



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

2 Saint Famille

Steve Rawling and his wife Judie visited this area on a recent trip to Canada hoping to find and learn more of Judie's ancestry. The trip had a quirky local touch.

4 Memorial Park history

All present at the recent annual & general meetings found Frank Holland's talk on the early years of Memorial Park informative and well researched. Some of his references are reproduced, rather than quoted, to convey a picture of the dialogue in the periods of the park's development and those involved, and trusted with the outcomes.

6 A village gathering

Pat O'Toole gives a detailed account of the annual and general meetings held at the CWA hall in Kurrajong on 23 October. The election of committee members is covered as well as brief overviews of the talks given by Frank Holland and Ray Glenister.

8 Dates for your diary

Final reminders for the Memorial Park reopening on Saturday, 15 November and the KCHS Xmas party on Saturday, 6 December.

New Members

The Society would like to welcome the following new members

**GAVIN ADAMS
KATHERINA
KOSTRZAK
BERYL PUGH**

Honouring Yesterday's Grandmothers

JOY SHEPHERD

The KCHS Family History Group held a high tea at *Tallowood*, Vincent Road, Kurrajong on Saturday, 23 August. The event got underway at 10 a.m. and more than sixty people attended. The idea of holding the event was hatched by Joy Shepherd and Carolynne Cooper after visiting the Miss Fisher exhibition and high tea at Old Government House.

The theme of the day was 'Honouring Yesterday's Grandmothers' and guests were asked to write a brief story about their memories of one of their grandmothers. They were also asked to bring along a photo or item related to the person for what one could call 'show and tell'.

On arriving everyone was excited and keen to talk about their grandmothers and pass on to others their memories of the past. Joy ensured there was a computer and scanner on hand so that the submissions could be copied and hopefully reproduced into a small booklet.

Wanda Deacon, Carolynne Cooper and Joy Shepherd supplied the heirloom fine china and silverware used on the day, Carol and Geoff Roberts made the delicious sandwiches, Wanda the yummy cakes and Joy was the head scone chef.

Some of those who attended were past members of the Society who had decided not to renew their membership. Hopefully the day's activities might see them rejoin as all those who attended thoroughly enjoyed the occasion.

A considerable amount of feedback has been received, all positive, via emails, letters, phone calls and even Facebook. Some examples are:

I would like to thank all of you for a lovely morning at Tallowood. It was most interesting hearing people talk about their grandmothers and their really early memories, all very different. It was also interesting to see the close connections between a lot of the families. The china, cutlery, sandwiches, cakes etc. were great and served so elegantly on the fine china, by two young women who looked very professional.

You all did a great job and I am sure everyone had a great time. Thanks again.

Jan Koperberg

Blue Mountains Association of Cultural Heritage Organisations



The magnificent setting at Tallowood for the high tea

Photo: Carolynne Cooper

Continued from front page

I would like to congratulate you all on the brilliant idea of having such an event as a high tea. I would also like to thank you for a wonderful morning. The lovely setting and delicious food was made even more memorable by the entertaining stories.

Many, many thanks.

Yvonne Wright
Blue Mountains Family History Society

Thank you for the invitation to attend a wonderful high tea. I was able to share this with my dear friend Jennie Hall who has come to live in Richmond after her family home was burnt down at Yellow Rock in the fires last October.

Jenny found two more friends she knew from the Blue Mountains Historical Group on the day so the occasion was just beautiful for lots of friendships catching up. The family of yours are to be congratulated; the lovely settings, fine china, yummy food and lots of cuppas were all well appreciated by everyone. I am sure the ladies of the Historical Society are also to be thanked for such a lovely morning. Kind regards.

Yvonne Tuckerman
Kurmond Family History Society

Our thanks go out to Pam and Ken Bennett for providing so much, including their beautiful new hall which helped to make the event such a financial success for the Society. Also thanks to Jessica and Sophie Bennett for their hard work waitressing so beautifully and their mother Brenda who backed up so well in the kitchen.

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 Wanda Deacon

Patricia O'Toole

(3 vacancies)

Accessions / Librarian Valerie Birch

Millstone Editor Chris Upton

Webmaster David Griffiths

Digital Archivist Jenny Griffiths

Public Officer David Griffiths

Grants Officer (vacancy)

Hon Auditor Bruce Obermann

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President's Corner

It's a long way from Kurrajong to St Famille, but family history can connect them. We all know where Kurrajong is, but St Famille? It is a village and a parish on the Isle of Orleans, in the St Lawrence River, east of Quebec City. It was in fact the first parish on the island, after pioneering French immigrants had settled there in the early years of the seventeenth century.

Most members of our Society are well aware of the value of family history in illuminating the past, and of course our Family History Group has been doing significant work for some time in making information from parish records for the Kurrajong area available to all. But of course all of us have ancestors from far and wide, and searches can take us back to long before the first European settlement in Australia, let alone in Kurrajong. It so happens that my wife Judie, née Poulin, knew that her father's family had a connection with the Isle of Orleans,

Continued page 3



Photo: Steve Rawling

The church at St Famille on the Isle of Orleans

KURRAJONG CELLARS

Christine Mead JP

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Continued from page 2

generations before he was born in Quebec City in 1917. So on a recent trip to Canada, we determined to track down her ancestry. With some preliminary work on the internet we travelled to the Isle of Orleans with our daughter, who had joined us from Scotland. It is a very beautiful place. We found that, unsurprisingly, French Canadians are very keen on their identity as illustrated by family history.

We were given a key tip that there was in St Famille a very good family history centre, Maison de nos Aieux, in the old presbytery next to the church. There we found that someone had previously done a comprehensive history of the lineage from the first immigrant from France in 1636, Claude Poulin. From this, and further information from an equally good genealogy centre in the village of Chateau Richer, across the River, we were able to identify his parents, born in Rouen in 1588 and 1590.

So who was it who gave us this vital tip? Another family history researcher, none other than Kathie McMahon, from Kurrajong! Kathie had been in St Famille the day before we arrived there and she alerted us to some Poulin links. Kathie was researching the Marcoux family, of her former husband, Claude, who lives on the island, and the Brousseau family, of his current wife. She had found information in St Famille and elsewhere and I am sure she will be pursuing more on her annual stays in Canada.

How likely is it that two people in the Kurrajong area would find a connection 12,000 miles away, and not in Britain or Ireland? It could be said that here are two kinds of people in the world – those who find family history fascinating, and those who are not at all interested. I think that this example shows just how it can enlighten our understanding of where we and our community come from. Family history is an integral part of the work of an historical society such as ours.

I hope to see you all, well perhaps not absolutely all, at our Christmas party on 6 December.



From the Editor

I recently visited the Hydro Majestic at Medlow Bath after reading an article in the Sydney press regarding its restoration and refurbishment. What a sight it was. The owners have in a very short time replaced what was once an unused eyesore with something which I am sure will soon again be one of the jewels of the ‘mountains’.

The exteriors of the various buildings have been repaired and painted to reflect their original condition. The interiors though were not completed so it was not possible to view inside the buildings as the doors were shut.

This was a pity as I'd been hoping to take a photo of the room where one of the first events had recently been held, which was pictured in the article. It is very well furnished, seats quite a number of people, all those present wore period dress, and the theme of the event was a ‘high tea’. It was a huge success as the theme was so appropriate to the building's history.

I felt a sense of déjà vu reading the article as it had only been a few days prior that I had put the finishing touches to Joy Shepherd's article, which appears on the front page, concerning the Family History Group's high tea. It is a good example of how a simple idea, with good planning and execution, can result in a very successful outcome.

The high tea was successful not only in the attendance figure but also financially. The proceeds from the day were such that it has been possible to produce a small eighty-four page book with the memories of those who spoke and some of the photos and momentos they brought with them. The book is expected to sell for \$10.

If you would like to purchase a copy of this book a notice appears on page eight with further details.

As this is the last issue of the calendar year I would like to wish you all a festive, relaxing and safe festive season. Your contributions, feedback and understanding have been appreciated greatly.

notpuc@bigpond.com

Memorial Park Kurrajong

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Thanks to Hawkesbury City Council, Kurrajong Comleroy Historical Society, Kurrajong Community Forum, Kurrajong Rural Fire Brigade and Windsor and District RSL Sub Branch



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Memorial Park's early days

FRANK HOLLAND

Excerpts from Frank's presentation on the history of Kurrajong's Memorial Park 1920-60

I am constantly reminded of the need to be careful of forming preconceived ideas. While researching this presentation I found I had to adjust my view on a number of things. The first related to the timing of retail activity in the now Kurrajong Village, the second to the creation and naming of Memorial Park, and the third how often history repeats itself.

Retail activity commenced prior to the opening of the rail line. Woodhills had a store beside Little Wheeny Creek before 1900 and were well established at the corner of Grose Vale Road and Old Bells Line prior to the rail link. By 1930 retail activities also included a bakery, Hobby's garage, Robert's butchery, Jack Hurst's barber shop, Mrs Hurst's sweets and vegetables, Arthur Minturn's newsagency and post office, and Mr Pye's chemist.

By 1901 Kurrajong had an established Progress Association which seems to have been replaced by a body first named the Kurrajong Improvement Association, formed in 1935, and later amended to the Kurrajong and District Improvement Association. I suspect that these were the forerunners of the current Kurrajong Community Forum. The issues they dealt with seem very familiar: the dangerous road crossing at the entry to the village, the location of bus parking bays, beautification of the main street, inadequate public transport and the development of parks etc.

KURRAJONG'S PROGRESS

IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION FORMED

A number of public-spirited men and women gathered under the shady trees in Kurrajong Park last Friday, to discuss ways and means of effecting improvements in the district.

It was decided to form an association to be known as "The Kurrajong Improvement Association," and the following office-bearers were elected:—Mr. F. B. Mackenzie, chairman; Mr. Marshall Brown, deputy chairman; Mrs. G. Lord, hon. secretary; Mr. A. F. Vincent, hon. treasurer; Mrs. Gosper, and Messrs. R. A. Ziems, D. Gregg and A. E. Vincent, councillors; Mr. H. C. Watt publicity secretary. Membership fee was fixed at 1/- per annum.



Photo courtesy: Wendy Dillon

The main street of Kurrajong c1940. Grose Vale Road to the left, Bells Line of Road to the right.

It was decided to concentrate first of all on improvements to Kurrajong Park, and Messrs. A. F. Vincent and H. C. Watt were appointed to draw up a comprehensive plan and submit same to members.

Pending receipt of this plan, it was decided to request the Colo Shire Council to provide directional signs to the park where considered necessary, and also to have the whole area underscrubbed.

Already the Kurrajong Cricket Club has shown practical sympathy with the movement and has voluntarily erected a roomy shed in which material can be housed and shelter obtained from the elements. This shed was a much needed necessity, and the club is to be congratulated for showing this practical lead. The cricketers have also asked for permission to enlarge the playing area of the oval, and, if granted, will carry out the necessary work themselves.

All improvements effected through the agency of this association will be an added asset to the district generally, and business people and residents alike are expected to give practical support and cooperation to the enterprise.

Windsor & Richmond Gazette
Friday, 10 November 1935

I had formed the opinion that Memorial Park was named around 1920 to recognise and commemorate the sacrifices of World War One, but it appears that the acquisition of the site of Memorial Park did not occur until 1941/42.

ACQUIRING PARK SITE

The Department of Lands advised that it had been asked by the Kurrajong Improvement Association to acquire an area in the centre of Kurrajong for park purposes, and was prepared to accede to the request if the council would take steps to acquire a small portion shown on an enclosed plan, and the Department of Main Roads agreed to surrender, without cost, another portion.

—Decided to ascertain the cost of acquisition of the portion indicated.

Windsor & Richmond Gazette
Friday, 5 August 1941

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There was a reference to open ground opposite Kurrajong rail station dated 1926, however, this reference could have related to land on the other side of the station opposite the current site of Bennett’s Real Estate office.

It is clear that around 1945 the park acquisition was well underway and funding was being sought for development. In a report of a Colo Shire meeting the Improvement Association asked council to expedite the spending of a grant of fifty pounds for the improvement to the reserve near Woodhill’s as no trees could be planted there until the area was fenced. Commenting on this the president pointed out that the area had only just been dedicated in the council.

KURRAJONG

IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION MEETS

Colo Shire Council was to be informed that as soon as it took over the reserve near the station and advised the association, the latter would go ahead with plans to make a Soldiers’ Memorial Park of it, and plant trees, etc.

*Windsor & Richmond Gazette
Wednesday, 12 September 1945*

A report on activities around Kurrajong complemented Councillor W Clark for leading a working bee to clean up the rockery near Woodhill’s.

KURRAJONG

Cr. W. Clarke has already shown his good taste in making our little village attractive, and on Saturday afternoon led a working bee to clean around the rockery near Woodhill’s. A splendid job was done, the gentlemen responsible being Cr. W. Clarke and Messrs. H. Wholohan, Minturn and Uebel. It is surprising, the transformation scene that a few hours’ hard work with hoe, shovels and wheelbarrow has made, and when the seats promised by several residents are placed at the spot, visitors will be able to sit in comfort and view the beautiful scenery. I believe the park opposite the theatre is the next step. Keep on going, boys; Kurrajong will be on the map before long! Mrs. J. Hurst kindly provided afternoon tea for the workers, and this was greatly appreciated.

*Windsor & Richmond Gazette
Wednesday, 10 July 1946*

Then, as now, the wheels of government turned slowly as the next reference is in 1952. Part of a report from a council meeting states, “The Kurrajong Improvement Association were somewhat more prompt for in November 1952 it was reported that they had forwarded a letter to council renewing their earlier offer to erect toilets in the Memorial Park if the council supplied the materials.” The offer was commended and the materials were supplied.

In 1953 a request was made to Colo Shire Council by the RSL sub-branch to name the park ‘Returned Soldiers Memorial Park’.

KURRAJONG REQUESTS TO COUNCIL

Third request was that the small park near the railway station be named “Returned Soldiers’ Memorial Park.” The council could not see any affinity between the words “returned soldiers” and “memorial,” and decided to suggest, in turn, that the park be named “Kurrajong War Memorial Park.”

*Windsor & Richmond Gazette
Wednesday, 28 January 1953*

Matters seemed to have dragged on from here as it was noted in a council meeting report in 1954, “... that the Kurrajong Improvement Association had done nothing regarding the Memorial Park despite its promises to the council regarding the area. In the meantime council had expended more than three hundred pounds on improvements to the area - all in accordance with requests of the Association.”

It would have been helpful to have found reports of the other side of this story and perhaps the minutes of the Association may be located. I am sure they would add value to the documented history of the area. One can only hope they have not been destroyed.

We are now well into living memories of Memorial Park with developments such as the closure of the rail line, the building of the fire station, the relocation of the mill stones in 1988 to their present position, the erection of newer buildings in the village, the dedication of the War Memorial in 1996, the Scarecrow Festival and more recently the major redevelopment of Memorial Park.

References

*Kurrajong – An Early History Vivienne Webb
Windsor & Richmond Gazette*



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**70 Old Bells Line of Road
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**Seasons
Greetings**

*To our members and readers of the newsletter
The committee & office bearers of the KCHS wish you all
a very merry Christmas and happy New Year
Thank you for your support during 2014 and we look
forward to an event-filled 2015*

A Village Gathering The Annual & General Meetings

PATRICIA O'TOOLE

At the request of some members a daytime meeting for the annual general meeting and the following general meeting was organised for Thursday, 23 October. Thirty-one members gathered at midday in the CWA hall at Kurrajong. After lunch the meeting opened with President Steve Rawling welcoming members and guest.

Minutes of the AGM on 24 September 2013 which had been circulated online were accepted and approved as were annual reports for 2013/14 which had been published in *The Millstone*. Prior to the election of office bearers for 2014/15 Steve spoke on the need for new committee members, especially younger people. He emphasised that while much of the work of the Society has been done by working parties, sub-committees and individuals, it is essential to have a competent committee to manage the Society's affairs in accord with its constitution.

Public officer David Griffiths acted as returning officer and took the chair while elections took place. Major committee positions were filled unopposed and remain as for the previous year: president - Steve Rawling, vice president - Kathie McMahon, secretary - Suzanne Smith, and treasurer - Marguerite Wyborn. Wanda Deacon and Patricia O'Toole remain on the committee but with three vacancies effective functioning could be difficult. As the committee has the right to make appointments it is hoped that these vacancies can be filled. We ask that members consider offering their services. Appointments to other important roles were also confirmed, but there are vacancies there as well, which will have to be addressed by the committee. For details see elsewhere in this issue.

In keeping with the village location and the impending opening on 15 November of the revamped Kurrajong Memorial Park, Frank Holland presented a most interesting report on its evolution. Two especially interesting parts of Frank's research were: that progress or improvement associations existed in Kurrajong from the late nineteenth century and lasted until the 1930s, and that the formal establishment of the park and the dedication of the war memorial were fairly recent events, well within living memory.

Guest, Ray Glenister, showed amazing photos from glass plates of the Mayo family of *Woodbine*, a sixty acre property between present-day Bowen Mountain Road and Little Wheeny Creek. Hopefully more on this collection will be available at a later date.

The general meeting followed. The president outlined events and activities since July, emphasising the great success of the High Tea which was organised by the Family History Group. Not only was it an enjoyable event but it made a profit, which the committee has agreed should be put to the cost of publication of the stories and pictures presented on the day.

The president presented the background to the committee's decision to proceed with major changes to the management of the digital archive and the Society's website. This had been on the agenda since the planning meeting in March, and the committee has confirmed the appointments of David Griffiths as webmaster and Jenny Griffiths as digital archivist. Both have experience and skills to upgrade both aspects of our online presence and will be able to work together as a team. The whole process will be managed in house rather than relying on outsourcing to an external agency. There will also be cost savings.

David gave a detailed presentation of the new program he has written to manage the website, emphasising the enhancements and general improvements which will be possible.

Joy Shepherd, who originated and maintained the digital archive so well over many years, spoke of the fact that SearchTech, the company with whom the Society had been working, had a good reputation and provided services to many important libraries and other bodies. It was pointed out by others that SearchTech had been taken over and that new owners were likely to change their software so things will change anyway. The committee's decision to act on the direction of that change will stand.

The meeting ended at 3 p.m. as a thunderstorm broke over Kurrajong village.

On Licensed Premises

FINES AT RICHMOND COURT

THE licensee and two other defendants were fined by Mr. A. E. Stonham, S.M., at the Richmond Court, on charges arising from a police visit to the Kurrajong Heights Hotel "after hours" on June 23.

WHEN Harold Edwards pleaded guilty on his own behalf, and for Francis Herbert Lenord (who did not appear), on a charge of being found on licensed premises without lawful excuse, it was stated that these defendants, with other people, were consuming liquor in the bar parlour when the police entered at 10.50 p.m. Lenord said he had come to see the licensee on business, and Edwards said he had accompanied Lenord—but not for business purposes. Both were men of good character.

Remarking, "It makes it an expensive drink, you know," the magistrate fined each defendant £2 with 10/- costs.

Windsor & Richmond Gazette
Wed, 22 Aug 1951



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From
THE ARCHIVES

Annie & Agnes



Photo courtesy: Joy Shepherd

This photo of Scottish cousins Annie Devine, née Frame and Agnes Mitchell Frame was taken in 1909 at a Sydney studio.

While on holiday in Australia with her parents Annie met Wes Devine of Kurrajong and refused to return to Scotland with her parents. She chose instead to marry Wes and settle with his family in Kurrajong.

Agnes came to Australia in 1908, aged seventeen to be company for her cousin. Agnes worked at *Westbury*, Grose Vale as a housemaid to the Dunstons. She married Charles Davis on 17 April 1912 at St Stephens church. At the time Charles was a warden at the church, age twenty-five and Agnes was age twenty.

They bought a 'Hudson Ready Cut' house – two rooms with a hall down the middle, and built a lean-to at the back with a dirt floor for a kitchen. The land was situated at H E Peck's 'Woodburn Estate'.

A Chevy at Telling's store



This photo is from an album of the late Alice Brown which she inherited from her mother Gertrude Telling, née Smith.

It is thought that the photo was taken in front of Frank Telling's shop on the Bells Line of Road, Kurrajong Heights. This store seemed to sell everything for the needs of the residents of Kurrajong Heights and surrounding areas including Shell petrol. In more recent years it has been the Opal Shop.

The identities of the two people are not known but the car appears to be a 1927 Chevrolet Capitol, possibly owned by Frank Telling.

NEAT AND TRIM

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The Farmer and Settler
Thursday, 9 July 1936

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NEW OWNERS 4573 1267

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Saturday, 15 November MEMORIAL PARK REOPENING

All members of the community are welcome to attend this event. Activities commence at 11 a.m. and conclude around 2 p.m.

Hawkesbury City Council will be hosting a reopening event of Memorial Park, Kurrajong. It is anticipated that by this date all items in the park's master plan will have been completed including the history of the Kurrajong mill signage within the newly created canopy and surrounds of the mill stones.

KCHS has been invited to have a stall in the park on the day so if you are able to assist with manning it for half an hour or so your help would be appreciated.

If so please contact the secretary on 4567 7410 or secretary@kurrajonghistory.org.au

Saturday, 6 December KCHS CHRISTMAS PARTY

Members and friends are welcome to attend the Society's Christmas party which will be held at the home of Judie and Steve Rawling, *St Clements*, 1238 Bells Line of Road, Kurrajong. Festivities get under way at 5 p.m.

Further details will be forwarded to those who make bookings. **Booking is essential.** For bookings and details contact Steve Rawling on 4567 7979 or 0414 567795

Historic Millstones

Sir,—In the early 1800s, Benjamin Singleton built mills in the Windsor and Wheeny Creek (now Kurrajong) district.

As wheatgrowing declined there and the Wheeny Creek mills fell into disuse, our forefathers painstakingly hauled, probably with bull-ock teams, two of the huge circular stones—splendid examples of the old mill-wright's art—up the ridge, and laid them on their side at the Comleroy Road junction.

Here they subsequently served as a base for a 1914-18 war memorial. Then Bell's Line of Road was to follow a new alignment, and the Department of Main Roads appeared in the historic district with all the power and modernity of tractors, bulldozers, and earthmoving equipment. It became necessary to move the ancient stones.

They now lie spread in a number of shattered segments, apparently ownerless, next to the Kurrajong Park, showing how our ancestors' loving care was nullified by an inappreciative posterity, despite every mechanical aid at its command.

MacLEOD MORGAN.
Sydney.

The Sydney Morning Herald
Saturday, 13 March 1954

Honouring Yesterday's Grandmothers

KCHS publication

This new book is currently being printed and will soon be available for purchase.

Thirty-seven of the attendees at the Family History Group's high tea, held at Tallowood, Kurrajong in August submitted stories and photographs of their memories of their particular grandma. These memories have been compiled into an eighty-four page book.

Cost per copy is \$10 pickup or mailed with postage costs yet to be determined.

For further information contact:

Carolynne Cooper 4576 0356
Joy Shepherd 4588 5867
joyshep1@bigpond.com

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

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