

THE MILLSTONE

KURRAJONG ~ COMLERROY 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

Pansy & Mr. Thow

When the Richmond-Kurrajong rail extension opened on 20th November 1926, it was at the end of a year of significant issues for the rail authority. At the previous 30th June it had posted a deficit of over 1 million pounds. The Sydney Morning Herald of 26th September 1926 reported that "the financial position of the railway and the tramways causes the gravest apprehension" and stated in December that there were 126,000 motor vehicles registered in NSW, one for every eighteen of the population.

A revolution in transport was under way.

Adding to general concern were two major train crashes, one on 10th June at Aberdeen, killing five passengers and injuring 31. The other was on the following 13th September near Murrurundi, where runaway loaded rail trucks slammed into the North West Mail causing 27 deaths and 37 injuries.

The Kurrajong extension was the only new line opened in 1926, apart from the short electrified line from Central to St James. If anyone thought the new line would use modern rolling stock and locomotives they were wrong.

So what was the history of the locomotives? Their origins are to be found 35 years earlier in 1891 following the appointment of William Thow as Chief Mechanical Engineer in April 1889. Thow, born in England (Liverpool) had served as C.M.E. for South Australian Railways before accepting the same office in NSW. Shortly after arriving, at a time of critical locomotive shortage, Thow ordered twelve tank engines from Beyer Peacock's Gorton foundry

in Manchester. The design called for six driving wheels, a two-wheel pony truck and four trailing wheels under cab and coal bunker. The build required options for inter-changeability with the A(93) class, which Thow admired, 63 already being in service. *The Z20 class*, as they became following the 1924 reclassification, worked coal traffic in Newcastle. At 61 tons 9 cwt. they were suitable for



the light "pioneer" lines such as Richmond - Kurrajong, Rogans Hill, Camden and Carlingford among others, together with shunting duty at Port Kembla and elsewhere.

William Thow died in 1926, the very year in which his

20 Class locomotives scrambled up the hill to Kurrajong for the first time, a task to continue for another 26 years. **Article courtesy Ron Rozzoli**
Research Source: *Along Parallel Lines*, by John Gunn, Melbourne University Press 1989

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General Meeting -Monday 27th March

INSERT: PANSY TOUR FORM

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Welcome to 2017 to all members.

Thirty members started the year on Australia Day (see story and images page 3). The Committee, accompanied by a number of other KCHS members, had begun the year with a planning meeting earlier in January. The purpose was to establish priorities for 2017 and to address any apparent problems.

One of the first issues to arise was the question of maintaining or expanding membership. It is clear that we are short of younger members, and an analysis reveals that there is an underrepresentation of people from many parts of our area. The first of these is a problem for many organisations, but the second is being addressed, partly through "street stalls" on Saturday mornings. Two have been held in Kurrajong Village, one at Bilpin markets. They have been received positively, including sales of our publications. Further stalls are planned over the next few months.

We will also do a mail out throughout the area canvassing members, and explore the possibility of welcome packages for new residents through estate agents.

This has also raised the question of whether our Society name conveys the range of our coverage. Does "Kurrajong-Comleroy" resonate with people in other areas, like Grose Vale, Wilberforce, Colo Heights or Glosodia? Our experience in Bilpin suggests not. Any suggestions for a new name welcomed!

KURRAJONG – COMLEROY HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

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ABN 68930834921

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Vice PresidentDavid Griffiths

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TreasurerPat O'Toole

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secretary@kurrajonghistory.org.au

Several possible excursions were discussed, and the very successful Pansy route excursion will be repeated. We will look at possible combined events with other societies. Publications in progress and future publications were discussed and these will add to the Society's potential publicity efforts.

Perhaps the key question, apart from the overall membership, was the future membership of the Committee. Several current members have given long service, and it was requested that everyone should put their minds to possible nominees later in the year.

President Steve Rawling AM

AUSTRALIA DAY BREAKFAST

The 2017 Australia Day Breakfast was held at the Bowen Mountain Hut, which once again proved to be a delightful venue. We owe many thanks to the Bowen Mountain Association, notably Colin Chesterman, and Alison and Bill Kerr for their hospitality and the work they put into the setting up of a suitable Australia Day atmosphere.

The Australia Day Award for 2017 went to our indefatigable Secretary Suzanne Smith, for her continuing work, not only in that role, but in her work on the Millstone, and in liaison with other historical and community groups.



The History of the Country Women's Association Hall in Kurrajong Village

By Airdrie Martin

The Hall, located at 58 Old Bells Line of Road, was constructed in 1952 as the Kurrajong District War Memorial Club (RSL).

In 1946 the newly formed Kurrajong-Colo Sub-Branch of the Returned Servicemen's League decided that they needed a meeting hall in Kurrajong. From 1946 to 1950 they held dances in the Kurrajong Theatre, with the agreement of the popular proprietor, Mr Eather, to raise money for a Memorial Hall, which would be "an ornament to our little village".

At the November, 1946 Colo Shire Council Meeting, Councillor Clarke explained how "the sub-branch proposed to build a hall for meetings and other functions of the returned soldiers and for the use of other public bodies. In addition it was proposed to house fire-fighting equipment, Red Cross equipment etc. so that all these facilities would be in one central spot instead of being scattered all over Kurrajong as they were at present."

In January 1947 more than sixty returned men attended a branch meeting at the Kurrajong Theatre to discuss the building of a Memorial Hall. Among the men working hard for the building were Messrs Minturn, Clarke and Uebel. The hall was to be erected by volunteers and a bowling green, tennis courts and a swimming pool were also mentioned!

On February 12th, 1947 the Sub-branch met with the Council who agreed to donate land for the hall, if it gained permission from the Department of Lands, as the land in question was Crown Land. On October 22nd, 1947 the Minister for Lands, Eddie Graham, promised to make available, immediately a 150 foot block for the proposed RSL Hall. In 1948 Lot 300 was gazetted for a Memorial Hall and the Kurrajong District War Memorial Club was formed with Messers Clark, Minturn and Vincent, Trustees of the Club.

However, earlier on 5th October 1936, a grant of land, lot 294 Parish of Kurrajong, County of Cook, was sold by auction for township settlement under the "Closer Settlement Act" of 1904 to the Kurrajong Producers Association Co-op Ltd. for £62.10. Then on 5th November 1949 a transfer of title, was made from the Co-op to Arthur William Clark, of Kurmond, Manufacturer, James Vincent of Kurrajong, Orchardist and Norman Minturn of Kurrajong, Storekeeper as joint tenants, who were also trustees of the Kurrajong District War Memorial Club of the RSL.

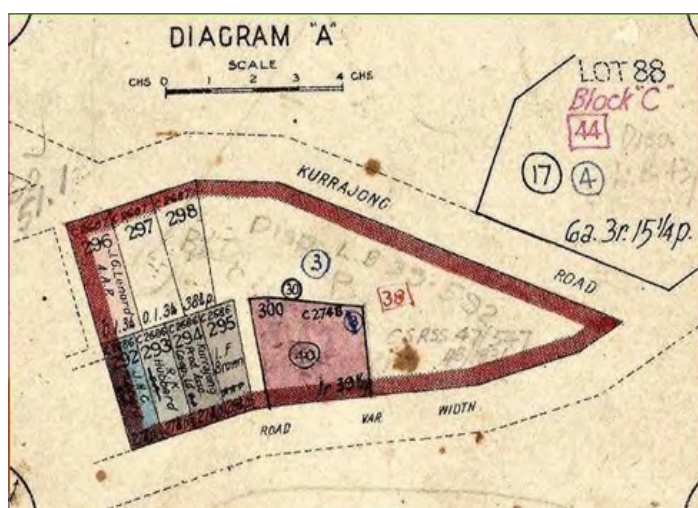


Diagram "A" on Kurrajong Parish Map of August 1940, with later Note 40 "Portion 300 Dedicated for a Memorial Hall"
Lot 294 is the small lot 3rd from the left.

The Hall was subsequently built on Lot 294 not the Gazetted Lot 300. The Windsor and Richmond Gazette of 9th April, 1952 reported that at a meeting of the Colo Shire Council a letter from the Department of Lands stated it would not consent to a 99 year lease of Lot 300. Councillor Matheson remarked that the Memorial Hall Committee had purchased a site for the hall. This was probably due to bureaucratic delays.

In 1950 Bill Clark, a local brick maker living at Kurmond, and operating as "Clarks Concrete Blocks" at the old Crusher at Richmond, donated the distinctive concrete blocks. The hall was built with voluntary labour using donations of other materials and the monies raised from dances and other events over the previous years.



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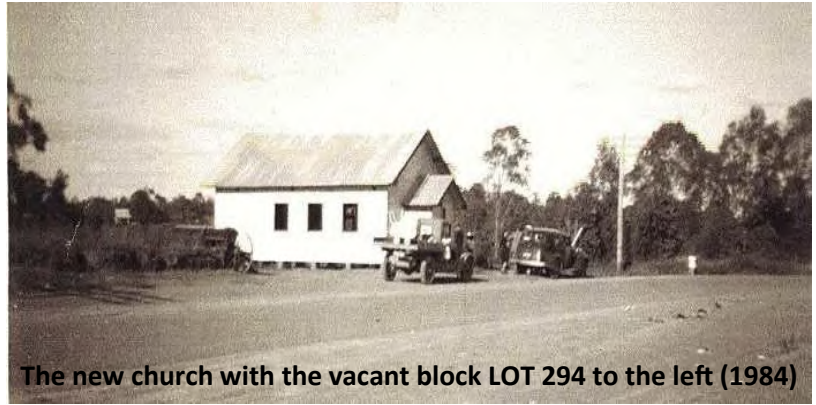
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CWA Hall History cont.

The Memorial Club then made application for a liquor licence which was rejected on the grounds of its "proximity to a place of worship". This was the Church of Christ which had been built in 1948, on the adjacent site.

As one of the main objectives was not possible, the RSL Sub-Branch Memorial Club decided to sell the premises. Transfer of the title to the Country Women's Association of N.S.W took place on 6th March, 1963.



The new church with the vacant block LOT 294 to the left (1984)

The RSL Memorial Club purchased a cottage in Kurrajong Road and met in a garage behind the house. Due to falling numbers, a succession of bad tenants and heavy maintenance the cottage was sold and the proceeds invested.

The first meeting of the Kurrajong Branch of the C.W.A. had been held at St. Stephen's Parish Hall on the corner of Roxana and Comleroy Roads on 17th April, 1927 (This hall was later moved to St Stephen's Church, Grose Vale Road). Mrs Grace Lord was elected President and held the position for 15 years. Later meetings were held in the Kurrajong Theatre.

After the opening of the Memorial Hall in 1952, the Kurrajong CWA began using it for their meetings and other events. During the late 1950s the CWA ladies formed a Dramatic Society and performed plays to the delight of the local people. On October 31st, 1956 a special meeting of the CWA was held at 8pm for the purpose of discussing the purchase of the hall. All members were requested to attend. Mrs L. W Shepherd was the President and Miss Mary John the Secretary.

The Hall was purchased in 1963 and thereafter all meetings were held in the CWA Memorial Hall. The Hall continues to be well used for CWA meetings and local community events.



The CWA Memorial Hall in 1978. Note the garage door to the right of the building which housed the fire fighting and Red Cross equipment etc.

By the way, what became of Lot 300? It remained vacant until the early 1960s when it became available on a 99 year lease. Hazel and Ron Horan of Bilpin considered the block but a number of conditions made it unviable. In 1998 the Darug Land Council made a claim and transferred the land to the Deerubbin Land Council who sold it in 2000 to a private buyer. (Gazette, 5/9/2001)

Kurrajong Heights CWA Hall

Did you know that there was a Kurrajong Heights Branch of the C.W.A. and it had a small meeting room? The branch had been established in 1939 and the meeting room acquired in 1955. The Windsor and Richmond Gazette of the 30th November, 1955 reported: "On November 2nd, 1955 at the Annual Meeting of the Kurrajong Heights CWA branch, Mrs L. W. Shepherd of the Kurrajong Branch congratulated the branch on the achievements of the past 12 months – especially the purchase of a building to be placed on the branch's own land at Kurrajong Heights for a meeting room..."

Image below is of the old CWA meeting room next to St David's Church and cemetery, Bells Line of Road Kurrajong Hts. (2017)

All images are from the K-CHS Image Library and Paul Hulbert





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TRIVIA EVENING Saturday 11th February, 2017 was the hottest February day on record, and it was not much cooler at night. Nonetheless the planned *KCHS Trivia Evening* went ahead in the Kurrajong CWA Hall. The ceiling fans and the air-conditioning struggled to make things cooler, consequently it was more than a challenge for the 71 people who attended. Fortunately, no-one succumbed totally, with copious amounts of water and other liquid refreshments consumed.

But on to the Trivia itself. Jenny and David Griffiths had put an enormous amount of work into the preparation and the presentation of the night, and coped magnificently with an enthusiastic but pretty noisy audience.

It appeared that most of the people who attended were not members of KCHS. Seeking new memberships and raising awareness of the Society, formed part of the intention for the holding of the *Trivia event*. The general support of the Kurrajong community was very welcome.

The trivia questions came in ten categories, ranging from local Kurrajong District history to much wider aspects of general knowledge. Some of them were particularly difficult, and a number of tables seemed to struggle, while others did very well. Prizes were awarded to the winning table and to the runner-up, and most certainly, a good time was had by all. (*Images below courtesy David Griffiths*).

The evening was not designed as a fund-raiser, but after expenses (hall hire, prizes etc.) we emerged in the black, greatly assisted by generous donations from a number of businesses in The Kurrajong, who donated vouchers for goods and services.

Next time, we won't do it in February!



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Society is very grateful to our generous local business community for their support in donating goods and services as prizes for the *KCHS Trivia Evening*, adding to the excitement.

Seasons Cafe

Kurrajong Kitchen

Carey & Co

Kravings

Barrel 58 & Mountain Palace

Kurrajong Friendly Grocer

Lochiel House

Kurrajong Chemist

Kurrajong Cellars

Deli La Na

Kurrajong Radio Museum

New Comer - QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What was the official name of the rail line to KURRAJONG
2. Where was the Bilpin School of Arts located

ANSWERS will be on the K-CHS website

www.kurrajonghistory.org.au

Also in the May / June Millstone Newsletter



Belmore Lodge Tennis Courts Kurrajong Heights c1900

A group of four people enjoys a game of tennis on the *Belmore Lodge* court at Kurrajong Heights in about 1900.

Bells Line of Road (now Warks Hill Road) is next to the court. The photo is taken looking towards Tellings Store and "Lochiel".

Visit the Archive Image Library at:
www.kurrajonghistory.org.au

MISSING PROPERTIES

Query, enquiry, request

I'm hoping someone can help me with these houses that have come up in my research. Do they still exist or does anyone have photos or memories.

Deborah Hallam

1 – In April 1895 the Windsor and Richmond Gazette reported that Woodhill and Co were building a cottage at their Kurrajong stores. This site was known as Brown's Corner and was at the intersection of Comleroy Road and Bells Line of Road. A Mr Marlin was the builder.

2 – In December 1898 The Gazette also reported that Woodhill and Co were calling for tenders for a new cottage at Kurrajong. The architect was G. M. Pitt Jnr., who was an extremely well known architect being the son of G. M. Pitt of "Sunnyside" North Richmond and the architect of "Belmont", the Wesleyan Church at North Richmond and the grandstand at Richmond as well as many other projects. The site of this cottage, once again, commenced by Marlin, was behind Woodhill's proposed new store at the corner of Bells Line of Road and Grose Vale Road. The cottage was completed in June 1899.

3 – In July 1924 The Telephone and Allowance Office at *Sterculia* was established at the Soldier Settlement Store. A Mr A.E. Hodgkisson was in charge. There were to be no money orders processed as it was deemed too close to Kurrajong PO (Wheeny Creek) at only one and a quarter miles.

In August 1924 the Post Master General defined *Sterculia* as a locality at the corner of the Kurrajong and Comleroy Roads. This Post Office location was short lived as it was closed in August 1926.

The name *Sterculia* seems to have disappeared shortly after, never having been widely used.

The Village Kitchen Kurrajong

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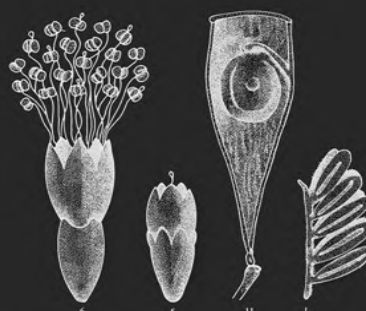
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Dates for Your DIARY

**REMINDER to members who are booked for the
Nepean Gorge History Discovery Cruise**

NEPEAN BELLE Paddlewheeler



Saturday 18th March 2017

Enquiries or questions Ph: Suzanne 4567 7410

Email: secretary@kurrajonghistory.org.au

K-CHS MARCH GENERAL MEETING


1pm Monday 27th March 2017

Bowen Mountain Park "HUT"

Guest Speaker: Ron Glenister presenting wonderful digitised **GLASS PLATE SLIDES** of the Kurrajong Hills and Grose Vale region. These will be presented in digital form and gifted to the Society's Image Collection by descendants of the Mayo family.

Members & Friends welcome

\$2.00 coin donation for Afternoon Tea



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KURRAJONG PANSY EXCURSION

SATURDAY 17th JUNE 2017

This is to be a guided bus tour conducted by

Jennifer & David Griffiths

BLAXLAND RIDGE PUBLIC SCHOOL 1892

The K-CHS home-base has been freshly painted by
Hawkesbury City Council

Image capture by Paul Hulbert - January 2017



Note: Current research reveals that John Marquet Blaxland in 1825 submitted a proposed survey line to Wollombi which ran along the ridge we now call Blaxlands Ridge. Trove reveals that in 1966 under the Geographical Names Act the name Blaxlands Ridge was assigned to the area. In fact the Geographical Names Board records the ridge as named Blaxlands Ridge 3 October 1969 and the suburb assigned on 10 September 2004. School plaque has Blaxland Ridge 1892.



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