

THE MILLSTONE

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

**ST. DAVID'S KURRAJONG HEIGHTS
150 YEAR ANNIVERSARY 2017**



On Sunday 5th of November, Chris and I were privileged to join parish members, local residents and guests at a service to celebrate 150 years of worship at St David's, Kurrajong Heights.

Identified as "the oldest church on the mountain" the land was originally settled by ex-convict Joseph Douglass and his wife Mary Orr Burgess. It is interesting that when Joseph was arrested in Dumfries, Scotland for theft, his local Presbyterian minister attested to his previous good character. Joseph continued as a strict and pious Presbyterian for the remainder of his life.

In 1841 William Bowman purchased land from Joseph Douglass and in 1846 donated two lots for a Presbyterian Church at Kurrajong Heights.

Interestingly the index for the transfer of title lists the vendors as Joseph and William.

It was not until 1865 that Rev. James Cameron saw a need for the church on the hill and fundraising and planning commenced. A nearby supply of sandstone dictated the fabric and local builders Charles Pittman and Tom Mason set to work with contractor Charles Holdsworth.

The church was opened at a service on 10th October 1867 conducted by Rev. J.B. Laughton with the Rev. Dr. Steele preaching.

The commemorations took the form of a service conducted by Rev. Geoff Stevenson with assistance from Rev. Rodell Palma, with the address by Rev. Simon Hansford, Moderator of the Uniting Church of Australia.

The children present were included with an explanation of the cutting of the stone for the church.

The service was followed by an amazing afternoon tea and the opportunity to inspect a display of photographs and documents from the history of the Church.

A highlight of the afternoon was a tour of the Historic Cemetery conducted by Debbie Cooper and Don Webster. Although the first gravestone in the cemetery is that of Mary Douglass (d1857) and her husband Joseph (d1865), Mary was initially buried elsewhere and Joseph's place of burial is a source of conjecture. At some time the gravestone was erected at St. David's. However, it is unclear whether Mary's and/or Joseph's remains were moved and if so when. There was that afternoon much discussion concerning the final resting place of the original European pioneers of this land.

Deborah Hallam

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K-CHS Australia Day Breakfast information

President's Report

I am penning these notes the day after a very enjoyable Christmas Party. A big thank you to Chris and Deborah Hallam for hosting us and to Marguerite Wyborn and all the members who arranged the fabulous catering. The party was very well attended with 42 members and guests as well as an appearance from our local federal member, Susan Templeman and her husband Ron. Susan is simply amazing with all the functions and events she manages to make it to and we appreciate her support. Our mayor, Mary Lyons-Buckett had hoped to make it but sent her best wishes to all our members and their families for the festive season.

It was good to see many of our newest members present. We have added 21 members since the AGM which brings our membership up to 127.

Included at the party was a very brief General Meeting (nominally the November meeting), at which I gave a run-down of what we have been doing since the last GM (see elsewhere in this Millstone for full reports) and some of the events we have planned for next year.

We were well represented at the RAHS Annual Conference, which was held in Cowra this year.

The 2018 Australia Day breakfast has a fascinating topic lined up - all about the fine ceramic studio that was in Kurrajong Heights between roughly 1972 and 1986, known as Bells Fine Art Ceramics.

In March we plan a members only tour of Reibycroft at Freemans Reach.

Due to popular demand, we are running another Pansy Tour on 14th April. Bookings are now open on our website.

Our newly released publication, *Built in The Kurrajong*, has been selling well. I'm sure a few Christmas stockings will/did include a copy.

At the December General Meeting I mentioned a project I have been involved with to collect rain statistics. This is to assist the RFS to plan hazard reduction burns. The idea is that anyone who records daily rain readings can contribute these to the website and we can then compare variations between locations. You can take a look at: www.kurrajong.org.au/Rain (note this is the Kurrajong website and not the K-CHS website). As I write this, the site has been running for less than one week and we have 8 local sites with data for all of 2017. If you would like to participate, please contact me.

David Griffiths; president@kurrajonghistory.org.au
Phone: 4567 7993

KURRAJONG – COMLERoy HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

PO BOX 174 KURMOND NSW 2757

ABN 68930834921

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Jenny Griffiths

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secretary@kurrajonghistory.org.au

WELCOME to NEW MEMBERS

The Society would like to welcome new members

William Hurst

Cheryl & Wesley Walker

Aub & Beverly Chapman

Annette Wulff

Kate Richmond

Rick Donnan & Rosemary Viggers

A visit to Cowra NSW - RAHS Conference October 2017

Finding Lost Places, Lost People

Conference delegates were welcomed to the Cowra Shire by Mayor Bill West in the Cultural Centre of the Japanese Garden, on Friday evening 27th. The pre-conference event hosted by Cowra Council featured a delightful spell-binding performance by young Aboriginal dancers. With the backdrop of the manicured gardens, they told a traditional tribal story in dance. This local troupe performed in the 2017 School Spectacular in Sydney. Mr Bob Griffiths, Chairman of the Board of the Cowra Garden, provided an historical overview of the Garden and its centrality to the Cowra-Japan friendship. Established in 1979, the Garden nestles into the rocky hillside, a tranquil and serene environment landscaped on traditional Japanese themes, encased within an Australian landscape. The Hon. Michael McCormack MP added a vibrant and engaging welcome to all RAHS conference delegates to the region.

Saturday morning saw a full program of speakers with *Welcome to Country* given by Auntie Robyn Coffey. RAHS President Associate Professor Carol Liston AO discussed the process of bringing Lesley Muir's 1994 PhD to fruition, *Shady Acres*, concerning the Illawarra Railway. In June 2012, the RAHS Council agreed that the keynote address at all RAHS Conferences would be named after Lesley Muir in acknowledgement of her contribution to both the RAHS and local history in Australia.

This was followed by a most interesting presentation by Clr.

Ray Walsh, President of Cowra & District Historical Society, ably assisted by his wife Libby, through word and archive images. His talk commenced with stories about the Indigenous people of the region to early European settlement and the development of *Cowra Rocks* into the busy Cowra farming and commercial centre that it is today. Interestingly Ray's grandfather, who settled and farmed along the Lachlan River in the mid 1800s, had his origins in *The Kurrajong*, his father having received a grant in the region of Diamond Hill, Kurrajong.

A talk by Graham Apthorpe who has published a book *A Town at War* about Cowra during WW2, suggested that few towns can demonstrate such an intense war-time and post-war involvement. Cowra's military training camp, Jewish refugee settlement, small-arms manufacturing and *Edgell's* wartime food production, to name but a few commitments to the war effort. But it was the Prisoner of War Internment Group 12, that set Cowra apart. This camp housed Italian fascists, Koreans and Chinese, some of whom were Black Dragon gang members, Indonesian revolutionary communists and others considered enemies of Australia at the time and the ever increasing numbers of Japanese war criminals and militant naval agitators that eventually led to the *Cowra breakout*.

A new life in a new country – Finding Europa was presented by Lawrance Ryan, Vice President, of the Cowra Breakout Assoc., who gave wonderful insights into the story of the Cowra Migrant Camp, the largest post-war resettlement camp in Australia. (To be continued in the March issue) **Suzanne Smith**

KCHS Christmas Gathering at Goldfinders Inn

home of members Christopher & Deborah Hallam, held on the 9th December 2017



A history of **The 1809 Land Grant of Rowland Edwards and The Goldfinders Home Inn** can be purchased through the Society's Secretary Ph:4576 1371 secretary@kurrajonghistory.org.au

"Kurrajong-a-Buzz" report.

On the 19th November a successful stand and display was held in the CWA Hall during the "Kurrajong-a-Buzz" in the Village. The stand was manned by several enthusiastic members who spoke with many people about our local history. In keeping with the theme of the day's event, our display showed some of the old gardens of Kurrajong Heights and the area in general. A number of our books were sold and two new members signed up. **Jennifer Griffiths**

Image courtesy Lenore Walker official Kurrajong-a-Buzz photographer
Two KCHS Secretaries, Marguerite & Suzanne enjoying the day.



FOND MEMORIES OF GROSE WOLD SCHOOL by Susan Wooff

Susan Wooff lives in the UK, so this article comes to us via her sister, Society member Jennifer Stevens.

"This is our school

Let peace dwell here

Let the rooms be full of contentment

Let love abide here

Love of one another

Love of mankind

Love of life itself

And love of God

Let us remember

That as many hands build a house

So many hearts make a school"



Miss Thalia Matheson
teacher at Grose Wold
for 31 years, 1932-1963



Jennifer Stevens (nee Wooff) outside the
Grose Wold school house

Every week, the pupils of the small one room school at Grose Wold stood behind their desks and recited the above creed. We spoke with meaning, as these words described our school exactly - a quiet, peaceful place where we worked hard, enjoyed learning and made great friendships. We were very patriotic and each week we also raised the Australian flag in the playground, saluted it and said "I honour my God, I serve my Queen, I salute the flag." Never did we hear a word spoken in anger or frustration as our teacher, Miss Matheson, had complete control and we all had great respect for her.

The school was started in 1901 when a group of Grose Wold families petitioned the Department of Public Instruction for a school. Mr. Philip Charley of Belmont Park donated two acres and the school building (built in 1878) was transported from Grose Vale School (then called the South Kurrajong Primary School). Earth toilets were constructed in the bottom corners of the land (we did NOT enjoy cleaning these on Friday afternoons) and a weather shed and workshop were added in 1912. Although no longer a school, the original building (and toilets!) still stand.

My two sisters and I attended this school in the 1950s/60s. Attendance at the school was never high, and it was even closed on a few occasions because of insufficient numbers, but during our time there were between 15-20 pupils. Our teacher, Miss Thalia Matheson had been appointed in 1932 when the school was re-opened as a subsidised school with just 7 pupils (after a few years of closure). She was the only teacher for the next 31 years until finally resigning due to ill health in 1963. An inspector's report of 1964 said: "As a subsidised school this was in its individuality almost unique in my experience; in its perfect tidiness; in the quiet and calm of its management and generally in the strong momentum of the children's work."

There were just 3 in my class and also in my sister Lesley's class but poor Jennifer (my other sister) was all alone in her class. It must have been very difficult for Miss Matheson (whom we just called 'Teacher') to teach all grades of children in one room (from 5 right up to 12 years old) but she managed it expertly.

I do remember that quite a few lessons were conducted outside - particularly the learning of our "times tables" by rote. That lesson was always held under the Camphor Laurel tree that stood at the front of the building. We always sat outside in the playground for our sewing and knitting classes too, while the boys were taught woodwork in the shed at the back. We also all had gardens to care for, flower gardens for the girls and vegetables for the boys. As a farmer's daughter, I always thought it very unfair that I was not allowed to grow vegetables, but had to care for the sparse flower garden with poor soil under a large tree.



Grose Wold pupils at the Small Schools Sports Carnival in 1959

Back (L to R): Jennifer Wooff, Susan Wooff, Carol Shepherd, Susan Evans, Robyn Martin. Front (L to R): Sandra Martin, Maureen Ezzy, Lesley Wooff and Maureen Matheson

(Story continued over, page 5)

Teacher read us stories each week - a chapter from a new "Enid Blyton" story book and a Bible story, which one of the older pupils (in turn) was allowed to illustrate using a box of brand new coloured chalks on the large blackboard in front of us. If the story was about a journey, the illustrations could cover the whole board!

We also listened to the "Kindergarten of the Air" on the school radio once a week. When Jean Hart, the announcer, said "Good morning boys and girls", we all had to stand, face the radio and say "Good morning, Miss Hart". Secretly I thought this a bit unnecessary as Miss Hart would never hear us, but it did teach us respect!

Resources were always short because we were a subsidised school (i.e. parents paid a weekly fee to cover the teacher's salary) and at times exercise books were cut in half so they would go further. Drawings and paintings were often done on both sides of the paper in art lessons. At times we even made our own glue, collecting the sticky gum that trickled out from some wattle trees, soaking it in water and storing in glass jars. It was not that successful at sticking things and the brown stain always came through, but it was better than nothing!

Concerts featured prominently in the school calendar, particularly on Empire Day and at Christmas. The weather shed was transformed into our stage with green branches (probably more wattle!) fastened to the walls; the piano was carried down the school steps and at Christmas, a large Christmas tree put up. The school became our changing room and we ran up and down the back school steps to change for our next appearance "on stage". Our long suffering parents and friends sat on long benches in the playground as we worked our way through about 20 items.

With only a small number of pupils, we were on stage a lot. I remember being in eight different items at one concert. I knew that Mr. Garnie Shepherd was dressed as Santa at the Christmas concert but went along with the pretence for the sake of my younger sisters. Jennifer really did believe that Santa's reindeer had landed on the school roof but was always concerned that she could not see or hear them! We all received gifts and prizes at Christmas (mostly books) and our teacher always gave each child a gift on their birthday.

We were given a half day holiday for Empire Day. A sports competition was held and in the evening a huge bonfire was lit in the school grounds, built up for weeks before by our parents. Mr. Shepherd produced a large leather suitcase full of fireworks and we children could ask him for whatever we wanted. The more dangerous fireworks were to be supervised by older children. Little in the way of 'Health & Safety' regulations were followed in the 1950s!

Once a year we attended the Small Schools District Sports Carnival held at Richmond Oval. We were one of the smallest schools, but proudly marched in our brown and white school uniforms behind our flag. The photo on page 4 was taken at Richmond Oval in 1959.

My years at Grose Wold School have been some of the happiest of my life. I received an excellent education in the basics (English, Maths, History and Geography) and some valuable practical skills such as sewing, knitting and gardening. We all loved Miss Matheson and remain very grateful for her dedication and commitment to us and to our school.

Susan Wooff with contributions from her sisters Jennifer Stevens (nee Wooff) and Lesley Switzer (nee Wooff) 2017.

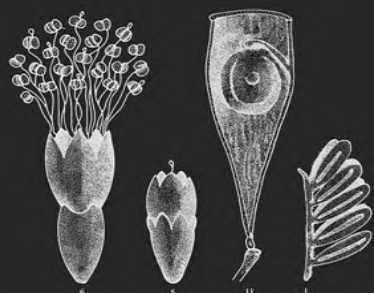
**Thank you on behalf of the KCHS Committee and
KCHS Members to the HCC Print Room Staff**

for professional assistance over the past year and with a consistent newsletter print run, ready for posting to our KCHS MEMBERS each bi-month. Thank you to the print room team, Peter Op't Land, Wendy Irving, Ron Smith

Note to MEMBERS - The KCHS Members Library now has a rather excellent collection of books, just waiting to be borrowed. Please access the listing on the KCHS website

www.kurrajonghistory.org.au

Arrangements for borrowing can be made by contacting
Valerie Birch: librarian@kurrajonghistory.org.au



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A Journey to The Heights in 1935

An extract from "Here & Now" by John Fairfax exhorting the rapidly increasing car owners of Sydney to explore historic roads around Sydney.

"We crossed the bridge over the Hawkesbury/Nepean at North Richmond and started on the climb to Kurrajong Heights. *"Very good air up here"*, said the old man sniffing appreciatively. *"Should be able to live forever in this climate."* "Yes" I agreed. "I read the other day in an old newspaper, rather an unkind reflection on the good health of Kurrajong inhabitants. The writer said of them; *food reformers have a strong argument in their favour from these pioneer settlers, as one learns that they ground their own corn and had little or no fresh meat. They rose early, worked hard, ate sparingly and did little or no thinking.*"

"One of the early settlers here" said Jane, taking up the story, "was Job Wilson, who had six sons. The family names became rather tangled because they were given the same names as their uncles. Thus the members of the younger generation had to be known as Job's Job, Tim's Job, Tom's Job, Tim's Tim etc. The next generation was worse, becoming Sonny Jack's Jack, and so on. Apparently it was the custom in the district. The man in charge of the punt was known as Micky the Punt and his son and daughter as, John Micky the Punt and Ellen Micky the Punt".



Image 1 The North Richmond Bridge C1920s - Bells Line of Road looking towards North Richmond. The piers supporting the original 1860 bridge can be seen. On the rise to the left of the road is the old North Richmond Travellers Rest Inn, in the 1930's known as Riverview. (Contributor: Mick Reberger) KCHS Image Collection

We stopped at the bridge over Wheeney Creek above Kurrajong to admire an old stone Inn, in a lovely setting amidst willow trees. The little creek, for all the world like an English brook, bubbled beneath its bridge and gurgled happily along between meadows of impeccable green.

The road climbs swiftly here and we began to glimpse one of the best of Australia's better views. In a sense it is a man-made view, or rather a man-improved view, because as far as the eye can see, stretch the orderly patterns of orchards; patchwork patterns, green with a background of deep chocolate breaking the monotony of interminable bush which so palls the spirit of even the most joyous of tourists. Here, in days gone by, ran *Bell's Line of Road* over the Mountains[?]. There is a story that this route was discovered when a black gin[sic] employed at Belmont made her escape and was tracked over the mountains.

A few miles above Kurrajong we came to that noted spot, *Bellbird Corner*. We stopped the car and listened to the tiny carillon of their song, which has been carried on despite bush-fires, roads, the thunder of motor-lorries and the usual clattering's of mankind. A little further on we stopped again to admire the view, then turned and headed for Sydney."

"Now, sir and relative, I condescended, you may go to sleep, and he did, very peacefully".

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The above article was submitted by Ron Rozzoli.**

Image 2 Old Bells Line of road through Kurrajong in the 1930s. The post office on the right was also the general store, newsagent and Hire Car Service. The house on the left is Reginald Allison's. The Railway Station can be seen in the left background. Further down the road at the junction is Woodhill's Store. Image Archives: www.kurrajonghistory.org.au



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"Camp MacKay boys going for a Swim in Little Wheeny Creek"?

Taken in the 1940s, the caption on the photo says "A swim in the pool at the bend of the creek."

KCHS Image Library

www.kurrajonghistory.org.au

Enquiries: Contact Image Archivist

Jennifer Griffiths;

K-CHS images@kurrajonghistory.org.au



HANNAPAK

Bells Line of Road North Richmond

2017 Marked the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Hannapak factory in north Richmond, and also of its sale to a multinational company, Westrock. Charles Hanna moved his business (then known as Hanna Match) from Carlingford, and built the North Richmond factory, incorporating the premises of Dowidat-Coffey, makers of spanners.

The business had been engaged in the printing of promotional materials, including matchbooks, and expanded that business in the early years in North Richmond. In 1984, based on the purchase of a folding carton manufacturing company, Hannapak refocused on that business. Charles Hanna (son of the founder) had taken over the business in 1969, and it is understood that his son, Sam Hanna will still be involved in the business under the WestRock name, although it is a major change to what has always been a family affair.

The Hannapak factory is of course a major presence on Bells Line of Road in North Richmond. A few years ago, at a Council organised forum on a new Development Control Plan for North Richmond, a young man asked the gathering "what does it mean when the best-looking building in the town is the factory !?". It is of course a major employer in our district, with over 220 full-time staff.

But the Hanna name also applies to the adjoining land, Hanna Park, a very large area leased from Hawkesbury City Council, which is a very significant element of the area. It was for some years during the 90's the site of a community event, the Wine, Food & Music Affair supported and sponsored by both Hanna Match and Hawkesbury City Council. There is always a large gathering of families for the North Richmond *Carols by Candlelight* held in Hanna Park each year in December.

Steve Rawling AM

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Our agents have forged strong relationships with the local community and have the knowledge and expertise to talk to buyers about a property's potential. You are welcome to contact us to have your property appraised.

Dates for Your DIARY



KURRAJONG COMLEROY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

17th Annual Australia Day Breakfast

Friday 26th January 2018 9am - 11am

Venue: *The Hut Bowen Mountain Park* via Bellbird
Crescent, left into Lieutenant Bowen Road
BOWEN MOUNTAIN

Presentation: Lyn Naylor & Pat O'Toole
Bells Fine Ceramics 1972-1985

NOTE: Members are welcome to bring their own
breakfast fare. There is an electric undercover
barbecue, kitchen with fridge, cutlery, plates,
table and chairs available.

The Society will supply tea and coffee

ALL WELCOME

KCHS MARCH General Meeting - Radio Museum

7pm Monday 26th March 2018

Presenter: Ian O'Toole

Members & Friends welcome - Supper provided

842 Bells Line of Road

KURRAJONG Ph: 4573 0601

PANSY LINE TOUR 14th April 2018

Our popular Pansy Tour exploring the remnants of the
Richmond to Kurrajong Railway is being repeated on

Saturday April 14th 2018.

Full details and bookings are on our KCHS website.
You can pay by Credit Card, PayPal, EFT or Cheque.

If you can't book on the web, contact:

President David Griffiths on 4567 7993 or email
president@kurrajonghistory.org.au

Prices: Adult \$35, Members & Seniors \$30, Children \$25.
Price includes a steak sandwich lunch at Kurrajong RFS.

REIBYCROFT Members Only Tour

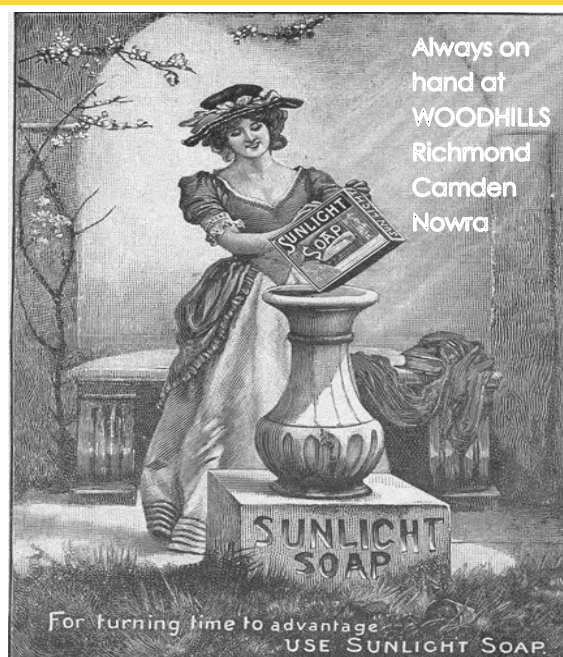
On Saturday 17th March 2018 we have been invited
to inspect the historic **Reibycroft Farm** at Freemans
Reach. This is a **Members Only Tour**, which will start
with some historic sites in Wilberforce and Freemans
Reach and finish with an inspection of **Reibycroft** and
a picnic lunch. Cost is only \$5 per head, self drive and
BYO picnic. **Please book on the web** so we are aware
of numbers or contact the Secretary Marguerite,
Ph: 4576 1371 or secretary@kurrajonghistory.org.au

REQUEST for show of interest in an excursion, May 2018

to either **North Head Quarantine or Cockatoo Island.**

Both these venues hold interesting early and more recent
Australian history. Please contact: Suzanne Smith

Ph: 4567 7410 or Email: viewfromheights@bigpond



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