

# THE MILLSTONE

KURRAJONG ~ COMLERoy HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Covering all of the Hawkesbury West of the River, from North Richmond to Bilpin, Grose Vale to Colo, including Wilberforce, Ebenezer, Glossodia, Tennyson, Freemans Reach and Bowen Mountain.

## Sand, Gravel & Steam

*This is a summary of an article by Ron Rozzoli about the Nepean Sand & Gravel Company at Yarramundi and its connection to the Richmond-Kurrajong Railway. The full article can be found on the KCHS website.*

The successful KCHS Pansy Line tours paused at Bells Line of Road and Yarramundi Lane intersection to view the site of the former exchange sidings and crusher. They were a major element in the provision of raw material for civic construction and roads in the Sydney basin in the post-World War 1 era. The proposal by the NSW Government to extend the Richmond rail branch to Kurrajong was seized upon as a possible access route to the sand and gravel of the Yarramundi Falls at the junction of the Grose, Nepean and Hawkesbury rivers. The authorising Act for the railway was passed in 1919. However construction did not commence until 2<sup>nd</sup> June 1923.

William Percival took out a mining lease of eighty-five acres in 1924 and established the company. Representatives of James Hardie Ltd and Concrete Constructions Ltd became directors. There were early problems with the supply of electricity. The first load reached the crusher on the eastern side of the river in June 1925. The exchange siding at this time consisted of a loop constructed parallel to the incomplete Kurrajong line curving then through nearly 90 degrees to be parallel with Yarramundi Lane.

Early business for the Company was very successful, and by late 1927 two locomotives were purchased, joining the other substantial equipment the Company had accumulated. In the years to 1930, outputs continued to climb not only because of the quality of the product but also because of the demand from major projects coming on line, the city railway, Sydney Harbour Bridge, Bunnerong Power Station, Woronora and Cataract dams, and major road building contracts. The Company weathered the storms of the early depression years and was boosted by the new demands of wartime industrial need, but the end of the War saw the beginning of its decline.

The closure of the Kurrajong branch line in 1952 brought an end to the link between the Pansy Line and the Company.



*The buildings above were part of the Nepean Sand & Gravel Co. The railway line to Kurrajong, runs through the cutting on the right side towards North Richmond bridge over the Hawkesbury R. The wooden bridge in the mid-ground linked two properties. This bridge spanned Bells Line of Road even after closure of the railway in 1952 and the rail easement became the roadway. The bridge was demolished in 2010. View a series of images of the demolition at [www.kurrajong.org.au](http://www.kurrajong.org.au) - image archives 101515 to 101533*

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**Note: INSERT/ATTACHMENT - AGM Notice & Nomination FORM**

## President's Corner

A whole year has flown around since I took on the president role and it has been a pleasure leading the Committee. This is the final Millstone before the AGM, so it includes reports from various office bearers. The financial report will be available at the AGM or by request to members. Suffice to summarise by saying we roughly broke even this year and still have a very healthy financial position. I will touch on some key activities and you can read the full reports elsewhere in this edition.

We have had a busy year with a mixture of local and non local excursions, street stalls and social functions, as well as liaising with HCC about historical signage etc. Our web site and image archive are being actively used and our Family History Group has been kept busy responding to queries and requests for assistance.

We saw a modest increase in membership numbers thanks to our various efforts to raise the profile of the society. Unfortunately due to a number of members passing away and others not having renewed their membership for various reasons, like moving away, the overall numbers are pretty well back to where they were at the start of the year. I guess with an ageing membership, as is typical in historical societies, we have to be continuously paddling to keep from going backwards.

We have two more excursions planned, one local (Merroo, Camp MacKay and the Kurrajong Volcano) on Saturday 6th October and one to the Fairfax property 'Retford Park' at Bowral, Wednesday 26th September. Details are on the back cover, and as usual, you can book online.

The Annual General Meeting is on Monday 24th September and we hope there are some members willing to put their hands up to be on the committee. Nomination forms are enclosed/attached.

If any member has a suggestion for things you would like us to be doing or a possible excursion, join us at the AGM or just drop the president a line - [president@kurrajonghistory.org.au](mailto:president@kurrajonghistory.org.au).

I would like to thank the Committee for their efforts and wisdom during the year and all the members who participated in K-CHS.

**David Griffiths**

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[secretary@kurrajonghistory.org.au](mailto:secretary@kurrajonghistory.org.au)

## WELCOME to NEW MEMBER

The Society would like to welcome new member

**John Williams**

### How do we define "The Kurrajong District"?

#### Exactly as the Government Gazette did in 1940

*The boundaries ...run from the Grose River in the south to the Colo River in the north, and the highlands around Mt Tomah are included. The eastern edge of the area is the Nepean River [actually the Hawkesbury ed.] from near the Grose junction downstream to the Colo.*

Sourced by Pat O'Toole from The Bushwalker, 1940

## Secretary's Report

I have enjoyed my year as Secretary, getting to know some of our members more closely and helping in the running of the Society.

Programs on the website, put in place by President David, have streamlined membership applications and notifications regarding our outings making the Secretary's job easier.

We have had a successful year, highlighted by the Pansy tours and street stalls around the local shopping areas to promote the Society. There were two outings, Reibycroft in March, North Head and the Quarantine Station in May, which were extremely interesting and well attended.

The Millstone continues successfully, thanks to Suzanne Smith and Steve Rawling and the many members and others who submitted articles.

We look forward to another good year and hope to encourage new memberships.

*Marguerite Wyborn*

## Treasurer's Report

The strong financial position continues although the year produced a small loss. Pansy Tours conducted by Jenny and David Griffiths were well supported by locals and produced a profit. Expenses have included the publication of a new book.

More members are now using Direct Debit (EFT) which is very convenient however please be sure your name will appear on the society Bank Statement. Membership renewals have been slow and some members have not taken advantage of fee reductions in some categories.

Book sales at Saturday street stalls and special events show steady demand for our publications especially the latest, "Built in the Kurrajong". Please keep our books in mind for gifts. They come at a reduced price to members. Digital images also show a steady demand.

After 3 years in the job MYOB is still a challenge and my thanks to Robyn Gunn for her guidance whenever needed and to Bruce Obermann for auditing again this year. **The Financial Statement will be available at the AGM, 24<sup>th</sup> September, or on request.**

*Patricia O'Toole*

## Website & Digital Archive Report

In the last 12 months our website has had 28,000 visitors and they viewed 54,400 pages. That averages over 70 visitors a day. Admittedly a large number of those visitors would be 'spiders' from various search engines cataloguing the site, but even if only half the number are real visitors it is a pretty impressive number.

Our archives now hold 5737 images, 515 non images (documents, maps etc.) and 969 people from 224 families. If you haven't visited the archives for a while, check them out, particularly the People Database which has grown considerably this year. Of course more contributions are always welcome. We need you, our members, to seek out images and other items to add to the archives. Any image showing life in our area is something we want. We can arrange to scan any images and return the originals. The archives had the following views: Images 126,918; People 17,871; Documents 1,811.

During the year we supplied 30 images to Hawkesbury Museum for their display about local food production. We added images on Bells Fine Ceramics (the subject of our January meeting), Richmond North Public School in the 1960s (from Suzanne Mulligan) and Bilpin Public School in 1949 (from Lesley Abraham). Various other images were provided to individuals doing family history research.

*David Griffiths - Webmaster, Jennifer Griffiths – Digital Archivist*

## Family History Group Report

Our group has not taken on any new projects this last year, but our small group are still active in other ways. There are the enquiries we receive via the website that keep us busy and we have been able to help most of these people.

Jenny Griffiths, Wanda Deacon and myself had a delightful day showing a lady and her daughter who were descendants of William Townsend, a convict and one of our early settlers, around our district.

William Townsend's property is where Loxley now stands. We were able to take them to Loxley as well as Hermitage Road and St Stephens Church and burial ground, all places connected with their family history. They both were impressed with what they learned and took many photographs. We were able to put them in touch with other researchers of the Townsend family tree as well as extra information we had in our records. When they left us they were two happy ladies.

When dealing with these enquiries we always ask the folk to exchange any photographs or family details with us that they may have. We add this information to our own records for future reference.

**Valerie Birch Family History Co-Ordinator**

## New Structure for KCHS Awards

The Committee has decided, on the recommendation of a sub-committee, to simplify the nature of and the criteria for the Society's awards. The Committee believes that the new system is simpler, and hopes it will encourage members to participate by nominating possible recipients. There will be two awards, as follows:

### Merit Award

This award may be made to a member or members of the Society who have made a significant contribution to the Society's work in any manner, over a reasonable length of time. A Merit Award Certificate will be presented, accompanied by a book, where appropriate.

### Australia Day Award

This award may be made to a member or members of the Society who have made an outstanding contribution to the work of the Society in any manner over a reasonable length of time or to a member or members who have made a significant contribution to the recorded history of the Kurrajong district. A framed certificate and a framed archival print and/or an appropriate publication will be presented.


- Awards will be presented at the Society's Australia Day breakfast.
- Neither award will necessarily be given every year. This will depend on the number and quality of nominations.
- Additional nominations may be made by the Awards sub-committee
- All nominations must include at least a brief statement summarising the contribution(s) made by the nominee.
- Decisions on awards will be made by the full Committee
- **Nominations are invited from members, to be received by the Secretary (Marguerite Wyborn) by December 1<sup>st</sup>.**

\*\*\*\*\*



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### K-CHS 24th July 2018 Mid-Year Dinner held at The Village Kitchen Kurrajong

The evening was enjoyed by all who attended. Our guest speaker Kurrajong Group Captain Ken Pullen engaged members and friends with an overview of current Rural Fire Service practice, particularly in relation to local and regional fire protection methods. Each year, consistent with a grid pattern, areas are control burned in the cooler months of the year on a rotational basis. Generally every 7 years for most areas, 14 years for wet sclerophyll and rainforest gullies. Interest in Ken's presentation was revealed through an engaged question time. A thank you to Shane and Village Kitchen staff for fine food and excellent service.



### Prospect Heritage Trust group visit The Kurrajong

On Sunday 29th July KCHS hosted a small group from the Prospect Heritage Trust. Jenny & David Griffiths escorted the group by bus from Richmond, around The Kurrajong area, also visiting Grose Vale and Bowen Mountain. Frank Holland provided an informative talk about Benjamin Singleton at the Kurrajong Village millstones. The group were particularly interested in the millstones as they have some of their own. Lunch was enjoyed by all at Goodie Goodie Gum Drops, Kurrajong Village.



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## KURRAJONG RURAL FIRE SERVICE – Sixty Years of Service

### Extracts from a brief history complied by Brigade Members for the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary held in 2009

Fierce bush fires in 1936, that had endangered residents and their property, may be considered to have contributed to raising awareness of the need for trained fire-fighting personnel. Including the need for official recognition by both local government and State Authorities for a co-ordinated fire-fighting force, methods and supply of equipment for Rural NSW.

The recording of a disastrous fire event appeared in the Hawkesbury Gazette, on the 13th November 1936, with the heading: *Kurrajong swept by Bushfires – Blaze on 4 Mile Front – Homes Destroyed.*

“The most disastrous fires have been raging in the mountains beyond Kurrajong Heights and the Grose Valley for some days and on Friday last they brought disaster and havoc to the Kurrajong district. Bush fires burning for days on a front of about 12 miles in the valleys to the west and northwest of Kurrajong Heights, advanced on the township on Friday, with a frontage of about 4 miles.

Threatened on 4 sides by flames, an 8 room house at Wheeny Creek, owned by Mr Cooper, was saved by a small band of fire fighters. Despite the efforts of fire fighters, who worked day and night with little rest or refreshment the Powell family lost their home, along with a cottage on the Bilpin estate. The residents had burnt fire breaks around the homes of RM and S Dunston and Misses Sproule and these were all saved. Unfortunately the flames swept from the mountain down to the home of Mrs Wark and while the combined forces were engaged fighting this new outbreak, a fire started in the pine trees and vines at the old Powell home. With little help now available nothing could be done to save the Powell homestead.

Post Officers in the district sent out SOS signals for help and volunteers rushed from all parts of the Comleroy, Grose Vale, Grose Wold and Navua Farm areas. *Spring Grove* the old home of William Dunston Snr. at Kurrajong North was threatened, but a break was burnt around the property, with volunteer help. The homes of Messrs. Devine, M Brown and G Horn were all in danger, but the sturdy old pioneers, assisted by volunteers, burnt breaks and fought back the flames and saved the homes. Some of the volunteers were soon overcome with the awful heat and on the point of collapse. Mr Dick Dunston and his son Russ, were rescued when after fighting for two days and nights their strength failed and they needed to be dragged to safety.

On Sunday morning 1<sup>st</sup> November, a fire unexpectedly started at the farm of Mr Morgan, Grose Wold. A fire break had been burnt to save the homestead, but a sharp wind caused

the flames to spread and in no time the properties of *Belmont Park* and the Stinson Brothers, Propsting, Irving, Poole and Creer were all in danger. Further SOS phone messages brought assistance from all over the district. Eventually police recruits from Sydney and a number of RAAF personnel were succeded to assist local residents with the protection of a number of properties in the district, helping to bring the fire under control.

Miles of fencing and many acres of orchard had been burnt and trees singed, that would eventually die. Many tonnes of wattle bark used in the tanning industry had been destroyed. The Gazette continues to report that conditions in the whole of the Colo Shire are very serious indeed, with no rain to speak of since April, tanks and dams practically empty, grass brittle and brown, bloom burnt off the citrus trees, oranges withered and dry and the present stone fruit crop small and inferior. The man on the land seems to be faced with disaster and the damaged caused by the bush fires cannot be estimated.”

Research into the Kurrajong Brigade history has uncovered information showing that there was an official brigade recognised by Colo Shire Council from 1939 onwards. The *Kurrajong Brigade* covered the greater Kurrajong District, with deputy captains elected in their respective localities, each with relevant powers vested by council.

As was the case across the State, most Bush Fire Brigades, were required to raise funds locally for equipment, including trucks. Street stalls, fetes, fashion parades and woodchops, along with door to door campaigns, became the main source of the money required, with many members from their respective communities participating.

In *The Kurrajong* the driving force behind these activities were the late Mrs Natalie Buckett and Mrs Dorothy Buckett. The Kurrajong Brigade raising enough money to purchase the R model Bedford tanker which was affectionately named *Natalie Dot* in their honour and recognition.







Colo Shire President Mr Forbes McKenzie, Mrs Beryl Minturn & Mr Jimmy John in front of the old Ford Blitz Truck and Series 1 Land Rover at the hand over of the new fire-shed. (Early 1960s) Image courtesy Peter Minturn, held in the Kurrajong RFS collection.

### KURRAJONG RFS continued.

In earlier times residents used green tree branches, along with common garden tools to fight fires around their properties. "The first equipment to assist fire fighters carry water was a 100 gallon canvas bag, which could be placed in a utility or trailer and filled with water."

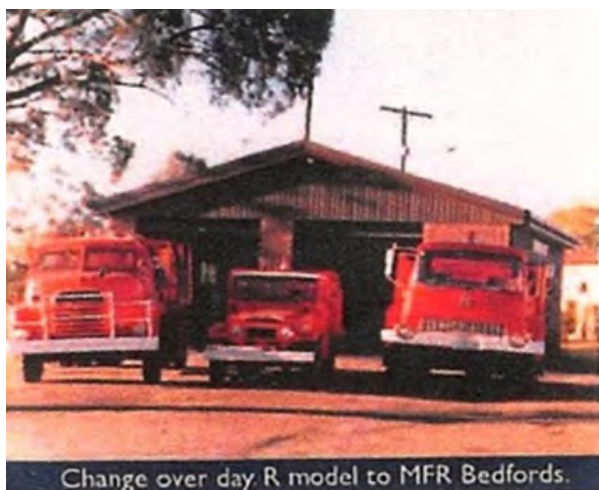
In 1948/49 a canvas top Navy surplus Series 1 Land Rover was acquired, picked up from Sydney by Reg Hurst and Captain of the day, Norm Minturn. The Land Rover towed a trailer with water tank and pump and carried a few hand tools and knapsacks. Fire-fighters would fit where ever they could, even sitting on the A-frame drawbar of the Trailer. This vehicle was kept behind Hurst's shop in the main street of Kurrajong, until the shop burnt down in 1963.



Another ex-army vehicle acquired by the brigade was a Ford Blitz fitted with a water tank and pump, powered by a V8 petrol motor and thought to have been an old

water cart acquired from Colo Shire Council, the truck was kept in a garage beside the old Woodhill's store.

The first of the purpose built trucks was the R Model Bedford, a 4 wheel-drive that replaced the Ford Blitz in 1968/69. This truck was powered by a 6 cylinder petrol motor and was the vehicle affectionately named *Natalie Dot*.



Change over day R model to MFR Bedfords.

A Toyota Land Crusier tray back replaced the Land Rover in the late 1970s. This was petrol powered with a petrol pump-set and a galvanised tank. A second purpose built heavy Bedford MFR 4 wheel-drive, powered by a heavy duty Holden V8 motor and fitted with a Davey Tanker-master pump replaced the old R Model in 1981. Also known as *Natalie Dot*, this truck had open crew accommodation between the cabin and the water tank.

An Isuzu Twin Cab 4 wheel-drive powered by a diesel motor and fitted with a diesel pump and air-conditioning, replaced the MJR. The truck known as *Natalie Dot 2*, seated 7 crew. A Mitsubishi Canter Twin Cab replaced the Toyota, powered by diesel and fitted with a diesel pump-set, remains in use today. A second Isuzu replaced the original unit, with quite a number of design improvements, including a turbocharged diesel motor and various plumbing alterations, making the vehicle safer for crews and remains in use today.



Latest equipment in use.

**Major District Fires: 1936-37, 1944, 1957, 1961, 1968, 1974, 1976-77, 1979, 1994, 1997, 2001, 2003**

**A few Major Events include: The 1944 fire, reportedly the highest impact fire recorded in the district. 1962 The Kurrajong Public School main building was lost to fire. 1963 Hurst's shop in Kurrajong main street was burnt down. In 1969 Woodhill's old store on the corner where Pansy Junction is today, burns down. The building was being used as a textile factory by Mr Alan Gobert. 1975 Kurrajong Heights Hotel burns, with flames visible from Sydney.**

## Early Grants at FREEMANS REACH By Deborah Hallam

Although it is generally accepted that Freemans Reach was named for the first free settler along this Reach of the Hawkesbury, Thomas Reibey, he was by no means the first grantee.

The first grants were a true reflection of the corruption that defined the Rum Corps in these early years. In 1795 Patterson made it possible for a number of individual soldiers to receive titles for land as consolidated acreage, which they were then able to sell as one lot, frequently paid for in rum. Thus on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 1795, fourteen, twenty-five acre lots were registered to individuals all of whom were privates in the Corps. However, on 21<sup>st</sup> July the sale of all three hundred and fifty acres was formalised to Commissary John Palmer. Palmer, having paid each soldier six pounds became the owner of *Stillwell Farm*. It is worth noting that the maximum legal grant to an officer was one hundred acres.

Other properties consolidated at the same time were *Wellow Farm*, *Reavill Farm* and *Contentment Cottage*. Interestingly *Reavill Farm* became the property of ex-convict John Stoddell, valet to John Palmer. Stoddell paid eight soldiers a total of thirty two pounds and became one of only two convicts to own over two hundred acres.

Thomas Reibey was an ex-sailor (*Britannia*) who appears to have left the ship in order to marry 17-year-old ex-convict Mary Haddock whom he had met two years previously. Thomas was granted 100 acres which became *Reibeycroft*



A view across the lowlands to Windsor from *Reibeycroft* at Freemans Reach

### THE PROPERTIES

The best-known property on Freemans Reach Road has been the two story timber building that succumbed to time earlier this year. However this was predated by the neighbouring brick building.

In 1838 Robert Farlow (convict per *Canada*, 1801) purchased a portion of *Stillwell Farm* from George Palmer Jnr who had subdivided the property that year. Roberts' son James (Snr) employed Thomas Collison to construct the two-storey brick home in 1864. This was one of the very few lowland Freemans Reach houses to survive the 1867 flood.

In October 1888 while James Farlow Jnr was visiting his recently bereaved mother in the brick family home, his adjacent timber cottage was destroyed by fire.

James' wife and children escaped although they suffered burns. The old timber home was erected the following year by Thomas Collison in a similar style to the neighbouring brick home. The use of timber rather than brick seems to have been a financial decision as the losses due to the fire were substantial.



James Farlow's timber farm house built in 1889 on the Freemans Reach lowlands. Purchased by the Ridge Family in 1920 it operated primarily as a dairy for many years. In recent years the house was often used as a backdrop in advertisements and in television series. The building was demolished in April this year 2018. Image 096469 Kurrajong Comleroy Historical Society Collection.

James Jnr died in 1905 and the property passed to his son Alvin who disposed of it to the Ridge family with 60 acres in 1921. The property became *Ridge Dairy* remaining in the Ridge family until 2011. Unfortunately, during the latter part of Ridge ownership, the house was allowed to fall into disrepair culminating in its collapse.

The brick home was excised with one acre from the sale and remained in the Farlow family until 1927 since when it has had a number of owners.

The third property of this grouping is the house known as *Sunny Farm* on the corner of Freemans Reach Road and Gorricks Lane. Gorricks Lane was named for third fleet convict Isaac Gorrick, who leased the *Contentment Cottage* property around 1800.

In 1838 most of *Stillwell Farm* was sold to Thomas Tebbutt. In 1846 the 69 acre portion on which *Sunny Farm* sits was conveyed to William Nichols (convict per *Baring*, 1819). It is unclear when the house was constructed, but 1850 has been suggested. Interestingly the form of the building is unusual for a farm house suggesting instead the structure and position of an inn. In 1862 Nichols applied for an inn license which was refused. William died in 1888 at Freemans Reach. The property became the centre of a major ownership dispute, eventually being subdivided.

*Sunny Farm* is currently a turf farm, with the house overshadowed by sheds.

Cont. page 9



### Early Grants at FREEMANS REACH Cont. from p 8

*Wellow Farm* is also one of the lesser known of the Freemans Reach properties. Again the 25 acre grants to Thomas Newton and three others were consolidated and immediately sold to Richard Collins in 1895. Collins with no interest sold 75 acres to emancipated convict Henry Baldwin in 1897. Elizabeth Carpenter became Henry's common law wife after leaving her husband in about 1803 and a home was built on the property which they called *Wellow Farm*.

Elizabeth died in 1839 and Henry constructed a burial crypt for her at *Wellow Farm*. Henry himself was interred in the crypt on his death. All trace of the crypt seems to have gone - washed away by time and flood.

It is difficult to find any verifiable information on the current house which appears to date from the late 1800s, but perhaps contains remnants of the earlier homesteads. More recently however the property was the centre of an ICAC scandal involving Australian Water Holdings and the Obeid family.

*Bridgeview* is certainly about to become BRIDGEVIEW with the construction of Option 1. Located on the corner of Freemans Reach and Wilberforce Roads the property was granted to Edward Whitton in 1795.

Advertised for sale in 1821 and again in 1824, a very early farmhouse was built on the property. In 1839 a public house under the sign of the *Squatters Arms* was opened in the farmhouse. The Inn operated under various leases until destroyed by the 1867 flood while under the care of Ton Ryan.

The building remained derelict for some time until a new *Squatters Arms* was erected on the site of the current house by John Ryan before 1879. In 1907 Cecily McQuade purchased the lot and demolished the *Squatters Arms* to replace it with the current building.

Of interest is also the property previously at 230 Freemans Reach Road which has been relocated to Australiana Pioneer Village. This weatherboard home built by the Cobcroft family and later the home of Dennis McMahon, has a connection to Honora McMahon (later Nora Cuppitt) a well-known local educator.

There are several other interesting Freemans Reach sites, as this only covers those close to the river. (To be continued)



**James Farlows (1820-1888), brick farmhouse & barn built by Thomas Collison in 1860 on part of a property original owned by Commissary John Palmer known as *Stillwell Farm*. Image: 150035**  
(Now listed on the HCC Local Environment Plan LEP)



**Built in 1889 by James Farlow Jnr. (1857-1905) this 2 storey farmhouse has survived many floods. Owned by the Ridge family from 1920 to 2012. It was demolished in April 2018**  
Image: 150037

Further Heritage images can be viewed by visiting:

[www.kurrajonghistory.org.au](http://www.kurrajonghistory.org.au)

Image Archive Collection

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## My School Days at Kurrajong North Pubic School (1944 – 1947)

By Brian Dunston

On my first days at school, I was lucky to have my cousins around to comfort me. The Principal Mr. Percival Simpson, taught all classes – First to Sixth - around 30 pupils. He taught at the school from 27/3/1941 to 22/1/1953. He and his family lived in the residence joining the large classroom.

There were boys and girls porches and between the porches was a huge wash trough fed by tank water. There was also a large weather shed with seating around the wall. Mr Simpson had a small green car which, I think, he called "Annie" that was housed at one end. The classroom had lots of blackboards. Large maps hung on the wall. They would be unrolled by a long pole with a hook on the top. There was also an open fireplace and the older boys had the task of splitting the wood for the fire.

A large photo of Sir Henry Parkes was high up on the wall. I thought it was my great-uncle, George Blundell, a Boer War Veteran, who also had a large white beard.

There was a large World War One Honour Board with the names of 49 ex-pupils of Kurrajong North School and District who enlisted from 1914 to 1918. My uncle Dudley Dunston and his cousins Jack Dunston and Harry Dunston are on the board.

My family home was close to the school – about one mile away and I would race home for lunch. My cousins would also come with me at times. My favourite lunch in winter was baked white sweet potato. We would play tricks on the girls. There was a short cut past my great-uncle Mill Dunston's home we called "the drain". In summer the paspalum grass grew tall and the boys would run ahead of the girls and tie knots of grass stems together to trip them up.

At playtime, mid-morning, Mr Simpson would select a pupil to go to the store and Post Office on the corner of Hermitage Road for the "Sydney Morning Herald". I was chosen often and would run, bare foot, down the hill and be back before it was time for the drill in the playground. Other pupils selected would take their time and wander in late.

Before school and at lunch time we played games such as marbles, hop-scotch or "Fly", a jumping game where sticks were moved to make ever wider gaps, which was my favourite.

Friday, after lunch, was garden time. Pupils had a garden plot to attend to. Each plot was about 2 yards wide by 200 yards long. The plants came from home and there was lots of "pig face". The whole garden was fenced to keep the rabbits out. We also had a rain gauge and a record of the rainfall was kept.

Empire Day, the 24<sup>th</sup> May, was held on the school lane, now Stone Terrace. It was a big day run by the P & C with lots of events – age races, egg and spoon, three-legged and sack races. The start was at Mr Frank Doyle's shed on old Bells Line of Road and the finish was the school gate. The winners would receive a prize.

At Christmas we would have a large Christmas tree. My great-uncle George Blundell acted as Santa and handed out our presents. Some pupils would sing a song, recite a poem or act in a play.

Classes were very laid back. Good handwriting was most important – you had to get the slant right. If your parents were able to help you with your studies you got along OK. A number of pupils would get the cane for not behaving. I can't remember getting the cane.

My school time was also upsetting for me. My Grandfather died in July 1947 when I was nine. We were going home for lunch only to be stopped by Auntie Madge saying we were having lunch at her place today. I will never forget it. We were dished up a big bowl of lemon sago. It was never eaten by me again!

I lost my father the next year. He had diabetes and caught a chill while picking the winter peas. He went into a coma and was taken to hospital but did not recover.

However, I was fortunate to have a friend at our home for a few years. World War II was on and in 1942 a Japanese submarine raided Sydney Harbour, sinking HMAS Kuttabul. Friends of our family, the Edworthys, had a hotel near Sydney Harbour. Mr Edworthy asked if their son, Ivan, could stay with us until "this thing blows over". Ivan was a year older than me and went to Kurrajong North School with me. His parents would visit often, bringing lots of goodies. One was a large tent so we could camp out. Ivan still comes to visit and likes to catch up on news of old school mates.

### *The Village Kitchen Kurrajong*

Dine in Gallery - Fully Licensed

Tuesday to Sunday 8am - 4pm

Dinner Friday & Saturday from 6pm

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## From THE ARCHIVES



**Kurrajong North Public School  
Empire Day celebrations held at  
Spring Grove Mr William Dunston's  
property Kurrajong North  
The Windsor & Richmond Gazette  
19th June 1906 has a description of  
the Empire Day event held on the  
4th June 1906. Image: 081439**



**Kurrajong North School 1878. This school replaced the Denominational School on the corner of Hermitage Rd and Bells Line of Road, Kurrajong Hills. The Public Instruction Act 1880 created the Department of Education which took responsibility for Primary Education. Image: 150605**

### A Family History ENQUIRY from Richard Prunty

"I am related to Alexander McCabe born 1773 who lived in the Kurrajong area after arriving as a convict in 1795.

Alexander married Catherine Wallace who also was a convict.

One of his daughters Ann McCabe married another convict named Haynes, and I think they eventually found their way out to Narrabri.

I am wanting to make contact with any family members who still reside in the Kurrajong area."

Please contact: Richard Prunty  
Email: [richardp@ransw.org.au](mailto:richardp@ransw.org.au)  
Ph: (02) 4728 4800

## Memories of Kurrajong

By Syd Sheldon

As I sit and idly dream of the days of long ago  
Those good old days of Kurrajong and the friends we used to know  
I fancy I can see them back in the early days  
With their sulkies and their wagons and loaded bullock drays

As the teams all travel into town, with their loads to go by rail  
I look back on sixty years, when McNamara drove the mail  
With a four-horse team and mail coach, ploughed the dust along the road  
While the swingle trees and traces swayed gently with the load

And the orchards on the hillsides, and out on Comleroy  
The loads of fruit we used to pull when I was just a boy  
But the orchards all have vanished, they are grazing pastures now  
The only marks that still remain are the furrows of the plough

But still we were contented, if the days were long and bleak  
We worked nine hours every day, for thirty bob a week  
And those good old country dances, that were held in Butler's barn  
Where the old folks by the dozen, could it around the fire and yarn

And the dancers shook the building, with the Lancers and quadrilles  
And those old-time songs we used to sing went floating through the hills  
But the years are swiftly passing, and the days are just as long  
We think of the happy days we had in good old Kurrajong

\*\*\*\*\*

Syd Sheldon lived in Kurrajong for more than seventy years in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, mostly along Comleroy Road. This and another of his poems, set to music, are featured on the CD *Memories of Kurrajong – History in Song*, released in 2004

Contributor; Steve Rawling AM



## Dates for Your DIARY

### KURRAJONG COMLERoy HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

7pm Monday 24th September 2018

St David's Uniting Church Hall Kurrajong Heights

Followed by Guest Speaker, General Meeting & Supper

All members & friends welcome

Please remember to return the Nomination Form by 18/9/18



### RETFORD PARK National Trust Estate Bowral

A K-CHS TOUR - Retford Park House & Garden

Wednesday 26th September 2018

**This beautifully appointed home, garden, farm and ancillary buildings  
is now registered under the care of the National Trust.**

The house was built in 1887 by Samuel Hordern (1849-1909) merchant and stockbreeder, and his wife Jane nee Booth. Retford Park house was designed by Albert Bond and is a grand rendered brick Italianate style residence. It was in 1964 that James Fairfax bought the property and gradually turned it from an agricultural property to a gentleman's residence. The house is a treasure trove of pieces James Fairfax collected over the years. Both the house and garden are a delight to wander through. A surprise at every corner.

**COST K-CHS Members \$50.00 Non Members \$55.00**

- ◆ Includes Bus fare, house entry, guided tour and morning tea
- ◆ BYO - Please bring own lunch to have in the grounds of Retford Park
- ◆ Community bus will leave from McMahon Park Community Centre Kurrajong 8.30am (return approximately 4.30pm)

BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL online at [www.kurrajonghistory.org.au](http://www.kurrajonghistory.org.au) or  
Direct Debit: Bendigo Bank A/c 118125632 BSB 633-000 or  
Post cheque to KCHS Treasurer PO Box 174 KURMOND NSW 2757

Enquiries: Suzanne Smith 0427 410 344 or 4567 7410  
Email: [viewfromheights@bigpond.com](mailto:viewfromheights@bigpond.com)

Please NOTE: this is an exclusive tour for KCHS. Retford House itself is generally only open to the public twice a year on OPEN DAYS

### A K-CHS VISIT to Meroo Christian Centre Camp Mackay & Volcano site



**6th October 2018**

Guided by Valerie Holland  
& Rev. David Broughton  
\$5.00 Members  
\$8.00 Non Members

BYO Lunch & Thermos for a  
surprise picnic destination

Self-Drive 10am - 2pm

Book online at [www.kurrajonghistory.org.au](http://www.kurrajonghistory.org.au)

Any queries please contact David Griffiths  
[president@kurrajonghistory.org.au](mailto:president@kurrajonghistory.org.au)

Phone: 4567 8999

**A notice re meeting place will be sent on  
making required booking**

Members please diary in the

### KCHS 2018 CHRISTMAS GATHERING

**Saturday 1st December 2018**

To be held at *St Elmo* the home of  
Marguerite & Bryan Wyborn

Booking details will be in the  
November/December MILLSTONE