

## KURRAJONG ~ COMLEROY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

*The Kurrajong ~ Comleroy Historical Society is dedicated to researching, recording, preserving and promoting the growth of interest in the history of the Kurrajong district, the area west of the Hawkesbury River bounded by Bilpin and the Grose and Colo rivers*

## THIS ISSUE

## The Society's AGM

SUZANNE SMITH

### 3 Comleroy School of Arts

As the Society is becoming more involved with this historic building the article and accompanying newspaper clippings are a reminder of the reason for its construction and the hopeful outcomes it would have on the local community's welfare and upbringing. Whatever the future may hold hopefully the founding fathers' visions will be achieved.

### 5 Mystery photo

Ray Goddard, a resident of Carlingford, forwarded to Joy Shepherd a photo of a group of gentlemen on a shooting trip to Little Wheeny Creek. It is a classic photo but little detail is known of those pictured. It is hoped readers might be able to fill in some blanks.

### 7 From the archives

Johnnie Roberts, mounted on a fine steed in 1927 is our subject of this issue. His family were the local butchers in Kurrajong over many generations.

### 8 Dates for your diary

Final reminder for the Society's Christmas party which will be held on Saturday, 23 November at Kathie McMahon's residence. Festivities get under way at 5 p.m.

Forty members and guests gathered in the McMahon Park Community Centre for the Society's annual general meeting and election of office bearers and appointments for 2013/14.

President John Cooper welcomed everyone and opened the meeting with a call for acceptance of the minutes of the 2012 AGM and any matters arising. Members' apologies were given later in the evening. Acceptance of the annual reports for 2012/13 as published in The Millstone September-October issue were approved and adopted by all members present.

The main business item of the evening was presented by John Cooper, a detailed report and supporting point list document regarding the progress of the Society's application for management of the Comleroy Road School of Arts. The matter was then thrown open for discussion.

A vigorous discussion emerged from the floor, covering issues such as restoration and maintenance obligations both financial and other. Issues of insurance and concerns regarding the overall condition of the building, parking, security, water and availability of a public toilet facility emerged. It was expressed that local council requirements for occupation of the hall might be impossible to meet for operation as a licensed public hall and any subsequent subletting. Discussion regarding availability of government grants and loan offers towards restoration and ongoing maintenance followed. It was requested that local council requirements be known before further discussion with the relevant government authorities. It was also pointed out that the School of Arts building has no listing offering state heritage protection although listed on the local government LEP plan. It was moved that the committee continue negotiations with the local council and the relevant state government departments and report back at future general meetings before any final acceptance of the management of the Comleroy Road School of Arts Hall.

The meeting moved on and it was agreed by members that the public officer sign the annual statement and the treasurer submit the required A12 document to the Department of Fair Trading.

*Continued page 6*

## New Members

The Society would like to welcome the following new members

STEPHEN MUNRO  
CLIVE SEARLE SMITH  
DORIS SMITH



Comleroy School of Arts 2010

## President's Corner

This is my first 'President's Corner' and I thank those members who showed confidence in my ability to provide leadership to the Society. It is equally important to thank those who again put their names forward for membership of the committee. It is great to have them back. They have all been an essential part of a successful society. I owe special thanks to past president, John Cooper, and to Carolynne for their contributions to the committee's work in recent years.

The only disappointment is that there was only one new member to come forward to join the committee. Jennifer Stevens is a most welcome addition. The committee plays a vital part in the Society's affairs, and for those general committee members, that is those without an executive role, the duties are not burdensome- one meeting a month in which they can help to assess and confirm the direction the Society heads in, providing a valuable input from their personal, community and/or professional perspective. The possibility is always there for co-option to the committee – feel free to put your name forward at any time to me or to the secretary, Suzanne Smith. I suppose every new president of any society issues such a plea, but it is sincere in our case.

But, and it is a big but, serving on the committee is not the only way in which any member can contribute to the work of the Society. As a founding member I am acutely conscious of the work done on major projects and other activities by members who might or might not be on the committee at any given time. Some of them have also been there from the very beginning. Notable examples include Joy Shepherd's work on the digital archive, Val Birch's as librarian/accessions officer, Chris Upton's on *The Millstone* and Greg Upton's on the website. Then there are those who have worked as teams to produce the excellent books the Society has published and as the Family History Group. And I can't ignore the indefatigable Les Dollin! I am sure that there are many others worth a mention who have helped with events, excursions etc but I am sure that you get the message – there are many rewarding ways in which members can help to continue the great achievements which have marked us since our beginnings not so long ago.

I am finishing this at a time when many of us are facing the danger of the October bushfires. I hope that when we all meet next, none of our members will have suffered loss.

*The committee and office bearers of the Kurrajong-Comleroy Historical Society wish all our members a happy Christmas and New Year.*

*Thank you for your continued interest and support throughout 2013 and we look forward to an interesting event-filled 2014.*



### Kurrajong – Comleroy Historical Society Incorporated

PO Box 174 Kurmond NSW 2757

www.kurrajonghistory.org.au

ABN 68 930 834 921



#### COMMITTEE

**President** Steve Rawling AM

**Vice President** Kathie McMahon

**Secretary** Suzanne Smith

**Treasurer** Marguerite Wyborn

**Committee members** Airdrie Martin, Lorna (Peggy) McCarr, Patricia O'Toole, Jennifer Stevens

**Accessions / Librarian** Valerie Birch

**Millstone Editor** Chris Upton

**Webmaster** Greg Upton

**Digital Archivist** Joy Shepherd

**Public Officer** David Griffiths

**Grants** Carol Roberts

**Hon Auditor** Bruce Obermann

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## Comleroy School of Arts The formative years

CHRIS UPTON

An advertisement was posted in the Windsor and Richmond Gazette for a public meeting at the Comleroy Road public school on Tuesday, 11 July 1905 for the purpose of discussing the advisability of erecting a school of arts at Comleroy. A large number of residents attended. Mr C Fraser occupied the chair with Mr Anderson the convener. The object of the meeting was, "That in the opinion of this meeting it is desirable to erect a school of arts at Comleroy, and that a suitable site be decided by the meeting." It was proposed by Mr V McMahon "That the building be erected as near the school as possible." On the motion of Messrs H. Dingwall and F. Norris it was decided to erect a brick building not exceeding a cost of £300.

Finding a suitable site was proving difficult. The site originally chosen was not within reach of the funds available to the committee and other sites appeared unsuitable. The committee was hopeful that a nice block of land would be found and employed Mr Alf Bottles to make the bricks for Mr Fred J Norris. The contractor was Mr Henry Anderson and he engaged Mr F Stephenson of Richmond to do the bricklaying.

The site chosen was a corner of the orchard leased from the Ezzy family by Mr A Quinn as it had a frontage to Comleroy Road. Its location was alongside the post office. The cost of the site was £13,10/- the bricks cost £66 and the building contract was expected to be £175, total expenditure of about £254.

The memorial stone was laid on Saturday, 8 June 1907 by the member for the Hawkesbury, Mr Brinsley Hall MLA at a gathering of 800 people. The construction was still to be completed but it was expected to be ready for use in about six weeks time.

It was proposed that half the hall would be utilised as a reading room and library, with a moveable partition that could be used for a stage as necessity demanded.

*Continued page 4*



### From the Editor

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome Steve Rawling as the Society's new president and Jennifer Stevens on joining the committee. Steve has contributed a number of articles in past issues and I hope his new position sees them continue.

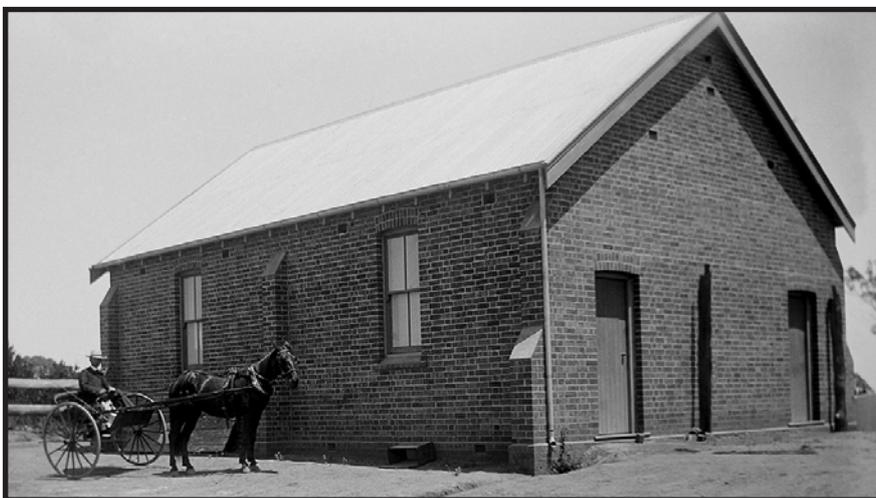
A new advertisement has been added to each issue, Minaloo Lodge. I ask members to repay their support by visiting their establishment.

An update of the progress regarding the Family History Group's book on the parish records of St Stephens appears on page five. I have been involved with this project since January, have spent a considerable amount of time on it, and am pleased that it has been given approval for publication.

When the girls had got to the stage where the written records had been recorded digitally I was asked to recommend a programme that would easily convert them into a book. It soon became clear that the programme I use to produce the newsletter was more than capable of doing their task. As they had each spent a couple of years of their time transcribing the records I figured the least I could do was to spend a year of mine helping to see their efforts bear fruit.

The effort has been worthwhile as I have learnt a great deal on the subject of compiling a book compared to a newsletter. The content the girls forwarded to me is what I found most interesting and I'm pleased others will be able to read and learn from it as well.

[notpuc@bigpond.com](mailto:notpuc@bigpond.com)





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Continued from page 3

The original plans did not suit the Department of Education, there was too much hall and not enough library. The plans were modified and the department's objection was overcome.

The hall was officially opened on Friday, 23 August 1907. There were about 150 people present with the chair being taken by Mr W Fraser and the opening ceremony performed by Mr P Charley.

**Reference**

On the Kurrajong *Compiled by Val Birch 2003*

**Comleroy School of Arts.**

A LARGELY attended committee meeting of the above was held at the residence of Mr A. Anderson on the 15th inst. Mr Dingwall, V.P., occupied the chair. The business of the meeting was to consider the buying of a piano and bookcase and different other items of furniture, and to consider the course to adopt to open the institution. After the several matters had been fully discussed it was decided to purchase a new piano at a cost of £35. It was also decided to buy a large book case for use in the library. The matter of opening the institution was definitely arranged, and Mr P. Charley is to be invited to open the building, which ceremony will take place at 7 p.m. sharp on the 23rd August, to which the public will be admitted free. After the opening ceremony is concluded the committee have arranged for a grand social for which the charge will be 5/ double and 3/ single ticket. A large number of tickets have been sold and everything points to a very successful function.

The hall is rapidly approaching completion and will be a neat and useful building when finished.

Windsor & Richmond Gazette  
Saturday, 20 July 1907

**Dyer's  
Windsor.**

Mr Henry Anderson, of Sydney, brother of Mr Arthur Anderson, of Comleroy Road, is the successful tenderer for the erection of the new School of Arts at Comleroy Road.

Windsor & Richmond Gazette  
Saturday, 11 May 1907

**COMLEROY SCHOOL OF ARTS**

Sir,—In a recent issue I notice S. A. Anderson has the cool effrontery to resent cerallusions being made in reference to Comleroy School of Arts. Comleroy Correspondent is doing the district a great service in bringing the matter before the public. He thinks, no doubt, that a reaction will set in in its favor in order to restore the building to its former self-respecting basis, and thereby create a purer atmosphere. Under present conditions the place has an extremely bad name, and is positively tabooed by many of Comleroy's most respectable people. I, as one of the guarantors, understood when signing the bond for an overdraft on the building when erected, that it was to be a School of Arts, erected for the purpose of promoting the intellect of the district, not to pander to the lower instincts which, I am sorry to say, it has been lending itself during the past few years. What right has Mr. Anderson and his committeemen to assume such virtuous indsignation. Facts speak for themselves, and Comleroy Correspondent has evidently based his on police court records. Comleroy Correspondent recently asked this self-crowned despot through your columns, what I considered to be very just and reasonable questions, namely—when were the books last audited and a balance-sheet published? I notice this Mr. Anderson carefully refrains from answering these questions, but cunningly assumes the pose of virtuous indignation instead. I might inform this gentleman I have the right to demand an answer to these questions, and do so. If Mr. Anderson then chooses to disregard this warning, I will call together other guarantors for the purpose of interviewing the Minister for Education, with a view to having matters in this direction thoroughly investigated.

—ONE OF THE GUARANTORS.

Windsor & Richmond Gazette  
Friday, 26 October 1917

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## St Stephens Book

Excitement is building among the members of the Family History Group as the first book of the registers of St Stephens nears completion.

The first book covers the period from 1861 to 1902 and incorporates the parish records from St Stephens, St Philips, St James and Salis Flats Mission Church.

The girls have tediously transcribed and checked the records of baptisms, marriages and burials during those years. In addition to the records some of the stories behind the registers have been researched, recorded and included in the book. These include the building and growth of the churches, the amazing rectors, and some typical people and families of the time.

We are extremely grateful to our editor, Chris Upton, for his dedication to this project.

At last we will soon be ready to take the final to the printer. We are hoping our launch will be at St Stephens Church in early December.

*St Stephens Church*  
Kurrajong  
Parish Registers  
1861 – 1902



## MYSTERY PHOTO



### Shooting party at Wheeney Creek



Photo courtesy: Ray Goddard

It has been some time since a 'mystery' photo has been included in an issue of the newsletter but the forwarding of this photo by Ray Goddard, a resident of Carlingford NSW, warranted the reappearance of the column in the hope that readers might be able to shed further detail on this fine image.

The names of those present are not known except for Ray's grandfather, Albert Matthias Pope (Popp), the one holding the larger fox in the centre-right.

Albert Pope was born to Charles Popp and Elizabeth Mahon at Grose Vale. His family lived for a while at Richmond and when his father was hospitalised they returned to Grose Vale residing at Edward Mahon's farm on Little Wheeney Creek, upstream from the Singleton's mill site.

In 1912 Albert and his family moved to Wilcannia in far-western NSW. During his time there he met the 'Flying Parson', Reverend Len Daniels, and helped him build a landing strip and hangar. A more detailed article of Albert's life is hoped to be published in a future issue.

If you are able to help Ray put names to the faces, as well as a date and the reason for the occasion please forward details to him at ray\_g@tpg.com.au

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**NEW OWNERS 4573 1267**

Continued from front page

The election of office bearers then followed. John Cooper invited David Griffiths, the returning officer to take the chair. As there were two candidates nominated for the position of president David invited both nominees to speak. John spoke on his willingness to continue as president to September 2014 with a focus on his desire to acquire the School of Arts for the Society. Steve invited members to nominate for office on the committee to assist with the running of the Society.

A secret ballot was taken with Steve gaining a majority vote of 30-14. Voting proceeded with Kathie McMahon re-elected to the role of vice president, Suzanne Smith as secretary and Marguerite Wyborn as treasurer. For a complete list of current committee positions refer to page two of this issue.

The new president Steve Rawling took the chair and thanked John Cooper for his commitment to KCHS over his two year term. Steve also thanked the outgoing committee for their work over the past year. He made special mention of Joy Shepherd acknowledging her contribution over many years, in particular in digital archiving.

In other business David Griffiths requested that the Family History Group present a business plan before publication of the church registers of St Stephens Kurrajong.

Leslie Jane Abrahams and Rosalind Allatt were invited to speak about Hesba Hungerford Brinsmead. Leslie and Rosalind's aunt had written five children's books with tales of growing up in Berambing in the early twentieth century. Names of people and places were altered in the fictional works but all characters were based on real family members and places on the 'Longtime' between Kurrajong, Bilpin, Berambing, Mt Tomah, Bell and Lithgow. Rosalind Allatt brought 'Longtime' alive with engaging readings from a number of Hesba's books.

The Hungerford, Allatt and Abraham families presented the Society with four books from the 'Brinsmead Series'; a well received donation to the Society's library.

The meeting adjourned for supper, after which those who could remain reassembled for the general meeting where a discussion of membership fee increases was first on the agenda. There was general acceptance that the rate be increased by \$5 and the committee investigate this possibility and present a suggestion for resolve at the next general meeting in March.

A further agenda proposal regarding upgrading of IT equipment and applications was addressed and it was moved that the secretary should be equipped with suitable equipment and applications, appropriate to the needs of the position. Similar requests may be made by other committee members but such requests are to be forwarded to the committee for consideration.

The meeting was closed by Steve with an invitation to the November Christmas party and general meeting.

## Kurrajong Railway Terminus

### DAVIS' SUBDIVISION

THE BUSINESS CENTRE OF THIS GREAT DISTRICT

W. H. GOODMAN, under instructions from C. Davis, Esq., will sell by PUBLIC AUCTION on the Property on

**SATURDAY, DEC. 20, AT 3 P.M.**

20 valuable business and residential lots with frontages to the Main Kurrajong road, and close to the new Railway Station terminus.

The business, shop and dwelling now occupied and carried on by the Vendor, with about 63ft. frontage of land will be sold in one lot as a going concern.

The iron shed, now occupied by the Packing House Co., will be sold subject to a short leave.

TERMS:—25 per cent, deposit balance in 4 equal half-yearly instalments at 6, 12, 18, and 24 months. —Interest at 6 per cent.

The Auctioneer wishes to draw special attention to this Sale, as this property must increase in value on completion of the Railway.

Lithos ready in a few days—Further particulars from the Auctioneer.

**W. H. GOODMAN, "Bilyabah," North Richmond**

Windsor & Richmond Gazette  
12 December 1924

Hawkesbury Herald  
4 September 1903

I would like to congratulate Steve Rawling for being elected to the position of president at the recent annual general meeting.

I hope he and the new committee continue the work that Suzanne Smith and myself commenced to secure the long term use and management of the Comleroy Road School of Arts, which the minister announced just a few days prior to the meeting.

I would also like to thank all the members who supported and assisted me during the two years I held the office of president.

*John Cooper*

### RICHMOND.

On Wednesday morning the news flashed round town that Mr. C. Roberts, of March-street, the well-known butcher and auctioneer, had dropped dead at his residence. People couldn't believe it, but alas! it proved too true, for Mr. Roberts was struck down whilst preparing for breakfast, prior to going to Kurrajong. For some time he had been ailing with rheumatics and influenza, but was an apparently strong and healthy man. On Wednesday morning, whilst his daughter was getting breakfast ready, he complained of a pain in one of his arms, and almost immediately fell. He was a native of the district, being born near Marsden Park, on the Blacktown Road. He was 68 years of age, and leaves four children, including Mrs. W. Dalton (Richmond), Mrs. Rhodin (Arncliffe), and Misses Mary and Jessie Roberts, who resided at home. There was no better known man in the district, and it will be a long time before people will realise that good old "Charlie Roberts," as he was so well known by, has gone to that bourne from whence no traveller returns. The funeral took place yesterday afternoon, and was largely attended. The remains were laid to rest in St. Peter's Church of England cemetery. The Rev. J. Howell-Price conducted the funeral service, and Mr. A. Price carried out the duties of undertaker.

 From  
**THE ARCHIVES**

**Johnnie Roberts**



Photo courtesy: Ellie Roberts

This photo was taken on 21 February 1927 and shows a very proud and confident young lad on a fine steed. He is dressed in Albert John's (his maternal grandfather) cap and coat.

Johnnie's family were butchers in Kurrajong for three generations, first at the corner of Bells Line of Road and Old Bells Line of Road until they moved into the village in the 1920s. Their abattoirs were maintained at the old site for many years with the animals killed and dressed prior to being brought to the shop by horse and cart.

**Roberts butcher shop**



Photo courtesy: Ellie Roberts

The Roberts' butcher shop has been demolished since this photo was taken in January 1975. It was located on Grose Vale Road, Kurrajong Village. The area is currently occupied by a pizza shop.

**KURRAJONG**

On Tuesday morning Mr. W. H. O'Brien's horse, attached to Messrs Nickels and Stormon's titled cart, became affrightened, and rushing under the verandah of Mr. E. Roberts, butcher, pulled the whole concern down. The cart tilt was left under the debris, but the horse dashed off with the vehicle, and damaged it considerably.

Windsor & Richmond Gazette  
13 March 1897

Kurrajong was the scene of another fire on Thursday night last, when part of the residence of Mr. A. J. Roberts, butcher, was burnt down. The fire started in the small hours of the morning, and it was with difficulty that the main part of the building was saved. Even the children narrowly escaped. Water had to be carried from Wheeney Creek, and in this great assistance was rendered by some Assyrians who happened to be camped near.

Hawkesbury Advocate  
Friday, 23 November 1900

On Saturday night a fire broke out at Mr A J Roberts' butcher's shop at Kurrajong, and the building and contents valued at £200, were completely destroyed. Some Indian hawkers, who were camped close by, saw the fire first and rendered great assistance in trying to subdue the flames. The property was uninsured, and the loss to Mr Roberts is a heavy one. How the fire originated is a mystery.

Windsor & Richmond Gazette  
Saturday, 24 November 1900

**EDITOR'S NOTE** The two excerpts from early newspapers above are clearly reporting on the same event, yet important details differ between them. The day of the fire is Thursday in one, Saturday in the other. Those who helped are described as Assyrian in one and Indian in the other. These are a good example of when one is doing research relying on past publications steps should be taken to confirm verification of the published details.

If any readers are able to confirm which is the most factually correct let me know and I will add a postscript in the next issue.

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# DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

## Saturday, 23 November KCHS CHRISTMAS PARTY

Our Christmas party for members will be hosted by Kathie McMahon, our vice president, at her residence, 954 Bells Line of Road, Kurrajong Hills. Festivities start at 5 p.m.

Please bring your own meat, poultry and fish for the barbecue and any drinks and spirits you would like to imbibe or share with others.

If you will be attending please contact Kathie on 4567 7105 so that she can ensure the necessary arrangements are in place prior to the event. If you wish also indicate if you might be able to help with a contribution towards the cost of the nibbles, salads and deserts which will be available to all.

All members are welcome to attend and for the benefit of those who might not be familiar with the area Kathie will have balloons at the top gate on Bells Line. Enter and descend the incline to the last house which is near a large dam.

## Sunday, 26 January AUSTRALIA DAY BREAKFAST

At the time of going to print the venue for the traditional Australia Day breakfast has not been finalised. Details will be published in the next issue but ensure that any calendar that you might receive as a present has this date jotted down as it is always regarded as a highlight.

# THE BOOKSHOP



### KCHS publications

With Christmas on the horizon any one of these publications would make interesting gifts for family, friends and neighbours.

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Kurmond NSW 2757  
4567 7410

The Society's website  
Carey & Co Kurrajong Village

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## Thank You

### Wendy Plunkett

The Society would like to thank one of our members, Wendy Plunkett from Victoria for her recent generous donation to the Family History Group's archives.

She has given the Society a copy of her many years of personal research of the Hill family who were early Kurrajong settlers. These comprise six large folders containing many birth, marriage and death certificates and interesting facts of the early Kurrajong district.

In 1851 Mary Hill, daughter of James and Elizabeth, nee Pearson, married John Mason at St Peters Church in Richmond. One of the folders contain the history of the Mason family's land dealings at Kurrajong. These are very complex but detailed accounts and are included with copies of original documents up to 1913.

Many Kurrajong families are mentioned in these research papers and they will be a great asset to all members of the Society.



On 25 October Carol Roberts was awarded a Master of History and New England Award from the University of New England at Armidale. On the left is Prof. Jim Barber, VC & CEO and on the right is the Hon. John Watkins, Chancellor.

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- NSW Business Chamber Awards finalist for Business Leader, Paul Maher, 2012
- Winner Excellence in Tourism, Western Sydney Excellence in Business Awards, 2011