf for a 12 noon departure and returning at 2.30 pm. We will be served with a traditional Christmas dinner as we explore and learn more about the early days of the Hawkesbury River.

Cost: \$30 per head (drinks not included but can be purchased on board).

#### Coming events

- \* August 8th (time and cost to be confirmed): Archiving workshop (see story page 2)
- \* Monday 25 September: AGM and trivia night
- \* Monday 27 November: Lecture evening with Laurie Duffy

#### Bookings

To book for any of these events, call Joy Shepherd on (02) 4571 1524. All cheques should be made out to the Kurrajong

Comleroy Historical Society and posted to KCHS, PO Box 174, Kurmond, 2757. Include your name, address and phone number along with the event you are booking for and the names of those attending.

#### Venues

Activities will be scheduled at different venues to make use of halls, meeting rooms and restaurants throughout the district. Check venues carefully before setting off. Any problems en route contact Joy Shepherd on 0417 029 685.

#### Next newsletter

The next issue of 'The Millstone' will be published in July 2006. If you have an item to include in the newsletter please contact Robyn Fuller on 4573 0696. Copy deadline is 14 June 2006.

## COMMITTEE

**President:** Kathie McMahon (acting)

**Vice President:** Kathie McMahon

**Secretary:** Valerie Holland

**Treasurer:** Joy Shepherd

**Minute Secretary:** Pat O'Toole

**Committee Members:** Airdrie

Martin, Marguerite Wyborn, Robyn

Fuller, Les Dollin

**Project Officer:** Frank Holland

**Acquisitions Officer:** Val Birch

**Millstone Editor:** Greg Upton

**Webmaster:** Greg Upton



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Helen Lord's wedding 16th March 1921

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- Winner of Hawkesbury Excellence in Business Presentation for Ten or More Employees 2004
- Winner of Western Sydney Industry Awards for Tourism Most Outstanding Contribution to Western Sydney Tourism by a Small Business 2003
- Winner of Western Sydney Industry Awards for Excellence in Tourism, Meetings and Business Tourism 2003
- Winner of the HMAA Best Short Break Accommodation in NSW/ACT 2003
- Business Advisory Service Inc. Best Home Based Business of the Year Award 2003
- Winner of Western Sydney Industry Awards for Excellence in Tourism, Hosted Accommodation 2002